This Toolbox Talk is focused on creating discussion about how your team addresses this theme. Below are listed a number of prompts/questions for discussion. Please pick the ones relevant to your service or indeed feel free to develop a more relevant ones if desired. The main thing is to engage with staff around this theme in order to raise awareness and to elicit from them any suggestions with regard to simple actions your service can take to improve the service user experience.

The detail of what the Healthcare Charter says in relation to what service users can expect and what they can do to help in relation to this theme is outlined overleaf.

Questions

1. Do we provide as a service open and appropriate communication throughout our care in relation to the following?
   - a service users illness and what the treatment or care aims to do
   - results of any proposed tests
   - proposed treatment and medication, including the possible risks and alternatives
   - type of continuing healthcare a service user may need, including medication, continuing care in hospital, timely and appropriate referrals, convalescence or rehabilitation
   - what discharge arrangements are in place or when appropriate, what choices in relation to end-of-life care are available
   - when plans change or if something does not go according to plan.

2. A service user should be given:
   - the opportunity to ask questions and to receive answers that he/she can understand
   - advise on how to ask questions and how to make the most of consultations and obtain information about diagnosis, treatment and care from members of the healthcare team
   - Information in a language they can understand including access to interpretative services where possible

“We will listen to you carefully and communicate openly and honestly, and provide clear, comprehensive and understandable health information and advice”
• the name and role of everyone who cares for them, and the name of who is in charge of their care (staff should always introduce themselves and wear name badges)
• relevant information leaflets to help service users understand their illness

Do you agree? Which points do you consider more important and why?

3. How can we as a team make sure that a service user knows how to look after himself/herself and prevent further illness?
   Have we got services and sources of help (such as further information and self-help groups)? How can we provide support in managing a chronic (long-term) condition?

4. How do we communicate to a service user what is going to happen to them on the day of any intervention/procedure?
   Please discuss.

What service users can do to help

• If there is something that they do not understand about a condition or treatment, let your healthcare professional know. Never be afraid to ask.
• If he/she is able, they should provide information about their history, current treatment, medication and alternative therapies directly. Otherwise, their family, carer or other nominated support person should provide the healthcare team with this information. It may be helpful for them to carry the information with them.
• As a service user, he/she should follow plans that have been agreed with his/her healthcare provider and report any changes in his/her condition.
• Have you made available to patients the leaflet entitled “It’s Safer to Ask”, this leaflet is designed to encourage patients to ask questions and get more involved in the decision making about their care plan.

Sample questions included in the leaflet:
– Can you please tell me more about my condition?
– Do you have any information that I can take away with me?
– Can you tell me where I can find out more information?
– Why do I need to have this particular test?
– What are the different treatments for this condition?
– How will this treatment help me?
– What does the treatment involve?
– What are the risks of this treatment?
– What is likely to happen if I do not have this treatment?
– What should I look out for?
– What can I do to help myself?
– When should I come back to see you?

Acknowledgements