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Principles of Health and Social Care Practice: Reflective Report

Introduction

Health and social care in the United Kingdom are guided by key principles that influence how care is delivered in practice. These include person-centred care, partnership working and ethical practice. Person-centred care focuses on recognising each person's needs, preferences and choices when planning and delivering care. Partnership working involves communication and cooperation between professionals, families and other services to provide consistent support. Ethical practice refers to working in a way that respects dignity, confidentiality and equality (NHS England, 2023).

The Care Act 2014 emphasises the importance of promoting wellbeing and responding to people's needs, while the Health and Care Act 2022 support better coordination between services. However, in practice these principles are not always applied consistently. Care settings can be busy and affected by staff shortages, which may impact the quality of care provided (Care Quality Commission, 2023). This can lead to differences between expected standards and real-life practice.

This report will explain the importance of these principles, provide an example from practice, and reflect on professional development within health and social care.

Task 1

Person-centred care is one of the most important ideas in health and social care because it focuses on the person, not just what is wrong with them (NHS England, 2023). It means taking time to understand what they need, what they like, and how they feel, instead of just doing things quickly and moving on. From my experience, this really makes a difference.

When someone feels listened to, they are usually calmer and more open to accepting support. This is especially important in mental health and dementia care, where people can feel confused or unsure about what is happening (NICE, 2018).

Maslow's theory explains that people need to feel safe, respected, and valued, not just physically cared for (Maslow, 1943). If someone does not feel safe or understood, they can become upset or withdrawn. From my experience, I have seen situations where the same person reacts very differently depending on how staff approach them. This shows that care is not just about completing tasks, but about how the person experiences that care, especially when they may already feel confused or vulnerable (NICE, 2018). This is also supported by research which highlights the importance of person-centred approaches in improving wellbeing for individuals receiving care (Kitwood, 1997).

At the same time, I have also seen that this type of care is not always easy to do. In real situations, things can be busy, and staff often have a lot to do. Because of this, care can sometimes become rushed, and people are treated more like tasks instead of individuals. This is something that has been reported in care services, where pressure on staff affects how care is given (Care Quality Commission, 2023). This shows that even though person-centred care is important, it is not always easy to apply properly.

Working together is also very important. Care is not done by one person, but by a team, and often also involves family members (Glasby and Dickinson, 2014). When staff communicate well, things run more smoothly, and individuals get better support. From my experience, when information is shared properly, it helps avoid confusion and improves care.

However, I have also seen situations where communication is not clear. Sometimes things are not passed on, and this can affect how the person is supported. This shows that working together is important, but it does not always happen in the best way (Skills for Care, 2023).

Respecting people and treating them properly is also a key part of care. This includes respecting their choices and keeping their information private (Beauchamp and Childress,

2019). The Mental Capacity Act 2005 is important when someone cannot make decisions for themselves (Mental Capacity Act, 2005).

From my experience, this is not always simple. There are times when you must choose between what is safe and what the person wants, and that can be difficult. This reflects how ethical practice requires judgement and not just following rules.

Task 2

In my role as a support worker, I have worked with individuals who can show challenging behaviour, especially those living with dementia. One situation I remember clearly involved a resident becoming very distressed during personal care. The person was shouting, refusing help, and looked scared. At first, it could have been easy to see this as aggression or non-cooperation. However, from my experience, I understood that behaviour like this is often a way of showing how someone feels, especially when they cannot explain it properly (NICE, 2018).

In dementia, people can feel confused and may not understand what is happening around them. Personal care can feel very uncomfortable or even frightening, especially if the person does not recognise the staff or understand why they are being assisted. This can lead to a sense of loss of control, which increases anxiety. According to Alzheimer's Society (2023), behaviours such as shouting or resisting care are often linked to distress or unmet needs, rather than intentional aggression.

Instead of reacting quickly, I tried to stay calm and slow the situation down. I spoke gently, used a reassuring tone, and gave the person some space. I did not try to force the care, because I knew that would likely make the situation worse and increase their distress. After some time, I returned, and the person was calmer, which made it possible to complete the care in a more positive way.

This experience helped me understand how important it is to adapt your approach depending on the individual. It is not just about completing the task, but about how the care is given and how the person experiences it (NHS England, 2023). At the same time, I am aware that this approach is not always easy to follow in every situation, especially when staff are busy or under pressure.

After the situation, I spoke with my colleagues and reviewed the care plan to see if there were any specific triggers or preferences we needed to consider. We also involved family members to better understand the person's background and what might help them feel more comfortable (NHS England, 2025). This made a difference in how we approached future care and helped reduce similar situations.

From an ethical point of view, it was important to respect the person and not treat them like a task that needed to be completed. Even though personal care was necessary, it had to be done in a way that protected their dignity and wellbeing (Beauchamp and Childress, 2019). This situation also made me realise that ethical practice is not always simple, especially when balancing care needs with how the person feels.

However, I also recognise that not all situations are handled this way. In busy care environments, staff may not always have the time to stop and reflect, and behaviour can be misunderstood or managed too quickly (Care Quality Commission, 2023). This shows how pressure in care settings can affect how principles are applied in practice.

Overall, this experience helped me understand that good care is not just about completing tasks, but about understanding behaviour and responding in the right way for everyone.

Task 3

Reflecting on my role as a support worker, I can see that person-centred care, partnership working, and ethical practice are part of everything I do, even when I am not always thinking about them directly. At the beginning, I used to focus more on completing tasks and making sure everything was done on time. However, with experience, I started to realise that how I approach individuals matters just as much as what I do. This has made me more aware of my own practice and more thoughtful in the way I support people.

Reflective practice is also recognised as an important part of professional development in health and social care, as it helps practitioners improve their skills and decision making (Schön, 1983).

One of my main strengths is my ability to stay calm in difficult situations. From what I have seen, reacting too quickly can make things worse, especially when someone is already distressed or confused. Taking a moment to understand what is happening usually helps to calm the situation and makes it easier to support the person (NICE, 2018). For example, when someone refuses care or becomes upset, I try to think about what might be causing that behaviour instead of just focusing on completing the task. This approach has helped me manage situations better and avoid unnecessary conflict.

At the same time, reflecting more honestly, I realise that staying calm is not always enough on its own. There have been times where I could have taken more time to understand the individual instead of thinking about what needed to be done next. This made me realise that person-centred care is not just about being patient, but about being fully present and paying attention to the person. It sometimes means slowing down, even when things are busy. NHS England (2023) highlights how important communication is in this, and I can see that this is something I still need to keep improving.

Another strength I have developed is my communication. I try to adapt how I speak depending on the individual, using simple language and reassurance when needed. This helps people feel more comfortable and builds trust. However, I have also realised that communication is not just about what I say. It is also about listening and noticing how

someone is feeling. There have been situations where I could have listened more carefully or paid attention to small changes in behaviour. This made me realise that good communication is not just talking clearly but really understanding the person.

Teamwork is another important part of my role. I understand how important it is to share information and work together to provide consistent care (Glasby and Dickinson, 2014). When staff communicate properly, it helps avoid mistakes and improves the quality of care. However, I have also seen that this does not always happen. Sometimes information is not passed on clearly, or people assume others already know. This can affect the person receiving care. It made me realise that working in a team is not just about being present, but about making sure communication is clear and responsibility is shared.

One area I know I need to improve is my understanding of legislation, especially the Mental Capacity Act 2005. This is important because it helps guide decisions when someone cannot make their own choices (Mental Capacity Act, 2005). I have some understanding of it, but I know I need to feel more confident in applying it in real situations. Without that confidence, there is a risk of not fully supporting someone's rights or making the best decision for them. To improve this, I plan to take part in more training and try to apply this knowledge more in my daily work.

Another area I need to develop is how I deal with stress. Working in care can be emotionally demanding, especially when dealing with challenging behaviour or difficult situations. There are times when things feel rushed, and it can be hard to give each person enough time. This is something many people in care experience, and it can affect how care is given (Skills for Care, 2023). Reflecting on this, I realise I need to find better ways to manage stress, such as taking time to reflect after shifts and asking for support when needed.

This reflection has helped me understand that being a good support worker is not just about experience. It is about being willing to learn, reflect, and improve. There are times where I have handled situations well, but also times where I could have done things differently. Being honest about this is important because it helps me grow and become better in my role.

Looking ahead, my goal is to become a care home manager. This means I need to think beyond my own practice and consider how I would support a whole team. I would want to make sure that staff feel supported and confident, because from what I have seen, when staff feel valued, they provide better care. Leadership plays a big role in this (Care Quality Commission, 2023).

I would also focus on improving communication within the team, making sure information is shared clearly and that staff feel comfortable speaking up. I would want to create an environment where people can learn from each other and improve together.

I would also make sure that care is always done in a way that is safe, respectful, and fair. This is very important to me because I have seen how much it affects individuals when they feel respected and understood.

Overall, reflecting on my practice has helped me understand both my strengths and the areas I still need to improve. It has also made me more aware of the responsibility that comes with this role. I can see that becoming a good professional takes time, effort, and continuous learning. This reflection has helped me feel more prepared for my future and more confident in my ability to grow in this field

Conclusion

In conclusion, person-centred care, partnership working, and ethical practice are essential in health and social care (NHS England, 2023). They help ensure patients are treated with dignity and supported properly.

From my experience, applying these principles is not always easy because of pressure in care settings (Care Quality Commission, 2023). This shows that understanding them is not enough, and they need to be applied properly in practice.

The example discussed shows how understanding behaviour can improve care, and reflecting on my work has helped me understand my strengths and areas for improvement.

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