Needs Assessment Communication Skills

[00:00:04] **Robin:** An exploration of the impact of communication skills upon the needs. Assessment interview requires consideration of a variety of factors. These include: choice of vocabulary and phrasing, pace, volume, tone, and clarity of speech, the impact of body language, the establishment of a boundaried emotional connection with the disabled.

I.e. The application of empathy. Maintenance of balance between the necessity of leading the process of the needs assessment and the need to give the disabled person the time and space that they require to consider and articulate their difficulties. Use of various questioning and listening techniques, which facilitates effective and efficient gathering of information during the interview.

While also helping to establish a rapport with the disabled person. And awareness of the power dynamics at play during the interview and the potential detrimental impacts upon the experience of the needs assessment for the disabled person. The core conditions of the person centered model for helping interactions guide the establishment of a boundaried emotional connection with the disabled person.

The aim is that the disabled person feels that the needs assessor is committed to the interaction between them and that the needs assessor has heard and understood the difficulties that they are experiencing. This helps to dispel any preconceived fears or reservations allowing for the establishment of trust.

Trust is critical to open discourse during the needs assessment. Particularly if the disabled person is at all inhibited in disclosing the difficulties. As well as the needs, assessor applying empathy to the presentation of the disabled person during the needs assessment, those empathetic responses must also be communicated effectively to the disabled person

in order to maximize their productive impact. Appropriate use of different questioning and listening techniques helps the needs assessor to communicate their empathetic understanding of the disabled person's experience, while also ensuring that the needs assessors notes are clear and accurate. These are techniques to be used with care. Appropriately,

an open question, communicates humidity in appropriately used. It can communicate disinterest or lack of understanding. Likewise, appropriate to use of a closed question can communicate that the needs assessor is committed and insightful, inappropriately used a closed question can communicate presumptiveness or hubris.

When the desired information is received from the disabled person, the use of active listening skills ensures that the disabled person is aware that the needs assessor has accurately heard and understood what they have said. These techniques help to communicate the competence of the needs assessor in their command of the needs assessment process, which also helps to strengthen trust.

The application of the core conditions of the person centered model, along with the use of specific questioning and listening techniques is a methodology that can be applied across all needs assessments, to a large extent, comparatively factors like formality, tone and pacing will vary considerably from person to person demographic, to demographic

and even culture to culture where the needs assessor has experience of conducting needs assessments in different regions of the world. While the information gathering process is fundamental to a needs assessment, the process may or may not also include explanation and demonstration of assistive technology.

Something that is largely dependent on the experience and confidence of the needs assessor in the functionality of the assistive technologies that they are recommending. A needs assessor in training can typically expect to be relatively limited in active demonstration of assistive technology. At the beginning of their experience of active work in the field making it's vital that needs assessor

is comfortable, confident and competent in articulating the functionality, benefits and drawbacks of any relevant assistive technology. This is particularly important where recommendations for funded supports are being made as the disabled person would typically be asked during the needs assessment to make firm decisions about which assistive technology to receive.