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Here are the differences between acceptable behaviour and behaviours of concern.

Acceptable behaviour

- ▶ Acceptable behaviour is not dangerous, offensive or detrimental to the person, their environment or other people. The person's needs must be considered when making decisions about whether their behaviour is acceptable.

Behaviours of concern

- ▶ Behaviours of concern are dangerous, offensive or damaging to the person, their environment or others; for example, if they are:
 - verbally aggressive
 - physically aggressive
 - stealing
 - acting in a sexually inappropriate manner
 - behaving inappropriately.

Unacceptable support worker behaviour

- ▶ Support workers can also demonstrate unacceptable behaviours if they:
 - neglect a person's needs
 - accept money from a person they support
 - steal
 - do not report incidents
 - do not perform designated tasks
 - treat the people they support unfairly because they hold different beliefs.

The role and responsibility of support workers

Support workers must regularly observe and monitor the behaviour of the people they support. Behaviour can be concerning or challenging, but when understood in context can provide a clue to the person's needs. Workers need to know what is 'normal' for a particular person and what to do if their behaviour changes. Understanding behaviour helps to avoid or reduce difficult situations. When a person commences with their care service, their behaviour is assessed and recorded in their care plan.

Consider the advice below when observing and monitoring behaviour.

Observing and monitoring behaviour

- ▶ Understand and support cultural, spiritual, emotional, physical and psychological needs. These factors can affect a person's behaviour.
- ▶ Encourage cooperative behaviour, which makes life more enjoyable for the people you support and makes your job as a support worker more rewarding.
- ▶ When you are monitoring behaviour, gather specific information about the person.
- ▶ Collect information at specific times, whether daily, weekly, fortnightly or when something out of the ordinary occurs.

Positive behaviour that can prevent or defuse conflict

- ▶ Smiling, being positive and supportive
- ▶ Encouraging feedback
- ▶ Listening and respecting the person
- ▶ Involving the person in their own care
- ▶ Being professional and non-judgmental
- ▶ Accepting the person for who they are
- ▶ Giving positive feedback

Negative behaviour that can fuel conflict

- ▶ Ignoring a person's request
- ▶ Continually ordering a person around
- ▶ Not listening
- ▶ Talking down to a person
- ▶ Passing judgment
- ▶ Saying yes but meaning no
- ▶ Making fun of the person

Example

Recognise situations for potential conflict

Andrea is an 83-year-old, wheelchair-bound lady living with her husband. She is a double amputee, who has had several health complications including heart problems, diabetes and respiratory problems. She is now starting to experience memory problems. Andrea finds her problematic health very frustrating and she is aware of her increasing memory problems. She is embarrassed about her disabilities and has started to become increasingly difficult to support.



One morning Carol, the support worker, notices Andrea becoming distressed. Andrea clenches her fist and starts wheeling herself around the room with her head down muttering to herself. She yells at Carol to get out and tells her that if she goes near her she is going to run her over. Andrea has never been aggressive toward Carol before.

Carol remains calm and professional. She calmly asks Andrea if there is anything wrong, she'd like to talk about. Andrea is dismissive, at first, but Carol stays calm. She moves herself out of harm's way, and tells Andrea she will wait in the kitchen, and when Andrea is ready, she should come and talk.

Andrea eventually comes into the kitchen, and tells Carol that her funding has been cut, and she's worried about how it will affect her support. Carol validates Andrea's concerns, and says they are very reasonable worries. She suggests she arrange a meeting with Andrea's case worker to discuss the current funding situation, and to help Andrea make a plan that suits her needs.

Interpret the available evidence

The cause of the person's behaviour may not be immediately visible. You may need to interpret the evidence to determine the trigger for the behaviour, and the need being expressed.

When interpreting the evidence, you need to be responsible and fair. Do not make biased assumptions. For example, if the person swears in conversation with you, you may be personally offended, but this may not mean the person is acting aggressively.

You also need to see the evidence within its context. Ask: Who is giving the evidence? Is the evidence factual? What bias may impact the evidence? Is there any other evidence to support this evidence?

To remain objective, consider the following when interpreting the evidence available to you. Types of evidence are also discussed below.

Types of evidence	Remain objective
▶ Visible observations	▶ Talk to your colleagues and supervisor before making decision
▶ Behaviour	▶ Look at facts, rather than opinion
▶ The person's case notes, charts, history	▶ Ensure all written evidence is signed and dated, and is objective
▶ Observation of others	▶ Remain calm and professional
▶ The person's behaviour support plan	▶ If you are distressed, seek supervision

Respond appropriately

There are three choices you can make when determining an appropriate response. First, you can do nothing if you believe the behaviour may stop. Second, you can observe and then act. Behaviour that is harmless may only need to be recorded in the person's care notes. If the behaviour worsens you may have to intervene. Finally, you can act immediately if the behaviour is affecting other people or has the potential for harm. You can either intervene directly or contact your supervisor.

Follow organisational policies and procedures

Collect and review the evidence presented to you at the time of the behaviour, and then make a decision to act, which is in keeping with organisation policies and procedures.

Policies and procedures are in place to ensure all workplace practices comply with industry standards, legislation and ethical conduct. They are also instructional templates staff should follow in order to know how to act in a given situation.

Read, or listen to, organisational policies and procedures relating to decision-making in the workplace. If you are unclear, consult your supervisor for clarification.

Policies and procedures may relate to the following issues, in relation to decision-making.

The best ways to find out about your organisation include:

- ▶ attending an induction/training program
- ▶ asking your supervisor
- ▶ reading organisational information given to people (brochures/websites)
- ▶ talking to work colleagues to find out who does what/who specialises in what role.

Refer to external organisations

Your organisation may not always have all the resources required to meet needs. In these situations you may need to refer a person to a service that is better able to meet their needs. When referring to another organisation, encourage the person to make their own decisions about the suitability of the service.

All organisations have procedures for referring people to other organisations, as well as for receiving referrals. When referring people internally or to another organisation, inform the person about how long they may have to wait before an appointment can be made and explain why. Ensure they are aware of costs, and other access issues, such as location. Complete all required forms. Consider the following.

Obtain consent

- ▶ A person's information is private and confidential, and consent should be sought for that information to be shared with others. Organisations may also refer people to your organisation, so you need to understand your own organisation's policies and procedures for incoming referrals.

Inform

- ▶ Informing people about their referral involves explaining:
 - details about the organisation and why you are referring them there
 - what the other organisation will expect from them; for example, if any fees and charges are associated with the referral
 - what information you provide to the other organisation.

Accept referrals

- ▶ Methods for accepting referrals include:
 - a telephone call, with you logging details of the referral directly into your organisation's database or onto a paper form – in some cases the person will be present when this referral occurs
 - an email or an online form
 - the person attending with a letter or other written document from the referring organisation.

Accessing services for a person

- ▶ When a person needs support to access other services, you may choose to access the other service on behalf of the person. You could also encourage the person to contact the other organisation while you are present.

Obtaining informed consent

- ▶ Always remember that you require the person's consent before passing information to another service provider. This includes case information and personal details.

Example

Referral form

Here is an example of a referral form that may be completed.

Referral form for disability services		
Applicant name		
Date		
Referral to		
Do you require assistance completing this form?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Format type	<input type="checkbox"/> Audio tape <input type="checkbox"/> CD <input type="checkbox"/> Large print	<input type="checkbox"/> Interpreter <input type="checkbox"/> Oral presentation <input type="checkbox"/> Sign language
Applicant personal information		
Last name (please print)		
First name		
Middle initial		
Address		
Phone	Mobile:	Work:
Gender	<input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female	
Birthplace		
Relationship status	<input type="checkbox"/> Single <input type="checkbox"/> De facto <input type="checkbox"/> Partnered <input type="checkbox"/> Married <input type="checkbox"/> Widowed	
Citizenship	<input type="checkbox"/> Australian <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify):	



Topic 2

In this topic you will learn how to:

- 2A Conduct interactions with individuals in a fair, just, humane, equitable and positive manner**
- 2B Use communication strategies for effective interaction and problem-solving**
- 2C Consider cultural sensitivities and adapt style and language to accommodate different cultural values and practices**
- 2D Identify potential causes of conflict and use a range of appropriate and effective defusing responses**
- 2E Use negotiation techniques to divert and minimise aggressive behaviour**
- 2F Use negotiation to examine cause and effect and encourage appropriate responsibility and accountability for behaviour and its outcomes**

Manage conflict

Good communication is the key to good working relationships and is especially important when dealing with people who display behaviours of concern. The support worker's role is to help people they support cooperate so a high standard of care can be maintained, and disruptions are kept to a minimum. Workers need to know how to speak calmly and in a positive manner to defuse problem situations.

If someone is particularly aggressive, negotiation skills are required. Each person must also be treated fairly and in a caring and positive manner, regardless of their background.

2B Use communication strategies for effective interaction and problem-solving

Support workers need a range of communication skills to effectively meet people's different needs and expectations. Effective communication skills not only help to get the right message across, but they can also help solve problems and minimise conflict.

The differences between verbal and nonverbal communication are outlined below, along with the importance of feedback during communication.

Verbal and nonverbal communication

- ▶ Verbal communication is using your voice to give another person a message. The words you choose, your tone of voice and the way you speak all contribute to the way the message is received.
- ▶ Nonverbal communication is communicating through actions, gestures, facial expressions, sign language or pictures.

Giving and receiving feedback

- ▶ Feedback is also essential to effective communication. It is a way the listener can check that what they are hearing is the message that the other person is intending to send. Feedback can be as simple as acknowledging a person's emotions, or a nod to let them know you have heard and understood what they are saying.

Principles of communication used in conflict management

Communication techniques and principles you use may vary depending on the context. There are similarities, such as always using clear, empathic communication. But there are differences, such as using a more assertive tone in a conflict situation.

Below is a brief description of aspects regarding communication and conflict management.

Facilitate agreements

When you facilitate agreements, you mediate between different sides and perspectives. You need to remain neutral and objective, and ensure both sides are satisfied with the outcome. Encourage each person or group to listen to the other party. Ask open questions, and allow each person or group enough time to answer the question. Summarise what has been said for the benefit of all parties, ask both parties if they are satisfied with the agreements, then document the process.

Positive

- ▶ 'I'm sorry Mr Jones, I'm not qualified to give you that information. Do you need to make an appointment to see your doctor? Can I help you with that?'
- ▶ 'It's a shame that you are short of money Mrs Menzies. I'm sorry, but I can't lend you any money. Can you ask your family? Do you need someone to help you with a budget?'
- ▶ 'Are you having trouble with that task? Do you need to speak with my supervisor about extra support? I can't help you today but I may be able to help next time if my supervisor changes the care plan.'

Negative

- ▶ 'That is a silly question Mr Jones. Of course I can't tell you if you have high blood pressure; I'm not a doctor.'
- ▶ 'Don't tell me about your sore leg. I'm here to clean your house not listen to you complain.'
- ▶ 'There is no way I am going to give you some money until your next pension payment, Mrs Menzies.'
- ▶ 'That's not my job. I'm not going to the shops for you. I am here to shower you, that's it! Instead of asking me, talk to my supervisor.'

Use nonverbal gestures

Nonverbal communication is considered to be just as powerful as verbal communication. Therefore, it is important to be aware of the impact of your body language. Nonverbal gestures generally reflect a person's mood, attitude or state of mind. They can be intentional or unintentional; often people have little control over them.

People with hearing difficulties may use sign language. In Australia people use Auslan, the sign language for communicating with people with hearing impairments. You may need to learn some of the signs or arrange for a specialist to help you communicate with a person who has a hearing impairment.

Examples of nonverbal gestures include:

- ▶ nodding your head in agreement
- ▶ shaking hands to greet or welcome someone
- ▶ smiling to show you are happy
- ▶ crossing your arms across your chest to show you are annoyed or impatient
- ▶ shrugging your shoulders to indicate that you are not sure about something or don't care
- ▶ glaring at someone if you are angry
- ▶ yawning and looking away from someone if you are bored.

Use constructive questioning

You need to be able to get the right information to help you solve problems or calm a person who is behaving unacceptably. The best way of doing this is by using constructive questioning and active listening.

Cultural considerations

Communication is a very important element of your work, as you need to communicate with the people you support, their families and friends, other staff in your workplace, volunteers, and members of the general community, advocates, visitors and other care professionals.

There are many ways you can show you respect and understand another person's culture through the way you communicate with them. This helps you build rapport and develop a trusting relationship.

Here are some tips for working effectively with people from diverse cultural backgrounds.

Tips for working effectively with people of diverse backgrounds

- ▶ Greet people in the way they would like to be addressed.
- ▶ Show cultural understanding and empathy. Don't make negative comments about another country. Don't talk about events that may be upsetting to someone.
- ▶ Assist people to complete forms if they have trouble writing in English.
- ▶ Show courtesy and respect; be polite. Know when it is appropriate to smile, make eye contact, touch, bow to a person or shake their hand.
- ▶ Don't call someone by their first name or 'love' unless they want you to.
- ▶ Learn some phrases in the person's language such as 'Hello', 'Thank you' or 'How are you?'
- ▶ Talk to the person as an equal; speak in your usual voice. Don't shout or speak as if you are talking to a child.
- ▶ Include everyone; don't leave someone out of a conversation because you have trouble understanding their accent. Never ignore people in a group.
- ▶ Use language everyone can understand. Speak to your supervisor if specific communication issues arise.
- ▶ Never make assumptions; when considering specific communication needs based on a cultural background.

Adapt style and language to accommodate different cultural values and practices

There are many strategies you can use to overcome a language barrier and help a person communicate. Knowing these strategies can help you determine the best one to use. Bear in mind that you may have to try more than one strategy to successfully overcome a language barrier.

2D Identify potential causes of conflict and use a range of appropriate and effective defusing responses

When conflict occurs, the person may become verbally or physically aggressive. They may swear, shout or punch the wall; or they may become very quiet and withdrawn. Support workers must recognise potential conflict situations and try to defuse them. This becomes easier as your skills increase and you become more confident.

Some examples of conflict you may experience with the people you support are listed below.

Examples of conflicts include:

- ▶ refusing to attend to tasks such as cleaning and taking their medication
- ▶ becoming verbally abusive
- ▶ becoming physically threatening or aggressive
- ▶ displaying discrimination against the worker; for example, behaving in a racist manner
- ▶ being sexually inappropriate
- ▶ involving you in a personal or family argument.

Identify potential causes of conflict

Conflict can occur for many reasons. The first step is to identify the cause or causes of the conflict. Avoid jumping to conclusions or assuming you know what the cause is. Rather, observe the behaviour; ask questions; ask others such as family members or other carers for their input; and then make an assessment.

Potential causes of conflict may include:

- ▶ a reaction to a stressful situation; for example, the death of a loved one
- ▶ a communication problem; for example, the person cannot understand the worker
- ▶ an issue with the environment; such as the person's room is too hot, too cold or too noisy
- ▶ the person feels they don't have enough support
- ▶ physical or mental problems; for example, the person may be in pain or have dementia
- ▶ the service not meeting the person's needs
- ▶ workers not understanding cultural needs
- ▶ a person being afraid, frustrated, angry or manipulative
- ▶ learnt behaviour and the only way the person feels they can deal with an issue.

Consider the strategies below when setting boundaries.

Be specific about what is and is not acceptable

- ▶ Be specific so people are quite clear about what they can and cannot do. For example, if a person has isolated themselves and refuses to eat, you may provide small goals for them to reach each time you visit.

Set rules to handle disagreements

- ▶ Provide an opportunity for people to discuss the situation without interruption.
- ▶ Listen and ask questions.
- ▶ Give suggestions that help the person take responsibility for their behaviour but also let them back down without feeling embarrassed.
- ▶ Refer the situation to a supervisor or other relevant people if the problem can't be resolved.

Monitor behaviour and suggest support services

- ▶ Your goal is to encourage the person to build their self-esteem and confidence.
- ▶ Watch their behaviour as you go about your duties.
- ▶ Give them positive feedback.
- ▶ Discuss the person's behaviour with your supervisor.
- ▶ Their care plan may need to be revised.
- ▶ You may seek other services, if appropriate.

Example

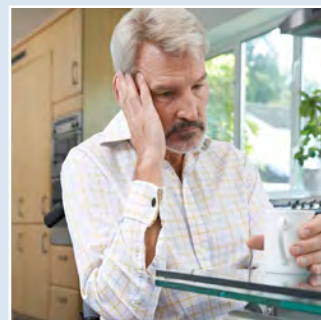
Use negotiation to examine cause and effect

Mike has recently been assessed by the local council and is to receive home help twice a week. Vince, a support worker, arrives at Mike's home at the pre-arranged time. After initial introductions, they begin to discuss the care plan and how they will work together. Mike says he wants to change his support from showering and house cleaning, to being taken on errands and to the local pub.

Vince explains that this is not possible and any changes to his care need to be made by the supervisor. Vince explains the role of home and community care and confirms that all people need to have input into their support. However, the things that Mike is requesting are not available as part of home and community care support.

Mike immediately becomes verbally aggressive and physically threatening. Vince asks Mike to stop yelling at him, otherwise he will leave. Mike refuses, so Vince leaves and rings his supervisor immediately.

The supervisor and Vince return an hour later to speak with Mike. Mike apologises, takes responsibility for his inappropriate behaviour and says he'll never do that again. He says he is just very anxious about the meeting, but now realises that there is nothing to worry about. The supervisor, Vince and Mike agree that Vince will return the following day to attend to the initial care plan.



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- ▶ Aggression towards others, such as raising their voice or swearing
- ▶ Breaking objects, such as household items
- ▶ Refusing to participate
- ▶ Deliberately doing things people don't like, such as undressing
- ▶ Repeating the same activity to cause harm to themselves or others
- ▶ Hiding away from people

Identify possible cause of behaviour

Behaviours of concern may be caused by a range of events and occurrences. Each person will be affected in different ways. What is distressing to one person may not cause any disturbance for another. This is why it is important to look at individualised support plans, and ensure each plan is tailored to the individual, and their specific needs.

Here is a list of possible causes of behaviours of concern.

Mental health issues

Psychiatric illnesses such as schizophrenia and bipolar disorder may result in aggressive behaviour. The mental illness may be pervasive, but there may be certain triggers that stimulate behaviour. For example, paranoia is one effect of schizophrenia, and may be caused by anxiety or a feeling of discomfort. The person's support plan should outline any mental health issues.

Medical issues

A person may be in chronic or severe pain, which may cause them to act aggressively towards themselves or another person. If the person is on medication for their pain, monitor signs of discomfort or changes in physical characteristics or mood, which may indicate the medication is ineffective or needs review.

Substance abuse

Alcohol and other drugs can cause certain activity in the brain that can effect a change in behaviour. If a person has a history of substance abuse, you may be familiar with possible triggers and associated behaviours. The behaviour support plan should indicate what puts a person at risk of substance abuse, and ways to minimise associated behaviours.

Unfamiliar environment

Changes, such as an unfamiliar environment, can cause a person to feel uncomfortable or distressed. This can trigger behaviour of concern.

Stress

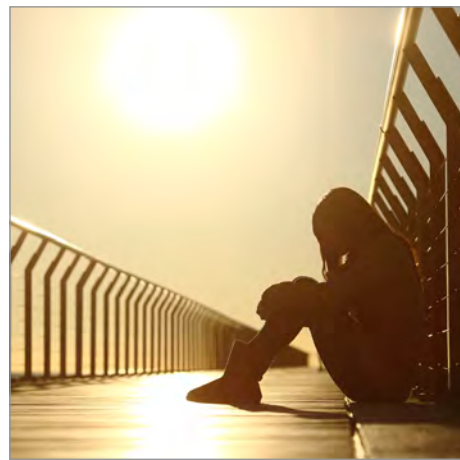
Stress can have many causes – social discomfort, fear of failure, a new environment and paranoia are just some examples. Stress causes adrenalin to be released, and adrenalin is often associated with aggressive behaviours. It may also cause a person to withdraw and hide. Stress will affect different people in different ways.

- ▶ Do not constrain or restrain the person without a restrictive practice.
- ▶ Be familiar with the behaviour support management plan, and follow behaviour management strategies, according to organisational policies and procedures.
- ▶ Stay calm and professional; being grounded will help the other person de-escalate, and will not add to the stress response.
- ▶ Seek supervisor assistance immediately.
- ▶ Always follow workplace policies and procedures.

Principles of responding to behaviour relating to suicide

Suicide in Australia is all too common. Eleven per 100,000 deaths in Australia are related to suicide; this is almost seven deaths per day. Males are more vulnerable to completing suicide than females. The risk of suicide is also greater in Indigenous Australian communities.

It is estimated that for every completed suicide, there are 30 attempts. Working in community services, you work with vulnerable people who may be at risk of suicide. It is important to be aware of indications that a person is suicidal, and to be aware of the appropriate responses to suicidal behaviour.



Indications of suicide

It is important to be aware of indications that a person is suicidal. It can be very difficult to judge in some circumstances; however, here are some signs, which may indicate that a person is having suicidal thoughts.

Indications a person is suicidal may include the following:

- ▶ A person expresses that they no longer want to live.
- ▶ Someone tells you they have nothing to live for, or want to give up.
- ▶ A person is in possession of weapons, or other devices they can use.
- ▶ A person is depressed or experiences manic episodes.
- ▶ A person experiences psychotic episodes.
- ▶ A person has attempted suicide in the past.
- ▶ A serious and complicated event has just occurred in the person's life.
- ▶ A person self-harms.

Responses to suicidal behaviour

Respond to suicidal cues as soon as possible. If the person mentions they have nothing to live for, it may be a call for help. Clarify that the person is suicidal by asking, 'Are you thinking about suicide?' If they admit they are, you need to enact a suicide intervention, as described here.

3C Follow procedures to ensure the personal safety of yourself, the individual, colleagues and others

When you start work as a support worker, you are given instructions about working safely in the support environment. The service that employs you will have policies and procedures in place to guide you. These rules provide instructions about what you are to do when situations become unsafe. They are based on work health and safety legislation designed to protect a worker's right to a safe workplace. Ensure you can access this information and know how to use it to support your work practices. Discuss anything you are unsure of with your supervisor. An unsafe workplace or work practices could result in damage to property, injury to a person or injury to a worker.

Some of your responsibilities as a worker are listed below.

As you have a responsibility to act safely, you need to:

- ▶ follow organisational policies and procedures in place to minimise hazards and risks
- ▶ perform tasks in a way that does not place you at risk
- ▶ work within the limitations of your education and experience, and not become involved in a dangerous situation if you are not trained to handle it
- ▶ attend training on health and safety issues
- ▶ use planned strategies when managing behaviours
- ▶ report and record incidents following your workplace's procedures.

Personal safety

You need to know what you must do to protect your safety if a situation looks as if it may escalate into violence or conflict with the person becoming verbally or physically abusive. Know your organisation's policies and procedures and your level of authority. Do not enter a situation that you feel is unsafe; you have the right to refuse to enter an unsafe environment. If in doubt, ask for support.

Some techniques to ensure safety are outlined below.

Personal safety techniques

- ▶ Be familiar with the person's care plan so you are aware if there is a possibility they may behave in a dangerous manner.
- ▶ Remove yourself physically from an unsafe situation; this may involve locking yourself in an office and contacting your supervisor or emergency services.
- ▶ Your reaction is crucial, so remain calm and pay attention to your body language; don't clench your fists as the person may see this as threatening.
- ▶ Give the person space, don't crowd them. Move slowly into their field of vision. Move to one side. Don't stand in front of them.

3D **Select strategies and responses for their potential to provide role models and examples of confident assertive behaviour**

Support workers need a range of strategies to deal with various situations. In order to be prepared for problems and ready to respond, workers should become familiar with organisational policies and procedures, fully understand their role and responsibilities and know who to contact in case of emergency. You also need to have an escape plan and use two workers when situations are potentially risky; know the people you work with and what they respond best to; use assertive communication that is clear, concise, simple and effective; and understand the formal and informal reporting process and requirements.

Remember that in a crisis situation, you are the role model, so your personal behaviour in a crisis is very important. Being confident and assertive will let others know you are in control of the situation.

During or after the crisis, you will need to seek supervisor support to address your emotions and your response at the time of the incident. Many threatening or critical occurrences have the potential to cause trauma. Seeking supervision may address this.

Select strategies and responses

You need to know the appropriate action to take for specific situations. Some strategies will be specific to the person your support, and will be outlined in their behaviour management support plan. Other strategies will be specific to your organisation, and may apply to all critical incidents, or high-risk incidents. Familiarise yourself with strategies, and know which strategies you can use, within your role.

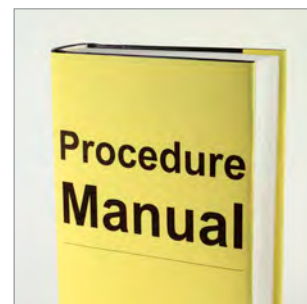
Here are some specific behaviours of concern and suggestions for strategies to handle them.

Verbal aggression

- ▶ Calm the situation down as soon as possible. Speak to the person in a calm and reassuring tone.
- ▶ Tell the person what you are going to do and where you are taking them.
- ▶ Give them realistic choices. Use distraction, encouragement or humour where appropriate.
- ▶ Do not criticise, anger or frustrate the person

3E Carry out interventions based on an analysis of the situation and organisation policies and procedures

Your response to a person depends on the individual and the type of behaviour they are displaying. Just as each person is an individual and has different needs, each situation will vary and require specific strategies to manage it. A person's care plan will provide information regarding the type of behaviour to expect and what triggers it. Your organisation's procedures and protocols will outline who to contact if a crisis occurs, how to document the incident and how to follow safety requirements.



Analyse the situation

Every time the person displays behaviours of concern, the situation should be assessed and analysed in accordance with organisational policies and procedures, as there may be a different cause each time. Investigate the behaviour to implement the best intervention.

All challenging situations are different; however, your organisation's procedures will set out the steps to follow to analyse behaviours of concern so that nothing is missed. Consult with your colleagues when analysing the situation.

Here are some tips for analysing behaviours of concern.

Tips for analysing behaviours of concern

- ▶ Observe the environment.
- ▶ Identify the cause of the behaviour.
- ▶ Listen to the person.
- ▶ Analyse the context and the situation; who is at risk, how high is the risk, and if the risk be controlled.
- ▶ Look at the situation from all viewpoints.
- ▶ Assess behaviour; who is at risk, how high is the risk, can the risk be controlled.
- ▶ If you have time, complete forms or charts that rate the risk of the behaviour.

Analyse the risk

You need to be familiar with the processes used in risk analysis and the systems you can use to identify, evaluate, prioritise and document risks. The following information gives a summary of the steps in risk analysis and the types of qualitative scaling systems you can use. You may not have time to complete these steps in a critical situation, but they can be used as a rough guide.

Summary

1. Behaviours of concern can vary in type and severity. Support workers must respond to behaviour as a form of communication – a sign and symptom of how a person is feeling.
2. Changing behaviour takes time; appropriate behaviour therefore needs to be reinforced.
3. Intervene at the first sign of unacceptable behaviour with a calm but firm response. Be alert for signs that behaviour may be worsening.
4. When dealing with behaviour issues, follow workplace guidelines, policies and procedures to ensure everyone's safety. Support workers should have a clear understanding of the boundaries of their role.
5. Minimal physical force to deal with behaviours of concern should be used only as a last resort and after attempts at using effective communication have been exhausted. Whenever force is used it should be reported and fully documented, following appropriate procedures.
6. Know people you support, including their likely behaviour patterns and the triggers for behaviour. Being prepared with accurate, appropriate strategies assists in intervening to deal with behaviours of concern.
7. Workers must be a positive role model for people they support, and treat them with dignity and respect.

Make sure you report in the appropriate way for the different types of documentation, as outlined below.

Care plans

- ▶ Workers need to be familiar with individual care plans. If you are unsure of anything, ask the supervisor. If an incident occurs, the information recorded on the incident report form will be included in the person's records. The care plan may need to be altered as a consequence of changing behaviour or changing needs.

Incident reports

- ▶ An incident report is a form that details what happened during an incident of unacceptable or aggressive behaviour or an accident. This form also indicates required follow-up action. It should be completed as soon as possible after the incident has occurred. Workers should check their workplace policy to see who the report needs to be given to. Verbal reporting is also important to keep the supervisor informed.

Care notes

- ▶ Care notes or case notes are used to document the care and support given to people. They are a legal document and an accurate record of care provided. They also provide a history of what a person has done, what they have experienced and what care they have received. Make sure you complete notes according to organisational policy and procedure.

Special reports

- ▶ Types of special reports vary between organisations. They might be used for particular types of incidents such as a medication error, serious injury or death. You must be accurate, objective, timely and professional. All details need to be included to ensure the report is clear and correctly reflects the event described.

Inquiries

- ▶ Your supervisor, management, family members or health professionals may ask for information about a particular person. This advice may include writing an outline of a situation or providing a verbal account. In providing information or advice to people outside the care service, uphold your obligations in relation to privacy and confidentiality.

Legal reports

- ▶ Records may be needed for legal reasons in a court case, quasi-judicial or formal inquiry. Common examples are WorkCover inquiries into injury, court cases relating to criminal matters. Any completed forms and other documents related to the allegations will be used in the inquiry as part of a review of events leading up to the incident.

4B Prepare reports and other documentation according to organisation requirements

Reporting and documentation requirements in community care settings are extensive. There are two main purposes for accurate record keeping based on communication and accountability.

These two issues are discussed in more detail below.

Communication

Records and documentation may identify needs; act as a guide for planned action and provide a reference point to ensure the person is receiving the required services. Information lacking accuracy or currency about a person's status or the issues affecting them may mean incorrect care or disjointed services are provided.

Written records provide evidence that actions have been performed and give an account of procedures that have been followed. Passing on documentation regarding changes in individuals, incident reports or hand-over records may also assist in meeting individual duty-of-care requirements. Documents provide evidence of the actions or lack of due care and compliance with industry standards in the event of an incident, accident or other adverse effect.

Accountability

Another reason for complying with organisational reporting and recording requirements is to demonstrate accountability to service users, funding bodies, government and other stakeholders. Service providers receiving government funding must complete and maintain records that demonstrate compliance with department expectations and benchmarks. Inaccurate or ineffective reporting and documentation may impact an organisation's professional reputation.

Follow organisational requirements

It is important to follow organisational requirements when completing documentation. Be familiar with procedures and policies and, if you need clarification, consult your supervisor. Remember that documents are legal documents, so policies must be followed exactly.

What policies and requirements dictate and the requirements they meet are listed below.

What policies dictate	Requirements policies and procedures meet
▶ How information is gathered	▶ Privacy laws
▶ Who receives information about a person's progress	▶ Freedom of information legislation
▶ How the information is stored	▶ Regulations and codes of practice
▶ Who may access the information	▶ Aged care or disability services standards and principles.