

Foreword

Each time we breathe, we are reminded of what it is to be human. On the inbreath we encounter our

Introduction

Person-centred and community based working (strengths based approaches)

Skills for Care worked together with North West Employers and providers to learn more about what Person-centred and community based working means and why it's important. Focusing on a person's strengths is about what people 'can do' and what's important to them, rather than purely focusing on their care and support needs.

This resource contains information, ideas and bite-size learning for adult social care employers and their employees to learn about person-centred and community based working. We've used stories and examples of what providers told us works well and is important for people to live good lives.

You'll find key information about person-centred and community based working across social care settings including that focuses on the many benefits this can bring to people supported to have valued connections, reduce social isolation and promote good physical and mental wellbeing.

The guide is relevant for:

- adult social care providers
- care and support workers in residential, supported living, domiciliary care and non-regulated services
- individual employers and personal assistants.

The resource is split into 3 sections:

What is person-centred and community based working? This section includes an explanation of the various ways to describe the approaches.

Why is it important to use person-centred and community based approaches? This section explains how these approaches empower and value people's talents, skills and abilities.

How do you use person-centred and community based approaches? This section is split into bite sized information about the various ways you can use the approaches, who to involve and includes case studies, practice examples and top tips.

You can use either the whole resource or go to the various bite-size sections for top tips, stories and practice examples. Most of the sections

Contents

This guide is interactive so you can use the buttons below, buttons along the top and (purple) sub-menus to navigate through the document making it quicker and easier to find what you need.

What

Why

How
By getting started

How
By building relationships

How
Strengths based leadership

How
Conversations to plan care and support

How
Working with others

How
by learning more

What is person-centred and community based working?

Person-centred and community based working (strengths based approaches)

Introduction

Person-centred and community based is about 'what's strong, rather than what's wrong'.

There are different ways of describing person-centred and community based working. You may hear people talking about using skills and talents, strengths and assets, place based approaches, building community capacity. All these terms have the same focus, which is to support people to live good lives, through what they are able to do for themselves, what their community can offer, as well as what they can offer the community.

It's also about the principles of autonomy, choice, self-determination, freedom and responsibility. These principles underpin being person-centred and taking a strengths approach, as well as being embedded in legislation in the Care Act 2016 (updated) and the Human Rights Act 1998.

Remember a community can be where a person lives, a community of interest, a faith community, a virtual online community, really anything that provides connection and a sense of belonging.

We believe that being person-centred is also about being relationship-centred. We mapped our local assets to learn more about our relationships both inside and outside of the organisation. This really helped us to collaborate and connect the young people we support with local community groups.

Chris Powell, Q41 32fRtn3 75 7Managber(W)37 argrhaveHouseh,

What

Why

How
By getting started

How
By building relationships

How
Strengths based leadership

How
Conversations to plan care and support

How
Working with others

How
by learning more

What are strengths and asset based approaches?





What

Why

How
By getting
started

How
By building
relationships

How
Strengths
based
leadership

How
Conversations
to plan care
and support

How
Working with
others

How
by learning
more

Exercise two – What are assets?

Watch this short video which has a simple but powerful message about assets and using what's already available in your community.

Play video



Video Transcribe

John told the following story: he was visiting rural Ireland and wanted to go fishing at a local lake - but did not have any bait.

He found a small store, went up the path and asked, "Sir, do you sell bait?" He looked at me and said, "What do you mean, bait?" John said, "Well, like, worms." The man responded, "Son, when you walked up the path, did you see those three big whitewashed stones on each side of the path? I think if you just go and turn over one of those stones, you'll find all the worms you need".

(Laughter)

"This is the great, great lesson of Ireland which is: all around you is what you're looking for, but it's hard for you to see if you think the way you have a good life is to buy it. And so that's why I think being a consumer is the way you'll never see what's there".

John McKnight 'The Worm Story', Kirkham International ABCD Festival. June 2015

What

Why

How

By getting started

How

By building relationships

How

Strengths based leadership

How

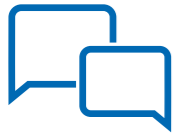
Conversations to plan care and support

How

Working with others

How

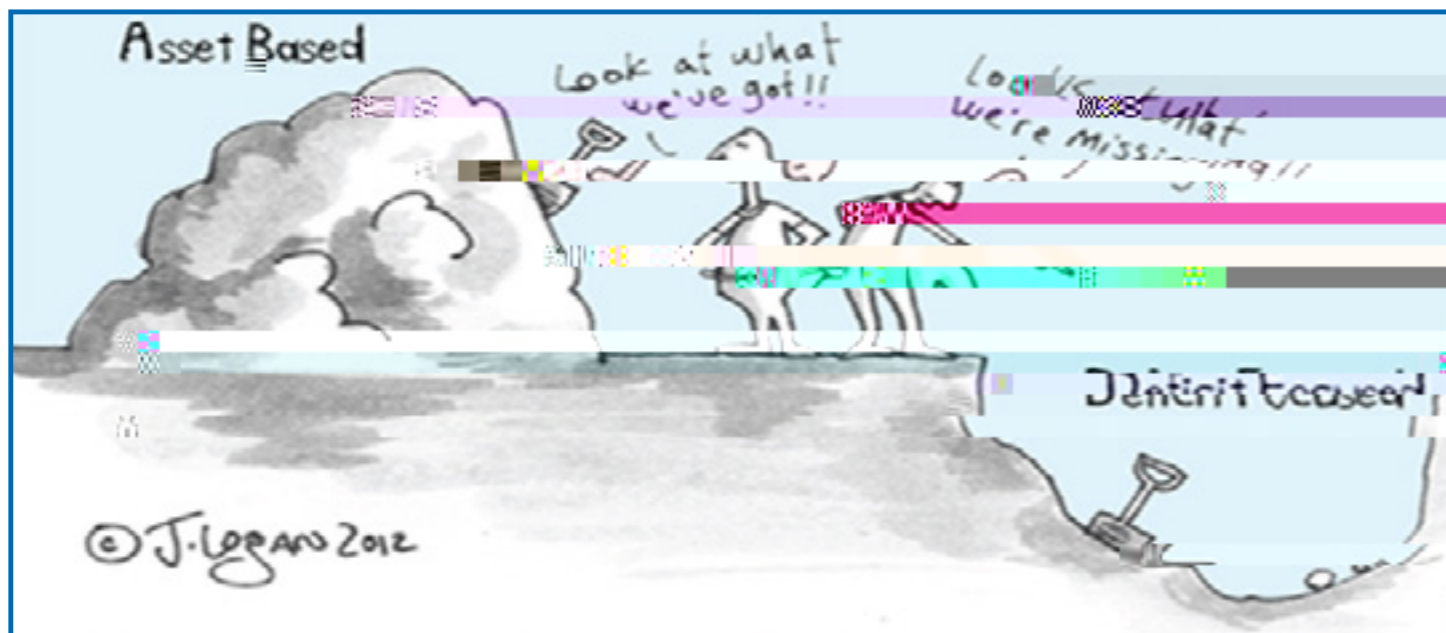
by learning more



Group discussion

1. What were your initial thoughts about the video?
2. Share any examples of how you have found what 'is all around you'.

Take a look at the next exercise and plan how to find out what's available in your area, bearing in mind that your 'community' may look and feel differently than in recent times.



What

Why

How
By getting started

How
By building relationships

How
Strengths based leadership

How
Conversations to plan care and support

How
Working with others

How
by learning more

Sector story – The Grange

When their local community changed during the COVID-19 lockdown, Felicity White, Registered Manager at The Grange in Benenden told us how people they support and staff made changes to create a community at home.

A number of the people who live at The Grange volunteer in the local community run village shop and café. This is something that is incredibly important to them, so during the COVID-19 pandemic, we created our own café/shop so that they could still continue their voluntary positions and everyone else had somewhere to visit. We quickly went about clearing out an old wooden building, which was previously a craft room and support staff and supported individuals worked side by side in painting and decorating the interior.

They decided on a name for the café – Pete’s Café in memory of a dear friend they had lost the previous year, a very fitting tribute to a man who loved tea and cake! The shop was opened with a particularly delicious lemon drizzle cake, which was of course made by some of the supported people and the coffee, tea, hot chocolate (with marshmallows and cream) and cake hasn’t stopped flowing since!

To put the cherry on the cake, we added some essential goods (TV Times and Diet Coke to name but a few) to emulate their much-loved village shop, so that people were still able to continue with their usual routines and shopping habits as much as possible.

Pop-up Church

With some people unable to physically access places of faith worship during the pandemic, every Sunday Pete’s café is temporarily converted into a place of spiritual sanctuary. Music is played and people gather to practice their own individual beliefs.



What

Why

How
By getting started

How
By building relationships

How
Strengths based leadership

How
Conversations to plan care and support

How
Working with others

How
by learning more

What

Why

How
By getting started

How
By building relationships

How
Strengths based leadership

How
Conversations to plan care and support

How
Working with others

How
by learning more

What are other benefits to this approach?

By working in a person-centred and community based way, you will deliver good quality care and achieve better outcomes for people supported.

You can drive quality improvements through making a real difference to peoples' lives and this can help towards meeting the Care Quality Commission Key Lines of Enquiry and achieving good and outstanding ratings.

In 'responsive' the CQC states that people's care plans reflect their holistic needs, including their interests and aspirations. Activities are socially relevant and people are encouraged and supported to make and main relationships within the service and the wider community.

The Care Act wellbeing principles

Improving and maintaining peoples' wellbeing is an important area of The Care Act (2016 update) which tells us to '*consider the person's own strengths and capabilities and what support might be available from their wider support network or within the community to help*'. The Care Act describes the 9 principles of wellbeing as:



What

What

Why

How
By getting started

How
By building relationships

How
Strengths based leadership

How
Conversations to plan care and support

How
Working with others

How
by learning more

Share your progress - TLAP Making it Real

Some organisations may be signed up to or want to sign up to the Think Local Act Personal 'Making it Real' initiative to share their commitment and progress towards community and person-centred working.

The [Making it Real](#) is a framework and a set of statements that were developed by people and families who use services to describe what good, personalised care and support looks like from their point of view with a focus on what's important to them and what really matters.

Organisations can publish their commitment to strengths and community working and share progress on the Making it Real website.

The Think Local Act Personal website also contains some useful ideas and resources about community working. Follow the link below to the directory of innovations for commissioners and providers to find out about community-centred approaches that are having a positive impact on people's lives. This directory is continually being updated with new ideas.

→ [TLAP/Innovations in community centred support](#)

The TLAP website is showcasing 'Stories of Promise' in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, with examples to show how communities are adapting with positive, responsive and creative approaches and solutions to providing care and support during the pandemic.

Go to → [TLAP Stories of Promise](#)



[Sector story - Home Instead Stockport](#) →

What

Why

How
By getting
started

How
By building
relationships

How
Strengths
based
leadership

How
Conversations
to plan care
and support

How
Working with
others

How
by learning
more

Sector story – Home Instead Stockport

Clare Cliff, Head of CAREGiver Experience told us that:

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, we facilitated a monthly lunch club for over two years as part of a voluntary intergenerational

What

Why

How
By getting started

How
By building relationships

How
Strengths based leadership

How
Conversations to plan care and support

How
Working with others









How
by learning more

How to use person-centred and community based approaches?

Introducing and embedding person-centred, community and strengths based working needs leadership buy-in and time to change culture and introduce new ways of working and thinking differently.

How to get started?

Here's a checklist with some questions to consider and suggestions how to get started.

-  Do you have strong leadership buy-in?
Leadership buy-in is important both strategically to get started, as well as everyday leadership across the organisation
-  Have you identified who will lead the process? Having a dedicated workforce group helps to focus on priorities and challenges.
What is your contingency plan if key people go on long term absence or leave the organisation?
-  How will you communicate the intended shift and commitment to person-centred and community working?
How will you monitor and share progress?
-  How will you identify and share what you are already doing well?
Share existing good practice where person-centred and community working is already happening and any lessons learnt.
-  How will you engage others and keep the momentum going?
-  How will you involve people supported and/or family members?
-  How will you work with the wider system for better outcomes e.g. social workers, commissioner, social prescribing?
-  Have you identified any barriers and how these can be addressed?

What

Why

How
By getting started

How
By building relationships

How
Strengths based leadership

How
Conversations to plan care and support

How
Working with others

How
by learning more

How? By building relationships

What

Why

How
By getting started

How
By building relationships

How
Strengths based leadership

How
Conversations to plan care and support

How
Working with others

How
by learning more

Person-centred approaches

A person-centred approach means working in a personalised and preventative way to engage and support people to live healthier and fulfilled lives.

Working in a person-centred way means working in partnership with the individual to plan for their care and support. The individual is at the centre of the care planning process and is in control of all choices and decisions made about their lives.

The values of compassion, dignity and respect are essential when involving people in their own care.

What

Why

How
By getting started

How
By building relationships

How
Strengths based leadership

How
Conversations to plan care and support

How
Working with others

How
by learning more

Sector story – using person-centred approaches to identify strengths and skills

→ [Living Well at Home](#)

Living Well at Home, Tameside assists with providing practical help, however the service is committed to changing the way this support is provided; ensuring the focus is as much about the person as it is about tasks, and wherever possible, exploring options that aren't necessarily just about paid support.

Dane Bank, Denton

Comfortcall staff have started supporting a small group of older people from the Dane Bank area to meet once a week at Denton West Community Library. They all live on their own and, due to long term health conditions, rarely leave the house. Until recently, homecare staff would have had daily calls to assist individuals with tasks, but would not have been in a position to address issues like loneliness - and the often associated issues of depression and anxiety that can result - even though they may well have recognised them.

Now, by taking a more flexible approach to support, these same staff have been able to explore more creative ways of helping people to achieve what they want in addition to the practical support; in this case, to get out of the house and see other people. Every Wednesday afternoon, with the support of their homecare workers, the group meets at the library for a brew and a chat and often some kind of activity too.



What

Why

How
By getting started

How
By building relationships

How
Strengths based leadership

How
Conversations to plan care and support

How
Working with others

How
by learning more

How? Through strengths based leadership

Effective person centred and community based working needs a whole system shift in thinking and culture to do things differently and work in an empowering and preventative way.

Any long term behaviour and culture change needs to be supported by the leadership and culture of the organisation and become 'the way we do things around here'.

If leaders adopt and model this approach, there is the opportunity to provide motivation and learning how to make changes to do things differently and deliver support in a strengths, rather than a deficit based way.

At a practical level, a strength-based approach places significant importance on all involved to work in a way that enables people to reach their potential of being capable, resourceful and empowered.

In this section:

[Top ten tips for strengths based leadership](#)



[Video - Strengths Based Leadership Exercise about creating a movement and Exercise 1ve](#)



What

Why

How
By getting
started

How
By building
relationships

How
Strengths
based
leadership

How
Conversations
to plan care
and support

How
Working with
others

How
by learning
more

Top ten tips for strengths based leadership

1. Connect, engage and communicate clearly to all staff:
 - a. why strengths based approaches are being adopted
 - b. that there is a clear leadership buy-in
 - c. the intention to deliver better outcomes
 - d. the values and principles that underpin the approaches.
2. Involve people supported, families and commissioners in doing things differently and promote working in a collaborative and co-productive way.
3. Involve the people you support, their families and staff to give feedback on what works well and doesn't work well to support making changes in line with what people want. Find out what the enablers and barriers to change are.
4. Share stories and celebrate successes to inspire and build confidence.
5. Promote a positive attitude and culture, be visible and work alongside each other to build relationships.
6. Encourage open communication and promote 'permission' to take positive risks.
- 7.

What

Why

How
By getting started

How
By building relationships

How
Strengths based leadership

How
Conversations to plan care and support

How
Working with others

How
by learning more

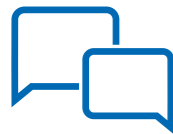
Video – Strengths Based Leadership Exercise about creating a movement

Watch this inspiring three minute video about leadership and creating a movement.

Play video



Exercise



1. After watching the video use the top ten tips and discuss what you already do well and what might need to change?
2. How can you encourage and nurture your first followers?
3. What will you commit to doing next?

- What
- Why
- How
By getting started
- How
By building relationships
- How
Strengths based leadership
- How
Having good conversations**
- How
Conversations to plan care and support
- How
Working with others
- How
by learning more

How? By having good conversations

By changing the way we have conversations, we can focus on peoples’ skills and strengths and find out what really matters to them, what they can do for themselves and in which areas they need support.

Having strengths based conversations in social care is basically ‘human to human connection’. We must never lose sight of that fact that people we provide support to are human and our conversations must be meaningful and authentic for all parties involved.

A person-centred approach respects that all conversations are two way and that the way in which the conversation happens can have an impact on those involved.

There are many things you can do to support good conversations by thinking about the way you ask questions, your body language, how comfortable the environment is. It’s really important that people leave a conversation feeling more empowered and enabled than before.

Remember we are moving away from a deficit model of what’s wrong and focusing on what’s strong. It’s really important to really listen and get to know people. These powerful words by self-advocate Christine Mayer encourage us to really listen.

“
 To work with me
 You have to listen to me
 And you can’t just listen with your ears.
 Because it will go to your head too fast.
 You have to listen with your whole body
 If you listen slow
 Some of what I say
 Will enter your heart
 Christine Mayer

Moving away from the deficit model...

What do we mean by this?

What is the problem? What are you unable to do?	What would you like your life to be like? What can you manage yourself? What would help?
--	--

In this section:

Top ten tips for everyday strengths based conversations	➔
Top ten things to avoid	➔
Exercise six - Active listening, open questions, strengths and skills	➔
Exercise seven - having good conversations	➔

What

Why

How
By getting
started

How
By building
relationships

How
Strengths
based
leadership

How
Having good
conversations

How
Conversations
to plan care
and support

How
Working with
others

How
by learning
more

Top ten tips for everyday strengths based conversations



1. Smile and introduce yourself; 'Hello my name is...'
2. Be aware of the environment, for example, the layout of the room, the level of privacy or other factors that can affect the other person.
3. Use active listening to really hear what the person has to say and give the conversation your full concentration. Show interest in the person their life and their community – see the SOLER model below for tips on active listening.
4. Use language and ways of working that the person prefers and understands.
5. Show empathy - this means seeing things from the individual's perspective, is 'being in their shoes' to try to understand them and how they see things.
6. Ask open questions to explore what really matters to the person and their community - see below for examples of open questions.
7. Be non-judgemental – show respect and preserve dignity - sensitively bring up topics that the person may find challenging or uncomfortable.
8. Be honest about what you can and can't do and who else to involve.
9. Feel comfortable using pauses, silences and gentle cues such as nods as appropriate - be aware of your eye-contact, gestures, facial expressions and voice tone.
10. Be observant - notice clues that might lead to other conversations - check if there is something else the person wants to talk about.

What

Why

How
By getting
started

How
By building
relationships

How
Strengths
based
leadership

How
Having good
conversations

How
Conversations
to plan care
and support

How
Working with
others

How
by learning
more

Top ten things to avoid



1. Asking open questions then not using the information to shape the conversation.
2. Being distracted, with your mind on other things.
3. Sitting or standing and using your voice in a way that shows you aren't listening or are annoyed by the conversation.
4. Assuming people have understood each other without asking and checking.
5. Using complicated language or jargon.
6. Interrupting or rushing the conversation.
7. Using your body posture, voice or positioning to gain 'power' or advantage.
8. Communicating with the person's family or carer without asking including the person as it feels 'easier'.
9. Not giving the person an indication of how long the conversation is likely to be then suddenly ending it without warning.
10. Not giving the person time and opportunity to express their feelings, thoughts and opinions.

What

Why

How
By getting
started

How
By building
relationships

How
Strengths
based
leadership

What

Why

How
By getting started

How
By building relationships

How
Strengths based leadership

How
Having good

What

Why

How
By getting started

How
By building relationships

How
Strengths based leadership

How
Conversations to plan care and support

How
Working with others

How
by learning more

How? Conversations for assessment and care planning

In everyday life, conversation is the way we learn about people.

Having good conversations with people through the assessment, care planning and review process can help you to find out all sorts of things that could be lost if you followed a standard form and set questions.

By using a person-centred conversation approach, you can find out all sorts of things that could be lost if you just asked the questions to fill in a form. The result should be something that focuses on the person, their support networks and community, rather than about the 'tasks' of the care plan.

The Skills for Care ['Using conversations to assess and plan people's care and support'](#) guide includes the principles of conversational assessment to help you to take this approach



“
Conversational assessment is just the first step in supporting people according to their wishes and needs.
”

The principles of conversational assessment

Thinking about the principles of conversational assessment above, consider how we truly connect with people supported and their families. How do you show respect and concern, are really listening and making the experience positive, rather than just completing the task?

In this section:

[Top tips for having good conversations for assessment and care planning](#)

What

Why

How
By getting
started

How
By building
relationships

How
Strengths
based
leadership

How
Conversations
to plan care
and support

How
Working with
others

How
by learning
more

Top tips for having good conversations for assessment and care planning



1. Using person-centred conversations, build a picture of each person's individual strengths, preferences, aspirations and needs.
2. Provide any support needed to enable the person to express their views and participate in the conversations, including independent advocacy if required.
3. Involve the person's wider social network (carers, family, friends, advocates) if that's their wish and explore the support that it may offer.
4. Consider how to support and promote positive risk-taking.
5. Promote the person's interests and independence and their preferences now and in the future.
6. Step into their world and immerse yourself in their life in order to understand them – take a holistic approach and think about the 'whole' person.
7. Take time to listen to everything - every bit of information counts not just what you think is important (or your documentation thinks is important).
8. Acknowledge what the person is already doing for themselves, their efforts and achievements.
9. Record absolutely everything but let the person guide your conversation, not your completing documents.
10. Assume nothing and constantly challenge your own assumption.

What

Why

How
By getting started

How
By building relationships

How
Strengths based leadership

How
Conversations to plan care and support

How
Working with others

How
by learning more

Social prescribing in action – Brightlife Cheshire

Providing truly person-centred care ... how do we do this?

What

Why

How
By getting
started

How
By building
relationships

How
Strengths
based
leadership

How
Conversations
to plan care
and support

How
Working with
others

How
by learning
more

Sharing our learning

Our learning has centred around the relationships we build – with the referrers who have their own requirements, with the people who do not want to be made to feel ‘old’, ‘lonely’ or ‘done to’ and with the plethora of agencies, activities and communities in our area.

We have learned how important a ‘warm welcome’ is to people returning to a group and engaging with other people and this is an area that other Ageing Better projects have reported on in detail: The National Lottery Community Fund Documents: [Connecting communities and healthcare: Making social prescribing work for everyone](#).

At Brightlife we know that person-centred care and interventions can be challenging to undertake as it often involves a lot of time, phone calls and research to find appropriate activities for the person.

However, we also know that person-centred care and interventions produce the best long-term results and that a good laugh in friendly company really is the best medicine.

Read more about our work and our learning on [Brightlife Cheshire website](#).



Introducing social work strengths based practice

[The Strengths based practice framework and handbook](#) - was published in February 2019.

This framework and handbook supports social workers and social care professionals to apply a strengths-based approach to their work with adults.

A strengths or asset based approach to social work practice aims to put individuals, families and communities at the heart of care and wellbeing, and in doing so strengthen relationships between members of that community.

The framework is based around the following areas:



What

Why

How
By getting
started

How
By building
relationships

How
Strengths
based
leadership

How
Conversations
to plan care
and support

How
Working with
others

How
by learning
more

Rochdale Borough Council has formed neighbourhood teams which helps to develop more local knowledge. Social work teams have adapted assessments to include strengths elements including for example the question, 'what can you do for yourself?' to open up the discussion to what is already around them, who they can connect with and include conversations about what people can do to meet their own needs.

Commissioners, providers and communities working together

Some local authorities are taking a very proactive approach to commissioning in a strengths based way.

"Tameside Council, in partnership with the borough's six contracted Living Well at Home providers, are committed to changing the way people are supported to live at home."

Here's a short video which describes their approach to working together

Play video



What

Why

How
By getting started

How
By building relationships

How
Strengths based leadership

How
Conversations to plan care and support

How
Working with

What

Why

How
By getting
started

How
By building
relationships

How
Strengths
based
leadership

How
Conversations
to plan care
and support

How
Working with
others

How
by learning
more

How? By learning more - further reading and resources

Things to help

- ➔ [Evidence for strengths and asset-based outcomes](#)
- ➔ [TLAP - Building Community Capacity](#)
- ➔ [SCIE - What is a strengths based approach?](#)
- ➔ [Skills for Care Building community capacity](#)
- ➔ [Sustainable community development: from what's wrong to what's strong | Cormac Russell | TEDxExeter](#)