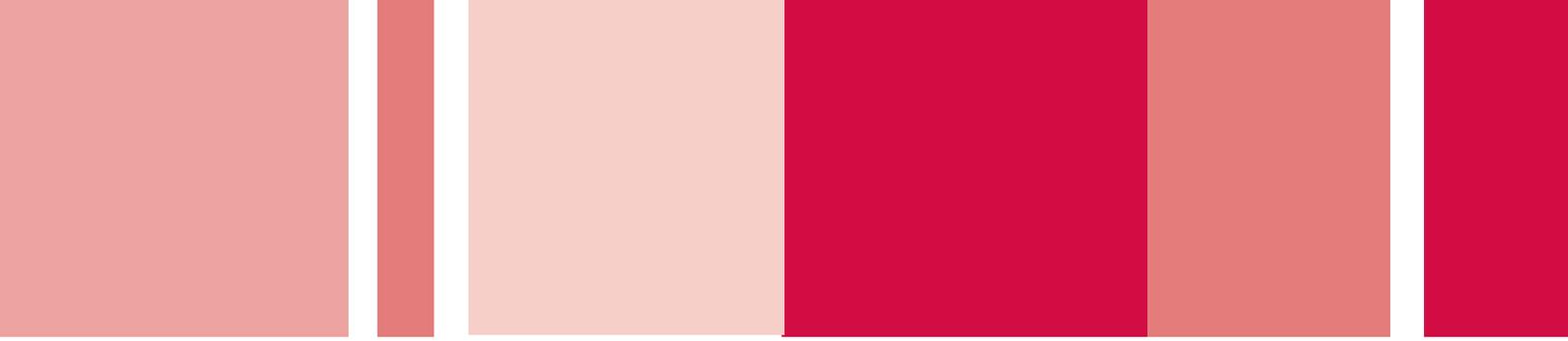
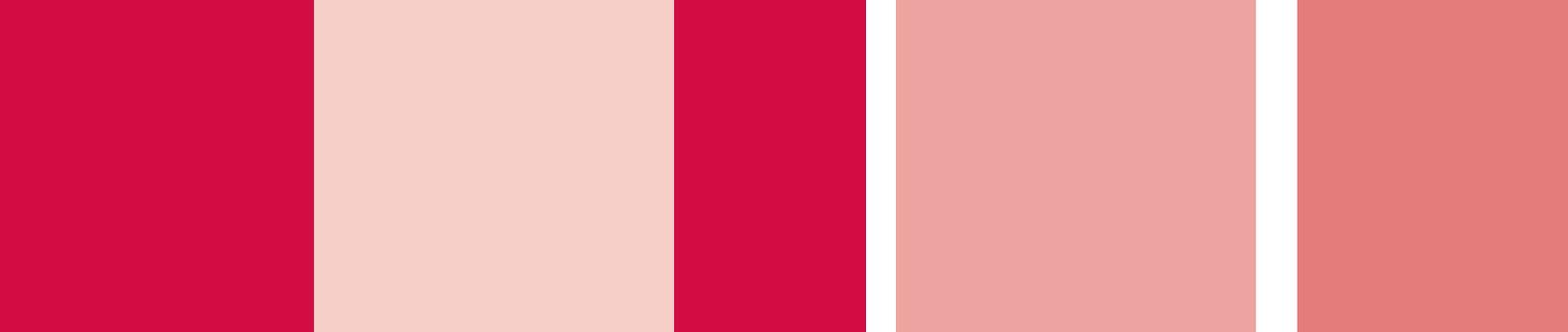


Self Care Training Manual

Module 8: gathering
information and
signposting





The key to self care support is for new types of workers to gather appropriate information for the people they support, so they can learn more about the long term conditions they suffer from.

Module 8 explores the different ways that new types of workers can gather information that is appropriate and agreed for the people they support. Having more information can be the bridge that people need to gain a better understanding and increased confidence to want to learn new ways to self care for their conditions.

New types of workers will learn the options available to signpost people to self care programmes, community services and support networks, so they can further motivate people to consider improving their self care.

Learning outcomes

On completion of this module learners will be able to:

- Have knowledge of signposting people and explore the best ways to do this.
- Recognise the importance of gathering information to support people to self care.
- Understand how to support people to access self care programmes and support networks to increase their self care skills.
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(OHP. 8.2 What is signposting?)

What is signposting?

Signposting is - supporting individuals to gather information about their long term conditions

Signposting is - letting individuals know about other services in their communities that can support their self care

Signposting is - connecting individuals with others in their position so they can learn more about their long term conditions

Signposting is taking action, and supporting people with long term conditions to do self care better. It can be as simple as getting someone an information leaflet on their diabetes, Parkinson's, arthritis etc, so they learn more about their conditions.

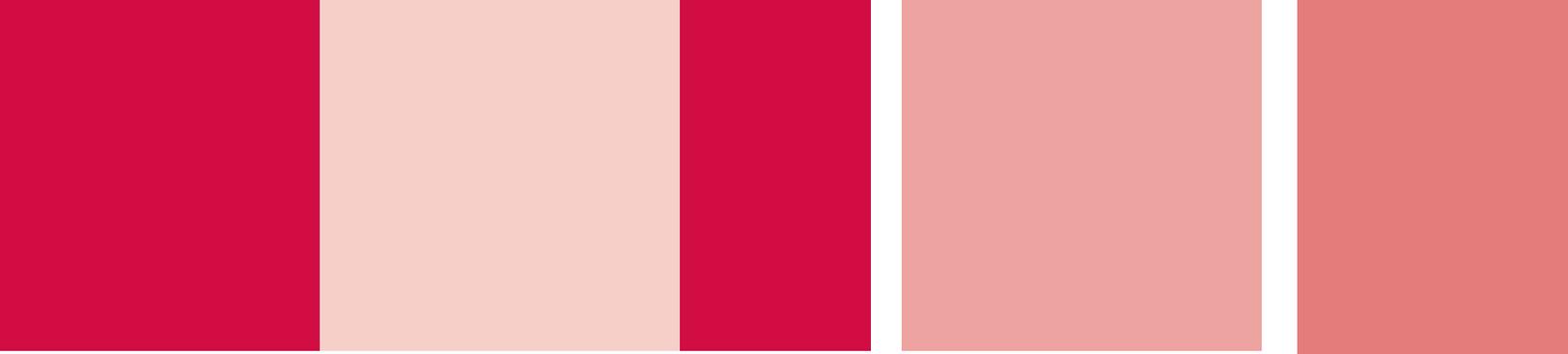
It can be telling people about other services that exist, to support them with their self care management—a pain management clinic, stroke club, etc.

It can be networking people with others who share the same journey; being able to speak to other people in the same position, with the same challenges, can motivate people to start to look after themselves that little bit better, to see self care as a way to live a happier healthier life.

For some people saying 'yes' to signposting will be easy, others may need more support and time to consider it as an option.

! Key point:

What is important is that new types of workers continue to look for opportunities to signpost, and discuss the benefits of other services with the people they support.



(OHP. 8.3 How do I signpost?)

- Many local authorities will have a local directory of services that you can access.
- This will provide the right information, support and guidance to people who are interested in finding out more about self care.
- If you cannot access a directory of services then speak to your supervisor and they will support you to find the right information.
- Work with the people you support, their next of kin and support networks to access information.

For many local authorities, the future will be a one stop shop or a local directory of services with the aim of being able to offer people the right information, support and guidance when they need it.

This will be a place in the community where new types of workers and people using services may seek advice and access helpful information and practical support, by phone, email or internet access.

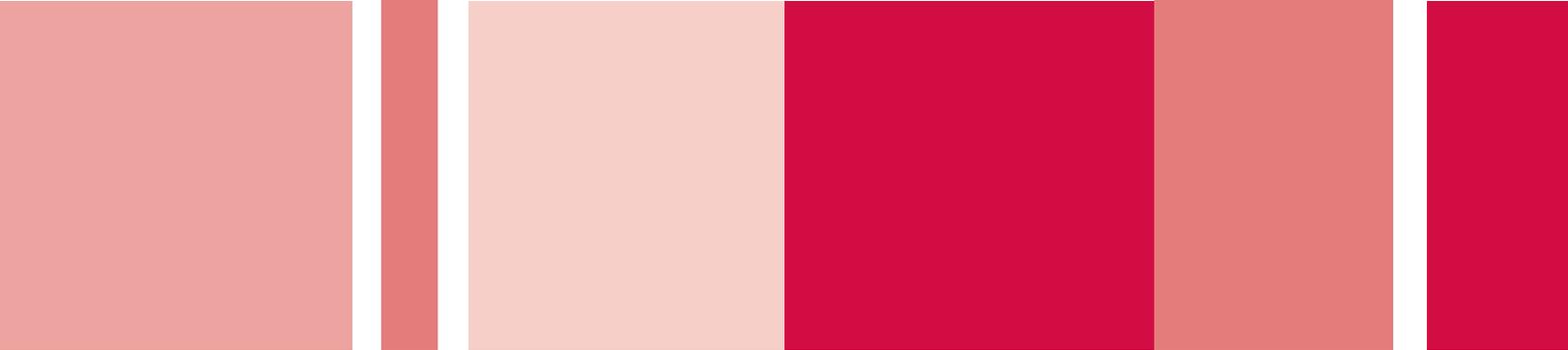
So, if people want information on their depression, arthritis, stress, pain, diabetes, Parkinson's, multiple sclerosis or any other long term condition and symptom, they will be able to go to one place that can give them reliable and appropriate information.

It is important that new types of workers check with their supervisor about how to do this in their area, or if they have a directory of well-being services that they can access to signpost the people they support.

If the one stop shop is not available then new types of workers should work in partnership with the people they support, their families, advocates and their own employer to access the best possible information and support.

! Key point:

The information is out there, and new types of workers have a responsibility to find out how to access it.



(OHP. 8.4 Group discussion)

Gathering information may help people to self care. Where are the places you could go to find information for them?

Please refer to discussion 8.1 in how to present module 8 in the Self Care Training Manual.

1. Gather information on long term conditions

The first step towards self care management is for people to learn more about their long term conditions.

Being able to read a leaflet or to be told more about the long term condition that affects their life will give people a better understanding about their condition(s) and the symptoms they face as a result.

Reading a leaflet on the effects of smoking may prompt some to seek support to reduce their addiction or give up all together.

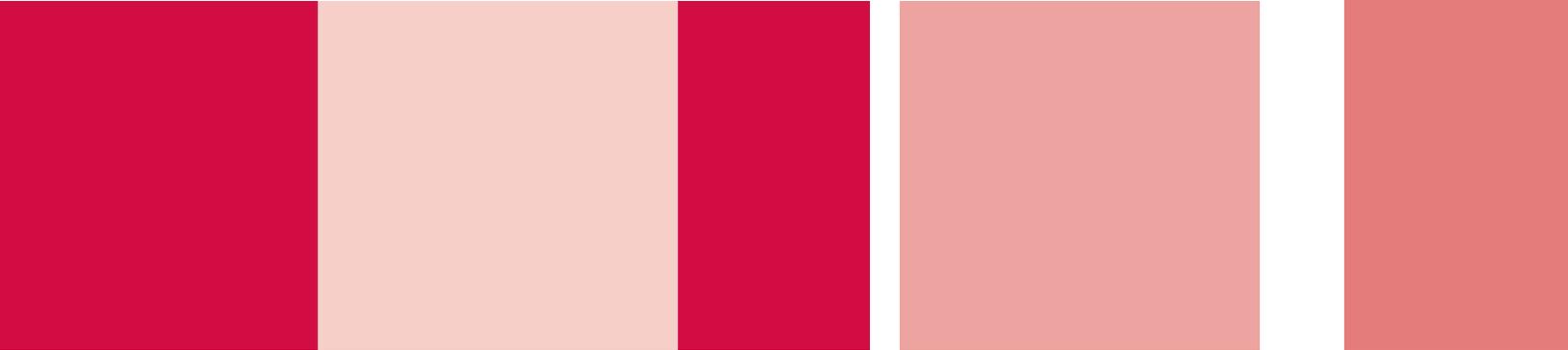
Having more information on diabetes, may help some people understand what it is, why it affects them and how they can do things to prevent the affects diabetes brings.

Now, just having information alone will not make people begin to self care for their long term conditions, but it can make them feel more confident to want to learn more, and to consider new ways of supporting themselves.

So this is an important stage for many people to read or listen to information that shows them that they can take more control over their journey, and limit the symptoms they face – through self care.

! Key point:

New types of workers should be motivated to gather as much information as they can. In doing so they will be signposting people to a healthier future!



Trustworthy sources of information

The internet

- www.nhs.uk – This site has information on a number of long term conditions
- www.healthtalkonline.org – This site gives a personal perspective from individuals who have experience of living with a long term condition.
- www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk and www.askbootshealth.co.uk - These sites give evidence-based information on a range of long term conditions and outline what works and what doesn't in their management.
- www.pals.nhs.uk – This site is a gateway to other support services for individuals with long term conditions.

Written information

A good source of written information is the person's local GP surgery, hospital or community nurse. They will all provide patient information leaflets that can help individuals learn more about their long term conditions.

Telephone advice

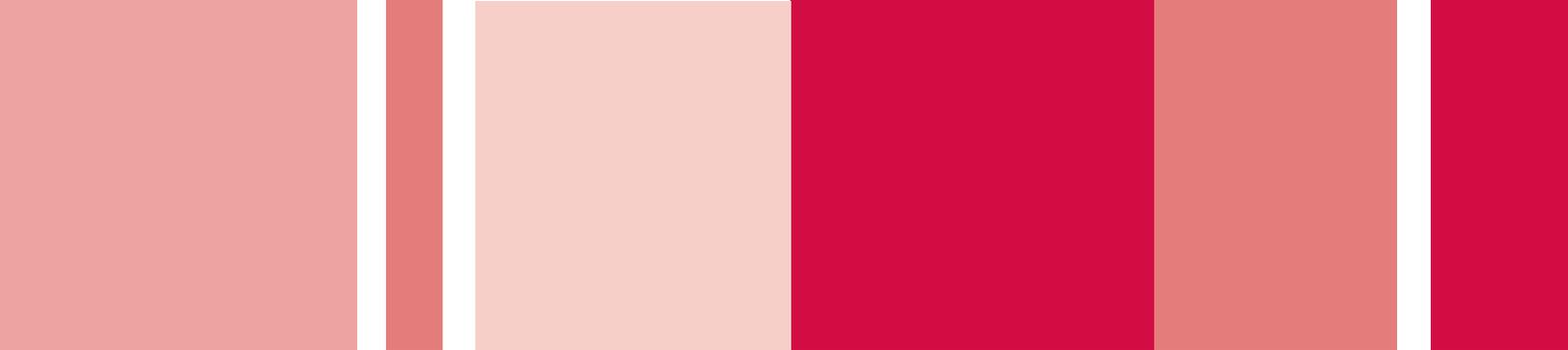
Contacting the NHS Direct Helpline on 0845 4647 can give individuals direct access to a nurse to find out more about their long term conditions. Many local authorities will also have voluntary support lines where individuals may access more information on their long term conditions.

(OHP. 8.6 The rules of information)

The information that new types of workers gather for the people they support should be:

Appropriate:

What is important is that the information is appropriate and relates to the long term condition the person has. Printing information off the internet is 'ok' only if it has come from reliable sources.



Clear:

We all have different beliefs and customs and our diverse needs will mean we may want to receive information in different ways. Therefore, the information must be clear, easy to read and follow, and where possible available in a number of formats (e.g. braille, large font, alternative languages, picture stories).

Useful:

It should allow people the opportunity to learn more about their long term conditions, and begin to show them ways that they may better look after and self care for themselves.

Agreed:

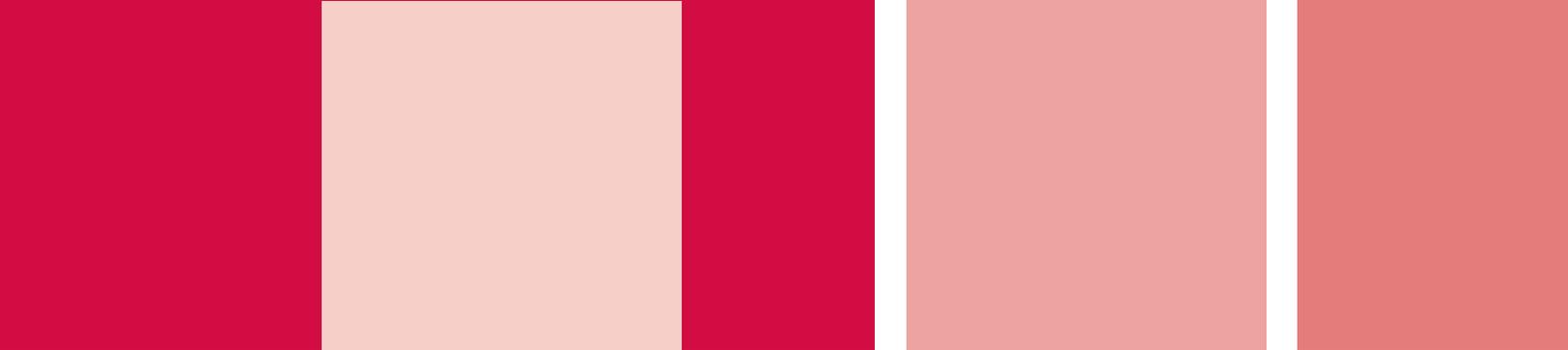
Finally, the information new types of workers gather must be agreed. This can be directly with the person they support, their family, friends, advocates or their employer.

! Key point:

It is important to remember that the new type of worker's role is to not give advice to people on their long term conditions but to support them to:

- Access information.
- To help people understand the information and relate it to their symptoms.
- To make informed choices to self care.

Many people may need to seek professional advice from their GP, advocate, or family before acting on the information they have read.



(OHP. 8.7 Knowing more leads to...)

Once an individual has had the time to read or been given more information about their long term conditions they may:

- **Do nothing**

For some people learning more about the long term condition they have can be an overwhelming experience, and it may take time for them to consider what they have learned.

Their decision to 'do nothing' should be respected, and they should be supported slowly to consider the benefits of self care management.

- **Be unsure of what to do next**

For many people, having an information leaflet on their long term conditions will mean learning things about their conditions they did not know before. This will bring a number of questions about what they should do next?

- **Asking for more information and support**

For some, learning that there are new ways they can self care for their long term conditions will motivate them to want to do more, and learn more.

It is important then that new type of workers are aware of how and where to signpost people so they may continue to learn more about the self care of their long term conditions.

- **Set a goal to learn new skills to self care**

For some people, having the opportunity to read or learn more about the long term conditions they suffer from will motivate them to want to set new goals with their new types of workers, so they can begin to change their approach to caring for their long term conditions and have more control over monitoring and managing their symptoms.

(OHP. 8.8 The key areas to signpost are...)

Once people are ready to set goals and learn more about improving their self care skills they can be signposted to:

Self education programmes

There are a number of education programmes that new types of workers must be aware of, so when people want to improve their knowledge and understanding of their long term conditions they can signpost them to the relevant services.

The two main types of programmes are:

- disease-specific programmes
- the Expert Patients Programme.

Disease-specific programmes

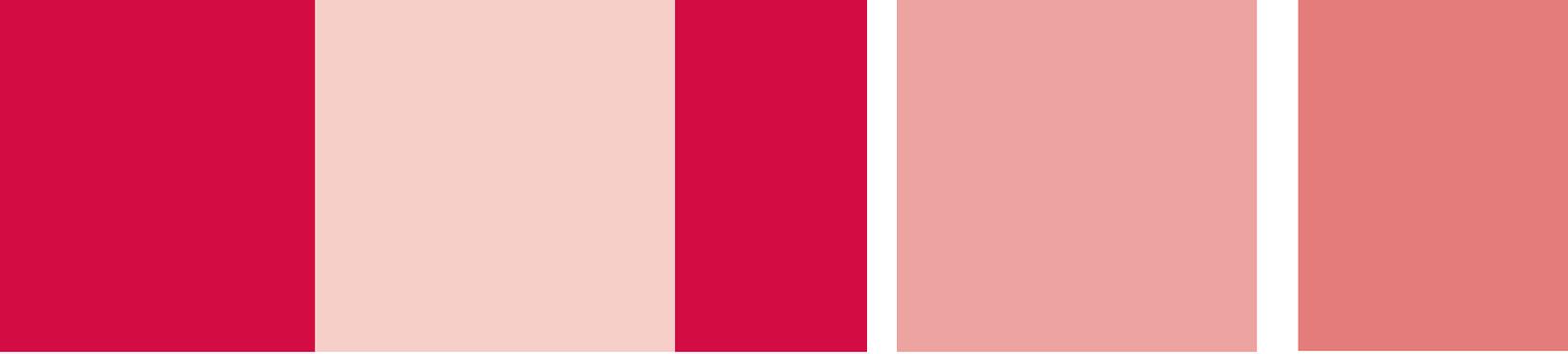
Disease-specific programmes are one-on-one programmes designed to support people to learn more about the long term conditions they have, and prevent them from getting worse.

The programmes are offered by health professionals in local communities and can be delivered directly to people in their own homes. So people with diabetes, arthritis, multiple sclerosis, etc., would each join different programmes to get the most out of their learning.

Examples of disease-specific programmes:

In Bedfordshire: A specialist nurse works with individuals in the community to improve their understanding and self care of their diabetes. A personal diabetes record is then used by individuals to set goals in their self care management and to support them to learn new skills and improve the quality of their lives.

In Nottingham: A specialist nursing team works with individuals in the community who have the long term condition Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD). A self care management plan is written in partnership with the individual suffering from COPD so they may set targets and learn how to manage their ongoing condition.



Experts Patients Programme

The Experts Patients Programme is ‘people helping other people’ and offers a number of tailored programmes in the community that support people to improve their self care skills. The courses are often run by ‘expert patients’ — people who have long term conditions that they have learned to self care for.

They are not disease specific, so you may have a person with a heart condition and a person with diabetes or arthritis on the same programme learning to take control over the symptoms of their conditions.

By attending the course people could learn to:

- set goals and make action plans
- problem solve
- develop communication skills
- manage emotions – frustration, fear, anxiety
- manage relationships with family, friends and health professionals
- find health resources
- get the most out of consultations with health professionals
- understand the importance of exercise and healthy eating
- manage fatigue, sleep, pain, anger and depression.

Kathy: *“I did the Expert Patients course because I’ve been on a mission to make some progress with my chronic lifelong acute eczema and asthma. As a result of the course I now have the confidence to search out people like the dermatology nurse practitioner and a new modification method for my skin, which is brilliant. I am able to swim again which is the first time in 20 years. I have also been on inhalers since they were invented, now I don’t need them.”*

Maggie: *“I have osteoporosis and arthritis. The course helped me in many ways. Most of all it gave me my confidence and independence back. I now manage to do much more for myself. I use the buses again like I used to without having to ask my husband to take me everywhere. All this is thanks to the course and the people I met there. My first holiday for years was a cruise to Iceland. I have been to a beauty parlour and am wearing make-up again. My GP has noticed an improvement in me.”*

! Key point:

New types of workers should remember to speak to their supervisor if they want to access information on the education programmes that are available.

(OHP. 8.10 Community services)

Community services

Joining a group in the community is a good way to motivate people to feel better about themselves, to give them focus and something to look forward to.

Joining a group means getting out of the house and having a change of scenery, it means making friends with likeminded people and taking a step closer to learning how to better manage the symptoms of long term conditions.

Becoming more 'active' could give people more energy, improve their sleep, relieve stress, improve their circulation and could prevent their mental and physical health from worsening.

These positive effects will mean that people could become more motivated to self care, and reduce the symptoms that they may suffer from – depression, anxiety, and isolation, etc.

There are a number of community services that people can access as part of their support service:

swimming

walking groups

yoga classes

meditation

cooking classes

aqua classes

rehabilitation classes

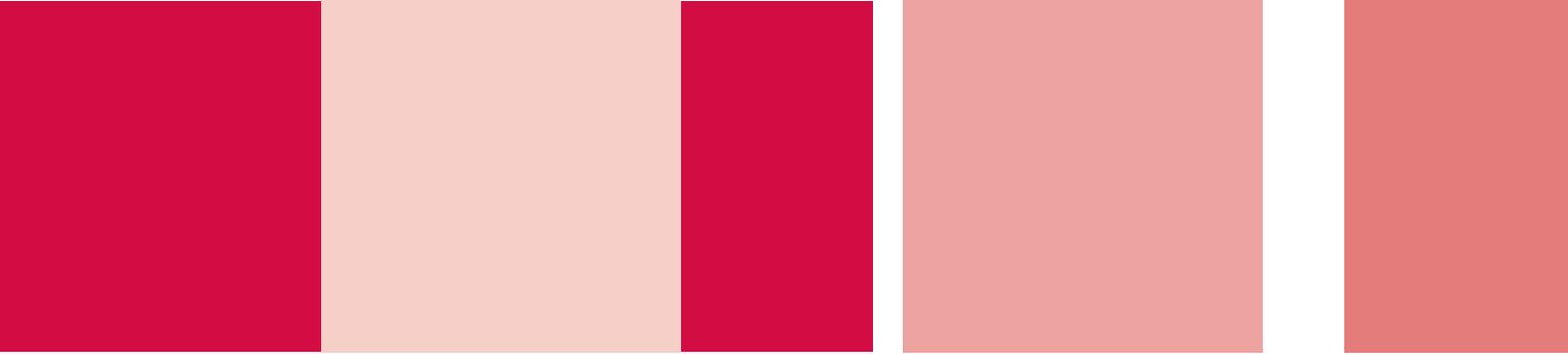
singing classes

dancing classes

keep fit classes

craft classes

thai chi classes



! Key point: New types of workers should tell the people they support about the benefits of community services and support them to find the right ones for them. New types of workers should remember to speak to their supervisors if they want to access information on the community services that are available.

(OHP. 8.11 Support networks)

Support networks

Support networks are groups of people with similar experiences who come together to learn from each other and to start to make positive changes in their lives.

There are no expectations with support networks, and people can take it at their own pace, some may contribute immediately, telling their story, others may go along and simply listen.

Support networks for people with specific faiths and customs can be useful for people who want to be supported in ways that best suit their religious and spiritual beliefs, helping them feel comfortable, relaxed and ready to learn new skills in self care.

Handy tips, information and advice on how to cope with their symptoms is always at hand, and people can take their learning, try it out and then feed back their challenges or successes to the group.

Examples of support networks:

- Neighborhood Watch
- nutrition advice
- smoking cessation
- gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender groups
- Alcoholics Anonymous
- addiction support groups
- multi-cultural networks
- bereavement support groups
- abuse support groups.

Some of the most commonly known support groups are:

- Age Concern
- Alzheimer's Disease Society
- Arthritis Care
- Asthma UK
- British Deaf Association
- British Heart Association
- British Liver Trust
- British Lung Foundation
- Diabetes UK
- MIND
- National Kidney Foundation
- Parkinson's Disease Society
- Prostate Help Federation
- Scope
- Stroke Association

! Key point:

New types of workers should speak to their supervisors if they want to access information on the support networks that are available.

Please refer to worksheet 8.2 in how to present module 8 in the Self Care Training Manual.

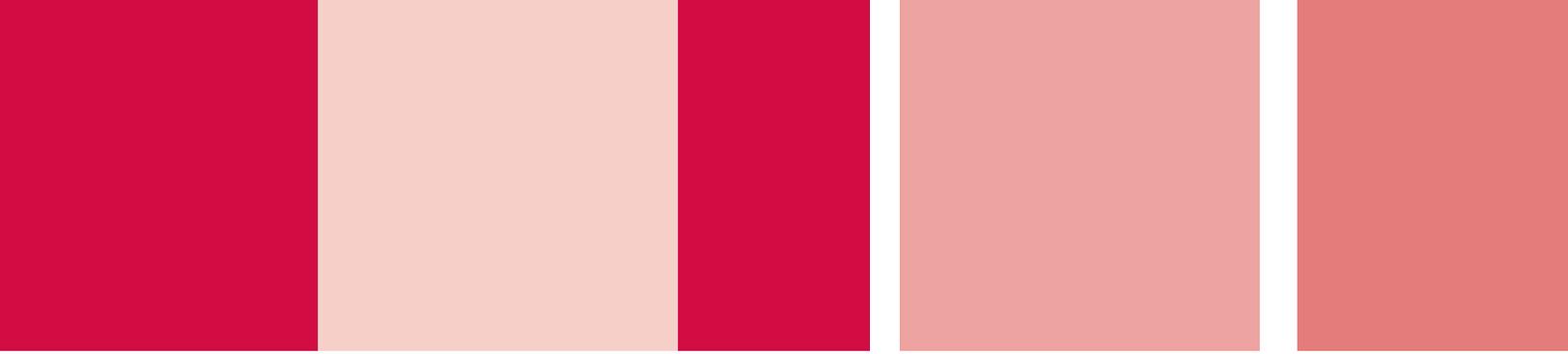
(OHP. 8.12 Benefits of signposting)

The key benefits of signposting people to new services are that they:

1. Begin to learn more about their long term conditions
2. Become active in choosing how to take control over their conditions
3. Reduce the symptoms they suffer from and start to feel more positive!
4. Reduce the number of times they may have to go into hospital or respite
5. Become more independent of others and meet new friends
6. Have a longer life expectancy

Gathering Information is key to learning new skills and developing new ways to better self care. So joining education programmes, local community groups or finding informal support networks will all support people to learn how to better monitor and manage their long term conditions.

New types of workers have a responsibility to make signposting a regular activity of their new way of working!





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