

Transcript

Module 2 – Why inclusive communication matters

Slide 1 – Title

Welcome to the Foundation Inclusive Communication Toolkit - Module 2
- Why inclusive communication matters.

This module explains why individual staff, teams, and organisations need to work on inclusive communication.

You will learn why inclusive communication matters to you, your team and organisation. Questions to support reflection appear throughout the presentation.

You can download and print a factsheet with the same title and information from the Toolkit Module 2 webpage.

Slide 2 - Module 2 - Content

This presentation includes quotes from people who experience communication exclusion, experts, public body representatives, and research publications.

It covers –

A quick definition of inclusive communication.

Why inclusive communication is the right thing to do.

How many people need inclusive communication.

Research which shows the public want inclusive communication.

The impacts of communication practice on service users and public bodies.

And relevant laws.

At the end it sets out actions for individuals, teams, and public bodies.

Slide 3 – Quick definition

Before we go on, here is a quick definition of inclusive communication.

Toolkit module three provides a more detailed definition.

People need or prefer to communicate in diverse ways.

Communication is better when organisations recognise and respond to this diversity of needs and preferences. Inclusive communication allows more people to understand communication from others and express themselves easily.

It is about -

- All ways of communicating like writing, speaking, and signing.
- All channels of communication such as online, on the phone, on paper and in person communications.
- Situational factors like the time and place of a communication, and
- It matters at every point and for every communication.

Slide 4 – It is the right thing to do

The first reason inclusive communication matters is simply that it is the right thing to do.

Including people in our communication is the ethical, polite, and kind way to interact.

Professional codes of practice and employment contracts require staff to behave ethically and to protect people's dignity.

Enabling people to understand and express themselves in ways they prefer is an essential element of person-centred and trauma informed services.

Next you will hear Alan and Sarah talk about why they need inclusive communication. They have different communication needs and

preferences. Alan uses a communication aid to talk. Sarah describes herself as autistic.

Slide 5 – Service users 'perspective

“I need inclusive communication to talk to my family, friends and doctors or any other services I require.”

“The reason that inclusive communication matters is that not everybody thinks the same way, not everyone communicates the same way, individuals who, like me, are autistic might need other ways of communicating that neurotypical people or people who are not autistic might not think of.”

Slide 6 – People need inclusive communication

Alan and Sarah have just told us why they need inclusive communication.

There are many more people than you might expect who also need it.

Every community or group of service users, colleagues, family, and friends includes people who need, or prefer, to communicate in diverse ways. Inclusive communication good practice is an effective response to this diversity of needs and preferences.

Everyone experiences communication disadvantage or exclusion at some time. Inclusive communication helps any of us if we are distracted, ill, anxious, upset, or are doing something for the first time.

People who are sometimes described as "hard to reach" or "seldom heard" are more likely to experience communication disadvantage or exclusion. They include -

The 1 in 5 people in Scotland today who will experience communication difficulties at some time in their life.

People with conditions associated with communication disability. Such as stroke, cancer, dementia, mental illness, learning disability, and neurodivergence. Stroke, cancer and dementia are more common among older people and people from ethnic minorities.

The 1 in every 4 adults who have reading or writing difficulties.

And the increasing numbers of older people with hearing and sight loss.

1 in 13 people use English as an additional language at home. People tend to use the language which they find easiest at home. This statistic means English is not the easiest language to use for 1 in 13 people.

1 in 8 people do not have, or cannot use, a computer. Few people like to use digital services for everything.

Older people, in particular, are less likely to have or use a smart phone. Using the phone is hard or impossible for many people with hearing loss.

Finally, communication disadvantage is significantly higher among

- people who live in poverty,
- young people out of work, education or in conflict with the law and
- people with care experience.

Next there is a question for you and your team. You can pause the presentation while you take time to answer.

Slide 7 – Question

How many people using your services might need inclusive communication?

Next, we will hear from Lisa and Elena.

Lisa has a sight and learning disability. Elena has a hearing loss. They describe the assumptions service providers make about their communication. These assumptions mean communication is not always done in the way that Lisa or Elena need or want.

Slide 8 – Service users 'perspective

“People will hear learning disability and think that you're more disabled than you are, or you're more able than you are. Because I might verbally come across very able but actually internally, it takes longer to process.

I need inclusive communication because I am deaf partially you know. I got a lot of problem with hearing. There are a lot of people like myself with hearing impairment, because of age, because of accident, because of genetics. That's how people take for granted that you can hear, like a normal person and you cannot.”

Slide 9 – The public want inclusive communication

The assumptions some people make mean that Lisa and Elena do not always experience communication in the way they would like.

To add to their experience - a lot of surveys show that the public also want more inclusive communication.

A Scottish Health Council study found most people want to communicate with services in person, with time to understand and ask questions. They also want professionals to use clear, day-to-day language. And symbols on signs, documents, and websites.

The Health and Social Care Alliance found that people want more accessible information. And staff who know how to meet different communication needs.

The Royal National Institute for the Blind report people with sight loss are missing crucial information from health and education communications.

And the Royal National Institute for the Deaf say that 1 in 4 people with hearing loss need more accessible ways, and a variety of channels, to contact their local health services.

Other national statistics show that the demand for British Sign Language and other language translation and interpreting services has grown in recent years.

Now answer a question about the needs and preferences of people who use your services. You can pause the presentation while you take time to answer.

Slide 10 – Question

What have your service users told you about their communication needs and preferences?

Next, we will hear from Sarah, Emma, Elliott, and Alan about the difference exclusive and inclusive communication makes to them. You have met Sarah and Alan already. Elliott has a visual impairment. Emma's young daughter has a communication disability.

Slide 11 – Service users 'perspective

“In the vast majority of times when things are done incorrectly or are changed, that can make me want to just phone up and cancel everything and just kind of run away.”

“We were met by the most wonderful nurse, who knows my daughter fairly well because she's seen her before. And she was able to respond to my daughter's needs. And she made lots of reasonable adjustments to make sure that my daughter felt comfortable enough to be examined. And my little girl wasn't frightened. You know and that made such a big difference. You know my wee girl was able to get treated promptly. And it was such a lovely experience in terms of you know I didn't feel like we were a burden. I didn't feel like we were a problem.”

“Good communication makes me feel included and it makes me feel part of something and it makes me feel like part of the conversation, it makes me feel like I matter. That I have, something to give and that I am valued.”

“Good communication makes me feel happy and less isolated. I forget how not being able to talk makes me feel.”

Slide 12 - Impacts on service users

We have just heard about the impact of communication practice on Sarah, Emma, Elliot, and Alan.

Many more people have reported the benefits of inclusive communication.

People say they feel more relaxed, happier, valued, respected – like everyone else.

They have more trust and confidence in services and can develop better relationships with professionals.

They have a greater sense of independence, autonomy, and empowerment.

They feel more socially connected with more opportunities to engage and to contribute their skills.

On the other hand, people say, and the research publications show, communication exclusion has many negative impacts.

People feel upset, confused, embarrassed, angry, socially isolated, and lonely.

They lose trust in public bodies and services.

They do not engage, fail to attend or withdraw from services.

People are debilitated and so miss out on benefits, screening, and health treatments.

Individuals can experience poor mental health and wellbeing.

In the long run people who are excluded tend to gain fewer qualifications and have limited employment opportunities.

Now answer a question about the sorts of things you experience in your service. You can pause the presentation while you take time to answer.

Slide 13 – Question

What behaviours and outcomes, if any, do you recognise among people using your services?

In the next slide we will hear from Emma and Lisa again. They will give their perspectives on how inclusive communication good practice can impact on organisations.

Slide 14 – Service users 'perspective

“Certainly, for my child, if she's in you know expected to attend something and she doesn't have that understanding, she'll often have a meltdown and again, that's not just an impact on her that's an impact on the service, who might have to rearrange another appointment. It's an impact on us because our day is you know it's, it's ruined.”

“If you were more inclusive and whatever it is would then be more noticeable and more accessible to whoever in life is wanting to reach whatever you're doing.”

Slide 15 – Impact on organisations

Emma and Lisa think that inclusive communication good practice can help organisations to be more efficient and engage with more people.

Effective communication between service providers and users is the foundation of service success.

Some public bodies already implement some elements of inclusive communication good practice. They see benefits now or expect to see benefits in the future. Research publications back up their views. Excluding people from communications can lead to the opposite negative consequences.

Organisations which already implement inclusive communication have a better public reputation for inclusion. And more diverse public involvement and engagement.

They believe good practice will deliver better outcomes for more people. They expect that their recruitment, retention, and workplaces will be more inclusive.

Their staff are more able to communicate with service users and to contribute their skills.

Research shows inclusive organisations are more efficient. And that the costs of litigation, complaints, or errors are reduced.

Inclusive communication could even prevent or reduce demand for services and so lead to savings.

Finally, there are benefits in the long term, across generations.

This is because children whose parents are communication excluded are more likely to experience the same exclusion. Inclusive communication can break this intergenerational cycle of communication exclusion. And so, reduce health inequalities, improve access to education and employment, and reduce child poverty.

Now answer a question about the goals of your organisation. You can pause the presentation while you take time to answer.

Slide 16 – Question

Which impacts, listed above, are important to your organisation?

Slide 17 – Laws

Many laws, policies and strategies encourage public bodies to implement inclusive communication. Inclusive communication good practice helps public bodies to follow these laws.

The key laws are –

The Equality Act 2010.

It says discrimination can occur when organisations treat people less favourably because of a disability. This might include a disability related to communication.

It can also occur when a policy puts a particular group at a disadvantage. For example, people who cannot use a computer because of a disability are at a disadvantage if services are only provided online.

The Act says organisations must take steps to make adjustments for disabled persons. This might include providing information in accessible formats.

The General Public Sector Equality Duty

This duty arises under the Equality Act. It requires some public authorities and those working on behalf of public authorities to consider the need -

- to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and other prohibited conduct.

- to advance equality of opportunity between people who share and people who do not share a relevant protected characteristic.
- to foster good relations between people who share and people who do not share a relevant protected characteristic.

Lastly, the Public Sector Bodies Accessibility Regulations require public service websites and mobile apps to meet accessibility standards.

Slide 18 – law, policy, and strategy search terms

Many other laws, policies, and strategies relevant to specific groups or services also require or encourage relevant public bodies to communicate in inclusive ways. Some are listed in the factsheet that goes with this module.

Check if law, policy, and strategy relevant to your service includes anything related to inclusive communication. You can use search terms such as -

Communication and inclusion,

Access and accessible information,

Involvement, engagement, and participation and

Translation, interpreting, and community languages.

Next is a question about law, policy, and strategy relevant to your work.

You can pause the presentation while you take time to answer.

Slide 19 – Question

Do the laws, policies, and strategies relevant to your work include anything related to inclusive communication?

Use the search terms listed in slide eighteen.

Slide 20 – Actions

You have reached the end of the second toolkit module. It is time for you to take action.

Use this presentation and the factsheet to learn and raise awareness of why inclusive communication matters.

If you have not already done so - on your own or with colleagues, answer the questions to identify why inclusive communication matters to you, your team, and your organisation.

After that go to module three to find out what inclusive communication good practice is in detail.

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