



Duty of Care

Disclaimer: This video is designed to be a conversation starter on the topic of duty of care in a remote aged care context. The facilitator should make use of other resources to ensure the learner continues to develop their understanding of duty of care in their workplace and their responsibilities.

Duty of care in an aged care setting means ensuring your actions or inactions do not result in harm or injury to the person receiving care. It means taking reasonable measures to protect, or at least not cause foreseeable harm, to another person or their property.

Working in the aged or disability sector, you have a legal and moral responsibility to keep the people you support safe from harm while using your service or in your care.

In our modern aged care framework, a duty of care also means providing a high standard of care and services that meet the person's assessed needs and listening to and facilitating consumer dignity and choice.

Risk assessments for activities

The setting for this video revolves around taking a group of care recipients out on a bush trip or picnic. The video opens with the preparation phase and emphasises how important this is to support the safety of those attending the activity.

Judith and Tamika discuss completing a vehicle checklist and an activity risk assessment.

Enid and Judith run through the activity risk assessment together and confirm things like who is going, communication and timeframes. They also identify specific people who may be more vulnerable.

- *Talk about the risk assessments and paperwork that is completed in your organisation before taking people out on activities.*
- *If the staff member will be taking people out on social support activities, talk about things they might need to consider before going out.*
- *If you are watching this video as a group, talk about vulnerable people you know who might need additional care and support.*

Monitoring person receiving cares

When running an activity, staff need to continually monitor where everyone is to ensure they are safe.

For example, in the bush activity scene, one person wanders away from the group. While the person is found quickly, it is vital for staff to understand that if a person goes missing from a group activity, this must be reported under the Serious Incident Response Scheme (SIRS).

- *Talk about SIRS and what things need to be reported by staff under this program.*



A second incident during the outing was when Tamika left the group to do her own thing. This could put the group of older ladies at risk, with no support person to assist them if something goes wrong. Additionally, one of the ladies had been identified as having dementia and was therefore vulnerable.

- *Talk about how important it is for staff to stay with and monitor vulnerable people, both in the home if they provide in-home respite, or when out on activities.*

Review of Activity

In the final scene, Judith and Tamika review the activity and talk about what went well and what didn't.

Judith challenges Tamika about leaving the ladies alone to do her own thing, saying that although nothing terrible happened, they have a duty of care to keep them safe.

Tamika raises the concept of supporting the independence of people receiving care as one of her excuses for her actions. Judith acknowledges this but reinforces that supporting a person's independence doesn't negate the care workers' duty of care to the person.

- *When working with people at your service, discuss balancing independence with the duty of care.*

Links to additional resources

Reporting responsibilities for providers and their staff, SIRS for Home Care, - Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission: <https://www.agedcarequality.gov.au/resources/reporting-responsibilities-providers-and-their-staff-sirs-home-services>