

## **'Capable Environments' Transcript**

### **Introduction**

Jo Coulson:

[00:01] This video is all about capable environments, what they are and why they're useful for anyone working within and positive behaviour support context.

[00:10] As with all of our videos, this one has been sponsored by Norfolk County Council.

[00:19] This video is introduced by me, Jo Coulson.

[00:22] I'm a board certified behaviour analyst and a UKBA cert.

[00:27] I've worked within health and social care for twenty years and have been using the positive behaviour support model as a clinician for fifteen.

[00:35] I work across a range of setting for adults and children and I help develop strategies and service level support to improve people's quality of life.

[00:44] I deliver lots of clinical supervision to enhance other people's practices and I sit on the UK society for Behaviour Analysis Board.

[00:53] Along with that, I'm a co presenter for PBS Matters podcast alongside Paddy, who is doing the other videos for Norfolk County Council.

[01:07] So in this video we're going to cover what capable environments are, the different components of capable environments and how we should consider applying them.

[01:15] And then I'm going to talk you through a case study so that you can see capable environments in action.

### **What is a capable environment?**

[01:26] So what is a capable environment?

[01:28] A capable environment is somewhere that meets all the needs of the person who's supported.

[01:34] It gives them the life that they want, so that they don't need to produce behaviours that challenge to get those needs met.

[1:40] It moves away from the focus being on the individual to their environment.

[1:49] So if we have a good environment for the person, what we have found is that it increases that person's quality of life, increases well being for both the person and their staff team, it reduces the use of restrictive practices and it reduces placement breakdown.

[02:11] Okay, so there are twelve elements to capable environments for us to consider.

[02:16] The first one is positive social interactions.

[02:20] Then we have support for communication, support to participate in meaningful activity, consistent and predictable environments, that they establish and maintain relationships, that there's opportunities for choice, there's an encouragement of independent functioning, that the personal health and care needs are met, that there's an acceptable physical environment, that the staff supporting them are mindful and skilled, then that there's an effective management and support.

[02:51] And finally, there's an effective organisational context.

### **Positive Social Interactions**

[02:57] So the first component is positive social interactions.

[03:01] So the things that we should be looking for here is, are those interactions that - between the person we support and their staff team - respectful, are they more positive to neutral?

[03:11] So by neutral what I mean is things like instructions: 'Go get your coat.'

[03:15] And more positive in relation to negative, so, 'Stop that, don't do that.'

[03:21] We're looking for a much bigger amount of interactions that are positive.

[03:25] We're also looking, do the staff team respond to initiations for interaction?

[03:31] And are they themselves initiating interactions with the person that we support?

### **Support for Communication**

[03:41] So the next component is communication systems.

[03:44] So what are we looking for?

[03:46] Firstly, individualised communication.

[03:48] Are resources needed?

[03:50] Are those resources available?

[03:52] And then, are staff trained to use them?

[03:55] QUite often we might see that the person uses PECS or Makaton, but staff don't actually know how to use them.

[04:01] So in a good, capable environment, you've got those systems in place and everyone understands them.

### **Support to Participate in Meaningful Activity**

[04:11] So component three, opportunities to participate in meaningful activities.

[04:18] What you're looking for is, is there an individualised opportunity plan for that person?

[4:23] Do they have things to do that they actually like?

[04:27] Are they engaged in activities?

[04:30] Is there a good variety?

[04:31] And then, is support tailored to make sure that people can access those activities successfully ?

### **Consistent and Predictable Environments**

[04:41] In consistent and predictable environments, what we're looking for is, are all staff supporting that person in a consistent way, in a way that the person likes to be supported.

[04:51] Are there systems in place that make that environment predictable?

[04:55] Is there a staff rotor, for instance, or an activity timetable or a diary that just communicates what appointments are happening for that person?

[05:03] Are there clear activity support plans so that their staff know how to support that person?

[05:09] One of the things that I've been liking to do recently is have a QR code that can be scanned so that all staff supporting that person can scan the QR code and see the step by step activity plan for what to do.

### **Establish and Maintain Relationships**

[05:25] Next component is establish and maintain relationships.

[05:29] So what should you be looking for?

[05:31] Does that person have anyone in their life that's not paid to be with them?

[05:35] If they do, how do we maintain that?

[05:38] Do we need to make use of technology?

[05:40] Do we need to give regular opportunities for the family members, friends to visit and for the person we work with to visit them?

[05:47] Do we need to plan that?

[05:49] And then if they don't have those people in their lives, what can we do to support that person and to develop those friendships?

### **Opportunities for Choice**

[05:59] Component six is all about opportunities to make a choice.

[06:03] So some questions to ask ourselves, how does this person make a choice?

[06:07] And how do you meaningfully offer that person a choice?

[06:10] Can they choose between two options?

[06:12] Four options?

[06:13] Do they need to be written, presented visually?

[06:16] Do they need objects to actually choose from?

[06:19] Do staff then actually understand that person's communication to say whether they are happy doing something or unhappy doing something?

[06:25] Are we listening to that person's behaviour as well as the words that they say?

[06:31] We need to make sure that people are involved in the decisions about their life and give people plenty of opportunities throughout the day to make decisions.

[06:39] There are lots of opportunities throughout the day to make lots of decisions.

[06:44] It doesn't need to just be the big ones, like where to go on holiday.

[06:47] It can be, when do I want to go out?

[06:49] What clothes do I want to wear?

[06:51] Where do I want to go?

### **Encouragement of Independent Functioning**

[06:57] So the next bit is all about opportunities for independent functioning.

[07:01] Now, what we should always remember with this is, that no one of us is truly independent in all aspects of our life.

[07:07] So it's about being as independent as possible.

[07:10] So, for example, if my car breaks down, I can't fix it myself.

[07:14] I either call my dad or I take it to a garage.

[07:18] I'm not truly independent, but I am independent in requesting the help and support that I need.

[07:23] So, to increase someone's opportunities for independent functioning, what we need to make sure that we do is give people time.

[07:30] Don't rush the person.

[07:31] We need to understand the levels of support that that person needs.

[07:35] Good, solid activity plans can help this.

[07:38] And finally, we need to make sure that there's an appropriate risk assessment in place.

[07:42] This isn't about risk assessing people within an inch of their life.

[07:46] It's about just making sure that people are given an opportunity to participate in as safe a way as possible, rather than using it as a way to ban activities from happening.

### **Personal Care and Health Support**

[07:59] Section eight is all about personal and healthcare.

[08:03] So, do we understand what that person's healthcare needs are?

[08:06] Are there regular visits and checks on that person's health happening?

[08:11] Do they have a support plan for how that person prefers to be supported with their intimate and personal care?

[08:17] Are people understanding that plan and following it?

### **Acceptable Physical Environment**

[08:24] The next element is all about the physical environment.

[08:28] So things that we should be expecting to see here is, it is homely?

[08:32] Does it look like somewhere that we would like to live?

[08:35] Is it accessible for the person?

[08:38] So, especially if they have physical needs, can they manage any stairs that are there, are there aids for someone to get into and out of the bath?

[08:47] Then we're also just looking for some of those fundamental things, like, is it clean?

[08:52] Is it safe?

[08:53] Do they have all of the furnishings and things that they need in their home?

### **Mindful, Skilled Carers**

[09:05] Component ten is all about the staff and them being mindful and skilled carers.

[09:11] So the things I want to look for here is, do they have an understanding why the person presents the behaviours that challenge that they do?

[09:19] Do they have good values?

[09:21] Do they support that person with respect and dignity?

[09:24] Are they well trained?

[09:25] Have they had all of the training that is needed to effectively support that person?

[09:30] And then finally, is there opportunities for good reflective supervision and support?

[09:35] So where they look back at their staff shifts and go, why did this work well?

[09:40] Why did that not work well?

[09:41] And then those reflections inform improving support again in the future.

### **Effective Management and Support?**

[09:49] Part eleven of capable environments is all about effective management.

[09:54] So the things that I'd like to see here is, are there good shift plans?

[09:58] Do all the staff know what's expected of them during their shift?

[10:02] Are there regular team meetings happening?

[10:05] Are there good supervisions happening?

[10:07] Is everyone working consistently and communicating across themselves as a team?

[10:12] And then are there systems for debriefs in place?

[10:15] So if staff feel that they need someone to talk to following either a difficult shift or a behaviour that challenges, they have someone that they can talk to about that.

### **Effective Organisational Context**

[10:29] The last part of capable environments is all about having an effective organisational context.

[10:35] So here what we're looking for is there's policies and procedures, that they have good training opportunities, that they have good staff retention, and that they're good and responsive to funding restrictions.

[10:48] So by that, what I mean is that someone might only have a few hours funded, one to one support throughout the day, but there's good evidence that those one to one hours are being used effectively and to meet those individual needs well.

### **How to use Capable Environments?**

[11:03] Okay, so how to use capable environments?

[11:06] The way that I use it is, is I use all of those twelve components and I'm thinking under there, like what's working and what's not working, and then that enables me to plan what I'm going to suggest to do differently.



## **Muna Case Study**

[11:24] So to show you how I use it, I'm going to talk you through a case study.

[11:28] I'm going to introduce you to Muna.

[11:30] So Muna is a gentleman in his thirties.

[11:32] He loves trains, he loves going bowling and he loves interacting with people from his local church.

[11:39] He has epilepsy, a mild learning disability and is autistic.

[11:45] He's supported within his own home where he lives with one other person, and he has shared staffing most of the time, but he has one to one, five hours a day.

[11:55] So the other thing that's important to know about Muna is that he also presents self injurious behaviour.

[12:00] And for Muna, what I mean by this is that he will strike his face with a flat hand.

[12:09] So, looking at capable environments checklist, if we look at firstly the positive social interactions.

[12:15] For Muna, what was working really well was that they were using nice, respectful language, they were communicating with him with dignity and respect.

[12:24] What wasn't working so well, however, was that most of the interactions were focusing on instruction.

[12:30] So what to do, where you're going, what equipment you need to get, rather than all of those positive chitchatty sort of things that we each do every day, that could be something that the service could have improved.

[12:47] For component eight, we're looking at personal healthcare support.

[12:52] So for Muna, what was working well was that all of his staff team had been trained in epilepsy and how to support him with a seizure and how to avoid those things from happening.

[13:01] However, what wasn't working so well was it was really impacting on his privacy

[13:05] Because of the concern about risk of seizures while he was in the bath, staff felt the need to have to be in the bathroom all of the time with him.

[13:18] So the other component that I looked at for Muna was the effective management.

[13:23] So some of the things that I found that were working really well was that all of the staff's mandatory training was up to date and they were all receiving relatively regular supervisions.

[13:32] What could work better was having a good structure to the shift.

[13:37] When I went in, they didn't have this, so therefore the staff didn't know what the expectations were of them, and how to effectively support Muna.

[13:45] There were also no team meetings happening, and this meant that most of his support was totally inconsistent and made up each and every single day by whichever staff member was supporting him at that time.

[13:57] As well as there being very little structure to each shift, I also found that there was no handover happening.

[14:03] And handovers are really important because you can find out if something's happened that morning, it might have an impact on the afternoon.

[14:10] You can also find out, like plans maybe have been promised in the morning and without your staff handover, these things can go missing.

[14:20] So by looking at just those three key components from capable environments for Muna, some of the recommendations that I made were put in place was, right, this is how we're going to structure the shift.

[14:30] These are the handovers that we need to have and this is what they look like.

[14:35] We then finally did some training on communication styles and how to have more positive interactions with Muna, how to deliver praise in a way that was meaningful for him and that he enjoyed.

[14:47] So you can see from just going through capable environment, you can really impact on making a positive difference to the people we're working with.

[14:56] Thank you for watching this video.

[14:58] If you'd like further information, you can go to [www.pbsuk.org](http://www.pbsuk.org), [www.supportingpositively.com](http://www.supportingpositively.com) or [www.pbsmatters.co.uk](http://www.pbsmatters.co.uk).