

# carers and confidentiality

The following good practice checklist is taken from the Carers and Confidentiality in mental health leaflet produced by the Royal College of Psychiatrists and The Princess Royal Trust for Carers (2004). Although the checklist may need adapting to fit your own work setting, it nevertheless provides a useful starting point. The guidance provided in the leaflet clearly states that “Even when the patient withholds consent, carers are to be given sufficient knowledge to enable them to provide sufficient care. They should also be given the opportunity to discuss any difficulties in their caring role and help to try to resolve these. The provision of general information about mental illness, emotional and practical support for carers does not breach confidentiality.”

In your groups reflect on the following:

## Good practice checklist

Carers are given general factual information, both verbal and written about:

- The mental health diagnosis
- What behaviour is likely to occur and how to manage it
- Medication – benefits and possible side-effects
- Local in patient and community services
- The Care Programme Approach
- Local and national support groups.

Carers are helped to understand:

- The present situation
- Any confidentiality restrictions requested by patient
- The patient’s treatment plan and its aims
- Any written care plan, crisis plan or recovery programme
- The role of each professional involved in patient’s care
- How to access help, including out of hours service.

## activity nine - level 2 handout/exercise

Carers are given:

- The opportunity to see a professional on their own
- The right to their own confidentiality when talking to a professional
- Encouragement to feel a valued member of the care team
- Confidence to voice their views and any concerns they may have
- Emotional and practical support
- An assessment of their own needs with their own written care plan

In your groups consider the following questions:

1. Why is it so important that appropriate information is shared with carers?
2. How might the above checklist need to be tailored to your own particular work setting?
3. What might be the barriers to implementing a similar good practice checklist in your own organisation/team?
4. How might these barriers be overcome?