Strengths based approaches and the right to take risks.

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Workshop objectives

› Explain the significance of risk enablement in meeting the requirements of the Care Act 2014

› Provide examples tools to promote using strengths based and risk enabling practice with older people
Some definitions

- **Risk enablement** means working to enable individuals through carefully considered risk-taking.

- **Positive risk taking** is
  - A *collaborative* process of balanced decision-making in relation to risk,
  - In which the stakeholders weigh up potential risks *and benefits* and
  - Take a *shared problem-solving approach* to try and find a way of managing risks

RiPfA (2016)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk aversion to risk enablement</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>› ‘Risky/ vulnerable’ people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>› Worst case scenario</td>
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<tr>
<td>› Focus on physical (someone getting hurt)</td>
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<td>› Medical problems, limitations, what’s gone wrong before</td>
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<td>› A senior/ lead professional takes decision (and gets blamed if it goes wrong)</td>
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<td>› Risk of specific situation</td>
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<td>› Consider benefits too</td>
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<tr>
<td>› Social, emotional also (hidden harm/ benefits)</td>
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<tr>
<td>› Strengths, resources (outside services), what’s worked before</td>
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<tr>
<td>› Person &amp; supporters, range of professionals share responsibility for managing risks</td>
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IBA 2016
Implications of The Care Act 2014

› Local authorities to promote *wellbeing* (not just provide particular services)

› Assumption that we are best placed to judge our own wellbeing (and the outcomes that matter most to us) unless proven otherwise

› People should be enabled to participate as fully as possible in decisions at every stage

› Professionals to respond proactively to risk of abuse/ neglect, by making enquiries
Care Act 2014: Aspects of Wellbeing

- Dignity
- Health
- Accommodation
- Economic Status
- Relationships
- Occupation
- Control
- Protection

Wellbeing

IBA 2016
Risk enablement and safeguarding

Shared features of positive risk-taking and Making Safeguarding Personal:

- The approach to risk is rights-based.
- People using services are kept well-informed in an accessible way.
- The wishes of people using services are at the heart of decisions.
- The strengths of the individual are identified.
- Decisions are balanced; reasoning demonstrable.
- Decisions are regularly reviewed.
- Practitioners are reflective and legally literate.

RiPfA (2016)

NB: It is possible that safeguarding alerts will increase where a risk enablement approach is being taken.
MSP Evaluation/ Temperature check

‘Looking at the level of risk the person will allow’

‘Recognising people’s right to lead a risky lifestyle’

‘Shifting the focus from risk to wellbeing’

‘It enables positive risk taking whilst safeguarding individuals from potential abuse.’

LGA (2015), Cooper (2016)
Question for discussion

- Think about decisions you have been involved in which have involved weighing up risks..........
- What has enabled a positive risk-taking approach?
- What has got in the way?
How teams/organisations can support risk enablement

➢ A vision focused on empowerment and wellbeing
➢ Space/facilitation to discuss, disagree then reach consensus and share accountability
➢ Communicate and celebrate positive outcomes
➢ Tools and systems to record decision making
➢ Supervision and support – especially where things go wrong, despite good decision-making
➢ Create a culture that trusts in natural human relationships and conversations

Finlayson (2015)
Risk enablement & mental capacity

› Don’t assume someone can’t make own decisions just because of diagnosis or age

› Making unwise or unusual decisions doesn’t necessarily mean someone lacks capacity

› Capacity often fluctuates – the decision that someone lacks capacity is specific to that time and that decision and not a permanent label

› If someone is assessed as lacking capacity, we make the decision in their ‘best interests’. This is not about protecting them from all possible harm: it’s about considering their past decisions, preferences and wider wellbeing
Mrs P and Bobby

Mrs P (in a nursing home, following a 2\textsuperscript{nd} stroke) was not allowed visits from her dog because it would be ‘irresponsible’

Yet court judged that this contact with her was critical to her quality of life and wellbeing

\textit{Mrs P v Rochdale BC & others, 2016}
Questions to ask in decision-making

› **Reaching a decision**
  > Identify specific risks, ‘hidden harms’, benefits
  > What are our worries and those of others?
  > Is there a way of doing this and reducing risks?

› **Agreeing a plan:**
  > What is each person’s role and responsibility here?
  > Any rules/ conditions we agree to follow?
  > What is the contingency plan (if things go wrong)?
  > Which changes should trigger a review?

Blood (2016)
Exercise: Mr F

» Read Mr F’s case study, on your tables

» Discuss how you would use elements of a risk enablement approach to support him.
Questions/ comments
Further reading

› Blood, I (2016) *Enablement in Dementia: Practice Tool*, Dartington: RiPfA


  

› ImROC Briefing 9 (2014) *Risk, Safety and Recovery*, Centre for Mental health
Further reading (cont)


› RiPfA (2016) *Risk enablement*, Frontline briefing, Dartington: RiPfA


› Steve Morgan’s site includes links to his positive risk publications and podcasts: http://practicebasedevidence.squarespace.com
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