

# **SURVIVAL SKILLS** in the Workplace

The image features a vertical split background of yellow on the left and purple on the right. Overlaid on this are green-outlined icons: a large stethoscope on the left, two pill bottles in the center, and a cluster of pills below them. A blue banner with a jagged bottom edge is positioned at the bottom of the icons.

**DIRECT CARE**

## Everyday tasks for direct care employees

- Supporting clients and those close to them
- Contributing to the health and safety of individuals in their environment
- Supporting clients' mobility
- Administrative tasks relating to the delivery of the care service
- Talking with clients, their friends and families, and other staff
- Answering the telephone and taking messages
- Helping clients with eating, drinking, toileting and dressing



- Ensuring that clients maintain high standards of personal hygiene and physical comfort
- Administering medicine under supervision



# WHAT SKILLS?

## Speaking and Listening

- Listen carefully to detail, e.g. from clients about their needs, from colleagues on daily schedules
- Explain clients' requirements/needs to others, e.g. doctors, social workers, family
- Communicate effectively on the telephone with a wide range of agencies, e.g. social services, health services, council services
- Deal sensitively with clients and other agencies with an awareness of the appropriate tone of voice and body language, e.g. facial expression, gestures, appropriate body contact

## Reading

- Recognise common abbreviations, e.g. for medication, names of organisations
- Understand common signs and symbols, e.g. health & safety, laundry labels
- Interpret straightforward information from charts, e.g. weight charts, dietary information

- Obtain information from short written reports, e.g. case notes, day book
- Read aloud clearly and accurately, e.g. letters to clients, forms for clients

## Writing

- Write clearly and accurately on forms to avoid mistakes, e.g. benefit forms, records of medication
- Note messages accurately from telephone calls and conversations, e.g. calls from family and friends of clients and other professionals involved in their care, conversations with colleagues and supervisors
- Compose simple letters and brief reports, e.g. for clients, day book entries, case notes

## Number Skills

- Record numbers accurately, e.g. telephone numbers, weights, batch numbers of medication
- Extract information from straightforward tables and graphs, e.g. temperature graphs, pulse and blood pressure graphs



- Measure accurately, e.g. to check client size for medical aids and appliances
- Weigh accurately, e.g. clients to ensure maintenance of health, food portions
- Measure liquid volume, e.g. of medicine (under supervision), fluid intake, urine



## **Communication skills needed to work in direct care**

- Reading – understanding straightforward written and graphical information, e.g. case notes, day book, letters, laundry labels, safety signs
- Writing – completing simple forms and records, writing notes and messages, e.g. case notes, day book, records of medication, letters and forms for clients
- Speaking and Listening – talking face-to-face and on the telephone to a small number of people, e.g. clients and their families, colleagues, other professionals

## **Numeracy skills needed to work in direct care**

- Numbers – writing numbers clearly and accurately, e.g. telephone numbers, weights and size
- Extracting information from graphs, e.g. temperature, pulse, blood pressure
- Measuring, e.g. dispensing medication under supervision, weighing and measuring clients

To start work or undertake an NVQ in direct care, the basic skills levels needed are:

- communication at or above Level 1;
- numeracy at or above Level 1.



For further information contact:

The Basic Skills Agency,  
Commonwealth House,  
1–19 New Oxford Street,  
London WC1A 1NU

Tel: 020 7405 4017

Fax: 020 7440 7770

email: [walesenquiries@  
basic-skills.co.uk](mailto:walesenquiries@basic-skills.co.uk)

[www.basic-skills-wales.org](http://www.basic-skills-wales.org)

