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University Health Board

The 4 Key Characteristics of a Primary health Need

Nature	Intensity
This is about the characteristics of an individual's needs. Ask yourself questions like: 🔸 How would you describe the needs (rather than the medical condition leading to them)? What adjectives would you use? 🔸 What is the impact of the need on overall health and well being? 🔸 What types of interventions are required to meet the need? 🔸 Is there particular knowledge/skill required to anticipate and address the need? Could anyone do it without specific training? 🔸 Is the individual's condition deteriorating/improving?	This is about quantity, severity and continuity of needs. Ask yourself things like: 🔸 How severe is this need? 🔸 How problematic is it to alleviate the needs and symptoms? 🔸 How often and for how long is each intervention required? 🔸 How much care is needed? 🔸 How many carers are required? 🔸 Does the care relate to needs over several domains?
Unpredictability	**Complexity**
This is about the degree to which needs fluctuate and thereby create challenges in managing them. Ask yourself things like: 🔸 Are you able to anticipate when the need(s) might arise? 🔸 Does the level of need often change? Do you often have to change the level of support at short notice? 🔸 Is the condition unstable? 🔸 What happens if you don't address the need when it arises? How significant are the consequences? 🔸 To what extent is professional knowledge/skill required to respond spontaneously and appropriately? 🔸 What level of monitoring/review is required	This is about the level of skill/knowledge required to address an individual need or the range of needs. Ask yourself things like: 🔸 How difficult is it to manage the need(s)? 🔸 Are the needs interrelated? 🔸 Do they impact on each other to make the needs even more difficult to address? 🔸 How much knowledge is required to address the need(s)? 🔸 How much skill is required to address the need(s)? 🔸 How does the individual's response to their condition make it more difficult to provide appropriate support?