

# WHAT ARE “CORE CONVERSATIONS” ?

The underlying principle of 'core conversations' is that people who help residents with complex issues need to have

**human-to-human conversations.**

## Core conversations aren't:

- scripted
- a checklist
- an interaction that needs to be 'wrapped-up' in four minutes.

## Instead, they:

- build trust
- start a relationship
- gain better insight into the resident's real situation.

If these conversations are successful you can learn more about the resident's needs, which may be complex, multiple and hidden at first. With this information and having built some trust, the best possible starting points for help can be identified and agreed.

As you might imagine – these conversations aren't easy. On the next page you can find 8 principles around how to make them as human as possible.



# EIGHT PRINCIPLES FOR GREAT CORE CONVERSATIONS - CHAPTERS

## Comfortable

Ensure people have a comfortable, not rushed conversation.

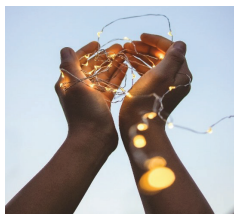
It is easy to overwhelm people. Ensure the right pace that the guest/client can deal with, add bits of information, and help as and when possible. When people feel at ease, conversations will flow.



## Hands

Get something into the client's hands – It could be a flyer or a piece of paper with your phone number.

In these situations, people might be stressed and not take in all information. This is an opportunity to read it again or as a hook for them to re-establish contact for questions or support.



## Assumptions

Avoid making assumptions or jumping to conclusions.

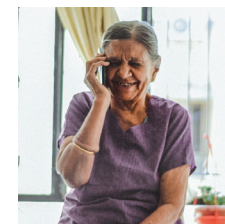
Assumptions about people might lead to unwanted behaviours, for example treating young people as ignorant. Try to be aware when making assumptions and treat everyone the same. Similarly, try to remain open and avoid forming an opinion or jumping to conclusions. Genuinely enquire and check and engage as with a friend; show and have empathy.



## Personal

This is a conversation between people – a real human to human interaction.

Keep the conversation initially light, a bit of chit chat is fine. Build a connection – there might well be things you have in common. Share something about your own life or who you are. Avoid coming across as interrogating, ensure that people know what they say will be treated confidentially and use jargon-free language.



## Take ownership

Allow and enable the client to take /retain ownership of their situation.

We all feel the need to just take care of someone in need. It's easy to say 'don't worry, I'll take care of it', when in reality we might not have all the answers and solutions (yet). It's better to let them know; 'I'm joining you in helping to figure out solutions'. The feeling that they are not alone in figuring this out will be an enormous relief to people. However, the client remains owner of their situation; you offer them the tools and advice which they can choose to ignore or take up.



## Explore

Many people are dealing with various issues and deeper underlying problems than the one they present with. Explore these by prompting them to tell their story.

There is often not just one problem facing an individual or family. Don't try to understand all the needs at once - satisfy the immediate need (e.g. food), then engage about more.



## Relationship

You don't have to solve all problems in one meeting, it's important to follow -up and maintain the relationship.

Keep the relationship going through quick informal check-ins to help build understanding and trust. For any follow up, don't be vague about the time and place/tool to reconnect. If people express this themselves or write it down, it's more likely that they remember and will connect again. Do try to establish a link for continuity, even if you are a little pushy (in a friendly way).



## Strengths

Everyone has strengths. Take opportunities to affirm and help them feel proud.

By reminding people of their strengths and the things they've achieved, particularly when they're facing real adversity, can help build and maintain people's resilience. Do this by being friendly, affirming people that they're doing well and helping them to think about what they enjoy and what they're good at. These kinds of questions are more likely to come after a few conversations, slightly later in a relationship. While we should acknowledge and try to solve people's problems – focusing on strengths is also important!

