Writing the needs assessment report

[00:00:00] **Meghan:** In this short video guide, we will explore how to write your needs. Assessment reports using the template provided in this course. The first page of your needs assessment is the cover page. On this page. You'll need to list the key details such as the name of the person you are assessing your name as the assessor and the date of the assessment.

The date is particularly important as you may well be doing follow-up assessments at a point in the. You could also add your organization's logo or continue to personalize this page to whatever your organization's requirements are. As we work through this video, I will highlight the key elements of each section of your needs

assessment. Feel free to stop the video at any point to take in the information, make notes, or to try and assessment part.

Section 1.1 is for assessment information. In this section, you'll need to add in things like the assessment date, where the assessments taken place and whether that's online or in person, who the assessor is,

so yourself, you'll then need to add in the specifics of who attended the assessment. This might just be the individual, in which case circle, yes, in the individual assessment. Or you might have had a supporter attend the assessment as well, alongside the individual. This could be a carer, a friend, a family member, or perhaps another teacher.

If the supporter came, circle yes. And note down who they were and what their job description or role is. Noting down, whether or not any supporter attended is particularly important. There may be circumstances where a supporter does not facilitate the sharing of good information from the individual. They might feel uncomfortable in this scenario or feel as though they are being judged.

It's important to note this down because this will provide better context for the assessment. Of course, there may also be scenarios where the supporter is in fact very supportive and that this has facilitated information collection and gathering from the individual and has created a space of safety.

Section 1.2 is about assessee details. Work through the assessee details section by adding their name, their preferred pronouns, so for example, my preferred pronouns, are she /her, their home address, date of birth, mobile and email address. Asking about things like preferred pronouns or one of the ways in which you can make an individual feel safe.

Not everybody identifies with the pronouns that they were assigned at birth, such as she or her, and may in fact, prefer to use pronouns such as they or them, clarifying this in an assessment and ensuring you're using the right pronouns whilst writing up the report creates a much more anticipatory and inclusive environment where the individual may feel supported.

Next, we want to capture whether they're a student or an employee, or whether they're not in work or education. If they are in work or education add the details of the provider in the next box down. Next, we want to start exploring what they do every day. If they're a student, think about what current educational level they are and what their day might look like in school, or perhaps in university, we want to understand whether their day includes a mixture of different studying

for example, maybe group work, or maybe they might need to spend lots of time working on assignments or. We want to understand this so that we can support them with these things later on in the assessment. If they're an employee, we want to know what their current role is and what their job description includes.

We also really want to find out about their working patterns. And this is one of those things that you can expand on quite a lot. Working patterns might in a contract, be something like nine to five, but ask questions such as "do you find you're always sticking to your working hours or might you be working a little bit longer" as these things can start to give a

broader context for the assessment and help you to identify what strategies might be supportive for an individual. If they aren't in education or work, ask them about their daily activities, what do they enjoy? What do they not enjoy? What things comprise their day that you might need to know about that you might be able to then support them with and build strategies around going forward. When you're in your needs

assessment, asking about these types of things can be a great place to start building rapport. When you're building rapport, you might want to comment on the things that they're doing or ask them whether they enjoy those types of things, asking probing questions, understanding a little bit more about their context and the world that they live in.

This helps us to see things through that frame of reference and can help us to create a much more complete and holistic needs assessment. Next, we want to understand the current technology they've got access to. This is because a large amount of assistive technology, despite it being free and open source does require access to a phone, a tablet, or a computer. In this section

use the space to write down whether they have access to a computer tablet, phone, and also things like a printer as this can be quite an enabling strategy as well. If they've got access to any other technology, such as an AAC device, that they might be frequently using, add this in here as well as it can be crucial for building strategies later on in the assessment.

We also want to note down things like the make or the model of the technology they've got. And this is because we want to understand that the software that we'll be recommending will be able to run on these devices.

There's a space in this section for any additional supporting information. You could use this space to write down things like "they may be only able to access a computer at school or at work", or "they have an iPhone, but the iPhone is quite old and doesn't run all apps". This contextual information can help you to identify which strategies will be most appropriate and how best to implement these technologies and strategies for the specific individual you're working with.

Section 2.1 is on identified challenges. This is the section where we'll be thinking about the challenges and barriers that individuals face that they've come to you for support with. The first box is about the challenges they experience. This could be their current health condition and the impacts of that current health condition, such as the particular symptoms, they might experience like fatigue, or it could be related to their disability.

As we know when we think about the term disability, we are thinking about this in relation to the social model. Not everybody will relate to the term disability or disabled. However, what we are thinking about here are the barriers that an individual might experience. For example, an individual might experience barriers to reading or barriers to processing when reading, those are the types of things that we'll be exploring in this box.

The next action is disability related impacts on the ability to complete daily tasks. This is where we're going to expand on those initial challenges we've written down. We want to understand what the barrier really is. What is it that might challenge or cause problems for the individual every day?

This is going to be the starting point for you thinking about what strategies, tools, assistive technology and solutions might benefit this individual. Remember that we aren't recommending solutions based on a specific diagnosis that any individual may hold. This is because you don't need a diagnosis to experience barriers or challenges.

Each individual will also experience very different barriers or challenges from the next individual, regardless of whether they might share a similar diagnostic label. Identify any specific challenges for that individual that they might experience each day and write down the context of when they experienced those challenges as well.

For example, I might experience challenges when I'm reading from a screen, but not experience those similar challenges when I'm reading from paper, we can then use the space to explore why that might be. If there's any further background or context, such as, when I read from a computer screen and I've got the computer screen tinted to a warm orange, I can read much better,

that context can all go in here. We can also use the further background and context to talk about the strengths of the individual. And this is really important because the best place to start for strategies is by identifying the strengths first and building on those strenghts. For example, I'm quite good at drawing things and using mind mapping to understand information.

So for me to help me to process different reading things, I might then be able to draw a reminder up and quickly get my ideas down that I've extracted from the text and might need to process. Add in those strengths add in things like, the individual feels very creative. Well, the individual is very good at time management or project planning.

These are all great places to start. When you're thinking about strategies in the next section.

 The last section in your needs assessment report is number three recommendations, and this is the crucial part of your assessment, where you're going to identify what strategies might work best for the end.

And it's really important to remember here that those strategies can't just be decided by you. It needs to be a collaborative discussion between you and the individual that you're assessing to work out if the strategies will work for them and how they might be able to use them. When you're writing this section, keep in mind that many individuals won't yet have heard any of these assistive technologies or solutions that you're recommending.

They might not have any context to how to apply them or how to install them. So that important justification and explanation of what each of those tools are, is really fundamental to get right in this section. When you open the needs assessment report template, you'll see, you've got lots of different boxes that can be filled in for recommendations.

You should edit this number of boxes to the number of recommendations that you're going to make. For example, in the mock assessment you saw in week one, there were three recommendations that were made. You might do a needs assessment where eight or nine different recommendations are valid for that individual and would work well for them.

Judge it depending on the individual, their own context and circumstances and how those different tools remove the barriers for the individual. When you're completing each of these boxes, you need to name the recommendation. We'll use X mind here as an example.

Inbox eight, where the words read name of recommendation, remove this text and add in the word XMind. You can also put a link to X mind software here so that when the individual reviews the report, they're able to very quickly download it or look back on what's been suggested. It's also helpful if somebody, other than the individual or yourself will be reading this assessment, as it means that they'll be able to go and look the tool up, find out a bit more about it and then support the individual in implementing that tool

if needed. Once you've made the specific recommendation of software, we need to justify why we're recommending that software. What we want to do here is write a brief description of what the tool is. For example, X mind is a digital mind mapping tool that you can use to get your ideas down, quickly, move them around and remain agile in your thinking planning processes.

We then need to say why this specific tool has been recommended for the individual and how it will support them in overcoming the barriers that you've identified. For example, X mind is recommended to support overcoming barriers to processing information and planning essays. This tool will enable the person to easily get their ideas down on the page without any challenges in having to put them in a specific order.

Once those ideas are on the page, the individual will then be able to quickly move them into the sections needed and export the essay into a word document, for submission. It is recommended that colour coding strategies are used in this mind mapping tool. As this builds on the strength of organizing colours, that the individual has already told us about.

After you've written this justification check through what you've written with the individual, ask them if it's summarizes their needs, and if that tool will really help them to overcome those barriers, if it does, that's great. If it doesn't go back and have a think about what other options there might be or how you could implement that tool in conjunction with another tool to support that individual, even better.

We hope this guide has been useful in helping to break down the different sections of the needs assessment report. Do practice this approach with friends and family and peers and colleagues and see if you're confident in using it? If you're not come back to us, ask questions, we're absolutely here to support you.