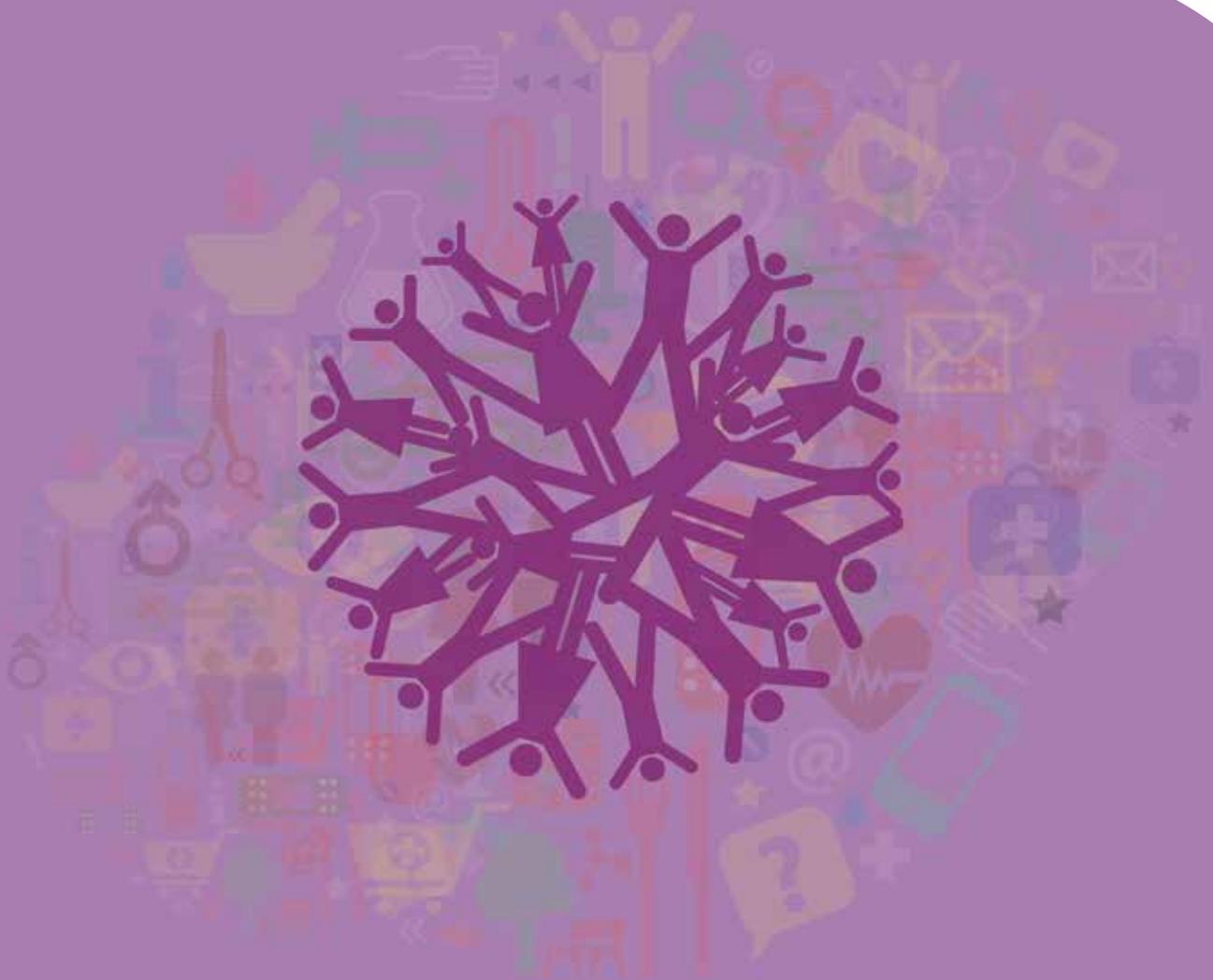


# CHCCCS010

## Maintain a high standard of service

Release 1



*Learner guide*

CHCCCS010

# Maintain a high standard of service

Release 1

Learner guide

Aspire version 1.3



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### Version control and modification history

Version	Release date	Modification
Release 1, version 1.1	July 2018	First release
Release 1, version 1.2	July 2019	Updated to reflect the new Aged Care Quality Standards.  Added an allied health focus.  Minor corrections as part of our continuous improvement program.
Release 1, version 1.3	November 2019	Updated in line with changes to the Home and Community Care (HACC) program.

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#### CHCCCS010 Maintain a high standard of service, Release 1

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## Before you begin

This learner guide is based on the unit of competency *CHCCCS010 Maintain a high standard of service*, Release 1. Your trainer or training organisation must give you information about this unit of competency as part of your training program. You can access the unit of competency and assessment requirements at: [www.training.gov.au](http://www.training.gov.au).

## How to work through this learner guide

This learner guide contains a number of features that will assist you in your learning. Your trainer will advise which parts of the learner guide you need to read, and which practice tasks and learning checkpoints you need to complete. The features of this learner guide are detailed in the following table.

Icon	Feature	How you can use each feature
	Learning content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Read each topic in this learner guide. If you come across content that is confusing, make a note and discuss it with your trainer. Your trainer is in the best position to offer assistance. It is very important that you take on some of the responsibility for the learning you will undertake.</li> </ul>
	Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ These highlight key learning points and provide realistic examples of workplace situations.</li> </ul>
	Practice tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Practice tasks give you the opportunity to put your skills and knowledge into action. Your trainer will tell you which practice tasks to complete.</li> </ul>
	Summaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Key learning points are provided at the end of each topic.</li> </ul>
	Learning checkpoints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ There is a learning checkpoint at the end of each topic. Your trainer will tell you which learning checkpoints to complete. These checkpoints give you an opportunity to check your progress and apply the skills and knowledge you have learnt.</li> </ul>

## Foundation skills

As you complete learning using this guide, you will be developing the foundation skills relevant for this unit. Foundation skills are the language, literacy and numeracy (LLN) skills and the employability skills required for participation in modern workplaces and contemporary life.

The following table provides definitions for each foundation skill.

Foundation skill area	Foundation skill description
Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Understanding your job role, organisational procedures and legal responsibilities</li> <li>▶ Managing your work and seeing how well you are going and making goals for yourself at work</li> <li>▶ Seeking professional development opportunities for continuous improvement</li> </ul>
Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Understanding how documents are presented and being able to navigate through documents</li> <li>▶ Understanding industry- and job-specific terminology</li> <li>▶ Interpreting key information in relevant documents</li> <li>▶ Understanding routine workplace checklists and documentation</li> </ul>
Writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Planning, drafting and writing reports and documents</li> <li>▶ Communicating through written letters, email and online</li> <li>▶ Recording progress</li> <li>▶ Reporting incidents</li> </ul>
Oral communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Clarifying instructions</li> <li>▶ Providing information</li> <li>▶ Supporting others through encouragement, negotiation and conflict resolution</li> </ul>
Numeracy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Calculating costs, weights, measurements of height and distance</li> <li>▶ Interpreting measurements</li> </ul>
Teamwork	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Working well with other people by cooperating, collaborating, encouraging and building rapport</li> </ul>
Planning and organising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Planning your workload and commitments</li> <li>▶ Implementing tasks</li> <li>▶ Completing work on time</li> <li>▶ Knowing how to deal with hazards and risks</li> </ul>
Making decisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Understanding and applying decision-making processes</li> <li>▶ Reviewing the impact of your decisions</li> </ul>
Problem-solving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Identifying problems</li> <li>▶ Working out how to fix a problem using problem-solving processes and reviewing the outcome</li> </ul>
Innovation and creation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Recognising opportunities to develop and apply new ideas</li> <li>▶ Generating ideas by thinking of new ways to do something</li> <li>▶ Making suggestions to improve work</li> </ul>

Foundation skill area	Foundation skill description
Technology and digital literacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Efficiently using digitally based technologies and systems correctly and safely</li> <li>▶ Accessing, organising and presenting information</li> <li>▶ Using equipment correctly and safely</li> </ul>

## What do you already know?

Use the following table to identify what you may already know. This may assist you to work out what to focus on in your learning.

Topic	Key outcomes	Rate your confidence in each section
Topic 1 Develop an appropriate relationship with people accessing services	1A Establish rapport and ensure the service is appropriate	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	1B Ensure effective communication and quality service provision	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	1C Identify the client's needs and respond within level of responsibility	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	1D Act to directly resolve conflicts or refer to appropriate personnel	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	1E Respond to complaints in line with organisational policy	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
Topic 2 Act in a respectful manner	2A Respect clients as individuals	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	2B Respect and maintain confidentiality and privacy	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	2C Follow procedures for behaviours of concern and aggression	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident

Topic	Key outcomes	Rate your confidence in each section
Topic 3 Evaluate your work to maintain a high standard of service	3A Monitor your effectiveness in interpersonal interactions	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	3B Seek advice and address your performance	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident



## 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.

# 1A Establish rapport and ensure the service is appropriate

*Begin building a good relationship with clients from your initial contact.*

You may be the first point of contact with the client and have the responsibility of determining what kind of support the person needs. You may provide support directly to the client, or refer them to someone in your organisation or to another organisation that is able to provide the support the client needs.



The techniques you use to build a relationship will differ depending on whether someone makes initial contact by phone or presents in a face-to-face meeting. However, the basic skills are similar. How you interact can significantly affect their level of satisfaction and can lay the foundation for how the interaction continues. Your aim is to be able to assist the client and for them to find some benefit in the service.

Your organisation will have intake and assessment procedures that will guide you. You should follow this carefully.

## Show your desire to help and assist

*Health and community services organisations have a primary objective to support the people who come to them for help.*

When people in need of support make contact with an organisation, they often require advice. They may be unsure of the process or not understand the workings of the system or organisation.

Your first task is to begin building a relationship where the person feels welcome and understands the benefits of the support services they are being offered. The client needs to be clear that the services they are accepting or agreeing to are appropriate for their needs so you can begin to build a level of engagement and commitment.

The types of services clients require will vary. Your role may be to provide the service directly or to refer the client to the appropriate service that will best support their needs.

## Types of services

You may work in a service such as:

- ▶ aged care
- ▶ home and community care
- ▶ disability
- ▶ alcohol and other drugs
- ▶ family and domestic violence
- ▶ mental health
- ▶ allied health
- ▶ patient services in a hospital
- ▶ housing
- ▶ community development
- ▶ community work
- ▶ youth work and juvenile justice
- ▶ children's services
- ▶ child protection
- ▶ employment services.

Some organisations provide services directly to people, such as providing medical treatment or access to emergency housing. Other organisations only provide information and may refer clients to other service providers.

## Types of clients accessing services

People accessing health and community services include:

- ▶ individuals who are seeking help for themselves; for example, an abused woman seeking help from a women's support service
- ▶ people seeking help for a family member or a friend
- ▶ individuals requiring a treatment as a result of a referral, such as speech pathology or podiatry
- ▶ workers from other health and community services organisations who are seeking information for the people they support
- ▶ people required to contact your organisation because of a court order, or as a requirement to be eligible to receive government welfare payments.

## Develop rapport

*Rapport requires you to communicate effectively to reach a shared understanding.*

To develop rapport, listen carefully to your client. Whether the client has simple or complex needs, you must demonstrate that you have heard and understood their needs, and are interested in supporting them. Use questioning, listening and body language to develop rapport with your client.

Here are some things you can do that will assist you to develop rapport. This acronym was developed by Gerard Egan in his book *People Skills*.

<b>S</b>	Sit or stand SQUARELY to the person – usually at a slight angle (i.e. not directly opposite them) so as not to startle them.
<b>O</b>	Use an OPEN posture at all times (e.g. don't cross your arms) to ensure you do not set up any physical barriers to communication.
<b>L</b>	LEAN slightly toward the person to show you are interested and engaging in the conversation with them.
<b>E</b>	Maintain appropriate EYE contact – you will need to consider any cultural needs, e.g. making less eye contact with an Indigenous Australian.
<b>R</b>	Take a RELAXED approach. If you are relaxed, this helps the client to feel relaxed as well.

## Ensure the service is appropriate

*The intake procedure will vary between different organisations and the services they provide.*

After initial contact, provide information about the service you offer or the process to enter the service. This could include information on the costs, any waiting periods that apply and future appointments. The client needs an explanation on the benefits of the services available so they can provide their consent and confirm if they wish to proceed. You may also need to collect information from the person to use the service.

Here is some information about intake and assessment processes.

### Intake



This is when the potential client meets the eligibility requirements for the organisation and is accepted into the service. The specific services they will receive have not yet been worked out in detail at this stage.

The initial intake process will depend on the sector of the community services industry and the protocols of each organisation. For example:

- ▶ To access funded homecare services through the Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP) and disability services through the NDIS, clients must make initial contact with the centralised intake and assessment services.
- ▶ My Aged Care (MAC) is the point of entry for subsidised aged care services in Australia, including CHSP services. A potential client, their family member or representative, or another professional may contact MAC on behalf of the person. This could be a hospital, the person's doctor or another health practitioner. The person's initial eligibility will be established.

## Initial needs assessment



This assessment will depend on organisational protocols, but it is ideally conducted face to face with the client and their significant other or a representative, if applicable. In the case of a health appointment, the information is collected by asking questions. The client's medical history may need to be accessed from other services. For example, you may need to obtain copies of referral letters and scanned images or medical tests. For community services the assessment information may be provided by central assessment teams, such as MAC or NDIS. Depending on the situation, other stakeholders may also be present.

Initial needs also involve an initial screening process to determine the areas of client need. It is a holistic look at the areas of the client's presenting needs, risks, and the level of urgency with which they require services. This phase gives a picture of the client's eligibility and service provision requirements.

The case coordinator will use this information to begin to understand the client's needs, preferences, priorities and aspirations. They need to understand what the client hopes to accomplish through the services they will receive.

Once this has been established, a deeper assessment process is undertaken to gain a more thorough picture of each of the client's presenting needs.

### Example

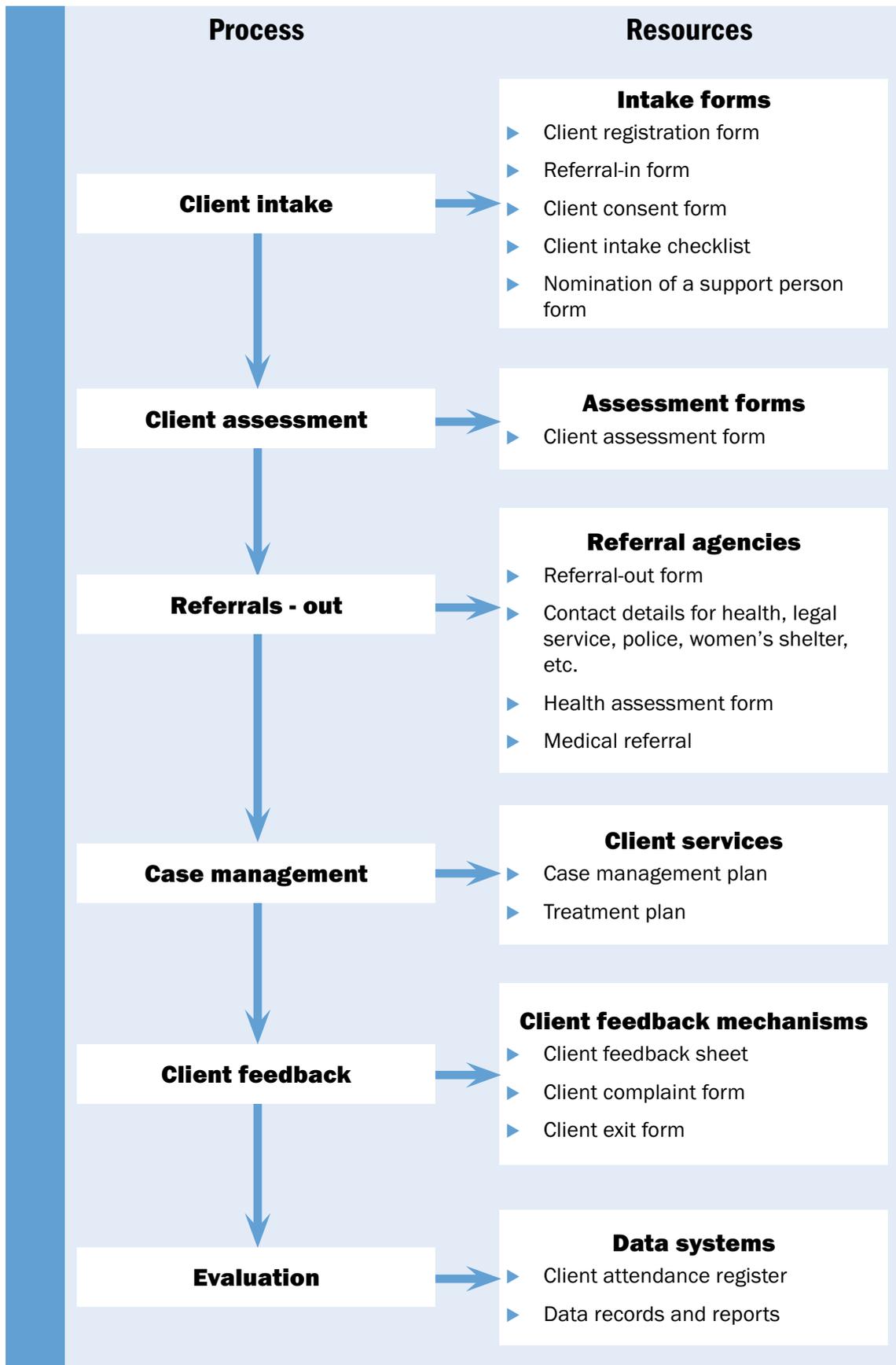
#### Establish rapport and ensure the service is appropriate

Mary is new to her role as a support worker in a disability organisation that provides day services to clients with mild intellectual disabilities. Her supervisor has provided her with a thorough induction and she has been shadowing her colleague over the last week to learn about the day program and to meet clients.

Today a potential new client, Simon, is being interviewed. Simon has arrived with his sister and Mary has been asked to conduct the interview. Mary will use the intake process document and collect the information on Simon's needs. If Simon decides he wants to join the group, Mary will monitor his progress and record his attendance for her organisation's claims to the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA). After a few months, Mary will speak to Simon to determine if he is satisfied with the service he is being provided and whether it meets his needs.

Here is a copy of the intake process given to her by her supervisor:







# Practice task 1

## Question 1

Why is it important to build a relationship to make the client feel welcome?

## Question 2

Give **three** examples of communication techniques you can use to help build rapport with your client.

## Question 3

Why should you explain to the client the benefits and appropriateness of the services offered by your organisation?

# 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 ...'

## Effective communication

*You need to be genuine in your desire to help and in your interest in the client.*

Being empathetic does not mean that you always agree with the client, but simply that you acknowledge their situation.

Communicating effectively is one of the keys skills you need to master in your job. This helps you to deliver a high standard of service to your client on behalf of your organisation. You must respect individual differences, including cultural differences, for the different ways people communicate; you may need to adjust your techniques according to the situation and individual client needs. For example, some people find it hard to explain their situation without getting emotional or angry, and there may be cultural differences in the protocols of giving and receiving information.

Here is a range of communication techniques you can practise using in your role as a support worker.

### Questions

It is important to understand how to use questions to help you collect the information you need to assist a person with support needs. Asking the wrong types of questions could result in incomplete information, which in turn could mean a person does not receive the support they require.

Open questions are used to encourage the other person to speak. These questions often start with the words what, why, when and who, and are used to encourage the other person to say what they know or feel.

Open questions include:

- ▶ Why do you think that happened?
- ▶ How are you feeling?

Closed questions are used to obtain 'yes' or 'no' answers, and to constrain the conversation if necessary. For example, when people are angry they may talk fast and ramble. Asking a closed question can help them to focus on facts.

Closed questions include:

- ▶ Has this happened before?
- ▶ Do you have anywhere to sleep tonight?

The responses to your questions reflect a person's understanding of what you ask, and may be what the person thinks you want to hear.

Clarifying questions demonstrates to the person that you are listening and taking the time to understand their needs. You would usually use a clarifying question in response to something a person says.

Clarifying questions include:

- ▶ How did that happen?
- ▶ Can you give me an example so that I can understand better?

## Observe body language

Observing a person's body language should give you an indication of how they are feeling and their level of comfort. Body language forms 50–80 per cent of human communication. Body language can show many things, such as whether a person is nervous, afraid, angry, anxious or in pain. It can also indicate that someone is happy; that is, not feeling any discomfort or concern, and feeling at peace with their current situation.

## Verbal cues

The way a person speaks can provide clues about their emotional state. For example, the tone, pitch, volume, inflection, rhythm and rate of speech can provide useful information about how a person is feeling.

Think about how you use your voice when you express sarcasm, anger, affection, fear, happiness or confidence. For example:

- ▶ A flat tone may indicate that the person would rather be elsewhere.
- ▶ An abrupt tone may indicate irritation.
- ▶ A high pitch can indicate nervousness, excitement, fear or anger.
- ▶ A low pitch can indicate despair, sadness or loneliness.
- ▶ A loud voice can indicate anger or aggression.

## The role of an interpreter or translator

*An interpreter or translator can help if there is a communication barrier and decisions about care need to be made.*

Interpreters can be used in different ways, including face to face, and through phone and video conversations. Interpreters must understand exactly what the worker wants to communicate to the person they support.

By using an interpreter or translator, people you support may be able to direct their own care, self-advocate, make a complaint, request or suggestion, or make their own legal, medical and financial decisions more appropriately and effectively.

Tips when using an interpreter include:

- ▶ Always speak to the person you are supporting, not the interpreter.
- ▶ Allow the interpreter to finish before you start to talk again.
- ▶ Make sure you use words the interpreter is likely to understand.
- ▶ Don't use difficult medical terms the interpreter may not understand or be able to translate.

The following groups of people may benefit from the services of a translator or interpreter.



<b>Workers</b>	Workers who provide support to people may need to use an interpreter to ensure the organisation has the correct information about each person. Workers can then develop a care or treatment plan and provide the appropriate service. For example, workers must know each person's health issues, food preferences, ability to self-direct their own care, mobility needs and any other special requirements.
<b>Clients</b>	The people you provide support to may benefit from using an interpreter or translating service so they fully understand the service provided to them. All clients must understand the nature of any documents they need to sign in relation to their care.
<b>Family</b>	Clients' family members and/or carers also need to understand the nature of the service provided to the client, particularly in regard to specific care and/or medication.

**Example****Ensuring effective communication and quality service provision**

Linda is the receptionist in an allied health clinic. Her key role is to greet people who come into the office or contact her by phone. She answers their questions and provides them with the information they are seeking. She may suggest who would be the appropriate person to make an appointment with and provide information as to the costs and time of available appointments.

Linda hears the door opening, so she stops what she is doing and looks up with a warm smile. As a woman comes in and goes to her desk, Linda says, 'Good morning, I'm Linda. What can I do for you?'

The woman speaks softly, saying that she's in pain and would like to see someone who could help her. Linda notices that the woman's eyes are puffy and bloodshot, and she looks as if she's been crying. Linda knows from her training that people react and deal with pain differently. Linda gently asks some clarifying questions, such as, 'Have you been to see any health professional before about your pain?'

Linda's interaction with the woman is professional, friendly and informal. She gives the woman her undivided attention and acknowledges her concerns, is prepared to listen and asks clarifying questions.



## Choosing an interpreter

*There are many factors to consider when selecting an interpreter for a client.*

Some of the factors when choosing an interpreter are outlined below.

**Interpreters from the same culture**

Workplaces that provide care to people from more than one culture often have a register of interpreters that includes names, contact details and the languages they speak. An interpreter from the same culture can make a client feel comfortable.

**Interpreters of the same gender**

Workplaces usually try to use an interpreter of the same gender as the person they support. This may help the client relax when personal questions are being asked. For example, a woman who has a urinary tract infection may not want to talk about this with a male interpreter.

**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>.



When booking an interpreter, keep in mind that some people may use Signed English or another signing method as an alternative to Auslan.

## Example

### Recognise and support communication needs

Joseph is deaf and uses sign language. Joseph's mother, Ming, emigrated from China and speaks Cantonese. Both Ming and Joseph use limited English, and meaningful communication can be difficult. Several significant conflicts have developed between Ming and Joseph, and there is confusion and resentment about the options for aged care for Ming. Danielle is a case manager who is working with Joseph and his family.



Ming and Joseph agree to have a meeting to resolve some of their difficulties. Danielle books an Auslan and Cantonese interpreter. She allows extra time for the meeting as using two interpreters may mean the meeting will take longer. She knows it will be a complex discussion and there must be enough time for Ming and Joseph to express their views without feeling pressured.

The meeting is very successful. Ming says she has never had an opportunity to talk like this before. Both Ming and Joseph express their concerns and fears as well as their needs. The issues are not resolved in this one meeting, but good progress has been made. Some actions are decided on regarding what to do next. Ming and Joseph agree it would be useful to hold another similar meeting. They set a date for the next one.



## Practice task 2

### Question 1

Give **two** examples of different communication requirements your clients may present with that will require you to adapt your communication method.

### Question 2

Give **three** examples of different communication methods that can be employed with clients.

### Question 3

What is active listening? Provide an example with your answer.

### Question 4

Give **three** examples of what you need to consider when selecting an interpreter to help communicate information to a client.

# 1C Identify the client's needs and respond within level of responsibility

*You need to understand your obligations within your scope of practice to meet the legal and ethical requirements of your role.*

If you do not understand your legal and ethical responsibilities, you may risk breaching your duty of care obligations, or you may not be responding to situations in a responsible or reasonable manner.

People who provide support to others in the community or health sector should not attempt to carry out work that:

- ▶ is not specified in your job description
- ▶ cannot be performed safely due to lack of training or practical experience
- ▶ is unethical, illegal or outside the policies and procedures of the organisation.



Generally, support workers are responsible for obtaining and recording information, providing support, personal care or treatments, case management and assessment.

Always seek assistance and advice from your supervisor where necessary. They can help to clarify the boundaries of your role during orientation by referring to your position description and workplace policies and procedures, such as how to handle referrals and behaviours of concern.

You will need to be able to explain your role clearly to your clients to avoid any misunderstandings, and set boundaries that will ensure an honest and professional relationship.

The following outlines the difference between legal and ethical obligations.

## Legal obligations

Legal obligations include duty of care, and adhering to the laws and regulations that govern your area of practice. For example, you should be informed about your health and safety obligations and responsibilities when you commence employment, and how you can address these within your scope of practice.

## Ethical obligations

Ethical obligations include ensuring you understand and apply the ethical codes and practice standards that relate to your work. It is important that you understand your ethical obligations relating to maintaining appropriate professional boundaries with service users.

## Client needs and concerns

*Part of your role involves identifying why people are contacting your organisation.*

If you are the first point of contact, you are responsible for collecting sufficient information to help the person determine what their specific needs are. You can then provide information as to the next steps or actions to take.

Often people understand they need help, but may be unaware of the types of services available. Sometimes people know exactly what they want or need and sometimes they do not. Some clients may not be able to articulate their needs; for example, because of drug use or a mental disability. Similarly, a person may discuss one aspect of support they are seeking, without mentioning other support needs.

Observation, listening and questioning skills are useful for better understanding people's needs. The importance of understanding what exactly a person requires is outlined below.

### Understand needs

A person may present with an overt need; for example, they may ask for help to find employment. However, without taking the time to understand their needs better, you may not realise that they have depression or a drug addiction that needs to be addressed so that they can be successful in their job search. A client may have many different needs and it may sometimes be difficult to understand which need should be addressed first.

### Clarify needs

Your role is to both understand and clarify a person's needs. This may seem straightforward; for example, a client may want to make an appointment to see someone in your service. Without clarifying the client's needs, you cannot know whether the person they seek an appointment with is the best person to provide support.

## Scope of practice

*You should not undertake tasks that are the responsibility of other professional or occupational roles.*

Scope of practice refers to the area of practice that people with specific qualifications or experience must stay within.

If you are working as part of a multidisciplinary team it is crucial that you understand exactly what you are expected to do and your level of authority. You need to respond to your client within your agreed level of responsibility to meet the legal and ethical requirements of your role. As a worker who provides support to others, you need to be able to recognise situations that are beyond the scope of your role.



### Situations that may be beyond the scope of your role

- ▶ A community services worker does not diagnose conditions or provide advice on exercises. These roles belong to other professionals, such as a medical doctor or physiotherapist.
- ▶ An allied health assistant does not provide treatments or give health advice without the supervision of a health professional, such as a speech therapist or podiatrist.
- ▶ Although many health and community workers receive some training in communication and customer service, this does not mean they are expected to deal with all customer complaints, especially if the client is aggressive and threatening. This will be the responsibility of their manager or supervisor.
- ▶ If a worker does not have supervisory experience or qualifications, they should not be expected to supervise others as this may be outside of their scope of practice.
- ▶ Providing legal advice to a client would also be outside a support worker's scope of practice. This needs to be provided by a suitable qualified lawyer or legal practitioner.

## Work safely in your role

*Some community and health services, such as hospitals, are high-risk workplaces.*

As a support worker, you are in the front line to offer assistance and provide services to your clients. In this role you may also become aware of the difficult or challenging behaviours of some clients.

Health and safety legislation includes both employer and employee responsibilities for keeping safe at work. Your workplace will have policies and procedures in place relating to work health and safety (WHS) and you should make sure you request a copy or ask your supervisor about the WHS roles and responsibilities of people in the organisation.

You must be aware of and respond to risks that are present in your workplace. A workplace risk is the chance a hazard will cause harm, injury or illness.

A workplace hazard is something in your workplace that poses a risk to you and/or your work colleagues. Hazards that you could be exposed to include anything that is a source of potential harm that could result in injury, illness, or damage to property or to the environment.

Once you have identified your client's needs, you may become aware of a situation that places you or your client at risk. You have a duty of care to report to your supervisor when someone's actions could affect another person, and act to avoid situations that may cause foreseeable harm to any person.

The following is an example of a risk assessment matrix that can be used to assess the potential risk of a work activity. Consider the likelihood and impact of a work activity you have been involved in and use the following matrix to estimate the risk level.

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.

## Unsafe behaviours



Unsafe behaviour is any behaviour that places you, the person accessing your service, or anyone else at risk of physical or emotional harm.

Unsafe behaviours may include:

- ▶ shouting, having intrusive conversations or playing loud music
- ▶ using threatening or abusive language or behaviours; for example, swearing, making offensive remarks or damaging property
- ▶ harassing or bullying workers or other service users
- ▶ making derogatory, discriminatory or demeaning remarks or gestures; for example, making racial or sexual comments
- ▶ being affected by drugs or alcohol on the organisation's premises
- ▶ behaving unlawfully; for example, stealing, drug dealing or being physically violent
- ▶ threatening the safety of workers or others.

## Work environments



You may be working in a new or unstable environment, such as in a client's home. Discuss any safety concerns with your supervisor. They may be able to suggest ways to control the risk, such as:

- ▶ Ensure a WHS inspection/audit is conducted before any services are delivered in that environment to identify any hazards and risks.
- ▶ Determine if the environment is appropriate for staff to attend.
- ▶ Determine any control measures/strategies required, such as not attending after hours.
- ▶ Having robust processes in place to ensure that case workers do not enter unsafe environments.

## Stress and exhaustion in workers



Stress may result from the emotional and psychological requirements of the role. A supervisor can offer support and advice, and has a duty of care to monitor your health and wellbeing. Stress can be a result of:

- ▶ clients who self-harm
- ▶ clients who have committed suicide
- ▶ exposure to family/domestic violence
- ▶ ongoing exposure to trauma.

Exhaustion may also be a factor that needs to be monitored and reported. This could be due to:

- ▶ working long hours
- ▶ having large case loads
- ▶ having inadequate human resources (i.e. not enough support workers for the number of clients)
- ▶ dealing with contingencies and crises.

## Clients at risk



Clients must be protected from hazards and the risk of harm must be controlled. Clients may be at risk from themselves, others or their environment.

Clients with complex needs may experience a range of risks in relation to their physical, psychological and psychosocial safety. Qualified professionals may need to identify and respond to these complex risk areas.

If a case worker has any reason to suspect that clients may be exposed to these or other risks, you must respond to and report them according to organisational protocols.

Clients may be at risk from:

- ▶ self-harm
- ▶ suicide
- ▶ family/intimate partner violence
- ▶ child abuse or neglect
- ▶ elder abuse
- ▶ medical issues
- ▶ harm from alcohol or other drug (AOD) use
- ▶ reduced capacity due to physical or mental disability.

## Example

**Identifying and responding to the person's needs**

Chen works in a first point of contact position in a local community service that provides support for homeless young people. Referrals can be made by the individual or by a service on the individual's behalf. Chen notices that a young girl is standing in the doorway. She looks nervous and ready to run away. Chen nods at her and mouths 'hello' with a smile, hoping to encourage her to feel comfortable about coming in. This strategy works and the girl approaches Chen.



The girl appears sullen, scared and anxious. She says in an angry and defiant voice that she is tired of the fights at home, hates her father and has run away from home, but is now sick of living on the streets. Chen notices that she sits with her legs crossed, her arms folded across her body and her whole body hunched up.

Chen wonders if perhaps the girl is being sexually abused and decides to report his observations and discuss his concerns with his supervisor. Chen's role is to determine whether people accessing the service are eligible for emergency housing. In this case, he feels that his observations warrant further support for the girl. When reporting his observations, he refers to his notes, where he recorded the following:

- ▶ Body language – closed (legs crossed, arms crossed across body, hunched up), thumb-chewing
- ▶ Demeanour – scared, sullen, anxious
- ▶ Non-verbal communication – angry/defiant appearance
- ▶ Verbal communication – swore, mentioned fights, says she hates her father

Chen's supervisor will refer the girl to a specialist agency that has experience with this type of case.



## Practice task 3

### Question 1

What are **two** things you can do to confirm your level of responsibility for your role?

## Question 2

Explain why it is important to clarify the needs and concerns of your client.

## Question 3

Explain why you have a responsibility to prepare a report for your supervisor about a client. Give an example with your response.

# 1D Act to directly resolve conflicts or refer to appropriate personnel

*It is common for conflicts to arise in your interactions with clients.*

Your client may need help resolving conflicts they have with other people, such as partners, family members, their children or their friends. The conflict may be directed at you as a representative of the service or organisation.

Your client's emotional state may result in them expressing strong feelings. You may be the object of the conflict because you have a relationship with the client. You could be the object of strong negative emotions because you are in the front line of the person's issues and they may direct their frustration on you.



The following are some examples of emotional states that a client may present with.

Emotional states	
▶ Distressed	▶ Angry
▶ Fearful or scared	▶ Confused
▶ Anxious	▶ Impatient
▶ Amused	▶ Stressed
▶ Disgusted	▶ Frustrated

## Avoiding conflicts

*Whenever you deal with people who are distressed, aggressive or who have a cognitive impairment, try to avoid confronting issues that will aggravate, frustrate, confuse or discourage the person you support.*

Conflict avoidance techniques can be employed as a way of delaying or defusing a conflict. They can be used as a temporary measure so you can gain some time to research or investigate an issue. They can also be used to change the situation where the conflict is no longer relevant and it may not be necessary to discuss the situation again.

### Conflict avoidance techniques include:

- ▶ changing the subject
- ▶ redirecting the conversation
- ▶ putting off a discussion until later, or until the person has calmed down
- ▶ not bringing up the subject in contention.

## Defuse the conflict

*Use your communication skills to resolve a conflict with a client.*

Communication is the best response to conflict. This involves sharing appropriate information, listening attentively, and communicating openly and effectively with the person.

Below are key communication skills you will need to develop and use effectively.

### **Be assertive**

Assertiveness is different from aggression. Being assertive means being self-assured and confident. If you are assertive, you are more in control of the situation. Use positive, clear language and open body language. Avoid raising your voice, but speak audibly and clearly, and be clear about your own position.

For example, if you are defusing a conflict, you may say, 'Okay, let's step back for a minute and think about this situation calmly. Then we can talk.'

### **Listen attentively**

Listening is a central part of communication. Listen to the other people involved in the conflict. Each person should be given time to share their perspective. Other people who are present should listen and pay attention to what is being said. Try not to interrupt; instead, wait for the person to finish speaking. Paraphrase and summarise what you have heard to demonstrate you were listening. For example, you may say, 'It sounds like you are frustrated with the service.' Wait for the person to clarify that this is what they meant before continuing.

### **Be empathetic**

Empathy is the ability to see a situation from another person's perspective. Be empathetic and focus on what the other person is saying.

For example, if a person appears angry, you may use empathy to try to understand why they may feel angry, rather than focusing on the fact that they are angry with you.

### **Allow time**

The cause of the conflict may not be immediately apparent, especially if the situation is emotionally heightened. Allow parties or yourself time to cool down and think before trying to verbally resolve a situation. This could involve stepping into another room for a moment or taking time to think about what happened before addressing the conflict directly.

### **Take ownership**

If you are involved in a conflict, one of the most powerful things you can do is to take ownership of your part in it. This can be extremely difficult, particularly if the conflict is very recent and emotions are high. But when you take ownership, the situation is likely to defuse, or at least change quite quickly. When you take ownership, you encourage the other party to take ownership too.

For example, if the conflict is about a misunderstanding, accept that you may have miscommunicated the information and ask if there is any way you can improve the situation.

### Encourage win-win solutions

A win-win solution is when all parties are satisfied with the outcome. Help parties to say what they hope to achieve from the situation and identify where overlaps exist. Both parties should be involved in identifying possible solutions and both should agree on the solutions before proceeding.

For example, if a colleague is complaining about having to work too much overtime, help the colleague to identify their desired outcome, and see how they meet the organisation's needs. Check with them that they are satisfied with the outcome.

## Organise referrals

*It may be necessary to refer a client to another organisation that has the skills and expertise to assist them.*

To access specialist and publicly funded services, a formal referral may be required. A referral is a formal document used to introduce a client to an organisation or practitioner to access services.

Clients may enter your service on the basis of a referral from another organisation or practitioner. You may be required to complete a referral form yourself or provide information to your supervisor so they can prepare a referral to other services for your clients.



### Information required in a referral

- ▶ the client's name, address, phone number, email address, date of birth and next of kin
- ▶ details of a representative, advocate or substitute decision-maker (if applicable)
- ▶ the reason for the referral
- ▶ brief history outlining why the client requires services from the organisation
- ▶ Medications the client takes (if the referral is for medical or other allied health services)
- ▶ level of urgency with which the client requires the service
- ▶ the referring party's details and relationship to the client
- ▶ important cultural, religious or personal requirements, such as being looked after by a female staff member
- ▶ communication needs, such as requiring an interpreter
- ▶ behavioural issues
- ▶ details of pending legal matters, such as court orders
- ▶ power of attorney arrangements for medical or financial purposes.

## Refer to an appropriate service

*When the need for a referral has been confirmed and discussed with the client, the services need to be confirmed.*

You may need to determine what services are available for your client and how accessible they are. Some organisations have a database that provides details of the services offered and the eligibility criteria. You may also need to consult your supervisor or colleagues and search online to identify a broader range of service providers.



You may be asked to access a service and advocate for your client on their behalf. People with cognitive, intellectual or visual impairments, or from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds may require additional assistance.

You may need to provide this assistance to people who are unmotivated or resistant to planning. In these situations, it may be necessary to contact the service on the client's behalf. This should be with their consent and preferably in their presence.

Clients may need a referral for a variety of reasons, but usually because another service agency or professional is better able to meet the client's needs because of their expertise or specialisation in a particular set of skills. For example, a client may require:

- ▶ medical treatment
- ▶ personal care support
- ▶ psychological counselling
- ▶ help with employment or housing.

The referral services may be found within or external to your organisation.

<b>Examples of referral services</b>	
▶ Mental health services	▶ Culturally specific services
▶ Medical services	▶ Diagnostic or imaging services
▶ Employment services	▶ Counselling services
▶ Criminal justice services	▶ Financial support services
▶ Social services	▶ Drug and alcohol support services
▶ Housing services	▶ Welfare services

**Example****Act to directly resolve conflicts or refer to appropriate personnel**

Harriet has dementia and an intellectual disability. She has lived in a disability residence with another person for 20 years. However, a recent assessment reveals that Harriet requires specialist dementia services because she has become physically aggressive and has started lashing out at staff and other residents.

A meeting is arranged with Harriet and her daughter Elisabeth, where the information is presented. The support worker and the assessment team have gathered brochures and documentation about the organisation, which include costs, location and privacy policies.

Elisabeth and Harriet argue about what each service offers and how each might meet Harriet's needs. Harriet's first preference is residential care close to where Elisabeth lives, but Elisabeth points out that the cost will exceed Harriet's pension. The team do not interfere in the obvious conflict between mother and daughter and, after some heated discussion, Harriet decides to access the public residential care facility.



## Practice task 4

### Question 1

How can conflict avoidance techniques be useful when there is a conflict with a client? Give an example with your response.

### Question 2

Give **three** examples of communication skills that can help to deal with or resolve a conflict.

### Question 3

Why is a referral sometimes necessary if a conflict cannot be resolved?

# 1E Respond to complaints in line with organisational policy

*Every person who receives a service has the right to make a complaint or report a concern about the service.*

Having this right contributes to dignity and respect. Most services have specific policies and procedures for managing complaints internally. The person making the complaint has the right to explain what they are dissatisfied with about the service they received. Depending on the service context, a support person may be present; this may be an informal advocate, a family member, friend or a formal advocate. The facts of the situation must be investigated and discussed.



The person who the complaint is made against has a right to know what is said in the complaint, and must be given the chance to present their side of the story. They may also choose to have a support person present at any interviews. This may include a fellow worker, manager or union representative.

An overview of the principles and processes for best-practice complaints management may be read at this location: <http://aspirelr.link/betterpracticeguides>.

## Avenues of complaint and appeal

*Complaints about services often refer to failure to meet a service standard.*

For many areas of community services and health, the service provider is required to be registered to provide services to the community. Registration requires the service provider to adhere to several quality standards in the delivery of services to their clients.

Service standards such as the Aged Care Quality Standards provide clear benchmarks to support a complaint. For example, Standard 6 requires that organisations have a system to resolve complaints which must be accessible, confidential, prompt and fair. It should also support all consumers to make a complaint or give feedback. Resolving complaints within the organisation can help to build the relationship between the consumer and the organisation.

For more information, go to: <http://aspirelr.link/aged-care-quality-standards>.

The Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) supports national boards that represent many areas of health professionals, such as physiotherapy, podiatry, nursing and midwifery. Each board sets the standards and policies for registered health practitioners. For more information, go to: <http://aspirelr.link/ahpra>.

Similar standards for other areas of health (such as mental health services) include:

- ▶ The National Standards for Mental Health Services 2010 – these are the ones to use when referring to ‘the Standards’. For more information, go to: <http://aspirelr.link/national-standards-mental-health>.
- ▶ The National Standards for Disability Services (NSDS). There are six revised national standards. More detail can be found here: <http://aspirelr.link/nsds>.

## Manage complaints

*You are expected to be able to read and interpret policies and procedures.*

Unlike an act of legislation, which is written into the law, a policy is developed by the organisation itself, and outlines their own particular requirements, processes and rules in keeping with legislation. Procedures are practical guidelines that staff must follow as a reference for the actions they need to perform as part of their job. They are processes that the organisation feels are the safest ways to follow laws, including health and safety laws, referrals, dealing with behaviours of concern and privacy obligations.



You need to be familiar with your organisation's policies and procedures as a requirement of your employment. If you can't locate them, ask someone to show you where they are kept.

Here is an example of the steps required for resolving a complaint from a complaints management policy document for a community services organisation.

### Complaints management

1

#### **Raise the concern or complaint**

Raise the concern or complaint with the person responsible if possible. For example, if a client is not happy with the way a staff member talks to them, or feels that the staff member has not carried out a particular service properly, speaking to the staff member is the first step in resolving the issue. If a client does not feel confident about approaching the staff member directly, the organisation will provide avenues for them to raise the concern with a manager, an advocate or through a more formal complaints procedure.

2

#### **Resolve the issue internally**

If the issue is not resolved at this level, the complaint is reviewed and taken to a higher level in the organisation. It is usually part of a manager's role to deal with complaints about operational matters and staff performance.

3

#### **Resolve the issue externally**

If the complaint cannot be resolved internally, again depending on the service context, it may be referred to an external complaints body or advocacy service.

## Seek advice to resolve concerns or issues

*There are likely to be times when you need to seek advice from someone with more experience in relation to a complaint or issue.*

You may not have the experience to deal with an issue. Discussing it with your supervisor or an expert can provide you with insight and enhance your knowledge and skills. Your supervisor may be able to provide you with information, or suggest where you can obtain the information you require. Use your researching skills to search the internet for contacts or refer to your referral list used by your organisation. You may need to refer to an expert, either from your organisation or external to it. You will need to seek permission from your supervisor as some experts charge for their advice.

People you may seek advice from are outlined below.

### **Other staff**

Your supervisor, experienced staff or staff with specialisations may be able to assist you. For example, they may be trained in behaviour management or, in cases involving non-English-speaking people, may be able to communicate with a person in their first language.

### **Consumer groups**

These are generally groups of volunteers whose aim is to provide help and support to people with particular needs. There is a range of consumer groups, including support groups for carers, people living with chronic pain, people who need financial management aid, and people who wish to access toy libraries or playgroups.

### **Clinical mental health services**

Your organisation may have a list of organisations that provide services to people with mental health needs. Clinical and community support services for young people, adults and older people can be accessed to provide high standards of practice and service.

### **Acquired brain injury services**

Acquired brain injury could be the result of an accident, alcohol or drug abuse. There are organisations that provide specialist support to people who have acquired brain injuries that identify opportunities to provide mental, emotional and physical wellbeing, and encourage independence and social inclusion.

### **Specialists**

The key specialists in community services organisations are psychologists and counsellors. These people can be critical for dealing with a potentially dangerous person, particularly where the specialist knows the person and is involved in their treatment. Many specialist medical practitioners offer different health services. Most community services organisations hold a list of these.

### **Community-based support services**

Community-based support services include aged care and support services, multicultural services, children's services, community health and wellbeing programs, housing, transport, finance and employment support services.

### **Police**

The standard procedure in the event of an emergency is to phone 000 and explain the situation to the operator, who can arrange for the appropriate response. It is good practice to have an established arrangement with the local police station. Some community services organisations have formal agreements in place with the police because they frequently have to deal with difficult people.

### **Ambulance**

If a person accessing your service is in a critical situation, ongoing communication with an ambulance in transit may be necessary. Many community services organisations have a qualified first-aid officer or nurse, who should be on hand to talk to the ambulance staff if required. Your organisation may also have an arrangement with the local hospital to provide advice over the phone.

## Example

**Respond to complaints in line with organisational policy**

The following is a procedure for responding to client complaints made by phone.

**Procedure for responding to client complaints made by phone**

Follow these steps:

- ▶ Ask for their name and write it down.
- ▶ Use their name during the conversation.
- ▶ Ask what they are making a complaint about and write down the details.
- ▶ Let them know you are listening to them.
- ▶ Once they have finished, repeat the problem back to them so they know you have heard them and to ensure the details are correct.
- ▶ Confirm you will pass the information on to a supervisor/manager who will be in contact with them shortly.
- ▶ Ask for their contact details. Repeat back the details to confirm you have accurately recorded them.
- ▶ Apologise for the problem/difficultly they have experienced.
- ▶ Confirm again you will pass the information on and that they will get a response as soon as possible.
- ▶ Before finishing the call, say, 'Thank you [name] for taking the time to contact us, [the manager] will be in touch very soon'.

**Note:** The caller may be angry or upset. Remain polite and calm at all times. At the end of the conversation, record the conversation in the complaints register, including the date and time of the call and your name.

**Practice task 5****Question 1**

Why do organisations rely on policies? Give **three** examples of policies that you would need to read and understand as part of your job.

**Question 2**

Outline the steps that may be required in a complaints management policy.

### Question 3

Give **three** examples of appropriate sources you can refer to for advice on how to resolve issues regarding the service provided to a client



## Summary

- ▶ Your interaction with a client can significantly affect their level of satisfaction, and can lay the foundation for how they interact with the service.
- ▶ Use your communication skills, including using positive body language, to develop rapport with your client.
- ▶ The client needs an explanation on the benefits of the services available so they understand it is in their best interest to participate.
- ▶ Learn to identify the communication needs of your clients and communicate to meet their individual preferences and diverse requirements.
- ▶ By using an interpreter or translator, people you support may be able to direct their own care, self-advocate, make a complaint, request or suggestion, or make their own legal, medical and financial decisions more appropriately and effectively.
- ▶ Observation, listening and questioning skills are useful for better understanding people's needs and concerns.
- ▶ If you are working as part of a multidisciplinary team it is crucial that you understand exactly what you are expected to do and your level of authority.
- ▶ Conflict avoidance techniques can be employed as a way of delaying or defusing a conflict.
- ▶ Clients may need a referral for a variety of reasons, but usually because another service agency or professional is better able to meet the client's needs.
- ▶ Every person who receives a service has the right to make a complaint or report a concern about that service.



## Learning checkpoint 1

# Develop an appropriate relationship with people accessing services

### Part A

1. Identify **three** ways you can establish rapport with your clients and make sure the service you are offering is appropriate for them and in their best interest.

2. Different clients will require different sets of communication skills. Give **three** examples of the communication needs you may identify in your clients.

3. Give **two** examples of how clients may benefit from using an interpreter.

4. Explain what might happen if a worker did not respond to a client's concerns or needs within their scope of practice. Give an example that illustrates a WHS risk.

5. Give **two** reasons why it is good practice to follow guidelines in a policy or procedure for responding to a complaint and to seek advice about problems a client is having with the service you are providing.

## Part B

Read the case study, then answer the questions that follow.

### Case study

Judy is a 60-year-old with Down syndrome and is being cared for by her mother, Nancy, who is 85 years old. Judy usually attends a day centre program five days a week, but lately the staff have noticed that her attendance has been sporadic. On the days she attends, the staff noticed that she is grumpy and not the usual friendly outgoing person she is. She has lost weight over the past few weeks, her clothes are unwashed and her hair is not brushed. The staff know that Judy and her mother often argue and this conflict has led to Judy leaving home on more than one occasion in the past.

Wendy is a carer at the centre. She knows Judy well and believes that these changes are very out of character for her. Wendy discusses her concerns with her supervisor, who suggests that she explain the situation at the upcoming team meeting. Wendy suggests an assessment may be needed to determine what factors have contributed to Judy being unhappy and the lack of personal care.

Wendy explains to the team what she knows about the relationship between the mother and daughter, but understands that the expertise in this area is outside of the scope of her job and that she will need to refer to the situation to a more experienced worker.

1. What actions did Wendy take to help resolve the issue she observed?

2. Why did Wendy identify the need to refer the case to another worker?



## Topic 2

In this topic you will learn how to:

- 2A** Respect clients as individuals

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- 2B** Respect and maintain confidentiality and privacy

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- 2C** Follow procedures for behaviours of concern and aggression

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## 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.

# 2A Respect clients as individuals

*Your organisation's customer service model should encompass the standards, policies, procedures and protocols that function together to provide high-quality services to clients.*

The standard of service must be consistent and actively employed by all workers. This way clients receive the information, support and services that meet their needs and address their concerns or issues.

Here are some standards that an organisation should aim for in its customer service model.

## Behaviours reflecting excellent service

Excellent service encompasses a range of specific behaviours, such as listening actively, communicating and explaining clearly, questioning and summarising information, showing empathy and staying positive.

## Quality of service

High-quality service occurs when an organisation treats its clients with courtesy and respect, provides information and advice to meet client needs, offers quality services, refers to others if required and handles complaints fairly, promptly and effectively.

It also includes the extent to which the organisation provides services to meet the needs of its clients by having policies and procedures in place to ensure services are delivered to clients consistently and at the desired standard.

## Effectiveness of service

Service is difficult to measure. Often clients become aware of a service when there is a problem with it. The effectiveness of services offered by an organisation can be measured through surveys and feedback sought from all stakeholders, including service users and other people who interact with the organisation, such as IT and HR departments. The organisation can use feedback results to improve their service to clients.

## Quality employees

*The standard of service an organisation provides is dependent on the quality of its staff.*

Every staff member must have the knowledge and skills needed for their role. Think about the range of skills and knowledge required to provide a consistently high level of service to clients across all of their interactions with an organisation.



### Workers

An organisation will interview and screen staff so they employ people with the skills required for their different roles.

In addition to qualifications and prior experience, it is vital that their workers have other skillsets so clients receive the best possible service. This will vary according to different roles, but may include excellent interpersonal and communication skills, thorough knowledge of the organisation and its operations, being a team player and having good decision-making abilities.

### Training

All workers should be provided with training to provide a high standard of service to clients. They need to be trained in understanding and using the organisation's policies and procedures, such as how to respond to queries and the communication methods they are expected to use. Ongoing training and professional development should be offered so the skills and knowledge of workers is always up to date and regularly refreshed.

### Best practice

Quality service can be achieved when an organisation makes a consistent, daily priority to ensure that clients are treated fairly and offered the best possible service. This means there is a commitment to quality service that is championed by every area of the organisation.

## Show courtesy and respect to all clients

*First impressions are important. Showing courtesy in all dealings with clients means being polite and showing consideration of their personal situation and circumstances.*

This requires demonstrating polite behaviour by holding open doors, and offering clients a seat and a drink of water. Being courteous also means speaking in a friendly manner that makes clients feel welcome.

Respect is more than just politeness; it is a meaningful regard for someone. Through your interactions you can show them you have a good opinion of them by demonstrating certain qualities that will develop respect and trust.

Here are some important qualities that demonstrate a respectful relationship.

### Genuineness or congruence

The worker is genuine in their interest in the person that they support. You can demonstrate this by maintaining congruence between your verbal and non-verbal messages. Your body language should match what you are saying and thinking. By being verbally and physically congruent, you can help build trust and communicate clearly.

### Unconditional positive regard

The worker respects the person by showing them unconditional positive regard. This means accepting the other person unconditionally, without judgment or disapproval. This helps the person feel increased self-regard and to value their own experiences.

**Empathy**

Empathic understanding means that the worker tries to understand the person's perspective or internal frame of reference instead of imposing their own views on them.

**Collaboration**

Be prepared to work in a collaborative relationship with others. This demonstrates to the client that the worker respects their ability to make decisions and choose options that best suit their needs. If you do not encourage people to participate in making choices about the services they require, you may disempower people and diminish their self-respect.

## Demonstrate respect in your work

*When offering a service to someone, you must listen to and respect the perspective of the other person.*

You must focus on the client's capacities and strengths in order to support good outcomes. By seeing them as individuals, you can treat them with the respect and dignity they deserve.

Here is a summary of some of the principles and practices used in community services that demonstrate respect. Many of these principles apply to the delivery of health services where the patient is involved in decisions regarding their health and encouraged to make choices.

**Person-centred approach**

Try to promote empowerment when you support individuals. This means ensuring the service meets the client's needs. People receiving support services have the authority to make decisions about their own lives. Person-centred care is about respect for people and their values, needs and individual preferences, and aims for a partnership and teamwork between the person, their family and the workers offering support. The client should be at the centre of care, and services should revolve around the client rather than around funding and/or mental health professionals.

**Consumer-directed care**

Known as CDC, consumer-directed care enables people with care needs (and their primary carer) to make decisions about their own care rather than being made by service providers. It allows for flexibility in the timing and scheduling of services. This approach to service provision and model of funding is central to people having choice and control over their own lives. It is built on the premise of person-centred care, but with the added opportunity to use their funding to get the services they need in the ways that suit them.

**Flexible service model**

This refers to how and where aged care services are delivered. Services can be provided in a range of settings (e.g. transitional care, multi-purpose services and innovative care) as well as providing support at a time that suits the person.

### Strengths-based practice

A strengths-based practice (SBP) approach to community services practices identifies and uses a person's inherent strengths and interests to assist with growth and empowerment.

SBP focuses on the client's potential, strengths and capabilities, and engages people with respect and dignity.

Strategies to promote SBP when working in the community services sector are to:

- ▶ engage the person in capacity-building
- ▶ empower the person
- ▶ recognise the person's strengths
- ▶ affirm and support the person's potential.

### Social justice and inclusion principles

Social justice refers to the equal distribution of wealth, opportunities and privileges in a society. This means that, along with social inclusion, the person should have the same access to community resources and opportunities as others in the community.

These principles recognise that people have a lot to contribute to their community. Social inclusion supports recovery through both formal connections, such as employment, and informal networks, such as participation in neighbourhood relationships.

Social exclusion can occur when people experience discrimination, unemployment, illness, poverty and family breakdown. For example, mental illness can cause people to be excluded from their community because of difficulty maintaining employment that may then lead to poverty, discrimination and stigma. Poverty can be a significant barrier to accessing social and recreational activities, or from obtaining resources or services, such as transport, that people need to engage with the community.

## Human rights

*Respecting human rights recognises the value of everyone, regardless of their background, where they live, what they look like, what they think or what they believe.*

Human rights are based on principles of equality and respect, shared across cultures, religions and philosophies. They are about treating everyone fairly and giving them the chance to make genuine choices in their daily lives. Respect for human rights underpins the values and principles of health and community services, and should always be applied. This respect allows people to contribute to society and to feel included.

Basic human rights are the right to:

- ▶ basic necessities, such as food and water
- ▶ freedom from torture and other inhumane treatment
- ▶ justice and a fair trial
- ▶ free speech
- ▶ religious freedom
- ▶ freedom from discrimination and abuse
- ▶ an adequate standard of living, education and health.



As a person working in the community or health industry, you are also a human rights worker. This means that as part of your daily work tasks, you should ensure that the human rights and needs of your clients are being met.

Here are some examples of how human rights can be integrated into work practices, procedures and policies.

### Practices

The workplace should inherently support individuals' human rights and needs. Workplace practices will observe the right to dignity, privacy, security and safety.

### Procedures

Workplace procedures are step-by-step instructions that underpin practices. For example, health and safety procedures ensure people remain safe at work.

### Policies

Policies inform procedures and practices. For example, an anti-discrimination policy ensures that all individuals are treated fairly and equally.

## Respect individual differences

*Customer service work is based on a set of core values.*

Every person has a right to:

- ▶ be treated with respect and dignity
- ▶ equal opportunity and social justice
- ▶ be as self-determining and independent as possible
- ▶ freedom from discrimination – no person should be discriminated against on the grounds of race, ethnicity, colour, age, gender, sexual preference or disability.

When providing services to people of diverse backgrounds and abilities, consider the following.

### Social background

- ▶ A person's personal circumstances may influence their behaviour.
- ▶ Treat all people equally and avoid making assumptions, either positive or negative, based on their social background.
- ▶ Recognise social disadvantage, and work to increase social justice and inclusion wherever possible.

### Cultural background

- ▶ Cultural and ethnic background may influence behaviour in various ways; for example, in expectations about gender roles and what is considered polite or impolite.
- ▶ Learn as much as possible about an individual's cultural and ethnic background so you can provide appropriate services.
- ▶ Respect all people's cultural and religious beliefs.
- ▶ Use appropriate cross-cultural communication strategies and/or interpreters when necessary.

### Physical abilities

- ▶ Recognise that most people with physical disabilities do not have intellectual disabilities as well.
- ▶ Work with a person-centred approach so the client has the opportunity to make decisions and choices about the services that best suit their needs.
- ▶ Focus on what the client can do, not on what they can't do.

### Mental abilities

- ▶ Treat people with intellectual disabilities with the same respect and courtesy as you would treat others.
- ▶ Avoid talking to people in an overly simplistic and patronising way.
- ▶ Encourage decision-making and self-determination as much as possible.

## Culturally and linguistically diverse people

*Cultural and linguistic (language) diversity contributes to the richness of Australian society.*

Australia is known as a multicultural society because there are people from a wide range of different cultural backgrounds and origins in the population. You will encounter this diversity among your clients and others in the workplace.

Legislation and associated government policies and procedures relevant to working with culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) people include federal and state anti-discrimination acts, equal opportunity acts and human rights legislation. Current legislation and policies relating to migrants and asylum seekers are also relevant.

Individual organisations will have their own policies and procedures for addressing CALD issues and needs, based on relevant legislation and government policy.



The following outlines some cultural aspects to consider:

- ▶ Ethnicity or country of origin; for example, western cultures differ in some notable ways from eastern cultures.
- ▶ Identification; for example, people who identify and are accepted as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander have certain cultural obligations.
- ▶ Geographic location – the behaviours and experiences of people in metropolitan, regional, rural and remote Australia vary.
- ▶ Religion – the customs of people from one religion vary from the customs of people who follow a different religion or no religion at all.

Here are some aspects you need to take into account when working with clients.

### Body contact or gestures

Some cultures are more tactile than others; for example, in some cultures shaking hands or touching a person's arm as you speak to them is common, but in others it is considered rude to touch people or to offer objects using your left hand.

### Eye contact

In some cultures, making eye contact is a sign of respect, while in others it is a sign of aggression.

### Proximity

People from densely populated areas may be used to smaller areas of personal space than people from sparsely populated areas, and may therefore sit or stand quite close to others; whereas people from some cultures may require a large amount of personal space to feel comfortable.

## Cultural competence

*As a worker offering service to others, you must work effectively and respectfully with clients from a range of backgrounds.*

The ability to express cultural traditions and needs is a key factor in maintaining emotional and psychological wellbeing. It is vital that clients receive services that are culturally appropriate for their holistic wellbeing.

Anti-discrimination laws and regulations make it illegal to discriminate against anyone because of their cultural, religious or racial background.

Cultural competence is more than simply accepting differences; community services organisations will have policies and procedures that require clients to be provided with culturally competent support.



### Cultural competence involves:

- ▶ genuinely valuing diversity, resulting in clients experiencing cultural and emotional safety
- ▶ factoring cultural needs into support services in a genuine and meaningful way
- ▶ not expecting clients to relinquish their cultural beliefs and practices in order to receive services
- ▶ not stereotyping people based on their cultural backgrounds
- ▶ practising self-reflection in relation to your own attitudes, biases and prejudices.

## Example

**Respecting clients as individuals**

Sophie will soon be working in a clinic with families from a range of cultural backgrounds, including refugees and Indigenous Australians. She wants to be well prepared for her appointments, so begins researching online about how to show respect for the groups she will be working with.

She finds and notes down the following information:

- ▶ Australia accepts thousands of humanitarian entrants into the country. Most are refugees fleeing war and political instability.
- ▶ Nearly all migrants will experience some sense of 'culture shock' as many things will be new and unfamiliar to them.
- ▶ Usual practices and accepted norms of behaviour will be different for other cultural groups.
- ▶ Indigenous Australians come from a range of diverse cultural groups.
- ▶ Many issues affecting Indigenous Australians have arisen from the impact of colonisation, the stolen generation, government involvement in their lives, displacement from their lands and other hardships.
- ▶ To work effectively with Indigenous people, you need to understand the impact of their history, culture and current issues. This understanding needs to be developed as the foundation on which all communication is built.



## Practice task 6

### Question 1

Give **three** examples of what an organisation can do to ensure they provide excellent service to clients.

### Question 2

Identify **three** ways you can display respect and courtesy for all clients you work with.

### Question 3

Provide **two** examples of how human rights can be applied in your work within an organisation.

### Question 4

How can cultural competence be used to build respect for individual differences among the clients?

# 2B Respect and maintain confidentiality and privacy

*Confidentiality is critical to work in the community services sector.*

In your role, you will be given access to privileged and sensitive information about the people you work with. The way you manage confidential information can have a significant impact on a client's dignity, rights and choices, opportunities, self-concept, self-esteem and wellbeing.

## Confidentiality and privacy

*Confidentiality refers to managing access to private information and data.*

Confidentiality provisions restrict an individual or organisation from using, storing and disclosing information about a person that is outside of the scope for which the information was collected. It can refer to both written and verbal information. Maintaining confidentiality is part of respecting a person's privacy and individual rights.

In practice, confidentiality means not discussing or passing on documentation containing personal information unless the person has given their consent for this to happen.

Confidentiality and privacy overlap; much of an individual's private information will be labelled confidential, and should be treated as such.

Here are the 13 National Privacy Principles that organisations must apply when collecting, using and storing people's personal information.



### National Privacy Principles

1

#### **Open and transparent management of personal information**

Organisations must manage personal information in an open and transparent way.

2

#### **Anonymity and pseudonymity**

Requires organisations to give individuals the option of not identifying themselves, or of using a pseudonym. Some exceptions apply.

3

#### **Collection of solicited personal information**

Outlines when an organisation can collect personal information that has been solicited (requested). It applies higher standards to the collection of sensitive information.

4

#### **Dealing with unsolicited personal information**

Outlines how organisations must deal with personal information that has not been requested.

5

**Notification of the collection of personal information**

Outlines when and in what circumstances an organisation that collects personal information must notify an individual of certain matters.

6

**Use or disclosure of personal information**

Outlines the circumstances in which an organisation may use or disclose the personal information it holds.

7

**Direct marketing**

An organisation may only use or disclose personal information for direct marketing purposes if certain conditions are met.

8

**Cross-border disclosure of personal information**

Outlines the steps an organisation must take to protect personal information before it is sent or communicated to someone overseas.

9

**Adoption, use or disclosure of government-related identifiers**

Outlines the limited circumstances when an organisation may adopt a government-related identifier of an individual as its own identifier, or use or disclose a government-related identifier of an individual.

10

**Quality of personal information**

An organisation must take reasonable steps to ensure the personal information it collects is accurate, up to date and complete.

11

**Security of personal information**

An organisation must take reasonable steps to protect personal information it holds from misuse, interference and loss, and from unauthorised access, modification or disclosure. An organisation has obligations to destroy or de-identify personal information in certain circumstances.

12

**Access to personal information**

Outlines an organisation's obligations when an individual requests to be given access to personal information held about them.

13

**Correction of personal information**

Outlines an organisation's obligations in relation to correcting the personal information it holds about individuals.

## Disclosure of confidential information

*There are some situations where you may be required to disclose confidential information.*

There are exceptional circumstances that enable you to disclose private information – generally when you become aware that someone may be harmed. For example, if a client is being referred for medical treatment, the hospital, specialist or doctor needs to know the client's history, allergies and personal details. You must always obtain the client's informed consent before you disclose any of this confidential information to a third party. You may need to seek advice and speak to your supervisor for instructions and advice.



**You may be required to disclose private or confidential information when:**

- ▶ compelled by law; for example, the person has a reportable disease or the information is requested by a court of law
- ▶ it is in the client’s best interest and there is a serious risk which justifies breaching confidentiality; for example, risk of suicide, self-harm or harm to others
- ▶ there is a duty to the public; for example, there is a public threat or concern
- ▶ the person has consented to the disclosure.

**Example**

**Respecting and maintaining confidentiality and privacy**

Pamela works as a personal carer in an aged care centre. Doris, who suffers from dementia, is one of her clients. Pamela assists Doris to engage more with community groups and other services to meet her needs.

Sylvia is one of an old friend of Doris and regularly comes to the centre to visit her. On one of her visits, Doris doesn't recognise Sylvia and asks her repeatedly who she is and what she's doing there. Sylvia seeks out Pamela and asks her about Doris's condition because she is concerned about her mental health. Sylvia also asks for the contact details of Doris's daughter. Pamela knows that Doris has had a falling out with her daughter and is unsure whether Doris wants anyone to contact her.

Pamela responds by explaining that she is not legally able to disclose Doris's private information, including her medical details and her family's contact details, without Doris's consent. Sylvia says she understands and that she will ask another friend who still has regular contact with Doris's daughter for contact details so she can let her know how her mother is progressing.



**Practice task 7**

**Question 1**

Give **two** examples in which disclosure of a client's private information is allowed.

**Question 2**

Give **three** examples of the legal requirements relating to privacy and the access, storage and use of private information.

# 2C Follow procedures for behaviours of concern and aggression

*As part of your role, you must be able to identify and plan appropriate responses to behaviours of concern in line with organisational policies and procedures and your own level of authority.*

Your organisation's procedures will guide you on how specific behaviours should be managed. This helps to ensure they meet duty of care and safety obligations, and address the person's behaviours and needs according to planned responses. This will assist you in your role and provide a boundary for tasks you should do and those tasks that need to be referred or are outside of your job role.



## Behaviours of concern

*Behaviours of concern are any behaviours that have the potential to cause harm or to make people feel uncomfortable, frightened or unsafe.*

Many of these behaviours are a form of communication that the client is using to convey an emotion such as anger, fear or confusion. They may be using these inappropriate forms of communication, which may involve verbal or physical aggression, because they do not know how to communicate their feelings or needs in any other way.

### Behaviours of concern may result from:

- ▶ a cognitive disability
- ▶ a mental health issue
- ▶ the effects of alcohol or other drugs
- ▶ a personality issue
- ▶ frustration and disempowerment.

## Emotional indicators

*Be observant of cues about a person's emotional state. You may be able to acknowledge and then divert these behaviours before they escalate.*

Emotional indicators that you observe in others are often behaviours of concern, or they may be your own feelings that something is not right. The following gives examples of emotional indicators that suggest the client is emotionally unstable.

### Verbal indicators

- ▶ Abusive language
- ▶ Direct threats
- ▶ Fast, non-stop talking
- ▶ Shouting/yelling

### Behavioural indicators

- ▶ Grinding teeth
- ▶ Fists clenching and unclenching
- ▶ An inability to sit still
- ▶ Uncontrolled gesturing
- ▶ Flaring nostrils

### Intuitive indicators

- ▶ Your sense that there is something wrong
- ▶ Your feeling of suspicion
- ▶ Your own fear or apprehensiveness

## Procedures for responding appropriately

*How you respond to distressed people expressing behaviours of concern can either reduce or increase the likelihood of aggressive or violent behaviour occurring.*

Before meeting with a client with known behaviours of concern, take the time to prepare by familiarising yourself with their care plan, treatment or case notes.

Always seek advice and assistance from a manager or supervisor if required, and work with the client in accordance with established policies and procedures on how you should respond. It is important to always follow your organisation's policies and procedures, including health and safety guidelines, to ensure you respond in a safe and appropriate manner that meets your duty of care obligations.



Organisational policies and procedures may include:

- ▶ operational guidelines for handling incidents and/or cases involving behaviours of concern
- ▶ staff debriefing following an incident
- ▶ incident reporting and documentation.

The following outlines guidelines for responding to behaviours of concern.

### **Stay calm**

- ▶ When you are calm you can more easily help to calm someone down who is confused, angry or upset.
- ▶ If you appear anxious, frightened, angry or upset, the person's behaviour may escalate and the situation may worsen.
- ▶ Avoid quick movements or gestures that may seem threatening to the individual.

### **Observe the situation**

- ▶ Observe the situation to help you understand what is happening.
- ▶ Avoid jumping to conclusions that may be incorrect and unfair.
- ▶ Remain objective and try to gather as much information about the situation as possible.

### **Respond appropriately**

- ▶ Past experience and knowledge of an individual will help you to respond to their individual needs and de-escalate or divert any typical behaviours of concern they exhibit.

### **Be prepared**

- ▶ Be prepared for unpredictable behaviour, particularly if you do not know the client well.
- ▶ Reassure the client you are there to help.
- ▶ Be observant and note their body language.

### **Stay safe**

- ▶ Keeping yourself, the person and others safe is a priority.
- ▶ Clear the area of other people if the behaviour is disruptive or could cause harm.
- ▶ If possible, take the individual to a quiet, safe room, but leave the door open and ensure a clear exit path.
- ▶ Make security a priority and do not approach closely until you are sure it is safe to do so.

### **Communicate**

- ▶ The way you communicate with the client will impact how calm, safe and supported they feel.
- ▶ Speak slowly and clearly to reassure the client.

### **Seek assistance**

- ▶ There are situations you will not be able to manage on your own.
- ▶ Use an alarm if necessary to obtain assistance from other staff.

## Respond to aggressive behaviour

*Some people become verbally or physically aggressive when they are frustrated with situations they perceive as beyond their control.*

A person's anger is often not a personal attack, even though it may be directed at you. It is likely to be a sign of frustration or displaced emotion about the difficulties they are facing.

Use your communication and problem-solving skills to respond appropriately and manage aggressive behaviour.

### Verbal aggression



#### How to manage verbally aggressive behaviours:

- ▶ Acknowledge the person's anger and frustration; for example, 'I can hear how upset you are.'
- ▶ Rephrase what the person is saying and identify the possible reason for their emotions; for example, 'I can see how upset you are because you feel you are not being listened to.'
- ▶ Allow the person to ventilate, get their feelings out and tell you what is upsetting them.
- ▶ Reduce stimulation by inviting the person into an office or another quiet space to talk.
- ▶ Tell the person that you are not willing to accept their verbally abusive behaviour; for example, 'When you yell at me I find it hard to listen.'
- ▶ Tell the person they are violating your personal space and to please move back if they are getting too close.
- ▶ Help the person problem-solve and deal with the core issue when they become calmer.

#### What not to do:

- ▶ Do not get into an argument or begin shouting at the person.
- ▶ Do not become hostile or punitive.
- ▶ Do not describe their behaviour or ask for reasons for it.
- ▶ Do not look away or ignore the situation.
- ▶ Do not give away your own rights to a safe workplace.

## Physical aggression



### How to manage physically aggressive behaviours:

- ▶ Prevent total frustration by quickly and calmly acknowledging the intensity of the situation; for example, 'I can see you are upset and I want to help you resolve this issue.'
- ▶ Explain to the person clearly and directly what behaviours are acceptable; for example, 'You have the right to feel this way, but damaging property is not going to help.'
- ▶ Remain in an open area where other people are present.
- ▶ Get help from others, such as your colleagues or supervisor.
- ▶ Call the police if the behaviour becomes dangerous or threatens the safety of yourself or others.

### What not to do:

- ▶ Do not ignore warning signs that the person is about to lash out.
- ▶ Do not ignore threats of violence.
- ▶ Do not threaten, dare, taunt or push the person into a corner.
- ▶ Do not touch the person.

## Report behaviours of concern

*If a person demonstrates behaviour that threatens the safety of themselves, you or others, you must respond accordingly.*

Follow your organisation's emergency procedures for seeking assistance. The following outlines how to report your observations, including who you should report to.

### Who should you report to?

You will usually report observations of behaviours of concern to:

- ▶ your immediate supervisor or manager
- ▶ the person's case manager
- ▶ a clinician, e.g. a psychologist
- ▶ an authorised representative of another support service.

If a person's behaviour is threatening anyone's personal safety, including their own, you may need to contact:

- ▶ the police
- ▶ paramedics
- ▶ a hospital.

## 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.





## Practice task 8

### Question 1

Provide **three** examples of behaviours of concern that you may notice in a client.

### Question 2

Identify **three** things that a procedure may recommend to help you manage behaviours of concern or aggressiveness in your clients.

### Question 3

Who should you report to if you encounter an aggressive client?



## Summary

- ▶ The standard of service given to clients needs to be consistent and actively employed by all workers so they receive the information, support and services that meet their needs and address their concerns or issues.
- ▶ Show courtesy in all dealings with clients by being polite and showing consideration of their personal situation and circumstances.
- ▶ As a worker providing support to others, you must ensure that human rights and needs are met.
- ▶ Clients must be provided with culturally competent support.
- ▶ How you manage confidential information can have a significant impact on a person's dignity, rights and choices, opportunities, self-concept, self-esteem and wellbeing.
- ▶ Confidentiality means not discussing an individual's personal information with others unless they have given their consent.
- ▶ Learn to identify and plan appropriate responses to behaviours of concern in line with organisational policies and procedures.
- ▶ Be observant of cues about a person's emotional state; the way you respond to distressed people can either reduce or increase the likelihood of aggressive or violent behaviour.
- ▶ A person's anger is likely to be a sign of frustration or displaced emotion about the difficulties they are facing.
- ▶ Use your communication and problem-solving skills to respond appropriately and manage aggressive behaviour.



## Learning checkpoint 2

# Act in a respectful manner

### Part A

1. Select **two** examples of an excellent standard of service provided to a client. For each of these examples explain how the client would benefit.

2. Give **two** examples of courteous actions you can take with your client.

3. Give **three** examples of actions you can take with your client that demonstrates your respect towards them.

4. Provide **two** examples of how you can demonstrate respect for human rights in your individual practice with clients.

5. What are **two** actions an organisation can take to ensure the confidentiality and privacy of clients is maintained?

6. Your client with a cognitive disability is behaving aggressively. What **three** actions can you take to manage the behaviour and meet your duty of care responsibilities and safety obligations?

## Part B

Culture derives from the country or region a person grew up in. Each culture has its own unique ways of communicating.

Here is a list of different gestures and body language people use in their communication:

- ▶ **Personal space:** Some people prefer to stand at least an arm's length away from the person they are speaking with. If someone enters into their personal space, they may feel intimidated or uncomfortable.
- ▶ **Touching:** Different cultures have different rules about who can touch whom. In most cases touching is inappropriate and, unless specifically required – such as a distressed person needing assistance – it should be avoided.
- ▶ **Eye contact:** In some cultures, making direct eye contact can be seen as disrespectful, especially if it is prolonged. This can be the case with Indigenous Australians and in some Asian cultures where direct eye contact is avoided as a sign of politeness and respect.
- ▶ **Hand gestures:** Gestures that you may consider harmless may be considered offensive in some cultures; for example, the thumbs up gesture is considered rude in Middle Eastern cultures.
- ▶ **Nodding:** In some cultures, nodding the head is used to indicate 'no'.
- ▶ **Polite conversation:** Conversation styles of different cultures may be direct or roundabout. In some cultures it is acceptable for people to talk over each other.
- ▶ **Questioning:** Direct questioning is considered impolite in some cultures and an indirect questioning style is more appropriate.

1. Select **two** of the examples listed above and explain how they differ from the communication style in your culture.



## Topic 3

In this topic you will learn how to:

- 3A Monitor your effectiveness in interpersonal interactions**

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- 3B Seek advice and address your performance**

## Evaluate your work to maintain a high standard of service

*Organisations and staff must consistently strive to provide high-quality services.*

Clients should never be disadvantaged by the service offered by an organisation. Your role is to support the client to experience optimal quality of life, underpinned by empowerment, independence and self-determination.

Organisations across the community and health services industries must implement effective protocols and processes to monitor and evaluate the work performance of their staff. These processes will help to identify the strengths of staff and areas in need of improvement. Staff can be supported to build on their strengths and develop their areas of professional interest.

# 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.

**Informal methods of obtaining feedback include:**

- ▶ conversations with a supervisor or colleague about your performance
- ▶ seeking clarification from your clients that they understand you and what you have said
- ▶ observing the effect your conversation has on your clients by reading their body language and reactions
- ▶ checking if your instructions were carried out correctly.

## Evaluate and monitor your performance

*There are a number of ways to identify and monitor the effectiveness of your interactions with clients.*

Here are some ways you can monitor your performance.

### Self-reflection



Self-reflection involves reflecting on or thinking about your actions and motives. Professional self-reflection is a form of self-evaluation.

The following are examples of self-reflection:

- ▶ Think about how you handled a complex or difficult situation. Objectively attempt to understand why you took a certain course of action and whether this was the best action in the circumstances.
- ▶ Keep a journal to make notes about key events and your responses to them, including your emotional responses.
- ▶ Consciously acknowledge your own discomfort in relation to specific professional situations. These may include times when you experienced a lack of confidence, fear or anxiety. Such emotions may indicate that you need additional support or skill development in a specific area.

### Peer review



You may seek review from your peers – those who are at a similar level to you in the organisation – or from higher management.

Peer review may involve discussion about workplace situations or dilemmas, including difficulties with staffing or supervisory matters. Peers may also review any case management practices you have implemented.

## Performance appraisals



A 360-degree appraisal is a performance appraisal in which managers, peers and staff who report to you anonymously provide their feedback in a structured and formal manner as part of a performance appraisal.

The feedback is analysed and discussed with you to identify strengths and areas in need of development.

## Clinical supervision



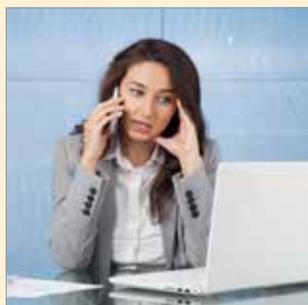
You may need to participate in a clinical supervision session with an experienced practitioner or senior manager. The session provides feedback to help analyse the level of your supervisory skills.

## Formal complaints



Analysing formal complaints lodged by staff, clients, clients' families and other stakeholders can provide an effective mechanism for self-evaluation. It is important to examine and analyse complaints carefully and objectively.

## Critical incidents



If you have been involved in a critical incident, the incident must be investigated to determine what went wrong and who contributed to it. Incident reports provide objective information you can use to evaluate your own performance.

## Example

**Monitor your effectiveness in interpersonal interactions**

Sally recently started working for the local council as an allied health worker. Her job is to coordinate the health services required to allow some elderly clients to remain living in their homes. Sally must make sure the people under her care are provided with all the support they need, such as medical appointments, physiotherapy, occupational therapy and podiatry appointments. Sometimes she helps out her clients with domestic tasks, such as ensuring personal items are within reach.



Sally enjoys developing relationships with her clients and feels she has a good understanding of their needs. A recent feedback survey she conducted indicated that her clients were very happy with her services. However, it became clear from some comments that some of them saw Sally as a friend rather than as a support worker.

After some reflection and a meeting with her manager, Sally identified that while her interpersonal relationships are excellent, she has changed the expectations of her clients as to her role by providing services that are not in her job description. Sally wants to do a good job and provide exemplary service, but she knows she has been overstepping her role, resulting in less time to complete her other tasks. Her manager advises Sally not to overstep her professional boundaries and reminds her that although she is capable, she does not have the training or practical experience to complete these tasks safely, which are outside the organisation's policies and procedures.

**Practice task 9****Question 1**

Give **three** examples of ways you can collect information from your clients about your effectiveness in interpersonal interactions with them.

**Question 2**

Provide **three** examples of self-reflection that can be used to monitor the effectiveness of your interactions with clients.

# 3B Seek advice and address your performance

*Self-development is an organisational requirement.*

Everyone providing a service should do their best to make improvements where they can. To continuously improve your own performance, regularly seek advice and assistance from your supervisor, colleagues and support groups.

The advice you seek may be about your role as a worker and may relate to your skills and abilities to deal with a client's complex questions or issues. For example, you may need help and advice on dealing with a client with complex health needs or someone who is aggressive.



When discussing concerns or problems relating to a client, you must use your discretion and maintain confidentiality. It is not appropriate to make notes about a person's behaviour in front of them, or to speak about a person's needs in front of other service users or colleagues who do not require the information.

Staff meetings, mentoring sessions and supervision opportunities are all good places where you can debrief and discuss any issues or concerns you may have. It is also helpful to have an approachable supervisor who encourages you to share your concerns, and to self-evaluate and reflect on improvements and areas of concern. Plan to meet regularly with your supervisor to discuss how you handled certain situations. Remember, it's important to be honest when self-evaluating – especially with yourself.

The information you receive can be used to reflect and improve your work practices.

## Ask for support and assistance

*Even the most experienced worker will be confronted with situations that are beyond their scope of practice or area of expertise.*

Expert advice can be sought from supervisors or colleagues, particularly in relation to a difficult issue or to review the actions you took. This can be useful for accessing information from more experienced and skilled professionals who can offer insight into the ways you could improve your handling of a situation.

Depending on the complexity and urgency of the situation, the issue or difficulty may need to be escalated to upper management or referred to experts. The following are examples of situations when your manager may escalate a situation to their manager or seek specialised advice.

### **Disciplinary action is required**

- ▶ If a worker requires disciplinary action to be taken, the situation may need to be referred to the human resources (HR) department and/or senior management.
- ▶ A referral to the Fair Work Commission or the Fair Work Ombudsman may be required.

### **Personal difficulties affecting work performance**

- ▶ Personal difficulties may require referral to the HR department and/or senior management.
- ▶ The worker may need to be referred to the employee assistance program.

### **Cultural conflict**

- ▶ The matter may require escalation to the HR department and/or senior management.
- ▶ The matter may need to be referred to cultural mediators.
- ▶ Consultation may be required with representatives from cultural or ethno-specific community groups.

### **Worker injured while completing their duties**

- ▶ You may need to escalate the issue and refer to relevant authorities (such as police or emergency personnel).
- ▶ The worker may need to be referred to the relevant workers' compensation authority.
- ▶ The worker may need to be referred to the return to work coordinator.

### **Worker requires training or professional development**

- ▶ If urgent training is required, you may need to escalate the issue and refer to in-service training or refresher training.
- ▶ The worker may need to be referred to the HR department and/or senior management.

### **Employee conflict**

- ▶ If the issue is urgent, you may need to escalate it and refer to the HR department and senior management.
- ▶ The employees involved may need to be referred to an external mediator.
- ▶ The employees involved may need to be referred to legal services or to the Fair Work Commission.

## Improvements based on feedback

*Think of feedback as a positive way to grow and develop.*

If your supervisor provides you with feedback, reflect on it and try to make improvements where you can. Your role is to ensure the best service outcomes for your clients, and this will be enhanced with improved skills and knowledge to perform your job well.

You may receive feedback as part of a performance review process where your manager or supervisor can discuss information about how they think you could improve your performance. You may also receive feedback from people using your services, family members, advocates, network members or other workers within your organisation.



Reflect on what you do well and how you may improve in the future. This information outlines how you can improve in particular aspects of your job, your interactions and work with clients and colleagues, and your skills in communicating and supporting clients.

Here are some areas of your performance that may require improvement.

### Problem-solving

Community and health services work presents many opportunities to use problem-solving skills. This includes resolving issues related to work tasks, dealing with situations, interactions with colleagues, and time and resource management. Being good at problem-solving takes time and practice, and there are some specific skills that can assist you in becoming a better problem-solver. These include using technology and adopting clear thinking practices.

### Communication

You will need to communicate with different groups of people in varying contexts. You will often have time to plan and consider your communication in advance. However, in some situations you need to respond rapidly, but still ensure your communication is precise, clear and well received. Good communication is a skill that can be learnt and developed over time.

### Technical skills

Your day-to-day tasks often depend on technical skills. Depending on your level of responsibility, technical skills may include those related to the treatment care and support of clients, as well as how you work with or lead groups of people. Technical skills need to stay current and sometimes require regular updates, particularly in relation to emergency management.

### People-focused skills

In order to offer a high degree of customer service, you need the skills to work directly with people. It takes skill and knowledge to be able to think in a way that places the person you are providing services to at the centre of your focus, and ensures you operate from a person-centred viewpoint. Ongoing professional learning, reading, attendance at training sessions and conferences, mentoring and participating in networks all help to build people-focused skills.

## Adjust your work in response to areas in need of improvement

*Once self-evaluation and areas in need of improvement have been identified, measures can be developed to meet these gaps in professional and practical skills.*

Practise incorporating the advice you have been given. If a particular area of improvement is identified, you can develop your skills by seeking opportunities to:

- ▶ pair with a mentor or experienced supervisor
- ▶ access off-site or on-site training
- ▶ join networks of other workers in your area
- ▶ access support from a manager or supervisor.

### Example

#### Seek advice and address your performance

Rhonda manages up to four clients at one time in a local community services organisation. She is hard-working and dedicated to her job.

Rhonda usually enjoys the many challenges of her role, but lately she is starting to feel stressed. She feels like she has too much work to do and is struggling to get everything done. In the past month, two clients have lodged complaints against her claiming she did not follow up on matters she had promised to take care of.



Rhonda often works late so that she doesn't fall behind, but with the extra workload she is starting to feel overloaded. She is looking forward to her scheduled session with her manager, Peter, later that afternoon.

Rhonda shares her concerns with Peter, who asks her to evaluate what is happening and to interpret what the recent events mean. Rhonda begins to think objectively about how she has been managing her time. She acknowledges that she could be seeking help from her colleagues and referring her client with more complex needs to a specialist service able to deal with difficult behaviours. Rhonda tells Peter she will review this.

After the supervision session, Rhonda's self-reflection leads her to realise that she needs to aim to work more reasonable hours. She is feeling better about her situation and a lot less stressed, and feels confident she will be able to address all the issues she identified.



## Practice task 10

### Question 1

Give **two** reasons why you should seek advice from supervisors and colleagues to enhance your own performance.

### Question 2

Provide **three** examples of different ways you can incorporate the advice you have been given and develop your skills.

### Question 3

Explain why people-focused skills are important for maintaining a high standard of service.



## 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.



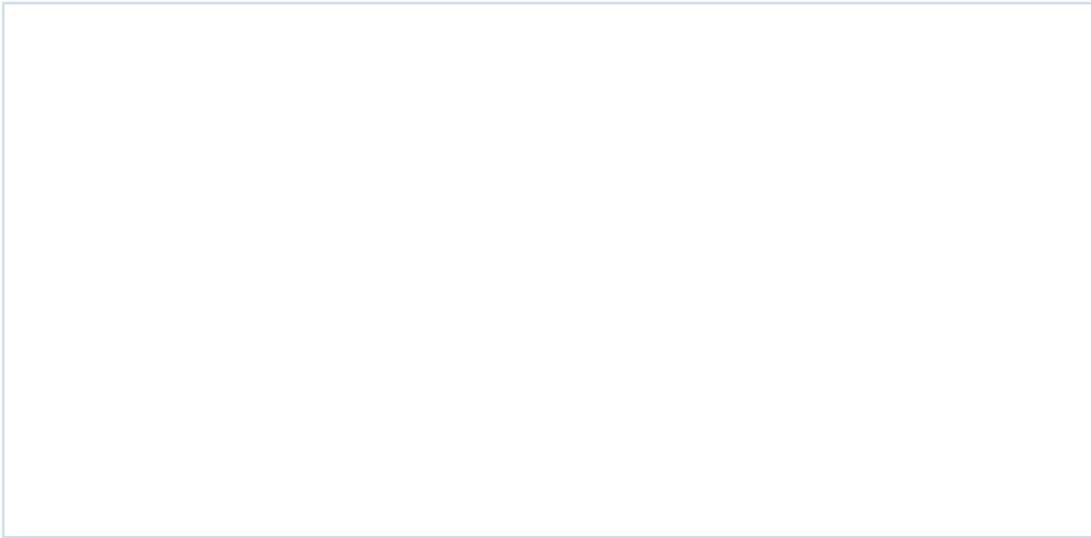
## Learning checkpoint 3

# Evaluate your work to maintain a high standard of service

1. Outline both a formal and an informal method of monitoring and evaluating your effectiveness as a support worker.

2. How can a health and safety incident involving a client be used to help you evaluate your performance?

3. Give **three** examples of adjustments you could make to your work after receiving advice on areas of your work that could be improved.



4. How could training assist you in meeting any gaps in professional and practical skills?

