# Reflection Log

This Reflection Log is a personal resource that you will build up as you work through the course. You will use it to record your progress through the unit as you undertake activities and tasks. You can add to the Log at any time with further notes and observations. Once you have completed the course, we hope that this Log will be a useful reference for you to reflect on your practice or to plan your next steps towards the Carer Positive kitemark.

This Log is designed to be downloaded and saved to your computer or memory stick. You can open and add to it as required – but **don’t forget to save it** every time you use it.

If you prefer, you could print out the Log and use it to write down your thoughts by hand.

Some of the activities in the course may be completed by using free online tools, for example bubbl.us. You also have the option of completing these activities using any other IT tools that you have, or a pen and paper, or you might like to think visually and make collages.

The important thing is the learning you gain from completing the tasks rather than the tools you use.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **My name** |  |
| **My organisation (if applicable)** |  |
| **Date** |  |

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##

## Activity 1.1 Thinking about myself

*We suggest spending around 15 minutes on this activity.*

The next stage is to start thinking about yourself and your role as a manager. A good way to do this is to ask yourself four questions:

* How do I see myself now? For example how well do I engage with the people I manage?
* What are my strengths?
* What am I most proud of within my management role?
* How would I like to see myself in the future?

You can fill in the boxes for yourself in the table we have provided for you below or, if you prefer, you could take a different approach and use a visual way to sum yourself up. You can do this at any point during the course if you’d like to.

Words aren’t the only way to capture or explore your ideas. Sometimes it helps to use pictures.



Creating a mood or vision board is a fun and creative way to get insight into your thinking. You’ll need a range of catalogues, magazines and newspapers, some scissors, glue, coloured paper, maybe even some glitter!

Just flick through the magazines until you see images or words that catch your attention. Cut or tear that page out. Before you know it you’ll have gathered pictures and words that summarise some of your thoughts about yourself and your role as a manager.

You might be surprised at the pictures you’ve chosen. Sometimes a creative activity can release thoughts or ideas that you can’t put into words.



Arrange your images into a collage and you have a record of your feelings or your aspirations – whatever you choose to show. You can use it to talk about your thoughts with others if you’d like to.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **How do I see myself now? How well do I engage with the people I manage?** | **What are my strengths?** |
|  |  |
| **What am I most proud of within my management role?** | **How would I like to see myself in the future?** |
|  |  |

## Activity 2.1 My timeline

*We suggest spending around 20 minutes on this activity.*

Having looked at the examples try drawing your own timeline.

The actual timeframe will be up to you – it can include your whole life since childhood, or you might want to focus on your career, family life, or if you also have a caring role, your experience of life as a carer.

You could use the drawing tools available in most word processing programs, such as Microsoft Word, to produce your timeline or other diagrams.

If you’d like to look at further IT options, you can use a free online software program to create images like the ones included in this course. Go to [bubbl.us](https://bubbl.us/) and click on Welcome, then on the main page select ‘Learn how to use bubbl.us’, and this will show you how to get started. (This is not an Open University website and the OU is not responsible for third party websites such as this or the information you choose to share with them.)

If you prefer not to use bubbl.us, or any other online tools, don’t worry – pen and paper will do just as well! You can print off this document.

You may have other ways of representing your timeline. What is important in this activity is the information or understanding from your experience that is brought to mind. So, if you prefer, you can simply make a list of the high points and low points of the period of your life and reflect on these.

Remember, it’s up to you what you want to include and the timeframe you want to focus on – your whole life, or a specific period. Try to put low points lower down the page and high points above them, just as Lesley and Scott have done, but if your life has fewer ups and downs then just list them side by side. You do not need to include anything that you want to keep private.

If you are working in a group, or with a mentor, you might want to share and discuss your timeline.

Keep your timeline safe, you’ll need to refer to it for Activity 2.3.



Use the space below for any notes that you want to make on your timeline activities.

|  |
| --- |
| **My notes** |
|   |

## Activity 2.2 Learning from the caring experience

*We suggest spending around 10 minutes on this activity.*

You have heard Lesley talking about what she has learned from the different roles, environments and situations she has been in.

Here are some key words from Lesley’s comments:

By reflecting on her experience Lesley has learned that she is **resilient**; she can **manage her time**; she can **budget** and she can **manage stress**. She knows that she is **capable** of learning new things and **coping** with difficult situations and that she can **communicate** well.

Think about the following questions and make some notes in the table below.

* Was some of Lesley’s learning unexpected?
* Did she learn from difficult times as well as good ones?
* Did Lesley learn things while caring that will be useful in studying and employment?

|  |
| --- |
| **My notes** |
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## Activity 2.3 Learning from my experience

*We suggest spending around 15 minutes on this activity*

In the previous activity, carers looked at their life experiences, focusing particularly on their caring roles. You may also find it interesting to try this activity for yourself.

Look at your timeline again and think about what you have learned from your experiences. Looking over the ups and downs:

* Does the timeline help you to recall how you felt at each point?
* What did you learn from each situation?

Perhaps you found out more about your individual qualities and your ability to just keep going: qualities such as resilience, adaptability or reliability?

If you’re using [bubbl.us](http://bubbl.us/) you can add your learning points to your timeline in a different colour. You can find out how to do this in the [bubbl.us](http://bubbl.us/) help section. Once done, you can save your new image as a .JPG file and insert it into the space below.

If you prefer not to use bubbl.us, don’t worry – pen and paper will do just as well. Add your learning points to the hand-drawn timeline that you created in Activity 2.1.

If you’re working with a group, you can share and discuss your learning points with others if you’d like to.

Add your amended timeline here.

##

## Activity 3.1 Reflection on Gavin’s observations

*We suggest spending around 15 minutes on this reflection activity.*

Record your thoughts on Gavin’s observations in the box below.

|  |
| --- |
| **My notes** |
|  |

If you are doing this course as part of a group or with a mentor then you can share your answers and discuss your notes with others.

## Activity 3.2 Reflection on carers’ timelines and learning points

*We suggest spending around 15 minutes on this reflection activity.*

Looking at the carers’ timelines and learning points, are there other skills and qualities you think could be added to these lists?

Record your thoughts in the box below.

|  |
| --- |
| **My notes** |
|  |

If you are doing this course as part of a group or with a mentor then you can share your answers and discuss your notes with others.

## Activity 3.3 Reflection on valued skills and qualities in the workforce

*We suggest spending around 15 minutes on this reflection activity.*

What skills and qualities would you value in your workforce?

Record your thoughts in the box below.

|  |
| --- |
| **My notes** |
|  |

If you are doing this course as part of a group or with a mentor then you can share your answers and discuss your notes with others.

## Activity 3.4 Reflection on carers’ personal qualities in the workforce

*We suggest spending around 15 minutes on this reflection activity.*

Have you thought about the personal qualities that carers possess and how they might use these at work?

What do you think aboutthe skills, qualities and attributes highlighted by carers and summarised in Table 3.1?

The skills you saw listed for Lesley and Scott result from all their experiences gained through education, their work and their caring roles.

Do you recognise any of these skills, qualities and attributes in the carers in your workforce?

You might find [The SCQF: A Guide for Employers](http://scqf.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/Employer-Guide-v2-FINAL-July-2010-with-updated-Framework.pdf) to be a useful resource. This maps skill levels to qualifications.

Record your thoughts in the box below.

|  |
| --- |
| **My notes** |
|  |

If you are doing this course as part of a group or with a mentor then you can share your answers and discuss your notes with others.

## Activity 4.1 Reflection on carers’ skills, qualities and attributes developed through their caring role

*We suggest spending around 15 minutes on this reflection activity.*

Naomi is working towards a career in social work. The following is a list of the skills, qualities and attributes that a social worker would need:

* excellent communication and people skills
* the ability to relate to people of all ages and backgrounds and gain their trust
* a practical and flexible approach to work
* tact, patience and empathy
* an understanding of the needs of different client groups
* a non-judgemental attitude
* the ability to work in a team and also use their own initiative
* the ability to assess situations and take appropriate action
* resilience – for coping with difficult situations and challenging cases
* good time management and organisational skills
* computer literacy and administrative skills.

(Source: National Careers Service, 2012)

Looking at the skills, qualities and attributes above, how might Naomi’s caring experience prepare her to become a social worker?

Record your thoughts in the box overleaf.

|  |
| --- |
| **My notes** |
|  |

If you are doing this course as part of a group or with a mentor then you can share your answers and discuss your notes with others.

## Activity 4.2 Looking at person specifications

*We suggest spending around 30 minutes on this activity.*

Bearing in mind what you have learned about the carers’ and their experiences in a caring role we would now like you to consider what carers may bring to your organisation.

* Identify a person specification for a job in your organisation.
* Explore the information in the person specification, so that you are able to respond to the following questions:
1. What knowledge, skills, qualities and attributes are required in the person specification?
2. What might someone with experience of caring bring to the role?
3. What kinds of question could an interview panel ask to identify some of these things during recruitment?

You can use the table provided to record your thoughts.

|  |
| --- |
| **Person specification** |
| **Knowledge, skills, qualities and attributes needed for the role** |  |
| **Things a carer could bring to the role** |  |
| **Useful types of interview question to ask** |  |

You can complete this activity on your own or in pairs if you are in a group. Remember to save your answers because you will return to these in future activities.

If you completed this activity in pairs or in a group environment, you may want to discuss your answers.

## Activity 4.3 Factors that help or hinder carers

*We suggest spending around 15 minutes on this reflection activity*.

Thinking of the carers you have met during the course, or carers that you know or support at work, think about some of the factors that may help or hinder them.

Record your thoughts in the box below.

|  |
| --- |
| **My notes** |
|  |

If you are doing this course as part of a group or with a mentor then you can share your answers and discuss your notes with others.

## Activity 4.4 Support network

*We suggest spending around 15 minutes on this activity.*

Try drawing your own spider diagram to illustrate the support for carers you are aware of in your workplace.

Using a different colour pen, add other sources of support for carers that you have explored during the session.

Considering the example of Scottish Court Service, and any ideas you may have, use another colour to add support that your organisation could possibly provide for carers in the future.

If you are working in a group, you can share your spider diagram with the rest of the group and discuss each other’s ideas before adding them to the diagram.

You can use the online tool <http://www.bubbl.us> to create your spider diagram or you can do this with pen and paper if you prefer.

Before drawing your spider diagram, here are some points to consider:

1. What skills and qualities should a supportive line manager have? (such as tact, sensitivity, empathy, ability to build mutual trust and respect, communication skills, fairness, reflective)
2. What factors might you need to consider when supporting a carer in your workforce (such as impact on the rest of the team, workload, staff awareness, supportive culture, policies)?

Keep in mind that you should gain permission from staff before sharing information about their caring role with the rest of the team. Respect their privacy.

1. What other support could be put in place for carers in your workplace?

Be sure to save the spider diagram as this could help you with your planning activity in the next session.

**My spider diagram**

|  |
| --- |
| **My notes** |
|  |

## Activity 5.1 My action plan

*We suggest spending around 30 minutes on this activity.*

For this activity you need to think about the five criteria for the Carer Positive kitemark, where you/your organisation are trying to get to, and within what timescale. As a reminder, here are the five criteria again:

1. Identification of carers
2. Policy
3. Workplace support
4. Communication, awareness raising and training
5. Peer support

Think carefully about what you need to do to get there, starting from ‘now’ and where you are now. Take a moment to think back over the activities you have done and what you have learned from this course.

You may have several goals in mind: these might be for you as a line manager, or wider goals for the organisation. Some may be quite specific and achievable within a short timescale; others may be broader in scope, longer term and perhaps more complex. Think in terms of bite-size chunks or stepping stones. Thinking about a series of small steps makes it easier to identify and plan what a next step might be.

Remember, there is a lot of information and advice available from the websites listed in the Resources section of this course.

Now complete the template for your action plan (it is on the next page of this document).

|  |
| --- |
| **My long-term goal** |
|  |
| **Carer Positive criteria** | **What I am going to do** | **Where I will go for help or advice** | **When I will do this** |
| **Identification of carers:** |  |  |  |
| **Policy:** |  |  |  |
| **Workplace support:** |  |  |  |
| **Communication, awareness raising and training:** |  |  |  |
| **Peer support:** |  |  |  |
| **The first step I am going to take will be to…** |
|  |

## Activity 5.2 Reflection on my practice

*We suggest spending around 30 minutes on this activity*

Consider each of the Core Principles for Working with Carers and Young Carers and reflect on how well you demonstrate them in your practice.

The Core Principles are supported by a framework of knowledge and skills, with three levels based on job role and nature of contact with carers. [Level 3](http://www.knowledge.scot.nhs.uk/media/6806454/core%20principles-level3.pdf) outlines the knowledge and skills those with a leadership or management role may need. You may find it useful to read these to help you identify areas of your practice that you feel you need to develop.

To get you started, we have listed the Core Principles in the table below, along with some reflective questions based on the skills expected at Level 3, and some space for your comments.

| Core Principle | Reflective question and comments |
| --- | --- |
| Carers are identified | Do you feel confident that you could identify if someone you manage had a caring role? |
| Carers are supported and empowered to manage their caring role | What skills and qualities would you need to support someone in your workforce to manage their caring role? |
| Carers are enabled to have a life outside of caring | Having time away from their caring role to return to work or to continue working can be important for carers. What support are you aware of in your workplace and the wider community to enable carers to do this? |
| Carers are fully engaged with the planning and shaping of services | Are carers in your workforce involved in planning and decision making? |
|  | How do you ensure they feel valued as members of your staff team? |
| Carers are free from disadvantage or discrimination related to their caring role | What policies are in place in your organisation to ensure carers do not experience discrimination or disadvantage as a result of their caring role? |
| Carers are recognised and valued as equal partners in care | How do you contribute to fostering a Carer Positive workplace? |
|  | Do you promote carer awareness in support and supervision with all staff? |
| The first step I am going to take to improve my practice will be to… |
|  |

If you are working in a group, or with a mentor, you may want to discuss and share your thoughts and share your ‘first step’ sentence with others.

## We hope you have enjoyed working through this course and found it useful.