

Dementia, Mental Health and Learning Disability

Learning outcomes

9.1 Understand the experiences of people with mental health needs, dementia or learning disabilities

9.2 Understand the importance of promoting positive health and wellbeing for an individual who may have a mental health need, dementia or learning disabilities

9.3 Understand the adaptations in care delivery relating to an individual who may have a mental health issue, dementia or learning disabilities

9.4 Understand the importance of early detection of mental health needs, dementia and learning disabilities

9.5 Understand legal frameworks, policy and guidelines relating to mental health needs, dementia and learning disabilities

9.6 Understand mental capacity.

Standard

Awareness of Mental Health, Dementia & Learning Disability

- Your role may not include providing direct support to individuals with mental health problems, dementia & learning disabilities
- Having an awareness of the experiences of others can help you to identify any signs and symptoms as well as enabling you to work in ways that show compassion and understanding.



Mental Health Conditions

1 in 4 adults in Britain will experience at least one **mental health** need in any year. Examples of mental health problems include:

- Depression
- Psychosis
- Anxiety.



Mental health

Mental health can be seen positively to identify a positive state of mental wellbeing or negatively, to identify a negative state of mental wellbeing, for example, mental health problems or issues.



Depression

An individual experiencing depression will feel emotions such as hopelessness and negativity that don't go away.

Mild depression

This has a small negative impact on daily living

Major depression

This has a more significant effect on daily living

Bipolar disorder

This causes the individual to experience extreme mood swings from highs, such as joy and excitement, to feelings of complete misery and hopelessness. As a result they may behave in ways others find difficult to understand.

Anxiety

Individuals living with anxiety find it hard to control their worries. Symptoms can be:

- Physical
- Psychological
- Cognitive
- Behavioural or social.



Psychological

Psychological symptoms relate to feelings and emotions, it includes how the mind looks at things and how this can affect behaviour.



Cognitive

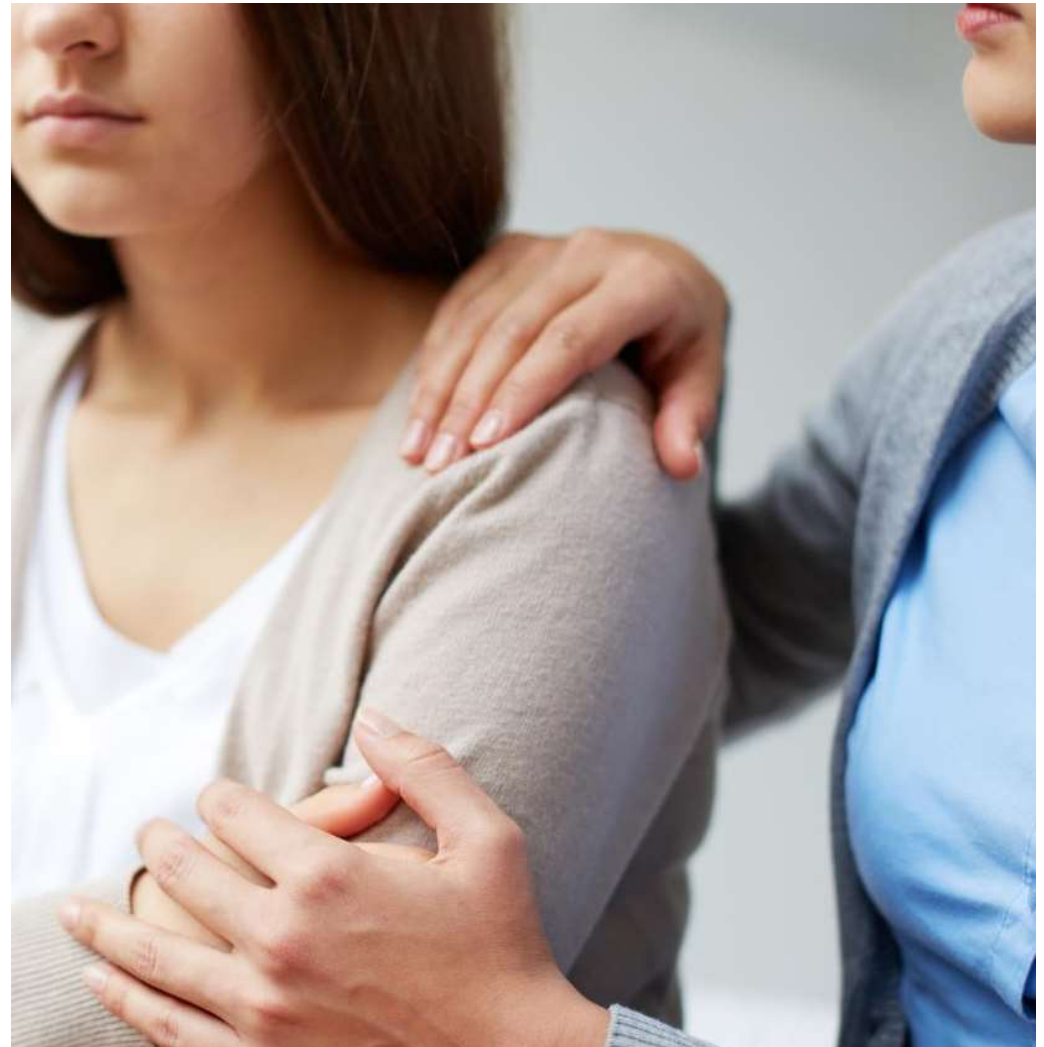
Cognitive or cognition refers to our brains and how we think about things; how we process, use and store information we take in through our senses.

Psychosis

Psychosis is a symptom of conditions such as schizophrenia and bipolar disorder. Two signs of psychosis are:

- Hallucinations
- Delusions

Experiencing these symptoms can be frightening. Reassure the individual that you are there to help and that they are safe.



Causes of mental health problems

An individual may experience a mental health need as a result of:

- A traumatic event
- A **chemical imbalance** in the brain
- Genetics.



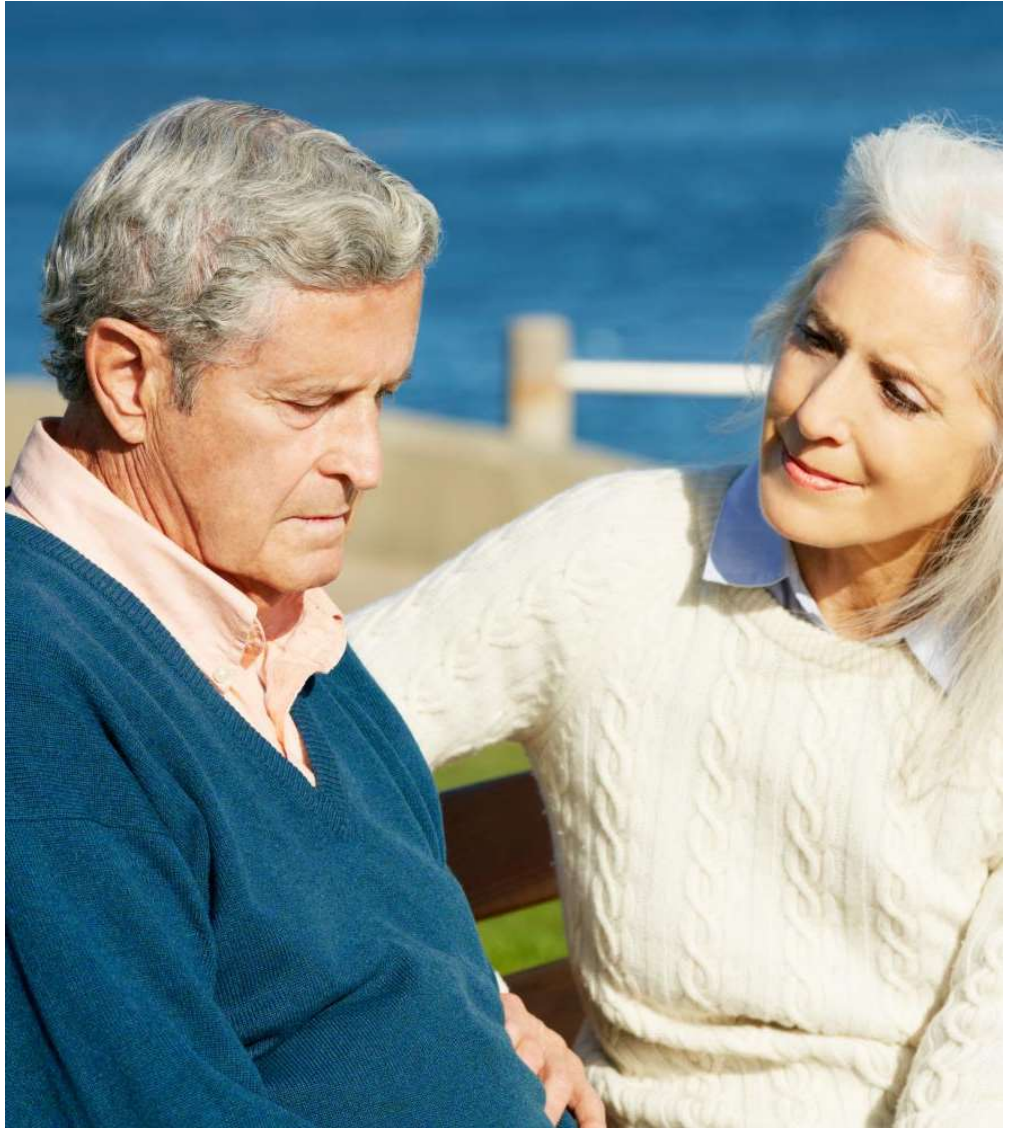
Chemical balance

The chemicals or hormones that affect our emotions and behaviour may be lower or higher than they should be.

Dementia

A word used to cover many different conditions that affect the brain. These conditions cause a decline or reduction in abilities, including:

- Memory
- Thinking
- Reasoning
- Communicating.





Supporting individuals with dementia

There is currently no cure for dementia. The individual's experience of living with the condition can be affected by the attitudes and views of others.

If people view living with dementia as a constant loss of abilities...

...that there is nothing that can be done to support the person...

...the person living with dementia is likely to experience feelings of ill-being...

...that can then contribute to a negative experience of living with the condition.

Types of dementia

The two most common types of dementia are:

Alzheimer's disease

In individuals with Alzheimer's disease a bad protein develops in the brain causing damage to the brain cells and their connections.

Vascular dementia

Vascular dementia is caused by oxygen failing to get to the brain cells as a result of problems with the blood supply (the vascular system).

Dementia will affect each individual differently depending on the type of dementia they have and the support they receive.

Learning disabilities

The cause of learning disabilities is not always known but they can be due to:

- Complications during birth
- Genetic conditions
- Illness or injury in childhood

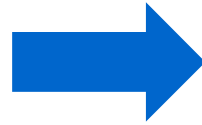
An individual with a learning disability may have difficulty

- Understanding information
- Learning new skills
- Communicating
- Living independently.

The impact of learning disabilities

An individual's experience of living with a learning disability and the support they need will depend on the severity of the condition.

People with a mild learning disability may only need a little support to be independent



Someone with a severe learning disability may not be able to verbally communicate

Individuals may communicate in ways that others find difficult to understand. This can affect how others see and respond to them.

Supporting people with learning disabilities

Every individual is unique with different needs, preferences, life history and experiences.

The support provided must:

- Be person centred to meet their specific needs
- Develop and enable them to develop their skills and become more independent.



Promoting positive attitudes



The stigma associated with mental health problems, dementia or learning disabilities can lead to feelings of loneliness and being left out of society. Positive attitudes can be promoted by:

- Reducing stigma by ensuring that individuals are not isolated in social situations
- Promoting wellbeing for those living with the condition
- Identifying and building on the individual's skills and abilities
- Providing opportunities for individuals to feel empowered and in control.

The social model of disability

The social model of disability says that disability is caused by the way society is organised, rather than by a person's impairment or difference.

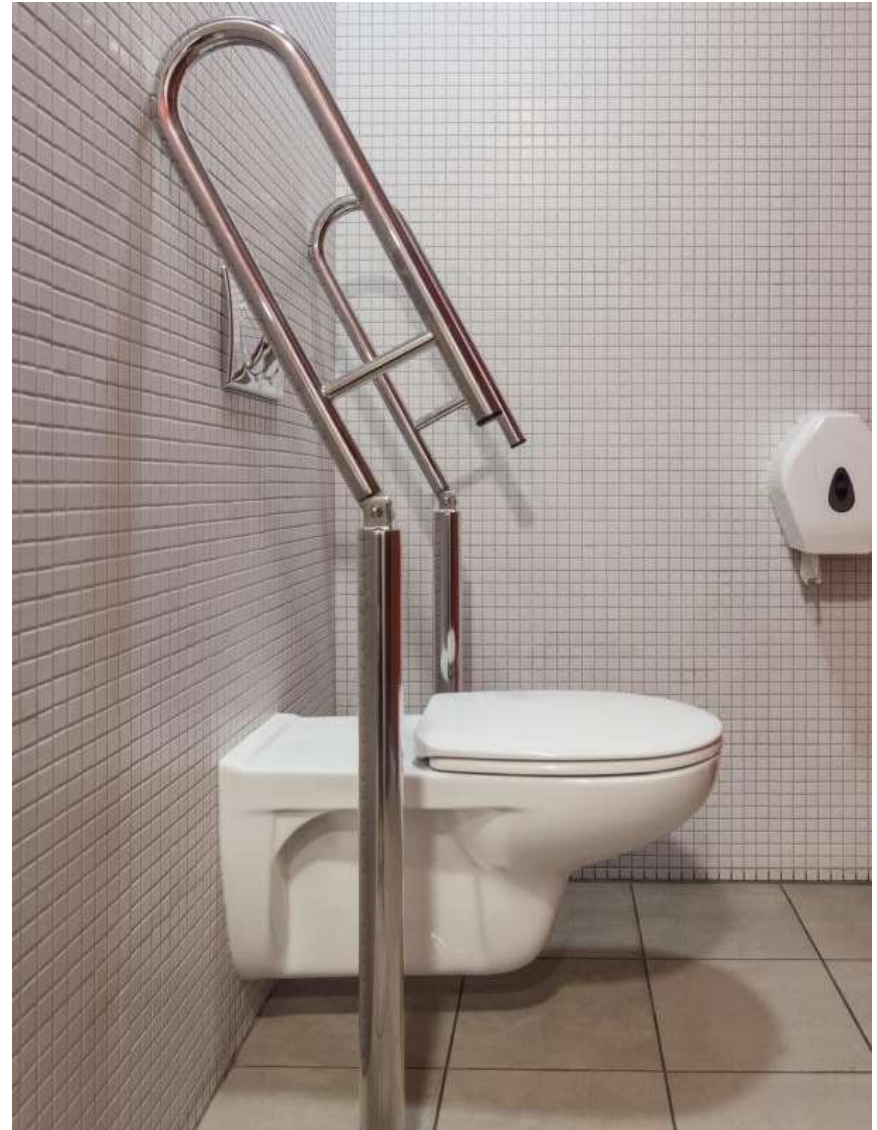
- The social model looks for ways of removing barriers that limit life choices
- When barriers are removed, people can work towards being as independent as they can be and be included and equal in society.



Adaptations

The individual's changing needs may need to be assessed to identify adaptations which can support them to live their lives more independently. Adaptations could include:

- Environmental support
- Emotional support
- Practical information or additional services.



Reporting concerns

- If you think a person's care and support needs have changed and need reassessing, you should record this information and pass it on
- It is important to follow your **agreed ways of working** on recording to reduce lost or misinterpreted information.



Agreed ways of working

This refers to organisational policies and procedures. This includes those less formally documented by individual employers and the self-employed as well as formal policies such as the Dignity Code and Compassion in Practice.



Early diagnosis

Similarities between conditions can mean that conditions are sometimes mistaken.

Psychosis	Depression/ mood disorders	Anxiety	Dementia	Learning disabilities
<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Confusion as a result of hallucinations and delusions■ Lack of insight and self-awareness■ Problems with sleeping	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Change in mood/ personality■ Problems with sleeping	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Change in mood/ personality■ Problems with sleeping	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Confusion as a result of memory loss■ Change in mood/ personality■ Problems with verbal communication■ Problems with sleeping	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Confusion due to difficulties with memory or relating to information■ Lack of insight and self-awareness■ Problems with verbal communication

Adapting care and support

Care and support must be person centred and will need to be reviewed and adapted to meet the changing needs of the individual.

It may be necessary to develop your skills so that you can provide effective care and support. For example:

- Developing skills to support people to communicate
- Learning how to use assistive technology

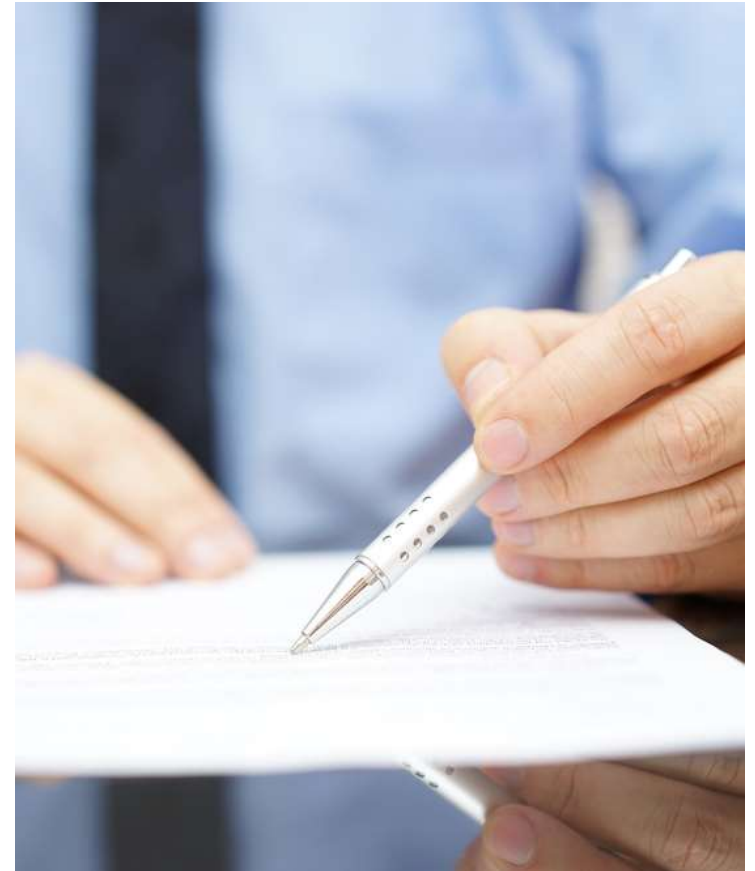
Individuals may need to be supported to learn how to use this technology in order to live independently.

Legislation

Legislation and policies promote human rights, inclusion, equal life chances and citizenship of individuals with mental health needs, dementia or learning disabilities.

These include:

- The Human Rights Act 1998
- The Care Act 2014
- The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2016
- The Safeguarding Adults National Framework
- The Fundamental Standards of Quality and Safety.



Mental capacity

Mental capacity is a term used to describe an individual's ability to make their own decisions.

When assessing a person's capacity ask yourself:

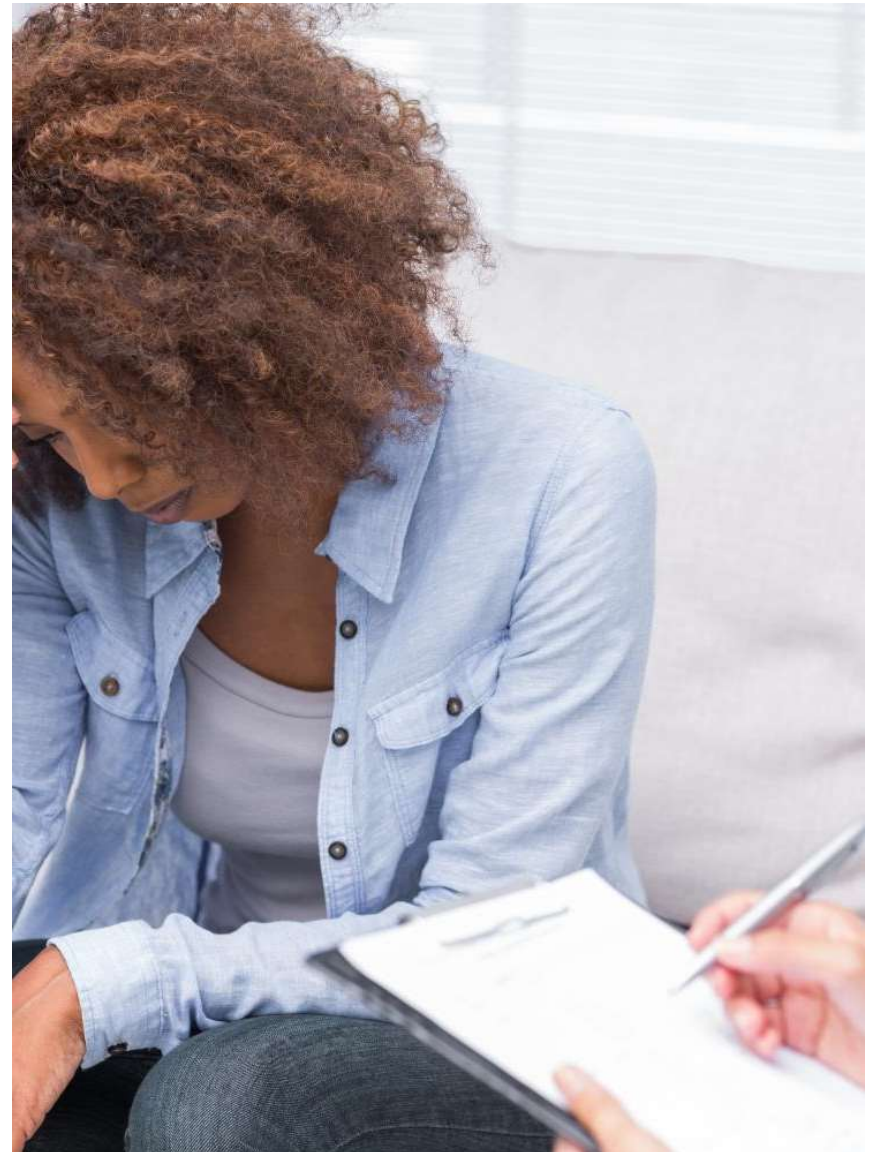
- Does the person have an impairment, or a disturbance in the functioning of their mind or brain?
- Does the impairment or disturbance mean that the person is unable to make a specific decision when they need to?



The Mental Capacity Act 2005

You must assume that individuals can make a decisions unless they are unable to do one or more of the following:

- Understand information given to them
- Retain information long enough to make the decision
- Weigh up the information available
- Communicate their decision.



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