

Sharing knowledge is a vital part of working out how best to deal with difficult situations where there are few clear answers (like how to support and care for people with complex needs). As well as factual information about the situation itself (e.g. someone's health conditions or circumstances), this knowledge also includes emotions and feelings as well as ideas, know-how and wisdom gleaned from similar situations and past experiences. Sharing knowledge can help groups of people to develop ideas and solutions and make informed decisions about how to deal with a difficult situation.

Groups of people often face difficulties when they are trying to share knowledge. The questions opposite are designed to help. They are based on previous research and observations of meetings between health and social care practitioners. They have been tested and discussed with 5 community health and social care teams.

The questions are grouped into 3 areas, each of which represents an aspect of how groups of people share knowledge and some of the common sticking points in that process. The questions can be used in any order and repeated as many times as necessary. The aim is to use them to develop new ideas and solutions and to make informed decisions about how best to deal with the situation being discussed.

Questions about the key area of concern

- What is the biggest/underlying issue?
- What are we worried about?
- What is the issue we want/need to address?
- Why is this an issue?
- What are we struggling with here?
- Why do we want/need to do something?
- Who is this an issue for?

Questions about what is already known/not known

- What do we know/think/feel about this situation?
- What do people affected by the situation know/think/feel?
- Do we all know/think/feel the same?
- Have we tried to do something about this situation before?
- Have we dealt with a similar situation before?
- What do we know about how to address this situation?
- What do we usually do about this type of situation?
- How do we capture what we know?

Questions about accessing and using knowledge

- What do we need to know to move forward?
- How do we find the knowledge we need?
- Who else might know something about this situation?
- Who do we need to talk/listen to?
- Has anyone else tried to do something about this situation?
- Has anyone else dealt with a similar situation?
- How do we use what we know/find out to develop a solution?
- What might influence our ability to use knowledge?
- How do we share what we know with others?

About the author

Vicky Ward is an academic from the University of St Andrews. Her work focuses on how people share knowledge with each other and how they can be supported to do so.

Between October 2014 and November 2016 she looked at how knowledge was shared during case management meetings in community health and social care teams. She also developed and tested a set of questions designed to help these teams to share knowledge. This work was carried out during an independent research project funded by the National Institute for Health Research. This booklet has been developed using the results of this research.

Further information about the project can be found at <https://mobilisinghealthandsocialcareknowledge.wp.st-andrews.ac.uk/>

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