

Service users may have a variety of needs which mean that they could benefit from creative and therapeutic activities. These can be remembered as PILES! This stands for:

Physical – to do with the body. A person may have had a stroke, which could have left them with a weakness in one side of their body. Or they may have had an accident which has caused them to lose a limb. Any activities that exercise the body would count as physical.

Intellectual (cognitive) – to do with the brain, thinking or learning new skills. Intellectual needs may include activities that relieve boredom. They can also help prevent memory loss. Any activities that stimulate the brain or get people thinking are ideal for meeting intellectual needs.

Language – to do with how we communicate with each other. A service user could have lost the ability to speak or a child may learn new words.

Emotional – to do with how we feel about ourselves or our ability to express emotions. A service user may have poor self-esteem or may be depressed, or they may be bereaved or separated from loved ones.

Social – to do with friendship groups and working with other people. A service user could be new to the area or have few friends.

Activity 1

In pairs, discuss any work experience placements you have had in health and social care settings. What types of activities did the service users carry out? Can you think of any creative or therapeutic activities which could be introduced into your care setting?

Benefits of creative and therapeutic activities

There are a number of benefits that service users may gain from creative and therapeutic activities. Some of these are listed below.

- **New skills** can be developed or existing skills can be maintained (individuals can stay physically or mentally active). Benefits could also include promoting independence or being supportive.
- **Physical benefits** may include improving fine motor skills such as dexterity (for example, picking up small objects) or gross motor skills, such as major muscle groups in legs or arms. Physical benefits may include a general increase in fitness (such as in games). Physical activity is often shown to be a very important factor in good mental health as well as physical health.
- **Intellectual benefits** may include developing imagination (e.g. making up stories), problem solving (e.g. crosswords) or developing language (such as games you may play using new words with children). Communication skills may be developed or improved.
- **Emotional benefits** may include improved self-esteem for the individual or social benefits such as developing friendships and co-operation.
- **Social benefits** will include development of new friendship groups and learning to co-operate with others.



So why are these benefits so important? If you think about your own experiences, you will soon realise that all individuals need to engage in activities which they enjoy and which stimulate them. Service users who can communicate well, or can join in with games or play, or simply have good friends, are likely to feel more positive and happy. Some of these benefits may interlink – for example, an increase in fine motor skills and agility may improve confidence, which in turn will boost an individual's self-esteem.

Activity 2

Read the case studies below and identify the PILES needs of those involved.

Case Studies

- Sally is a 70-year-old woman. Her husband died recently and she is lonely. A lot of her friends have either moved away or died. As she is older she has poor mobility and finds it difficult to get out and about.
- Nine-year-old Jodie is in hospital as she is having surgery. She sometimes finds it difficult to communicate her needs. As she has spent a lot of time in hospital she has not had the opportunity to develop many friendships with other children.
- Rob has always been dependent on other carers and is now trying to increase his own independence.

Activity 3

Choose one of the following activities and identify the benefits using PILES:

- playing football
- cooking
- playing a board game
- listening to a story
- playing bingo.