



Self-Neglect - Understanding the Challenges for Workers - An Aide for Managers

Managing the balance between protecting adults at risk of self-neglect against their right to self-determination is a serious challenge for services.

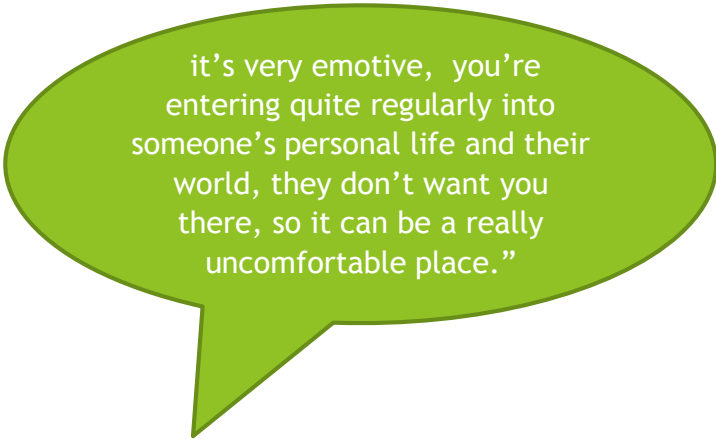
Working with people who are difficult to engage with can be exceptionally time consuming and stressful to all concerned.

However, failure to engage with people who are not looking after themselves, (whether they have mental capacity or not) may have serious implications for, and a profoundly detrimental effect on, an individual's health and well-being. It can also impact on the individual's family and the local community

Impact on workers

Working with someone who self-neglects can feel lonely, frustrating and risky, it takes a long time to build the good relationships and find the solutions that are necessary for a good outcome, workers can feel:

- ▶ Denial
- ▶ Self doubt
- ▶ Loss of Self esteem
- ▶ Isolation
- ▶ Distress
- ▶ Shock
- ▶ Anger



it's very emotive, you're entering quite regularly into someone's personal life and their world, they don't want you there, so it can be a really uncomfortable place."

Impact on worker (2)

- ▶ Guilt
- ▶ Helplessness
- ▶ Fear
- ▶ Stress -at home and at work
- ▶ Illness
- ▶ Concerns about impact on their other cases
- ▶ Wanting to leave the profession/team

Factors that increase the impact on workers

- ▶ Previous difficult experiences - work or personal
- ▶ Own personal feelings and reactions to the smells, sights, dirt and untidiness that can results from self-neglect - feelings of pity, disgust or revulsion
- ▶ Regularly working in this or other stressful areas - especially without support
- ▶ Risks to personal safety or experience of intimidation and/or violence to self or property
- ▶ Culture of denial
- ▶ Poor response or lack of engagement from the other agencies involved
- ▶ Taking on the role of mediator/ being the “chosen one”


The challenges of managing self-neglect - what is needed:

- ▶ Active risk assessment of these cases
- ▶ Good understanding and application of the Mental Capacity Act
- ▶ Identifying who is the best person to work with the service user - who/what agency knows them best?
- ▶ Support for workers who may not appreciate guidance
- ▶ Creating a culture that supports discussion about these cases and the self doubt they create
- ▶ Clear escalation policies within the team/organisation

Challenge of managing self-neglect (2)

- ▶ Planning - allow visits for late in the day so worker can go straight home afterwards, advise suitable clothing and footwear
- ▶ Examination of the impact on the wider team
- ▶ Regular supervision and support for individuals and teams
- ▶ Skills and knowledge - your own and the worker/teams - do you/they need training, support etc.
- ▶ Consistent application of policies and procedures

Workforce and Workplace Priorities – have systems in place to allow:



Staff learning & development, building understanding and capability

Organisational cultures that give time and space for relationship-based work and flexibility of outcomes

Interagency systems for shared assessment risk-management and decision-making

Remember, we must support those adults at risk who can not protect themselves, but we must also support the workers who are trying to make a difference, and recognise the challenges this work presents.

Guidance:

- ▶ Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Multi-Agency Policy and Procedures to support People Who Self-Neglect
- ▶ Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Protocol for Working With People with Hoarding Behaviours
- ▶ Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Multi-Agency Adult Safeguarding Procedures
- ▶ Social Care Institute for Excellence - Self-neglect policy and practice: research messages for managers

For more information about safeguarding of adults at risk, please visit our website:

www.peterborough.gov.uk/safeguardingadults