**Australian Government**

**Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations**

# CHCFAM417B Identify and use strengths-based practice

**Release: 1**

**INDUSTRY SKILLS COUNCILS**
Creating Australia's Future

# CHCFAM417B Identify and use strengths-based practice

# Modification History

Not Applicable

# Unit Descriptor

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|---|---|
| **Unit Descriptor** | This unit of competency describes the skills and knowledge required to work with a strengths-based approach when working in the area of relationship and family work |

# Application of the Unit

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| **Application** | This unit of competency applies to practitioners working in the relationship education sector |

# 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 | PERFORMANCE CRITERIA |
|---|---|
| 1. Apply principles of strengths-based practice when working with clients | 1.1    Apply understanding of the *principles of strengths-based practice* in working with clients |
| | 1.2    Demonstrate recognition of *power issues* involved in 'working with' clients |
| | 1.3    Apply understanding of how change occurs when using strengths-based approaches and potential constraints to these changes |
| | 1.4    Reflect on own practice and how to use a strengths-based approach |
| 2. Use strengths-based tools to explore issues | 2.1    Identify a range of *strengths-based tools* |
| | 2.2    Identify own strengths and ability to use strengths-based tools effectively |
| | 2.3    Develop a safe and supportive environment to use the strengths-based tools effectively |

| ELEMENT | PERFORMANCE CRITERIA |
|---|---|
| 3. Use strengths-based approaches in an education context when working with clients including adults, parents, young people and children | 3.1 Work with clients to clearly identify issues and develop their understanding of strengths-based practice<br><br>3.2 Assist clients to establish a picture of the future using tools from strengths-based practice including the 'miracle question'<br><br>3.3 Assist clients to identify strengths, resources and growth areas they possess in order to work toward the picture of the future<br><br>3.4 Assist clients to identify strengths and resources they require from others<br><br>3.5 Assist clients to identify the first steps for them to take toward their picture of the future<br><br>3.6 Identify and record responsible party, timeframe and who is responsible for first steps |
| 4. Deal effectively with difficult issues using a strengths perspective | 4.1 Use a strengths-based approach when working with mandated and voluntary clients who have difficult issues<br><br>4.2 Use the *principle of 'power with'* when working with clients<br><br>4.3 Use the *engagement triangle* when dealing with difficult issues |

| ELEMENT | PERFORMANCE CRITERIA |
|---|---|
| 5.  Collaboratively review progress toward the client's picture of the future | 5.1     Assist clients to review their progress towards the picture of the future identifying exceptions and alternative stories |
| | 5.2     Assist clients to identify and celebrate their successes in moving toward goals |
| | 5.3     Assist clients to identify what is getting in the way of movement towards their goals |
| | 5.4     Assist clients to make adjustments to their picture of the future if needed |
| | 5.5     Assist clients to identify strengths and resources they have to work toward their picture of the future |
| | 5.6     Assist clients to identify strengths and resources they require from others |
| | 5.7     Assist clients to identify continuing steps for them to take toward their picture of the future |

# 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:

- Good detailed knowledge of principles of strengths-based practice when working with clients
- Good understanding of the appropriate application of strengths-based tools
- Knowledge of micro-skills used in setting up a learning relationship with a client
- Knowledge of own strengths and growth areas
- Self-awareness including awareness of own beliefs, values and experiences which can impact on work practice
- The impact of 'power' when working with service users
- The power and impact of language
- A good general knowledge and understanding of the issues affecting service users
- Knowledge and application of ethical behaviour and legal frameworks for relationship work

*Essential skills*:

It is critical that the candidate demonstrate the ability to:

- Apply principles of strengths-based practice when working with clients
- Identify, respect and foster client strengths
- Accept client's own world view
- Reflect positive attitudes about people's dignity, capacities, rights, uniqueness and commonalities
- Work consultatively and collaboratively with clients to identify realistic future goals and visions and to effect changes toward these
- Elicit client strengths to put towards possibilities for change
- Motivate supervisees to effect changes in their lives through the fostering of their strengths

## REQUIRED SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE

- Work constructively to complement people's existing strengths and assist them with solution building approaches rather than 'problem solving' approaches
- Acknowledge and address power imbalances between workers, organisations and clients
- Recognise and address dynamics inherent in organisation practices and structures that are incongruent with strengths-based principles and processes
- Use open, honest, effective and appropriate communication which is at all times respectful and promotes a partnership approach to working with clients based on consultation, collaboration and mutual learning
- Identify and address social, personal, cultural and structural constraints to people's growth
- Identify and address potential barriers to accessing programs and achieving identified outcomes including access to child care, transport, cultural, linguistic, religious, disability, language, literacy and numeracy or learning differences
- Recognise and remain within bounds of own practice

*continued ...*

*Essential skills* (*contd*):

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:

- Understand the limitations and boundaries of the practitioner's role within the context of their responsibilities within their agency and manage own and others expectations in relation to these
- Maintain awareness of self and how experiences, biases, values and beliefs of self and significant others in own life may impact on ability to work effectively with various client groups
- Identify and address social, personal, cultural and structural constraints to people's growth
- Work inclusively with the whole client, considering the full range of possible influences in their lives including:
    - personality, culture, language, religion, age, gender, family of origin, education levels, learning abilities, economic situation, social context, health, disabilities and issues
    - the interplay and dynamics of each of the above
    - ability to respond respectfully to the whole person demonstrating inclusive practice through competently valuing each and every person as a whole unique individual

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# 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.

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| *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 to apply strengths-based practice when working with clients<br><br>• Evidence of competency in this unit will need to be assessed over a period of time in order to gather evidence of performance<br><br>• This will include contexts applicable to the work environment, such as actual or simulated workplace situations involving a combination of direct, indirect and supplementary forms of evidence<br><br>• Assessment must confirm sufficient ability to apply a strengths-based approach to working with clients |
| *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<br><br>• All workers should develop their ability to work in a culturally diverse environment<br><br>• 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<br><br>• 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 |

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**EVIDENCE GUIDE**

*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
- Resource requirements for assessment include access to:
    - a relevant workplace or an appropriately simulated environment where assessment may take place

*Method of assessment*:

- Evidence for assessment of competence may be gathered by appropriate combination of the following:
    - demonstration of competency within the working environment in delivering services to clients using a strengths-based approach
    - realistic simulations, projects, previous relevant experience or oral questioning on 'what if?' scenarios
    - observation of processes and procedures, oral and/or written questions on essential knowledge and skills and consideration of required attitudes
    - where performance is not directly observed and/or is required to be demonstrated over a period of time and/or in a number of locations, any evidence should be authenticated by colleagues, supervisors, clients or other appropriate persons
- The assessment environment should not disadvantage the candidate
- Assessment practices should take into account any relevant language or cultural issues related to Aboriginality, gender or language barriers other than English
- Where the candidate has a disability, reasonable adjustment may be applied during assessment
- Language and literacy demands of the assessment task should not be higher than those of the work role

# Range Statement

**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.

| *Principles of strengths-based practice must include*: | • Respect for people's dignity, uniqueness and rights |
| | • Self determination and empowerment |
| | • Recognition and use of strengths (skills, capacities, knowledge, resources, information, hopes and dreams) |
| | • Mutual learning between service user and professional |
| | • Understanding that people are experts in their own lives |
| | • Understanding that the issue is the problem, the person is not the problem |
| *Power issues may include*: | • Where and when practitioners meet with clients and how this is determined |
| | • Who 'owns' records of the work |
| | • Who determines what issues will be worked on |
| | • Who determines timeframes for working on issues |

## RANGE STATEMENT

*Strengths-based tools may include*:

- **Miracle questions** - 'Let's imagine.....You go to bed tonight and while you are asleep a miracle happens ....When you wake up the problem has less effect on your life. On a scale of 0 to 5, how much is the problem affecting your life? How will you know things have improved? What will be different? What will others notice is different?'
- Scaling questions assists professionals and service users to identify the problem or issue, set achievable goals, have a starting point for change, notice what is already working well, identify strengths and exceptions, measure progress and allow for the introduction of metaphors
- Vision and goal setting assists professionals and clients to identify where the service provider would like to move toward and how they can effect this change
- Strength focuses cards assists professionals and clients to identify strengths or issues
- Photo-language cards, objects and images assists professionals and service users to identify and represent significant feelings or issues
- Previous success stories assists professionals and clients to identify ways that people have successfully dealt with similar problems
- Relationship questions assists professionals and clients to identify and explore a problem by shifting the focus to how key relationships in the person's life view the situation for example, 'What would your best friend (mother) say? Or 'How would your family tell there was a miracle and your problem is solved?'
- Letter writing involves the documentation of change and learning in a personal style of writing a letter to the other person recognising changes in learning that you have observed in them
- The five column approach to problem solving is a table that enables professionals and clients to have a guide to explore problems in different ways that build on existing strengths. The guiding questions are: What is the issue? Establish a picture of the future using the miracle question. What strengths and resources do you have to put towards the picture of the future? What strengths and resources do you need from others? What are the first steps to take towards the picture of the future? Who needs to do what and

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## RANGE STATEMENT

|  | when? |
| --- | --- |
| *Principle of 'power with' may include*: | • A genuine equal partnership with the client<br>• Mutual respect and care demonstrated at all times and evident in language, processes and outcomes |
| *The engagement triangle may include*: | • Establishment of relevance to the client's needs<br>• Establishment of the professional's faith in the client's ability to commit, choose, care, change, create, connect and communicate<br>• Establishment of an honest and direct way of communication between the professional and the client |

# Unit Sector(s)

Not Applicable