



Australian Government

Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations

HLTCOM404B Communicate effectively with clients

Release: 1

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Modification History

Unit 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

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

Pre-Requisites

Employability Skills Information

The required outcomes described in this unit of competency contain applicable facets of Employability Skills

The Employability Skills Summary of the qualification in which this unit of competency is packaged will assist in identifying Employability Skill requirements

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

Elements and Performance Criteria

Element	Performance Criteria
1 Establish professional relationship with the client	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
2 Provide effective response to client enquiries	2.1 Present relevant information clearly and comprehensively and in sufficient detail to meet the needs of the enquirer 2.2 Select appropriate modes of communication to suit the enquiry and the purpose and context of the enquiry 2.3 Identify and acknowledge enquirer's expectations 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 manage appropriately 3.2 Maintain professional integrity at all times
4 Use basic counselling skills as required to facilitate	4.1 Determine need for basic counselling 4.2 Provide basic counselling to facilitate treatment/

treatment

services when necessary and in accordance with
practice specific guidelines

4.3 Record details of services provided according to
workplace guidelines

Required Skills and Knowledge

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

Essential knowledge:

Effective communication strategies

Principles and practices of services provided

Various modes of communication appropriate to therapeutic practice

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

Local professional counselling resources

Organisation policies, procedures and guidelines

Legal and ethical issues relating to practitioner - client relations

Essential skills:

Ability to:

Respond appropriately to a range of clients in a range of situations

Respond appropriately to special needs

Appropriately prepare and present information for a range of enquiries

Make appointments to meet a range of client needs in accordance with established business practice

Handle difficult situations

Follow workplace guidelines

Assess the need for professional counselling

Use basic counselling skills to facilitate various goals and to recognise the limitations of own counselling skills

Communicate effectively including:

active listening

clear, concise and correct written and verbal communication

- passing on verbal and written messages
- documentation and record keeping
- correct presentation of correspondence
- clarify and ascertain correct meanings from communication
- establish rapport
- communicate on a one-to-one and group basis
- use correct grammar, spelling and punctuation

Seek assistance if necessary

Elicit information

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:

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 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

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

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

Workplace guidelines may include:

Guidelines and procedures

Mission statements

Codes of practice

Unit Sector(s)