

6b3

Skilled Escort

Do

Carefully deliver skilled personal and psychological support to the focus person while sharing in the community activity.

Story

John had found it almost impossible to leave his home unaccompanied, but he wanted to 'lead a normal life'. Despite being very anxious and nervous about going on a short journey with a support worker, it was a journey he was determined to make. The distance from home to the local college was only two miles

and initially the worker drove John in his car. Throughout the first journey John was anxious and physically shaking, chain-smoking and tearful. He asked lots of questions about the venue and how many people would be there. Constant reassurance helped him to endure the journey and enter the college building, where, as agreed, he stayed for just a few moments on the first visit. This provided a starting point for further work.

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Hints & Hazards

Much of the work done by members of staff participating or visiting people who need support involves them acting as a skilled escort rather than a companion. They are constantly aware of the needs of the focus person and how to assist them to orientate themselves to new surroundings, as well as the fact that they are company for the focus person. It involves building trust, establishing boundaries and enabling them to become more independent.

Exactly what skills does this escort need to have? A useful tool for thinking about what skills such a person needs to have is the section in essential lifestyle planning (see 1a4) addressing what supports a person wants and needs. This will enable the person to have more control over the characteristics of who supports them and will not feel like another 'assessment'.