



# Principles of rehabilitation

Training resource for support workers



This workbook has been produced by the CSP and the professional network Agile.  
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# Principles of rehabilitation

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## 1.1 Aim of the workbook

The aim of this workbook is to introduce physiotherapy support workers to the principles of rehabilitation and to incorporate these principles into practice.

## 1.2 Learning outcomes

By the end of this workbook you will be able to:

- **Explain** the purpose of rehabilitation.
- **Describe** the components that form the process of rehabilitation.
- **Identify** from your own practice where rehabilitation principles can be incorporated.
- **Demonstrate** an appropriate contribution to the setting of realistic rehabilitation goals with selected patients.
- **Recognise** and provide appropriate information to patients and carers in relation to patient's therapeutic needs and goals.
- Recognise when it is appropriate to involve carers in rehabilitation activities and do so effectively.
- **Accurately** describe patient progress in meeting goals to appropriate professional standards.

## 1.3 What is rehabilitation?

Rehabilitation can be defined as 'a set of interventions designed to optimise functioning and reduce disability in individuals with health conditions in interaction with their environment (World Health Organisation 2023), [Rehabilitation \(who.int\)](https://www.who.int)

It involves restoration, to the maximum degree possible, of physical or mental function and role. Roles include what the person does within the family, socially or at work.

Rehabilitation usually requires a mixture of clinical, therapeutic and social interventions that address issues relevant to a person's physical and social environment.

Effective rehabilitation needs to be responsive to patients' needs and wishes, be purposeful, involve a number of agencies and disciplines and be available when required.

Rehabilitation helps a person to be as independent as possible in everyday activities and enables participation in education, work, and recreation (WHO, 2023).

## 1.4 The process of rehabilitation

Rehabilitation is a complex process, involving an interdisciplinary team and normally comprises of the following components:

- **Assessment**
- **Goal setting**
- **Interventions**
- **Outcome**

Professionals involved in rehabilitation include nurses, medical practitioners, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, dietitians, speech and language therapists and podiatrists.

Assessment enables professionals to identify what intervention is required, and which members of the team require to be involved in the rehabilitation of individual patients. All members of the multidisciplinary team have a contribution to make to the assessment process.

Areas that the different professionals are involved in assessing and assisting patients to achieve independence include:

- **Physical activities of daily living**
  - basic self-care, mobility, coping with domestic tasks
- **Mental health functioning**
  - cognitive abilities, presence of psychiatric symptoms
- **Psychosocial functioning**
  - emotional well-being in a social and cultural context
- **Social resources**
  - family, friends, familiar professional and voluntary helper
- **Communication**
  - verbal and non-verbal.

The therapists, as part of the multidisciplinary team, discuss the difficulties the patient is experiencing with the patient and their carers where appropriate. They then assess the patient and jointly identify problems. These problems are usually difficulties the patient presents with, that prevent them from being able to function independently.

## 1.5 Goal setting

Goals are jointly set with the patient and the team. Goals normally address a functional problem and they are the purpose of the proposed intervention. Goals can address problems such as inability to get out of bed independently, balance in sitting or standing or inability to dress or climb stairs independently. Goals should be SMART; this means they have well defined criteria for success:

**Specific** – clear identification of what the patient is aiming to achieve

**Measurable** – has a target that can be measured. This could be numerical, but there are other forms of measurement.

**Achievable** – is attainable in the time allowed

**Realistic/relevant** – is meaningful, important to the patient and relevant to their functional problem

**Timed** – the intended time frame to accomplish the goal.

It is very important that all team members work with the patient and their carers towards the achievement of functional goals and the goals are achievable. As a physiotherapy support worker working with patients to achieve rehabilitation goals, you will be involved with the patient and the multi- disciplinary team in setting

these goals. Because you are in the unique position of assisting with tasks or everyday living, you can provide information and feedback to the team about the progress of the patient.

Sometimes the therapy department or ward is an artificial environment and patients perform differently there than in their own home. If you are working with patients in a ward or therapy department, part of your role will be to bridge the gap between this setting and their home environment and to assist the patient in the setting and achieving their goals. Support workers also work in the community where they will continue this rehabilitation within a patient's own home, or their role may span both settings where they will follow the patient through the pathway.

Sometimes it is difficult for therapists to speak with relatives and carers due to time availability and other commitments in their roles. Again, because of your unique role, you will at times be able to communicate with relatives and involve them in the rehabilitation activities, as agreed with the therapists.

## 1.6 Interventions

Specialist staff provide interventions within the scope of their professional remit – physiotherapy, speech and language therapy, occupational therapy and podiatry, **but all staff working with the patient**

**can contribute to rehabilitation.** Each member of the team has a role to play in enabling patients to achieve their goals.

The multi-disciplinary team works together to enable patients to independently carry out activities of daily living and achieve their goals. Gait rehabilitation (the rehabilitation of walking) and transfers are key areas in which physiotherapists work to enable patients to achieve independence. In your role as a physiotherapy support worker, you are ideally placed to encourage the patient to achieve independence. The support worker works with registered therapists to provide therapeutic activities, which may include exercises. The support worker is ideally placed to ensure the patient continues to practice these activities to achieve independence. The key to your role in this is understanding the therapy goals and carrying out appropriate activities with patients in collaboration with the therapists. Some support workers have specific job roles where they are able to progress some elements of intervention autonomously.

Communication between team members is vital and team members may come together at a multi-disciplinary meeting to discuss progress and discharge plans (depending on setting).

As a support worker, having clear lines of communication between you and the therapists within your team is vital. You should give feedback on the progress your

patient is making and monitor the selected therapy activities for patients in your area of work.

## 1.7 Outcome

Outcome refers to the effectiveness of the rehabilitation activities in achieving the expected goal (Langhorne et al 2011). Therapists use various measures to assess the effectiveness of rehabilitation. The Elderly Mobility Scale, for example, measures balance, locomotion and position changes required for more complex activities of daily living and is used as a physiotherapy outcome measure. Outcome measures should be linked to SMART goals and used to provide appropriate measurement of progress.

What constitutes a successful outcome will vary between patients and appropriate outcome measures used should be selected accordingly.

Being independent is not a realistic and achievable goal for all patients, it may be progressing from assistance of two to assistance of one or it may mean that they can access a day centre (for example).

## 1.8 Evidence your knowledge

As a physiotherapy support worker working with patients, you are ideally placed to contribute to achieving and monitoring the outcome of rehabilitation.

### Defining rehabilitation

**Explain what is meant by the term Rehabilitation**

**Describe the four components of the rehabilitation process**

## Principles of rehabilitation

**Consider the activities that you undertake with patients in your clinical area. Which of those would patients need to do independently in order to be able to function at home?**

**From your own work as a physiotherapy support worker, identify activities that your patients would need to perform independently in order to function in their own environment.**

**How might you be able to incorporate rehabilitation activities into your work to enhance the outcome for the patient?**

## Goal setting

Once you have completed the workbook and have been able to apply what you have learned to your practice, provide a description of how you addressed goal setting in rehabilitation with a selected patient.

What contribution did you make to the setting of rehabilitation goals with this patient (describe your discussion with the patient, their therapists and their carers)?

Describe your involvement with the carers. What information did you provide them with in relation to the patient's therapy?

How did you involve the carers in the therapy activities?

**How did you describe to the appropriate therapists the progress of the patient towards the goals?**

**What went well?**

**What could have gone better and why?**

**What would you do differently next time?**

# 1.9 Principles of rehabilitation workbook completion

Your mentor / supervisor will sign your portfolio to indicate that you have completed this workbook successfully.

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Supervisors Signature</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>Explaining the purpose of rehabilitation</b>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<b>Describing three components of rehabilitation</b>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<b>Identifying from own practice where rehabilitation principles can be incorporated</b>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<b>Demonstrating an appropriate contribution to the setting of realistic rehabilitation goals with selected patients</b>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<b>Recognising and providing appropriate information to patients and carers in relation to patients therapeutic needs and goals</b>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<b>Recognising when it is appropriate to involve carers in rehabilitation activities and do so effectively</b>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<b>Actively describing patient progress in meeting goals to appropriate professional standards</b>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>



# Notes

# Notes



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