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Topic 1

In this topic you will learn about:

- 1A** Providing information to clients
- 1B** Confirming therapy and treatment plans
- 1C** Working in a safe manner

Prepare for the therapy session

Before working with a client, you need to ensure a safe working environment.

Allied health workers focus on promoting and enabling clients to have a healthy lifestyle and gaining or maintaining independence. The care they provide can not only assist with physical health, but also psychological, cognitive and social health.

Allied health professionals work in a range of settings, including acute and primary care, aged care and rehabilitation. They work with clients from childhood through to adulthood and the ageing population. These professionals provide services to enhance and maintain the function of clients in hospitals, private practice, community health and in-home care.

Allied health assistants (AHAs) always work under the instruction of an allied health professional (AHP). Therefore, you must seek guidance and clarification from them if you are unsure of any aspect of the therapy session.

In allied health, a therapy session can refer to:

- ▶ a program (such as an exercise program)
- ▶ a treatment or procedure (such as removal of corns from a client's foot).

1B Confirming therapy and treatment plans

Understanding treatment plans is imperative when carrying out any therapy.

As an allied health assistant (AHA), you must work under the instruction of an allied health professional (AHP). Therefore, if there is any uncertainty with any aspect of a task you are required to perform, you must ask a supervising AHP for clarification. AHPs are required to give you clear instructions.



Relevant information can be obtained from your supervisor, other health professionals, documentation such as file notes, policies and procedures. Preparation for a therapy session requires forward thinking, ensuring that you have everything you need for the therapy session, such as the resources and equipment you require for each client. This might include:

- ▶ using a checklist to ensure all equipment is available
- ▶ checking equipment batteries are operational prior to meeting the client
- ▶ ensuring equipment is at the correct height for the client, and adjusting if necessary
- ▶ ensuring equipment is in working order, not frayed or damaged.

Preparing clients for therapy

Preparation is the key to a successful therapy session.

Prior to a session with a client, you may need to consider the following:

- ▶ How will you establish rapport with the client? This may include introducing yourself and explaining your role.
- ▶ How will you assess the readiness of the client for therapy? If you identify any changes in their health, you should bring this to the AHP's attention.
- ▶ What do you need to do to ensure the client is prepared for the session? For example, you may need to check they are wearing the appropriate clothing and that they have not eaten in the last 24 hours.
- ▶ Does the client need to have particular medication prior to the session, such as analgesia?

It is important that you follow the guidelines that the AHP has set for the session. If the client presents differently from what is suggested in the information provided to you, consult with your supervising AHP before proceeding.

To ensure privacy and confidentiality, all accounts, client histories, papers containing client information, letterheads and other official documents must be stored in areas that are secure and inaccessible to the public. Only authorised staff should have access to medical files. At no time should a client be left unattended in a room where such forms can be readily accessed.

From time to time, client records need to be discarded. Due to the confidential nature of client records, it is essential that during the physical destruction of such records, no identifiable contents are retrievable.

If you have any concerns about privacy and confidentiality matters, speak with an AHP.

Following supervisory and reporting protocols

Accurate information is crucial to effective communication between a supervisor (AHP) and an assistant (AHA).

Your supervising AHP will give you instructions on a task to complete in one of three ways:

- ▶ Directly – For example, your supervisor may give you step-by-step instructions on how to carry out a task and observe as you complete it.
- ▶ Indirectly – For example, your supervisor may give you a task to complete and check in on you as you perform it to provide advice and evaluate your work.
- ▶ By delegation – You may be responsible for completing a task on your own if your supervisor is confident you can do it unassisted.

Good communication between you and your supervising AHP is essential for the safety and management of your clients. This can be done in written and/or verbal forms. Some organisations will have protocols that must be followed for reporting and seeking permissions from a supervisor. You may have to follow specific guidelines regarding what the AHP wants to be informed of, and this may be determined by your level of experience.

Information that you must provide to your supervising AHP includes:

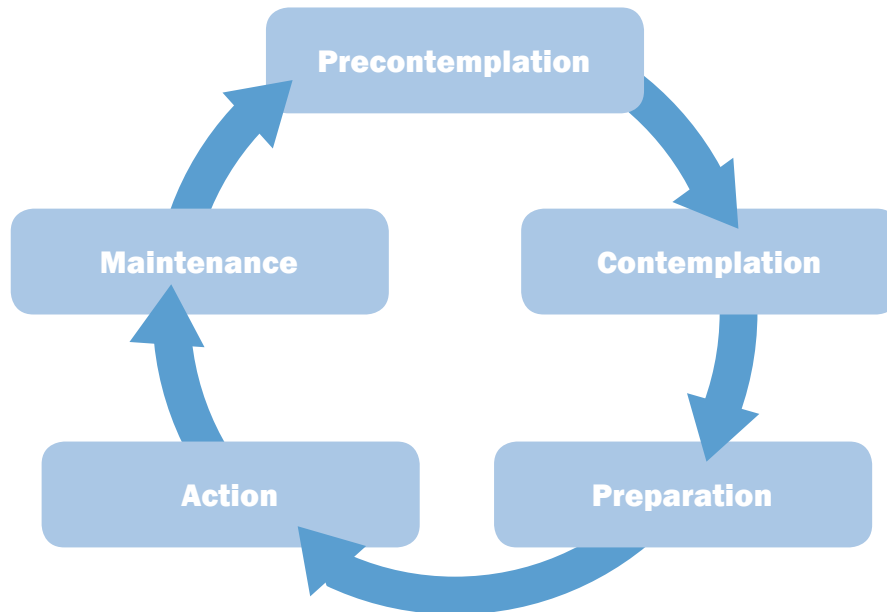
- ▶ significant improvement or deterioration in the client's health status, especially changes that mean a review and potential change of program is required
- ▶ any accidents or adverse reactions
- ▶ any safety concerns you may have
- ▶ any new information that you become aware of that may impact on the client's management
- ▶ any difficulties with compliance and following instructions
- ▶ any complaints that have been received.



Summary

- ▶ To support your clients, you need to understand what allied health involves, including the role of the different health professions you need to support and assist.
- ▶ Allied health professionals (AHPs) include people in a number of different areas of specialty, each with different roles and responsibilities relating to client healthcare.
- ▶ The individual needs of a client determine the therapies they should receive.
- ▶ Allied health assistants (AHAs) work under the instruction of AHPs, including carrying out therapies outlined in treatment plans.
- ▶ Discussion and instructions from an AHP on the treatment plan for a client may occur face to face, over the phone or by online videoconferencing. Instructions may also be received in the form of a handover sheet.
- ▶ You may need to refer to policies and procedures for accessing relevant information on the client from other people or services.
- ▶ You must understand and follow rules relating to confidentiality and always maintain privacy of information relating to a client.
- ▶ You have a legal obligation to familiarise yourself with health and safety laws, and your organisation's policies and procedures.
- ▶ Policies and procedures provide guidance about reporting procedures, recording requirements, infection control and manual handling.
- ▶ Housekeeping includes checking the suitability of equipment to perform a task and identifying defects that might interfere with the correct operation or workings of equipment.

The model consists of five stages, as shown in the following diagram.



1

Precontemplation

In this stage, the client is deemed to not be ready to take action in the foreseeable future. Clients may be in this stage due to being uninformed, misinformed or underinformed about the consequences of their behaviour or lack of therapy. Typical characteristics of clients in this stage are resistance, lack of motivation and not being ready or willing to accept help.

2

Contemplation

This is when the client is getting ready to make a change and participate in therapy. During this stage, the client is becoming more aware of the benefits of changing, and may also be aware of the personal costs of not making a change. Clients in this stage are often seen as procrastinators, putting off the change until another time.

3

Preparation

The client is now ready to take action in the near future, often within a month. Usually clients in this stage have made some progress toward taking action over the past year. Generally, these clients would have a plan of action, and are ready to be recruited into action-oriented programs.

4

Action

Clients are now actively modifying their lifestyle to move towards their goals.

5

Maintenance

Clients have made modifications in their lifestyle, and are working on preventing relapsing back to old habits.

Indications, contraindications and precautions

Instructions from the AHP will include indications, contraindications and precautions.

This information may be provided in a verbal instruction or recorded in the documents and health notes that accompany the client. You must take special care to seek out clarification if you are unsure how this information affects your tasks.

Record all the information accurately when making appointments, including:

- ▶ the name and of the person requesting an appointment (check and confirm spelling)
- ▶ contact information, such as an address and phone number
- ▶ appointment date and time
- ▶ if it is a standard or extended appointment.

You should also be prepared with alternative dates and times if the scheduled dates the client requests are not available. A client may request a particular health professional and you will need to be able to look up their availability as well as the availability of rooms and specialised equipment.

Other information that you may want to note is if the client has other requirements that will affect the treatment they are given. This may include whether they speak English as their first language or have other needs or disabilities, such as a hearing impairment. These clients may want to bring a support person to the appointment or may require an interpreting service. Some clients may also need assistance in organising transport to and from appointments.

If the client is new to the organisation, they will need information about the cost of treatments, address of the organisation and/or department, parking, etc. You may also need to request they arrive early to complete any documents required for their first appointment.



Practice task 9

Which of the following statements in relation to administration duties are correct? Select yes or no for each one.

- | | | |
|--|-------|------|
| a. Collecting statistics can provide important information on how much a particular client costs to treat. | * Yes | * No |
| b. A purchasing policy may only allow expensive stock and equipment to be purchased when stock levels are low rather than keeping a store of expensive stock on hand that is not being used. | * Yes | * No |
| c. Procedures for making appointments may require adequate time between appointments. | * Yes | * No |
| d. Statistics provide data on which programs have high attendance, which means prices to clients should be increased. | * Yes | * No |
| e. A policy on appointments will not allow clients to request a particular health professional. | * Yes | * No |



Topic 3

In this topic you will learn about:

3A Promoting health through a preventative approach

3B Supporting access and equity

Working with a primary healthcare approach

Primary healthcare includes care and treatments to clients who are not in a hospital.

Medical care provided in hospitals is known as acute care. Primary healthcare aims to improve people's health and wellbeing by supporting them to manage their health issues in the community and at home. This reduces the need for people to go to hospital and the need for specialists and visits to emergency departments. It aims to provide better access to medical care and early management of health conditions. This occurs when the client can discuss their health and receive preventative information and referral to specialised care if required.

A broad range of health services can be provided in this model, including:

- ▶ general practice services
- ▶ prevention and health screening
- ▶ early intervention
- ▶ treatment (including surgeries and procedures)
- ▶ management of illnesses and injuries, such as rehabilitation.

Primary care is provided by general practitioners (GPs) and nurses as well as AHPs, pharmacists, dentists and Aboriginal health workers. It can be provided in a person's home or in a community-based centre close to their home, such as medical clinics and local government community health centres such as Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services.

Human behaviour and needs

Power is at the core of many social interactions and relationships.

The health system can be viewed as having a hierarchy with the client with the health concern at the bottom and the specialists with their high level of knowledge and expertise at the top. In the past, doctors were considered to have a high social status in a community and most people would accept the judgment of a doctor without question.

As an AHA, you have an important role to play in this power dynamic. In the course of your work you may see one client over an extended period of time. You can develop a relationship with them based on trust where the client's needs and their personalised care are your priority. Offering client-centred care means the client will have their basic needs met. This can help alleviate some of the stress associated with illness.

Maslow's hierarchy of needs describes the basic needs of human beings. This psychological theory outlines the needs we all share and can help you determine what clients require from you as an AHA. For example, setting and achieving goals in rehabilitation from an injury can improve a client's self-esteem.

Maslow's hierarchy of needs is outlined in the diagram below.

