



Australian Government

Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations

CHCRCP401A Use telephone communication skills to assess caller's needs

Release: 1

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Modification History

CHC08 Version 3	CHC08 Version 4	Description
N/A	CHCRCP401A Use telephone communication skills to assess caller's needs	New unit in V4

Unit Descriptor

This unit of competency describes the skills and knowledge required to conduct a telephone based assessment of callers' needs using effective communication/interpersonal skills

Application of the Unit

The communication skills described in this unit may be applied across a range of workplace contexts involving application of a range of communication strategies to address specific needs and issues, and working with various levels of social and cultural diversity
In particular, this unit would be applied where workers provide support to carers, care recipients and their families across a range of service types and settings

Licensing/Regulatory Information

Not applicable.

Pre-Requisites

Not applicable.

Employability Skills Information

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

- Establish a relationship with *the caller* using a professional manner
 - 1.1 Establish and maintain professional boundaries with the caller
 - 1.2 Explain and apply privacy and confidentiality principles, practices and procedures according to organisation guidelines
 - 1.3 Establish the identity of the caller and their relationship to the person with care needs
 - 1.4 Consistently use *active listening skills* to help develop a rapport with the caller and establish trust
 - 1.5 Show respectful, empathic understanding to clarify the nature and depth of the caller's feelings
 - 1.6 Ensure all communication with the caller reflects an understanding and respect for individual differences and needs
 - 1.7 Develop an *empowering relationship* which assists the caller to clarify options, seek support and decide on next steps to address and/or meet current needs
- Apply strategies to manage the call
 - 2.1 Identify the need for and engage an interpreter service when required
 - 2.2 Identify and respond to *the nature of the call*
 - 2.3 Listen for and respond to *non-visual feedback* from the caller
 - 2.4 Adjust tone or manner to respond to caller's individual needs
 - 2.5 Identify *cues which may indicate caller stress or distress*
 - 2.6 Differentiate between abuse from the caller and the caller's expression of anger/frustration
 - 2.7 Implement *strategies to effectively manage any abuse from the caller and defuse the caller's anger/frustration*
 - 2.8 Adjust communication processes as required when assessing *callers with special needs*
 - 2.9 Maintain the focus of the caller on the provision and receipt of information relevant to their needs
 - 2.10 Identify *situations where telephone communication is inadequate* and plan for alternative assessment

- Manage the completion of the telephone call
 - 3.1 Recap and clarify the caller's understanding of the conversation
 - 3.2 Confirm with the caller that the information that they have provided is complete
 - 3.3 Confirm with the caller the *next steps in the process*
 - 3.4 Sensitively manage to break the rapport with the caller and bring the call to a timely end
 - 3.5 Document information within identified time frames and according to relevant guidelines
 - 3.6 Pass on the information gathered to other health professionals as required
- Address own personal factors likely to impact on telephone communication
 - 4.1 Identify and respond to *barriers to listening to the caller*
 - 4.2 Identify and develop personal attributes and attitudes likely to facilitate communication
 - 4.3 Demonstrate awareness of personal issues or attitudes likely to impact negatively on the call and manage appropriately
 - 4.4 Use constructive *strategies for dealing with strong caller emotions and stressful situations*
 - 4.5 Discuss own reactions to these strong caller emotions or stressful situations with peers and/or supervisor
 - 4.6 Use a *range of effective self-care strategies* for responding to strong emotions and stressful situations
 - 4.7 Use peer support to seek advice and knowledge, brainstorm and problem solve collaboratively

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 perform task skills, task management skills, contingency management skills and job/role environment skills as outlined in elements and performance criteria of this unit

These include knowledge of:

- Awareness of unique issues for callers with special needs, including those from an

Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander/culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) background

- Basic understanding of relevant guidelines and legislation
- Communication styles/techniques and how to apply them
- Organisation policies and procedures
- Personal attitudes, beliefs and values and how these might facilitate or impede effective communication
- Principles of effective communication, in particular, communication processes that support resilience and self-management in others
- Procedures for facilitating referrals and emergency interventions
- Scope and limitations of telephone assessment role
- Service and own role boundaries
- Understanding of the cognitive or emotional barriers and dynamics in seeking help

Essential skills:

It is critical that the candidate demonstrate the ability to:

- Communicate effectively with callers/clients, supervisors and co-workers
- Demonstrate willingness to work within philosophy, policies and procedures of the organisation to address callers' needs
- Establish priorities, manage time effectively and demonstrate well-developed personal organisation skills
- Identify requirements outside scope of role, responsibility, knowledge and skill
- Use skills in defusing challenging situations to ensure support and positive outcomes for callers who may be highly stressed
- Work collaboratively with internal and external stakeholders to achieve organisation goals

In addition, the candidate must be able to demonstrate relevant task skills, task management skills, contingency management skills and job/role environment skills

These include the ability to:

- Communicate with callers in a representative range of workplace situations and involving:
 - adjusting communication to meet differing needs
 - providing feedback
 - strategies to minimise conflict and tensions
 - using active listening and recognising non-visual triggers
 - using language that is respectful, non-judgemental and neutral
- Demonstrate skills in:
 - accurate data entry using current assessment tools and technology
 - applying basic understanding of relevant guidelines and legislation
 - effective communication
 - information gathering and situation analysis
 - negotiation

- Use oral communication skills (language competence) required to fulfil job roles as specified by the organisation, including:
 - acknowledging and responding to a range of views
 - active listening
 - asking for clarification and probing as necessary
 - asking questions
 - negotiating solutions
 - using interviewing techniques

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
- This unit is best assessed in the workplace or in a realistic simulated workplace setting under the normal range of workplace conditions
- Consistency of performance should be demonstrated over the required range of situations relevant to the workplace
- Where, for reasons of safety, space, or access to equipment and resources, assessment takes place away from the workplace, the assessment environment should represent workplace conditions as closely as possible

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 CALD environments
- 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 essential for assessment include:
- workplace health and safety (WHS) guidelines
- relevant organisation and legislative guidelines, standards and procedures

Method of assessment:

- In cases where the learner does not have the opportunity to cover all relevant aspects in the work environment, the remainder should be assessed through realistic simulations, projects, previous relevant experience or oral questioning on 'What if?' scenarios

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.

- Assessment of this unit of competency will usually include observation of processes and procedures, oral and/or written questioning 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

Related units:

It is recommended that this unit be assessed in conjunction with the following related unit or an equivalent unit on assessment of client's needs:

- CHCRCP402A Conduct assessment of carer's needs

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.

The caller may include:

- Advocate
- Care recipient
- Carer
- Family member
- Friend
- Significant other

Active listening skills may include:

- Appropriate brief encouragers which help the caller relate their story and concerns
- Balancing the frequency of questions
- Hearing the caller's concerns
- Paraphrasing (reflection of content)
- Reflection of feelings/thoughts, behaviours and experience (content)
- Summarising and closure
- Understanding the caller's context
- Using open and closed questions to expand or clarify understanding

Empowering relationship may include:

- Active listening
- Avoid use of labelling
- Exploring options and potential consequences with the caller
- Facilitating informed caller choices
- Focus the caller on identifying immediate needs and concerns
- Identify achievable tasks to be addressed after the call
- Identifying, affirming and focussing on the caller's strengths and opportunities
- Reframing, summary and closure

The nature of the call may include:

- A request for information
- A request for advice
- A request for services
- An emergency

Non-visual feedback includes:

- Background noise
- Manner of speech, including rate and type of language used
- Paralingual clues

Cues which may indicate caller stress or distress include:

- Silence
- Tone/pitch of voice
- Crying
- Inability of the caller to articulate problems
- Inability of the caller to identify or accept possible solutions to needs
- Raised tone of voice
- Talking at the same time/not listening to responses
- Terminology of negative words (e.g. burden, prisoner, trapped and can't cope)

Strategies to effectively manage any abuse appropriately includes:

- Provide a warning that the behaviour is unacceptable
- Report to manager according to organisation guidelines
- Terminate the call appropriately

Strategies to defuse the caller's anger/frustration include:

- Acknowledge and validate the caller's feelings
- Identify opportunities to implement active listening skills
- Identify priorities to be addressed and recognise the possible need for additional contact to work through issues
- Manage tone, pitch and pace of voice
- Recognise that the caller is angry/frustrated
- Remain calm while allowing the caller to express their anger/frustration, within limitations
- Take opportunities to empower the caller and assist them to reach a solution to resolve any identified issues

Callers with special needs include but are not limited to:

- Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander callers
- CALD callers
- Callers who have cognitive impairment
- Callers who have hearing impairment
- Callers with dementia
- Callers with mental health problems
- Callers with a speech impediment or decreased verbal communication
- Callers living in rural and remote locations
- Callers who may have experienced social exclusion and/or trauma

Situations where telephone communication is inadequate may include:

- Environmental factors impacting on the caller's ability to engage over the telephone
- Particular needs facing Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander and CALD callers
- Severe emotional distress

Next steps in the process may include:

- The need for an in-depth assessment
- Establish actions and timeframes
- Clarification of the caller's expectations of respite/support
- Follow-up contact
- Identification of responsibility for actions
- Referral to another service

Barriers to listening to the caller may include:

- Environmental factors
- Inability to connect with the caller on a personal level
- Lack of understanding of the individual's context
- Pre-conceived perceptions of the caller and their situation
- Talking at the same time/not listening to responses
- Use of jargons

Strategies for dealing with strong caller emotions and stressful situations may include:

- Awareness of personal vulnerabilities which may be triggered during a call
- Containment skills
- Debriefing
- Externalise caller emotions
- Manage tone, pitch and pace of voice
- Supervision
- Identification of alternative communication mediums

Range of effective self-care strategies may include:

- Constructive feedback about assessment skills
- Debriefing and defusing
- Knowing when and how to ask for back-up/support
- Recognition and processing of call-related experiences
- Recognition of stressful situations when it is appropriate to terminate a telephone call
- Reflection on practice
- Self monitoring

Unit Sector(s)

Not applicable.

Custom Content Section

Not applicable.