Talking with Older Adults Course: Coaching, Standards and Review for Care Managers

25 – 29 October 2027
Barcelona

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Programme Summary

Talking with older adults is the subject of this one-week training course for care home and home-care managers, nursing and allied health leads and caregiver trainers, who finish with a team coaching plan. Care quality often depends on small conversations, yet communication standards are rarely written down or observed. The programme covers hearing, vision and memory changes, respectful language, difficult moments and structured feedback, using examples from residential, home and hospital settings. Mars Training Centre UK delivers this programme on talking with older adults.

The Business Case

Poor communication with older people leads to missed concerns, unsettled residents, family complaints and tired staff. Managers seldom see these conversations directly, so they cannot easily say what good looks like or coach it. The programme gives leaders simple standards, observation tools and a coaching routine, so that daily conversations become something a team can describe, practise and review.

- Resident experience: consistent, respectful conversation reduces distress and increases cooperation with care.
- Complaint volume: clear explanations to residents and families reduce avoidable misunderstandings.
- Staff confidence: coaching and feedback lower stress and support retention.

Principles and Evidence Base

- Communication partner training: used to teach caregivers to adjust their own speech, pace and prompts, not to expect the older person to adapt.
- Health literacy guidance on older adults: applied to the effects of hearing, vision and cognitive change on understanding.
- Person-centred communication: used to shape language around the individual's history, dignity and preferences.
- Structured observation and feedback: applied to review conversations fairly and coach without blame.

Intended Participants

- Managers accountable for the daily quality of care in residential or home settings
- Nursing and allied health leads who supervise caregivers
- Trainers who design communication content for caregiver teams
- Quality leads who review complaints and resident feedback
- Supervisors who run handovers and team meetings

The programme suits care homes, home-care agencies, hospital older-adult wards and community health services.

Learning Outcomes

1. Participants will be able to diagnose communication barriers linked to hearing, vision and memory change.
2. Participants will be able to construct communication standards for a care team.
3. Participants will be able to evaluate a recorded or observed conversation against agreed criteria.
4. Participants will be able to prioritise responses for distress, refusal and family disagreement.
5. Participants will be able to design a coaching routine for caregivers.
6. Participants will be able to justify a team communication plan to senior management.

Programme Structure

Day 1: Talking with Older Adults: Foundations

What makes a conversation with an older person succeed or fail?

- Communication Partner Principles
- Dignity and Person-Centred Language
- Hearing and Vision Barrier Checklist
- Memory Change Communication Cues
- Conversation Quality Self-Assessment

Day 2: Diagnosing Daily Conversations

Where do conversations in our service break down, and why?

- Observation Guide for Care Routines
- Resident Voice Interview Method
- Complaint Theme Analysis
- Handover Language Review
- Barrier Map for a Care Team

Day 3: Standards and Tools

What should a team say and do, and how is it written down?

- Team Communication Standard Template
- Greeting and Explanation Scripts
- Visual and Written Prompt Cards
- Family Update Structure
- Environment Adjustments for Hearing and Vision

Day 4: Difficult Moments and Coaching

How do leaders coach caregivers through distress, refusal and disagreement?

- Distress De-escalation Steps
- Refusal Response Options
- Family Disagreement Conversation Guide
- Coaching Conversation Model
- Feedback Without Blame Protocol

Day 5: Review Cycle and Capstone

How are standards, observation and coaching joined into one cycle?

- Observation Sampling Plan
- Standards Applied to a Live Case
- Coaching Calendar for a Team
- Management Briefing Rehearsal
- Completion of the Team Coaching Plan

Methodology

The principal method is structured exercise on short conversation scenarios and anonymised observation notes. Participants first practise a technique in pairs, then use observation tools on realistic cases before applying them to their own teams. Facilitators encourage comparison across residential, home and hospital settings. Each session ends with a short written decision about what the participant will observe or coach in the following week.

- Suggested activity: role-play a refusal of care and compare responses in a group.
- Suggested activity: score a written conversation extract against a draft standard.
- Suggested activity: plan a four-week coaching calendar for a mixed team.

Capstone Output

Each participant completes a team coaching plan for a named care service. It contains a communication standard, an observation sampling plan, a set of prompt tools, a coaching calendar and a short briefing for senior management. The plan is taken back to the team as a working draft, tested for a few weeks and then revised with caregivers and families.

Frequently Asked Questions

Is this talking with older adults programme suitable for managers who are not clinicians?

Yes. It assumes responsibility for a care team, not clinical training. You learn the barriers and techniques needed to observe conversations, set standards and coach caregivers.

Which model does talking with older adults rest on?

It rests on communication partner training, health literacy guidance on older adults, person-centred communication and structured observation and feedback. Each is applied to team standards and coaching.

How is the talking with older adults coaching plan used at work?

You take it to your team as a working draft. It sets communication standards, observation routines, prompt tools and a coaching calendar, and it supports a briefing to senior management.

How does talking with older adults differ from a general customer service course?

Talking with older adults deals with hearing, vision and memory change, dignity and distress in care settings. A general customer service course covers service manner without these care-specific barriers.