



**Australian Government**

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

# **HLTCOM404C Communicate effectively with clients**

**Release: 1**

## **HLTCOM404C Communicate effectively with clients**

### **Modification History**

Not Applicable

### **Unit Descriptor**

#### **Descriptor**

This unit covers the skills required by practitioners to establish and maintain effective communication with the client throughout all interactions and provide basic counselling as required and as appropriate to facilitate the treatment or health service being provided

### **Application of the Unit**

#### **Application**

This unit applies to work in a range of health settings where health services are provided with direct client contact involved

Application of this unit should be contextualised to reflect any specific workplace requirements, issues and practices

### **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. Establish professional relationship with the client

### PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

- 1.1 Evaluate practice to maintain a high standard of client service
- 1.2 Identify and respond to *special needs* of clients
- 1.3 Use *effective communication* with clients
- 1.4 Encourage clients to voice queries and/or fears and address these appropriately
- 1.5 Take into consideration *cultural and personal factors* when consulting or interacting with clients
- 1.6 Exercise discretion and confidentiality appropriately, outlining and explaining to clients boundaries of confidentiality as required
- 1.7 Define and apply *boundaries* of the practitioner/client relationship

**ELEMENT****PERFORMANCE CRITERIA**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 2. Provide effective response to client enquiries                   | 2.1 Present <i>relevant information</i> clearly and comprehensively and in sufficient detail to meet the needs of the enquirer                   |
|   | 2.2 Select appropriate <i>modes of communication</i> to suit the enquiry and the purpose and context of the enquiry                              |
|   | 2.3 Identify and acknowledge <i>enquirer's expectations</i>  |
|   | 2.4 Discuss any unresolved concerns or issues with enquirers   |
|   | 2.5 Make appointments for clients according to workplace guidelines  |
| 3. Respond effectively to difficult or challenging behaviour        | 3.1 Plan responses to difficult or challenging behaviour and <i>manage appropriately</i>   |
|   | 3.2 Maintain professional integrity at all times   |
| 4. Use basic counselling skills as required to facilitate treatment | 4.1 Determine <i>need for basic counselling</i>  |
|   | 4.2 Provide <i>basic counselling</i> to facilitate treatment/ services when necessary and in accordance with <i>practice specific guidelines</i> |
|   | 4.3 Record details of services provided according to <i>workplace guidelines</i>   |

## 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

This includes knowledge of:

- Basic counselling techniques
- Basic information on counselling styles and theories
- Basic information on human psychological development and needs
- Basic information on human psychopathologies including personality disorders
- Effective communication strategies
- Legal and ethical issues relating to practitioner-client relations
- Local professional counselling resources
- Organisation policies, procedures and guidelines
- Principles and practices of services provided
- Various modes of communication appropriate to therapeutic practice

#### *Essential skills:*

It is critical that the candidate demonstrate the ability 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

This includes the ability to:

- Appropriately prepare and present information for a range of enquiries
- Assess the need for professional counselling
- Communicate effectively including:
  - active listening
  - clarify and ascertain correct meanings from communication
  - clear, concise and correct written and verbal communication
  - communicate on a one-to-one and group basis

## REQUIRED SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE

- correct presentation of correspondence
- documentation and record keeping
- establish rapport
- passing on verbal and written messages
- use correct grammar, spelling and punctuation
- Elicit information
- Follow workplace guidelines
- Handle difficult situations
- Make appointments to meet a range of client needs in accordance with established business practice
- Respond appropriately to a range of clients in a range of situations
- Respond appropriately to special needs
- Use basic counselling skills to facilitate various goals and to recognise the limitations of own counselling skills
- Seek assistance if necessary

## 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 competency unit:*

- The individual being assessed must provide evidence of specified essential knowledge as well as skills
- This unit is most appropriately assessed in the workplace or in a simulated workplace and under the normal range of work conditions
- Assessment may be mostly practical and examples covering a range of situations relevant to health services provided in the workplace
- Evidence of workplace performance over time must be obtained to inform a judgement of competence
- Assessment of this unit should be conducted concurrently with assessment of units relating to client assessment and/or provision of health

## EVIDENCE GUIDE

services/treatments

- Assessment of sole practitioners must include a range of clinical situations and different client groups covering at minimum, age, culture and gender
- Assessment of sole practitioners must consider their unique workplace context, including:
  - interaction with others in the broader professional community as part of the sole practitioner's workplace
  - scope of practice as detailed in the qualification and component competency units
  - holistic/integrated assessment including:
    - working within the practice framework
    - performing a health assessment
    - assessing the client
    - planning treatment
    - providing treatment

- Access and equity considerations:*
- All workers in the health industry should be aware of access and equity 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 health issues facing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, workers should be aware of cultural, historical and current issues impacting on health of 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 health of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander clients and communities

## 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.

*Special needs may include:*

- Disability
- Communication difficulties
- Language difficulties
- Presence of children/spouse
- Need for uninterrupted privacy
- Need for communication aids

*Effective communication includes:*

- Active listening
- Appropriate language
- Appropriate communication aids
- Appropriate modes of communication
- Appropriate demeanour and body language
- Appropriate tone and presentation
- Observation
- Questioning, clarifying, advising
- Providing appropriate and accurate information
- Honesty and integrity

*Cultural and personal factors may include:*

- Religious background
- Racial background
- Gender
- Age
- Dis/ability
- Family or social factors



## RANGE STATEMENT

*Boundaries may refer to:*

- Confidentiality
- Privacy
- Respect
- Acknowledgement of individual needs
- Appropriate sexual boundaries
- Appropriate physical boundaries
- Use of enquiry only as appropriate and necessary
- Practitioner awareness of possibilities of client transference
- Practitioner staying within area of expertise

*Relevant information may include:*

- Confirmation of appointment date and time
- Number, length and costs of visits
- Location directions
- Costs and payment options
- Referrals
- Medical reports
- Medication information
- Procedure and practices
- Information about client condition or treatment
- Information about general health and self care
- Background information about the practice
- Information about the expertise of the practitioner

*Modes of communication may include:*

- Verbal/non-verbal
- Written
- Formal/informal
- Direct/indirect
- Personal/using technology

*Enquirer expectations may include:*

- Potential for improved health/wellbeing
- Duration for treatment
- Costs
- Availability for health fund rebates
- Workcover eligibility
- Hours and locations of visits

## RANGE STATEMENT

*Manage appropriately may include:*

- Managing emotions
- Defusing anger
- Clarifying the issues
- Attending to client needs
- Maintaining composure and professional attitude
- Providing support
- Seeking assistance

*The need for basic counselling may include:*

- To support client
- To facilitate case taking
- To facilitate negotiation with client
- To facilitate education of client
- To facilitate information giving
- To assess the need for professional counselling

*Basic counselling skills may include:*

- Attending skills, use of body language
- Paraphrasing
- Reflecting feelings
- Open and closed questioning or probing
- Summarising
- Reframing
- Exploring options
- Normalising statements

*Practice specific guidelines refers to:*

- Basic counselling is used only in order to facilitate the treatment
- Clients requiring professional counselling are referred
- Counselling is used as a communication tool and for emotional support when necessary to treatment
- Client boundaries are respected at all times
- Counselling is provided in accordance with level of training

**RANGE STATEMENT**

*Workplace guidelines may include:*

- Guidelines and procedures
- Mission statements
- Codes of practice

**Unit Sector(s)**

Not Applicable