Saint John of God Hospitaller Ministries

Policy on Using a Total Communication Approach

13

This policy remains in force until such time as it is reviewed and approved by the Board of Community Services CLG.

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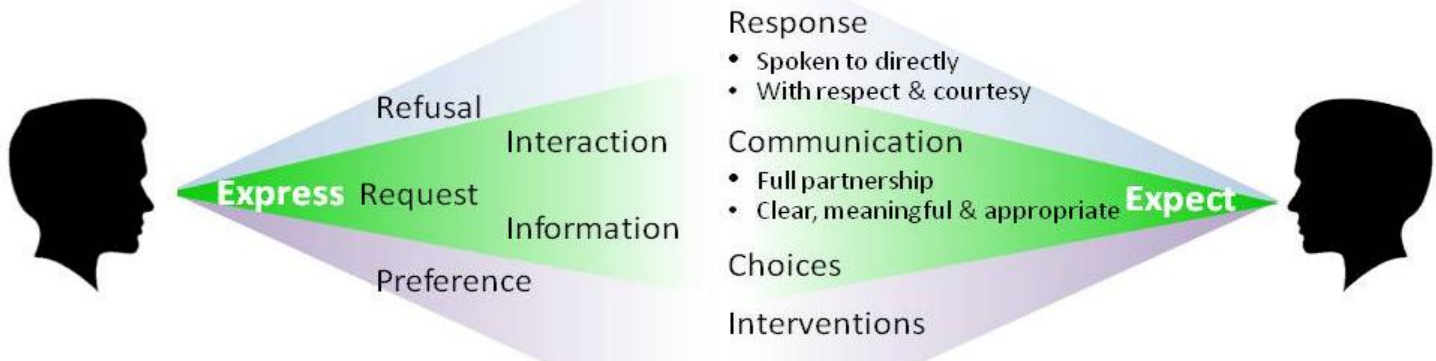
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A Total Communication Approach

To understand and be understood, all means are used,
all attempts acknowledged and opportunities are identified.

The Right to **Communicate** includes the right to **Express** & the right to **Expect**

Express Refusal · Interaction · Request · Information · Preference

Expect

Response
- Spoken to directly
- With respect & courtesy

Communication
- Full partnership
- Clear, meaningful & appropriate

Choices

Interventions

Responsibilities

Director	• Ensure dissemination of the policy 'Using a Total Communication Approach' • Promote the policy and principles • Provide targeted education and training to service users and staff
Direct Support Staff	• Read and understand this policy. Seek supervisory clarification if necessary • Avail of targeted education and training and implement learning • Endeavour to understand the preferred communication methods of people they support • Ensure each service user has a page about communication in their personal passport, where appropriate • Adhere to SLT guidance • Seek supervisory approval prior to making a referral & support service users to self refer • Inform supervisors of service users' communication difficulties • Be aware of other staff members' roles in supporting services users in their communication
Supervisors	• Reference the policy at induction & promote on-going awareness • Ensure that service users and staff are provided with targeted education • Promote understanding of preferred communication methods of service users • Ensure staff adhere to SLT guidance • Support the appropriate referral for Speech and Language Therapy input
Speech & Language Therapists	• Design, provision and review of individual communication plans • Appropriate onward referral, with consent • Application of current best, evidence-based practice for positive communication outcomes
Service Users	• Inform staff of any issues or concerns they have around communication • Avail of targeted education and training on effective communication when offered • Take part in SLT sessions if offered and if they choose to accept • Consider communication tools or aids recommended by the SLT team

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Achieving a Total Communication Environment

Effective Communication
- Two-way   - Respectful   - Meaningful   - Uses a variety of communication approaches
Supporting Effective Communication involves
- Acknowledgement of the right to communicate   - Acknowledgment of the ability to communicate   - Recognition and promotion of all modes of communication   - Provision of opportunities for communication
Easy to Read Format Documents
- Object, photos, pictures, multimedia communication systems should be promoted and encouraged   - Written communication should be in an easy to read format. Staff should refer to '*Make it Easy: A guide to preparing Easy to Read Information*', Accessible Information Working Group, 2011.

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1. Introduction

This policy is concerned with communication at the individual level between staff and the service users supported by Saint John of God Hospitaller Ministries (SJOGHM). Successful communication between people, especially between service users and those in their environment, is dependent on the ability of both parties to be open to communication and to adapt their modes of communication in order to function effectively in both speaker and listener roles.

1.1 Policy Statement

It is the policy of SJOGHM to promote clear and effective communication across the organization through the use of a Total Communication Approach. This approach encompasses use of all means of communication, acknowledgement of all attempts at communication and identification of opportunities for communication.

1.2 Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of this policy is to promote and support a Total Communication approach through the following:

- Acknowledgement that key stakeholders, including service users, are capable of communicating and are respected in doing so

- Provision of information for services users to be in an appropriate accessible format throughout SJOGHM

- Provision of opportunities for service users' voices to be heard through different modes of communication

- Encouraging and highlighting the importance of:
  - An environment that enables optimum communication;
  - Respectful, clear, meaningful interactions;
  - Recognition of communication rights;
  - Supporting the communication needs of service users.

1.3 Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to all service users, their advocates, employees, other workers, students and volunteers in Saint John of God Hospitaller Ministries.

2. Glossary of Terms, Definitions & Abbreviations

2.1 Definitions

"**Communication** is the transmission of meaning from one individual to another, whatever the means that is used" (Karlan, 1990:155). In Saint John of God Hospitaller Ministries communication is understood as any method used by a person to communicate through interaction with others. Methods of communication can be written, verbal, visual, signed or electronic.

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An environment that enables optimum communication is a place or situation where communication of all types is encouraged and valued. Such an environment provides support to individuals to communicate in a way that is appropriate to the individual.

Total communication is an approach that promotes all modes of communication, for example: gesture, sign (Lámh), speech, pictures, objects and writing. It is a communication philosophy rather than a communication method. *'Total communication is an approach that promotes the creation of inclusive, supportive communication environment using every available means of communication to understand information and to be understood'* (Royal College of Speech and language Therapists, 2006b). The use of 'total' or inclusive communication is increasingly recognised as best practice and the most effective use of Speech and Language Therapy resources (Jones, 2000).

Service User: The term 'service user' is used to refer to both adults and children (and their parents) who are supported by Saint John of God Hospitaller Ministries.

2.2   Abbreviations
AAC: Augmentative and Alternative Communication
ASHA: American Speech-Language-Hearing Association
AT: Assistive Technology
HIQA: Health Information and Quality Authority
HSE: Health Service Executive
SJOGHM: Saint John of God Hospitaller Ministries
SLT: Speech and Language Therapy

3.   Legislation, Regulatory Documents & other related policies

- Health Act 2007

- Health Act 2007 (Care & Welfare of Residents in Designated Centres for Older People) Regulations, 2009

- HIQA National Quality Standards for Residential Care Settings for Older People in Ireland, 2009

- HIQA National Standards for Residential Services for Children and Adults with Disabilities, 2013

- Communication Bill of Rights, 1992, National Joint Committee for the Communication Needs of Persons with Severe Disabilities

4.   Roles & Responsibilities

4.1   Director
4.1.1   Ensure that all supervisors have been given a copy of the policy 'Using a Total Communication Approach'

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4.1.2   Promote the policy and the principles that underpin it

4.1.3   Implement the policy within the context of service delivery priorities, available resources, HSE guidelines and Board of Management instructions

4.1.4   Provide and support targeted education and training in relation to effective communication to service users and staff

4.2   Supervisors

4.2.1   Reference the policy at local induction

4.2.2   Promote on-going awareness of the policy in service provision

4.2.3   Seek out appropriate training for staff and ensure that staff are provided with targeted education and training in relation to effective communication

4.2.4   Ensure that their staff adhere to the guidance provided by and use the appropriate communication tools/aid as recommended by the Speech and Language Therapy (SLT) team in relation to communicating with individual service users

4.2.5   Support the appropriate referral for Speech and langue Therapy input

4.3   Speech and Language Therapists

Upon referral to the SLT team, it is the responsibility of Speech and Language Therapists to conduct whatever assessment / intervention / advice / consultation is appropriate, with regard to the individual's communication needs. This may include the following:

4.3.1   Design, provision and review of individual communication plans/ programmes

4.3.2   Appropriate onward referral, with individual's consent, to other team members or to other agencies

4.3.3   Application of current best practice, which is evidence-based and supports positive communication outcomes for the individual

4.4   All Direct Support Staff

4.4.1   Read and understand this policy

4.4.2   Seek supervisory clarification on any aspect of this policy about which they are unclear

4.4.3   Avail of targeted education and training when offered and implement the skills and knowledge they have acquired to promote an effective total communication approach

4.4.4   Ensure each service user's communication needs are documented in their Personal Passport, where appropriate. This is the responsibility of the keyworker in conjunction with the circle of support.

4.4.5   Adhere to the guidance provided by the SLT team in relation to communicating with individual service users .

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4.4.6 Seek out supervisory approval prior to making a referral using the Clinical Referral Form.

4.4.7 Support a service user in making their own referral to the SLT team, if they so wish.

4.4.8 Inform supervisors of any difficulties encountered in relation to communicating with service users or observed difficulties service users may have in communication with others.

4.4.9 Be aware of the role of other MDT members in supporting service users in their communication e.g. positive behaviour support practitioners, occupational therapy, psychology.

4.4.10 Ensure that a copy of any SLT reports, recommendations, care plans and programs are in the individual's personal file.

4.5 Service Users

It is the responsibility of service users (in accordance with their individual ability and advocates where appropriate) to:

4.5.1 Take part in SLT sessions if offered and if they choose to accept.

4.5.2 Consider communication tools or aids recommended by the SLT team.

5. Principles underpinning the Total Communication Approach

5.1 The right of service users to express themselves and expect reciprocation, facilitation and choice is recognised.

The right to communicate (ASHA, 1992) includes the following rights:

- To request desired objects, actions, events and people;

- To refuse undesired objects, actions, or events;

- To express personal preferences and feelings;

- To be offered choices and alternatives;

- To reject offered choices;

- To request and receive another person's attention and interaction;

- To ask for and receive information about changes in their routine and environment;

- To receive intervention to improve communication skills;

- To receive a response to any communication, whether or not the communication partner can fulfill the request;

- To have access to recommended AAC (augmentative and alternative

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communication) and other AT (assistive technology) services and devices at all times;

- To have AAC and other AT devices that function properly at all times;

- To be in environments that promote communication as a full partner;

- To be spoken to with respect and courtesy;

- To be spoken to directly and not be spoken for or talked about in the third person while present;

- To have clear, meaningful; culturally and linguistically appropriate communications.

5.2   Service users are supported to communicate

Service users are supported to communicate through the following practices:

- The communication skills of all service users are considered and supported.

- SJOGHM is committed to building the confidence of service users to communicate as effectively as possible across as many situations, environments and people as possible.

- Every service user will be supported to makes choices for themselves.

5.3   Information is provided in accessible formats

To support the development and maintenance of total communication environments, all information that is relevant to service users should be produced in Easy to Read or multimedia formats. All staff can refer to '*Make it Easy: A guide to preparing Easy to Read Information*' (available on the Programme Quality and Safety Intranet) when preparing information for service-users to read.

http://intranetsvrvm/programmedevelopment/images/pdf/makeiteasyguide2011.pdf
and Accessible version
http://intranetsvrvm/programmedevelopment/images/pdf/easyreadinformationab
outguide2012.pdf)

5.4   Consistency in communication with service users across services within SJOGHM

5.4.1   Recognised systems:

- Lámh is the recognised manual signing system used in services.

- Photos from the SJOG Image Library are available on the intranet (www.brandfolder.com/sjog).

- Every service should display general visual timetables that support service users to understand the daily schedule.

- Accessible signage should be used to promote service users' navigation

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within services.

- Boardmaker © The Picture Communication Symbols ©1981-2009 by Mayer-Johnson LLC. All Rights Reserved Worldwide.   Used with permission. Boardmaker(tm) is a trademark of Mayer-Johnson LLC   Boardmaker is recognised as the primary standard symbol system in Saint John of God Hospitaller Ministries.

- 'Photosymbols' should be considered as a means of representing more general linguistic concepts.

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