CLIENT COMMUNICATION

Student Manual

CHCCOM006 ESTABLISH AND MANAGE CLIENT RELATIONSHIPS

CONTENT

1. ESTABLISHING PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

1.1 CLIENT RELATIONSHIP WITHIN PROFESSIONAL BOUNDARIES

ELEMENT:	1. Professional client relationship
PERFORMANCE CRITERIA:	1.1 Establish relationship within appropriate professional boundaries

Establishing Professional Relationships with Clients

Establishing and managing strong relationships with different people is an important part of success. The relationships you have formed with various types of people from many different areas of your life can help give you an idea of how to establish strong relationships with clients.

It's a good idea to consider what makes a good relationship and what makes a good professional relationship and what helps it last.

The following tips may help you establish professional relationships:

- **Treat others the way you want to be treated**
  This classic saying seems like a simple concept, but it is easily forgotten. When establishing a relationship with a client, consider what things are like for them and focus on trying to act and provide a service in the way that you would desire.
- **A clear service description**
  Giving a clear outline of what you can and intend to do is a good idea when establishing a relationship with a new client. Having a clear framework of objectives and plans in place allows clients to know what to expect from your service.
- **Open and effective communication**
  Communication is essential for building lasting client relationships. These days there are more ways than ever to keep in touch. Making yourself available and making timely, efficient communication a priority will help your client feel valued and build a relationship.

- Share knowledge
  In many cases your client may not completely understand your area of expertise which is why they engaged your services. This is a great opportunity to build trust by sharing information that will help the client understand your capabilities. Working in this way will help the client feel more involved and connected with what you do.
- Be honest
  The best relationships are built around openness and honesty. Be honest with yourself and the client about your capabilities, your skills and how long you expect it will take you to perform a task. Trust can be built when the client knows what to expect from you. It can be tempting to avoid confrontation and always be agreeable by telling your client what you think they want to hear. Clients rely on you to know what you are talking about; therefore it is essential to be open when it comes to your expertise and professional point of view. Most clients will respect you explaining your opinions and this will improve your relationship.
- Mutual respect
  When you respect your clients, you value their input and ideas, and they value yours. Working together, you can develop ideas and solutions based on your collective insight, wisdom and creativity.
- Be aware of your body language
  People can tell, consciously and subconsciously, how you feel about being around them. Being positive with your body language by keeping your arms and legs uncrossed, smiling and making eye contact are great ways to ensure that clients have positive associations with you.

Often the best tactic is to just be yourself and not overthink things. Take a genuine interest in a relationship and try your best to achieve the optimal results and the relationship will develop in a natural way.

Forming long-lasting, meaningful relationships is vital to your success. Being professional and positive should help you reap the rewards of positive, mutually beneficial professional relationships.

Professional Boundaries

Professional boundaries are clearly established limits that allow for safe and trusted connections between service providers and their clients. Boundaries give each person a sense of legitimate control in a relationship. Having a clear understanding of the limits and responsibilities of your role as a service provider is important and healthy, as well as helping communication in professional relationships. Professional boundaries allow you to stay focused on providing your responsibilities and services to the client.

Some things to consider when establishing professional boundaries:

- Be friendly with the client, not friends – it is easy to confuse the two, but will become clearer as your professional relationship becomes more defined
- Establish rules of contact
- Refrain from giving out your personal contact information
- Don't share personal information like money or relationship problems
- Protect your privacy on social media
- Watch your physical boundaries - don't hug or touch a client in any way that could be misconstrued
- Don’t ask questions that are not professionally relevant
- Don't become over familiar
- Don’t give or receive money or gifts from clients
- Don’t approach clients outside of work - even if you bump into them in public, don’t approach them – only say hello if they approach you

Staff may unwittingly be put in a position where their relationship with service users is compromised, or be drawn into conversations or situations where their boundaries are being stretched or crossed. In some situations the fine line between good and bad practice may not always be obvious or clear.

Remember the responsibility for respecting boundaries ultimately lies with you as the professional.

Transference

Transference is a psychological phenomenon characterised by unconscious redirection of feelings from one person to another. In the context of providing a service, transference refers to redirection of a client's feelings for someone else to the worker. Transference is often viewed as an erotic attraction, but can be seen in many other forms such as rage, hatred, mistrust, parentification or dependence among others. Transference often brings with it a sense that a person should act in a certain way (often similarly to that of the person who originally brought those feelings about) which can lead to expectations or feelings of vulnerability, shock or mistrust when they do not.

Client's and workers should be aware of transference so that they know that within a professional relationship, these types of strong emotional feelings are part of the process of the service provided, and that professional boundaries can be maintained.

ASSESSMENT 1.1

1.2 TRUST AND RESPECT THROUGH COMMUNICATION

ELEMENT:	1. Professional client relationship
PERFORMANCE CRITERIA:	1.2 Build trust and respect through use of effective communication techniques

Communication

Communication is one of the most important aspects when it comes to any profession. It is part of your tools of your trade just as much as your industry skills and is essential to the complete service that you offer. The communication element is often something that is under appreciated and it can be seen as a by-product or a means to an end. Communication is in fact one of the most vital parts of all interactions. Having clear, precise and effective communication tools can make a big difference in one's experience and relationship to what is going on.

Communication is the tool of transferring information from one person to another. Communication can essentially be broken down into 2 parts of transferring information: Verbal communication and Non Verbal (expression) communication. In modern day society we have developed many ways and tools for communication such as face to face, technology (computers, phones etc.) signs, sounds, textures and emotions.

Communication Techniques

The foundational skills of communicating are broken up into two parts – **Verbal Communication** and **Expression** (non verbal communication). These skills are vital to effective communication and transfer of information. The more developed your skills of communication are, the more accurate and clear your communication will be. Take time to develop and practice these skills, challenge yourself and your current ways to always grow and further develop.

Verbal Communication

Verbal communication is also referred to as oral communication and is the action of communicating information verbally. Verbal communication is important but even so it only accounts for 7 % of the communication that goes on in any interaction. This sounds like a very small percentage but without this component daily interaction would be very difficult. Current society relies heavily on verbal communication; from young we are taught that it is one of the most important means of communication. Often we are taught to always go by what is said which has also then put a lot of reliance on whether someone is communicating the truth or a lie. Consider as an example – Trying to order your dinner meal at a restaurant without verbal communication, imagine trying to communicate the intricate details of how you would like your meal prepared/cooked without being able to use any words. Consider how accurate your order might be as well as the experience of doing the order and the potential complication and difficulties.

You can see just by this one example that without verbal communication usually the details cannot be communicated and more then likely the information you are trying to relay may be distorted and or misinterpreted. Although communication is still possible you can see the importance of effective verbal communication. In your profession verbal communication plays a vital and essential role to the effectiveness and quality of your work. This includes such things as receiving client history as well as verbal communication throughout treatments to support tools such as permission and pressure.

The main keys of effective verbal communication can be broken into 3 parts.

1. Clear:

   Making sure your verbal communication is clear is important to supporting the listening skills of the recipient. Making verbal communication clear is the art of using the correct pronunciation and speed in which verbal communication is delivered. Having these factors within a certain range the verbal communication is much 'clearer' and hence easier to understand. For example:

- Pronunciation: Correct pronunciation of the words specifically so there is no confusion to the sounds that have been received. This can sometimes take time to develop but is an important factor in communication.
- Speed: Allowing the flow of your verbal communication to be appropriate to the situation. Often verbal communication is rushed out, sometimes due to nerves sometimes other factors. This can often make the communication of the sounds very hard for the receiver to interpret. Also speaking too slowly can cause disruption, by having it too slow the flow of sounds is also changed.

2. **Precise**:

   Making verbal communication precise is the ability to simply deliver what needs to be verbally communicated without saying too much or not saying enough. Being precise enables the direct information to be communicated effectively with out any other information getting in the way. By saying too much we are offering extra information for the receiver to interpret, this can often be misleading and or distracting. By saying not enough there may not be enough information being relayed for the person to fully understand what the message is that you are trying to communicate.

3. Tone of Voice

   A message can be communicated in many different ways. A large part of the receiver's understanding of the message comes from the paralanguage (tone of voice) used to convey the message. Different use of tone of voice can often imply different feelings and meanings within a message. As an example a high pitch, drawn-out speech can imply disbelief, or slow speed low pitch can imply depression or thoughtfulness. When communicating with people from other cultures and/or countries you need to be aware of your own paralanguage. Your tone of voice will convey a great deal of meaning even if the words themselves are not understood. Thus you need to ensure that your tone of voice conveys patience and courtesy. Use open-handed gestures to support your communication.

Expression and non Verbal Communication

Non-verbal communication is also referred to as expression and is the communication of information that is one's thoughts and or feelings that are not being conveyed verbally. Expression can be shown in many forms, for example facial expression, movement/gestures, contact, tone, and feelings. Expression is often under appreciated, yet expression is the foundation to communication and it is what makes our interaction translatable and effective. Expression accounts for about 93 per cent of communication and it is what gives our communication meaning, experience and quality. The responsibility of expression is not something to ignore and as you can see from the statistics it is worth investing in. Learning to read and understand non-verbal information is an important part of successful communication.

Throughout our schooling and from a very young age, much emphasis is placed on learning to read, write and speak, yet these are all only factors of non-verbal communication and only accounts for 7% of communication. How much education have we specifically received on how to understand, interpret and convey non-verbal information? This highlights the importance of learning to accurately understand and interpret non-verbal communication.

The keys to being able to receive and understand non-verbal communication are:

Observation

The ability to observe more then just the verbal communication including such factors as movement, facial expression, appearance, feelings and tone. Observing allows you to be more consciously aware of the information being communicated non-verbally.

Interpretation and Understanding

The ability to understand is the ability to have clarity beyond perception. This means being able to understand and interpret key markers of non-verbal communication without personal judgment or a personal view. Whether we choose to be consciously aware of this communication and interpretation or not, it is still happening.

One of the best aspects of non-verbal communication is that it is very hard to lie and or hide the truth. Essentially if you know the information you will convey it in some way or another. It is very easy to give false or misleading information through verbal communication. But through non-verbal communication there are too many ways that the expression will come through. Some professions, such as police and legal authorities at airports, are trained to read non-verbal expression. Other professions are trained to hide non-verbal expression. Studies have suggested that despite how much ones tries they can only make it more difficult, but the information will always show.

A good example where non-verbal communication is used and relied professionally is by political parties and campaigners. The majority of political leaders in the world are specifically trained in how to communicate non-verbally. This has been done throughout history and continues in modern time.

Key components of non-verbal communication

Body language:

Body language is the communication of conscious and subconscious information through the body. This includes movements, gestures and particular expressions that shape the body to communicating particular information. Body language constitutes anywhere from 55-80% of communication at any given moment. Studies have shown and suggested that particular body language highlights particular feelings and expressions. Essentially the body will take shape of how someone is feeling. The movement the body is subject to will always be one that reflects the inner status of the body. Common examples are:

- Looking down or away when you are not being truthful
- Crossing your arms over your chest feeling insecure or defensive
- Shoulders protruding forward being protective
- Body slouching being disinterested and or tired
- Frowning being confused, annoyed and or frustrated
- Tone of voice being quiet can mean that a person is shy
- Movements that are hard, abrupt, loud and aggressive can mean someone is angry

These are just some examples of the commonly accepted interpretations of particular presentation. This does not mean these expressions will always mean these particular things but more likely this is the case.

Consider the body language you would like to present. Consider the information you would like to communicate. Consider that your every expression and every movement is consistently communicating information being received by those in direct receivership and those around you.

Contact/touch

Touch can be used to communicate different meaning. Different qualities of touch will communicate to the receiver different feelings and expression. A gentle caring touch can often convey understanding, enjoyment, affection, care, support and trust. A harsh or rough touch can convey disinterest, frustration, anger, and protection.

To convey meaning and comfort (for both the giver and receiver):

A gentle, caring touch can convey sympathy, understanding, affection and enjoyment. Handling clients roughly will distress and upset them. Use touch to reassure people or to indicate compassion. Take care that the touching does not contravene boundaries set by legislation and by the client's own need for personal space.

Appearance and posture

Appearance and posture can convey a lot of information about a person, their attitude, their ideology and/or social constitute. The problem is that most people make judgments about appearance and posture according to their own perspectives on what these things should be and/or look like. This is creating and projecting our own ideology of appearance and posture before even interacting with another. When we then see another person we make a snap judgment based on our interpretation of their appearance and posture according to our views. These judgements are not accurate understandings of the information being communicated, they are perceptions based on preconceived ideas.

The key to to understanding appearance and posture comes back to your ability to observe and understand.

When working in a professional setting you can use your appearance and posture to support your communication with clients. Examples such as looking professional, neat, clean and tidy can be a simple way to communicate that your services are professional and that they are neat, clean and tidy.

Tone and presentation: Tone refers to the use of sound during verbal communication. This is changed by different factors such as pitch and velocity. The tone someone uses to express can often portray a strong message and meaning. Such examples include raising the voice when angry and/or speaking quietly when needed. Tone carries intention and within the expression of our tone we are relaying a lot of information. Although tone is an important communication method it is often secondary to the intention and quality of expression.

As a health care professional, you need to consider what tone to use when working with your clients. The ability to use appropriate tone, and present appropriately are key tools in your service. The type of service you provide, and what you are communicating with your client, will determine the tone you use. The more in sync your intention and delivery, the more effectively communication will be received.

Effective communication is a key interpersonal skill and by learning how we can improve our communication has many benefits. Communication is a two-way process so improving communication involves both how we send and receive messages.

The benefits of good communication:

- Builds trust and respect between you and the client
- May help the client disclose information
- Enhances client satisfaction
- Involves the client more fully in health decision making
- Helps the client make better informed decisions
- Leads to more realistic client expectations
- Produces more effective practice
- Reduces the risk of errors, mistakes or misdirected focus

These benefits in turn strengthen communication between you and the client and can contribute to better outcomes overall.

Communication skills, by definition, are slightly more refined applications of the concept of communication. These skills consist of the ability to convey and understand information both efficiently and effectively.

Listening Effectively

In order to interact effectively, we need to listen effectively.

Many people think that listening comes easily and naturally as long as there are no distractions, however this is not always the case. This misconception occurs because we tend to confuse the process of listening with the process of hearing. Hearing is something that comes easily. However, listening is a skill that requires energy and effort.

Sometimes we fail to hear the true message or capture the essence of what the other person is saying because we are hearing, but not listening. Let's discuss some ideas for effective listening.

Listening

The technique of effective listening involves you to be completely present, not distracted, and focused with one another. You cannot listen effectively if you are distracted, thinking of other things, emotionally involved and or planning what to say next. The art of listening is about connecting to your client and truly caring about what they are communicating. This does not mean taking on and/or judging what is being communicated. Listening is the activity of having understanding of the information being expressed. As we have learned with communication so far, there is a lot involved and therefore your listening needs to be attuned, directed and open to the receiving of the communicated information.

Listening can be further broken up into two methods - Reflective and Active.

Reflective listening involves re-communicating the information received to indicate that you have clearly understood.

Active listening is the ability to be actively engaged in what is being communicated. This includes actively responding but not changing the message being communicated. Active listening may clarify a feeling of being attached to the message but does not add to or change the message.

Listening does not involve giving advice, resolving the problem presented, or in any other way interjecting information about what was said. Effective listening is when we listen and connect to what is being communicated and expressed and allow an open understanding of the information being relayed. In listening there is no requirement for you to do anything, the key to effective listening is the art of observation. In the event of communication between two people, information is being relayed from the communicator to the listener. As we have covered, this information is being communicated in a multitude of ways. When we take an observational and detached stance it allows all messages to be received and understood clearly. When we attach to what the person is saying, the information they are communicating can get coloured with our own interpretation or judgements, and the message being sent is lost.

Underlying Meaning

Often what is being communicated will have both an obvious message that is being communicated, and an underlying meaning. Sometimes, the person you are communicating with is not necessarily aware of the underlying message they are communicating and you may need to support them in coming to understand this.

The key to receiving underlying messages is to listen with the intention of understanding what the individual is really saying and feeling. This means trying to look at things from the other person's internal viewpoint and not assume that we know how they feel or what they need.

A lot of messages function on at least two levels at the same time. Consider, for example, if somebody asked 'Do you like my shoes?' on one level the meaning is clear in that they are asking your opinion on their shoes and you answer 'yes' or 'no'; but on another level the person may just be in need of support, affirmation and positive feedback.

Respect their Opinion

This involves treating every individual with respect as a separate human being with rights to their own thoughts and feelings. This does not mean that we have to necessarily agree with everything they say, only that we respect what they say as what they believe their version of events or reality to be. Treating people fairly and with respect also means allowing them to grow and develop in their own time and on their terms rather than change being forced upon them.

Key points on listening effectively:

- Concentrate completely on the individual
- Remove distractions - this may mean moving to a quieter room/area, stopping any other tasks we are doing or putting aside time to speak
- Try not to let past experiences or ideas influence what you think about what an individual is saying
- Listen actively. Listening is much different from hearing, and it does take concentrated effort to listen actively to instructions, explanations and feedback
- Check that you are picking up the message correctly rather than assuming you are understanding - ask questions, repeat parts of the message back, using statements that begin, 'so what you're saying is…' or similar - this will give both you and the person you are speaking to a chance to clear up any misunderstandings as you go

- Give feedback at the end of the message – this is a good way of making sure you understand what the individual has said

Clarity

Clarity is a big part of effective communication. Clarity is making the subject as well as the opinion or remark about the subject very clear by leaving as little as possible open to interpretation. Lack of clarity is the primary cause of miscommunications and misunderstandings not just in work, but also in life as a whole.

For instance, the statement "our next talk is next week" lacks clarity, whereas "we will meet at here at 2 P.M. next Tuesday" is clear. The first sentence neither clarifies how the "talk" will take place, whether it will be face-to-face or by phone, and does not specify the time and location, the two factors in the sentence here. Communicating with clarity allows people to know what you can do and how it will be done. Being clearly understood, open and reliable will help build trust and respect in your professional relationships. To help you be understood, consider using different techniques or aids for the client.

Techniques and aids you could use include:

- Facial expressions, hand signals and other physical gestures
- Objects, photographs, pictures or symbols, written words
- Videos or practical demonstrations
- Translated printed material
- Interpreters
- Augmentative communication systems, such as devices and processes that replace, or are an adjunct to speech

The techniques and aids that you use must be suitable and appropriate for the client

Effective Questioning

Questioning is an important tool to receiving, clarifying and requesting information. The art to effective questioning is to be connecting in the questioning method. Asking questions to meet compliance with no real care is something that is always, even if inadvertently, communicated to the receiver. Having care, purpose, clear intention and integrity in your questioning method is key to supporting the responder to feel open to providing you with the information that needs to be received. Consider how you feel about responding to a question and offering information to someone who does not really care about what they are asking. This is commonly prevalent in the day-to-day question, 'how are you?'. Often this question is used as a conversation starter and or a passing by question, but there is no true intent behind the question and the person asking does not truly want the information that may come in a considered answer. This brings awareness to the importance again of truly connecting to the communication method and engaging in understanding.

With questioning tools there are essentially two types of questioning methods, open ended and closed ended questions. Open-ended questions are questions in which invite an open response, this means the response is not limited by the question being asked. For example 'how are you?'. This question allows the responder to openly communicate and express a free response. Closed ended questions are questions that limit what the response can be, although closed ended questions are leading towards a limited answer the responder may still choose to add in to the response free expression. But specifically the response to the question was limited. For example; 'are you good?'. In this case the question is asking for a yes or no answer, although the responder may choose to add expression such as details or reasoning to the response, such as; 'yes' or 'yes I am really good, I have just got back from a holiday and enjoyed spending time with the kids'.

In understanding the types of questions we can ask, we need to consider what information we are trying to obtain by the question being asked. Questioning usually comes down to five factors - who, what, where, when, and how. These five factors are the usual basis for questioning and words used to request information. How these 5 main factors are delivered can vary and needed to be considered appropriately based on the scene, setting and environment they are used.

Understanding the two types of questions and five factors within a question enables us to formulate communication in order to obtain information. As part of good method of questioning practice you can use the five factors to formulate your own questioning method.

Who – Who are you asking the question to? Consider factors such as age, cultural background, language spoken, religion, emotion state, disabilities.

Where – Where are you going to be delivering your question? This is to consider in what setting is your question being delivered, is it on the phone, during treatment, on the go, all these factors may have an affect on mode of delivery.

When – When is it being delivered? Similar to setting but consider the timing of your question. For example, should health history questions be asked prior or after treatment.

What – What is the information you are trying to obtain? Consider how much detail you need, what you need it for and what specific information are you trying to obtain. Such as; date of birth, do you need just the year of birth, do you need the year and month, or do you need specifically the day, month and year?

How – How are you going to deliver your question? This is where communication and expression comes into action, all things such as body language, tone and expression needs to be considered according to the above determined information. How can also include things such as, will it be verbal, gestured, written etc.?

Why – Why are you asking the question? What is the purpose behind you needing to ask this particular question? This is similar to what, but is more about the reason you need to know the information being requested. For instance, asking for a health history is in order to ensure that you fully understand the client's health status in order to perform a safe and effective treatment.

An extension from questioning is in the form of clarifying information. This is a mode of questioning in which part of the information has already been received or understood but there is still a part either yet to be received and or not understood. The same questioning methods can be used but when seeking clarification, it is about requesting specific information and or details for further understanding. For example; I understand you would like your back massaged, does this include your upper back, lower back and shoulders? Also would you like me to include the neck or not?

Advising

Advising involves communicating information in the form of advice. Advising can be in three forms:

- Offering suggestions
- Recommending

- Informing

In understanding advising we need to understand that all advice stems from a predetermined idea, ideal, belief, concept and or fact. Advising is the communication of information in which one person communicates a message in the form of a recommendation, offers a suggestion or provides information.

Even if your advice is factual it is still classified as a matter of opinion. This is because until the recipient has agreed, it is your view on the matter and/or situation. Therefore, we need to understand that when delivering advice it must not be loaded with a demand or hidden agenda. We can only advise on something or give advice to someone as an offering and suggestion of information. Due to this fact you need to consider the way you deliver advice.

Example scenario:

You are a massage therapist and during a treatment, you have come across a bump/lump on your client's leg when massaging and you would like to advise them to go to the doctor.

Incorrect way to advise: "I have noticed a bump on your leg, I am not sure what it is but you have to go and see a doctor today."

Correct way to advise: "I have noticed a bump on your leg, I am not sure what it is but I do suggest you go and see your doctor to have a look at it when next possible."

Although there is not a lot of difference in wording, the intention behind the two are very different. One is imposing your stance of what needs to be done onto your client and telling them what they have to do. The other is offering your opinion on what could be done based on what you have noticed. You are clearly and simply reporting the information, and informing them of your opinion but are allowing them to choose what they do with this information. Other important factors relevant to appropriate advice need to be considered such as age, cultural background, language spoken, religion, emotion state, disabilities.

Advice is limited to the scope of your profession; this means that the advice you are able to offer in a professional setting is limited to that of your professional qualification and role. Going beyond this scope is not needed or appropriate and is considered not a part of your role; this is where the art of referral is important. Referring clients within a professional setting is an important task, in any referral your client is working from trust in that what you are referring them to is of good value. Therefore it is important to have a good understanding of the referrals you may need to use.

Feedback

Effective communication depends not just on the sender communicating properly, but on the recipient receiving the communication in the intended manner.

Securing feedback is the best way to ensure that the recipient has understood the message in the intended manner.

<u>Ways of getting feedback for effective communication include:</u>

Visual cues and body language – For instance, a blank facial expression can mean a message not understood well, a quizzical look suggests some misunderstanding, failure to maintain eye contact indicates boredom or lack of interest, leaning forward and maintaining good eye contact depicts interest, an affirmative head nod indicates approval or understanding, and fidgeting implies a lack of interest or a distracted frame of mind.

Encouraging recipients to ask questions serves to reinforce the message and correct misconceptions.

Trust in Communication

Trust in communication is a tool for creating and establishing a level of trust about what is being communicated along with creating a trusting environment and being trustworthy.

The two most important factors of trust in communication are Intention and Integrity. It is these two factors that will then give purpose to your communicational skills, techniques, tools, ethics and criteria. All this simply means is the clearer you are in your intention of what needs to be communicated the clearer and more concise your communication will be. This is where the integrity factor becomes important. By adding factors such as being honest and truthful in intention it enables a defined and clearer understanding of the information within you first, before this information is communicated. Consider have you had an experience where you were unable to understand what was being communicated to you, in this situation how clear was the person on the information themselves and furthermore what other factors were going on within the person that were getting in the way of this communication, such as: emotions, nerves, confusion, complication and so on.

This awareness brings the importance of having your intention, integrity and delivery completely in sync. This is what allows trust in communication and hence the unhindered transfer of information. This allows more effective use of your communication skills and techniques, and essentially increases the effectiveness of the communication being received.

ASSESSMENT 1.2

1.3 CLIENT SPECIAL NEEDS

ELEMENT:	1. Professional client relationship
PERFEORMANCE CRITERIA:	1.3 Identify and respond to client special needs

Barriers and Influences on Communication

Different factors can affect the delivery and reasoning for communication, these factors are potential causes for misunderstanding and even conflict. Usually these barriers are brought up when there is information that needs to be communicated but is being blocked by uncontrollable factors. Effective communication is a skill and art; it takes time and experience to develop clear and confident communicational methods. Some client groups will have special needs for which you need to be able to cater your communication in order to deliver your information uncompromised.

When working with any form of communication barrier the question that you need to consider is how important is the information that I need to give? In a professional setting there is certain information that is absolutely critical to be effectively communicated, this includes that the recipient has full understanding of the information being communicated. Some of this information is essential to business operations, health and safety as well as legal and ethical requirements. Determining the importance of the information is the first step as it then allows the professional to look for effective ways that this information can be delivered. Assessing professional information is broken up into three categories: Critical, Informative and Social.

Critical Information – Is information that is compulsory to your profession, scenario or setting? For example; in the massage profession it is critical that you can effectively communicate the appropriate undressing requirements. If this does not happen effectively, it could lead to breach in privacy laws.

Informative information – Is information that is not critical but is important to know. Such as: how a client is feeling, or where they are experiencing tension.

Social Information - Social information is information that is not critical and not important to be known. This extends in to information for building rapport and professional relationships. Social information is the only information that is not a necessity to be communicated such as: How has your day been? What activities have you been enjoying?

Tools for dealing with communication barriers

The art of working with communication barriers can be very simple. As communication is about transferring of information from one person to another, working with barriers is simply a matter of finding a mutual way that the information can be clearly shared by both parties. This includes the information be understandable but also not offensive as in such examples of cultural differences.

To deal with communication barriers in a professional setting there is a simple two step method that is used.

Step 1: From your range of communication resources what factors are limited or compromised.

Step 2: What factors are mutual (common).

With all communication barriers you are looking to avoid the barrier and find mutual ground within which the information can be relayed. This may mean examples such as using different tools for communication, such as the use of signs. Or it may mean modifying the language used to support avoiding the barrier. Below are examples of the best way to effectively deal with these most common communication barriers based on this method.

Possible Factors and Barriers Affecting Communication

Language

Language is a simple yet important factor. In a professional setting there is required importance placed upon being able to communicate the required information despite any language barrier. In some cases, providing certain information is non optional and hence having differences in spoken language can create potential barriers.

Secondary Language

The impact of differing language can vary depending on whether there is a secondary mutual language or not. This simply means that both parties speak the same language as their second language. In this case there needs to be an assessment of communication standards. In most cases the potential barriers would be limited vocabulary and pronunciation. This is the most common type of language barrier you will encounter in a professional setting. This may mean that your client may not fully comprehend and understand all of the verbal communication going on. This is where you will need to use active and reflective listening skills to gauge and clarify what is being understood. Simple clarifying and repeater questions can be used such as: Do you understand? Are you able to do that? Is that okay?

Tools to Communicating with Language Barriers

With language barriers the two main factors that need to be considered is verbal communication and written communication. Both these factors are the factors that have the most change between language difference.

Language

Potential barriers – Verbal and written

Common – Gestures and directions, interpretation means such as electronic resources.

Gender Barriers

Gender affects communication via different communication styles that males and females tend to lean towards. This is not for all but can be a common trait and is usually affected by culture, behaviour and lifestyle.

Potential Barriers – Different communication styles, different language and different expression behind communication.

Common Communication – Try to keep communication as simple as possible, this supports the information and communication in having purpose. Also keep it respectful as this supports removing potential other barriers such as cultural and behavioural differences.

Interpersonal Barriers

This is the use of avoiding building personal relationships. This can be done through withdrawal, meaningless rituals which keep one devoid of real contact, superficial activities through past-times, and more. This can feel like a lack of connection and care in the communication, and may lead to potential conflict due to behavioural differences and perceived offensiveness. Dealing with interpersonal barriers is a case of having the understanding that there may be reasons behind them. In most cases you do not know what your client may have experienced throughout their life up until the point of communication. The key is to take a non-judgmental approach and not take anything as a personal offence. Working with interpersonal barriers means taking great care in providing clear and concise communication.

Emotional Barriers

Emotion can cause potential communication barriers as it will put a flavour on top of all communication. What this means is that the emotional state of either party can affect how the communication is delivered and or received. As an example someone who is already in an emotion of sadness will receive all communication and convert it through the emotional barrier. This can be easy to see when the emotions are in their reactive state, in this heightened state the emotion being employed tends to influence the person's outward behaviour and hence the effect on communication will be obvious.

The more difficult emotional barrier to work with is the hidden or unrecognised emotions. Someone may be in an emotional state but not in the reactive state, however this can still cause the same amount of misunderstanding in communication. In this case the hidden emotions are still putting an emotional slant on everything being received and communicated back. The best way to deal with this is to not engage in the emotions at play, and to be very clear and precise in your communication. It can help to repeat your meaning a few times in different ways to offer the receiver full understanding.

Potential Barriers: Emotional barriers can present in various ways. Due to emotion/s being present within the client it can mean that it can affect all areas of communication.

Common communication: The best way to deal with emotional barriers is bring the communication back to the simplicity of what is needed for professional practice. Often engaging the emotions will actually increase the emotional state. By bringing communication back to the simplicity of professional practice you are essentially bringing the clients awareness back to what the purpose is for their visit. This bring the purpose back to your profession and hence gives you the tools to proceed.

Religion

The biggest barrier created by religion in communication is differing beliefs; this means that depending on what religion someone may be a part of can cause variation on how information is being interpreted and how information is being received. Sometimes with differing beliefs what is okay for one may be offensive for another. Religious beliefs are not commonly disclosed information and are often kept private. This can pose potential communication barriers, as you may not be even aware of the barrier that is there.

Potential Barriers: Having differing beliefs can pose a barrier by means of what is deemed acceptable and not acceptable for different people. A potential barrier may be that the information needed to be communicated is deemed offensive or not appropriate by the receiver.

Common communication: With differing religious beliefs respectful diligence needs to be taken when communicating necessary information. It is best to keep information as basic as possible, and only communicate the needed professional information until such time that a professional relationship can be established with the client and clear boundaries can be established. By communicating only what is needed for professional practice you are ensuring everything shared is because it is a part of your professional services and not your opinion, view or beliefs (which can differ).

Disability

Clients with a disability will also have special needs. Disability can be briefly defined as a total or partial loss or disorder of a person's bodily or mental functions which can be permanent or temporary. Diabetes might be congenital, be caused by accident or illness or be the result of, for instance, the ageing process. The Equal Opportunity Act makes it unlawful for an organisation to discriminate against a person on the grounds of their disability or impairment. This means that both communication with and treatment of clients with a disability, must be and be seen to be equitable. When communicating with clients/patients with a disability it might be necessary to make allowance for their disability. Again, you will need to consult with the client and other stakeholders to determine the client's needs.

Potential Barriers: Multiple potential barriers may exist so it is important to gain a clear understanding of the disability so the barrier can clearly be defined.

Common Communication: As a health care practitioner you should note the disability at hand and make appropriate non-discriminative adjustments to support the information being communicated effectively.

Health

Ill health or health ailments can become a potential barrier to communication. There are many different types of health problems that could present as a barrier to communication and the ways in which they act as a barrier will vary. Some of the more common examples that could affect communication include poor hearing, physical ailments and poor vision.

Potential Barriers: In this case the potential barriers will vary. In all cases the therapist should clearly understand the limitation and barrier the ill health has potentially created. Further research may be needed.

Common Communication: Work together with the client to support working around the potential barrier to ensuring the communication is still effective. Determine what communication is limited and which may be strengths, use the strength to support adapting for the ones that are limited.

Age

Age can play an important factor in communication, having differing ages between you and a client may cause potential barriers in understanding, but also raises potential legal and ethical considerations that need to be adhered to. Differing ages also means differing generations and potentially differing experience within the same culture. As an example the culture, behaviour and way of life of someone born in the 1940's is very different to that of someone born in the 1990's. These differences can lead to potential misunderstanding and conflict. Another important factor with age is making sure age does not make any difference in personal hierarchy, meaning someone older or younger does not assume a more or less authoritative position.

Potential Barriers: Behaviour, beliefs, language, understanding, comprehension, social status, legal and ethics.

Common Communication: With age there is no specific rule of common communication, it is simply a matter of keeping the critical information simple and precise.

Presence of Children and/or Spouse

In this case communication needs to be censored and adjusted appropriately to the audience. Having respect and keeping information simple so as to support everyone audience understanding.

Responding to Clients with Special Needs

Regardless of what type of special need a client has; whether it is communication, mobility, learning, or otherwise, impaired clients have the same requirements and desires as other clients, i.e. quality staff and services that meet their needs, reliability, and encourage trust. As happens among many backgrounds, staff attitude and helpfulness is a key part of the service experience.

If you are not used to communicating with a person who has any kind of impairment or special need and have any hesitations or concerns, simply use your common sense, be polite, considerate and patient. In some cases it may take a little time to communicate, depending on the person's impairment.

We will go over some ways of responding to client special needs below.

Language Difficulties

Clients often come in with limited English speaking skills. You have to speak slowly and clearly. Before treating you may need to tell clients what you will be working on to gain consent. This should be done before any treatment so they do not feel uncomfortable. Make sure they understand what you will be doing before undertaking any treatment. We will go over techniques for communicating in ways that take into account cultural considerations in more detail in the next section.

Clients with mobility impairments

- When walking with people who use crutches, bracers, canes or just walk slowly, adjust your pace to theirs
- Enable people who use crutches or canes to keep them within reach
- When offering assistance, do so in a dignified manner with sensitivity and respect
- Do not proceed to assist if your offer to assist is declined. If the offer is accepted, listen to or accept instructions

Wheelchair users

- When speaking to a person in a wheelchair for more than a few minutes, consider sitting in a chair and placing yourself at that person's eye level to facilitate conversation

- When talking to a person who uses a wheelchair, look at and speak directly to that person, rather than through a companion who may be along
- If you don't know how to handle the wheelchair, ask the user and follow instructions
- When addressing a person who uses a wheelchair, never lean/hang on the person's wheelchair as the chair is part of that person's personal space
- Consider that some wheelchair users may choose to transfer themselves out of their wheelchairs (do not move the wheelchair away unless asked to do so or without permission)

Clients with speech impediments

- Don't be embarrassed when a person who has speech impairment talks to you - give them your full and undivided attention
- Do not pretend to understand if you do not - ask the person to repeat what you do not understand or try rephrasing what you wish to communicate. You can use techniques that help with communication such as asking short questions that require short answers or a nod of the head
- Do not raise your voice unless requested as most speech-impaired people hear and understand with no difficulty
- Do not complete their sentences for them as this can be considered rude

Blind or visually impaired clients

- When greeting a person with a visual impairment always identify yourself and introduce anyone else who might be present
- When offering assistance (as in when sitting) allow the person with visual impairment to take your arm (at or about the elbow) - this will enable you to guide rather than propel or lead the person
- Giving a verbal cue when you are about to do or are doing something is always helpful
- Let the person know in advance when you will be moving from one place to another. Don't leave them on their own without warning
- Let the person know when you will need to end the conversation

- If the client has a guide dog, treat them with care. Such dogs are highly trained and should never be pet, fed, talked to or called without the permission from the owner

Deaf or hearing impaired clients

- When talking to a deaf or hearing impaired person look directly at the person and speak clearly, naturally and at a normal pace. Only raise your voice when requested
- To get the attention of a person with a hearing impairment, consider tapping the person lightly on the shoulder or wave your hand
- Place yourself facing the light source and keep hands and food away from your mouth when speaking so that they can read your lips
- Make sure that the person has understood what you wish to communicate.
- Brief, concise written notes may be helpful

Clients with learning/understanding impairments

- Be natural and speak clearly - do not use complex sentences
- Be supportive and friendly
- Answer all questions making sure that you are being understood
- Treat adults in a manner befitting adults (treat mental/learning impaired adults as adults, not children)
- Don't provide assistance further than needed/required

There are numerous impairments that do not fall under the above categories, many of them are not immediately perceived or might be hard to notice such as chemical sensitivities, allergies or behavioural issues. The best sources of information about their needs are clients themselves.

ASSESSMENT 1.3

1.4 CULTURAL SENSITIVITIES AND DIFFERENCES

ELEMENT:	1. Professional client relationship
PERFORMANCE CRITERIA:	1.4 Communicate in ways that take account of cultural considerations

Cultural Considerations

As a service provider you are very likely to encounter many different types of people from a wide variety of cultural groups and backgrounds. It is important that you educate and prepare yourself beforehand with an understanding of what culture is, what to expect and how different people's values, beliefs and practices can effect communicating, negotiation and problem solving. Trying to deal with people without knowledge of cultural difference and practices can lead to problems, especially so if they are going through a difficult time. Take time to consider cultural differences and to reflect on your own attitude and beliefs.

In order to work with a wide variety of people, consider:

- Be aware of your own cultural background/experiences, attitudes, values, and biases that might influence your ability to assist individuals from diverse cultural populations. It is essential that you correct any prejudices and biases you may have regarding different cultural groups
- Educate yourself wherever possible to improve your knowledge and understanding and to address the needs of people from different cultures. This may involve learning about cultural, social, psychological, political, economic, and historical material specific to the cultural group being served
- Recognise that ethnicity and culture may have an impact on an individual's behaviour
- Help individuals to become aware of their own cultural values and norms, and facilitate discovery of ways individuals can apply this awareness to their own lives and to society in general, as well as within organisational values
- Respect the individual's religious and/or spiritual beliefs and values
- Work to eliminate biases, prejudices, and discriminatory practices
- Provide information in a language that the individual can understand
- Provide alternative methods of communication, such as in writing, drawing, diagrams, etc. along with oral explanations in order to aid understanding

Adapting Communication Styles and Language

Communicating with people from different cultures and backgrounds takes special skills to make sure everyone feels valued, listened to and understands well. Your courtesy and respect help effective communication through a solid foundation. People respond positively to respect and courtesy and feel comfortable when they know you are trying to work with them. This helps them to be open and willing to ask questions when they don't understand something and respond better to your input. By making people feel comfortable, you help them to be better listeners. Try to avoid words that require a dictionary when communicating cross-culturally.

<u>Ways to adapt communication styles and language include:</u>

- Give the person the time and space to express and share their story
    - may include relevant cultural heritage, language and values
- Slow down when you speak
    - allow those who don't have the same native language as you the time to interpret what you are saying
- Find out about social/community mores and practices relevant to the individual and their situation
- Speak clearly and concisely
    - make eye contact and enunciate plainly
    - avoid using words that are ambiguous or have more than one meaning
- Avoid slang
    - slang words are unique to individual cultures and not always interpreted correctly
    - to ensure effective cross-cultural communication, don't use slang words others might not know
- Keep it simple
    - think in terms of who you are communicating with, and speak to their understanding
    - allow listeners the time to soak in what you have said
    - pay attention to your audience and be an active speaker and listener

  - you can ascertain a person's grasp of your communication by their response to your words
- Address them personally, even if an interpreter or mentor is supporting them
- Ensure they are comfortable with you as the communicator in terms of
  - personal space, environment, dress, gender
- Smile and be open
  - your body language communicates your acceptance - or non-acceptance - and respect, as it helps put listeners at ease
  - your body language conveys unspoken communication
  - avoid large gestures with your hands, as this can be intimidating to people who might misunderstand your meaning
  - keeping your arms crossed often makes people think you are not open to what they have to say
- Give them extra time and support to participate in decision making processes
- Ask for feedback
  - request that the individual gives their opinion and provide interaction or ask questions
  - when you permit two-way communication, this helps prevent misunderstandings and clears up questions people might have

Communication Aids

Communication aids describes the use of a prop or props as means for communication. This can be in many different formats and the reasoning why to use a prop may vary. Communication aids can include such things as signs, technology, gestures, people and more. A common example of a communication aid would be a sign such as push and pull on a door. In this case the communication aid is used to relay the information of the direction that the door will open and close in. Communication aids are a great tool to support simple and clear messages being communicated, they are also very supportive in assisting communication. When considering using a communication aid you need to understand what the purpose of the communication aid is, and how can it be used to support information being communicated to the receiver. Communication aids should always be as simple as possible.

ASSESSMENT 1.4

1.5 DISCRETION AND CONFIDENTIALITY

ELEMENT:	1. Professional client relationship
PERFORMANCE CRITERIA:	1.5 Exercise discretion and confidentiality

Exercising Confidentiality and Discretion

Confidentiality is the protection of personal information. Confidentiality means keeping a client's information between you and the client, and not telling other people about it, including co-workers, friends and family among others.

Discretion means using your own judgment to decide what to do in a particular situation, rather than taking orders from someone else. In the context of information sharing and professional relationships, it means only sharing what you have to or being cautious about what information is shared.

Confidentiality is one of the most important topics about communication, trust and building relationships, even though it has more to do with not communicating, than it does with communicating. If you knew someone couldn't be trusted with information and talked about you, you probably wouldn't want to have a friendly relationship with them. The same principle is true for professional relationships.

Information can cause harm to some people in some situations. It therefore follows that the possession of information must be retained properly. The central requirement of any satisfactory approach to this issue is to protect the interests of the original owner of the information.

Apart from the sometimes considerable harm which may result from failure to protect the interests of a client who has shared sensitive information, there is another important consequence. That consequence is the damage to rapport and relationship, especially to the trust which may have built up over a long period of time.

In broad terms, confidentiality is applied to the process of handling information in a way designed to protect the interests of its original owner, thus promoting trust and making it possible for honest and open communication between you and the client without fear of negative repercussions.

Examples of maintaining confidentiality include:

- Individual files are locked and secured

- Workers do not tell other people what is in a client's file unless they have permission from the client
- Information about clients is not told to people who do not need to know
- Clients' medical details are not discussed without their consent
- Adult clients have the right to keep any information about themselves confidential, which includes that information being kept from family and friends
- Clients are not discussed with anyone outside of a professional and relevant context

Other information relating to ethnic or racial origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, health or sexual lifestyle should also be considered confidential.

People have the right to determine what information they consider personal and confidential. However, you also need to be aware of the limits to the confidentiality that you offer. There are several cases where total confidentiality is impossible, undesirable or even illegal and you must show discretion.

<u>These include:</u>

- Cases where the law requires disclosure of information which include:
    - If the health and/or welfare of a child or young person is at risk - you are required to contact Department of Community Services and notify them of your concerns
    - If your client tells you he/she has committed a serious crime - you are required to notify your supervisor or the police directly
    - If a worker is subpoenaed to present information in a court of law
- When the client has threatened harming themselves (e.g. if suicidal)
- When the client has threatened harming others
- When working in conjunction with other professionals in caring for a client
- The requirements of professional supervision, training, workshops or seminars
- Detailing where particular records need to be kept

It is always good practice to tell clients at the beginning of your contact with them that whatever they share with you is confidential except in the above circumstances.

When writing up case notes you need to be mindful about what you include and how you write this information up. Always remember that clients have the right to see files and read anything that has been written about them. It is good practice to obtain the written consent of the client before exchanging information about them to other professionals.

Legislation

All workers need to be aware that there are State and Federal laws that cover confidentiality. The following Acts relate to privacy and confidentiality of clients. These are some of the laws and legislation that you will need to be aware of, but there may be more depending on your role and organisation. It is your responsibility to find out what legislation you must abide by, for your own protection as well of that of your clients.

The main aspect of confidentiality requirements is The Privacy Act. This is an Australian law that came into force in 1988 and governs how organisations handle personal information about people, whether staff, clients or customers, etc.

The Privacy Act 1988

The Privacy Act comprises of 13 Privacy Principles that legally must be adhered to.

These are as explained by the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC) website:

- "Regulates the collection, storage, use, disclosure, security and disposal of individuals' tax file numbers
- Permits the handling of health information for health and medical research purposes in certain circumstances, where researchers are unable to seek individuals' consent
- Allows the information commissioner to approve and register enforceable APP codes that have been developed by an APP code developer, or developed by the information commissioner directly
- Permits a small business operator, who would otherwise not be subject to the Australian Privacy Principles (APPs) and any relevant privacy code, to opt-in to being covered by the APPs and any relevant APP code
- Allows for privacy regulations to be made.

Further information on the Privacy Act can be found on the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC) website, which is included within the references section at the end of this Manual.

Health Administration Act 1982

This Act covers any information that is provided or recorded within the health system. Essentially, information cannot be disclosed without the consent of the person to whom the information relates, or for the purpose of legal proceedings such as a court order or subpoena that allows access to health information on a client.

The Public Health Act 1999

This Act also relates to disclosure of information without consent. The most important confidentiality provision of this Act is the part that deals specifically with HIV/AIDS related information. Under this Act, this means two things:

- If a person has had or is going to have an antibody test
- If the person is HIV positive

The Public Health Act allows for the disclosure of information relating to a person's HIV status where not disclosing information could place the health of the public at risk. This disclosure provision is limited and allows notification to the Director-General of the Health Department only. Disclosure to other people is not authorised.

Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002

This Act is designed to protect the privacy of an individual's health information, enable individuals to gain access to their health information and provide an accessible framework for resolution of complaints regarding the handling of health information.

In an event where legal obligations override a client's right to keep information private and confidential, a community service organisation has the responsibility to inform the client and to them in a way they can understand the limits of confidentiality.

ASSESSMENT 1.5

2. MANAGING CLIENT INTERACTIONS

2.1 PERSON CENTRED APPROACH

ELEMENT:	2. Manage client interactions
PERFORMANCE CRITERIA:	2.1 Use a collaborative and person centred approach when working with clients

Person Centred Approach when Working with Clients

The term 'person-centred' is used to refer to many different principles and activities, and there is no single agreed definition of the concept. This is partly because person-centred approaches are an emerging and evolving area. It is also because, if care is to be person centred, then what it looks like will depend on the needs, circumstances and preferences of the individual. What is important to one person may be unnecessary, or even undesirable, to another. It may also change over time, as the individual's needs change.

Some of the principles of person centred approaches are:

- Affording people dignity, compassion/empathy and respect
- Offering coordinated care, support or treatment
- Offering personalised care, support or treatment
- Supporting people to recognise and develop their own strengths and abilities to enable them to live an independent and fulfilling life

Person-centred approaches aren't just about giving people whatever they want or providing information. It is about considering people's desires, values, family situations, social circumstances and lifestyles; seeing the person as an individual, and working together to develop appropriate solutions

There are many different aspects of person-centred approaches, including:

- Respecting people's values and putting people at the centre of your work
- Taking into account people's preferences and expressed needs
- Working together to make sure there is good communication, information and education
- Making sure people are physically comfortable and safe
- Emotional support

- Involving family and friends
- Making sure there is continuity between and within services
- Making sure people have access to appropriate services when they need them

Empathy & Compassion:

Caring professions are encouraged to show empathy for another's situation. To empathise with another person is commonly known as 'putting yourself in another's shoes'. It is possible that if we do this we take these emotions on, which can be harmful to our own health and wellbeing. If taking on others concerns becomes a pattern in our work we lose our objectivity regarding what might best support people over the long term.

Empathy

Empathy is the ability to accurately understand the experience being felt by others, often the emotional experience. This tool is used to offer more understanding for what an experience may be like.

This technique is not a difficult skill, it is simply a matter of being completely open in your listening method. This includes being open to what you are feeling and observing within the communication. The key to empathy is the ability to observe and receive the information being communicated by your client and enabling an understanding of their relationship to the issue at hand that is free of judgement. Empathy is not your view on a matter and should not be tainted by your emotional status and or attachment to the situation. Empathy is not about duplicating your client's emotional state within yourself, this means you should never absorb and or take in/on the experience and emotion. Empathy is also not you feeling the way the client feels, it is simply an understanding process in which you use listening skills to understand the clients view and relationship to the situation. As an example. Your clients pet animal recently died and they are very upset. This would not mean you as a therapist need to also feel upset and or take on the emotion of being upset. It simply means you need to understand and respect what relationship the client has to the situation. So in this case, have an understanding that the client may have had a strong, long-term relationship to the pet and hence might be experiencing such feelings as sadness, loss and loneliness. In this case as a therapist displaying empathy is the ability to understand the situation so you can accurately respond to and respect the clients feelings.

Compassion

Compassion is being aware of and sensitive to another's situation or experience. Developing understanding through observation allows us to fully support, assist, care for and offer understanding for another without being immersed in their situation. This approach provides the basis for clients to be heard and understood, and in turn, clients are more likely to honestly share their experiences. The process of expressing compassion relies on being able to listen to the client and connect with what they are expressing but not taking it on, remaining objective is the key.

ASSESSMENT 2.1

2.2 MOTIVATIONAL INTERVIEWING

ELEMENT:	2. Manage client interactions
PERFORMANCE CRITERIA:	2.2 Use motivational interviewing as a basis for client interactions

Motivational Interviewing as a Basis for Client Interactions

Motivational interviewing (MI) is a communication method where you use a client centred approach to inspire a client's own motivation for change. The art of motivational interviewing is being able to facilitate and support the client to come to an awareness that can spark making changes. In motivational interviewing the choice for change itself must come from the client, and must be their complete free and unpressured choice. Motivational interviewing is most commonly used as a psychology technique by psychologists dealing with patients with drug addiction. This is due to its strong ability to inspire change from within and empower people to make positively geared choices.

<u>Motivational interviewing is a conversational approach designed to help people with the following:</u>

- Discover their own interest in considering and/or making a change in their life
- Express in their own words their desire for change
- Examine their ambivalence about the change
- Plan for and begin the process of change
- Enhance their confidence in taking action and notice the importance of small changes
- Strengthen their commitment to change

How Does it Work?

The key to motivational interviewing is using the art of reflection. This is the ability to use reflection as a point of reference to give the client a greater awareness of the situation and or scenario in need of change. This greater awareness is created by offering the client positively geared information and education that may offer a different way.

Often the lack of motivation for change is caused when people are on a narrow mind set. This means that they get familiar with particular ways of function and particular ways of thought. This narrow mindset can be caused by multiple factors, most commonly including education, cultural, ideals and beliefs, familiarity, psychological factors, social factors and more. In motivational interviewing you are using reflection to offer a broader view, this is to show the client a view that is positively geared which is out of their current mindset. By the clients then gaining the broader view they are able to then self-evaluate the situation, this means they are able to internally challenge their own constructs and ways. By the client actively engaging in this process they are already taking the initial steps towards making the change. Once the client has then chosen the different view/path this is classified as the moving on and change. The practitioner can then further confirm the new positive status and look at possible further education or support for the client. This process means that **the client was completely responsible for making his or her own choice towards change** and therefore is their own decision to move on and own decision to be more positively geared. This also means that the motivation to change does not come as an instruct, push or rule from the therapist but instead is a complete choice from the client.

As a health care practitioner it is your role to offer the reflection to your client, this means that through your own education or positively geared choices you are able to offer the different view for the client to reflect on. There is a high level of responsibility and integrity needed on the heath care practitioner's part as the views they are offering for the client may well be the choice the client follows on to. As a health care practitioner it is your responsibility to provide the best possible reflection based on your own known awareness at the time, whilst at all times allowing the client the space to make their own choices and decisions. What is reflected should always be positively geared and in the client's best interest.

Motivational Interviewing Tools and Techniques

Motivational interviewing is there to support change, in order for the client to be able to perceive possibility for change there needs to be 3 factors considered and confirmed with the client:

- Willingness – The client is willing to make some form of change and or see the need for change
- Ability – The client has the ability to make the change

- Readiness – The client is willing to be ready to make a change, or what is the appropriate time frame

These three qualities are essential to successful motivational interviewing. Often if any of these qualities are missing then the change will not be successfully sustained. As a therapist you should first establish the client's status with these three qualities. Question yourself first, are they willing? Do they have the ability? What is the appropriate time frame for the change, when do the changes need to be made?

Once you have confirmed these three factors you can move on to introducing the motivational interviewing 3-step process. If you feel a client is lacking one of these qualities you will first need to use motivational interviewing (educating awareness) to support the client to see why change may be needed.

Motivational Interviewing 3-Steps

Motivational interviewing takes a specific path for developing someone towards and through change. It is comprised of a simple three-step process that takes a client through their different stages. Motivational interviewing should be kept as simple as these three steps. This allows the client to explore the process as they need to but return to the steps as a foundational support. As a therapist these simple steps are your key to also mapping your client through their progress of change.

Step 1: Relationship - Building a Relationship with your Client

Be open and willing

Step one involves building a professional yet trustworthy relationship with your client. At all times this relationship needs to remain professional and should always have your client's best interest at heart. When using motivational interviewing, the therapist needs to learn to have an open and non-judgmental position at all times. By you yourself having an openness with your client you will create an environment that allows the client to develop the same response. This openness does not mean you as a therapist have to divulge your own personal/private information: no treatment is ever an excuse to indulge. You are there in professional support of your client. It simply means to create an environment by your whole way of being that allows the client to receive the communication that you are open to supporting them to develop. Often an open person is described as someone who is willing to be open to seeing past the problems and meeting the person for the positives they are and bring. This means developing your own openness and willingness to not hold judgment on another's choices, beliefs and or culture.

Trust and Integrity

Another important asset to your professional relationship is your integrity, this is integrity firstly of you as a person and then you as the therapist. The consistency of your integrity is what will then allow your client to develop trust. Having a trusting relationship with your client is essential to achieving successful progression through your motivational interviewing steps.

Role of communication

In step one the client should do most of the talking, this is a time for them to feel they can explore opening up and expressing. It is important that your client feels that they are able to share information and that the information being shared will be heard and respected. At this stage, albeit wanting to help, avoid stepping in with any solutions. The aim in step one is not to solve your client's problems (nor should it be at any stage) it is simply a time for the client to feel they can open up and express. This means they can share all the important information that needs to develop in the change program. At this stage it is important that your communication as a therapist is very supportive to the client but understand that supportive does not mean and or include pandering and or being sympathetic towards the client. The reason being is if you are a pandering or sympathetic you are confirming to them that the 'thing' that you are to eventually work on for change is okay and should be continued. This is counter-productive to your next progression steps.

Resistance

At this stage allow a level of resistance, this is not resistance to you as a therapist but instead their own resistance to change. This means at this early stage you allow the client to express their own views of challenges and potential problems. This is evoked as clients are starting to consider change, and at this stage they are already weighing up many factors. These are non-personal to you as a therapist and may come from many different sources. Let them express these views and as a therapist still take an open and supportive stance.

In summary:

- Be open in yourself and non judgmental
- Trust is built by consistency
- Integrity is the key for the client to develop an openness
- Let the client do most of the talking
- Keep communication supportive
- Don't pander or be sympathetic
- Allow resistance to change

Step 2: Client Evaluations

Evaluate the client's readiness for change

Step 2 is where you make an assessment of what stage of change your client is at. There are 7 different stages, all as important as each other. By knowing what stage your client is at you can apply the appropriate reflection to help them progress to the next step. It is usually easy to assess a client's stage of change but in the case that your assessment is incorrect you will soon see that the techniques you are trying to apply are either not making sense or not leading to progression.

Stage of Change	Definition
Pre-contemplation	Unaware or unwilling to change
Contemplation	Seriously considering change
Preparation	Committed to change
Action	Starting to make changes
Maintaining	Sustaining changes
Learning (relapse)	Returning to behaviour
Confirmation	Appreciating the change

Step 3: Reflection

Applying the appropriate support for clients based on their evaluation

The key in step 3 is to make sure you have first gained a good assessment in step 2. By having a good understanding of what stage of change your client is in you can then match it with the appropriate stage of reflection technique. The way motivational interviewing works is as a health care professional you should aim to match the reflection stage to the state of change the client is at. Once this is done you can use the reflection techniques to offer your client motivation to progress to the next stage.

Reflection tools

Pre-contemplation

This step is just about creating a greater level of awareness. It is about sharing information with the client that is offering them a broader view and the possibility for them to see something they may not be seeing. It is not a point of telling them to do anything or bombarding them with reason but simply just sharing information for them to consider.

- Be open
- Build trust
- Share don't tell

Contemplation

When a client is at contemplation stage it means they are already considering change. This is almost like a stage of weighing up pros and cons. At this stage your role is to offer information that supports them to lean in a better direction (better for them). You can support by offering information of the benefits of the change and the possible issues with not changing. Again **this is a sensitive time and it needs to be purely the client's choice**. This means you are only there to share information to create further awareness but not pressure your client in any direction.

- Build trust
- Reflect greater awareness of pros and cons
- Elicit reason for change
- Make aware results of not changing

Preparation

Once the client has now decided to change and is considering what is the best way to put it into action they move into the Preparation stage. This is still a considering phase and it is about them establishing the simplest and most supportive pathway. In this stage you are to, by reflection, support them to find the simplest and easiest way to put their change into action. Your role is to support them making it as easy as possible and flagging any steps of action that may become potential problems. By you supporting them to find the simplest and easiest way they are more likely to sustain the change. Sometimes a client can decide to change but not know how, or at times can make it more of a challenge than it needs to be.

- Keep building an open professional relationship
- Support simplest and easiest steps for action
- Create awareness about potential complication or problems
- Support a positive approach and self appreciation

Action

Action is the step where clients are now putting their change into action. This means they are now trying to implement the change. This can be a time of learning what works and what doesn't and should always remain a supportive environment. The action stage is about them realising how they do have it in them to implement the different choices. As a therapist, your role is to reflect and confirm their positive action. Support them in appreciating the benefits they notice once they have done the action. Encourage open expression and let the client know that this is about developing their strength in the choices.

Maintaining

Maintaining is about the consistency of making the new choices, sustaining the change. The key to supporting a client to maintaining their change is to use motivational interviewing to work on any potential problems that arise after action is in place. This means that as the client puts their new choices into action there may be potential problems that come up along the way. As the therapist you use the motivational interviewing method for each one of the problems and work on making them also into a positive choice.

Learning Relapse

Learning is about the client having the space to learn and grow as they are putting their change into action. Often this will include relapse back to the old choices. This should be again a very supportive time and is more about creating a learning environment. The key to this stage is getting clients to relate to any form of problem, relapse and or negative choice as a learning experience. **This means that they will look at the negative choice and potentially grow from it, strengthening their choices for change**. This step is an important step as it is good for the clients to remind themselves why they are making the choice to change. As a therapist keep the environment supportive and make focus on turning every potential problem into a learning perspective.

Confirmation

Confirmation is the final stage and is essentially where you take the time to appreciate the change. Often change is actioned but not truly appreciated, this can lead to not being able to sustain the change long term. **Confirmation and appreciation is an important final step and should not be forgotten**. In this final step you should use reflection as an appreciative exercise as to how far the client has come. Delve into the detail of how great the new choices are and the appreciation of the person for making them. Take the time to appreciate what they did right and how they learned along the way.

Motivational Tools and Techniques

Motivational interviewing has specific tools and techniques that support as a counselling style that continues to enable the client to use internal motivation. Remember motivational interviewing is a counselling method that has the ability enable the client's own motivation as a source of development and change.

Normalising Statements

Normalising is the process of supporting a client to feel like things that may be different are normal. In other words that it is not uncommon or they are not alone. Often if someone is experiencing something they deem to be different to the expectations that will see it as not normal. This does not mean it is actually not normal it is just simply abnormal against the marker they are comparing it too. This can often be when someone is doing something that is from the minority (not many). The ability to normalise is the ability to bring reference to the minority and or similarity to another to create normalness to what is being said.

Summarising

Summarising is a tool to show effective listening to your client along with keeping communication on track and purposeful. Summarising is the process of simplifying and re-communicating the key information that has been shared with you. Summarising is a tool that can be used to create awareness of what the client may be experiencing, along with giving communication clear purpose.

Reframing

Reframing is when you use communication to get clients to examine their perceptions in new light or in a reorganised form. This is a way to give new meaning to statements, phrases and or information the client may be portraying.

Reframing should be used to support the client to change their view and perspectives on situations, hence being more open to developing awareness. The key to reframing is to remain respectful of the information being communicated originally, but at the same time create a shift to a more positively geared view.

Exploring Options

Exploring options is the process of systematically looking at what is a possible decision that can be made or a possible pathway that can be taken. Exploring options is the process of assessing what is a possible alternative; the key here is that it needs to be possible. Exploring options should always be geared towards making the simplest alternative option. This then encourages the client to explore the options available. If options are perceived to be more complicated, difficult or challenging the client will be likely to immediately have a reluctance or resistance to them.

Paraphrasing

Paraphrasing is the process of expressing the meaning of something in different words. This tool is used to show that you as the listener have clearly understood and also to confirm with the client that what you have understood is the meaning that they were trying to convey. Paraphrasing is used to gain more clarity.

Attending Skills

Attending is being fully present and focussed in the company of someone else, giving that person your full attention and awareness.

This includes:

- Maintaining eye contact
- Open and supportive body language
- Supportive posture
- Supportive tone of voice
- Using silence and listening when appropriate

Reflecting Feelings

Reflecting feelings is the process of expressing to the client that you have understood how they feel. This is not just communicating that you have understood what they have said but also that you can relate to the emotional aspects they may have been feeling at the time. This is important part of any communication, if a client does not feel like you have understanding for what they feel and or felt, it can create interpersonal barriers. The ability to appropriately reflect feelings back to the client can build trust and rapport. Reflecting feelings is not a process of enjoining your client's emotions or state of feelings. It is very clearly communicating that you have understood how they felt. For example:

Client: "I have been training for the last 12 years in playing tennis. I have currently been competing in national competitions and achieving good results. About 2 months ago I was competing in a competition semi-final when I felt an extreme pain in my elbow. It was so bad I was unable to keep playing, forfeiting the match and I still have not been able to play since. I am very concerned and bit distressed, as I am worried my tennis career is over."

Therapist: "I am sorry to hear that and understand how frustrating and upsetting it would be to have to forfeit a semi-final in competition. I understand your worry and will do my best to support with your elbow."

Key Aspects of Motivational Interviewing

Living what you Speak

As we know communication is delivered in many different ways, this can be essentially verbal and non verbal. In motivational interviewing your non-verbal communication needs to be aligned with your verbal communication. Meaning **if you are going to offer a client a different view then this view is to be one that *your* whole body is able to communicate**. For example, if you are working on inspiring a client to make change to their posture then you also need to make sure the posture that you are in whilst with the client is that of which you speak.

When a client is looking to make change they need to be able to trust the thing they are looking at changing towards. So as an example, say you were expressing to a client to consider changing their posture to be more upright but at the same time you as a therapist were slouching then you are giving them conflicting communication. Effectively your words are saying one thing but your body is communicating another. This does not facilitate the trust needed to offer the client the ability to be inspired to change. This goes across all areas and all choices, effectively you as a therapist have the responsibility to be a choice model for the client's progress.

Role of Motivational Interviewing

Motivational interviewing is a great technique that can be used in many circumstances. Often motivational interviewing is something that is used naturally in social circumstances when supporting friends and family to make changes.

The use of motivational interviewing in the health services plays an important role. In the health services all professionals are performing professions that are geared towards supporting a client to reach better health. This often means that a client needs to be supported into change or may be challenged to break familiar ways to support change.

Role of Motivational Interviewing as a Health Care Professional

As a health care professional, you are not a counsellor. Meaning you should not engage in trying to counsel a client through emotional or psychological issues. **As a health care professional you should always remain in your professional scope of practice**. This means that the role of motivational interviewing in your profession is specific to certain areas. Motivational interviewing is a communication technique that is to be used anytime a client is in need of change. This could range from getting a client to work on changing their posture through to getting a client to understand the need for treatment. All areas are important and anytime you as a therapist determine change and or growth is needed you should refer to your motivational interviewing techniques and method.

The key areas you will use motivational interviewing in are as follows:

- Client Support
- Case Taking
- Negotiation with Client
- Education of Client
- Information giving

Client support

This can range from many different things. Using motivational interviewing for client support is when you have identified a need for change due to identifying something in a client's choice that is hindering the best benefits for them. This is the main area you would use motivational interviewing in and where you will most likely need to use all motivational interviewing steps.

Case taking

Motivational interviewing can be used in case taking to inspire the clients to offer more information. The more information the client is willing to share the more informed you will be as a therapist when conducting treatment. This also supports keeping a client centred approach to case taking.

Negotiation with client

Motivational interviewing is one of the best techniques that can be used for negotiation with a client. Negotiating with clients is an important part of your services. This is where you are negotiating with the clients for their further benefits. The fact that you are engaging in negotiation is already a step of motivational interviewing. You should use your motivational interviewing techniques to progress them through the negotiation and into the steps of change. This is also good for dealing with difficult or challenging behaviour.

Education of client

Educating clients is an important part of your services. This is about sharing your expertise to support the client to make more positively geared decisions. This information can be very basic or very detailed. The role of motivational interviewing is to take a reflective approach to offer the client information so as to support changing towards more supportive choices.

Information giving

Information giving is about using motivational interviewing to give information. This means that the information you give is not a direct telling but instead more an offering which the client can choose to go with or not. The key in giving information should be only to offer the information and let the client make the choice to use it or not. By offering the client the choice to use the information, you are offering them to already take the first steps in motivational interviewing towards change.

ASSESSMENT 2.2

2.3 CLIENT INFORMATION

ELEMENT:	2. Manage client interactions
PERFORMANCE CRITERIA:	2.3 Seek client information respectfully and sensitively, using purposeful, systematic and diplomatic questions

Seeking Information

You may already have a system, routine or question sheet that you use in order to seek information from your clients. There is no single "right" way to seek information from clients, but as long as you are respectful, purposeful and diplomatic your questioning should have a positive result.

Be sure not to bombard your client with questions or spend too much of their time talking as they will lose interest if they feel like the session isn't as productive as they would hope. You want to approach the client in a positive and diplomatic way and present messages in a clear, concise and articulate manner. Focus on key points and use appropriate, unambiguous language. Try to choose the most appropriate medium for seeking client information and it may be a good idea to use different types of communication structure (written, oral, etc.) for recording answers if necessary.

Tips for seeking client information:

- Ask direct questions
  The most clear and obvious method and while you may not get all the answers you want, you'll likely get some useful information. If you don't ask questions then the client can't give any answers. Before anything else ask your clients directly. It may help to prepare a list of questions beforehand that you can use as a template for discussions with clients.
- Listen between the lines
  Clients will often tell you what you need to know, though not necessarily directly from the answers to your questions. Sometimes the information comes in answers to other questions or while you're engaging in small talk or chit chat. Pay attention whenever your clients are speaking.
- Get to know your clients better
  Similarly to the above, answers may not come in direct questions. Get to know your clients better to understand them more. The better you know your clients the more you'll understand what they mean when they tell you something.

- Ask indirect questions
  A client might not know what they want directly, but they might be able to tell you things they like or related concepts. Look for ways to rephrase questions or ask a completely different question that might still reveal the answer you seek.
- Speak your client's language
  Don't use jargon. Your clients shouldn't be expected to know all the words you use in your industry the same way you might not know words in unfamiliar subjects. The more you ask questions in a way they can understand, the more likely it is that your clients will be able to answer those questions.
- Talk about timeframes
  Sometimes you need information from a client in order to help them and move forward. Let them know clearly that you need information and make them understand if they haven't sent the information by your deadline you won't be able to help them by a given point.
- Use your client's preferred medium for communication
  Everyone will have preferences for how to communicate. Some will offer little information in writing, but will give you everything you need face to face or over the phone. Clients will give more information when they can do so in a way that suits them.

You might think it is the fault of the clients if they aren't giving you the information you need, but it takes two to communicate. Even if they are being problematic, there is likely a better way to find the information you need. Don't become frustrated or give up, just try finding new ways of effective communication.

The key is to keep asking in different ways and keep trying different things. If your client isn't giving you the information you want then take responsibility and find a way to get that information.

ASSESSMENT 2.3

2.4 ASKING THE RIGHT QUESTIONS

ELEMENT:	2. Manage client interactions
PERFORMANCE CRITERIA:	2.4 Support the client to identify and articulate key information that supports the provision of service

Supporting Clients to Identify and Articulate Key Information

The idea of asking clients for information may seem like an intimidating concept to some people. Am I asking the right questions? Will clients know the answers, or worse, not want to speak to me? The most important thing is to relax, be friendly and be positive and diplomatic. Remember that clients are with you because they want a positive service and will try to help you help them, even if they might not know the best ways of doing so. You might have specific techniques or questions that you like to ask that work for you. Consider the following topics when seeking key client information.

What does the Client want?

Clients may not always know what is best for them, but it is still a good idea to ask them what they think they need. Don't make assumptions – just ask, as you don't want to miss things. What do they want and expect from you? Conversely, what don't they need? This can help eliminate options that may not be of any help and make your work more efficient. You can use their answers to customise your service.

What Problems does the Client have?

Asking this question allows for a direct answer that provides a goal or an aim. Having a goal or aim in mind early to focus on is a good idea for structuring future interactions and processes as there is always something to reflect on and see if progress is being made. This allows you to find out if the client has any special needs or requirements for the provision of service.

What are the Client's Expectations?

Make sure that you know what your client's expectations are throughout the course of your work. As many things can happen during the process, expectations can be subject to change or may not be realistic. Discussing openly allows subjects to be raised further down the line as people know they can be spoken about. Running through ideas of what could potentially happen is good for open and honest communication.

Other questions you can consider include:

- What are the client's timeframes?
- Are there any particular ways the client would like information presented?
- Does the client have any relevant history or experience with similar services?
- Do they prefer more in depth or broader assistance?

The most important thing when seeking client information is to maintain a healthy dignity and respect for each other. Don't overload the client and don't ask meaningless or wasteful questions. Consider their time to be as valuable as yours – you wouldn't want to be messed around, so make sure the time you spend communicating is purposeful and productive.

ASSESSMENT 2.4

2.5 QUERIES OR CONCERNS

ELEMENT:	2. Manage client interactions
PERFORMANCE CRITERIA:	2.5 Encourage clients to voice queries or concerns and address these appropriately

Encouraging Clients to Speak

Engaging with the client is not only done purely to explore issues and gain their perspective on their own experience and any problems and pathways to solutions. It is also about building a rapport and trust with you, so that a client feels comfortable enough to open up and voice their worries. This relationship is built on trust and confidentiality, and can make all the difference between a positive and negative service or experience.

In order that the client feels comfortable in expressing themselves, the relationship between the client and the worker needs to be built on reciprocal trust. It is the worker's responsibility to provide a safe, confidential environment, and to offer compassion, understanding and respect.

Some clients may be more reluctant than others to voice queries or concerns, and workers must be aware that these individuals require a sensitive approach. By offering reassurance, compassion and genuineness, clients will become more comfortable in engaging with the worker. Engaging the client is only possible once they are sufficiently relaxed and comfortable.

Using open-ended and closed questions encourages responses from the client, and should form a large part of your strategy to encourage clients to voice their queries or concerns.

Addressing Queries and Concerns

Every person involved in interactions comes to the process from a different point of view, but everyone wants to be treated fairly and with respect in a positive way. The way that people understand words and interpret them is influenced by their origins, culture, religious beliefs and previous life experience.

Things to consider when addressing clients queries or concerns include:

- Consider beforehand what you intend to say to an individual before you say it
- Justify your reasoning for how this addresses their query or concern

- Bear in mind the individual needs of the client when deciding on an appropriate time and place - for example, someone will most likely not want you to talk in front of others or they may have other things to do or be in a rush at the time you want to meet with them
- Identify the best method for getting your message across - consider the words you will use, your tone of voice and non-verbal communication such as facial expressions and body language
- Do not assume that someone has understood your meaning - ask questions to seek clarification and look for feedback
- In order to help make sure a message is understood, keep it simple – don't needlessly complicate it
- Speak clearly, and if helpful or necessary consider using a diagram or pictures to help illustrate what you are saying
- Make eye contact – but note that the appropriate amount differs in some cultures
- Monitor the client's responses
- Use appropriate language that the client would understand
- Be specific, clear and precise - don't over-elaborate
- Occasionally summarise your message, checking that the individual understands you - this also gives them the chance to ask questions and/or clarify anything that is unclear
- Thank them for their input

Clients will appreciate it when you take the time to consider the way you are communicating with them and this enables more positive engagement, making it more likely that clients voice their queries and concerns so that you can address them.

ASSESSMENT 2.5

2.6 DIFFICULT OR CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR

ELEMENT:	2. Manage client interactions
PERFORMANCE CRITERIA:	2.6 Respond to difficult or challenging behaviour using established techniques

Responding to Difficult or Challenging Behaviour

When we are confronted with a difficult or challenging situation we can react physically as well as emotionally. Unless we are very aware of ourselves we can send signals to a violent or distressed individual that may further aggravate the situation. It is important that you send appropriate verbal and non-verbal signals that indicate that you are not hostile to their needs or their situation.

It is important when working with a person's difficult behaviour that workers don't add to the problem by overreacting or being authoritarian or aggressive in the situation. This is based around highly developed communication skills, fostering good relationships, empathy, compassion, calming, non-confrontational acts, minimising threat, negotiation, compromise, agreeing to any reasonable requests, distraction, activities and changes of staffing which are all key in preventing escalation.

Consider using the following techniques when responding to challenging behaviour:

- Keep an open posture – arms uncrossed
- Respect the person's personal space
- Use a calm voice
- Avoid threatening behaviour, deliberate and non-deliberate
- Do not become emotionally engaged
- Try to avoid becoming frustrated or irritated
- Listen – make sure you take the time to hear what the individual is trying to tell you, listen especially for underlying feelings
- Don't interrupt – an aggressive or distressed person needs to tell their whole story
- Watch for signs of changes in behaviour that might indicate that they are becoming less stressed - for example, changes in facial colour and more regular breathing
- Resist arguing and personal defence – you may wish to respond but it doesn't address the situation

- Be yourself – make sure the other person knows who you are and you know who they are, don't 'hide' behind your job title
- Treat them with respect - make sure that you acknowledge their complaints or opinions seriously and do not disregard their distress.

Most organisations have policies and procedures in place to deal with people who are aggressive, violent or exhibiting behaviours of concern. These policies give instructions about what should be done and who should be contacted, in the event of an incident. You should read your organisations policies carefully if they have them. If your organisation does not have such policies in place then you might suggest that they develop one.

Your organisation may provide training in how to deal with situations of conflict. These give workers an opportunity to develop and practice their skills in a non-threatening environment.

Ways of Dealing with Difficult or Challenging Behaviour

Be understanding

Having an understanding that the challenging and or difficult behaviour does have a reason behind it even though for you at times the behaviour may seem irrational, unwarranted and or unnecessary. You need to respect that there is a lot of experiences that may lead to this particular behaviour, and understanding why may not be from your personal point of view.

Create open lines of communication

As all forms of behaviour are a form of communication it is best to encourage open lines of verbal communication. This needs to be done sensitively but in the aim of seeking some verbal clarification and understanding behind the behaviour. The more the client feels they can trust and that you are there to listen, the more likely they are to communicate verbally.

Avoid escalation

Avoid anything that escalates the behaviour. This can be anything that is aggravating the behaviour to increase in intensity. Usually when escalation is occurring it is because the behaviour is not being understood, hence the client will increase the behavioural communication.

Communicate back with body language

As behaviour is all non-verbal communication it is good to also communicate back non-verbally. If your words are saying talk to me but your movements are not the client will receive this communication and be less likely to express what is going on. Use non-verbal communication to create a form of conversation that is reassuring and creating trust.

Clarify the issue

Often issues can arise from simple misunderstanding. In the case of challenging behaviour they are trying to communicate something to you. You will need to understand this in order to move forward and create a resolution. Clarifying the issue can be the simplest way to fully understand what is going on. Being sure to clarify is offering the client the freedom to openly express the issue at hand. This enables the conversation to go from non-verbal to verbal and also gives you a clear understanding of the clients reasoning. Further clarifying can also be a good way to further seek information and further give the client an opportunity to communicate. It is essential that the client feels they have the freedom to speak and that they are being fully understood.

Maintaining composure and professional attitude

Under no circumstances should you take the issue personally. Also issues within a professional setting are to be considered professional at all times. By engaging with an issue personally you are bringing the issue into your own personal perspectives, beliefs and ideals. This can then become an issue of your personal view versus the client's personal views. This is not professional conduct and should be left out of the situation in all circumstances. By not making the issue personal you can remain in professional composure. This still means you can have understanding for your client and the issue at hand but that your view and standpoint remain professional along with your conduct and your own behaviours. In the event that the issue is made personal it is best to refer the client on.

Providing support

Providing support for your client is essential in working towards a resolution. The support may be able to be personally provided by you or may have reason for referral. In minor cases it may mean just making small adjustments and being able to adapt to the client where needed. For more difficult cases in may mean making larger scale changes within professional scope. For example a client may not be happy with the service provided and you may need to offer a refund. In all cases adaption can be made to support the client but it is always within scope.

Seeking assistance

Seeking assistance is the ability to know when a situation requires further support or assistance. This is when you have determined the solution or next action is beyond your means. This may involve seeking assistance from another professional or may simply be someone who can directly help with the situation such as a family member. Seeking assistance also includes the need for referral when necessary. When seeking assistance do so respectfully to the client's safety, privacy and confidentiality.

Corrective Feedback

When you choose to give a person feedback about their behaviour it is often helpful to work through the issue in a collaborative way, rather than trying to take control. This type of feedback can produce good results, depending on the individual/worker and the circumstances.

The feedback process works best if you:

- Have a genuine concern for the client
- Give immediate feedback
- Describe the behaviour, not the person - your role is not to label the person, just to identify the behaviour as unwanted
- Be specific about what the problem is
- Inform clients why their behaviour is a problem
- Provide clear directions about what sort of behaviour is expected

If you do provide individuals and workers with clear directions about what you expect, then you must give them an opportunity to practise their new behaviour. For example, if an individual were to come along to your workplace and behave more appropriately, then you would need to acknowledge their new behaviour and comment on the fact that it is appreciated. This approach appreciates the person for making an effort and motivates them to continue. In general, people respond much more effectively to positive feedback about their behaviour.

ASSESSMENT 2.6

2.7 PROFESSIONAL INTEGRITY AND BOUNDARIES

ELEMENT:	2. Manage client interactions
PERFORMANCE CRITERIA:	2.7 Maintain professional integrity and boundaries at all times

Maintaining Integrity and Boundaries

Establishing and maintaining professional boundaries creates a relational space in which you and the client are able to work together within the safety of a professional relationship. The professional relationship is based on the idea of trust, respect, and appropriate use of authority and knowledge.

You and the client understanding the differential within your professional relationship is critical to the maintenance of professional boundaries. Having and respecting professional boundaries helps you maintain professional integrity, which the client can and should respect.

Having a clear understanding of the limits and responsibilities of your role as a service provider is important and healthy as well as helping communication in professional relationships and allows you to stay focused on providing your responsibilities and services to the client.

The topic of boundaries is a broad one that stretches across many topics, including but not limited to: sexual relations, financial dealings, social interactions, conflicts of interest, differences in values/opinions, and breaches of confidentiality. Boundaries may also differ from time to time or client to client, or over time in a given worker/client professional relationship. Boundary issues require more than your management of a given situation when it happens, it also requires anticipation and ongoing self-monitoring to help prevent development of any issues.

Crossing Boundaries

A boundary is crossed when a worker initiates behaviour or allows behaviour to happen in a professional relationship that compromises the relationship or sets a precedent or idea that may compromise the relationship with his or her client in the future. The potential for boundary crossings relates directly to the client's position of vulnerability in the relationship and when they occur, the relationship can become unbalanced and unprofessional.

Professional Behaviour

Maintaining professional boundaries and integrity is not just about interaction with the client, it is about behaviour in general. Workers should never exhibit behaviour that is unprofessional.

Unprofessional behaviour includes the topics mentioned above but may also include:

- Being late
- Asking the client if you can start later/leave earlier or change appointment times
- Not attending to the duties they are required to undertake
- Not treating the client with dignity and respect at all times
- Swearing, raising their voice
- Attending to personal errands whilst providing a service
- Spending unreasonable amounts of time on the phone whilst providing a service
- Inviting a client into their home during service time or outside of work hours
- Touch – from a worker should only ever be of a nature that is essential to the person's care
- Keeping information about a client from their employer
- Arriving for work under the influence of alcohol or drugs or consuming these whilst providing a service
- Sexual advances or misconduct
- Inappropriate remarks about their employer or other staff that provide a service to the client
- Disclosing information about other clients or staff

The establishment and maintaining of professional boundaries within a context where there is a lot of contact with a client can seem almost unnatural or counter-intuitive but is also absolutely critical, because it fosters an environment of mutual respect and productivity and allows you to support the client more effectively in the long run. It also protects the worker and client from anyone being over involved in each other's personal lives and potentially putting them at risk.

ASSESSMENT 2.7

2.8 CLIENT REFERRAL

ELEMENT:	2. Manage client interactions
PERFORMANCE CRITERIA:	2.8 Work within scope of role and identify and respond to situations where interactions suggest the need for client referral

Seeking Specialist Advice

The aim of establishing and managing client relationships is to help and support them to function more positively in their lives, reach their goals, and relate to others in a more effective way.

Within these aims dealing with individuals is first to ensure safety and establish a professional relationship, but it is also to perform the relevant action so clients can find appropriate ways of achieving their aims or goals.

Sometimes the action needed is not within the scope of your role, is not a service you can provide or cannot offer safely or in a professional way and so your options are to seek specialist advice and/or make referrals for the individual to see a professional over time.

When seeking specialist advice and making referrals, it is essential that workers are aware of the specific services available in their community or associated with their organisation that might assist individuals.

Workers can do this by:

- Making contact and networking with possible specialists
- Investigating their locations
- Finding out how much they charge for their services (if relevant)
- Finding out how long it will take before the individual can gain assistance
- Finding out the referral process to that service (the individual may be able to refer him or herself)
- Ensuring that confidentiality is maintained and asking the individual's permission in writing to release information
- Remembering to be objective in the process of reporting an individual's behaviour
- Documenting everything relevant to the individual's situation

Networking

As part of your work, we have established that you will potentially need to have contact with specialists, professionals and other organisations in order to help clients. Establishing and maintaining networks with other relevant organisations, specialists and services is vital for providing a greater service. Why is this?

It is the idea that a framework of organisations, people and services working together bring different skills and knowledge to the table. It also opens doors, breaking down the barriers for access to the various services an individual may need. As a result, the client should receive the help they need faster and with fewer obstacles. It therefore works closely with the principles of access, equity and consistency of service.

How can you establish and maintain networks?

- Establish the name and contact number for the main contacts you may need
- Maintain a professional approach during all communications
- Establish a process for referrals
- Maintain confidentiality

Other Services

When you cannot or are unable to fulfil the needs of a client within your work you will need to refer them to other services and specialists. When you refer them and who you refer them to will depend on the type and level of their need.

Referring will depend on:

- Service availability
- Service links
- Service cost
- The consent to the referral

Referral will depend on your organisation's relationship with other service providers – if there are specific partnerships in place, you should abide by them. Your organisation may have a list of referral organisations that you can use, complete with contact details and referral procedures. However, you may need to network and establish new relationships in order to obtain the support that individuals require.

Another factor that will determine who you refer people to is time that would be spent waiting – for example, if an individual requires a service within a month, it is no good referring them to one with a waiting time of six months.

ASSESSMENT 2.8

3. RESPONDING TO CLIENT ENQUIRIES

3.1 METHODS OF COMMUNICATION

ELEMENT:	3. Provide effective responses to client enquiries
PERFORMANCE CRITERIA:	3.1 Select the most appropriate mode of communication for the information being provided

Appropriate Methods of Communication

Communicating with clients is often about giving them an account of their behaviour or actions as it relates to a certain criteria.

In the context of establishing and managing client relationships, feedback and advice form an important part of working with the client.

<u>This is usually in the form of information, opinions, observations and suggestions offered by:</u>

- The client in relation to the way their case is being managed
- The support worker and other people involved with the client about their progress

We are therefore constantly using some form of communication or another to send a message. Without these different methods of communication available, it would be extremely inefficient to communicate as effectively to the client.

Let's try and understand what these methods of communication are and when to use them.

Oral Communication

Oral communication could be argued to be the most commonly used form of communication. Whether it is to present some important data to your client or describe ideas and goals, these skills are vital.

We are constantly using words verbally to provide information, make decisions, manage relationships and so on. This can be done either by phone or face-to-face.

The person on the receiving end would also need to understand what you are saying, so you need to have both good speaking and listening skills.

Written Communication

Writing is used when you have to provide detailed information such as figures and facts or when a record of what is being communicated is needed.

It is also generally used to send documents and other important material to clients which can then be referred to in the future, such as letters or e-mails. Important documents such as contracts, memos and minutes of meetings are also in written form for this purpose.

Pictures and Video

Providing information in the form of pictures and video can help clients to understand, particularly if there is a large amount of information, if English is not the clients first language or for different kinds if impairments (e.g. pictures for the hard of hearing).

Giving information in varying formats can help facilitate understanding for the client.

Body Language

Although the communication skills you use are carried out orally or in writing, the power of non-verbal communication in face to face meetings must never be underestimated.

Your smile, your gestures and several other body movements send out a message to the people around you. You need to be mindful of this while working with your clients

Always remember to maintain eye contact. This would show that you are serious and confident about what is being said.

Strategies for Communication

There will often be more than one way to provide the information required, or you will be able to use a mixture of methods. Depending on your client, you will need to adapt your communication strategy to meet their particular needs and include use of techniques and other aids.

<u>Techniques and aids you could use include:</u>

- Facial expressions, hand signals and other physical gestures
- Objects, photographs, pictures or symbols, written words
- Videos or practical demonstrations

- Translated printed material
- Interpreters
- Augmentative communication systems, such as devices and processes that replace, or are an adjunct to speech

The techniques and aids that you use must be suitable and appropriate for the client.

For example:

- Unnecessary use of hand movements can be distressing for some people with a mental illness
- A person who is deaf may need a specific type of interpreter specialising in sign language, Auslan or cueing

Pens and notebooks may not be appropriate when you are communicating with a person who is illiterate. Within a community that has low rates of literacy, informational videos may be more helpful to clients than written brochures.

You should discuss any difficulties in communicating with a particular person with your supervisor or mentor. It may be necessary to invite a third party to support communication with a client, or even to provide an alternative support worker.

There are many different types of people who may be able to assist with communication such as professional interpreters, case workers, as well as non-professional helpers or support people like friends and family of the client.

Be aware that non-professional support people such as family members, carers or professional advocates are not neutral. If these people are to act as help in communicating, be aware that they may be influenced by emotional involvement or their own personal views.

ASSESSMENT 3.1

3.2 LANGUAGE AND TERMINOLOGY

ELEMENT:	3. Provide effective responses to client enquiries
PERFORMANCE CRITERIA:	3.2 Use language and terminology that the client will understand

Appropriate Language and Terminology

It is important to involve your clients in any work that is with or for them. This includes effective responses to their queries, so that the client feels understood and valued. In order to do this effectively so you will need to use language and terminology that they will understand.

When you are planning with clients, it is important to give them information concerning:

- The initial assessment of their enquiry. Don't use jargon, use simple, ordinary language.
- The options normally available to meet their enquiry, e.g. the types of programs or services available or possible options
- The expectations on the client regarding these options
- Information about the implications of each option, i.e. practical steps involved, any issues or implications
- Information about options which will not be considered and why

Jargon is language used by an industry which is confined to that industry and can contain acronyms which are not familiar to those who are not part of the industry. Jargon can also be special words or expressions used by a profession or group that are difficult for others to understand. In some instances it is a language on it's own which is in use in particular industries. It can be confusing and overwhelming to use jargon when speaking with clients as they will not understand what you are saying.

Consider the previous chapter and remember that you may need to provide information in a range of ways. Some people prefer information given verbally, while others need to be able to read the information. Sometimes a combination of verbal and written information gives clients a better chance of understanding the information.

Check that the client understands what you have said or the written material you have provided. If they do not then they may need assistance through an interpreter or other outside help. Clients may also not understand for other reasons, for example if they are anxious or have other things on their mind, they might not remember what has been said to them. Consider any special needs that the client has and the combination of methods you will use to communicate with them. You may need to check understanding and repeat information where necessary.

Consider where and how you provide information to clients. Options include your office, the family home or a neutral location such as a community centre.

When choosing a location, consider:

- The purpose of the meeting and what you need to discuss
- Which location would improve discussion while maintaining privacy?
- What would help the client feel comfortable?
- Which location is most convenient or is suitable for people with special or additional needs?

ASSESSMENT 3.2

3.3 PRESENTING INFORMATION

ELEMENT:	3. Provide effective responses to client enquiries
PERFORMANCE CRITERIA:	3.3 Present information clearly and with sufficient detail to meet client needs

Presenting Information Clearly

The client should receive and understand the information she or he needs to make informed decisions about their needs. This requires that information is presented clearly and with sufficient detail so that it is communicated properly to the client.

<u>The following strategies can make information more readily comprehensible to clients:</u>

- Materials should be provided that are clear and easy to understand. Information presented through any one of a variety of media (for example, written, audio/visual, computer/web-based) need to be presented in a format that is clear and easy to interpret by clients
- Many adults have only a basic ability to obtain, process, and understand information necessary to make decisions about their services. Making easy-to-access materials enhances informed decision-making
- Make sure the client grasps the style of information clearly with a small amount of it before you present the rest of the information
- The amount of information presented should be limited and the essential points emphasised as not to overload the client with information
- Highlighting important parts and details and presenting them first helps clients to understand them better
- Positives and negatives should be presented in common rather than relative terms (e.g. If a client asked for more meetings, you could say "I will see you twice next week" rather than "I'll see you more")
- Framing messages positively increases acceptance and comprehension
- Information should be delivered in a manner that is culturally and linguistically appropriate
- Actively engage with the client and allow them to ask questions and refer to any information/materials provided

- Give brief pauses after sections of information to allow the client to ask questions as they think of them rather than saving them all for later
- Presenting information in a question and answer format is more effective than simply stating information

Regardless of how you present information to the client, you should always make sure that their comprehension and understanding of the information is correct throughout, and give them opportunities to ask questions both during and after presentation.

ASSESSMENT 3.3

3.4 UNDERSTANDING INFORMATION

ELEMENT:	3. Provide effective responses to client enquiries
PERFORMANCE CRITERIA:	3.4 Confirm with client that the information has been understood and address any unresolved issues

Reviewing Information

Working with clients to meet their goals and managing the relationship is a continuous process; it is therefore very important to have established indicators in place against which you can measure this progress.

It might be a good idea to establish processes for monitoring which are known and agreed to by the client so that they are aware and committed to them. Written agreement is preferable, although verbal agreement (in the case meeting) is often sufficient.

Through monitoring, the worker and the client can work to address any issues such as:

- If the client's goals are being achieved
- If the timelines are appropriate
- Whether there is a failure to achieve the goals
- What needs to be changed to meet the client's situation (the goals themselves, or the steps to meet those goals)

It is important that agencies expend time and energy into reflecting on and evaluating their practice delivery. This includes thinking about what they do, how they do it and what they could do better.

It is also a good idea to ask:

- Is there anything we are not doing that we should be doing?
- Is there anything we are doing that we should not be doing?

Addressing Issues

The most critical aspect of reviewing the information the client provides is to act on the feedback gathered. If people do not see some changes as a result of feedback they have provided, they will be less likely to provide input in the future and may feel more negatively about the relationship. As giving feedback requires an investment of time and effort by the client; this should be acknowledged and appreciated.

Depending on the nature of the feedback received, there will be a range of options for acting on feedback. If the feedback relates to the service generally, such as office hours, referral procedure, and a range of services offered, it is likely to be addressed by the management committee or the manager or board. If the feedback relates to specific staff members or specific support provided, it is likely to be addressed by the relevant staff member and their immediate supervisor.

For some service providers, effectiveness is judged differently depending on the outcome some will have the aim or goal of a specific outcome or strategy whereas others focus on client satisfaction with the idea that they are getting the support they need to achieve their goals, and that they are being treated with dignity and respect.

Irrespective of the level or type of review of service quality, client feedback is essential. A service or an individual may have quality systems and good intentions, but unless the client is satisfied, it is hard to say that the relationship is successful.

ASSESSMENT 3.4

REFERENCES

These suggested references are for further reading and do not necessarily represent the contents of this Student Manual.

The Privacy Act: http://www.oaic.gov.au/privacy/privacy-act/the-privacy-act

All references accessed on and correct as of 09/02/2016, unless other otherwise stated.