

Addressing the challenge of providing 'Care Fit for VIPS'



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I'm trying my best, but am I doing the right thing?

When you're working with people with dementia it can often be difficult to take the time to step back and look at the care you provide with an objective eye. How can you tell what you are doing really well and where there is room for improvement? The range of resources, products and training courses available around dementia care can also be confusing and overwhelming, and it can take time to explore the different options. The Care Fit for VIPS toolkit was developed as a free online resource to take some of the hassle out of the whole process by helping care staff to self-assess what they're doing and direct them to relevant resources.

That sounds promising, tell me more about it.

The toolkit uses the VIPS framework of person-centred care developed by Professor Dawn Brooker, Director of the Association for Dementia Studies at the University of Worcester. The VIPS framework focuses on four main areas of care that encourage care staff to put the person at the heart of what they do:

V – Valuing people. Valuing and promoting the rights of the person

I – Individual needs. Providing individualised care according to needs

P – Perspective of the service user. Understanding care from the perspective of the person with dementia

S – Supportive social psychology. Providing a social environment that enables the person to remain in relationship with others

I see where the name comes from, but what does this actually mean for me?

Essentially, the areas that the toolkit gets you to consider are:

Do my actions show that I respect, value and honour the person?

Am I treating the person as a unique individual?

How might my actions be interpreted by the person I am trying to help?

Do my actions help this person feel socially confident and involved?

So how do I use the toolkit?

Each VIPS area is broken down into different aspects of positive person-centred care. Individual statements for each aspect encourage you to rate your care provision, allowing you to see where your service currently sits. You can do this as an individual or as a group activity within your service. These assessments can be repeated as often as you want, to see where you've made changes.

As for resources, the toolkit has done most of the legwork for you. Relevant resources are linked to each aspect of care, so if you want to improve in a particular area you've got a list of appropriate resources readily available to you. New resources are added as we find out about them.

Okay, what next?

The Care Fit for VIPS toolkit also has a section encouraging you to put what you've discovered into action through 'improvement cycles'. These consist of four simple steps:

1. Plan what you want to do
2. Test your idea
3. See what happened
4. Act on what you found out

At each step you can enter details of what you're doing and why, and keep a record for future use if you want to show others the areas you've worked on.

There must be a catch. Is it really free?

Yes. You need to register to use the toolkit so that all your assessment responses and improvement cycle evidence can be recorded, but it's all free. Some resources we provide links to may have a cost to use, but this is clearly shown so you can avoid them. We've tried to include free resources wherever possible, so there are plenty of options available.

Who can use the toolkit?

The short answer is "anyone". It can be used by frontline care staff, team leaders and managers to get different perspectives on care provision. Individual staff may also find it helps with personal development plans and reviews. Currently over 4,000 people have registered to use the different versions of the toolkit.

Different versions? What do you mean?

We recognise that not all care settings are the same, so there are three versions of the toolkit available at present: Care homes, day centres and domiciliary care. The assessment statements and resources within the different versions have been tailored for the specific settings to make them more useful. We're also looking at developing a version for acute care settings and one with a specific focus on learning disabilities and dementia. If you've got any other thoughts or ideas, please feel free to let us know what you would like.

We hope you enjoy exploring the Care Fit for VIPS toolkit and find it useful and informative.

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Care Fit for VIPS toolkit www.carefitforvips.co.uk