

## Improving ward communication

- On-the-job learning resource
- Developed from Case 1
- Published by NIACE

*'Very helpful'* learner (nurse)

*'Very patient-focused'* mentor (professional development nurse)

## Overview

- Bite-size guidance on customer care, teamworking
- Handy, easily portable format
- Explains the **what, why & how** of ward communication
- Suitable for all ward staff, including staff from overseas
- Flexible resource for 'light-touch' learning
  - On-the-job coaching
  - Induction
  - Supervision
  - NVQ
- Successfully piloted at NHS Acute Foundation Trust

## How the learning works

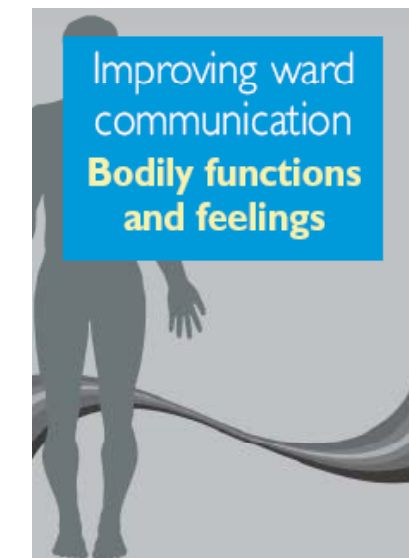
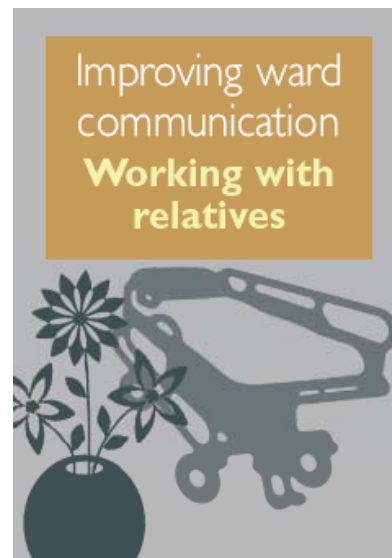
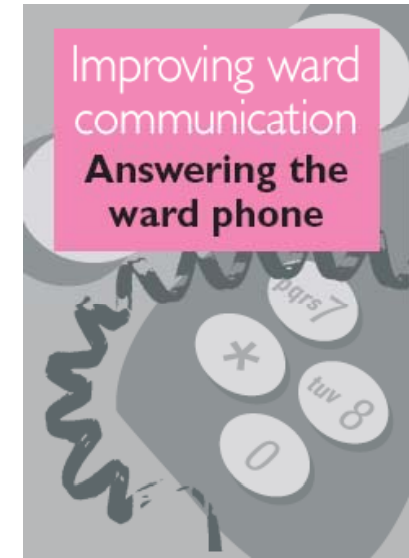
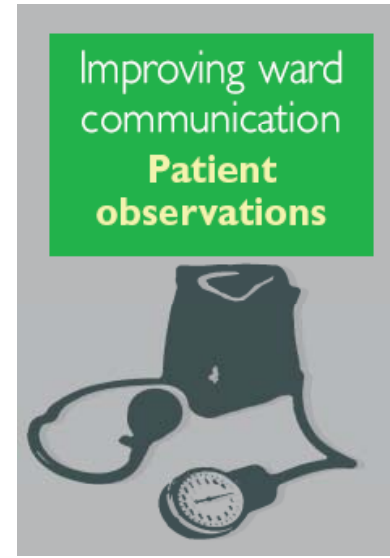
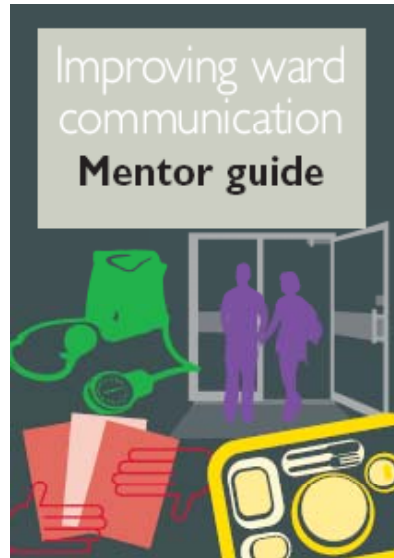
- Led by ward mentor (needs **no** special training)
- Mentor uses resource to explain tasks, then models good practice, observed by staff-learner
- Staff-learner studies resource, practises at work, observed by mentor, who gives feedback
- Interactions with other colleagues (quality dialogue) support staff-learner, standardise good practice

## What the LtW resource covers

Mentor's guide + seven topic booklets

1. Helping patients at mealtimes
2. Patient observations
3. Answering the ward phone
4. Handover
5. Working with relatives
6. Welcoming visitors
7. Everyday English for bodily functions and feelings  
(for overseas staff)

# LtW resource: seven topics & mentor's guide



# LtW resource: sample page from *Mealtimes*

## 7 Helping patients to eat



Sometimes patients need help to cut their food up and put it into their mouths.

### What do you think?

If you were a patient who needed help to eat...

- How would you want ward staff to treat you?

### Here is how to help patients to eat their meals

- Sit on a chair **beside** the patient, not opposite them (opposite is for babies)
- Say the food looks/smells good – this encourages the patient to eat

- Ask the patient if they want things (e.g. a napkin, some sauce)
- Let the patient take as much time to eat as they want
- Chat with the patient during the meal
- Fill in the food chart accurately
- Report **any concerns** – e.g. the patient not eating much, or finding it hard to swallow - to the person responsible for care

Asks learner to reflect



Describes & explains good practice



Learning through work

Improving Ward Communication

# LtW resource: sample page from *Mealtimes*

## 8 Helping patients: what to say



Offers learner  
explicit  
examples



*Would you like to hold a napkin in your hand?*

*Would you like me to help you cut your food up?*

*Would you like me to help you eat?*

*That smells nice. Does it taste nice too?*

*Would you like some salt or pepper?*

*Would you like a little more?*

*Would you like your pudding now?*

*Have you had enough?*

*Shall I wipe your hands for you?*

*Shall I use alcohol wipes – or wet and dry paper towels?*

*Did you enjoy your meal?*

Learning through work

**Improving Ward Communication**

## Benefits

- Better communication on the ward
- Easy-to-use, bite-size learning
- No staff release required
- Improves performance immediately, staff grow in confidence as well as skills
- Good for team-building, morale, helps standardise good practice