



Australian Government

Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations

CHCTC403A Provide telephone counselling in crisis situations

Release: 1

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Modification History

Not Applicable

Unit Descriptor

Descriptor

This unit describes the knowledge and skills required by telephone counsellors in those calls where they are required to apply crisis management skills

It includes frameworks for crisis containment, risk management, appropriate consultation and referral

Application of the Unit

Application

This unit of competency is applied in the context of providing telephone counselling services

Licensing/Regulatory Information

Not Applicable

Pre-Requisites

Not Applicable

Employability Skills Information

Employability Skills

This unit contains Employability Skills

Elements and Performance Criteria Pre-Content

Elements define the essential outcomes of a unit of competency.

The Performance Criteria specify the level of performance required to demonstrate achievement of the Element. Terms in italics are elaborated in the Range Statement.

Elements and Performance Criteria

ELEMENT

1. Identify when to apply *crisis* intervention

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

1.1 Be alert to the need for a crisis assessment and response by evidence of one or more of the following in the client:

- disabling levels of distress
- difficulty performing daily tasks
- difficulty fulfilling usual roles and responsibilities
- possible threats to life or safety

1.2 Apply checklists to determine client response as appropriate

ELEMENT**PERFORMANCE CRITERIA****2. Apply crisis intervention strategies**

- 2.1 Establish rapport and an active working relationship
- 2.2 Affirm help-seeking and instil realistic hope for managing the current crisis
- 2.3 Focus on how past or current problems are affecting present feelings, thoughts and behaviours
- 2.4 Balance the exploration and containment of powerful feelings and disabling thoughts
- 2.5 Balance adoption of a collaborative and directive helping stance according to the client's current capacity for decision-making and coping
- 2.6 Provide structure and strategies for dealing with the immediate crisis through enabling thoughts and behaviours
- 2.7 Identify and decide on short-term coping steps
- 2.8 Provide options for links to further help, actively facilitating these where necessary

3. Apply risk assessment strategies and implement risk management

- 3.1 Demonstrate vigilance about potential threats to life or safety in managing every crisis situation
- 3.2 Practise direct inquiry about thoughts of self-harm or harming others when there are slightest grounds for concern
- 3.3 Practise direct enquiry about possible exposure to harm from others when there are slightest grounds for concern
- 3.4 Employ risk assessment and risk management strategies whenever needed
- 3.5 Actively facilitate emergency interventions where assessed to be necessary to protect life or safety

Required Skills and Knowledge

REQUIRED SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE

This describes the essential skills and knowledge and their level required for this unit.

Essential knowledge:

The candidate must be able to demonstrate essential knowledge required to effectively do the task outlined in elements and performance criteria of this unit, manage the task and manage contingencies in the context of the identified work role

These include knowledge of:

- Principles and practice of crisis intervention, including relevant ethical guidelines and policy requirements which affect duty of care
- Applications of crisis intervention principles and practices to the telephone counselling medium
- Principles and practices of suicide intervention - particularly the tasks of suicide risk assessment and risk management associated with suicide first aid
- Procedures for facilitating referrals and emergency interventions
- The specific requirements of crisis intervention and how they relate to and complement general telephone counselling
- Knowledge of personal attitudes, beliefs and values and how these might facilitate or impede effective crisis interventions
- General awareness of how mental health issues may impact on crisis intervention
- Principles of self care and support-seeking relevant to involvement in crisis intervention work

Essential skills:

It is critical that the candidate demonstrate the ability to:

- Demonstrate appropriate use of self and accessing appropriate support in providing counselling service in times of crisis so duty of care and safety of client is assured

In addition, the candidate must be able to effectively do the task outlined in elements and performance criteria of this unit, manage the task and manage contingencies in the context of the identified work role

These include the ability to:

REQUIRED SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE

- Demonstrate application of skills in:
 - competent counselling skills
 - effective general crisis intervention skills
 - suicide risk recognition, assessment, and management (suicide first aid)
 - consulting appropriately
 - facilitating links with higher levels of care
 - self-monitoring and self care
 - seeking and integrating supervisory support
- Use relevant workplace technology safely and effectively in line with occupational health and safety (OHS) guidelines
- Maintain documentation as required, including effective use of relevant information technology in line with OHS guidelines

Evidence Guide

EVIDENCE GUIDE

The evidence guide provides advice on assessment and must be read in conjunction with the Performance Criteria, Required Skills and Knowledge, the Range Statement and the Assessment Guidelines for this Training Package.

Critical aspects for assessment and evidence required to demonstrate this unit of competency:

- The individual being assessed must provide evidence of specified essential knowledge as well as skills
- Assessment must occur in the workplace or similar environment conducive to professional work

EVIDENCE GUIDE

- Access and equity considerations:*
- All workers in community services should be aware of access, equity and human rights issues in relation to their own area of work
 - All workers should develop their ability to work in a culturally diverse environment
 - In recognition of particular issues facing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, workers should be aware of cultural, historical and current issues impacting on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
 - Assessors and trainers must take into account relevant access and equity issues, in particular relating to factors impacting on Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander clients and communities
- Context of and specific resources for assessment:*
- This unit can be assessed independently, however holistic assessment practice with other community services units of competency is encouraged
 - Resources for training in and assessment of crisis intervention competencies needs to be available to:
 - provide initial and ongoing training
 - ensure baseline knowledge and skills following basic training
 - observe implementation of these competencies in actual counselling situations and simulated role plays
 - facilitate learning through reflection on practice and integration of supervisory feedback

EVIDENCE GUIDE

Method of assessment:

- Consistent performance and development would be expected to be demonstrated involving a combination of oral and written media while also featuring simulated and actual practice
- Examples might include:
 - group exercises
 - written (e.g. journal) and verbal responses to questioning
 - simulated exercises
 - observation of practice on telephone shifts
 - response to and integration of supervisory feedback

Co-requisites

This unit must be assessed in conjunction with related units:

- CHCTC301B Deliver a service consistent with the organisation's mission and values
- CHCTC302A Provide client-centred telephone counselling

Range Statement

RANGE STATEMENT

The Range Statement relates to the unit of competency as a whole. It allows for different work environments and situations that may affect performance. Add any essential operating conditions that may be present with training and assessment depending on the work situation, needs of the candidate, accessibility of the item, and local industry and regional contexts.

RANGE STATEMENT

A crisis is any situation where:

- Internal distress over impactful events, painful transitions or problems in living has escalated to the point where it is disabling a person's ability to cope and function
- The person in crisis may be at risk of self-injury or suicide and may sometimes pose a threat to others
- The focus of crisis intervention is constructive management of the immediate situation
- Its primary goals are to promote safety, reduce distress and restore functioning rather than deal with underlying issues or explore long-term strategies for addressing them
- Crisis intervention always involves vigilance about potential threats to life and safety and development of a safety plan to address any imminent danger assessed to be present
- Crisis intervention complements other strategies adopted by the caregiver or counsellor and focuses on stabilising the current situation and providing a bridge to further help
- Once the immediate crisis has been addressed, other strategies designed to provide counselling, treatment care or support can be commenced or resumed

General context of work:

- Counsellors have received training in the principles and practice of crisis intervention, including risk management and suicide first aid
- Work is performed in a setting where ongoing supervision is provided within a team environment
- Supervision on 24-hour call may be accessed during a call should counsellors require it and must be accessed in certain mandated situations such as a potential suicide in progress
- Work will be assessed in accordance with professional standards of care commensurate with the telephone counselling role
- Enterprise requirements and OHS legislation shall be observed

RANGE STATEMENT

Working independently must include:

- Counsellors must demonstrate the capacity to work competently and independently according to the principles of their training and within the general context of the supervisory relationship noted above
- They shall be accountable for their own professional conduct and practice including:
 - carrying out assigned tasks
 - working effectively under the pressure of crisis situations
 - maintaining the quality of services to the organisations callers

Internal referral systems may include:

- Training
- Organisations referral database and folders
- Supervisory and on call network
- Support personnel
- Literature - including books and brochures

Unit Sector(s)

Not Applicable