

## Transcript

### Module 5 - How individual staff can implement inclusive communication good practice

#### Slide 1

Welcome to module 5 of the Foundation Inclusive Communication Toolkit.

This module is for anyone working for a public body in Scotland who:

- communicates at an individual level with service users, colleagues, and others inside or outside the organisation and / or
- is involved in producing organisational level communications such as websites, social media, building signs, posters, leaflets, and forms like booking forms.

If you have completed modules 1, 2 and 3 you will know why inclusive communication is important. You will also know about the nine inclusive communication good practice standards.

If you are a leader or manager, you may have also completed Module 4. That module is about standards to do with organisational infrastructure. This module – module 5 – on the other hand is to do with standards for individual staff. It sets out a step-by-step approach which individual staff can take to implement inclusive communication good practice standards 6 to 9. We will look at these standards in the next slide.

You can also find the information in this presentation in a step-by-step guide available to download and print from the Toolkit Module 5 webpage. You might want to have the printed guide to hand as you watch this presentation.

## **Slide 2**

This presentation describes one approach to implementing inclusive communication standards 6 to 9. It is not legal advice.

Standards 6 to 9 focus on what individual staff do to communicate in an inclusive way. These standards encourage staff to -

1. Recognise that every community includes people with diverse communication needs and preferences.
2. Find out about people's communication needs and preferences.
3. Act on those needs and preferences; and
4. Keep checking and improving their communication practice.

## **Slide 3**

In this presentation, we will first hear from people with different communication needs and preferences. They will remind us about what helps them communicate.

Secondly, we will look at things you need to know about inclusive communication before you start.

We will then talk through a four-step approach which individual staff can use to implement good practice.

Next, we will look at some quick good practice guides.

Finally, we will look at actions you can take after the presentation.

If you cannot watch all the presentation at once, you can watch it over a few sessions. You can also just watch part of it. For example, you can skip to slide eleven of this video with the title "Quick inclusive communication guide".

Let us now hear from Lisa, Emma, Elliott, and Alan. They all use public services. They each have different communication needs and preferences.

## Slide 4

(Lisa)

What I want staff to do for me, um, to be better is for current staff maybe just know that they can at any time ask me for a reminder what my needs are. For new staff, speak with me and if you don't understand what my needs are because it is a complex brain condition, then just ask for more information on the type of needs I've got.

(Emma)

I think sometimes what you, you have to do is just ask people, what is it that I need to do to make things easier for you to access a service? I think that that is you know being open to them telling you and being flexible can really, really help situations.

Having information in advance is something that's, that's incredibly helpful for us.

It would be helpful to have things like social stories or photographs of what the premises looks like. You know sometimes even visiting places in advance of procedures can, can be really, really helpful for us too.

So, my little girl communicates in a range of different ways, in order for her needs to be met. She's actually a very skilled communicator for somebody who doesn't have, who has very limited use of words. So, in order for her needs to be met I have to be aware of her body language. I have to we use gestures. We use signs. We use things like pointing. I give her time and I give her space to communicate what her needs. And I watch and I wait sometimes and to see what she's gonna do next.

Because she'll love she'll tell me, you know she, she knows what she wants. She's a little, she's a little girl that that knows what she wants. And she requires aids to help her, and this can be in various different

formats she uses. Like I said gesture, a little bit of sign, you know. She uses augmentative technology, so she uses a wee iPad that's got symbols that that that when she touches it it speaks. But they're actually quite complex for a child with learning disability to learn and use. But they're also essential for her so she uses. Like pictures is the probably the biggest thing, photographs especially.

(Elliott)

Ways individuals, ways individual staff can work towards being better at inclusive communication is making time and assuring me that I have time and I'm not being rushed. Another way is someone checking in with me, making sure I've understood and asking if I have any further questions. Follow up and follow up our interaction or follow up or and follow up our interaction with an email, summarising the points. And allow me to digest and look back over our interaction.

(Alan)

Understand, there are more ways to communicate than talking. Services should ask how that person prefers to communicate, then give the person enough time to be able to answer any questions or say what they are trying to say.

Services should not rush the person who is trying to talk. They should also not talk over them or try to finish what they are saying.

## **Slide 5**

Here are some things to know before you start to communicate more inclusively.

The first thing to understand is what inclusive communication is about.

Every community includes people with diverse communication needs and preferences. Communication is better when staff recognise and respond to that diversity. Inclusive communication good practice is the best way to respond to communication diversity.

It allows more people to understand 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.
- Situational factors like the time and place of a communication.
- and
- It matters at every point people interact with your service. For example,
  - Service adverts and booking systems need to be inclusive so that people turn up at your service.
  - Information and face to face meetings need to be inclusive to enable people to get the most out of what you offer.
  - And reports, advice and follow up activities need to be inclusive so that people can respond to these effectively.

## **Slide 6**

The second thing to know is inclusive communication matters to you, your service users, and your organisation because -

- It is simply the right thing to do – it is kind, polite, ethical, and professional.
- Making communication as easy as possible for an individual is an essential element of person-centred and trauma informed services.
- It benefits everyone. Research shows the public want it.

- An expert organisation estimates that 250,000 people need it to access services.
- Evidence shows that it enables better relationships with professionals, more independence, and social connections.
- It also helps you communicate with more people. You can achieve better outcomes. You and your service users can save time when communication works first time.

Toolkit Module 2 provides a lot more detail on why inclusive communication matters.

The third thing to know is that every member of staff is encouraged to communicate in an inclusive way.

All staff, in all roles and all teams are responsible for communicating effectively with service users, colleagues and other stakeholders.

Everyone, therefore, is encouraged to communicate in an inclusive way, as much as they can. Ideally, all your communication should be inclusive.

The last important point to be aware of is that inclusive communication good practice may mean changing the way you do things. But please do not be daunted.

For example, it might mean -

- offering people more ways to contact you or
- being flexible with the times you provide services or
- changing the letters you send out regularly.

It takes time, planning, and consistent effort.

You may feel concerned about changing the way you do things.

However, you should not feel daunted.

You are likely to be doing some good practice already. Following this step-by step guide will help you to work out how you can build on this.

You will implement good practice just by following the steps outlined shortly in this module.

Also, there may be help available from your organisation and expert organisations. As Lisa and Emma said, service users themselves may be able to help you.

Ideally, you will be able to match your development with inclusive communication developments happening in your organisation. So, you and colleagues can work on the same thing together – and support each other.

Finally, to reassure you - you may not need to do all the steps in this guide. Start at the step that best fits where you currently are in your inclusive communication journey.

Also, you can start – and restart - at any time. You do not need to do everything at once. Do as much as you can. Implement good practice at a pace that works for you.

Now let us look at the steps you can take to implement inclusive communication good practice.

## **Slide 7**

Firstly – find out what you can do.

You can -

1. Find out about the training, guidance, support, and practical resources your organisation provides.
2. Read your organisation's inclusive communication policy and development plans.
3. Complete basic inclusive communication training. For example, complete the modules in this toolkit. Your organisation may provide other training too.

4. If you are short of time - skip to the quick guides towards the end of this presentation. Or read the “Quick inclusive communication good practice guide” available as a separate document on the Module 5 webpage.

## **Slide 8**

Step 2 is about comparing what you do now with what you could be doing. And then choosing what you can do to build on your inclusive communication good practice.

There are several things you can do to assess your inclusive communication practice.

You can use the “Individual staff good practice assessment checklist” found on the Toolkit Module 5 webpage. This will enable you to compare what you do now with inclusive communication good practice standards. You may wish to assess one area of your work first, then progress to other areas.

You can also ask people about their experience when they communicate with you. For example, you can ask colleagues and service users -

- How well do you meet their communication needs and preferences?
- How easy is it for people to understand what you write and say? or
- How could you improve your communication?

Some behaviours can indicate that there is a communication breakdown between you and the people you are trying to reach. When communication breaks down people may, for example,

- not turn up or withdraw from services,
- not respond to information, or
- not respond in the way that you expect, or
- feedback comments or complaints related to communication.

Use the information you gather from your assessments to help you identify possible inclusive communication development goals.

Your goals might focus on, for example -

- The good practice standards and indicators you are only achieving sometimes or not at all.
- Or the things people ask you to improve.
- Or the areas of service where communication breakdown is common.

Next choose your priority development goal or goals. You could use this approach.

- Prioritise work on actions in the order of standards 6 to 9. For example, if you are not achieving actions to do with Standard 6 which is about recognising that people communicate in different ways – prioritise work on these actions first. Then go on to prioritise actions to do with Standard 7, which is about finding out about needs and preferences.
- It is also a good idea to choose goals which:
  - are achievable and sustainable in your day-to-day work,
  - align with any developments in your team or organisation,
  - and which make good use of all the support available to you.

After choosing your goal or goals, discuss and agree them with your manager. You may want to put an action in your personal development plan. For example -

- “I will find out about my service users’ communication needs and preferences.” or
- “We will put inclusive signs up outside and inside 4 of our public buildings.”

Finally, schedule time in your calendar to implement your plan. Some goals are likely to need extra time to do at first. Please be reassured, communicating in an inclusive way will become easier and quicker with practice.

## **Slide 9**

Step 3 is about working on your inclusive communication development goals.

Changing the way that you communicate can take time, planning, and consistent effort. It is not easy to change communication habits. So, it is important to use all the support available to you.

Access and use the training, information, guidance, support, and practical resources this toolkit provides. Use the resources available from expert organisations. The toolkit module 5 webpage includes a list of resources that can help you implement many of the inclusive communication standards.

Your organisation may also provide additional support.

Setbacks and delays are normal in any change process. If you are struggling to achieve your goals –

- Do not give up. The important thing is to keep trying. Your service users, your team and your organisation will appreciate your efforts.
- Ask lived experience experts – your service users - and colleagues for help and advice.
- Some progress is better than none. Consider focusing your goals to make them more achievable. For example:
  - Prioritise a smaller group of service users to engage with about their communication needs and preferences, or
  - Begin by installing inclusive signs in a few key locations first.

Finally, for this step – recognise and celebrate your success.

- Look out for progress with your goals, and any impacts - small or large. For example, you may feel more confident; have a sense of a better connection with a service user or notice you are saving time.
- Tell colleagues about the differences you have noticed. Congratulate yourself! Talking about your achievements will motivate you and others.

## **Slide 10**

This step is about taking time to look at what you have achieved over a longer period. And setting new goals.

When you reach the time that you scheduled to complete your goals, take a moment to pause, reflect, review, and update your goals. You may want to do this step as part of your personal development plan annual review.

Firstly, reflect on the differences your inclusive communication approach has made. For example, ask yourself -

- Do you feel more confident about your communication?
- Do you feel you have a better connection with more people?
- Are you or service users achieving better outcomes?

Next, review your current goals. Ask yourself -

- What goals have I achieved?
- What needs more work?

If you have not achieved a goal, try to identify what stopped you and what could make it easier to achieve next time.

Finally, update your goals. Take time to reflect on your progress, then decide what to do next. You may wish to set new development goals or keep building on the ones you have already started.

Before you finish this module, here are some quick guides to remind you what inclusive communication good practice is.

## **Slide 11**

Here is a quick inclusive communication good practice guide. You can download and print off a quick guide from the toolkit Module 5 webpages. More detailed good practice is provided in Toolkit Module 3 – Inclusive communication good practice standards and indicators.

Remember –

- Inclusive communication enables people to understand and express themselves easily.
- It is the right thing to do.
- It benefits everyone. Experts estimate 250,000 people in Scotland need it to use services.
- All staff are encouraged to communicate in an inclusive way as much as possible.

They are encouraged to -

1. Recognise that people need or prefer to communicate in different ways.

To demonstrate this, you can show a positive attitude towards people who communicate in different ways.

2. Find out how people need or prefer to communicate.

You can ask people what helps them to understand others and express themselves.

3. Act on people's communication needs and preferences.

To achieve this good practice, you can -

- Use inclusive speaking and writing. The next two slides provide short guides on how to do this.

- Support people to communicate using speech, writing, sign language, pictures, gestures, a communication aid or with a helper.
- Provide specialist supports such as translations, large print, Braille, or Easy Read.
- Give people the time they need to understand you and express themselves.
- Offer a choice of communicating in person, by phone, text, and email.
- And provide services in accessible places with wheelchair access, inclusive signs, good light throughout, working hearing loops and quiet spaces.

4. Finally, keep checking and improving your communication.

Ask people about their communication experience when they use your service. Be open to feedback. Improve your communication if people ask you to.

Now, let us look at a short guide on how to speak in an inclusive way.

## **Slide 12**

A lot of your day-to-day communication is likely to involve speaking to people. You may speak with service users, colleagues, or other stakeholders in person or on the phone. You may speak to people to welcome them to your service, to give them directions, during appointments, at team meetings, training sessions, or consultation events. Whoever you speak to, for whatever reason, it is important to speak in an inclusive way as much as you can.

Inclusive speaking will enable more people to understand you. And make it easier for them to respond to what you say.

Here is a short step by step guide on how you can speak in an inclusive way.

1. Work out your key points and the most logical order to say them.
2. Make sure people can see and hear you.
3. Use short, simple sentences for each point.
  - Avoid lots of ifs, buts, and maybes.
  - Use everyday words. No jargon. No abbreviations.
4. While you are speaking, also show people what you mean. Use pictures, gestures, and demonstration.

Now, let us look at a short guide on how to write in an inclusive way.

### **Slide 13**

You may spend time writing as part of your day-to-day communication. You might write to service users, colleagues, or other stakeholders on-line, on paper or in a text message. You may need to write emails, a letter, a leaflet, guidelines, or a presentation. Whoever you write to, and whatever you are writing for, it is important to write in an inclusive way as much as you can.

Inclusive writing will enable more people to understand what you write. And make it easier for them to respond in the way you would like them to.

Here is a quick step by step guide on how you can write in an inclusive way. There are 8 steps. They are spread over this and the next slide. It might seem like a lot to do. It will get easier and more automatic with practice.

1. Just like inclusive speaking, first work out the key points you want to get across.

2. Group key points into sections. Add a heading to each section. It is important to use “headings” styles. These help people who use screen readers, such as people who have a sight loss.
3. Put the sections in a logical order. For example, if you want someone to read something then contact you, write “1. Read the information” then “2. Contact me.” Then list your contact details.
4. Use short, simple sentences for each key point. Be direct. Avoid lots of ifs and maybes. Use local, everyday words whenever you can. No jargon. No abbreviations.

## **Slide 14**

Now work on how your writing looks on the page and features such as pictures and symbols.

5. Use a font “without tails” such as Ariel or Aptos. Use at least size 12 font. Space text out with at least 1.5 spacing.
6. Add icons and pictures to show what your writing is about. Add Alt Text for all images. Alt text describes an image to people who cannot see it.
7. Check the contrast between the text and paper colour. Black text on a white or cream background works well.
8. Finally, if you are using “Word” to write, use the “Check Accessibility” function on your computer. It can check the navigation or reading order. It helps you to add “Alt Text” to pictures. Use the “Read Aloud” function to review and check screen readability.

## **Slide 15**

Congratulations!

You have reached the end of all the Foundation Inclusive Communication Toolkit modules.

Now please take these actions.

1. Implement the steps set out in this module.
2. Recognise and celebrate your successes and progress. Tell your colleagues.
3. Keep collaborating with others to innovate and share developments. You, your service users, and your organisation will be grateful for the difference your action on inclusive communication will make.

END

### **Requesting alternative formats**

We are committed to providing adjustments. We will consider requests for alternative formats or translations for any materials from this publication.

Contact us at [mainstreamingstrategy@gov.scot](mailto:mainstreamingstrategy@gov.scot) if you would like to request an adjustment or alternative format.