

# Learning Guide

# Being a support worker



23451 Describe the role of a support worker in a health or wellbeing setting

Level 2

5 credits

23686 Describe a person's rights in a health or wellbeing setting

Level 2

1 credits

**Name:**

---

**Workplace:**

---

## Creative commons



This work is licenced under a Creative Commons Attribution-Non Commercial Licence. You are free to copy, distribute and transmit the work and to adapt the work. You must attribute Careerforce as the author. You may not use this work for commercial purposes. For more information contact Careerforce at [www.careerforce.org.nz](http://www.careerforce.org.nz)

# Contents

Introduction .....	1
Guiding documents.....	2
What is your role? .....	2
Policies and procedures.....	3
The Code of Rights.....	8
Your role and the people you support .....	15
Working with the people you support .....	15
Working with others .....	19
You have finished! .....	24



# Introduction

Your role as a support worker is to provide person-centred support. In this role, you have to carry out a wide range of tasks. These tasks will depend on the needs of the person you support. This learning guide gives you information about what those tasks are and why they are important. This will help make sure you, your workmates and the people you support get the very best from you!

## How to use your learning guide

This learning guide supports your learning and prepares you for the unit standard assessment.

This guide relates to the following unit standards:

- 23451 Describe the role of a support worker in a health or wellbeing setting (level 2, 5 credits).
- 23686 Describe a person's rights in a health or wellbeing setting (level 2, 1 credit).

This learning guide is yours to keep. Make it your own by writing notes that help you remember things, or where you need to find more information.

Follow the tips in the notes column.

You may use highlighter pens to show important information and ideas, and think about how this information applies to your work.

You might find it helpful to talk to your workmates or supervisor.

Complete this learning guide before you start the assessment.

## What you will learn

This learning guide will help you learn about:

- important documents for you and the people you support.
- your role and working with your colleagues.

# Guiding documents

## What is your role?

To help you do your role, there are some documents and laws that you need to know about. You may have:

- a job description.
- a contract.
- personal plans for the people you support.
- organisational policy and procedures you must follow as you do your job.
- boundaries – what you can and can't do in your role.

## Your job description

This may describe:

- the important parts of your role.
- the work you must do.
- how to do your work.
- the skills you need to do your work.
- how well you have to do your work.

## Your contract

This may have in it:

- the hours you have to work.
- how much you will be paid.
- what your employer gives you, for example, holiday pay.
- sick leave and other leave details.
- other important information.

These documents tell you what is expected of you in your role.

## Personal plans

These are plans that you work by. They are for the person you support. These plans describe the service your workplace will give to the person you support and they describe the work you will do to support them. Personal plans are different for each person.



### Think about

Do you remember when you started your job? Do you remember the paperwork you read? You may have signed some of the documents. Your employer will have these on file if you no longer have them.



### Do it

Read your job description and contract. Have your supervisor or one of your family tell you about anything you don't understand.

Keep a copy of these documents in a safe place!



## Personal plans

A support worker discusses a personal plan with the woman she supports.

## Policies and procedures

### People's private information – Privacy Act (1993)

In your role, you will often find out private information about the people you support. There are laws around private information and what you are allowed to do with it. One of these laws is called the Privacy Act (1993). It is a law for everyone.

The Privacy Act makes sure that private information about people can't be shared by just anyone. There is also another law called the Health Information Privacy Code (1994) for organisations in the health sector.

Your workplace should have a privacy officer. This person will know what to do with private information about the people you support. They will know where you can find this information.

Talk about your workplace's privacy policy with your supervisor or privacy officer. You can ask them anything you are unsure about or what you should do if you're worried about privacy. Talk with them about the most important parts of privacy that are to do with your role.

### Respect for private matters: privacy and dignity

When you support a person, you need to respect their privacy. By doing this, you also respect their dignity. To respect a person's privacy, always:

- ask them how they want you to carry out a task.
- tell them what you are going to do before you do it.
- draw the curtains or close the doors.
- ask about the areas of the house it is all right for you to go into.
- ask before you touch them or their property.
- ask before you open cupboards or drawers.
- knock or ask before you enter a room, particularly if they are doing a personal care task.

- leave them alone (if appropriate) in the room or area when carrying out personal care tasks. You could also turn away rather than watch them do something very personal such as going to the toilet.
- give them something to cover themselves with while they dress or undress.

People may need support to do personal things. This may make them feel nervous, ashamed or even stupid in front of other people.



### Privacy and dignity

Sometimes the people you support may feel nervous, ashamed or even stupid.

### Privacy and keeping things private (confidential)

When it comes to information about someone, there are private and confidential matters support workers need to know.

Everyone needs to know that:

- people must be told why information about them is collected and who it will be passed on to. This should happen every time personal information is collected.
- people may be asked to sign a form to show they have been told about how their information will be used.
- only information that's needed will be collected and it can't be used for any other purpose. This means you cannot ask a personal question if it isn't needed.
- people have the right to see the information that has been collected about them and to make sure there are no mistakes.
- organisations, including your one, will have policies and procedures about privacy and confidentiality.





## Keeping things private

People may be asked to sign a form to show they have been told about how their information will be used.

### As a support worker, you must:

- keep who the information is about to yourself.
- make sure only people like your supervisor or a team member can know confidential information about a person.
- not talk to other people about confidential information. Only talk to people such as your supervisor.
- not share confidential information about another workmate, unless it is about that person's health and wellbeing and they are happy to talk about it with you.
- not pass on confidential information about your organisation (your employer). You cannot talk about it in your workplace either.

 **Write**

---

*My notes* →

Write down the things you need to know about private information.

## How to behave at work: code of conduct

---



### Code of conduct

You are expected to behave in a certain way at work.

---

As you do your tasks, your workplace expects you to work in an honest, respectful and caring way.

Your employer will have written into your contract what they expect from you. Your workplace will also have a code of conduct. This information may also be in your contract. It will tell you how your workplace expects you to behave at work.

Talk with your supervisor about the most important parts of the code of conduct that are to do with you and your role.



**Write**

---

Look at your workplace's code of conduct. Write down some ways you are expected to behave at work.

## The Code of Rights

The Code of Rights is a set of rights for people who use health, disability and aged care services. It is about making sure the people being supported are treated fairly.

The Code of Rights gives ten rights to all users of these services. It sets out how healthcare workers are to behave. It's up to you to make sure you know what these rights are. It is also up to you to make sure the people you support know these rights.

The Code has ten rights. These are:

- 1 People are treated with respect. This is respect for their culture, values, beliefs and privacy.
- 2 People are treated fairly. This covers discrimination, which is when someone is treated unfairly because of their culture. It also covers when someone is pushed into doing something they don't want to do, or when a person getting them to do something ends up better off.
- 3 People are supported to live a worthwhile, independent life.
- 4 People are treated with the right standards of care, skill and service.
- 5 People are listened to, understood and given information in whatever way they need it. This covers using interpreters, who are people who can understand the language of the person and put information into the language others understand.
- 6 People are given full information and are told about their condition and what their choices are. This includes costs, waiting times, benefits and side effects.
- 7 People are able to make their own choices and be free to change their minds.
- 8 People are able to have a support person with them at most times.
- 9 People are told their rights if they are taking part in teaching or research.
- 10 People are able to make a complaint about services in a way that is easy for them. This won't have an effect on the way they are treated.

For more information about the Code of Rights, contact the Health and Disability Commissioner.



### Talk

---

Ask your supervisor about the Code of Rights and what it means for your workplace.

**HDC HEALTH & DISABILITY COMMISSIONER**  
TE TOIHOU HAUORA, HAUĀTANGA

# Ōu Tika mo to whiwhinga ratonga Hauora, Hauātanga rānei.

- **Mana**  
E tika ana kia tiakina tōu ake mana tangata, ahakoa ko wai koe, no hea koe.
- **Manaakitanga**  
Kaua tetahi e whakararu i a koe mo ōu whakaaro, whakahaui rānei i a koe ki te mahi kore e pai ki a koe.
- **Tū Rangatira Motuhake**  
Ma ngā ratonga e tū rangatira motuhake ai koe.
- **Tautikanga**  
Ko te tikanga kia matatau ngā pukenga manaaki, tiaki i a koe, kia mahi tahi te katoa hei painga mōu.
- **Whakawhitwhitinga Whakaaro**  
Ma te whakarongo kia mōrama, me te tuku mōhiotanga whānui ka tau pai ōu whakaritenga. Ki te hiahia kia whakamāramatia ki tetahi atu reo e āhei noa atu.
- **Whakamohio**  
E tika ana kia whakamāramatia ngā āhuatanga katoa o tōu māuiuitanga me ngā kōwhirianga mōu, āe atu ki te wā tātari, te atu, ngā kaitiaki, ngā painga me ngā pōraruraru. Ua ngā pātai kia mōhio ai koe.
- **Whakaritenga Mōu Ake**  
Kei a koe tōu ake tikanga, te whakaāe, te whakakāhore rānei.
- **Tautoko**  
I te nuinga o te wā e āhei ana kia whai kaitautoko koe.
- **Ako Me Te Rangahau**  
E hāngai ana te katoa o tōu tika ki ngā mahi ako me te rangahau.
- **Amuamu**  
E pai noa atu te amuamu. Ma te amuamu ka pai ake ngā ratonga. Me mānā te huarahi tōu amuamu kia kōwhiri ki te tūhono me to tuku amuamu.

Koia tēnei te whakarāpopotanga o te "Ōu Tika i Ōu Tika" i raro i te mana o te Toihou Hauora, Hauātanga. E whai mana ana ēnei tika ki ngā ratonga Hauora, Hauātanga katoa, ahakoa ūtu, kore ūtu. Kei ngā kaitiaki-a-rohe o te ratonga Hauora, Hauātanga te "Ōu Tika i Ōu Tika" hei whiriwhiri i a koe pātai ngā kōwhiri Hauora, Hauātanga.  
Kei kōwhiri kaitautoko-a-rohe ki te whiriwhiri, whakapā atu rānei ki te Toihou Hauora, Hauātanga i te nama waea.  
Auckland (09) 373 1060, Wellington (04) 494 7900, other areas 0800 11 22 33 (TTY)

The Code of Rights is for people who use health, disability or aged care services.



Write

What are your rights under the Code of Rights?

What do they mean for you in your role?

Match each example on the left to one of the 10 rights.

Example	Right
Ms Kahi is grateful that her support worker has taken the time to learn basic sign language so they don't always have to communicate on paper.	The right to be fully informed.
Priscilla understands that she can make a verbal complaint if she wants to.	The right to be treated with respect.
The staff respect the person's request to be called June and not Mrs Smith.	The right to dignity and independence.
Miss White is encouraged to shower herself in a private bathroom to help her to become more independent.	The right to services of an appropriate standard.
Thomas is happy that he has been told all about the changes in his condition, even though he is still a teenager.	The right to effective communication.
Mae Ann feels she was told about her treatment choices and is therefore able to make a good decision about her medical treatment.	The right to freedom from discrimination, coercion, harassment and exploitation.
Iosefa is pleased that his aiga (extended family) are there to provide support when he is told about his health issues.	The right to make an informed choice and give informed consent.
Mr Jones is gay and staff at the medical centre treat him just the same as all the other patients.	The right to support.
Rosa agrees to take part in research with student doctors and is given a Code of Rights leaflet.	All these ten rights apply in teaching and research.
Mr Green feels his support workers always provide good service and meet legal, professional and ethical standards.	The right to complain.

Talk to your supervisor about the examples and why you think they match each right.

## Safeguarding a person's rights

Protecting a person's rights is even more important when they might not be able to make decisions for themselves.

The people you support can do some things ahead of time to make sure their rights are taken care of when they can no longer make decisions.

### Enduring power of attorney

Enduring power of attorney is also known as EPOA or EPA. It means that someone chooses another person to make decisions for them when they no longer can.

There are two types of EPA:

- for property.
- for personal care and welfare.

In your workplace, you will probably be dealing with EPA for personal care and welfare. This is usually a close family member or friend of the person. When the person can no longer make decisions for themselves, the EPA will make decisions like:

- where the person will live.
- the diet the person will be given.
- the types of clothing the person will wear.
- the consent (or refusal) for medical treatment or procedures.



### Example:

This is Edna. A few months ago, she started to show signs of memory loss and confusion. Her doctor advised that she should choose an EPA and she chose her nephew, John.

Last week, Edna left the stove on and nearly started a fire but John was visiting and noticed in time. She also had a fall in the night and became very frightened when she couldn't remember the way back to her bedroom.

John decided he needed to use his EPA to move his aunt into residential care. At first, she wasn't happy to leave her home but she soon settled in at the rest home and is much safer.

For each person you support, you need to know if they have an EPA who can make decisions for them.

### Advance directives

Advance directives are another way that people can make decisions ahead of time.

A person can use advance directives to tell medical professionals what kind of medical care they would like to receive.

The types of things that might be in an advance directive include:

- whether a person wants CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation) to be performed if their heart stops beating.
- whether the person wishes to be kept alive on a ventilator if they are unable to breathe without assistance.
- whether the person wants to be kept alive by tube feeding.
- what kind of drug therapy the person wants. For example, the person might choose to have pain relief but not antibiotics to fight an infection.
- what the person prefers to happen with possible organ or tissue donation.

The person can carry a card to tell medical professionals what they want. The information will also be in their personal plan.

For each person you support, you need to know:

- if they have an advance directive.
- if they carry an advance directive card.

### Boundaries: know what you can and can't do

**Boundaries** are the lines or limits between two things. Limits let you know what you can and can't do in your role as a support worker. You can only provide support you have been trained to give. Knowing your limits will help you feel safe in your role. You should know where your role ends and where someone else's begins.

Working within the limits of your role may also be called your **scope of practice**. This means that you support a person in the way that's written in your job description and the person's personal plan.

Your workplace will have policies and procedures about your scope of practice. They may also have a staff handbook that gives you important information about this.

Your supervisor and other team members may support the person with different tasks in their personal plan. They have been trained to carry out these different tasks and will have a different scope of practice.



Your scope of practice is the range of tasks you may need to do in your role.



Sometimes you are asked to do things that are outside your scope of practice. It is not always easy to say no if a person or a family or whānau member asks you to do something, especially when the task is not in the person’s personal plan. It’s a good idea to practise with a workmate what you might say to someone when you are asked to do something you are not allowed to do.

 **Talk**

Talk to your supervisor about working within your limits. Ask them if you have a scope of practice in your job description or a workplace handbook that you need to see.

 **Write**

Write in the boxes what you could say. The first example is done for you.

You are asked to:	You could say:	You might also say:
clean out a fridge, as Tom has noticed some of the food has passed its use-by dates.	“I’m not able to help you as it is not part of your personal plan. Perhaps on Saturday, after your sister has been grocery shopping for you, she may be able to help you clean out your fridge?”	“Maybe you could keep a list of the food in your fridge and when you need to eat it by. Does that idea sound like something that might help you?”
take Mr Leary to church today as the person who usually takes him is ill.		

You are asked to:	You could say:	You might also say:
take Jean's library books back as they are due today but the weather is wet and cold and she doesn't want to go outside.		
prepare and give Mrs Soli'ai's mother her insulin, which she has forgotten to take.		

# Your role and the people you support

## Working with the people you support

As a support worker, there are many things you need to remember and think about. These include:

- people's quality of life before they needed support.
- how to talk to and listen to the people you support.
- how to support people to be independent.
- respect.
- values and beliefs.
- a person's goals.
- having a positive attitude.
- feeling for others (empathy).

### People's quality of life before they needed support

Most people like to be safe, independent and healthy. This helps them have a good quality of life.

The people you support all have their own life experience, culture, needs, feelings, likes and dislikes. As a support worker, it's really important you keep these in mind and do your best to remember them when providing support.

### How to talk to and listen to the people you support

One of the most important parts of being a support worker is talking and listening to the people you support. Their personal plan will help you understand what support you need to give, but you also need to talk with the person to understand how they want you to support them. When you talk and listen well to people it helps you make good relationships with them.



#### Personal care tasks

Helping people get dressed is a personal care task.

## How to support people to be independent

Sometimes people may have an injury or illness that means they need support to do things for themselves. Your role could be to help a person get back their independence so they have as much control over their life as possible. Most people will be able to do some things for themselves.

When you do things that help people do a task for themselves, they are called **supporting independence tasks**. These tasks are to help people to do as much as they can for themselves and continue to do them for as long as possible.



**Write**

Think about some of the tasks you do. Talk about them with your supervisor or a workmate. Fill in the table below. The first ones have been done for you.

Personal cares	Supporting independence	Other tasks
Helping someone get dressed	Putting someone's clothes on the bed so they can dress themselves	Peeling the vegetables



**Do it**

Talk to your supervisor or a workmate about the different types of tasks you do.



### Household management tasks

Helping people with meals or baking is a household management task.

## Respect

When you support people, it's important that you treat them with respect. You show people respect by supporting them with what they are able to do and supporting their interests and choices. Think about how you would want your mother or father or koro to be treated. You want them to feel valued and cared for. Being on time is one way of showing respect. If you're running late and not able to make it at the expected time, you should know what you need to do about it.

## Values and beliefs

People have their own values, beliefs and ways of seeing the world. As a support worker, you must show respect for these even if they are different from your own.

## A person's goals

Think about the goals of a person you support. How many different goals are there? What is your role in supporting them to achieve their goals?

## Having a positive attitude

How do you feel about supporting others? Your positive attitude makes a huge difference to the people you support. Being positive is a way you can show respect and encourage the people you support. Doing your job with a friendly voice and a smile makes a big difference to the people you support.



### Being positive

Being positive to everyone is a way to show respect.

## Feeling for others (empathy)

You may have been ill or spent time in hospital. Maybe you needed help with personal cares? How did it feel?

Empathy means you know how someone feels. Not everyone is the same. The person you support may feel differently from the way you felt. Think about how people may feel and treat them with respect and dignity. This will also help you think about what to ask people when you support them with their personal cares.



### Question

---

How do you show that you respect the people you support?



### Think about

---

How would you feel if you needed support with some personal cares, like:

- showering
- going to the toilet?
- getting out of bed?
- shaving?

---

### Example:

Nicky is a support worker at Aroha Rest Home and Hospital. She works there in the holidays and at weekends. Nicky often meets friends in town after work. Today, one of her friends, Lisa, tells her she has heard that Ethel Walsh lives at Aroha Rest Home and Hospital. Lisa says Ethel is a friend of her aunty. Lisa asks Nicky about Ethel and how she is going with her change of medicine. Nicky doesn't know what she should say.

Think about your answers to these questions.

- Can Nicky tell Lisa anything about Ethel?
  - Why or why not?
  - How should Nicky respond to Lisa's questions?
-

# Working with others

In your workplace, you will be working with others. These are your colleagues or workmates. When you work with other people, there are important things to remember. These are:

- having a positive attitude.
- knowing how to work together.
- being a great team member.
- asking questions.
- sharing the load.
- knowing boundaries: what you can and can't do in your role.
- having good workplace relationships.

## Having a positive attitude

A positive attitude helps make the lives of others better. This is the same when you work with others in your workplace. In your role as a support worker, you need to connect with people you work with and others in your workplace. You will work as part of a team.

It can be difficult to always keep a positive attitude. This happens sometimes! If you are finding it hard to stay positive, you may need to talk about this with a workmate or your supervisor.

## Knowing how to work together

Being part of a team is part of your role as a support worker. Having good teamwork skills means you and everyone else in your team will be even more useful. When you work together, you share the support and information about a person. This makes everyone mindful of that person and helps them reach their goals.

You may be a part of several teams. For example, you might be in a team with other health professionals supporting a person, or you could be working in a team where you are one of many support workers. Everyone in the team needs to know what their role is – and you are part of this team, too.



### Working together

Working together makes a team.

## When you support the same person

Do you have rosters in your workplace? Do you have a roster you follow? Do you share a roster with another support worker? Look at the roster below.

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Vai	Masina	Vai	Masina	Vai

Vai and Masina support the same person. It's very important they share information about this person. When you work with another support worker, you need to make sure you both know exactly what your roles are in supporting them and how your role may be divided up.

## Being a great team member

Listen carefully to what people say. This may be a workmate or your supervisor. You may need to use this information in your work.

## Asking questions

Asking questions when you are not sure about something is a good thing to do. Sometimes other people are really glad you asked because they weren't sure either.

Ask questions about changes in people's personal plans. Ask about any new tasks your supervisor wants you to do. The people you support trust you and need to know that you understand what you are doing to support them.



### Asking questions

Asking questions when you are not sure about something is a really good thing to do.

## Being asked what you think

Sometimes you will be asked what you think about something. You may need to say why you think the way you do. This is a good thing. Sometimes you may change your mind when you hear what others have to say. In a team, it's important to treat other team members and their ideas with respect. It is good to show others you know about their experience and how they feel, even if you don't agree or understand them.



## Sharing the load

### Help others

Your role is about supporting others. Sometimes this means helping your workmates to do a task.

### Do your share

When everyone in the team works well together, it makes it better for the person being supported. Make sure you do your share. This helps the whole team work better and has better results.



### Help others

Your role is about supporting others. Helping your workmates is part of this.

## Knowing boundaries: what you can and can't do in your role

A boundary is a limit or line between two things. There are boundaries between people. A limit is the line between what you will or won't accept from others.

In your role, you won't be asked to do something you haven't been trained to do. This is to keep you and the person you support safe and free from risk.

Relationships with others have boundaries that are usually known and understood by family, friends, workmates and society. When we know the boundaries, it helps us get on with other people and to be accepted by them.



### Limits and boundaries

When we know the boundaries, it helps us get on with other people and be accepted by them.



**Think about**

## Things that may affect boundaries between people

There are things that we do that make a big difference when working with others. Here are some examples:

What we do	How does it make others feel?
The tone of voice we use with each other	Is it friendly or unfriendly?
The attitude we use with each other	Is it helpful or unhelpful?
The tone of voice we use to answer a question from someone we don't like	Whether you like or dislike someone can make a difference to how you communicate with them.
How close we come to someone when they talk to them	This may make you feel very uncomfortable about being with them.

Think about a time when you found it hard to keep your boundaries.

What things made this situation tricky?

What could you have done to help you keep your boundaries when this happened?

## When you cross boundaries

Know what will happen if you cross boundaries. For example, someone you support has spoken to you in a very rude way and asked you to do tasks for them that are not in their personal plan. You have done your best to give them support. You may become very annoyed and speak in a rude way to the person. You need to know what to do if this happens.

## Know what to do

Know what you can and can't do within the time or situation and know how you should respond. Talk about your issues and work out how to make it so everyone is happy. Your supervisor will be able to help you in times like this.

## Having good workplace relationships

Know who you can talk to when problems come up. This may be your supervisor or someone from an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) in your workplace. Remember to:

- think about what you are doing with your body and the tone of your voice when you talk to others (your body language).
- cheer others up when they need it. Laugh or have a joke.
- take your time when you talk to others.
- call people by the name they want you to use.
- speak clearly, using different words if someone doesn't understand what you say.
- try not to use names for things people may not know.

- wait for answers to questions and try not to finish people's sentences for them.



### **Know what you need to do in your role**

This may mean going to staff training sessions or reading your workplace's newsletter.

# You have finished!

Great work – you’ve finished this learning guide.

Now you know about:

- important documents for you and the people you support.
- your role and working with your colleagues.