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Topic 1

In this topic you will learn how to:

- 1A** Establish rapport and ensure the service is appropriate
- 1B** Ensure effective communication and quality service provision
- 1C** Identify the client's needs and respond within level of responsibility
- 1D** Act to directly resolve conflicts or refer to appropriate personnel
- 1E** Respond to complaints in line with organisational policy

Develop an appropriate relationship with people accessing services

You need to be able to develop rapport and build a positive relationship with people based on trust and respect.

As a person who offers support to others, it is essential that you engage with people in a pleasant and accepting way to put them at ease. Having effective communication skills will help you to do this.

You must provide a high standard of service by:

- ▶ giving the person a sense of importance
- ▶ building trust and working in the person's best interest to ensure their needs are met
- ▶ providing a quality experience and level of satisfaction with your service
- ▶ understanding your obligations within your scope of practice.

1B Ensure effective communication and quality service provision

Clear and effective communication requires an understanding of how a person is feeling and thinking.

Communicating effectively means understanding, reading and responding to the emotional cues of clients. You must learn to identify the communication needs of your clients and communicate to meet their individual preferences and diverse requirements. Your ability to understand diverse perspectives will help you to develop positive relationships with the people you support.



Different communication requirements in clients will depend on:

- ▶ the urgency of their needs, either real or perceived; for example, they may need help immediately or in the next week
- ▶ their emotional state; for example, they may be angry or frightened
- ▶ their physical state; for example, they may be ill, hungry or speech-impaired
- ▶ previous interactions and experience with services, such as patients who have been attending the healthcare service for some time
- ▶ their cultural background – their communication style may be based on accepted religious beliefs and practices or what they consider to be norms of social etiquette
- ▶ their English language skills
- ▶ their understanding of how your service operates – they may or may not be familiar with the type of support your service can provide.

Communication methods

To meaningfully participate, clients must be assisted to understand the processes involved.

In all client contacts, you should make reasonable attempts to identify and address their communication needs as early as possible, and use the communication methods that are most appropriate to the client.



Communication requirements include:

- ▶ using alternative or augmentative communication, such as communication boards or tablet-based communication apps
- ▶ using family members or others to support clients with diminished communication abilities
- ▶ engaging with a client's guardian (a person who is appointed to make decisions on their behalf)
- ▶ inviting a chosen family member to facilitate emotional or cultural safety
- ▶ providing information about the client's rights and responsibilities in audio, Braille, plain English or another accessible format
- ▶ addressing issues involved in obtaining a client's signature, and verifying informed consent if needed
- ▶ arranging a person to interpret using sign language
- ▶ organising interpreting services for clients who speak English as a second language (ESL).

Use active listening

Build rapport by showing empathy, interest and understanding.

Using active and reflective communication techniques will help to develop rapport with your clients by acknowledging them.

Active listening means not only hearing what a person is saying but also observing and interpreting what is being communicated, both verbally and non-verbally. This requires you to:

- ▶ pay close attention and focus on what the person has to say
- ▶ respond to the speaker to clarify information
- ▶ paraphrase what the person has said to show that you have been listening
- ▶ encourage the speaker to continue
- ▶ understand the meaning and feelings being conveyed.

When speaking you should also be patient, polite and avoiding using jargon or colloquial language.

Examples of active listening phrases include:

- ▶ 'Do you mean ...'
- ▶ 'Let me see if I understand ...'
- ▶ 'Correct me if I'm wrong ...'
- ▶ 'As I hear it ...'
- ▶ 'From your point of view ...'
- ▶ 'I wonder if ...'

Allow time

Interviews and conversations may take longer when you are using an interpreter, as everything needs to be said twice – by the support worker and then by the interpreter.

Professional interpreters and translators

Ensure the interpreter or translator you engage is fully accredited. The following organisations can help you find accredited interpreters and translators:

- ▶ The Translating and Interpreting National Service (TIS) can link you with accredited translators and interpreters.
- ▶ The Department of Immigration and Border Protection has a translating and interpreting service you can use.
- ▶ The Australian Institute of Interpreters and Translators (AUSIT) has over 750 interpreters who speak over 30 languages.
- ▶ The National Auslan Interpreter Booking Service provides bookings to sign language users.

Also consider the costs – using a professional interpreter from an agency may be costly.

Other interpreters

Sometimes a professional interpreter is not accessible, and you may need to ask support from someone else, such as:

- ▶ other staff members
- ▶ a community group
- ▶ volunteers
- ▶ the client's friends and family members.

Consider any privacy or confidentiality breaches that may arise from using non-professional interpreters.

Sign language interpreters

People who are hearing impaired may use an interpreter to help them communicate with others.

Auslan is the official language of the deaf community in Australia. It is a form of signed communication using hand gestures. Auslan interpreters can be booked by phone or online via the National Auslan Interpreter Booking Service (NABS), which is funded by the Australian government. People can use the service if they require sign language to communicate and would like an interpreter to book healthcare providers. The service also provides resources for service providers.

You can access the Auslan interpreting service booking website at: <http://aspirelr.link/nabs>

Auslan Signbank provides an online video dictionary at <http://aspirelr.link/auslan-dictionary>.



Severity of impact				
Likelihood risk will occur		Minor	Moderate	High
	Likely			
	Possible			
	Unlikely			
Key:				
	Acceptable risk – Monitor and reduce as much as possible.			
	Concerning risk – Must be reduced as much as possible.			
	Intolerable risk – Must be acted on and reduced immediately.			

Refer to your organisation's policies and procedures for information on how to report risks to your supervisor or WHS officer.

Report your observations to a supervisor

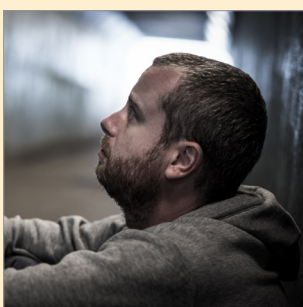
Follow the procedures for reporting your observations after initial contact with a client.

You must promptly discuss any concerns, problems or risks with your supervisor. This could be reported in writing or verbally.

When completing a report, remember only qualified staff such as psychologists, occupational therapists and physiotherapists can make a full assessment of a person's situation or provide them with advice or professional treatment.

Here are some examples of information that may need to be reported to your supervisor.

Risk of abuse



Community services staff at all levels have legal and ethical obligations to report known or suspected abuse according to organisational protocols. This includes mandatory reporting requirements.

When you suspect abuse has occurred or you have witnessed abuse, you must act quickly to ensure action is taken immediately to prevent further abuse from happening or escalating. When reporting, follow your organisation's policies and procedures. Besides verbally reporting to your supervisor, you will be required to document the report.



Topic 2

In this topic you will learn how to:

- 2A** Respect clients as individuals
- 2B** Respect and maintain confidentiality and privacy
- 2C** Follow procedures for behaviours of concern and aggression

Act in a respectful manner

If you provide direct support services in community services and health contexts, you will meet and interact with a wide variety of clients and their families.

People accessing an organisation will come from a variety of backgrounds and will accordingly have diverse needs. These needs may relate to their personalities, their cultural backgrounds, life experiences, and the skills or level of support they have in their families and the community.

Everyone should be treated in a professional manner that shows respect, is person-centred and identifies their individual differences. They must receive a high standard of service.

How should you report?

When reporting your observations, ensure that:

- ▶ they are accurate and specific to the person, and not clouded by your own values
- ▶ you only report what you actually see and hear; do not give opinions or make assumptions
- ▶ the words you use to report are not ambiguous
- ▶ you explain exactly what the person did or said, and the context of the situation to avoid misunderstandings
- ▶ you avoid using jargon or language specific to the service you work in to prevent misunderstandings
- ▶ your observations are not generalisations based on previous service users, prejudice or stereotyping.

Example

Understanding role requirements

Karen is new to her role as a case worker in the mental health sector. When she applied for the position, her work tasks were discussed and she gave evidence of previous work she had done in each of the areas indicated. Karen could explain her experience in working with people with complex needs and displays of behaviours such as aggression and violence.

At the induction, her supervisor discussed the job description and Karen's role in terms of the hierarchy and management within the organisation. Karen asked lots of questions because she knows it is important that she understands the organisation's policies and procedures for dealing with behaviours of concern. She needed to learn the reporting requirements of the organisation and who she should ask for information, support and advice if she required it. Her supervisor took her through the emergency procedures and they toured the interview rooms. They discussed the layout of furniture, location of other staff, and the panic button located in the foyer.

The supervisor made the boundaries of her role clear and specified when Karen should seek advice from her supervisor. Karen has been given copies of the organisation's policies and procedures, and must sign a form to confirm she has read and understood them. Her supervisor will meet with her in a week to see if she has any questions or needs clarity.

Karen is looking forward to her new role.



3A Monitor your effectiveness in interpersonal interactions

You should consistently ask your clients about the services they are receiving from you.

Obtaining feedback is a key element of evaluating and monitoring the service you are providing to clients. Client feedback can be sought to give you insight into your interpersonal interactions with them.

Feedback can be gathered via surveys, which may include questionnaires, observations or measurements of outcomes. For example, you may ask the person about their level of satisfaction and if all of their questions have been addressed. Questionnaires can be written or verbal and are useful ways to gather data.



You can encourage clients to provide feedback by:

- ▶ making sure the client understands their feedback is valued and will be acted on
- ▶ facilitating an open and transparent culture in which clients feel emotionally and culturally safe to share their feedback
- ▶ supporting clients and their families/representatives to provide feedback in ways they are comfortable and confident with.

Obtain feedback regarding your effectiveness

Be attentive to the feedback you get, and think about how you can make improvements based on the feedback you receive.

Feedback can be formal, such as feedback from a supervisor as part of a performance appraisal. It can also be informal, such as verbal feedback from your colleagues and clients.

Formal methods of obtaining feedback include:

- ▶ formal staff appraisals with a performance review
- ▶ team meetings where you are required to provide information and explain your opinion
- ▶ feedback from clients, either given anonymously or in face-to-face sessions
- ▶ surveys or questionnaires.



Summary

- ▶ Your role is to support the client to experience optimal quality of service.
- ▶ Protocols and processes are used to monitor and evaluate the performance of workers where staff strengths and areas in need of improvement are evaluated.
- ▶ Client feedback can give you insight into interpersonal interactions using surveys, questionnaires, self-reflections, peer review and performance appraisals.
- ▶ To continuously improve your performance, seek advice and assistance from your supervisor, colleagues and other sources such as experts and support groups.
- ▶ Even the most experienced worker will be confronted with situations that are beyond their scope of practice or area of expertise.
- ▶ Areas of performance can be reviewed, including interactions with clients and skills such as communicating and working in challenging situations.
- ▶ Seek advice from a mentor or experienced supervisor, or access training or support networks to improve your practice.