Qualification Unit

This unit forms part of a regulated qualification.

Unit Title: Autism and Neurodiversity

Unit Reference Number: A/652/0815

Level: Three (3)

Credit Value: Four (4)

Minimum Guided Learning Hours: 30

Learning Outcome (The Learner will):	Assessment Criterion (The Learner can):
1. Understand autism and neurodiversity	1.1 Explain the following terms: a) Autism b) Neurodiversity
	1.2 Analyse the impact autism and neurodiversity can have on individuals
2. Know how to promote inclusive and respectful support	2.1 Explain how to apply reasonable adjustments to meet individual needs
	2.2 Explain how to create and maintain environments that reduce sensory stress
3. Know how to support communication and emotional wellbeing	3.1 Analyse how to adapt communication to support understanding and engagement
	3.2 Describe ways to support emotional regulation and wellbeing
4. Know how to promote rights, choice and independence	4.1 Explain how to support informed choice and decision-making
	4.2 Explain how to promote independence in line with capacity and consent

Indicative Content	
LO1	AC1.1 Autism as a lifelong neurodevelopmental difference that may affect: • Communication and social interaction • Sensory processing • Thinking styles, routines and predictability Understanding autism as a spectrum, recognising wide variation between

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	individuals Neurodiversity as a concept that: • Recognises neurological differences as natural human variation • Includes autism alongside other neurodivergent profiles The importance of: • Respecting identity and individuality • Moving away from deficit-based or purely medical models AC1.2 How autism and neurodiversity may impact: • Communication styles (e.g. literal language, processing time) • Sensory experiences (hypersensitivity or hyposensitivity) • Executive functioning (planning, organising, flexibility) The impact of: • Routines and predictability on wellbeing • Unpredictable environments or changes Recognising strengths, such as: • Attention to detail • Honesty and reliability • Specialist interests or skills How social attitudes, stigma or lack of understanding can affect: • Confidence • Mental health and wellbeing • Access to services
LO2	AC2.1 What is meant by reasonable adjustments Examples of adjustments, including: • Flexible routines • Alternative communication methods • Adjusted expectations or timeframes Working in partnership with individuals to: • Identify what works best for them • Respect preferences and choices Reviewing and adapting adjustments as needs change How reasonable adjustments promote: • Equality • Inclusion • Dignity and rights AC2.2 Common sensory stressors, such as: • Noise, lighting, smells or crowded spaces Environmental adaptations, including: • Quiet spaces • Consistent layouts • Reduced sensory clutter The importance of: • Predictable routines • Clear, consistent communication Working with individuals to identify: • Sensory preferences • Triggers for distress or overload

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LO3	AC3.1 Adapting communication by: • Using clear, literal language • Allowing additional processing time • Avoiding ambiguity or idioms where inappropriate Using supportive tools, including: • Visual supports • Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) • Digital communication tools Checking understanding without pressure Respecting individual communication preferences AC3.2 Recognising signs of: • Distress, anxiety or overload Supporting emotional regulation through: • Predictable routines • Calm and consistent responses • Access to preferred coping strategies Creating safe spaces for regulation Working proactively to: • Reduce triggers • Promote emotional wellbeing
LO4	AC4.1 Supporting informed choice by: • Providing information in accessible formats • Allowing time for decision-making Understanding the role of: • Mental capacity • Consent Working with advocates where appropriate Respecting the individual's right to make choices, including unwise decisions AC4.2 Promoting independence by: • Building on strengths and abilities • Encouraging active participation Using positive risk-taking to support autonomy Balancing: • Safety and duty of care • Rights and freedom Partnership working with: • Individuals • Families, carers and professionals

Assessment Requirements

This unit must be assessed in line with Open Awards' assessment requirements and Skills for Care and Development assessment principles. Assessment must be work-based and grounded in the learner's real work practice within an adult social care setting.

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Learners must generate assessment evidence that demonstrates full achievement of all learning outcomes and associated assessment criteria for the unit.

While some knowledge evidence may be generated outside of the workplace, final assessment decisions must confirm that knowledge and understanding have been applied effectively in the real work environment, in line with Skills for Care expectations of validity and authenticity.

Assessment evidence may be drawn from a range of methods, selected to ensure validity, reliability and sufficiency, and may include, but is not limited to:

- Direct observation of practice in the workplace
- Reflective accounts demonstrating the application of learning to practice
- Professional discussion to explore understanding, reasoning and decision-making
- Work-based documentation relevant to the learner's role (for example: policies, procedures, care plans, risk assessments, audits or reports)
- Witness testimony from managers, colleagues or other relevant professionals
- Feedback from individuals, staff or partner organisations, where appropriate and permitted.

Where learning outcomes require demonstration of competence or practical skills, direct observation of practice must form the primary source of evidence. Observation should normally take place in person within the learner's work setting, unless otherwise permitted by awarding organisation guidance.

All assessment evidence must be valid, authentic, current, sufficient and reliable, and clearly attributable to the learner. Assessors must ensure that evidence:

- is fit for purpose
- reflects the learner's role, responsibilities and level of autonomy
- demonstrates both knowledge and effective practice, where required by the unit.

Evidence must clearly relate to the learner's own practice and must not rely solely on hypothetical, simulated or generic examples unless explicitly permitted.

Confidential, sensitive or personal information must not be included in learner portfolios. Where such information is relevant, evidence must be anonymised, summarised or referenced in line with organisational policies, data protection legislation and Open Awards requirements.

Assessment decisions must be made by an appropriately qualified and occupationally competent assessor and are subject to internal and external quality assurance in accordance with Open Awards policies and procedures and Skills for Care expectations.

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