



Supporting Independence

A Guide for Clinicians

This guide provides clinicians with strategies, information, and practical examples to actively support a person to be independent with all or aspects of their care.

This guide should be used in conjunction with the following resources which are available on the Bolton Clarke website:

1. Me and My Catheter: Sheet 1 - What is a Catheter and why do I have one?
2. Me and My Catheter: Sheet 2 - How do I care for my Catheter and bags?
3. Me and My Catheter: Sheet 3 - How do I change a leg bag and connect a night bag?
4. Me and My Catheter: Sheet 4 - How can I avoid infections?
5. Me and My Catheter: Sheet 5 - What do I do if something goes wrong?
6. Me and My Catheter: Sheet 6 - How can I get more equipment?
7. Me and My Stoma: How do I change my stoma bag?
8. Me and My Wound: How do I care for my wound?

Other translated resources available via the Bolton Clarke Website. Click the links below to view online.

- [Talking Books on Diabetes](#)
- [Information on Medicines in English a talking book](#)
- [Medicines Reminder Cards](#)
- [Information on caring for a Stoma](#)

The steps below fit within the wellness and independence promoting approach. Actively engaging and supporting people to do all or part of their 'clinical or personal care tasks' should be considered when assessing and planning care, this includes people with a diagnosis of dementia.

Every person should have their strengths and abilities assessed, and an opportunity to maximise their independence where possible.



Why we encourage participation in care

Supporting a person to be engaged in their own care, as little or as much as they choose, has positive benefits for their wellbeing and confidence.

- Positively encouraging a person to take control, *builds self-confidence*
- We don't want to 'take over' we want to *support the person's potential*
- Encouraging a person to stay active in looking after themselves, *builds on their strengths*
- Supporting a person to make decisions about their own care, *supports autonomy*
- Supports the best use of clinical resources to *deliver quality care* to more people

How we encourage participation in care

Every person will have their own level of confidence, motivation, and ability to participate in their care. It is an important part of the assessment to understand the level of involvement the person or their carer is willing to undertake.

Clinicians should use their assessment findings to determine whether the clinical requirements of the care align with the person's capabilities.

Step 1: Know the person and or their carer

- It is important to discuss with the person and or their carer the opportunity for promoting independence
- Getting to know the person is part of building rapport and trust, let them know they have a choice in the amount of participation they want to have in the care.
- Find out if they interested in learning more about the care and how they can be more engaged
- What do they need to know about managing the care?
- How would they best like to get information and learn about the care e.g., written material, talking or watching video
- What skills do they have from their lives that might help them to manage now e.g., their education, work, and life experience?

Step 2: Assess the person and or their carer's ability to do the care

- Using your clinical assessment determine the complexity of the care, what physical capabilities and their capacity to learn are required
- A person's situation may change, the first instance of meeting them may not be the 'right' time to talk about independence. It is important to reassess opportunities for promoting independence e.g., once their acute phase has settled, such as when an infection clears



Step 3: What does participation look like for the person and/or their carer?

- People have the right to be engaged in decisions about their care to ensure they remain in control and have choice about participation
- Tailoring and reassessing the support to the individual will look different in every situation as their confidence grows or the care requirements change. Consider these options:
 - Providing short term 'stand by' support and encouragement to build confidence
 - Short term support via telehealth until independent
 - Sharing the care arrangements between clinician and the person and/or their carer e.g., they do the care on Mon/Wed and the clinician on Friday.
 - They are engaged to do components of the care e.g., wash their leg before a wound dressing, gather the equipment.

Step 4: Setting up care for participation by the person and/or their carer

- Communicate the aims for care and participation with the care team e.g., document in care or service plan
- Schedule appointments to teach and support participation
- Provide the information required to do the care in the format they want
- Use the relevant care specific resource/s e.g., Me and My Catheter self-care sheets
- Access any equipment or assistive technology to support the care

Tools to support clinicians

- [Plain language Medical Dictionary](#)
- [Assistive Technology Essentials](#)
- [What is Health Literacy](#)
- [Opportunities for reablement](#)
- [Teach back method](#)
- [Embedding a Strengths Based Approach in Client conversations](#)