What is Person-centred Care?

Person-centred care is a way of working that puts people at the centre of their health care. In a person-centred approach, health and social care professionals work collaboratively with people who use services. Person-centred care:

- enables people to develop the knowledge, skills and confidence they need to more effectively manage and make informed decisions about their own health and health care
- is coordinated and tailored to the needs of the individual
- ensures that people are always treated with dignity, compassion and respect.

The term ‘person-centred care’ is used to refer to many different principles and activities. There is no single agreed definition of the concept, as person-centred care is still an emerging and evolving area. What it looks like will depend on the needs, circumstances and preferences of the individual receiving care. What is important to one person in their health care may be unimportant, or even undesirable, to another. It may also change over time, as the individual’s needs change.

Why do we need to practise person-centred care?

Many people want to play a more active role in their health care, and there is growing evidence that approaches to person-centred care such as shared decision-making and self-management support can improve a range of factors, including a person’s experience, care quality and health outcomes.

What does person-centred care look like?

- It provides people dignity, compassion and respect.
- It offers coordinated care, support or treatment, that meets the identified goals of the person.
- It supports people to make informed decisions about their health and wellbeing.
- It supports people to recognise and develop their own strengths and abilities to enable them to live an independent and fulfilling life.

How do we put person-centred care into practice?

Some ideas include:

**Collaborative care and support planning.** A way of supporting people to work in partnership with health care providers to plan their care. The process involves exploring what matters to the person, identifying the best care, and supporting them to set goals and think about actions they can take to reach them.

**Experience-based co-design.** A method for improving people’s experience of health care that involves gathering experiences of patients and staff and bringing them together to develop service improvements.

**Self-management support.** A whole-system approach to support people with chronic conditions to manage their health on a day-to-day basis. Every day, anyone living with a chronic condition will make decisions, take actions and manage a broad range of factors that contribute to their health. Self-management support acknowledges this, and enables people to develop the knowledge, skills and confidence they need.

**Shared decision-making.** A key element of person-centred care is shared decision-making, in which the consumer brings their lived experience, needs, values and care preferences, and combines this with a provider’s professional expertise and experience. This is a collaborative process in which both parties’ contributions are valued and acted upon.

*Adapted from Person Centred Care Made Simple, The Health Foundation* http://www.health.org.uk/sites/default/files/PersonCentredCareMadeSimple.pdf