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Integrated assignments

There are three integrated assignments supporting these materials:

- 1 Admissions and care planning
- 2 Safe moving and handling
- 3 Safe discharge

These assignments provide learners with an opportunity to extend their knowledge of key topics from the paper-based materials and apply some of the skills they have developed to their own work situation. The assignments aim to:

- develop skills to help learners achieve key competencies required on supervised practice
- extend the skills developed in the paper-based materials by encouraging the reading of nursing journals to find evidence that will inform practice
- give opportunities for personal research on key themes, for example searching on the Internet, reading nursing journals and interviewing colleagues and other medical professionals
- provide opportunities for learners to apply some of the language skills developed in the paper-based materials.

Assignment 1 should be tackled after completing modules 1 and 2. Assignments 2 and 3 are related to modules 3 and 4.

Assignment 1 Admissions and care planning

This assignment links to the paper-based materials in Module 1: Admitting patients and Module 2: Planning patient care. It extends the themes of admitting and planning care for patients and develops learners' knowledge of the topic through a series of research tasks and practical tasks using assessment and care planning documents specific to their workplace. It also looks at the role of the multidisciplinary team in planning patient care.

Assignment 2 Safe moving and handling

This is a short assignment and extends the paper-based work on safe moving and handling in Module 3: Implementing care. The emphasis is on looking at the actual policies and documents that are used in the learner's workplace. It also provides a series of practical tasks that focus on the specific lifting and handling equipment used in the learner's work area.

Assignment 3 Safe discharge

This assignment looks at aspects of discharge planning, and is linked to the paper-based materials in Module 4: Preparing for discharge. It provides a series of practical tasks that focus on the discharge and referral documentation used in the learner's workplace. It also looks at local provision of community care and the range of services and support that is available for patients' ongoing care after discharge.

Introducing the assignments

The assignments have been designed for individual study and research away from the classroom. Teachers should go through the steps in the assignment to check that learners understand what is expected. Allow time to discuss appropriate methods of gathering information for research tasks, for example searching on the Internet, interviewing colleagues at work, searching for relevant articles in nursing journals and magazines.

For each assignment, learners will need a file to collect information, such as documents from their workplace and relevant articles from nursing journals and magazines. Any written work for the assignment should also be placed in the file.

For each assignment, learners will also need copies of the three pro formas for recording their research and reflecting on the assignment that are provided at the end of this section.

- **Resource 1:** A discussion log, which learners can photocopy and use to record any discussions with colleagues and other health professionals.
- **Resource 2:** A reading record form, on which learners record specific texts they have read for the assignment. Learners will need to photocopy the form and complete it with a short summary of any article they have read.
- **Resource 3:** A reflection sheet for the whole assignment. Learners should complete this after they have completed an assignment.

Integrated assignment 1

Admissions and care planning

This assignment will help you achieve competency in admitting patients, assessing their needs and developing an appropriate care plan.

Part A Patient admissions

Task 1

- 1 Admission procedures will vary according to where you work. Find out how admissions are organised in your work area, for example is there is a pre-admission clinic? Is a specific nurse responsible for admissions? Make notes under these headings.
 - How
 - Who
 - When
 - Where
- 2 Decide on a visual way of presenting the information, such as a diagram or flow chart.

Task 2

- 1 A thorough patient assessment must be carried out before appropriate care can be planned. Choose two patients you are working with. For each patient, find out how information was gathered to plan his/her nursing care (e.g. a patient interview, medical records from another department, etc.).
- 2 Collect examples of forms that are typically used for assessing patients in your work area (e.g. admissions forms, manual handling forms, nursing assessment forms, risk assessment forms).
- 3 Choose two or three of the forms. Look carefully at each section of the form and complete this information for each form in a table like this one:

Name	Type of information	Contribution to patient's care

Task 3

- 1 A patient assessment often includes a patient interview, for example taking a patient's health history. Search some nursing journals for useful articles that will inform your practice when interviewing patients.
- 2 List any reading you have done and keep copies of relevant articles in your assignment file. For each article, complete the Reading record form that your teacher gave you.

Task 4 – Put it into practice

- 1 Arrange with your mentor to observe an experienced nurse interviewing a patient. As you are observing, think about:
 - how the nurse put the patient at ease
 - any techniques used to show he/she was listening
 - questioning strategies used.
- 2 Write a reflective account of the observation: describe what happened, what you have learnt and how it will influence your practice.
- 3 If possible, arrange with your mentor to interview a patient, using one of the forms that you collected for Task 2.3.

If you need help with admissions interviews, look at 'Gathering medical information' and 'Assessing patient needs' in Module 1: Admitting patients.

Part B The multidisciplinary team

Task 1

- 1 A wide range of health professionals can be involved in assessing and planning care for patients. Draw up a list of the different specialists in your work area (e.g. physiotherapists, respiratory nurses) and complete a chart like this one:

Job name	Contact person/department
Allied health professionals, e.g. occupational therapist, dietician	
Specialist nurses, e.g. stoma nurse	

- 2 Choose four or five members of the multidisciplinary team from your chart. Arrange to interview each of them to find out about:
 - a the type of work
 - b their role in care in your workplace
 - c any challenges and tensions.

Use this plan.

Step 1: Set up a face-to-face or phone meeting.

Step 2: Plan some questions you want to ask in the interview.

Step 3: Interview the person and record the discussion using Resource 1 (Discussion log) that your teacher gave you.

Step 4: Once you have completed all your interviews, decide how to present the results.

Task 2

- 1 Review articles in the nursing journals and magazines to provide evidence to support the case for an interdisciplinary and collaborative approach to patient care.
- 2 Complete the reading record your tutor gave you for each article.

Task 3 – Put it into practice

Choose one or two recently admitted patients. Decide which members of the multidisciplinary team would need to be involved in their care. Complete this information for each patient:

Refer to (e.g. physiotherapist, stoma nurse)	Reason/expected contribution

Part C Care planning

Task 1

Good care planning is important for providing continuity of care for patients. Find out how care planning is approached and organised in your work area.

- 1 Draw up an action plan to research answers to these questions:
 - a What kinds of care planning documents are used?
 - b Where are care plans written?
 - c Where are they kept?

- d Do care plans reflect a holistic view of the patient?
- e Are patients involved in discussions about their care plans?
- f What are the attitudes of staff and patients to care planning?

2 Present the findings of your research as a short report.

Task 2

Care planning may be organised differently in other departments within your hospital. Choose another department and find out how the approach to care planning in this department compares with what happens in your work area.

- 1 Plan what information you need and how you will obtain it.
- 2 Prepare a questionnaire to help you gather the information.
- 3 Carry out your research.
- 4 Prepare a summary of your findings for your assignment file.

Task 3

- 1 Search in the nursing journals for articles on developments in care planning that are listed in the table below. Copy the table and make notes about the advantages and disadvantages of each development.

	Advantages	Disadvantages
Standardised care plans		
Computerised patient records		
Multidisciplinary record keeping (e.g. integrated care pathways/ critical pathways)		

- 2 Interview staff about their experiences of using these ways of recording care planning.
- 3 Prepare a short report for your assignment file, summarising your findings.

Task 4

- 1 Documenting care is a legal requirement of care planning. Search for and download a copy of the Nursing and Midwifery Council's (NMC's) guidelines on recording care.

- 2 Read the guidelines and draw up a list of 'dos and don'ts' to help new staff write clear and relevant entries on care plans.
- 3 Choose two or three completed care plans in current use. Use your checklist to assess how far they take account of NMC guidelines for record keeping.

Task 5 – Put it into practice

- 1 Choose a patient on your ward. Write a care plan using one of the planning documents you identified in Task 1.
- 2 When you have completed your plan, assess it against the NMC guidelines checklist you prepared for Task 4.
- 3 Arrange a time with your mentor to discuss your care plan and give feedback.

Complete Resource 3 (Reflection sheet) that your teacher gave you.

If you need help with writing care plans, look at 'Writing care plans' in Module 2: Planning patient care.

Integrated assignment 2

Safe moving and handling

This assignment will help you achieve competency in manual handling policy and safe moving of patients.

Part A Moving patients safely

Task 1

- 1 By law, all hospitals must operate a manual handling policy to minimise the risk of back injuries to staff. Locate a copy of the manual handling policy for your workplace and keep it in your assignment file.
- 2 Prepare a short report summarising the benefits of a manual handling policy for:
 - the NHS
 - the hospital
 - nurses
 - patients.
- 3 How much do you know about the manual handling policy in your work area? Make an action plan to research the answers to the questions below. Plan who you will speak to and what documents you will need to gather.
 - a Does your work area have a 'no lift' policy?
 - b What training is available for new and existing staff?
 - c Who provides the training and how often?
 - d How are patients' needs for manual handling assessed?
 - e Are there any situations in which manual handling is acceptable?
 - f What information about the manual handling policy is provided for patients?
 - g What are patients' attitudes to the use of mechanical aids and equipment?
 - h What are the staff's attitudes to using mechanical aids and equipment?
- 4 Write a short summary of the findings of your research for your assignment file.

Task 2

- 1 What equipment is available in your work area for handling and moving patients? Complete a table like this one:

Name of equipment/aid	Location	Purpose

- 2 Collect information about any equipment or aids that you are unfamiliar with. Include photographs from brochures and instructions for use, information from the manufacturer's website, etc.

Task 3 – Put it into practice

- 1 Choose two patients you are working with. For each patient, assess which of the available equipment on the ward would be most appropriate for their manual handling needs. Give reasons for your choice of equipment for each patient.
- 2 Make a list of moving and lifting situations in which you are involved in your daily work (e.g. helping a patient from bed to a chair). Make a list of the steps involved in moving the patients.
- 3 Plan what you would say to the patients and any nurses helping you. Compile the information in a table like this one:

Moving task	Equipment	Phrases to use with patients (e.g. reassurance, giving instructions to the patient)	Phrases for giving instructions to another nurse

- 4 Observe colleagues moving patients using equipment and aids and make a collection of colloquial expressions that are used to talk about mobility. For example, for each observation, list the words used by:
 - the care assistant/nurse (e.g. *shift up the bed a little, will you?*)
 - the patient (e.g. *I feel wobbly*).

If you need help with giving instruction while moving patients, look at 'Everyday care' in Module 3: Implementing care.

Complete Resource 3 (Reflection sheet) that your teacher gave you.

Integrated assignment 3

Safe discharge

This assignment will help you achieve competency in planning discharge for your patients, and in making appropriate referrals to meet patients' ongoing needs for care.

Part A Discharge planning

Task 1

- 1 Most hospitals will have a policy that governs how patients are discharged. Locate a copy of your hospital's discharge policy for your assignment file. Make a summary of the key points.
- 2 Discharge processes will vary in different departments within a hospital. Find out how discharge is organised in your work area (e.g. is there a discharge coordinator?). Research answers to these questions:
 - a When does discharge planning begin?
 - b Where are patients typically discharged to?
 - c Who is involved in making decisions about discharge?
 - d Who coordinates the discharge?
 - e What is the ward nurse's role?
- 3 Draw a diagram or flow chart to illustrate the discharge process, from when a patient is first admitted until the end of their stay on the ward. The diagram/flow chart should show what happens at each stage and who is involved.

Task 2

- 1 Search for some articles in nursing journals to find out:
 - a why discharge planning has become a high priority for the NHS
 - b how effective discharge policies benefit the NHS, hospitals and patients.
- 2 Keep copies of useful articles in your assignment file and complete the reading record sheet that your teacher gave you.

- 3 Interview two or three experienced nurses about planning discharge in your work area. Find out about:
 - a what particular challenges they face
 - b the most frequent causes of delays in discharge
 - c their ideas for improving discharge procedures.

Complete Resource 1 (Discussion log) that your teacher gave you.

Part B Community health and social services

Task 1

In order to set up the right post-discharge care for patients, you need to know what health and social services are available in your local community and how to access them.

- 1 Research the range of community services available in your area. List the organisations under these headings:
 - health services (e.g. district nursing)
 - social services (e.g. drop-in centres)
 - voluntary sector services (e.g. Age Concern hospices).
- 2 Write a short summary about each of the services. Include information about the services they offer and any criteria for entry or referral.
- 3 Where possible, collect leaflets about useful medical and social services and include these in your assignment file (e.g. leaflets about a day centre for older people).
- 4 Choose four or five of the organisations you identified for part 1 of this task. Set up a visit or a phone interview to find out more about the work they do and how they support patients after discharge (e.g. arrange a visit to a local hospice or make a phone call to a district nurse).

Task 2

Prepare a pack of information about the local health services, social services and voluntary sector services. Choose information that you think would provide new staff with a clear overview of the range of services and what they offer.

Task 3

Search for articles in nursing journals about the following developments in discharge planning:

- a intermediate care in the community
- b discharge coordinators/teams.

Task 4 – Put it into practice

- 1 Choose two patients in your work area. For each patient, think about the kind of care and support he/she will need after discharge. Make a list of local health and community services that he/she could be referred to. Complete the information below.

If you need help with finding out about community services, look at 'Meeting to discuss discharge' in Module 4: Planning for discharge.

Service/support	Reason
Health services	
Social services/support	
Voluntary sector services/support	

- 2 Choose one of the patients you identified for part 1 of this task. Look carefully through relevant documentation about his/her stay in hospital. Imagine you are coordinating this patient's discharge. List the arrangements and referrals that would need to be made in the 24–48 hours before the discharge and on the day of the discharge.
- 3 a Make a plan for any telephone calls you would need to make. Include the information you need to give about the patient, and any requests you need to make.
- b Prepare some phrases for each call for:
- giving your name and ward name
 - giving the patient's name and patient number
 - making polite requests
 - checking to make sure you've understood.
- c If possible, ask your mentor to observe you making the calls.

If you need help with making phone calls, look at 'Making final arrangements' in Module 4: Planning for discharge.

Part C Discharge documents

Task 1

- 1 Collect the different discharge and transfer documents and include them in your file (e.g. discharge planning assessment form) together with a brief description of the purpose of each document.
- 2 Choose one of the transfer forms you've collected. Look through the form and make brief notes about the type of information that needs to go in each section of the form and how it will help in the ongoing care of the patient. Summarise your findings in a table like this one:

Section	Type of information required	Contribution to ongoing care

Task 2 – Put it into practice

- 1 Choose one of the patients who is due for referral to an external agency and complete the referral form.
- 2 Arrange for your mentor to give you feedback on the content and style of your writing.

Complete Resource 3 (Reflection sheet) that your teacher gave you.

If you need help with writing referral forms, look at 'Making final arrangements' in Module 4: Preparing for discharge.

Resource 1

Discussion log

Use this form as a record of face-to-face interviews or telephone discussions. Keep a copy of this discussion log in your assignment file for each interview or discussion you have.

Date:

Interview / phone call with:

Account of the discussion:

What I learnt from the discussion:

Resource 2

Reading record form

Use this form as a record of your reading for the assignments. Complete the summary sheet for each article you read and place a copy with the article in your assignment file.

Article / book title:

Author:

Publisher:

Date of publication:

Summary of key points:

How the article will inform my practice:

Resource 3

Reflection sheet

Complete this reflection sheet after you have finished each assignment.

Name:	Assignment:
What have I learnt from the assignment?	
What can I do better?	
What can I apply immediately into my practice?	
Is there anything I need more information about?	
How will I go about getting this knowledge?	
What else do I need to do to further my studies in this area?	
How might I go about doing this?	

Glossary

abbreviation a shortened version of a word, usually composed of the first letter or letters of the shortened words (e.g. NHS is the abbreviation for National Health Service)

abdominal to do with the body area that includes the stomach, intestines and other digestive organs

Accident and Emergency (A&E) hospital department that deals with accidents and often with the initial assessment of an acute illness (*also* Emergency Department (ED) and Casualty)

accountability being answerable for judgements and actions

acid reflux a condition in which acidic gastric juices from the stomach travel back up into the oesophagus, causing a burning sensation (*also* reflux, heartburn)

activities of daily living (ADLs) activities that are part of a person's daily routine of self-care, such as bathing, dressing, toileting and eating

acute description of a disease or condition that begins quickly and is often short and severe

administer give (e.g. a medicine)

admission entry into a hospital; the admission may be planned from a waiting list, or be an emergency via the hospital's Emergency Department

advocate someone who speaks on behalf of someone else

aetiology the study of what causes a disease

aggression an attitude of hostility

agitated troubled or nervous

alert paying full attention to the things around you

allergen something that causes an allergic reaction (see below)

allergic sensitive to some substances (e.g. a food, medicine, pet fur, pollen, etc.)

allergy reaction to a particular substance (e.g. a food, medicine, pet fur, pollen, etc.)

alleviate make less intense or severe

amputate remove all or part of a limb surgically

anaemia a condition in which there are too few red blood cells in the blood

anaesthetic medication given to decrease or stop sensation during surgery; may be local – administered to a small area of the body to temporarily numb just that part – or general – the patient is rendered unconscious

analgesic a drug used to reduce pain (e.g. paracetamol, morphine) (*also* painkillers)

antacids medications that reduce acids and gas in the stomach

antibiotic medication that kills bacteria

anti-emetic medication to reduce nausea and vomiting

anxiety strong and unpleasant feeling of nervousness or distress

appendicetomy (*also* **appendectomy**) surgical removal of the appendix to treat acute appendicitis

appendicitis inflammation of the appendix, caused by infection, scarring or blockage

appetite desire to eat

appropriate suitable/correct for the situation

artery a blood vessel that carries blood away from the heart to the body

arthritis inflammation of a joint, usually accompanied by pain and swelling, and which may lead to a change in structure

articulate able to express thoughts and ideas easily and clearly (adjective) (the verb means to express thoughts and ideas clearly)

aseptic free from disease-causing organisms

ashen look very pale, especially because of illness

assertive having a confident, even forceful, personality; someone who is assertive usually communicates clearly, honestly and directly

assessment identification of the health and social care needs of an individual so that appropriate care can be planned

assistance help

assumption pre-judgement about a person or situation

asthma a chronic inflammatory lung disease, characterised by recurrent breathing problems; usually triggered by allergens

attitude a way of thinking

bacteria microscopic organisms that may cause infection

belch noisy release of gas from the stomach through the mouth (*also* burp)

benign a term used to describe a tumour that is not cancerous

bereavement sad or lonely state due to death of a loved one

bereavement counsellor/therapist professional who helps people cope with the distress and sorrow following the death of a loved one

- biopsy** removal of a small sample of tissue to aid diagnosis
- bladder** the organ that stores urine
- bloating** fullness or swelling in the abdomen that often occurs after meals
- blood pressure** a measure of the force of blood flow against veins and arteries
- blood pressure cuff** a device placed around the upper arm to measure blood pressure
- bowel** another word for the intestines
- bowel movement** process by which faeces are passed through the rectum and anus (*also* bowel motion)
- breast cancer** a cancerous tumour of the breast tissue
- bronchitis** inflammation of the mucous membranes of the bronchial tubes, causing a persistent cough that produces considerable quantities of sputum (phlegm)
- bronchodilators** medications that widen the airways in the lungs; they are usually administered by an inhaler or nebuliser
- bronchoscopy** a procedure involving examination of the inside of the lung and airways using a thin illuminated tube
- cancer** a disease caused by abnormal cells that divide without control developing into tumours that can invade nearby tissues or spread through the bloodstream and lymphatic system to other parts of the body
- cannula** a thin tube, usually made of plastic, that is inserted into the body using a needle and that can be left in place to administer drugs or draw off fluid (e.g. blood)
- cardiac arrest** stopping of the heart
- cardio-** to do with the heart
- cardiologist** a doctor who specialises in heart disorders
- cardiovascular (CV)** to do with the heart and blood vessels (circulatory system)
- care home** residential home that provides full-time care for older people
- care package** services provided to a patient following an assessment of their needs to enable them to continue living at home after discharge
- care plan** details of the nursing care for an individual patient
- care planning** the process, based on an assessment of an individual's needs, that decides the level and type of care required to meet those needs
- carer** a relative or friend who looks after a person who needs support because of illness or disability
- case conference** meeting attended by representatives from all the agencies involved with the care of a patient to plan the provision of services after discharge
- catheter** a thin flexible tube used to drain fluid from or inject fluid into the body (e.g. Foley catheter, used to drain urine from the bladder)
- cerebral** to do with the brain
- cerebrovascular** to do with the blood vessels in the brain
- cerebrovascular accident** damage to brain tissue caused by a sudden interruption of the blood supply, which typically leads to weakness in one side of the body or may affect speech (*also* stroke)
- cholecystectomy** surgical removal of the gallbladder
- chronic** description of a disease, condition or health problem that persists over a long period of time
- circulation** the flow of blood through the heart and around the blood vessels of the body
- clammy** unpleasantly damp
- clarify** make clear to ensure understanding
- closed question** a type of question that invites a single-word (yes/no) answer (e.g. Do you live near here?)
- coherent** able to express one's thoughts in a clear and calm way that people can understand; logical and consistent
- colectomy** surgical removal of part or all of the large bowel (colon)
- colloquial** description of language used in everyday conversation but not in formal conversation
- colonoscopy** a procedure to look at the inside of the bowel (colon) using a thin flexible illuminated tube that is inserted through the anus
- coma** a state of deep unconsciousness
- commence** begin
- commode** a small portable toilet that can be used at the bedside
- community care** network of services and support that enables people to remain independent and living in their own home
- community nurse** a nurse who works in the community; includes practice nurses, district nurses and health visitors
- complication** undesirable effect of a disease or its treatment
- concerned** worried, anxious
- concussion** condition caused by injury to the head, characterised by headache, confusion and amnesia (loss of memory); the patient may also have been unconscious

- confidential** intended to be kept secret – confidentiality is one of the principles that underpins all health and social care practice
- confirm** check that something is correct
- congestive heart failure** a condition in which the heart is weakened and struggles to pump sufficient blood to maintain normal circulation
- consent form** a form that explains everything involved in surgery, including its risks; it must be signed by the patient before surgery can be performed
- constipation** infrequent bowel movements, with harder than normal stools
- constructive** leading to a positive way forward (e.g. constructive criticism)
- consultant** a specialist highly trained in a particular branch of medicine (e.g. cardiologist)
- continent** able to control the bladder and/or bowels so that you urinate (pass water) or have a bowel movement only when you decide to do so
- contraindication** something that makes a treatment unsuitable, ineffective or even harmful
- coronary** to do with the heart
- coronary artery bypass** an operation that improves the blood flow to the heart
- coronary heart disease** a condition in which the coronary arteries (which supply blood to the heart muscles) narrow, causing a decrease in blood flow
- critical incident** an incident that provides an opportunity for learning and development
- cultural awareness** the ability to interact with and understand people from other cultures without imposing assumptions, biases, behaviours or beliefs
- cyanosis** a bluish colour on the skin and mucous membranes caused by insufficient oxygen in the blood
- day centre** facility, run by Social Services or health or voluntary organisations, that provides care, stimulation and activities for people who need support during the day
- day surgery** surgical procedure that does not involve an overnight stay in hospital
- dehydration** excessive loss of fluid from the body (commonly occurs because of diarrhoea and vomiting)
- delete** cross out
- dementia** a progressive condition that affects the brain, resulting in memory loss, personality changes and confusion
- dentures** false teeth
- depression** condition characterised by feelings of sadness, lack of self-worth and dejection
- deteriorate** get worse
- diabetes** a condition in which the body is unable to control the level of sugar in the blood because of inadequate production of insulin
- diagnosis** identification of a disease from the person's signs and symptoms, medical history and the results of any tests
- dialysis** procedure to remove wastes and additional fluid from the blood artificially if the kidneys have stopped functioning
- diarrhoea** frequent, loose and watery bowel movements
- diet** what a person eats and drinks
- dietitian** expert in nutrition who plans diets for people with special health needs
- digestion** process by which the body breaks down food into simple substances for energy, growth and cell repair
- dignity** worthy of honour or respect; treating a patient with dignity refers to care that ensures that the patient feels respected as an individual
- disability** inability to perform an activity in a normal way as a result of an impairment, such as not being able to walk because of weakness or paralysis in a leg
- discharge plan** plan drawn up before a patient's discharge from hospital for any continuing care or treatment
- disorientated** without an awareness of time and place
- distressed** very upset
- district nurse** registered nurse who provides nursing care to people in their own homes
- dizzy** having a sensation of losing one's balance and being about to fall (*also* giddy)
- drain** a device to draw off fluid from a body cavity (e.g. chest drain)
- dressings** covering used to protect an area of the skin from infection
- dyspnoea** difficulty breathing; shortness of breath
- electrocardiogram (ECG)** a test that records the electrical activity of the heart; it detects abnormal rhythms and damage to heart muscle
- eligibility criteria** set of rules that determine access to services (e.g. home help)
- Emergency Department (ED)** hospital department that deals with accidents and often with the initial assessment of an acute illness (*also* called Accident and Emergency (A&E) and Casualty)
- empathy** ability to identify with another person and understand their point of view

emphysema a disease of the lungs, associated with breathlessness, chronic cough and progressive loss of lung function

encourage persuade in a supportive way

endoscopy procedure in which a thin, illuminated tube (endoscope) is used to examine the inside of part of the body

evaluate think about; consider carefully

exacerbation worsening of a condition (*also* deterioration)

faecal incontinence inability to hold faeces in the colon and rectum

faeces solid waste that passes through the rectum during bowel movements (*also* stools)

femur thigh bone

fever abnormally high temperature of the body (*also* pyrexia)

fibrillation abnormally rapid contractions of the heart muscles that may render the heart unable to pump blood effectively

fluency the ability to produce rapid, flowing, natural (but not necessarily grammatically correct) speech

formulary list or directory giving information on the drugs available for treating illness and disease

fracture partial or complete break of a bone

gait a pattern or style of walking

gall stones small lumps of hard material that form in the gall bladder and can cause great pain

gangrene the death of body tissue; most often caused by a loss of blood flow, especially in the legs and feet

gastric to do with the stomach

gestures movements of the body (e.g. the hands or head) that express meaning or feeling or are used to communicate

gist the general idea of what something is about

gout painful condition that affects small joints, especially the big toe, resulting from a defect in body chemistry (the pain is caused by build up of uric acid in the joint fluid)

grief intense sorrow, especially following the death of a loved one

grieving the process of feeling distress or sorrow in response to the loss of a loved one

haematemesis vomiting up blood

haematology the scientific study of blood and blood-forming tissues

haemoglobin (Hb) substance in the red blood cells that carries oxygen

haemorrhage medical term for bleeding, either inside or outside the body

halitosis bad (i.e. unpleasant-smelling) breath

health promotion provision of resources and information to people and communities to encourage activities that promote good health (e.g. measures to help people give up smoking, eat more healthily, etc.)

health visitor professional who works in the community and has responsibility for health advice, health promotion and community health development

hearing aid electronic device used by people with poor hearing that amplifies sound to the ear

heart attack term used to describe a myocardial infarction (damage to part of the heart muscle because of insufficient blood supply)

heartburn painful, burning feeling in the chest, caused by stomach acid flowing back up into the oesophagus (*also* dyspepsia, reflux)

hemiplegia paralysis of one side of the body

heparin a drug used to prevent blood clotting

hernia a protrusion of part of an organ through the muscle that surrounds it

high blood pressure a condition in which the blood circulates through the arteries with too much force (*also* hypertension)

hoist mechanical device used to lift and move a person from one place to another

holistic care care of the whole person; assessing the physical, intellectual, emotional, social, religious and cultural needs of a person and implementing care accordingly

home adaptations changes to the home or provision of special equipment to help someone live as independently as possible at home; this may range from simple rearrangement of furniture to major structural alterations (e.g. widening of doorways for a wheelchair)

home care services provided by Social Services for people who need help at home because of disability, illness or age; can be arranged on a permanent basis or for a short period of time (*also* home help)

hospice organisation that provides a range of services (e.g. pain control, skilled nursing care, counselling, spiritual care, etc.) for a terminally ill person and their family

humerus the bone of the upper arm

hypertension high blood pressure

hypoglycaemia low blood sugar level

hypotension low blood pressure

hypothermia abnormally low body temperature, usually below 35°C

hysterectomy surgical removal of the uterus

- immobile** unable to move
- impairment** loss or abnormality of physical or psychological functioning
- imperative** verb used to give orders, commands and instructions (e.g. *Bend your knees*)
- incontinence** inability to control the passing of urine or faeces
- independent** able to carry out activities without help
- infection** presence and growth of microorganisms (viruses or bacteria)
- inflammation** reaction to injury or disease that results in swelling, pain and stiffness
- informal language** casual, relaxed way of speaking
- informed consent** process by which a patient agrees to a particular medical treatment, having had it explained clearly to them
- infusion** slow administration of a substance (drug, blood or fluid) via a cannula in a vein
- inhaler** a device used to administer drugs directly into the lungs to help a patient breathe more easily (e.g. for asthma)
- in situ** in place (Latin)
- intermediate care** care provided as an alternative to general hospital admission; allows patients to be safely discharged from hospital and to recover at home or in another suitable place (e.g. community hospital or nursing home)
- intramuscular** via the muscle – an intramuscular injection involves injecting a drug directly into a muscle mass, such as the buttocks
- intravenous** via a vein – drugs can be administered by intravenous injection or infusion
- intravenous line** a thin plastic tube inserted into a vein (usually in the patient's forearm) through which fluid (including drugs or blood) flows into the bloodstream
- jargon** words or expressions used by a particular profession or group (e.g. doctors, computer operators) that are often difficult for others to understand
- jaundice** yellowing of the skin, eyes, and mouth, caused by build up of bile salts in the blood
- jejunum** the second segment of the small intestine
- joint** part where two or more bones meet (e.g. elbow, knee, hip)
- kidney stone** a solid lump of material that forms in the kidney from crystallisation of substances in the urine
- laparoscopic cholecystectomy** surgical operation to remove the gallbladder via a thin tube (laparoscope) inserted into the abdomen
- laparoscopy** procedure by which a thin tube with a lens or camera (and a light) on the end is inserted into the abdomen through a small incision to examine the contents of the abdomen; small tissue samples can also be removed during the procedure
- legible** clear and easy to read (e.g. handwriting)
- lethargic** lacking in energy and enthusiasm
- local anaesthesia** a medicine injected at the site of the operation to temporarily numb that area
- Macmillan nurse** a nurse who specialises in the care of patients who are terminally ill
- macula** part of the eye – near the middle of the retina – that allows us to see fine details clearly
- macular degeneration** deterioration in the macula of the retina, resulting in gradual loss of central vision and, sometimes, blindness
- malignant** term used to describe a tumour that contains cancer cells and that can spread
- malnutrition** lack of proper nutrition – the necessary and proper food substances that the body needs; may be caused by not eating enough of the right foods, or because the body can't absorb or distribute the food substances
- Marie Curie nurse** a nurse who specialises in the care of patients who are terminally ill
- marital status** whether someone is married, single, divorced, etc.
- Meals on Wheels** delivery of pre-cooked meals to the homes of people who are housebound and/or are unable to prepare meals and/or cook for themselves
- measles** highly infectious viral disease characterised by fever and a red rash; mainly affects children
- melaena** passage of dark-coloured, tarry stools that contain blood
- menopause** end of menstruation; commonly refers to the end of the reproductive phase of a woman's life
- menstruation** part of the menstrual cycle during which the endometrium (the lining of the womb/uterus) is shed from the vaginal opening (*also* period and colloquial terms such as 'the curse')
- mentoring** training process during which a more experienced person (the mentor) assists someone less experienced (the mentee) by offering advice, support and encouragement
- minutes** notes taken during a meeting to summarise what has taken place and actions that need to be taken
- mobile** able to move – may refer to the whole body (i.e. able to walk) or to part of the body

modal verbs verbs that express ideas such as possibility, intention, obligation and necessity, for example could, should, will, would, may, might

monitor to check progress

multi-agency several organisations working together

multidisciplinary team group of professionals from different specialities (e.g. doctors, nurses, social workers, occupational therapists, psychologists, etc.) who work closely to provide different but complementary services for patients

myocardial infarction damage to the heart muscle caused by insufficient blood supply (also heart attack)

nasogastric tube (NG tube/NGT) small flexible tube that is passed through the nostril, down the throat and oesophagus, and into the stomach (often used to feed someone who is unable to eat)

nausea feeling of sickness and need to vomit

nebuliser small device that delivers medication into the lungs as a fine aerosol (spray), often to help with breathing

neglected not looked after properly

next of kin closest family member or relation, usually a spouse, parent or oldest child

NHS Direct a 24-hour telephone help line that provides healthcare advice and information

non-verbal communication communication without words, through touch, gestures, facial expressions and body language

notify tell, inform

nutrition the process by which the body draws nutrients (the materials/chemicals it needs) from food; also used to describe the food that is eaten

observation the action of closely watching or monitoring (e.g. watching someone else carry out a task; monitoring a patient's condition)

occupational therapist (OT) professional who assesses individuals and develops treatments that will help them to reach their maximum level of function both physically and mentally

open question a question that invites more than a single-word (yes/no) answer (e.g. How would you describe the pain?)

orally given by mouth

osteoarthritis a condition caused by wear and tear that causes inflammation of the joint, leading to swelling, pain and stiffness

outpatient a patient who visits a hospital for care and treatment but who does not stay overnight

outpatient surgery surgery that allows the patient to go home on the same day, without having to stay in hospital overnight

ovarian cancer malignant tumour of the ovary

oxygen saturation volume of oxygen that a patient's red blood cells are carrying

palliative care care that involves relieving symptoms (e.g. pain) without treating the cause; appropriate for a patient who is dying or who has a disease for which there is no cure

paraphrase reword to express meaning in a different way

parenteral administered by any route other than by mouth (e.g. subcutaneous, intravenous, intramuscular)

period see menstruation

personal care washing, dressing, toileting, etc.

pharmacist professional trained to prepare and distribute medicines and to give information about them

phlebitis inflammation of a vein

physiotherapist (physio) health professional who helps people stay mobile and free of pain by teaching exercises, giving advice and providing massage and other treatments (physio)

pleurisy inflammation of the pleura (the membranes surrounding the lungs)

policy document stating how something must be done in an organisation

post-operative after a surgical operation (e.g. post-operative care describes the care that someone receives following an operation)

practice nurse registered nurse who works in the community; usually based at GP surgeries and health centres

predisposition to have a tendency to develop a particular attitude, action or condition (e.g. a disease)

prefix group of letters (a morpheme) that can be added to the beginning of a word to change its meaning, for example 're-' (reoccur), 'dis-' (dislike)

prescription written order from a doctor (e.g. for medication, oxygen)

presentation talk or demonstration on a subject or project

pressure sore area of skin that has become damaged because of pressure from lying in bed, sitting in a wheelchair or being immobile for a long period of time (also bed sore)

primary care community-based health services, including GPs, dentists, opticians and pharmacists (i.e. care that is not in hospital)

- priority** most important
- process** series of connected steps or actions to achieve an outcome
- prognosis** prediction of the course and probable outcome of a disease
- protocol** description of a specific healthcare procedure that has to be followed carefully
- psychiatrist** a doctor who specialises in the diagnosis, care and treatment of mental health problems
- pulmonary** to do with the lungs and respiratory system
- punctual** on time
- pyrexia** high temperature, usually above 38°C (*also* fever)
- rash** red spots that appear on the skin when someone is ill or has an allergy
- reassure** help someone feel safe and reduce their fears, doubts and worries
- rectum** lowest part of the large intestine, leading to the anus
- referral** request to a health or social care agency for assistance or specific action
- reflection** process of reviewing an experience of practice – describing, analysing and evaluating it in order to learn from it
- reflux** condition in which gastric juices or small amounts of food from the stomach flow back up into the oesophagus (*also* regurgitation; heartburn)
- rehabilitation** treatment to enable a person to live and work as normally as possible after a disabling injury or illness
- relapse** worsening of a patient's condition after a period of improvement
- relieve** reduce pain or discomfort
- renal** to do with the kidneys
- resection** surgical removal of tissue or part of an organ
- respect** regard/consideration for someone's values, views, opinions and preferences; treating patients with respect, for example, involves listening to them and treating them considerately in day-to-day situations
- respite care** care provided for short periods in order to give the main carer a break
- rheumatoid arthritis** inflammatory disease that involves the lining of the joint (synovium); the inflammation is usually accompanied by pain and swelling and may lead to a change in structure of the joint; it affects the joints of the hands and the feet and tends to occur equally on both sides of the body
- risk factor** something that increases the chance of something happening, such as developing a disease (for example, smoking is a major risk factor for heart disease)
- role-play** technique used to develop and practise communication skills; the aim is to simulate a real-life situation as closely as possible
- saline** a prepared sterile salt solution that contains the same salt concentration as the blood
- scan** look quickly through, for example a text, to find something in particular – information, word, phrases, or even a face in a crowd
- screening** checking for disease when there are no obvious symptoms
- sepsis** widespread infection in the body caused by bacteria entering the bloodstream
- shadow** accompany a professional on a typical working day in order to learn about their tasks, priorities, problems and pressures
- sharps** any items that may cut or penetrate (e.g. needles); sharps must be disposed of in special bins
- side-effect** unwanted effect of treatment
- sign** an indication of a disease or problem that the doctor notices but which the patient is not aware of (*see* symptom)
- skim** read a piece of text quickly to get an idea of what it's about, without reading every word
- social worker** Social Services professional who assesses people's eligibility for support and organises practical help, emotional help and financial support
- speech and language therapist (SALT)** professional who works with patients who have voice, speech, language or swallowing problems
- sterile** free from contamination with bacteria and other microorganisms
- stomach ulcer** open sore in the stomach lining (*also* gastric or peptic ulcer)
- stress** emphasis put on a particular word or part of a word
- stroke** *see* cerebrovascular accident
- subcutaneous** just below the skin
- summarise** pull together the main points
- surgeon** doctor who performs surgery
- surgery** procedure to remove or repair part of the body or to find out if disease is present (*also* operation)
- sympathy** a feeling of pity and tenderness towards someone who is suffering
- symptom** an indication of a disease or problem that both the doctor and patient notice (*see* sign)

tachycardia increase in the heart rate (e.g. due to fever)

terminal care care in the last days or weeks before a person dies; the aim is to ensure that the patient is free of pain and is as comfortable as possible

terminal illness a disease or condition that will lead to death (i.e. it cannot be treated)

therapy treatment

thoracic to do with the chest

thrombosis blood clot (formed in a blood vessel or in the heart or lungs)

throw up colloquial expression for vomit (*also* be sick)

tone way something is said (e.g. aggressively, calmly)

tonsillectomy surgical procedure to remove the tonsils

tonsillitis inflammation and enlargement of the tonsils

total parenteral nutrition (TPN) provision of 'food' (i.e. nutrients) using a solution administered directly into the stomach, often via a nasogastric tube; used to provide the nutrients needed to maintain weight and health of individuals incapable of getting these nutrients by eating

toxic harmful; having to do with poison

transfer move from one place to another (e.g. from chair to bed, or from one hospital department to another)

transplantation replacement of a damaged organ (e.g. heart or kidney) with one from another person – usually someone who has just died

tumour lump or swelling – may be malignant (cancerous) or benign (not cancerous)

ulcer sore on the skin surface or on the stomach lining

ultrasound type of scan that uses high-frequency sound waves to create an image of internal organs

urge incontinence inability to hold urine long enough to reach the lavatory

urinalysis testing of a urine sample for particular substances

urinary frequency how often a person needs to pass urine

urinary incontinence inability to control the flow of urine

urinary tract the ducts (tubes) that conduct urine from the kidneys out of the body

urinary tract infection (UTI) bacterial infection of the urinary tract

urologist doctor who specialises in the treatment of the urinary tract, and the reproductive or genital tract in men

urology branch of medicine concerned with the urinary tract, and with the genital tract or reproductive system in men

varicose vein an abnormally dilated vein

vascular to do with the blood vessels (arteries, veins and capillaries)

vein a blood vessel that carries blood towards the heart

ventilator a medical device used to help a patient breathe when they cannot breathe on their own (*also* respirator)

ventricular fibrillation (VF) a condition in which the ventricles of the heart contract in rapid and unsynchronised rhythms and cannot pump blood

wind excessive gas in the stomach or intestine (*also* flatulence)

X-ray a diagnostic test that uses electromagnetic energy to produce images of internal tissues, bones and organs on film

Abbreviations

A&E Accident & Emergency Department; also known as ED (Emergency Department)

A/O alert and orientated

ACS acute coronary syndrome

ADLs activities of daily living – refers to activities performed as part of a person's daily routine of self-care such as bathing, dressing, toileting and eating

AF atrial fibrillation

am/AM morning; before midday (from the Latin *ante meridian*)

bid twice daily – referring to drug administration (*also* bd)

BM bowel movement

BP blood pressure

c/o complains/complaints of

Ca lung Lung cancer

CA cancer

CCF congestive coronary failure

CCU coronary care unit

CHF congestive heart failure

CODP chronic obstructive pulmonary disease

CVA cerebral vascular accident (stroke)

- DN** district nurse
- DOB** date of birth
- DOH** Department of Health – the central government department responsible for the administration of health and social care
- Dr** doctor
- DVT** deep vein thrombosis, a blockage of the deep veins by a blood clot; particularly common in the leg
- ECG** electrocardiogram; a graphic record of the electrical activity of the heart
- ED** Emergency Department; also known as A&E (Accident and Emergency)
- ENT** ear, nose and throat
- g (or gm)** gram
- GI** gastrointestinal
- GP** General practitioner – doctor who provides family health services to a local community; usually based in a surgery or GP practice
- Hb** haemoglobin
- HCA** healthcare assistant
- hrly** hourly
- Ht** height
- ICU** intensive care unit
- IDDM** insulin-dependent diabetes mellitus
- IM** intramuscular, referring to an injection given into a muscle
- INR** international normalised ratio – a measure of blood clotting
- IV** intravenous; the delivery of fluids and/or medication into the blood stream
- IVT** intravenous therapy
- kg** kilogram
- L/min** litres per minute
- LVF** left ventricular failure
- mg** milligram
- MI** myocardial infarction – a heart attack
- MRI** magnetic resonance imaging; a type of scan that provides three-dimensional images of the body's interior, showing muscle, bone, blood vessels, nerves, organs and tumour tissue
- MRSA** methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA infection is serious and is hard to treat)
- MS** multiple sclerosis
- n/a** not applicable
- NBM** nil/nothing by mouth – the patient must have nothing to eat or drink, usually within a defined time frame, particularly before surgery
- neuro obs** neurological observations
- NG** nasogastric
- NGT** nasogastric tube – a tube inserted through the nose and into the stomach (also NT tube)
- NKA** no known allergies
- O/A** osteoarthritis
- O₂** oxygen
- obs** observations (e.g. temperature, pulse and blood pressure measurements)
- OGD** oesophagogastroduodenoscopy, an investigation of the digestive tract
- OOB** out of bed
- OPA** outpatient appointment
- OT** occupational therapy/therapist
- P** pulse
- PCT** primary care trust
- PE** pulmonary embolus – a blood clot in the lungs, carried there from the main circulation
- physio** physiotherapist
- pm/PM** afternoon; after midday (from the Latin *post meridian*)
- PMH** past/previous medical history
- PO** by mouth
- post-op** postoperative
- PR** per rectum – referring to administration of a drug via a suppository inserted into the rectum, or examination of the rectum
- prn** as required, referring to drug administration (from the Latin *pro re nata*)
- pt** patient
- q** every
- q2h, q3h, q6h, etc.** every two hours, every three hours, every six hours, etc.
- qd** every day
- qds** four times a day – referring to drug administration (*also* **qid**)
- qh** every hour
- qid** four times a day (*also* **qds**)
- rehab** rehabilitation
- resp** respirations (breathing rate)
- resus** resuscitation
- RN** registered nurse
- Rt.** right (*also* ®)
- S/A** see above
- S/B** seen by
- SaO₂** oxygen saturation of the blood
- sats** saturations
- sc** subcutaneous, referring to an injection given just below the skin
- SOB** short of breath
- sx** symptoms

tab tablet

tds three times a day, referring to drug administration (*also* tid)

temp. temperature (*also* T)

TPN total parenteral nutrition

TPR temperature, pulse and respirations

TTOs tablets to take out (*also* TTAs – tablets to take away)

UTI urinary tract infection

VF ventricular fibrillation

VS vital signs

Wd ward

WLN within normal limits

Wt weight

Yr year

