

Meta-competences

Attitudes, values and style of interaction

An ability to adapt practice to the needs and presentation of a person, so as to:
maximise their active involvement in addressing their needs
address any tensions between meeting their personal needs and any organisational requirements which inform 'usual' practice (such as local protocols)

Confidentiality and capacity

An ability to interpret legal definitions of competence, capacity and guidance regarding confidentiality in relation to the specific circumstances and needs of each person
An ability to judge when it is in the best interest of a person to disclose information, taking into account their wishes and views about sharing information, but holding in mind considerations of competence, capacity and risk
where there are concerns about a person's capacity to act in a way that maintains their own safety, an ability to proceed in a manner that is aligned with their best interests
an ability to judge what and how much information (both written and verbal) should be shared and with whom (in the light of the person's specific situation and the protection of the public)

Working with people from a range of backgrounds

An ability for practitioners to be aware of their own values and to reflect on the ways that these values affect (positively and negatively) the people with whom they are working
Where a person discusses practices at variance with the norms and values of the practitioner, an ability to judge when this difference should be respected and when it represents a concern that should be responded to
Where there is evidence that social and cultural difference is likely to have an impact on the accessibility or acceptability of a course of action, an ability to make appropriate adjustments to ways in which it is delivered, with the aim of maximising its potential benefit

Engagement

An ability to judge when to continue focusing on working with difficulties and when to step back, based on the level of engagement with a person
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Understanding a person's circumstances

An ability to balance the benefits of a thorough understanding against the need to initiate a timely action, and to judge:

when understanding is sufficient to take the next step, even if more information could be gathered

when there is sufficient understanding to proceed and when more information is required before an action can be carried out safely

An ability to adopt a flexible and responsive approach to assessment that balances the need to obtain information against a person's readiness and willingness to share this (e.g. because they have had limited opportunities to form a relationship with the practitioner)

Assessing risk

An ability to draw on knowledge of the difficulty of predicting risk in an individual person and so be able to:

synthesise theoretical knowledge with multiple sources of information about a person

integrate written sources with information from discussion with a person

integrate information from a range of sources

Implementing action in a flexible but coherent manner

An ability to judge the degree to which a course of action should focus on the immediate management of self-harm or suicide and when a broader focus can be adopted (e.g. to consider longer-term issues that contribute to a person's self-harm or suicidal behaviour)

Adapting discussion and action in response to feedback

An ability to identify and respond to implicit or explicit indicators that a person is at risk of disengaging from the interaction, for example by:

responding to, and openly discussing, *explicit* feedback that expresses concerns about important aspects of the conversation or proposed course of action

responding to *implicit* feedback that indicates concerns about important aspects of the discussion (e.g. by comments, non-verbal behaviour or significant shifts in responsiveness)

identifying when it seems difficult for people to give 'authentic' feedback (i.e. responding in accordance with what they think the practitioner wishes to hear, rather than express their own view) and discussing this with them

Recognising limits

An ability for an individual to judge when they have reached the limits of their responsibility and competence and when to seek advice, management or supervisory support, or assistance from others

Using supervision and support

An ability to be aware of the inevitable personal feelings elicited by challenging behaviours (such as hostility or suspiciousness) and their impact, and so judge when support or supervision is necessary, in order to:

continue working effectively with a person and to continue everyday duties

ensure that decisions about the best way forward are taken on the basis of careful reflection (e.g. whether to persist, adapt or stop the course of action)

An ability for the practitioner to judge when contact is creating excessive emotional demands and to put in place appropriate levels of self-care

Team working with other practitioners and professionals

When sharing information with others, an ability to judge what information needs to be shared, and with whom, titrating the level of confidentiality against the need for colleagues to have sufficient information if they are to act in the interests of the person

When undertaking work with other agencies, an ability to make a judgement about the potential impact of factors such as differences in statutory responsibilities and the operation of service constraints, and to take these into account when planning any further action

An ability to judge when there is sufficient evidence that professional colleagues are not performing their roles appropriately, or are performing them incompetently, and to act in line with professional, organisational and legal obligations