

## **April Brooks**

# **(MHQs) : A Tool for Training, Assessment and Decision-Making in Person Handling**

As a practical assessment and decision-making tool Manual Handling Questions (MHQs) provide a logical, hierarchical, principle-based approach to moving a person. Their purpose is to enable handlers to become reasoning and knowledgeable in an approach to patient/client handling which promotes rehabilitation and independence, with appropriate reliance on equipment or additional personnel as and when necessary.

MHQs have proved valuable within the following situations:

- Initial assessment of patient/client handling needs
- Decision-making regarding appropriate levels of intervention in patient/client handling, from instruction in independent movement through issue of equipment the patient/client can use themselves, to assistance from additional handlers and/or handling aids
- As a training method for patient handlers at all levels of competence, including treatment/therapeutic handling
- As a prompt for completion of risk assessment, handling care plan and other relevant patient handling documentation

The tool is concise; it can be printed on a single A5 sheet and used in ward areas, treatment areas, training rooms and in community folders. It should not be used in isolation: an understanding of principles of normal movement (and the effect on normal movement of incapacity), and basic biomechanics are required (as taught within moving and handling training sessions such as that recommended within the Inter-professional Curriculum Framework (National Back Exchange 1997) and throughout the Guide to the Handling of People 5<sup>th</sup> Edition (BackCare 2005)).

MHQs are easy to pick up and remember and encourage continued use of best practice after training. They have been used with physiotherapy and occupational therapy students and in Module 1 of the Post-Registration Programme for Back Care Advisers at the University of Southampton, within the Treatment Handling Training Programme for Physiotherapists in NHS Trusts in Portsmouth and by Back Care Advisers and Trainers within NHS, Private Sector Care and Social Services.

Testimonies regarding use of MHQs are available.

References

BackCare 2005 The Guide to the Handling of People 5<sup>th</sup> Edition Middlesex UK

National Back Exchange 1997 The Inter-professional Curriculum Framework for Back Care Advisers (Revised Edition) UK

**N.B.** The session is designed to follow-up on the article published in The Column Vol 20.1 Spring 2008. 1. To communicate the use of the MHQ tool as a method of assessment and decision-making within patient/client handling, 2. To demonstrate how use of the tool can promote functional rehabilitation or maintenance of function in patients/clients within the remit of moving and/or handling, 3. To demonstrate use of the MHQ tool within training, assessment and treatment situations using practical scenarios

THE WORKSHOP WILL BE OF INTEREST TO anyone who moves and/or handles people, those involved in risk assessment and writing of patient handling profiles/plans, moving and handling trainers, those involved in treatment/therapeutic handling and/or the training of it.

ORGANISATION REPRESENTED: Hampshire South East and Portsmouth City NHS Primary Care Trusts.