CHCCOM005

Communicate and work in health or community services

RTO 46044

HARVARD
MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE

LEARNER GUIDE

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Version Control & Document History

Date	Summary of Modifications	Version
8 June 2022	Version 1.0 released for publishing	1.0
16 August 2022	Version 1.1 released for publishing Updates to content in the following sub-chapters and sections: 1.2.2, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 3.1.2, 4.2.2, 5.4, 6.3.2	1.1
25 May 2023	Version 1.2 endorsed for use Fixed minor formatting and wording issues	1.2
18 February 2024	Version 1.3 endorsed for use Fixed few wording issues	1.3

Table of Contents

This Learner Guide

CHCCOM005 - Communicate and work in health or community services (Release 2)

This unit describes the skills and knowledge required to communicate effectively with clients, colleagues, management and other industry providers.

This unit applies to a range of health and community service contexts where workers may communicate face-to-face, in writing or using digital media and work with limited responsibility under direct or indirect supervision.

The skills in this unit must be applied in accordance with Commonwealth and State/Territory legislation, Australian/New Zealand standards and industry codes of practice.

A complete copy of the above unit of competency can be downloaded from the TGA website:

https://training.gov.au/Training/Details/CHCCOM005

About this Unit of Competency Introduction

As a worker, a trainee, or a future worker, you want to enjoy your work and become known as a valuable team member. This unit of competency will help you acquire the knowledge and skills to work effectively as an individual and in groups. It will give you the basis to contribute to the goals of the organisation which employs you.

It is essential that you begin your training by becoming familiar with the industry standards to which organisations must conform.

This Learner Guide Covers

Communicate and work in health or community services (Release 2)

I. Communicate effectively with people
II. Collaborate with colleagues
III. Resolve communication conflicts
IV. Report conflicts
V. Accomplish workplace correspondence and documentation
VI. Contribute to continuous improvement

Learning Program

As you progress through this unit of study, you will develop skills in locating and understanding an organisation's policies and procedures. You will build up a sound knowledge of the industry standards within which organisations must operate. You will become more aware of the effect that your own skills in dealing with people have on your success or otherwise in the workplace. Knowledge of your skills and capabilities will help you make informed choices about your further study and career options.

Additional Learning Support

To obtain additional support you may:

- Search for other resources. You may find books, journals, videos and other materials which provide additional information about topics in this unit.
- Search for other resources in your local library. Most libraries keep information about government departments and other organisations, services and programs. The librarian should be able to help you locate such resources.
- Contact information services such as Infolink, Equal Opportunity Commission, Commissioner of Workplace Agreements, Union organisations, and public relations and information services provided by various government departments. Many of these services are listed in the telephone directory.
- Contact your facilitator.

Facilitation

Your training organisation will provide you with a facilitator. Your facilitator will play an active role in supporting your learning. Your facilitator will help you at any time during working hours to assist with:

- how and when to make contact,
- what you need to do to complete this unit of study, and
- what support will be provided.

Here are some of the things your facilitator may do to make your study easier:

- Give you a clear visual timetable of events for the semester or term in which you are enrolled, including any deadlines for assessments.
- Provide you with online webinar times and availability.
- Use 'action sheets' to remind you about tasks you need to complete, and updates on websites.
- Make themselves available by telephone for support discussion and provide you with industry updates by email where applicable.
- Keep in touch with you during your studies.

Flexible Learning

Studying to become a competent worker is an interesting and exciting thing to do. You will learn about current issues in this area. You will establish relationships with other students, fellow workers, and clients. You will learn about your own ideas, attitudes, and values. You will also have fun. (Most of the time!)

At other times, studying can seem overwhelming and impossibly demanding, particularly when you have an assignment to do and you aren't sure how to tackle it, your family and friends want you to spend time with them, or a movie you want to see is on television.

Sometimes being a student can be hard.

Here are some ideas to help you through the hard times. To study effectively, you need space, resources, and time.

Space

Try to set up a place at home or at work where you can:

- Keep your study materials,
- Be reasonably quiet and free from interruptions, and
- Be reasonably comfortable, with good lighting, seating, and a flat surface for writing.

If it is impossible for you to set up a study space, perhaps you could use your local library. You will not be able to store your study materials there, but you will have quiet, a desk and chair, and easy access to the other facilities.

Study Resources

The most basic resources you will need are:

- A chair
- A desk or table
- A computer with Internet access
- A reading lamp or good light
- A folder or file to keep your notes and study materials together
- Materials to record information (pen and paper or notebooks, or a computer and printer)
- Reference materials, including a dictionary

Do not forget that other people can be valuable study resources. Your fellow workers, work supervisor, other students, your facilitator, your local librarian, and workers in this area can also help you.

Time

It is important to plan your study time. Work out a time that suits you and plan around it. Most people find that studying, in short, concentrated blocks of time (an hour or two) at regular intervals (daily, every second day, once a week) is more effective than trying to cram a lot of learning into a whole day. You need time to 'digest' the information in one section before you move on to the next, and everyone needs regular breaks from study to avoid overload. Be realistic in allocating time for study. Look at what is required for the unit and look at your other commitments.

Make up a study timetable and stick to it. Build in 'deadlines' and set yourself goals for completing study tasks. Allow time for reading and completing activities. Remember that it is the quality of the time you spend studying rather than the quantity that is important.

Study Strategies

Different people have different learning 'styles'. Some people learn best by listening or repeating things out loud. Some learn best by 'doing', some by reading and making notes. Assess your own learning style and try to identify any barriers to learning which might affect you. Are you easily distracted? Are you afraid you will fail? Are you taking study too seriously? Not seriously enough? Do you have supportive friends and family? Here are some ideas for effective study strategies:

1. **Make notes.** This often helps you to remember new or unfamiliar information. Do not worry about spelling or neatness, as long as you can read your own notes. Keep your notes with the rest of your study materials and add to them as you go. Use pictures and diagrams if this helps.
2. **Underline keywords** when you are reading the materials in this Learner Guide. (Do not underline things in other people's books.) This also helps you to remember important points.
3. **Talk to other people** (fellow workers, fellow students, friends, family, or your facilitator) about what you are learning. As well as help you to clarify and understand new ideas, talking also gives you a chance to find out extra information and to get fresh ideas and different points of view.

Using this Learner Guide

A Learner Guide is just that, a guide to help you learn. A Learner Guide is not a textbook. Your Learner Guide will:

1. Describe the skills you need to demonstrate to achieve competency for this unit.
2. Provide information and knowledge to help you develop your skills.
3. Provide you with structured learning activities to help you absorb knowledge and information and practice your skills.
4. Direct you to other sources of additional knowledge and information about topics for this unit.

How to Get the Most Out of Your Learner Guide

Some sections are quite long and cover complex ideas and information. If you come across anything you do not understand:

1. Talk to your facilitator.
2. Research the area using the books and materials listed under Resources.
3. Discuss the issue with other people (your workplace supervisor, fellow workers, fellow students).
4. Try to relate the information presented in this Learner Guide to your own experience and to what you already know.
5. Ask yourself questions as you go. For example, 'Have I seen this happening anywhere?' 'Could this apply to me?' 'What if...' This will help you to 'make sense' of new material, and to build on your existing knowledge.
6. Talk to people about your study. Talking is a great way to reinforce what you are learning.
7. Make notes.
8. Work through the activities. Even if you are tempted to skip some activities, do them anyway. They are there for a reason, and even if you already have the knowledge or skills relating to a particular activity, doing them will help to reinforce what you already know. If you do not understand an activity, think carefully about the way the questions or instructions are phrased. Read the section again to see if you can make sense of it. If you are still confused, contact your facilitator or discuss the activity with other students, fellow workers or with your workplace supervisor.

Additional Research, Reading, and Note-Taking

If you are using the additional references and resources suggested in the Learner Guide to take your knowledge a step further, there are a few simple things to keep in mind to make this kind of research easier.

Always make a note of the author's name, the title of the book or article, the edition, when it was published, where it was published, and the name of the publisher. This includes online articles. If you are taking notes about specific ideas or information, you will need to put the page number as well. This is called the reference information. You will need this for some assessment tasks, and it will help you to find the book again if you need to.

Keep your notes short and to the point. Relate your notes to the material in your Learner Guide. Put things into your own words. This will give you a better understanding of the material.

Start off with a question you want answered when you are exploring additional resource materials. This will structure your reading and save you time.

Introduction

Health and community services are some of the essential industries in the country. They provide a range of services to support the people and in taking care of the health and wellbeing of the community. These involve medical and social assistance to help the needs of the people in the community.

Health Services

Health services are focused on services providing health care. These involve public and private systems. The *public system* consists of several components, including public hospitals, community-based services and health organisations owned by the government. The *private system* includes health services being managed privately. Private hospitals, pharmacies, private health organisations and other private entities fall under this category. Several facilities and care facilities are receiving health services. Hospitals, nursing homes, childcare facilities, aged care facilities and disability support services are all included.

The country's health system involves various health professionals and service providers. This includes organisations from all levels of government and the non-government sector. They all work together to meet the health care needs of the clients. Health services are delivered to the clients in various ways. This involves treatments, diagnosis, community services or rehabilitation in hospitals or their residential homes.

The structure of the health care system has multiple components. This involves the following:

Health promotion	Primary health care	Specialist services	Hospitals

- **Health promotion** – This refers to the prevention of illnesses and diseases through activities. This involves conducting health programmes and promoting health literacy. Through these, avoidable health conditions are prevented. They also improve the overall health of the population.
- **Primary health care** – This refers to the range of services that a client may access. This includes general practice, allied health services, pharmacy and community health.

  Primary health networks (PHNs) refer to organisations that coordinate health services in local areas. The roles of PHNs may involve the following:

  - Supporting hospitals, community services and other health care professionals in improving service provision
  - Coordinating different parts of the health and community system
  - Assessing the health care needs of various local areas
  - Providing necessary services
- **Specialist services** – These refer to services that support clients with specific conditions. This may involve treatment for cancer, services for pregnancy or mental health services. These are also referred to as 'secondary' health care services. This is where a formal referral is required for clients to access specialist services. Medical specialists involve surgeons, physicians and obstetricians among others.
- **Hospitals** – It is crucial for the country's health system to deliver a range of services. This helps in providing services to admitted and non-admitted patients. Each state and territory government owns and manages public hospitals. Each of these provides care for the patients. For-profit companies or not-for-profit organisations own private hospitals.

  Local hospital networks (LHNs) are set up to manage public hospital services and funding. All public hospitals in the country are involved in the Local Hospital Network.

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Community Services

Community services are referred to as support being offered to the public. This may come in the form of information, advice, practical help, financial help or a combination of services. Community services may be run by federal, state or local government. Yet, there are non-government organisations that also do it.

Community services are provided to address the needs of a specific group of people. This involves children, teenagers, men, women, senior citizens and people with disabilities. Such services can also be provided to the following:

- People with housing difficulties
- Aboriginal Australians or Torres Strait Islanders
- Immigrants
- Refugees
- People in crisis
- Those with specific health or medical issues

Role of Support Services

Support services play a significant role in the health and community services sector. *Support services* refer to the programmes and activities that influence the community's clients, carers and their families. Support service workers provide the necessary support that clients need. Health support services are focused on the services being supplied inside hospitals or clinical settings. Community support services are support being provided to those outside hospitals.

Below is a table that shows the different support services and their corresponding roles:

Support services	Role
Aged care support services	These are designed to support older people, their families and their carers. This may involve providing support for the following: ▪ Aged care education ▪ Aged care financial planning ▪ Aged care placement services ▪ Aged care real estate services My Aged Care is the Australian Government's starting point on providing aged care support services.
Disability support services	These are designed to support people with disabilities. This may involve providing support for the following: ▪ Nursing and complex care ▪ Supported independent living ▪ Personal services such as support for doing daily tasks ▪ Community access such as doing recreational activities
Youth justice community support services	These are designed to protect the youth by providing integrated and intensive support. This requires organisations to strategically partner to provide the specific needs of the youth. This may involve the following: ▪ Intensive casework support for young people to connect with family, education, employment and the community ▪ Integrated access and referrals to services, such as mental health services, education, training or housing

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Support services	Role
Child support services	These are designed to support and protect the children. This may involve support services that provide support for the following: ▪ Children experiencing family and domestic violence ▪ Children with separated parents ▪ Children with parents living outside Australia ▪ Children with non-parent carers
Mental health support services	These are designed to support experiencing mental health issues. This may involve support services that provide support for the following: ▪ People experiencing depression and anxiety ▪ People experiencing childhood trauma ▪ People who need rehabilitation for alcohol and drug use

Below are some of the most common community services concerning health services that clients may access:

Aged care services	Services for people with disabilities	Child protection and youth justice services

- **Aged care services** – This aims to promote the wellbeing and independence of older people and their carers. This can be done by delivering care services that are accessible, person-centred and appropriate to their needs.
- **Services for people with disabilities** – This aims to enhance the quality of life experienced by people with disabilities. This can be done by assisting them in living as valued members of the community.
- **Child protection and youth justice services** – This aims to support families in caring for their children. They also seek to protect those who are at risk of harm. This can be done by recognising their rights and promoting safety in the community.

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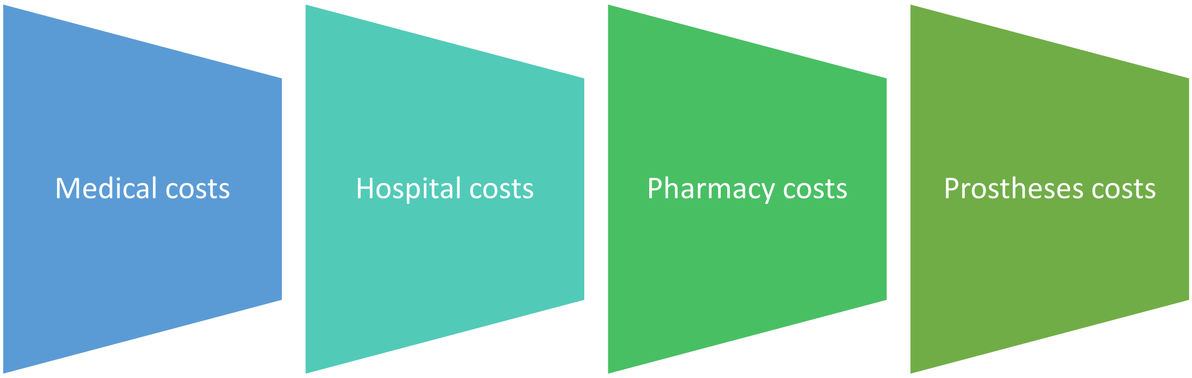
Health and community services are interrelated because people might need multiple kinds of support with their health and wellbeing. Some patients have complex health needs and need social care services to meet their health care needs fully. When primary health care providers and allied health professionals work with one another, they can provide for the complex needs of their patients.

For example, older people will need both health and community services. They need to be diagnosed by allied health professionals to check for illnesses or diseases. They also need the service provided by aged care services to help them with their everyday living and other needs.

Working in health or community services might look stressful, but providing services to those in need is always an honour. Providing people with quality service and communicating with them effectively make a positive impact on the world. You will help the people feel safe and attended to appropriately when such services are provided.

Funding Environment

Receiving treatment and staying in a hospital may cost a lot. Some specific fees and services need to be paid, and this may involve the following:



Clients are free to choose which type of service they want to avail. They have a choice to become a public or a private patient.

Medicare has been Australia's universal health care scheme which enables the public to access the public health system for free or at a low cost. This covers all costs of other health services. This may include services from community nurses and physiotherapy. This may also cover some tests and examinations that the doctor orders.

Below are some of the essential parts of Medicare that contributes a lot to the country's health care system:

- **Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS)** – This refers to a list of all health services that are subsidised. A team of medical experts is updating the list. The MBS has a safety net that helps in lessening pay for certain services.
- **Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS)** – This helps in making medicines cheaper. The PBS contains a list of medical brand names, generic, biosimilar and biologic medicines. Clients will only pay a part of the medical cost if they are enrolled in Medicare. The PBS safety net helps in keeping medical costs lower.

Aside from Medicare, Australians also have private health insurance. This covers the following:

- **Hospital treatment** – Private hospital cover will help pay for the costs of treatment and stay once admitted to the hospital.
- **General treatment** – This also refers to 'extras' or 'ancillary.' This may include dental, optical and other services not covered by Medicare.

The funding arrangements for community services vary for each service area and programme. Below is a table that shows the different service areas with the corresponding bodies funding each of them:

Service area	Responsible for funding
Statutory child protection, out-of-home care services, intensive family support services, youth justice services	State and Territory governments and some non-government sector
Specialist disability services (excluding employment services)	State and Territory governments with some Australian government contribution
Residential aged care	Australian Government and non-government sectors
Home and community care services	Australian Government (for older people) State and Territory governments (for younger people)

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Client Service

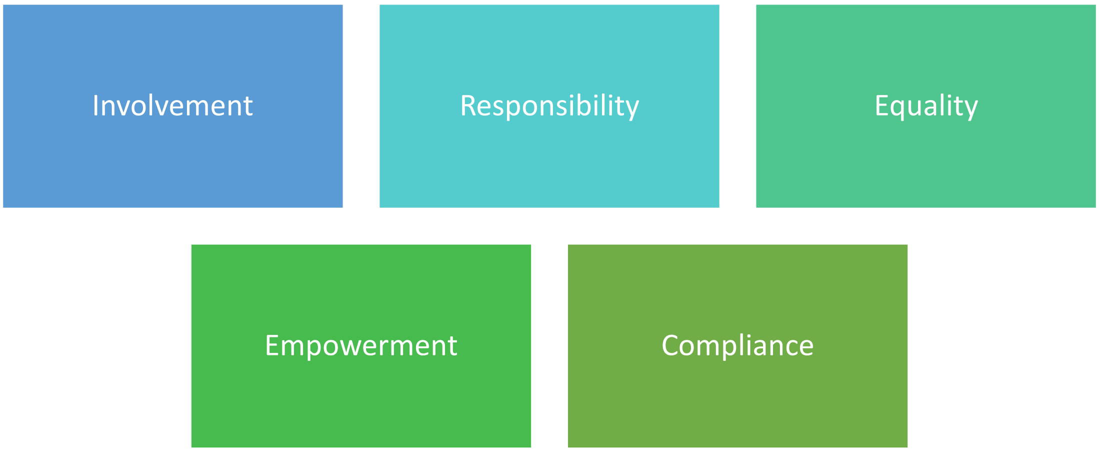
Clients refer to people to whom services will be provided. Clients need to be provided with the optimum support that they need. They are the main reason why health and community services are established. Specific models may help in supporting optimum client service.

The following are examples of models to support optimum client service delivery:

Person-centred service delivery	Rights-based service delivery

- **Person-centred service delivery –** This approach is focused on providing effective customer service. This involves putting people and carers at the centre of service delivery. The people must be included in decision-making relating to their care. They must also be included in discussions about service delivery options and issues. Their consent must also be obtained when examining, treating or working with them. You must listen to them and address them whenever there are complaints within the scope of your work role. When the person is a child, service delivery strategies may need to be modified. This is to ensure that the child is safe and is provided with a friendly and supportive environment. The fundamental principles of person-centred service delivery are as follows:
  - **Valuing people** – This approach merits the people. This includes the clients, the service members, the managers and other relevant people. This also involves people from appropriate services, partners and affiliations. People are valued. Valuing people may be done through supporting and assisting other people. This may also be done by understanding them and empathising with them.
  - **Autonomy** – This refers to the freedom given to people. This approach respects the choices being made by relevant people in the service. The people are involved in decision-making and are free to share their suggestions and recommendations. Independence is further increased by developing their strengths, abilities and interests.
  - **Understanding relationships** – This approach helps in building a deep understanding of relationships. This may be the connection between clients, service members and other relevant people. When these people are connected, they aim to work together for a common goal. This can be done by meeting with the client and their family or carers frequently to build trust and comfort.

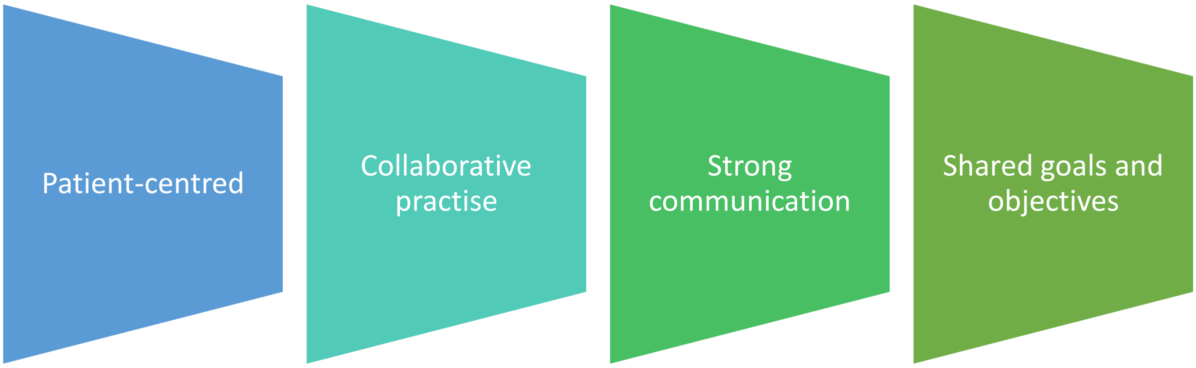
- **Rights-based service delivery –** This approach is focused on integrating human rights standards and principles in the community and health-related services. It includes human dignity, the rights of various groups of people and the inclusiveness of the services for all people. This is essential to address the inequalities of service provision to people. The following are the critical elements of rights-based service delivery:



  - **Involvement** – All clients and service members have the right to involve themselves in decisions that may affect their human rights. They have the right to participate actively, freely and in a meaningful manner. This may involve their right to access information in a language that they can understand.
  - **Responsibility** – Clients and service members must be able to exhibit responsibility. They must be able to follow standards, policies and procedures in health and community service provision. These must be following the legislation and regulations.
  - **Equality** – All clients and service members have the right to be treated equally. This involves the prohibition of any discriminatory act within or outside the service provision. Everyone must be treated equally despite having individual differences.
  - **Empowerment** – All clients and service members are entitled to exercise their rights. They must be informed, and they must understand their individual rights. This is for them to act freely and accurately while providing or receiving services.
  - **Compliance** – Service provision must be based on legal and ethical considerations. The rights and freedom of clients and service members are recognised as legally enforced entitlements.

Multi-Disciplinary Team

A multi-disciplinary team is one of the most common team models being used in allied health services. A *multi-disciplinary team* refers to a group of health care workers who are experts in different disciplines. This model has various characteristics. This may contribute to providing satisfying services to the clients. This may involve the following:



- **Patient-centred** – This means that the patient is the core of the service. They are focused on providing services to attend to the needs of the patients. The principles of client-centred service delivery also apply to this. This was further discussed on the previous pages.

  Services provide personalised care plans and programmes to each patient. This helps the service workers and allied health care professionals to provide integrated care to the patients.

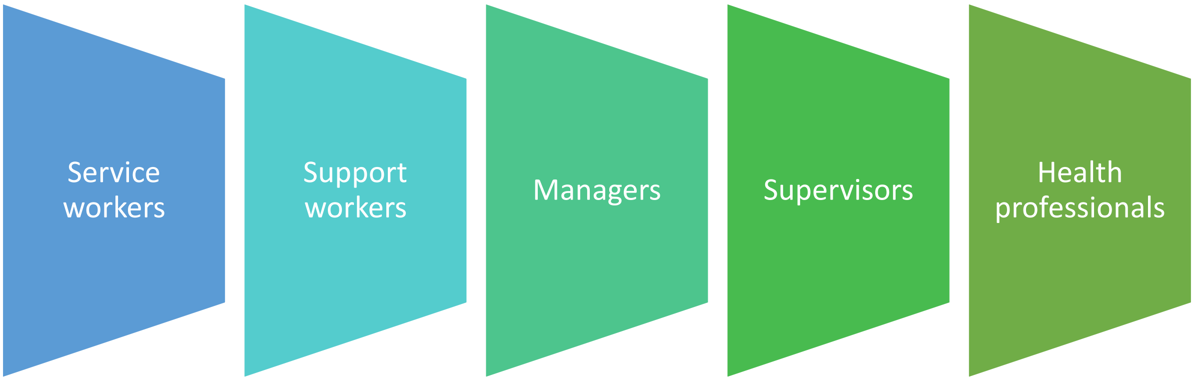
- **Collaborative practice** – Another characteristic of a multi-disciplinary team is that it promotes the collaborative practice. Service members and health care professionals work hand-in-hand to attend to the needs of the patient. They are based around general practices which integrate each of their expertise. They are involved in joint care planning and coordinated care needs assessments.
- **Strong communication** – Each of the persons involved in providing care and services acts on their responsibilities. They communicate with one another to ensure that processes and procedures are followed. They must be able to communicate with one another. This is to ensure that the patient's records are up-to-date and includes all their diagnosis and medications.
- **Shared goals and objectives** – All the involved experts work together for a shared goal and objective. Each of them has its own plans, which is in line with providing specific services. These goals are combined and analysed for them to work on a common goal. This boils down to providing the necessary services that the patient needs.

There must be relevant people who will work to provide integrated care for the clients. This may involve the following working professionals:

- Service workers
- Managers
- Supervisors
- Health professionals
    - Physicians
    - Counsellors
    - Psychiatrists
    - Physical therapists

Each of them provides specific services to clients. They work hand-in-hand with one another to treat conditions by providing integrated care. They use a care plan to record the necessary details about the client's situation. This is used to identify problem areas and how each of them will be attending to such.

Below are the most common health workers involved in a multi-disciplinary team:



- **Service workers** – These refer to people engaged in social work. They are the ones who provide direct service to the clients. This may involve the following:
    - **Aged support worker** – This refers to carers who look after the health and wellbeing of older people. Their work involves assisting clients with their daily activities and providing them with their personal needs.
    - **Childcare worker** – This refers to someone who oversees the children's daily routine. These routines may relate to their education, recreation and hygiene and one of their responsibilities is to assist children in taking part of these routines.

- **Disability support worker** – This refers to carers who assist people with disabilities. They may work in-home or in residential establishments. One of their responsibilities involves assisting people to access assistive technologies.

- **Managers** – They are the ones who meet with the community to discuss their programmes. They also coordinate the programmes to support the community's wellbeing. Their job also involves managing the workers providing such services to the clients.
- **Supervisors** – They are the ones who are responsible for administrative tasks within the care facilities of service providers. They direct and supervise service members and service workers.
- **Health professionals** – These refer to practitioners who work together in the health care team. This may involve the following:

Physicians | Counsellors | Psychiatrists | Physical therapists

  - **Physicians** – These also refer to doctors who diagnose and treat the patient's illnesses. These people are qualified to practice medicine.
  - **Counsellors** – These refer to professionals who help in addressing personal, social or psychological problems. This is done through clarification of issues and developing strategies for solving them. They are the ones who communicate with clients through consultations.
  - **Psychiatrists** – These refer to medical practitioners who diagnose and treat illnesses relating to mental, emotional and behavioural disorders. They can also prescribe medication to help address mental disorders.
  - **Physical therapists** – These refer to professionals who assist people who are injured. They are the ones who help these people to improve their movement and manage pain.

Relationship Between Health and Community Services

Given these pieces of information, health care services are significantly related to community services. It is necessary for most people who work in community services to communicate with those in the health care services, and vice versa.

Below are some examples of how health care is related to community services:

Older people under aged care services need multiple care and support from different areas.

Children who experienced physical abuse may need treatments from physicians and counselling from social care workers.

People working in laboratories and pathology collecting may refer to the order of general practitioners.

Community workers may assist people who cannot be supported by their families in accessing the care that they need.

Other Services

Aside from health and community services working hand-in-hand, other services may be of great help and may impact adequate service provision. You will also be communicating with these people while you are inside or outside the service. It is important to maintain effective communication. This helps in exchanging helpful information for better service provision. It is also possible that you are one of the service workers under each type of service. This may involve the following services:

- General and administrative services
- Food services
- Technical and clinical services

- **General and administrative services** – They are the ones who provide support for all types of organisations or services. Their duties may include general clerical tasks and administrative jobs. It is essential to communicate and work with them for service providers to be effective. For example, you must communicate with the ambulance driver clearly for them to know the details of the transfer. It would help to speak with a secretary when you want to make appointments with an affiliated organisation.

  The people who may be working under the general administrative services may involve, but are not limited to the following service workers:

  - General clerk
  - Hospital orderly
  - Driver
  - Housekeeper
  - Maintenance
  - Secretary

- **Food services** – They are responsible for the preparation of food based on the needs of their clients. They consider unique aspects of therapeutic diets that will fit the health status of their clients. They ensure that food hygiene and the quality of food are based on approved standards. Communicating with them is essential for them to know the appropriate set of food to prepare for each patient.

  The people who may be working under the food services may involve, but are not limited to the following service workers:

  - Food assistant
  - Domestic service assistant
  - Diet cook
  - Food monitor
  - Chef

- **Technical and clinical services** – *Technical services* refer to services that involve using the equipment and other technologies. These are used to diagnose, treat and prevent illnesses. They possess the technical skills to perform and operate specialised equipment. *Clinical services* refer to organised medical services that offer preventive, diagnostic and therapeutic services to clients. This may involve services such as screening, assessment, counselling or case management. Communicating with them is essential for them to know the set of tests or diagnostics that they need to do for each patient.

  The people who may be working under the technical and clinical services may involve, but are not limited to the following service workers:

  - Laboratory assistant
  - Social worker
  - Instrument technician
  - Pathology collector
  - Personal care worker
  - Anaesthetic technician

Legal and Ethical Considerations

All industries must adhere to legal and ethical requirements. *Legal consideration* refers to how a policy, procedure or process is based on the legal requirements. This involves the need for permits, the need for licenses, and the need to draft policies and procedures based on laws concerning health and community services. Your area of work includes all processes and settings that are involved in your day-to-day operations. To evaluate your area of work, you must ask the following questions:

What type of service are you providing?

Who are your prospective clients?

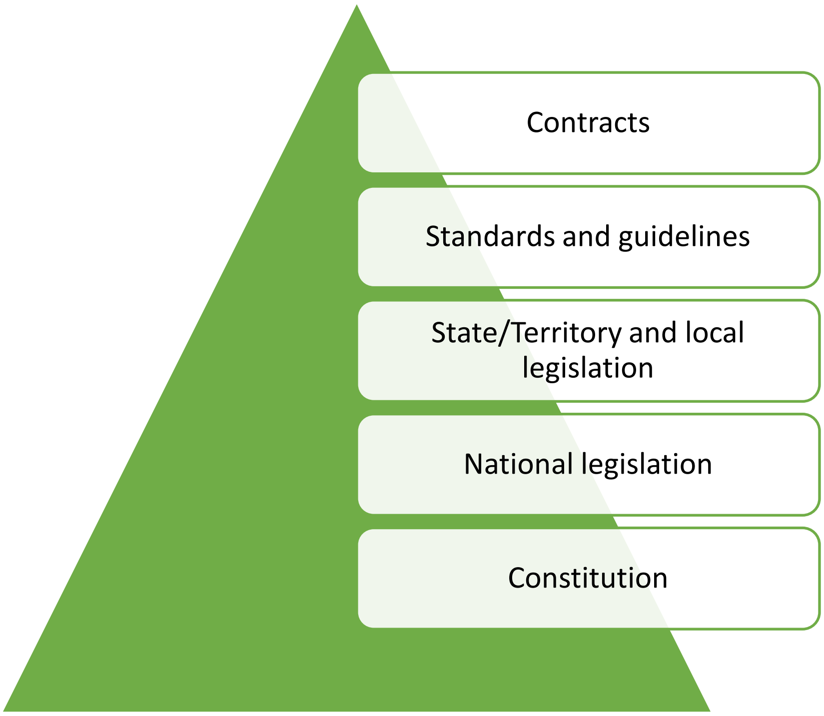
What are the other services related to the service you are providing?

What resources will you need to run the service?

In your case, you will be communicating and working in health and community services. You will be interacting with different people, including the delivery of the service they need. You will be exchanging information and responding to the queries that clients need to know. You will be working with colleagues, and you must be able to address concerns accordingly. You must also follow standards when completing necessary workplace correspondence and documents.

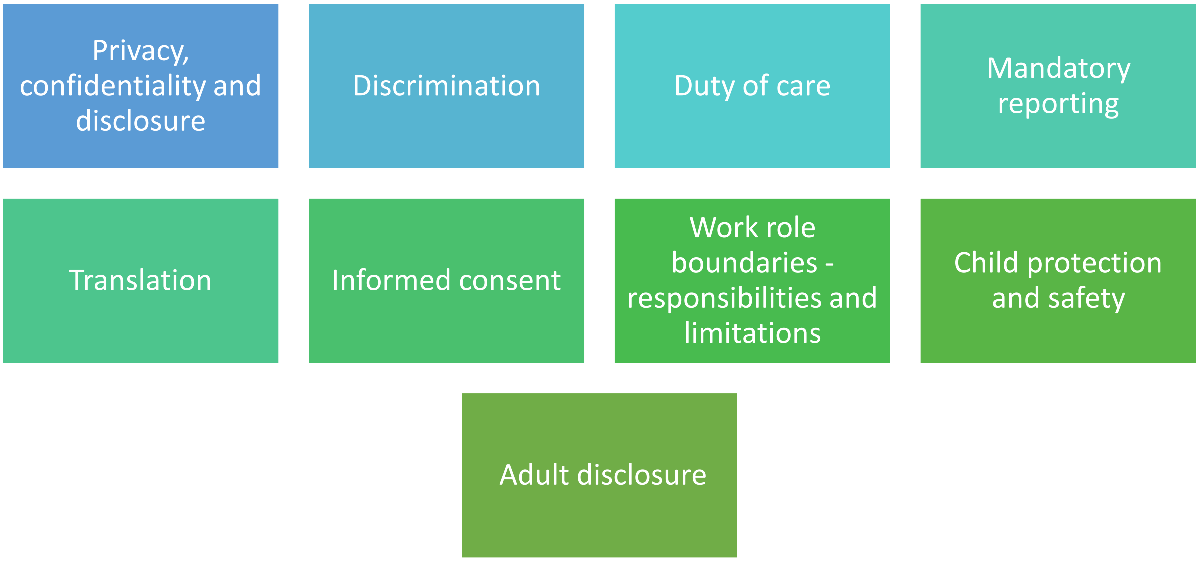
Once you have evaluated your area of work, the requirements that you need to comply with will be much clearer. The scope of your compliance requirements will be related to different aspects of your area of work. Remember that health and community services are strictly regulated. This is to protect the rights and welfare of clients, colleagues and other people. This means that regulatory authorities will be assessing each aspect of the health or community service. This is done for compliance with legal requirements.

You must identify legal frameworks that relate to different aspects of health and community services. This is to accurately determine the scope of compliance requirements that you need for your area of work. A *legal framework* consists of legal information of all levels related to a particular topic. This framework is illustrated in the pyramid below.



This section will discuss different topics and issues in health and community services. This involves their legal frameworks, applications and related compliance requirements.

You must identify legal and ethical considerations that relate to different aspects of health or community services. This involves, but is not limited to the following:



Privacy, Confidentiality and Disclosure

Privacy, confidentiality and disclosure laws protect the information of people from misuse. *Privacy* refers to the right of each person to keep information relevant to themselves free from access by others. With this, *confidentiality* restricts access to certain information only to people who require the information.

Disclosure prescribes how certain information can be shared and distributed to people. Legal compliance requirements protect all three. The blanket law that covers issues of privacy, confidentiality and disclosure is the Privacy Act of 1988. Concerning school-age education and care, this law sets principles that govern how an organisation:

- Can collect and use the personal information of clients, service members and other relevant people
- Is held accountable for misuse of information that they collect
- Should ensure accuracy of the information they collect
- Can provide clients and service members access to their own data and that of others.

Privacy, confidentiality and disclosure laws also have limitations. Below are some circumstances where other laws may supersede terms:

- The information must be disclosed as part of mandatory reporting.
- Non-disclosure may lead to harm.
- The health and welfare of people involved are at risk.
- Information is required for legal processes (e.g. court cases).

Further Reading

You can learn more about confidentiality and privacy laws from the Privacy Act 1988 and its related rules and guidelines.

Privacy Act 1988

Discrimination

It is illegal to discriminate against other people based on age, disability, race, religion, sex and gender. This is enacted in the following federal legislation:

- Age Discrimination Act 2004
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992
- Racial Discrimination Act 1975
- Sex Discrimination Act 1984

In addition to this, individual states and territories also have laws against discrimination. Follow the links below for the corresponding anti-discrimination legislation and guidelines that apply to each state/territory.

State/Territory	Anti-discrimination legislation and guidelines
Australian Capital Territory	Discrimination Act 1991
New South Wales	Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 No 48
Northern Territory	Anti-Discrimination Act 1992
Queensland	Anti-Discrimination Act 1991 No. 85
South Australia	Equal Opportunity Act 1984
Tasmania	Anti-Discrimination Act 1998
Victoria	Equal Opportunity Act 2010
Western Australia	Equal Opportunity Act 1984

Internationally, anti-discrimination laws are based on human rights treaties. This means that Australia is a party to, including seven core treaties:

- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights - Human rights at your fingertips
- International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination - Human rights at your fingertips
- Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women
- Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment - Human rights at your fingertips
- Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

In health and community services, your processes, policies and procedures must comply with national and state/territory legislation. This can be done by providing equal access to all clients who need your services. There must be equal access to:

- application and admission
- benefits provided by your service
- due process in case of involvement in incidents
- care and assistance from service workers
- resources, equipment and facilities.

Further Reading

The Australian Human Rights Commission published a guide for employers in complying with anti-discrimination laws. For further information, you may access the link below.

Quick guide to discrimination law

Duty of Care

Duty of care refers to your responsibilities, by law, in protecting the clients from harm. In common law, you are found to have a duty of care when:

- The welfare of other people is entrusted to you
- Your actions or lack thereof may cause harm to the people under your care.

The nature of your work requires you to interact directly with clients, and so you have a duty of care to protect clients from risks of harm. You are responsible for the following critical requirements concerning the duty of care legislation and guidelines:

- Possible sources of harm must be identified and eliminated, or minimised.
- Clients must be guided and supported to ensure that they follow safety guidelines.
- All equipment used must be checked for any defects that may cause harm to clients.

The presence of negligence determines legal liability for duty of care. This means that persons who receive care may claim compensation on the grounds of negligence if:

- a duty of care was owed to them at the time of the injury
- the risk of injury was reasonably foreseeable
- the likelihood of the injury occurring was more than insignificant
- there was a breach of the duty of care or a failure to observe a reasonable standard of care
- this breach or failure caused or contributed to the injury, loss, or damage suffered.

Risk indicators refer to factors identified in the child's environment that may correspond to threats or dangers. Children may be prone to experiencing different types of abuse and neglect. This depends on their surroundings and how they are treated at home. The following are some of the risk indicators that may lead a child to experience abuse and neglect:

- **Child risk indicators** – This refers to the child factors that may indicate that a child is at risk. This may involve the following:
  - **Child's age** – As young children, most of them are still unaware of the danger or threat that may happen to them. Due to their young age, they are more vulnerable to different types of maltreatment from irresponsible carers. They may experience physical trauma or medical neglect. When young children under care are unattended, certain dangers may happen, such as taking in the wrong medicine or not taking them at all.
  - **Child's health** – Children with physical, mental or emotional issues may also experience such maltreatment. Some carers may take advantage of their condition and deprive them of the care they need. Children with physical disabilities may not be able to protect themselves from physical abuse. Children with mental disabilities are also at risk as irresponsible carers may take advantage of them.

- **Family situations as risk indicators** – This refers to the factors within the family that may indicate that a child is at risk. This may involve the attitude of parents or carers. This is one of the factors that will have a significant impact on the children. How the children are raised and treated in their homes are potential risks for abuse and neglect.

  Children who need medical and other necessary support also need support from their homes. This helps them in having a cheerful disposition to face their health issues.

- **Community and environment as risk indicators** – This refers to the factors within the community that may indicate that a child is at risk. This may involve the following:
  - **Economic status** – Poverty is one of the major problems a family may be facing. Not having the appropriate service, facility or medicine puts a considerable risk on everyone, especially children. Although there are free services from public hospitals, there are instances when a child needs to be put under intensive care. There are times when they may also need services that can also be accessed through private services. Due to financial difficulty, some of these children are not being provided with the service or support they need.

  - **Neighbourhood** – The type of neighbourhood where children live and grow up is also a risk indicator. They may be at risk when they are living in a dangerous community. This may involve places where there are high rates of violent crimes or other relevant cases. The surroundings where they grow up immensely affect their safety and security.

Mandatory Reporting

Occupations that involve working in health or community services are often covered by mandatory reporting legislation. While it relates primarily to children, it can also be related to adults under residential care or service. This involves older people under aged care. Under Aged Care Act 1997, quality care and equal rights must be provided to those under aged care services.

Under mandatory reporting, people whose roles involve working with the elderly and children must report suspected cases of abuse and neglect. Abuse and neglect are classified into five types:

Sourced from Reporting child abuse and neglect, Australian Institute of Family Studies (AIFS) on behalf of the Commonwealth of Australia, CC BY 4.0

The legal basis of mandatory reporting guidelines can be found in state/territory legislation for child protection. Follow the links below for the corresponding child protection legislation and guidelines for each state/territory.

State/Territory	Child Protection Legislation and Guidelines
Australian Capital Territory	Children and Young People Act 2008
New South Wales	Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 No 157
Northern Territory	Care and Protection of Children Act 2007
Queensland	Child Protection Act 1999 No. 10
South Australia	Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017
Tasmania	Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act 1997
Victoria	Children, Youth and Families Act 2005
Western Australia	Children and Community Services Act 2004

Based on Australian child protection legislation, Australian Institute of Family Studies (AIFS) on behalf of the Commonwealth of Australia, CC BY 4.0

For each state/territory, mandatory reporting requirements prescribe:

- Persons responsible for reporting
- Information that must be reported
- Abuse and neglect types that must be reported.

Based on Mandatory reporting of child abuse and neglect, Australian Institute of Family Studies (AIFS) on behalf of the Commonwealth of Australia, CC BY 4.0

Further Reading

Information in this section was sourced from and based on resource sheets published by the Australian Institute of Family Studies (AIFS). Follow the links below for more information about mandatory reporting.

Mandatory reporting of child abuse and neglect

Reporting child abuse and neglect

Adult Disclosure

Adult disclosure happens when a child discloses their experience of being abused. They do this to seek protection and safety from adults whom they trust and believe. When cases like these are revealed to adults, it allows them to provide immediate support and comfort to the child. This involves taking action to stop the abuse and provide better life experiences to the child.

The legal basis of adult disclosure, child protection and safety can be found in state/territory legislation for child protection. This was already mentioned on the previous page.

Child Protection

A child needs protection when:

- They have suffered
- They are suffering
- They are at risk of suffering significant harm
- They do not have an apparent carer willing and able to protect them from the harm
- They need protection.

Child protection is enforced by legislation across all states/territories in Australia under these three principles:

Best interest of the child

Early intervention

Participation of children and young people in decision-making processes

One of your duties is to minimise the risk of physical or psychological harm befalling the children in your care. This is whether as a direct result of their experience or from adults relevant to their lives.

Child Safety

Article 19 of the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* states that all children deserve protection from any form of violence, neglect or exploitation. Health and community service facilities must put protective measures in place to ensure the safety of children. These include social programmes for children who have experienced any kind of abuse, neglect or maltreatment.

Facilities must ensure that children with disabilities are protected from any form of harassment from staff and fellow clients.

This means that the facilities should have policies in place to prevent any form of harassment and victimisation. There should also be procedures for the fair and speedy handling of harassment complaints. Measures for compliance include the following:

Policies to prohibit any form of harassment or victimisation based on a child's disability

Procedures for handling complaints of harassment and victimisation towards the children from members of staff

Training to inform the staff about the policies and code of conduct regarding harassment and victimisation of children

Translation

Section 3 of the *Community Relations Commission and Principles of Multiculturalism Act 2000* of New South Wales states that people have different languages, religions, races and ethnicity. This means that they are free to make use of their own languages.

In line with this, all people and their respective organisations must respect and develop provisions for the varying culture and language. This must be within the legal framework where English is the common language.

In line with this, there must be people who can assist in translating conversations and documents. *Translation* refers to converting written information from one language to another, which in this case, is in English. While family members and friends may assist in translation, accredited translators must take responsibility for the duty. A *translator* is a professional who is qualified in translating documents objectively and accurately into English. The National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI) accredits them.

According to the guidelines on translation, below are the types of accredited translators:

- Advanced translators
- Professional translators
- Paraprofessional translators
- Recognised translators

Translation of documents to and from English generally focuses on the following contexts:

- Communicating with culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities through publications and community legal education using various languages aside from English
- Providing legal assistance to legally-aided clients who rely primarily on documentation in other languages

There are alternative ways of providing multilingual information for clients who are not literate in their native language. This may be in the form of CDs, podcasts, picture stories or other mediums that may be used to deliver the information.

The following must be considered when preparing a text for translation:

Plain English must be used and must be written in the active voice.

The use of idioms, metaphors and jargons must be avoided.

Be aware of cultural sensitivities.

The document must be proofread before submitting for final translation.

The translator must be briefed before obtaining the quote they need to translate. Below are some of the things that must be provided:

- The text to be translated and the glossary of key terms
- Language, dialect and target audience
- How the translated material will be published
- The format that will be followed
- Confidentiality requirements

Informed Consent – Legal Considerations

Informed consent is a concept under privacy, confidentiality and disclosure. This relates to the actions and steps an organisation must perform before using the information provided by individuals. Under informed consent, you may only use personal information after informing and discussing your intent with the people involved. This may also entail getting their explicit and documented consent. The legal basis for informed consent is the Privacy Act 1988.

Legally, consent is only sufficient and valid when it meets specific criteria.

Consent must be informed.

- Consent is only valid if the person giving consent is aware of the related consequences.

Consent must be voluntary.

- People must not be forced to give their consent.

Consent must be current and specific.

- Consent is only limited to the specific purpose requested and discussed, and should not be assumed as granted for other purposes.

Consent must only be given by capable people.

- The person giving consent must be sufficiently capable of giving consent.

Based on Consent to the handling of personal information, used under CC BY 3.0 AU.
Office of the Australian Information Commissioner website — https://www.oaic.gov.au

Further Reading

Guidelines for consent in handling personal information are set by the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner. Follow the link below to learn more about the different types of consent, who can give consent, and how consent must be given.

Consent to the handling of personal information

To comply with the requirements of informed consent when handling information, you must:

- inform the person involved on the purpose of using the information
- inform the person involved on the ways the information will be used
- inform the person involved on who will have access to their information
- answer questions and clarify misunderstandings that the person involved may have
- obtain the written consent of the person allowing you to use the information.

Work Role Boundaries – Responsibilities and Limitations – Legal Considerations

Their responsibilities and limitations define the work role of an employee. *Responsibilities* refer to tasks an employee must perform at work. *Limitations* refer to actions that are beyond the scope and control of the employee's work role.

The legal framework for work role boundaries can be found in the Fair Work Act 2009. This law guides productive and inclusive workplace relations through provisions on:

- Terms and conditions of employment
- Rights and responsibilities of employees, employers and organisations.

Based on content from the Federal Register of Legislation at 24 September 2021. For the latest information on Australian Government law please go to https://www.legislation.gov.au.

For health and community services, the responsibilities and limitations of different people can be found in the Health Professionals and Support Services Award 2020. In this award, health professionals and support services employees have various responsibilities and limitations.

The table below shows that there are different levels of health professionals. This also involves the corresponding responsibilities and limitations.

Health professionals	
Title and level	**Responsibilities and limitations**
Health Professional – Level 1	Responsibilities ▪ Be a member of a professional association Limitation ▪ Receives guidance from senior staff
Health Professional – Level 2	Responsibilities ▪ Works independently ▪ Exercises independent judgement on routine matters ▪ Works under supervision from more senior members ▪ Involves in quality improvement activities ▪ Contributes to the analysis of guidelines, policies and procedures Limitation ▪ Does not allocate resources for budgeting ▪ Receives regular feedback from senior staff
Health Professional – Level 3	Responsibilities ▪ Applies professional knowledge and judgement ▪ Works with a high level of specialist knowledge and skills ▪ Contributes to the development of professional knowledge and skills in their field of work ▪ Performs across several recognised specialties ▪ Allocates resources to ensure optimal budget outcomes ▪ Provides regular feedback and appraisal for senior staff ▪ Provides support for effective and timely service provision Limitation ▪ Receives guidance from senior staff ▪ Does not develop strategic plans

Health professionals	
Title and level	**Responsibilities and limitations**
Health Professional – Level 4	Responsibilities ▪ Applies a high level of professional knowledge and judgement ▪ Allocates resources to set priorities ▪ Ensures budgets are met within a complex organisation ▪ Provides effective services ▪ Supervises staff ▪ Develops strategic business plans Limitation ▪ Focuses on high-level decisions ▪ Has limited time and opportunity to supervise staff

The table below shows that there are different levels of support services employees. This also involves the corresponding responsibilities and limitations.

Support services employees	
Title and level	**Responsibilities and limitations**
Support Services Employee – Level 1	Responsibilities ▪ Works within established routines, methods and procedures ▪ Has minimal accountability or discretion ▪ Works under direct supervision, either individually or in a team Limitation ▪ Is not required to have previous experience or training ▪ Receives guidance from more senior staff

Support services employees	
Title and level	**Responsibilities and limitations**
Support Services Employee – Level 2	Responsibilities ▪ Prioritises work within established policies, guidelines and procedures ▪ Performs with a limited level of accountability or discretion ▪ Works under limited supervision ▪ Possesses sound communication skills ▪ Is required to undergo on-the-job training or relevant skills training or experience Limitations ▪ Receives guidance and supervision from more senior staff ▪ Is not required to qualify with a specific certificate level
Support Services Employee – Level 3	Responsibilities ▪ Prioritises work within established policies, guidelines and procedures ▪ Performs with a medium level of accountability or discretion ▪ Works under limited supervision ▪ Possesses sound communication and arithmetic skills ▪ Is required to undergo on-the-job training or relevant training experience Limitations ▪ Receives guidance and supervision from more senior staff ▪ Is not required to qualify with a specific certificate level

Support services employees	
Title and level	**Responsibilities and limitations**
Support Services Employee – Level 4	Responsibilities ▪ Prioritises work within established policies, guidelines and procedures ▪ Performs with a medium level of accountability or discretion ▪ Works under limited supervision ▪ Possesses sound communication, interpersonal and arithmetic skills ▪ Is required to undergo on-the-job training, formal qualifications and relevant training experience at Certificate III level Limitations ▪ Receives guidance and supervision from more senior staff ▪ Does not use basic computer knowledge ▪ Does not possess administrative skills
Support Services Employee – Level 5	Responsibilities ▪ Functions semi-autonomously ▪ Performs with a substantial level of accountability ▪ Works individually or in a team ▪ Displays basic computer knowledge regularly ▪ Possesses administrative skills ▪ Possesses well-developed communication, interpersonal and arithmetic skills ▪ Is required to undergo on-the-job training, formal qualifications at trade or certificate level and relevant skill training or experience Limitations ▪ Receives guidance and supervision from more senior staff ▪ Does not use comprehensive computer knowledge ▪ Is not required to have Advanced Certificate or Associate Diploma

Support services employees	
Title and level	**Responsibilities and limitations**
Support Services Employee – Level 6	Responsibilities ▪ Functions with a high level of autonomy ▪ Performs with a substantial level of accountability ▪ Works individually or in a team ▪ Displays comprehensive computer knowledge regularly ▪ Possesses administrative skills and problem-solving abilities ▪ Possesses well-developed communication, interpersonal and arithmetic skills ▪ Is required to undergo on-the-job training, formal qualifications at post-trade or Advanced Certificate or Associate Diploma level Limitations ▪ Receives guidance and supervision from more senior staff ▪ Does not train employees in lower levels ▪ Does not monitor workflow

Support services employees	
Title and level	**Responsibilities and limitations**
Support Services Employee – Level 7	Responsibilities ▪ Functions autonomously ▪ Performs with a substantial level of accountability ▪ Supervises the work of others ▪ Works individually or in a team ▪ Displays comprehensive computer knowledge on a regular basis ▪ Possesses developed administrative skills and problem-solving abilities ▪ Possesses well-developed communication, interpersonal and arithmetic skills ▪ Is required to undergo on-the-job training, formal qualifications at post-trade or Advanced Certificate or Associate Diploma level Limitations ▪ Receives guidance and supervision from more senior staff ▪ Does not train employees in lower levels ▪ Does not assist in developing policies

Support services employees	
Title and level	**Responsibilities and limitations**
Support Services Employee – Level 8	Responsibilities ▪ Independently advises on a range of activities ▪ Contributes to the determination of objectives within the relevant field/s of their expertise ▪ Delegates responsible for the work under their supervision ▪ Trains and supervises employees in lower levels ▪ Assists in developing policy or services to meet the changing client needs ▪ Finalises quotations or costings ▪ Prepares internal reports for management Limitations ▪ Receives guidance and supervision from more senior staff ▪ Does not train employees in lower levels ▪ Does not monitor workflow
Support Services Employee – Level 9	Responsibilities ▪ Establishes priorities, task methodologies and work practices ▪ Prepares papers and reports ▪ Undertakes activities of a specialist ▪ Supervises a work group ▪ Sets priorities ▪ Monitors workflow ▪ Develops training programs for group development ▪ Provides advice in relation to development ▪ Communicates with clients or other relevant people Limitation ▪ Focuses on high-level decisions ▪ Has limited time and opportunity to supervise staff

Ethical Considerations

On the other hand, *ethical consideration* refers to a collection of values that should be followed concerning human affairs. To determine the scope of compliance requirements you need to adhere to, you must first identify and evaluate your work area. *Ethical decisions* are decisions that will positively impact trust and respect between clients and other relevant people. These are decisions that support and protect the clients, as well as the employees and employers. These decisions help in maintaining professionalism and the integrity of the service. Support workers may find guidance on ethical considerations in codes of conduct and code of ethics implemented in the area of work.

A *conflict of interest* occurs when an employee can be influenced by private or personal interests while performing the job. Although some employees can remain objective in their behaviour and decision-making, conflict of interest can be actual, perceived or potential. Instead of justifying one's behaviour and decisions, it is better to avoid that position in the first place. Employees must ensure that their choices are free of bias. These must also be based on relevant facts, policies and programmes. These choices must be implemented fairly. This helps in maintaining public trust. Conflict of interest may involve:

- monetary or material benefits or financial gain or loss
- favours, personal relationships or associations
- interests of employee's family members or relatives
- interests of workplace colleagues or business associates or partners
- interests of friends
- hostility or friendship within a relationship.

The examples below discuss the effect of conflict of interest on ethical decision-making:

- The possibility of financial gain may cause a person to make decisions that favour them to the detriment of others in the workplace. Having multiple people in charge in decision-making that involves money will help address this kind of scenario.
- A person may favour one person in the workplace for promotions because they are relatives. People in the organisation must not allow people with family connections to work under the same department.
- A person may refuse to give work opportunities to someone whom they dislike for personal reasons. The organisation must ensure that they are giving equal opportunities to each and everyone in the team.

Privacy, Confidentiality and Disclosure

Information you collect and use for operations is subject to privacy, confidentiality and disclosure laws. The handling of information in your organisation is governed by ethical principles that guide practice. Privacy, confidentiality and disclosure policies are based on the principle of respect for individual privacy and discretion. Each individual has a right to decide what information they share with organisations. They also have the right to know how this information is being used. Under disclosure, individuals also have the right to decide if their data should be used or shared at all.

The following guidelines may apply to you and others in your organisation. This is to maintain an ethical practice concerning privacy, confidentiality and disclosure, which is as follows:

- Do not bring up confidential information in conversations you have with others.
- Treat colleagues and clients with respect. Do not judge or discriminate against them based on confidential or protected information.
- Do not force people to share information if they are not comfortable with it.
- Ensure that authorised discussions of confidential matters are conducted in a secure environment.
- Always obtain consent when you wish to bring up or discuss confidential information.

These guidelines may be instituted in policies and procedures to require strict compliance by all workers.

Discrimination

People are protected from discrimination through national and state/territory anti-discrimination laws. Similar to laws, the overarching ethical framework for discrimination is based on the protection of human rights.

Anti-discrimination legislation prescribes specific and mandatory policies for all organisations to follow. Ethical considerations are concerned with particular measures. These prevent cultures of discrimination from growing within the organisation. As a service worker, you are responsible for ensuring that clients and other people relevant to the service are protected from discrimination. This includes ensuring that work processes and practices are fair for all.

To prevent discrimination in the workplace, the Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) suggests the following actions for management to create a fair and productive workplace:

- Develop and implement policies on discrimination and harassment.
- Establish a process for responding to discrimination and harassment complaints.
- Orient, inform and update staff on policies and procedures related to discrimination and harassment.
- Provide anti-discrimination training for staff.
- Ensure that the managers model and promote anti-discrimination.
- Establish contact points by assigning contact officers. These people will receive and discuss employees' discrimination and harassment issues.
- Establish other policies in line with workplace equality. This involves flexible work arrangements for workers with families.
- Identify and plan to address possible risk factors for discrimination and harassment.
- Ensure that your workplace is accessible to employees with disabilities.
- Consider other ways to identify problem areas where discrimination and harassment may arise. This may include staff surveys, exit interviews and other methods.

Duty of Care

The ethical framework behind the duty of care comes from the power balance in health and community services. In health and community situations, service members who interact with clients are charged with a duty of care. This is because they are in a position of control and power. In other words, the risk of harm to clients is dependent on the action or inaction of their carers.

In the workplace context, health and community services must be proactive in identifying and assessing risks. This is necessary for preventing injuries and accidents. An ethical organisation implements the following practices to uphold the duty of care:

- Duty of care policies and procedures are included in the staff handbook and code of conduct.
- Employees are well-oriented on their duty of care responsibilities.
- The prescribed processes for ensuring the safety of clients are promptly followed. There must be no shortcuts or compromises.
- A safe and welcome environment for clients is established and maintained.

Mandatory Reporting

Mandatory reporting requires workers to report suspected cases of child abuse and neglect. This involves those who interact with the elderly under residential care and children. If a worker reasonably believes that an elderly or a child is at risk of harm, they must report it to authorities.

In mandatory reporting, two ethical principles are at play and are seemingly in conflict. First, mandatory reporting protects the rights and welfare of the elderly and children. Proper and timely reporting of incidents will protect them from risks of harm. There is a risk of violating professional codes of ethics and conduct related to privacy and confidentiality through mandatory reporting. By reporting an incident, you may be at risk of disclosing personal information to unauthorised persons.

To respond to this ethical dilemma, you must remember the following principles:

- Mandatory reporting precedes other codes of practice and ethics. As a health and community service provider, your primary concern is to protect clients from harm.
- Mandatory reporting must be done in good faith. This means that the sole intent of reporting must be to protect children and others in the area of work from harm.
- Mandatory reporting must have reasonable grounds. In this case, establishing ‘reasonable grounds’ means that any other person placed in your situation may have reported the incident based on the same grounds.

Adult Disclosure, Child Protection and Safety

Adult disclosure happens when a child discloses their experiences of abuse or neglect to older people. If an adult receives information that puts a child at risk, they must handle that information. They must also report them as necessary. The children’s safety and protection must be taken into consideration.

Some ethical considerations relevant to adult disclosure, child safety and protection may include the following:

- Availability of procedures for supporting children experiencing distress
- Suitability of adults who will have direct contact with children
- Suitability of location for children
- Methods for protecting the privacy, anonymity and confidentiality of children
- Risk of harm to children

Translation

Translators serve as the gateway for two people with different speaking languages to understand each other. Ethics needs to play a significant role during translation. This is whether the translation is done for documents or conversations. Most of the time, translators interpret stressful and delicate situations. There must be a set of guidelines that they need to follow. This helps in maintaining a high level of professionalism. This also protects their clients and the information that they share for translation.

The following are the ethical considerations that may relate to translation:

Translators must maintain professional practice when providing translating services to health and community members and clients.

The information that translators will be translating must be accurate and it must convey the meaning that is expected from the conversation in order for them to be registered properly.

Translators must adhere to confidentiality requirements in order to protect the information they are translating.

Translators must remain impartial and must not involve themselves in any situation which may conflict their interests as this may affect their performance while translating documents or conversation.

Translators must demonstrate equal respect and must be sensitive to parties with different cultures.

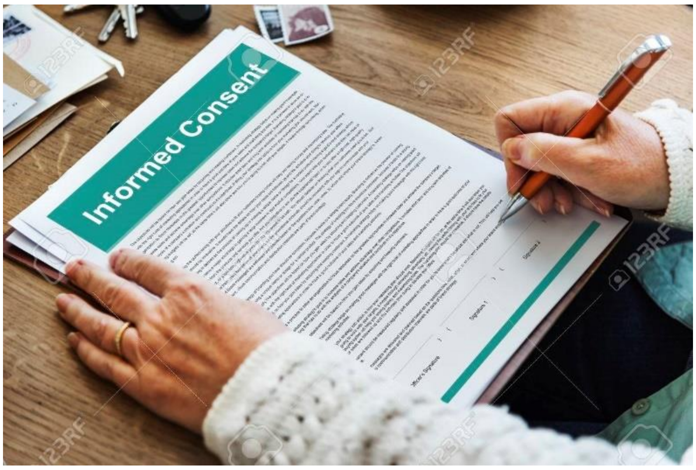
Translators must take responsibility if there are translation mistakes. They must rectify them in order to prevent risk issues.

Further Reading

The Australian Institute of Interpreters and Translators Inc follows a Code of Ethics which is recognised as the standards for ethical conduct of interpreters and translators in Australia and New Zealand. For more information, access the document through the link below.

Code of Ethics

Informed Consent



The proper application of privacy and confidentiality laws about consent is dependent on the judgement of the care service and its carers. The principles of integrity and transparency guide informed consent. Earlier, you learned about the set of compliance requirements concerning informed consent. These requirements dictate the actions you must take when obtaining consent.

To achieve these requirements, your organisation has corresponding ethical responsibilities, such as:

- Ensuring that the person involved completely understands what they are consenting to and why
- Practising due diligence in providing the person involved with all the information they need to give consent
- Refusing to proceed if there is enough reason to believe that the person concerned cannot give informed consent.

In the workplace, you may encounter situations where you need to obtain informed consent from clients, such as for:

- gathering children's information
- processes and procedures that will be performed
- medications that need to be taken
- the use of clients' personal information.

Work Role Boundaries – Responsibilities and Limitations

Earlier, you learned that service workers have different sets of responsibilities and limitations. These are all based on their level of knowledge and experience. For example, those in higher levels have more complex responsibilities compared to those in lower levels.

The ethical framework for establishing work role boundaries is grounded on respect for individual abilities and capabilities. This means that for good ethical practice in the workplace, responsibilities should be assigned concerning workers' individual limitations and boundaries. Workers should not be expected to perform tasks that they are not qualified to do in the first place. Additionally, work role boundaries must promote dignity in work. Each employee must take pride in their work regardless of their position within the organisation. This is only possible if work roles are well established and managed.

As a health and community worker, you are responsible for providing necessary services to the clients. You also need to work hand-in-hand with your colleagues. To establish ethical work role boundaries in your organisation, you must:

- Exhibit expected behaviour from your work role
- Achieve goals concerning work roles
- Encourage collaboration and teamwork among workers with different roles
- Promote constructive sharing of ideas and opinions regardless of organisational hierarchy.

Failure to uphold these ethical standards in the workplace may result in problems, such as:

- Hesitancy in bringing up workplace issues
- Lowered sense of security and safety in workers as they perform their roles
- Internal communication issues
- Underperformance due to unclear role expectations.

Sources of Information of Legal and Ethical Aspects of Health and Community Services Work

One of your roles is to guarantee that the information you gather and incorporate into providing services is based on credible sources. The data you use should be from sources that can be trusted. Authoritative sources of information are institutions or bodies in the industry that produce information about health and community services. Examples of these are government bodies and professional organisations. Examples of authoritative sources of information about health and community services include the following:

- **Department of Health**

  They develop and deliver policies regarding health. One of their strategic priorities is to provide affordable and quality services. This is for the better health and wellbeing of Australians.

- **Federal Register of Legislation**

  This is the authorised government website for Commonwealth legislation. It consists of a detailed life cycle of each law and the relationships between each of them. This involves legislation concerning protecting clients and health service providers based on national laws.

- **Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW)**

  AIHW is an independent statutory government agency working with health and welfare. Their role is to collect and manage health and welfare data. This also includes state, territory and federal government agencies.

- **Australian Human Rights Commission**

  This is an independent statutory organisation. They help in protecting and promoting human rights. They assist in providing legal advice on the human rights obligations of both clients and health service providers.

- **Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA)**

  AHPRA is the national organisation responsible for implementing the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme across Australia. Their primary role is to protect the clients. They also set standards and policies that all registered health practitioners must adhere to.

- **National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (NRAS)**

  AHPRA maintains the NRAS. Their role is to ensure that only qualified practitioners are registered. This involves allied health professions under optometry, pharmacy, and physiotherapy among others.

- **Attorney-General's Department**

  They deliver programs and policies in maintaining and improving the country's law and justice framework. This involves the rights and protections of clients and employees. These are specific to human rights concerning health.

- **Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC)**

  OAIC is responsible for promoting and upholding the rights to privacy and information access. They do this by ensuring that the public's right to access necessary documents is under the Freedom of Information Act 1982. This involves both the rights of clients and service providers.

- **Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care**

  They improve health outcomes and client experiences and work in priority areas to ensure adequate service provision. This involves the safe delivery of health care. This also involves partnering with clients and with other health care professionals. They also focus on the quality, value and outcomes of the commission.

- **Therapeutic Goods Administration**

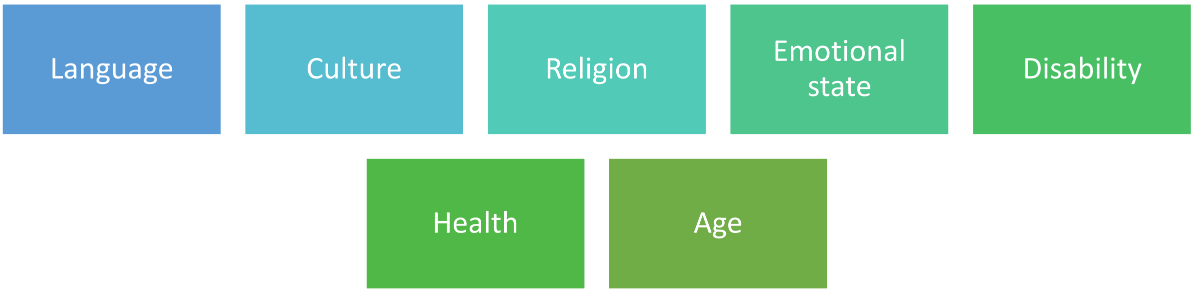
  They are a part of the Australian Government Department of Health. They are responsible for regulating therapeutic goods. They ensure that prescription medicines, vaccines, vitamins and other therapeutic goods are safe for the clients. These will help in treating illnesses and diseases.

- **Fair Work Ombudsman**

  They provide employees and employers free information about their workplace rights and obligations. They provide guidelines on compliance requirements related to employee welfare concerning health and community services.

Influences on Communication

Different factors influence communication. Each person may be coming from various places, and each of them grew up in different environments, including the people surrounding them. Where they come from and how they see things based on where they grew up will significantly affect their interaction with other people. Below are some of the factors that might influence communication:



- **Language** – *Language* is the fundamental factor that influences communication. When people come from different places, there is a high chance of understanding words, terms or ideas differently. When people have varying languages, there may be misunderstandings and misinterpretations of ideas and information.
- **Culture** – This refers to each person's identity and the sense of who they are as a person. This includes their beliefs, language, religion as well as the food they are eating. Some people might see things differently compared to others. They may have different views and opinions on some issues, which may cause misunderstanding with other people.
- **Religion** – Another communication barrier is religion. There are instances when a person's knowledge about different faiths and beliefs is insufficient. A person may not know the information that they must and must not include in the discussion. You must be aware of the differences in religion and beliefs. This may involve the topics that you can talk about. This also consists of physical contact, rituals or other considerations such as clothing and food.
- **Emotional state** – How people respond and react to situations also influences communication. You must be aware that people handle their feelings and emotions differently. You must understand that they may have different ways to deal with situations, and you must take them professionally.

- **Disability** – This includes people with physical disabilities such as hearing or speech problems. People are using adaptive and assistive technologies. This involves the use of hearing aids or braille systems. Because of these, it would be a challenge to communicate with them. You must be able to adjust by learning at least the basic sign language to understand one another. This also involves people with cognitive disabilities. This includes Down syndrome and attention deficit disorder. You must adjust your ways of communication to attend to their needs and communicate with them properly.
- **Health** – When a person is feeling sick, their mind is not focused on the thought or the idea they want to say, especially when they are feeling extreme pain. Some mental illnesses can also affect a person's communication with other people. Mental illness affects how a person talks and the information they are saying. A person with depression or anxiety often exhibits speech deficits. This may involve difficulty expressing the ideas in their heads or long pauses during conversations.
- **Age** – You must also understand that people from different age groups often have differences in communication. When communicating with young children, you must be able to adjust your way of communication and the use of simple words in your sentences. They often need concrete examples of illustrations for them to understand. Most of them may already have health issues that may affect communication when it comes to older people. This may involve visual and hearing impairments and memory loss.

In this unit, you will acquire the knowledge and skills in communicating and working in health or community services. You may be working in hospitals, health offices, health centres, community offices and the like. You will be able to fit in health or community service worker roles. This may involve roles, such as medical assistant, personal care assistant, care service employee or community services contact officer. These roles will require you to perform the knowledge and skills in communicating and working in health or community services.

While working in health or community services, you must learn to interact with different people. This includes the clients, your colleagues, supervisors and other people within the organisation or from other services. You must know how to communicate and work in such services. This will help in providing quality service to clients. This will also help you in maintaining a good relationship with the people you will be working with. Not being able to do so might have a significant impact on the delivery of service to the clients and the overall operation of the service.

In this learner guide, you will learn how to:

- Communicate Effectively With People
- Collaborate With Colleagues
- Resolve Communication Conflicts
- Report Conflicts
- Accomplish Workplace Correspondence and Documentation
- Contribute to Continuous Improvement

I. Communicate Effectively With People

Communication refers to exchanging information between people. This is one of the most important things you must focus on, especially when working in health and community services. Data and messages must be conveyed effectively and efficiently. This helps both ends to understand each other clearly and to carry out their task appropriately.

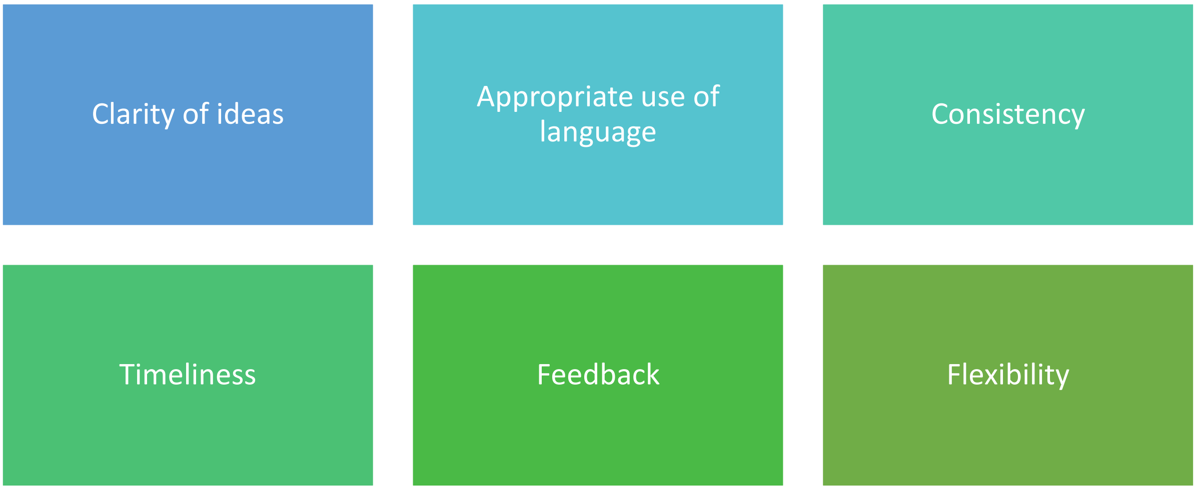
In health and community services, you will be encountering different people. This includes the clients, your colleagues, other service members and other relevant people. You must be able to communicate with them effectively. This may be done by considering the following:

- The principles of communication
- Models of communication
- Modes of communication
- Types of communication

The people you will be encountering are different from one another. The way you communicate with your colleagues might not be effective when communicating with clients or with supervisors. The principles, models, modes and types will guide you in maintaining effective and efficient communication with these people. You need to understand their communication preferences. This is for interaction to be more effective and efficient.

Principles of Effective Communication

Principles refer to fundamental qualities or attributes needed. This is for effective communication to be evident. These may also refer to the necessary behaviours and attitudes that each and everyone must possess. Below are some of the principles of effective communication:



- **Clarity of ideas** – Information and messages that will be shared and gathered must be clear and straightforward. This helps ensure that the necessary information is shared between service workers, clients and other relevant people. This is essential to have a clearer understanding of the topic.
- **Appropriate use of language** – Choice of words and use of language must be inclusive. Inclusive language promotes the acceptance and value of all people. It upholds preventing the use of words that will insult, stereotype, degrade or humiliate clients and other relevant people. It helps people feel valued and respected as everyone else should be.
- **Consistency** – For communication to be effective, there must also be consistency in all aspects that may affect communication. Communication must be under the services' objectives, procedures and processes.
- **Timeliness** – Ensure that communication is done promptly. Pay attention to the length of the communication when talking to clients and other relevant people. You must also consider when communication must be done. There should be no delays in communicating important information or issues, especially when there is a need for immediate action.

- **Feedback** – Make sure that communication must always be done in a two-way process. Both ends need to understand what each other wants to say. Both ends must be able to respond accordingly to what has been said. When this happens, there is a smooth flow in communication. This prevents misunderstandings between clients and other relevant people.
- **Flexibility** – The service's communication system must absorb possible changes in the organisation. It must adapt to possible adjustments and modifications in the process of communication. Communication protocols may be updated, and the service must be able to adjust to such changes.

Communication Models

Communication models refer to logical representations of the process of how communication works. The following are the most-common communication models:

Linear model | Interactive model | Transactional model

- **Linear model** – This model of communication is a one-way interaction in which feedback is not present. The following are the essential parts of a linear model:
  - **Sender** – This refers to the person who is speaking.
  - **Channel** – This refers to the method used in sending the message.
  - **Receiver** – This refers to the person who gets the message.

  An example of linear communication is when a carer instructs a colleague.
- **Interactive model** – This model of communication is a two-way interaction where feedback is present. There is an exchange of ideas between the sender and the receiver. Instead of having just one sender and receiver, each takes alternating roles by responding to each other's messages. It is focused on the flow of interaction and not on the message being delivered.

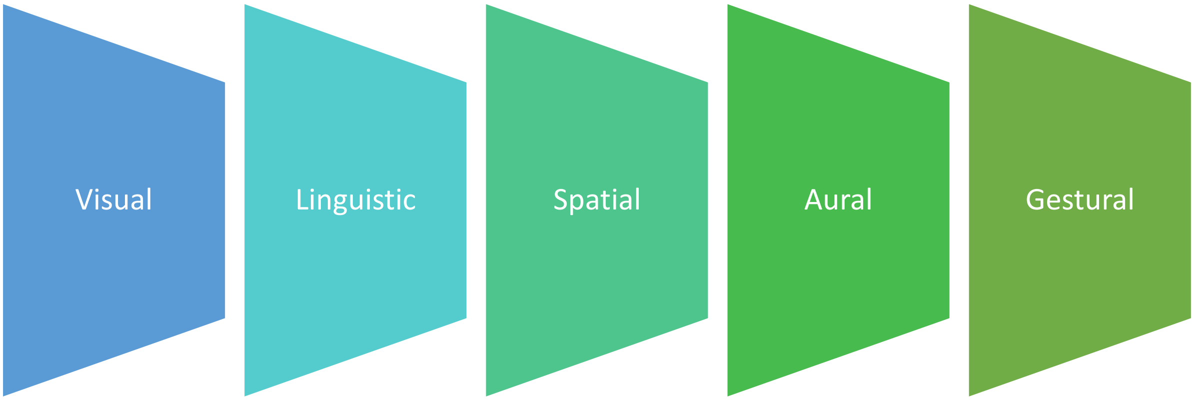
  An example of interactive communication is when two staff are talking to one another about a process in the service.

- **Transactional model** – This model of communication is described as an ongoing circular process. In this model, communication is not just focused on exchanging messages. It is concentrated on building relationships, learning new concepts and engaging with different situations.

  An example of transactional communication is when a carer attends to the needs of a client. This is done by providing them with the needed information about the service that they need.

Modes of Communication

Modes refer to the means or ways of communication. Below are the five modes of communication:

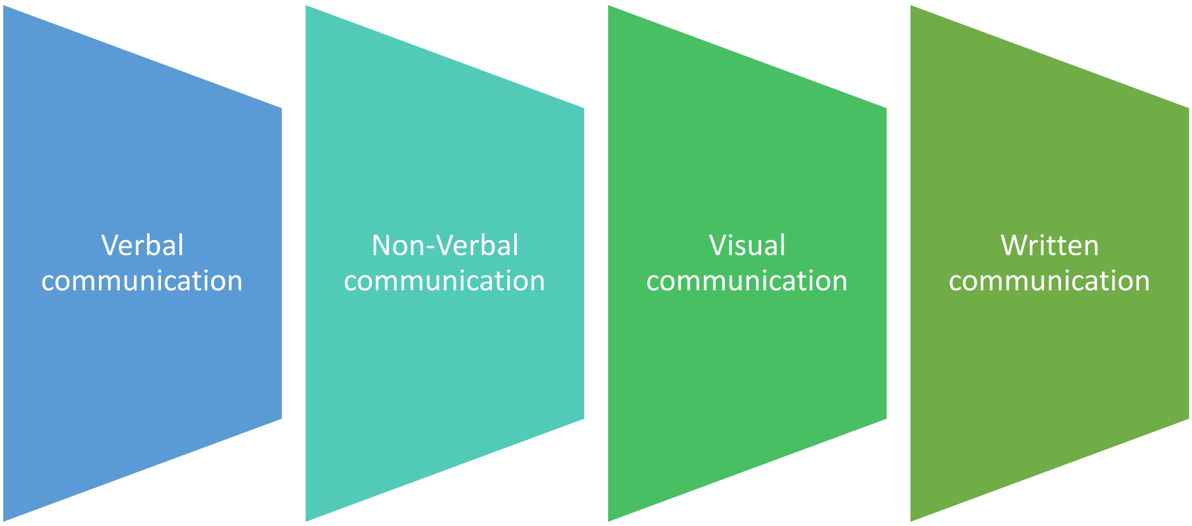


- **Visual** – This refers to images or diagrams that people see. This includes posters, photographs and signages that provide information. Examples of these are the following:
  - Posters about a process in reserving slots
  - Photographs of the facilities in the service
  - Signages, such as wheelchair ramps or emergency exits
- **Linguistic** – This is the most common mode of communication. This refers to spoken and written words, which includes choosing and organising the words into sentences. Examples of these are information being communicated to the people. This involves:
  - Instructions
  - Lists
  - Procedures
  - How-tos.

- **Spatial** – This refers to how the elements in the service are designed and arranged. In this mode, the distance between people and objects, and the organisation of items are considered. For example:
    - Seats are set to cater for all people despite their height or size
    - Placing the service rooms for aged care on the first floor of the building.
- **Aural** – This mode focuses on music, silence, tone of voice, volume and ambient noises. Examples of these are:
    - Announcements in the service
    - Podcasts
    - Calm music being played in the service
    - The volume and tone of your voice when you interact with different people.
- **Gestural** – This refers to the way movements are interpreted. This involves facial expressions, hand gestures and body language — all these help for face-to-face conversations to be more effective. This mode works with other modes in making the communication more meaningful.

Types of Communication

There are different types of communication being used daily. Each of these types may be used in different situations. Choosing the best type is essential for communication to be effective and meaningful. The following are the most common types of communication:



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- **Verbal communication** – This refers to the use of language in exchanging information through speaking or sign language. This type of communication is most used in plain conversations. This is also used in meetings, presentations, phone calls or conferences. Below are some of the things to consider when using verbal communication:

Use a calm yet confident speaking voice when talking to relevant people.

Ensure the proper utilisation of grammar, speed and pronunciation.

Be respectful in exchanging information with other people.

- **Non-verbal communication** – This refers to gestures, facial expressions and body language to convey information to relevant people. This type of communication can be done intentionally or unintentionally. For example, it becomes intentional when you choose to tap a person's back to comfort them. On the other hand, you may unintentionally smile when you hear good news from a colleague. Below are some of the things to consider when using non-verbal communication:

Develop emotional awareness.

Ensure that your gestures, facial expression and body language reflects what you are saying.

Make use of non-verbal cues that you find effective in each situation.

- **Visual communication** – This refers to visuals, such as photographs, illustrations, charts and graphs to convey information. They are often used to present information to have a more precise and concise representation. These are commonly used in meetings and creating reports. Below are some of the things to consider when using visual communication:

Consider your audience.

Ensure that data gathered are accurate.

Analyse the data and make use of appropriate medium.

- **Written communication** – This refers to conveying information in writing, typing or printing symbols such as letters and numbers. This is often used in producing written and digital data. These can be used to provide guidelines, as references or for documentation purposes. In the workplace, these are often used to create memos, letters and reports. Written communication is also used in sending emails and chats to relevant people. Below are some of the things to consider when using written communication:

Use a language that can be understood by most people.

Information must be simple and direct to the point.

Take time to review the documents you are writing.

Avoid the use of unnecessary elements.

With this, this Learner Guide will discuss the different tasks you should perform to communicate effectively with people. In this chapter, you will learn how to:

- Use Communication Techniques to Understand and Respect
- Communicate Service Information Clearly
- Confirm the Person's Understanding
- Listen, Clarify and Respond to Requests
- Exchange Information in a Timely Manner and Within Confidentiality Procedures

1.1 Use Verbal and Non-Verbal Communication to Enhance Understanding and Demonstrate Respect

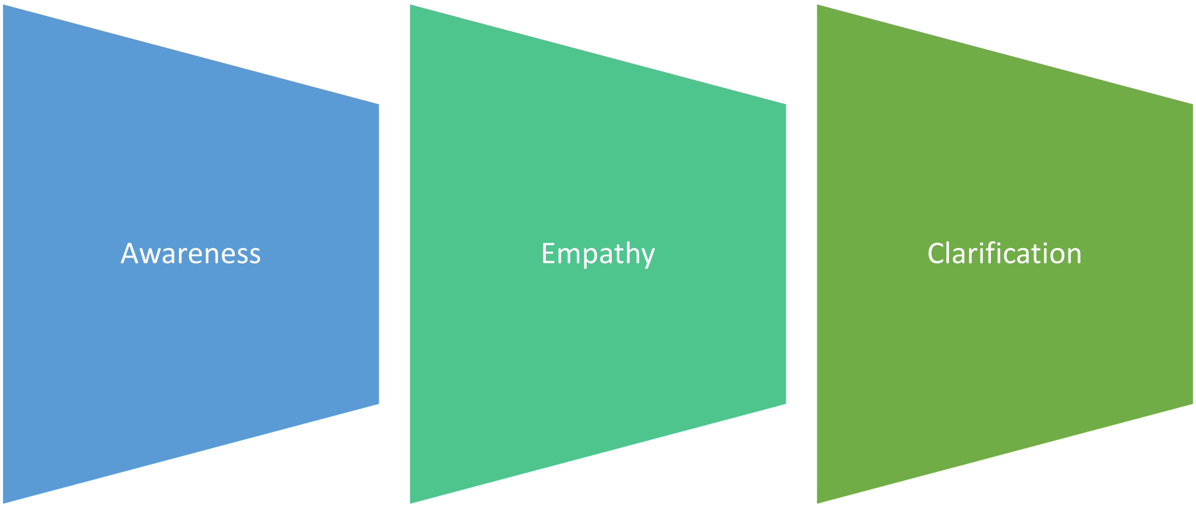
Working in a health or community service requires a lot of responsibilities. This includes communicating with clients, colleagues, managers or other relevant people. Communicating is not just done by simply exchanging information and messages with another person. Specific verbal and non-verbal responses must be done for communication to be effective. This involves the use of verbal and non-verbal communication. It is vital to consider these to enhance understanding of concepts and information. It also helps in demonstrating respect to the people you will be interacting with and towards various situations.

1.1.1 Understanding and Respect

You will be interacting with a lot of different sets of people. You need to enhance your understanding of the message and information you will provide them. This also includes that information that they want to inquire or ask about. When you strengthen your understanding, you tend to manage your behaviour. This helps in responding positively even in challenging situations. Demonstrating respect, on the other hand, helps in building a connection. This is beneficial for each and everyone to exhibit respect within the organisation and the community. You will be able to build lasting relationships with clients, colleagues, managers and other relevant people.

Enhancing Understanding

Understanding refers to the ability of a person to comprehend and realise people or situations. This involves perceiving the intended message or meaning of the words or information you gather. Below are some of the things to consider in enhancing understanding:



- **Awareness** – One way to understand the clients, colleagues and other relevant people is to be aware of their unique backgrounds. They may be coming from different places; thus, each of them may have different cultures and beliefs. Make sure to do some reading of the dos and don'ts when interacting with each of them. Some of them might be sensitive in some gestures that may seem normal to others. You must understand what behaviours must be exhibited while talking to these people.
- **Empathy** – Your understanding also enhances when you empathise with people or with the situation. When you put yourself in other people's shoes, you tend to understand them more. You dig deeper into the possible reasons behind a case and the possible outcomes of the behaviours that you will exhibit. This helps in providing them with the necessary help or service that they need.
- **Clarification** – It is also essential to clarify the information or message when interacting with these people. This can be done by asking questions, clarifying if your understanding is correct, and repeating or restating the message. If a message or information seems vague to you, ask if they can explain further to understand better. If you notice that they are confused about any instruction, paraphrase it for them to understand it better.

Demonstrating Respect

Respect refers to admiration due to the result of a person's abilities, characteristics or accomplishments. Respecting a person means valuing them and treating them how you want to be treated. Below are some of the things to consider in demonstrating respect:

- **Courtesy** – You must also consider your attitude and behaviour when interacting with people. You must maintain exhibiting politeness by considering the welfare of others. When communicating with clients, your colleagues and other relevant people, make sure to use polite words and actions. This is done to let them know that you care about them.
- **Appreciation and apology** – Another way to demonstrate respect is to show appreciation and apologise. Appreciation can be done by telling them sincere gratitude when they give you the necessary information you need. In cases where you make mistakes or delays are happening, make sure to apologise. These let them know that you respect them, and value their time and effort in communicating with you.
- **Attitude towards time** – One way to show respect is your attitude towards time. One kind gesture is being early during appointments and meetings. Being early shows that you value their time and effort. This will also help them be aware of their time and the people who may affect their behaviours. This will also help in developing a routine of punctuality, which will yield positive returns.

Multimedia

Linked below is a video about the transformative benefits of respect in the workplace. Click the link to access the video.

6 Transformative Benefits of Respect in the Workplace

1.1.2 Verbal and Non-Verbal Communication

As discussed in this chapter's introduction, effective communication refers to understanding varied ideas. This also involves exhibiting the appropriate behaviours and responses to act upon them. Effective communication can be done in a variety of ways. The most common types of communication are the following:

Verbal communication	Non-verbal communication

- **Verbal Communication** – This communication type is considered the primary form of communication. This refers to sharing of information through speaking or writing. You must be able to communicate with clients and colleagues to speak or write their thoughts and ideas. When talking to them, you must use positive words to develop trust and build lasting relationships. Through this, you can understand each other better and attend to their needs when necessary.

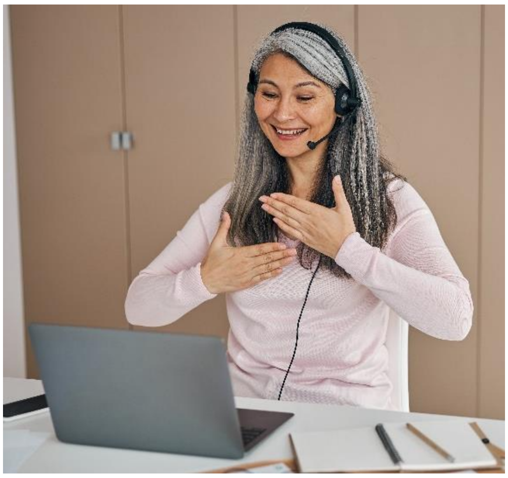
  In verbal communication, it is crucial to take note of the following:

  - **Grammar patterns** are vital structures for messages and information to carry meaning. The message or data must be constructed accurately for the other party to comprehend. For example, if you are reporting a recent incident to your supervisor using present tense verbs, they may think it is an incident that is still happening instead of one that has already been addressed.
  - **Speed** must also be considered while communicating with relevant people. Make sure that you speak at a steady speed for the listener to understand what you are saying. This also allows them to digest the information you are providing them for them to come up with a response. For example, it is important for support workers to ensure that they talk in a slow pace when communicating with older people so that they can clearly understand what is being said.
  - **Pronunciation** is also essential as this is what the other party's ears listen to. When the pronunciation is incorrect, they might comprehend a different meaning. This might cause misunderstanding or conflict. Support workers must consider this especially when talking to people with hearing impairments or language processing disorders.

Below are some of the verbal responses that you may use to *enhance understanding* and *demonstrate respect*:

Verbal responses to enhance understanding	Verbal responses to demonstrate respect
▪ 'So what you mean is… ' ▪ 'I understand your situation.' ▪ 'If you don't mind, is my interpretation correct?' ▪ 'So what happened is… '	▪ 'Thank you for… ' ▪ 'I apologise for… ' ▪ 'I'm sorry if… ' ▪ 'I promise to come before 9 am.' ▪ 'Would you mind if I… ' ▪ 'May I… '

- **Non-verbal communication** – You may also support the conversation with the use of non-verbal communication. This involves gestures, eye contact, facial expressions and tone of voice. This helps in holding up the message or information that you want to convey. Non-verbal responses may be used in different situations. Support workers must use non-verbal communication, especially when they are communicating with people who have speaking and hearing impairments and when handling people in an emotional vulnerable situation.

  Non-verbal communication is essential when communicating with clients, colleagues and other relevant people in health and community services. In health services, non-verbal communication helps when reassuring clients, especially those who are afraid and anxious. For example, when administering treatment to a frightened child, smiling, maintaining eye-contact and using gentle touches may help them feel comfortable. When talking to relevant people in community services, facing them, making eye contact with them and nodding to show that you are listening to them are some of the gestures to let them feel they are being provided the service they need.

Below are some of the non-verbal responses that you may use to *enhance understanding* and *demonstrate respect*:

Non-verbal responses to enhance understanding	Non-verbal responses to demonstrate respect
▪ Smiling to them whenever they are sharing information ▪ Nodding to show them that you are listening and that you agree to what they are saying ▪ Using hand gestures to support the message that you want to convey ▪ Speaking in a calm voice for them to focus on the conversation ▪ Displaying a quiet disposition even in challenging situations	▪ Slight bowing of head when greeting the people ▪ Facing people and maintaining eye contact when talking to them ▪ Sitting tall when communicating with people ▪ Holding both hands together when explaining something ▪ Offering a handshake before and after the conversation

Below are some specific situations where support workers must recognise non-verbal communication:

When communicating with someone who is not able to speak due to pain or injury

When deciding if a person is safe to approach after a violent outburst

When trying to decipher whether a person is lying or telling the truth

When figuring out whether a non-verbal person with a disability is happy or in distress

When deciding if a client feels unsafe or uncomfortable in a situation

Support workers must ensure that they are able to recognise their client's non-verbal communication and understand them. Being aware of their gestures, expressions and actions is essential in order to provide them their needs. Below are some of the ways support workers can recognise the client's non-verbal communication:

- Looking at the person's facial expression
- Watching their hands to interpret gestures
- Watching out for signs of discomfort
- Watching out for signs of aggression

A case study is provided to explain this further:

Brianna

Naomi, a 30-year-old client, came to the clinic to inquire about the services offered to her daughter, Brianna. Her child has been experiencing anxiety and depression due to the loss of her father. Naomi asked you about the availability of psychiatrists and counsellors. She also asked about their possible schedules.

While talking to Naomi, you noticed that Brianna was just staring blankly. You also saw that Naomi has been holding back her tears which causes her to buckle while talking. This also causes the conversation to take a long time.

In situations like this, the first thing you must do as a health care worker is to entertain the client respectfully. Make sure to display a welcoming disposition and to greet them verbally.

Be aware of their situation and empathise with them. You must understand that both are going through tough times and why they buckle while talking.

Clarify the situation by asking the client if your understanding of their concern is accurate. Help them by discussing the services offered to them, including the process they may undergo.

Provide a list of psychiatrists and counsellors with their corresponding availability. Make sure to maintain eye contact and a calm voice when talking to the client.

1.2 Communicate Service Information in a Manner That is Clear and Easily Understood

All services have unique information that describes their purpose. This information must be available to clients, service members and other relevant people. *Service information* refers to the pieces of information that can be provided to the public. This information needs to be shared to increase their awareness and help them choose the services they need.

This information must be communicated in a manner that is clear and easily understood. This is essential to deliver accurate and relevant information to the public. Relevant people are given opportunities to access the information they need about the service quickly. In return, this helps in building credibility and reliability among the clients and other relevant people. The service can gain the trust of the people in the community, including its members.

As a health or community service worker, one of your roles is to know how service information is communicated in various ways. Knowing this will give you an idea of the different means to inform relevant people of the information they need to know.

1.2.1 Service Information

These are information that can help notify the people of what the service can do and how they can be accessed. Below are some of the service information that can be provided for public access:

Vision and mission

Services offered

Target clients

Accessing the service

Contact details

Affiliations/Partnerships

- **Vision and mission** – Services often include their vision and mission. Through this, people become knowledgeable of its long-term goals. This also involves the actions that they need to take for them to achieve their goals. For example, most vision statements of health services focus on providing care and treatment to their patients. Their mission supports this. This involves the necessary action needed to provide care and treatment for their patients.
- **Services offered** – These refer to what the service can offer to the people. This involves various assistance, solution or aid that people can have access to. For example, aged care services assist older people. This involves accommodation services, personal care or complex care. Dental care services provide dental care for people of any age. This involves dental cleanings, X-rays, fillings and orthodontics among others.
- **Target clients** – These refer to the type of customers that the service wants to address. These may include their age, their needs or their health status. For example, the target client of school-age childcare services is the parents of children from 5 to 12 years old. Medical care services attend to people who need medical assistance.
- **Access to the service** – This refers to how the clients can access or subscribe to the service. This includes a series of steps on what they should do to request or apply for the service they need. These may involve the requirements that they need to prepare to access the service.

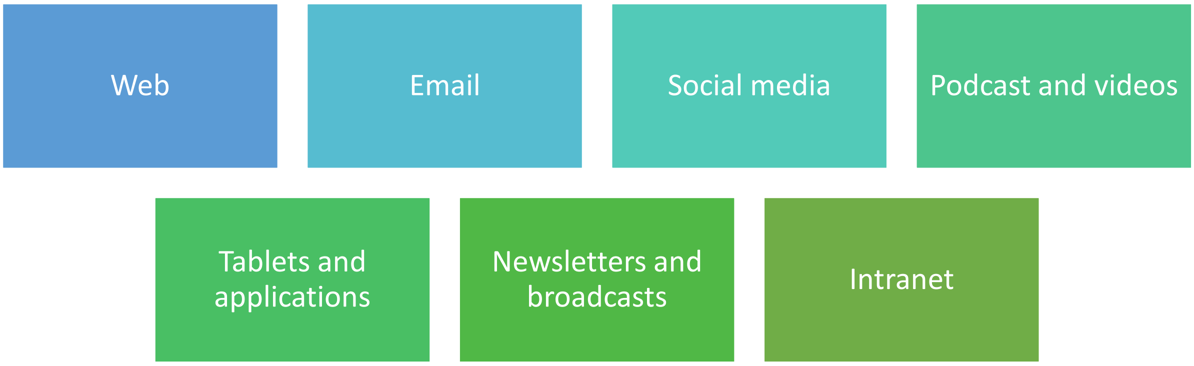
- **Affiliations/Partnerships** – These refer to partner organisations or affiliated services. The goals of affiliated organisations or services are relevant to the service's vision and mission. Affiliations or partnerships also add credibility to the service. Clients will know that the service is reliable in attending to their needs. Clients are also provided ideas on which to consult if the service is not available.
- **Contact details** – This is one of the most critical pieces of information that a service must have. This involves the service's address, contact numbers or email address. These serve as the way for the clients or other relevant people to reach the service.

1.2.2 Communicating Service Information Clearly and Easily Understood

The pieces of information about the service must be communicated for them to be available to the public. *Digital media* refers to any communication media that uses electronic devices. These are used to deliver, process and manage information. This way, the clients will become knowledgeable of the service in the comfort of their homes. These pieces of information must be communicated in a manner that is clear and easily understood.

There is clear communication when both the sender and the receiver of the message are on the same path. This helps in avoiding misunderstandings which also decreases possibilities for conflicts and errors. These sets of information will be clearly understood by both ends when they are presented in an organised manner. Using digital media is one way to communicate the service's information to relevant people.

Service information may be shared with the public by using the following types of digital media:



- **Web** – This may refer to the Internet or to a website displayed using a browser. Through this, people may quickly access the service information in just a few clicks and presses. This will be helpful, especially to potential clients who want to be knowledgeable of the service. Having a website will help the organisation in presenting their services by providing the clients with graphical and interactive content. This way, they can easily understand what the service provides.

Aside from the information discussed in the previous section, a website may also include the following:

- Pictures of facilities
- Client reviews
- Relevant news
- Service announcements
- Videos and illustrations
- Additional features

- **Email** – This refers to the use of a computer in sending and receiving messages. Emails are primarily used in sending memos, letters, reminders, files and documents. These types of documents usually contain lengthy details and reminding relevant people of such information will be confusing when they are just discussed verbally or face-to-face. If they use email, they can be able to relay the information in a detailed manner. This involves informing them of important matters such as the date, the agenda, the files they need to access, etc. Also, they can always check the email whenever they need to clarify information relating to the documents they received.

  Below are some examples of how emails can be used in communicating service information:

  - The management may use emails in sending updates or reports to the members of the service.
  - Service staffs may use emails when they need to update or remind their clients.
  - Clients may use emails when they want to request for documents or services.
  - Potential clients may use emails when they want to send inquiries.

- **Social media** – These refer to platforms that allow people to exchange information and socialise with one another. User preferences are considered, and these help in providing recommendations to users. This is where clients can also see multimedia, updates, events, programmes and other information relevant to the service. This way, they can be clearly informed of the details they need to know about the service.

Below are some examples of how social media can be used in communicating service information:

Clients can be able to see photos, videos and other posts relevant to the service.

Clients may discuss their experiences about a particular service. This makes potential clients aware of the service that will attend to their needs.

The service may share updates and posters about the new features of the service.

The service may share information about events or programmes organised by the service.

- **Podcasts and videos** – *Podcast* refers to a digital audio file, while a *video* is a record of shifting graphic images. Often, both are used for marketing purposes. Clients can be able to gather clear information by listening to podcasts and watching videos. The discussions of the service the organisation provides are summarised which allows them to understand the information without having to read lengthy articles or texts.

  Below are some examples of how podcasts and videos are used in communicating service information:

  Advertisements are developed to inform the people about the service.

  Podcasts may be used to inform people about the possibilities and risks and how the service may help in attending to such experiences.

- **Tablets and applications** – *Tablets* are mobile devices that are installed with applications. Services may develop applications for relevant people to have quick access to the service information. This way, the clients can be able to gather clear information through the applications developed for the organisation. Instead of reading lengthy texts and information, they can just browse through these applications and follow the steps being provided for them.

  These applications may have the following features:

  Online appointment setting

  Online inquiry

  Monitoring health status

  Virtual check-ups

- **Newsletters and broadcasts** – *Newsletters* are mainly used as a tool in sharing relevant and up-to-date information. *Broadcasts* refer to radio or television programs that are also used to provide public service information. This may involve announcements, daily news, interviews and documentaries. Below are some examples of how newsletters and broadcasts can be used in communicating service information:

Client interviews may be shown to invite potential clients.

Service members may be formally informed of management changes through newsletters.

- **Intranet** – This refers to a computer network that can be used within an organisation. This is used to secure information being shared across the organisation. This helps the service members and other relevant people have quick access to the service information. Relevant people may be given login details for them to access service information fully. Below are some examples of how the intranet can help communicate service information:

The management can monitor and keep track of the service or individual progress.

Service staffs may access templates and form that they need to use for their task.

Clients may see the schedules on when they can visit the service.

1.3 Confirm the Person’s Understanding

As a health or community service worker, one of your responsibilities is to ensure that the communication is accurate and precise. This involves confirming the person’s understanding of the information or message that you said. You must be able to put yourself in their shoes when you disclose information to relevant people.

There are various reasons why you must confirm the person’s understanding. These involve but are not limited to the following:

- You might be speaking too fast.
- Clients might not be aware of some of the terminologies.
- English might not be their first language.
- They might be pointing out a different thought or idea.

Thinking through these possibilities will help you identify the necessary steps in confirming the person’s understanding. These might help you in recognising the things to consider. This is for these people to understand information or messages in a more transparent and more organised manner.

There are instances when people will not understand or might have a vague understanding of what you said. While some of them can directly ask you to repeat what you said, some are not confident enough to ask or request clarification. You must be aware that some of these people might be confused about what you are saying, and you can see them puzzled. With these, you may confirm their understanding by doing but are not limited to the following:

- **Repeating the discussion**

  If you notice that the person you are talking to is clueless about what you just said, try to repeat the discussion. In case of lengthy messages, using visuals may help in informing the other party. Not all people can fully understand through listening. Providing them with illustrations such as graphs and charts may help them fully grasp the information. For example, when talking to older people, there might be chances that they did not hear you properly due to hearing loss. You must be able to speak in a steady and calm voice for them to understand it clearly.

- **Restating the idea**

  In cases where they are still confused about what you said, you must restate the idea in languages or terms that they can understand. If you are talking to clients, make sure to convert complicated terminologies to words that they can understand better. Restate the idea when you are talking to children or people with additional or special needs. This can be done by using simple words and relating them to experiences they encounter. You must also notice when English is not the home language of the person you are talking to. You must adjust by using simple terms for them to understand.

- **Asking out**

  One of the helpful ways to confirm the person's understanding is to ask them directly. Ask them if they understood what you said or if certain parts of the discussion seemed confusing for them. Below are some of the questions that you may ask to confirm their understanding:

  'Are you familiar with...?'

  'Does it make sense?'

  'Do you follow?'

  'Do you know how to...?'

  'Do you know what I mean by...?'

Through these, you can confirm if the person you are talking to understood what you said. Confirming their understanding will help them proceed to further steps. This will lead to achieving their goals and targets.

1.4 Listen, Clarify and Respond to Requests

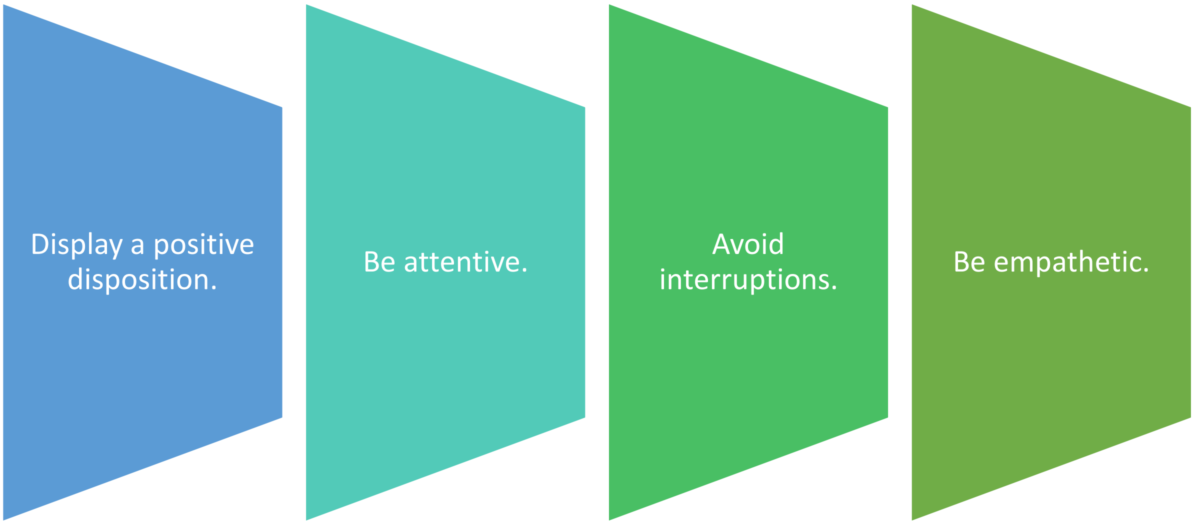
Requests refer to a thing that someone is asking for. Your clients may request information about the service. Your colleagues may request documents that they need to accomplish a task. Your manager may request a report or an update of work-related tasks.

As a health or community service worker, you must communicate with these people by listening to these requests. You must be able to clarify what they mean or if your understanding of their requests is correct. Having the information that you need will help you respond appropriately to their queries.

It is essential to listen to their requests and clarify them to respond accordingly. You will save time and effort if you listen to them clearly before taking the necessary action. This will also save you from misunderstandings that may lead to conflicts. Listening, clarifying and responding to requests may be done in face-to-face discussions. This may also be done via phone calls or online conversations. In any discussion, make sure that you listen, clarify and respond to these people with respect and in a welcoming manner.

1.4.1 Listening to Requests

The goal of listening is to acquire information from people. Listening is an integral part of communication skills that requires time and patience. If you listen, you can build a trusting relationship with your clients and other relevant people. Listening also helps in increasing productivity. You can address the concern efficiently since the process is already clear to you. This will also help in preventing conflicts from arising. Having clear and smooth communication with people will save you from being engaged with issues or problems. Below are some of the things to consider when listening to requests from relevant people:



- **Display a positive disposition.** – If you talk to a person face-to-face, it is essential to display a positive disposition. Make sure to smile and let them know that they are free to ask for requests or queries. You have to show a welcoming attitude to let them know that they can approach you. They will be confident enough to trust you with the information that they need to know. If you are talking to them through a phone call, make sure to maintain a calm voice. Let them know that you can be trusted by speaking professionally.
- **Be attentive.** – Make sure to focus on the information or message being discussed by the person you are talking to. You must understand their request by giving your full attention to the details that they are saying. When you are talking to them face-to-face, make sure to maintain eye contact. Support the conversation with non-verbal cues. This includes nodding and smiling to let them know that you are getting the information they are saying. In case the discussion is through a phone call, let them know that you are listening. This can be done by saying short responses, such as ‘Yes’ or producing sounds that indicate affirmation or agreement.

- **Avoid interruptions.** – Since you listen to their requests, give them enough time to state their requests. Please wait for your turn and avoid interrupting their statements unless they ask for clarification or approval. You may take notes while talking to them to let them know that you are getting what they say. When they are done talking, allow a few seconds before clarifying things with them.
- **Be empathetic.** – When you are listening to these people, always put yourself in their shoes. This will help you feel their emotions and understand the reason for their requests. You will appreciate the need to respond to them, especially when their request is urgent or when they need immediate action. This is where you can think about specific considerations in certain situations.

1.4.2 Clarifying Meaning

While it is essential to listen to the requests of relevant people carefully, there are instances when you are not able to gain a full grasp of the information. You may have heard everything they said at times, but you have a different interpretation of what they want. When this happens, you have to seek clarification of their request. You have to make sure that your understanding is correct. Just like listening, clarifying helps assure the person that you are interested in what they are saying. This also helps in avoiding conflicts within the workplace. Clarifying meaning prevents misunderstanding and misinterpretation, which may lead to mistakes or troubles.

Make sure to clarify meaning respectfully. Below are some of the things to consider in clarifying meaning with relevant people:

- **Apologise.** – Do not forget to say sorry for making them repeat what they said. This will let them know that their time and effort are being valued.
- **Use respectful words.** – This can be done by using introductory phrases such as 'Would you…', 'Is it okay to…', 'Could you…' or simply adding the word 'Please'.
- **Confirm your understanding.** – This can be done by restating what they said and confirming if your understanding is correct. This helps in recalling what their request is. This proves that you are listening to their demands. This can contribute to building a trusting relationship.

Below are some example statements on how to clarify meaning:

'Sorry, would you mind repeating that for me?'

'Would you mind pronouncing that one more time?'

'Is it okay if you tell me that piece of information again?'

'Could you be more specific?'

'Can you please repeat it for me?'

'So what you meant is…'

'Do I understand it correctly?'

'Please let me know if my understanding is correct.'

'So from what you are saying…'

1.4.3 Responding Appropriately

Once you get all the information you need and have clarified their requests, you must organise your response appropriately. Responses must be given to address the demands of the clients, colleagues, managers or other relevant people. These responses must be able to provide them with the information or help that they need. Below are some of the things to consider to respond appropriately:

- **Responses must be direct to the point.** – Most requests need direct responses. Make sure that when responding to requests, your response must be simple, short and specific. For example, when clients request a list of hospital referrals, answer them directly by providing them with the list they need. When a colleague asks for a digital copy of a particular document, send it to them virtually. When your manager requests a printed report, provide them with a report including the information they need to see.
- **Avoid unnecessary complexity.** – When responding to requests, ensure that your response does not contain unnecessary complexity. This includes irrelevant words like jargon which may add confusion to the conversation. Focus on what the other party is requesting and avoid adding information or designs that are not related.
- **Consider the other party's language.** – You will become aware of the person's language when you listen to their requests. Communicating with them will give you a hint whether they are using English as their first language. You must be able to adjust your way of communication and your language in a manner that they will understand. This can be done by using simple sentences or by giving relatable examples.
- **Respond politely.** – Remember to stay polite when responding to their requests. Take note that not all conversations carry on smoothly. There will be times where you need to communicate with difficult people, and you must stay polite despite the situation. You must remain calm and professional by using polite words, especially when you need to apologise or make a point.

1.5 Exchange Information Clearly in a Timely Manner and Within Confidentiality Procedures

Communicating with different people in health and community services can be challenging. You have to maintain a cheerful disposition while dealing with different personalities. All of these must be regardless of the situation.

Aside from these, you also have to exchange information with them in a clear and timely manner. This is not just about saving time but also the wise utilisation of time while sharing or gathering information. This involves gathering information from relevant people as necessary as possible. It also includes the provision of daily updates when necessary. When data is collected or provided on time, the succeeding action steps can already be visualised.

You also have to consider confidentiality procedures when exchanging information with different people. Not all information must be disclosed to the public. There are sets of information that need to be protected for the safety of the people. Make sure to review the service’s confidentiality procedures before sharing or gathering information.

1.5.1 Exchange Information Clearly in a Timely Manner

Exchanging information means gathering and providing relevant knowledge. This is done by at least two parties which may involve service workers, colleagues, clients and other relevant people. Information relating to health and community services may include the following:

- Service information such as service provision
- Client details such as their current condition
- Updates like changes with the process
- Details about different reports

This information needs to be exchanged clearly. This means that the information that you will be gathering or providing must be constructed appropriately. Having clear information leads to better understanding and swift action.

In line with this, the pieces of information must also be exchanged promptly. You must be able to trade this information as the need arises. This may include how often a particular task must be done based on specific needs and the situation.

Below is a table that shows how the pieces of information are exchanged in a clear and timely manner:

Information	Exchanging information clearly	Exchanging information in a timely manner
Service information	Provision and receiving of *clear and organised* information about the service and service provision	Giving *immediate responses* to inquiries of potential clients
Client details	Reminding your colleague of the *exact frequency* of the client's medications	*Daily recording* of client's condition, such as their client's vital signs, heart rate, etc.
Updates	Listening to the *particular changes* in the process of completing workplace documents	*Regularly informing* the families of the progress of the client's health status
Reports	Presentation of data about the number of clients through *charts and tables*	Submission of *weekly reports* to the supervisor

1.5.2 Exchange Information Clearly Within Confidentiality Procedures

As discussed in the introduction of this unit, privacy, confidentiality and disclosure laws protect people's information from misuse. Confidentiality restricts access to certain information only to people who require the information. With health and community services, confidentiality procedures may be done through but are not limited to the following:

Giving out information	Gathering information
Give out service information as necessary as possible.	Collect information of clients and other relevant people.
Ensure that information provided will be used for health and community service purposes.	Use their information for health and community service purposes.
Take responsibility for sharing confidential information.	Take responsibility for whatever misuse of information collected.
Ensure that the information being shared are accurate, reliable and up-to-date.	Ensure that the information collected is authentic.

While confidentiality laws offer protection of information, they also have limitations. Below are some of the circumstances where such restrictions may apply:

- Clients and other relevant people must provide information as part of mandatory reporting.
- The information must be shared or gathered to prevent the people involved from being harmed.
- The information must be shared or gathered to prevent putting the health and welfare of people involved at risk.
- The information must be shared or gathered for legal processes (e.g. court cases).

Checkpoint! Let's Review

1. Grammar patterns are vital structures in order for messages and information to carry meaning.
2. If you are talking to a person face-to-face, it is important to display a positive disposition. Make sure to smile and let them know that they are free to ask for requests or queries.
3. Exchanging information means gathering and providing relevant knowledge. This is done by at least two parties which may involve service workers, colleagues, clients and other relevant people.

Learning Activity for Chapter 1

Well done completing this chapter. You may now proceed to your **Learning Activity Booklet** (provided along with this Learner Guide) and complete the learning activities associated with this chapter.

Please coordinate with your trainer/training organisation for additional instructions and guidance in completing these practical activities.

II. Collaborate With Colleagues

In the previous chapter, you learned how to communicate with people effectively, including your colleagues. *Colleagues* refer to the people you work with to provide services to the clients and carry out work tasks.

In this chapter, you will be acquiring the knowledge and skills in collaborating with your colleagues. *Collaboration* means working together to make integrated decisions. This involves having a common goal towards service provision and completing workplace tasks. This is essential to prevent errors in service provision. It is a crucial thing to have a shared understanding and process. This applies most especially when dealing with client records and other workplace documents.

With this, this Learner Guide will discuss the different tasks you should perform to collaborate with colleagues. This chapter will discuss the following:

- Listen, clarify and agree to timeframes
- Identify lines of communication between organisation and other services
- Use industry terminologies during communication
- Follow communication protocols

2.1 Listen, Clarify and Agree to Timeframes

One of the most critical things in a workplace is communicating with your colleagues. This involves listening and clarifying things with them during a conversation. This is essential, especially when you are carrying out workplace instructions. You must be able to understand the instruction clearly for you to accomplish the task appropriately. In cases when you have doubts about your understanding, you must clarify the information with the people you are talking to.

Aside from these, you will encounter circumstances when you need to agree to timeframes being set. There will always be adequate time provided in finishing a task. However, there are periods when you think the time provided is insufficient, leading to disagreement about timeframes. Disagreements must be settled through settlements and negotiations. This helps in satisfying the needs of both ends and for the service to continue delivering.

2.1.1 Listen to and Clarify Workplace Instructions

You will be experiencing a lot of encounters not just with the clients, but most of all, with your colleagues. These encounters require each of you to be active listeners for workplace instructions to be given and heard clearly. You must clarify if your understanding is correct after hearing the instructions. This helps in accomplishing the task appropriately, thus, saving time and resources.

Listening to Workplace Instructions

As discussed in Subchapter 1.4, the goal of listening is to acquire information from other people. Listening is not just critical in listening to requests. It is essential to understand workplace instructions. You must be able to understand what your colleagues or your managers are asking you to do. This helps in making you capable of converting instructions into actions. Listening helps in bridging the gap between what you already know and what you need to learn. Below are some of the things to consider in listening to workplace instructions:

Listen actively.	Take down notes.	Exhibit positive attitude.

- **Listen actively.** – *Active listening* refers to understanding what other people are saying and not just hearing the words they speak. This can be done by maintaining eye contact with them. This involves displaying non-verbal cues such as nodding, smiling or saying words of affirmation.
- **Take down notes.** – You can also show that you are listening by taking down notes. Writing down the exact words helps you remember the instructions that you need to do. If instructions are lengthy, you may take note of the keywords. These will serve as guides whenever you want to recall the instructions given.
- **Exhibit a positive attitude.** – When listening, ensure that you have a cheerful disposition. Face them and let them see that you are calmly listening. Having your arms crossed or continuous tapping of feet may be disrespectful as these may mean that you are in a hurry. When you are confused with the instructions, do not just interrupt your colleague. You may raise your hand or say ‘excuse me’ when there is a need for immediate clarification.

Clarifying Workplace Instructions

Taking note of the instructions given does not mean you can go straight to taking action. Make sure that you clarify if your understanding of the instructions is correct. Below are some of the things you may do to clarify workplace instructions:

Ask questions.	Confirm your understanding.	Respond with a positive attitude.

- **Ask questions.** – The most basic way of clarifying your understanding is by asking questions. This must be done immediately to avoid misunderstanding. Below are sample questions that you may ask:
    - ‘Sorry, can you please recall the next step?’
    - ‘Did you mention Patient A, or have I misheard you?’
    - ‘I would like to clarify about the details of….’
- **Confirm your understanding.** – Aside from asking, you may also confirm by restating what they just said. Before doing the task, try rereading the instructions that you have taken note of. This helps in verifying if you heard them correctly. You may also ask the following questions:
    - ‘So what you mean is….’
    - ‘Please tell me if my understanding of… is correct.’
    - ‘So I need to print it first, right?’
- **Respond with a positive attitude.** – Maintain a positive attitude when clarifying your understanding. Make use of respectful words such as ‘If you don’t mind,’ ‘Excuse me’, or ‘Sorry’ when you need to interrupt to clarify something. After every clarification, show gratitude by saying ‘Thank you’ and by smiling. Make use of the appropriate non-verbal cues when clarifying your understanding. This is done to show respect towards your colleague.

2.1.2 Timeframes

Timeframe refers to a particular period in which a task needs to be accomplished. This indicates how much time is given for a job to be done. This also involves the expected deadline or due date for each of the tasks assigned. Below are sample workplace instructions with their corresponding timeframes:

Instruction	Support and resources	Timeframes
Generate reports for the meeting	▪ Necessary data ▪ Updates from each department	Two weeks
Talk to clients	▪ Client details ▪ Schedule	One week
Schedule a meeting with the supervisor	Supervisor's approval	Two days

Timeframes are essential in carrying out workplace instructions. Setting timeframes help in preventing the following from occurring:

- Missed or delayed deadlines
- Procrastination of team members
- Priorities not being focused on

Such occurrences may be prevented if you know how to listen, clarify and agree to timeframes being set. Listening to set timeframes is as important as listening to workplace instructions. Being aware of when workplace instruction must be accomplished is vital in delivering better service provision.

Listening to Set Timeframes

One example of a situation when you need to listen to set timeframes is during strategic planning meetings. You have to listen to know the due dates and the corresponding tasks that need to be done. This helps you in knowing which ones to prioritise over other tasks. The things to consider in listening to workplace instructions can also be applied to listening to timeframes. You may refer to the discussion on listening to workplace instructions in the previous section.

Clarifying Set Timeframes

Just like workplace instructions, there will be times that how you understood the details might be different from what is being conveyed. It is important to clarify your understanding of the set timeframes. This will help in preventing misunderstandings from arising. Clarifying set timeframes will enlighten you on which tasks must be done first based on the start and due dates given. This will also help in clarifying certain matters if you notice inconsistencies with the timeframes given.

The things to consider in clarifying workplace instructions may also apply to clarifying set timeframes. You may refer to the discussion on clarifying workplace instructions in the previous section.

Agreeing to Set Timeframes

While it is important to meet deadlines, you must also learn to negotiate, especially when you think the given time is not enough in carrying out workplace instruction. Below are some of the things you need to consider when agreeing to timeframes:

- **Assess the situation.** – When you are given instructions, assess the difficulty of the task. This involves calculating how much time you need in order for the task to be accomplished. Review them across the allotted time for you to finish it.
- **Be honest.** – Upon assessing the situation, make sure to open up when it is necessary. Be honest when you need additional time for carrying out workplace instruction. As soon as you realise that the time allotted is not enough, dare to speak up.
- **Suggest reasonable alternatives.** – You may propose projected dates or timeframes when you think the time is not enough. Make sure that your suggestion is not aggressive to the point that the whole process might be affected. In suggesting alternatives, you must understand that you have to make certain adjustments in some of your tasks.

- **Negotiate.** – It is not guaranteed that your suggestion will be approved. It would be best to learn how to negotiate respectfully. Let them understand your concern, and you must also listen to their responses. There must be a compromise for both ends to find the best solution that works for everyone.
- **Confirm timeframes.** – When your concerns are settled, you must be able to confirm the timeframes set. There must be an agreement between you and the person who gave the instruction. Agreeing to timeframes means taking the responsibility of delivering the instruction appropriately and on time.

Below is a sample case study to explain this further:

Accomplishing Paperworks

Randy, your team leader, conducted a meeting within your team. You and three other members attended it. The meeting started with some announcements regarding the updates and changes with the format of forms and templates. These are the documents you are using within the department. You noticed that there are inconsistencies with some of the pages. You raised your hand and clarified the changes to Randy. He thanked you for bringing the concern up and clarified that the third page is correct.

As the meeting went along, Randy mentioned that you would be working in pairs to accomplish the paperwork, specifically a report. William was assigned to be your partner. Randy told all of you that the deadline for the report is within the week. While browsing through the sample report, William thinks that the time is not enough to accomplish the report. You agreed with what William said, and both of you decided to negotiate with Randy. He asked you to explain further why you think it cannot be finished within the week.

After specific negotiations, Randy granted your request to have the report submitted the following week.

It is important to voice out when you think a certain concern needs to be addressed immediately in the situation above. Since all of you will be using the forms and templates, it is wise to clarify the exact format that you will be using. This is not just for you but for the welfare of your colleagues.

When you think the time is not enough to accomplish a particular task, negotiating is the best way. You must justify why there is a need for an extension for both parties to agree to timeframes.

2.2 Identify Lines of Communication Between Organisation and Other Services

Lines of communication are referred to as how information and messages are conveyed from one person to another. This involves identifying who needs to be communicated with regarding a particular topic or situation. This may also imply placing the appropriate means of communication with relevant people. You must maintain good communication by opening the lines of communication to your colleagues and relevant people from other services. This helps in building mutual trust and respect in the service.

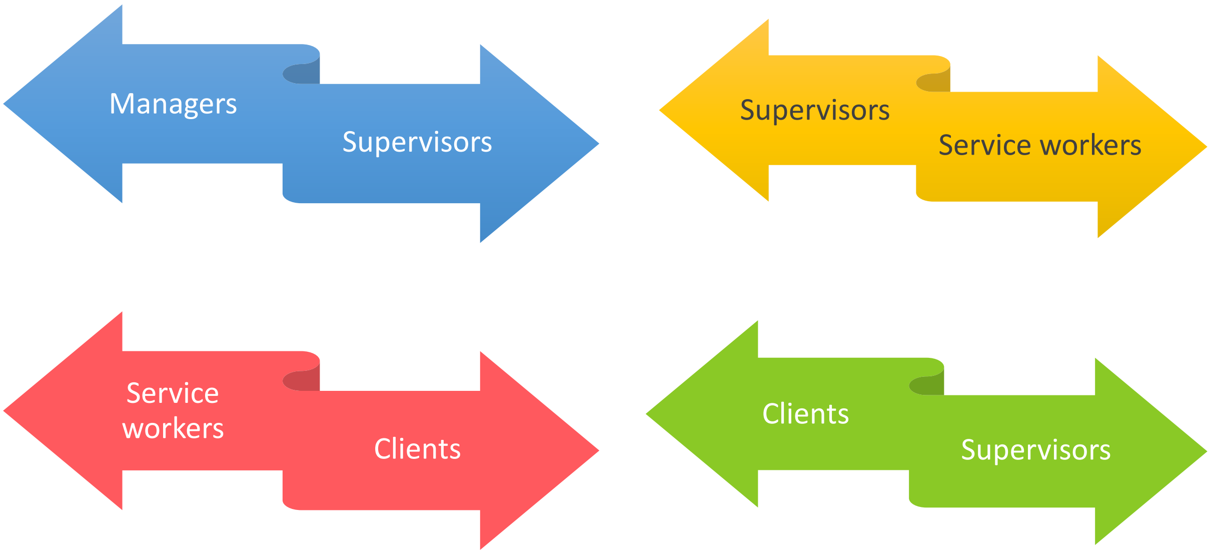
Determining the line of communication is essential for the process of communication to be smooth and accurate. Information shared and gathered must be authentic, clear and precise. This is essential, especially since you are working on health and community services. Identifying the lines of communication will help in providing effective services to those people in need.

The lines of communication in the workplace can be identified by:

- **Checking the organisation's chain of command.** *Chain of command* refers to how the organisation passes instructions from one employee to another. This requires employees to know who they must relay sets of information with. For example, employees need to report to their direct superior rather than bringing their concerns up to the ones in higher position (e.g. managers, Chief Operating Officer, etc.).
- **Checking the organisation's communication protocols.** All organisations have rules when it comes to transferring information. This may involve following communication protocols that will further be discussed in Subchapter 2.4.

Lines of Communication Within the Organisation

Below are some of the lines of communication *within an organisation*:



Managers to Supervisors

Both positions have leadership responsibilities. However, each of them still has its unique obligations. *Managers* are the ones who devise strategies and make decisions for the service. *Supervisors* are responsible for administering tasks. They also make sure that service members accomplish them accordingly. There may be more than one supervisor, and they all report to the manager regarding service progress and developments.

Supervisors to Service Workers

Supervisors administer tasks to service workers. They are the ones who provide guidance and advice to the service workers. In return, service workers directly report to their supervisors. They seek guidance and advice from the supervisors regarding their concerns. They also ask for assistance for specific points for improvement.

Service Workers to Clients

Service workers provide care and service to the clients. They are the ones who provide the necessary assistance that the clients need. For example, aged care workers provide services to the elderly. Disability support workers provide services to people with disabilities. Education aides offer support to children. In return, the clients seek help from the service workers. They ask for help whenever they need particular assistance.

Clients to Supervisors

Clients provide feedbacks about the services they receive to the supervisors. They also communicate their preferences and the changes that they want to happen with the service being provided. In return, supervisors inform the clients of updates and changes within the service. They are the ones who offer new services they think may help the clients. They also tell them the options they may choose from in relation to the service the clients are receiving.

Lines of Communication with Other Services

The lines of communication are not just limited within the organisation. There are also external lines of communication with which the service is associated to. The process of identifying lines of communication within the organisation may also apply with other services. However, there are other things to consider when identifying lines of communication outside the organisation. Before coordinating with relevant people from other services, the organisation must become familiar with communication protocols that these services follow.

When you are communicating within the service or with other services, you must consider the following:

- Familiarise yourself with the services they offer.
- Know who to talk to when there is a need for inquiry or interaction.
- Prepare all the necessary documents that they may ask from you.
- Follow the schedule that has been set.

Below are some of the lines of communication *with other services*:

Managers to Allied Health Professionals

It was discussed in the introduction of this unit that allied health professionals are practitioners who work together in the health care team. This involves different professionals who have their own expertise, such as psychiatrists and counsellors among others. Managers coordinate with allied health professionals regarding the multiple needs of a client. There are certain instances when a client needs integrated care. These health care professionals coordinate with one another to provide integrated care to the clients.

Compliance Officer to Legal Professionals

Compliance officers coordinate with legal professionals regarding the service's compliance with legal or ethical requirements. They seek guidance and advice from these people for the service to meet the necessary standards and requirements.

2.3 Use Industry Terminologies Correctly in Verbal, Written, and Digital Communications

Terminology refers to a general word being used in specific fields or sectors. Each industry has a set of terminologies that its members and employees use within the workplace. These terminologies need to be used for each member of the industry to understand each context.

In health and community services, industry terminology plays an important role, especially when dealing with processes. Well-defined terminologies help the service members communicate more efficiently. When each service member the same set of words and terms, conversations become clear and concise.

These terminologies are used in different types of communication. This includes verbal, written and digital communication. Everyone needs to be consistent with the use of such terminologies despite varying means of communication.

2.3.1 Industry Terminologies

Different terminologies are being used under each community service and health service sector. Provided are tables that contain different sets of terminologies for each industry.

Below is a table consisting of terminologies being used in community services. This involves terminologies relating to community service roles and service provision:

Community services	
Terminology	**Description**
Case worker	Someone responsible for assisting children, adults and families in obtaining the service that they need
Counsellor	Someone who helps in addressing problems through clarification of issues and developing strategies in solving them
Volunteer	Refers to an individual who participates in community services in a charitable way
Welfare support worker	Someone who assists community service professionals in providing care in nursing homes and other community-based care facilities
Home and domestic support services	Service intended for those who need assistance in everyday households
Transport services	Service intended for those who are having difficulty taking ordinary transport
Multilingual phone service	A service intended for migrants, refugees and visitors to speak to someone in their language
Foster care	A service that provides care to children or young people in out-of-home care by authorised, unrelated carers
Out-of-home care (OOHC)	Refers to service in which a child or young person is cared for by someone other than their parent at a place other than their usual home

Below is a table consisting of terminologies being used in individual support. This involves terminologies relating to individual support roles and service provision:

Individual support	
Terminology	**Description**
Individual support worker	Refers to carers who provide practical support for individuals and their families. This may involve paperwork, administering medication and personal care.
Disability support worker	Refers to carers who assist people with disabilities
Aged care support worker	Refers to carers who look after the health and wellbeing of older people. This involves assisting them with their daily activities and providing them with their personal needs.
Disability services	Refers to service provided to individuals with a disability
Aged care	Refers to service and care is provided to older people
Flexible care	Refers to aged care that addresses people's needs in either a residential or home care setting
Personal care	Refers to a service that aims to assist with everyday tasks such as eating, going to the toilet, bathing and getting dressed, grooming, or getting in and out of bed
Transition care	Refers to support services and rehabilitation care upon being discharged from a hospital
Admission	Refers to entry into aged care services
Discharge reason	Refers to the reason for an exit from aged care services

Below is a table consisting of terminologies being used in school-age care. This involves terminologies relating to school-age care roles and service provision:

Childcare services	
Terminology	**Description**
Childcare worker	Someone who oversees the children's daily routine, which may relate to their education, recreation and hygiene
School-age care/Out-of-school hours care	Refers to services that provide education and care for children ages 5 to 12 after their school hours or during their free days
Family childcare	Refers to care provided to unrelated children in a provider's home setting
Informal childcare	Refers to childcare being provided by families, relatives and friends in the child's home
Regulated childcare	Refers to childcare facilities that need to comply with a regulatory system
Childcare access	Refers to the family's ability in finding quality childcare arrangements that will satisfy their preferences
Physical abuse	It occurs when a parent or a carer causes physical injury to a child or an adolescent
Child abuse	Any form of maltreatment by an adult which is threatening to a child
Neglect	The state of not receiving any form of care

Below is a table consisting of terminologies being used in health support services. This involves terminologies relating to health support service roles and service provision:

Health support services	
Terminology	**Description**
Senior consultant	Refers to doctors who see patients at specific times
Resident	Refers to doctors who attend to patients on wards
Registered nurse	Refers to those who manage most current care and treatment in the hospital
Allied health professionals	Refer to practitioners who work together in the health care team. This may involve dietitians, therapists, pharmacists, etc.
Primary carer	Refers to a person of any age who provides informal assistance, which may involve families and relatives
Clinical assistant	Refers to people who take care of housekeeping in the hospital
Nutritional support	Refers to therapy being given to people who cannot get enough nutrition through eating and drinking
Mental health care	Refers to care provided to people who have challenges with their emotions and social wellbeing
Laboratory and diagnostic care	Refers to a service that focuses on doing laboratory tests and diagnostic procedures to check a person's health
Physical therapy	Refers to a therapy being given to people to ease pain and help them function physically
Diagnosis	Refers to the process of determining the disease or condition of a patient based on their symptoms
Medications	Refers to pharmaceutical drugs to prevent or treat illnesses

2.3.2 Using Industry Terminologies Correctly

The terminologies discussed in the previous section must be used when talking to relevant people. This involves conversations with co-workers, clients and other relevant people outside the organisation. In order to use the terminologies accurately, you must consider the following:

- **The person you are communicating with.** When communicating with a co-worker, you must ensure that you are using the terminologies consistently. You must use the correct terminologies to avoid misunderstanding in the workplace. On the other hand, when you are talking to clients, you have to consider that most terminologies are not familiar to them. You must always back them up with explanations for them to understand the terminologies clearly.
- **The kind of service you are currently working in.** There are different sets of terminologies for each type of service provision as discussed in the previous section. You have to ensure that the terminologies you are using are in line with the service you are working on. Using a different set of terminologies may cause confusion or misunderstandings in service provision.

2.3.3 Using Industry Terminology in Verbal Communication

As discussed in the introduction of Chapter 1, verbal communication refers to the use of language in exchanging information through speaking or sign language. Verbal communication is mainly used in:

plain conversation	meeting	feedback	presentation.

- **Plain conversation** – This refers to conversations with colleagues, managers or other relevant people. This occurs at any time of the day when you need to tell something or listen to a colleague.

  Below is an example of how industry terminologies are used in plain conversations:

  > *'Hi, Colleague! Have you checked if a **resident doctor** is available right now?'*

- **Meeting** – This refers to the assembly of relevant people to listen to the agenda and participate in discussions. This usually happens when there are new updates that service members need to know or important matters that need to be addressed. Below is an example of how industry terminologies are used in meetings:

  > *The service conducted an emergency meeting. This is due to the recent incidents in the **laboratory and diagnostic** department.*

- **Feedback** – This refers to helpful information or criticism given to people for them to improve. This can be given to anyone in the workplace who needs to develop themselves for the better. Below is an example of how industry terminologies are used in feedback:

  *A team leader informed an **aged care worker** of the feedback they received from a patient. According to the feedback, they are amazed by the service provided to them primarily. The service is done during the **discharge** and the **transition**.*

- **Presentation** – This refers to providing necessary information by speaking or talking in front of an audience. This is done to keep members updated on events and happenings within the service by updating, informing or sharing insights. Presentations usually happen when there are reports or essential details that need to be shown. Below is an example of how industry terminologies are used in presentations:

  *During a presentation, the service presented a chart that displays the number of **individual support workers** assigned for **flexible, personal** and **transition care.***

2.3.4 Using Industry Terminology in Written Communication

Written communication refers to sending and receiving information in a printed form. The purpose of written communication is to have a printed copy of necessary documents. This also helps in making communication much clearer and making it understandable. Written communication may be done through the following:

Letters	Memos	Manuals	Reports

- **Letters** – These refer to workplace documents used to tell an intent formally. There are various types of letters used in the workplace. This may involve letters of request, letters of complaint and letters of application among others. Below is an example of how to use industry terminologies in letters:

  *The service sends out letters to request **volunteers** to help in the service's **transport services.***

- **Memos** – These refer to written documents used to keep the service members informed of updates and the latest news about the service. Memos can be service-wide or department-wide. Memos may involve changes in the policy and why the change needs to happen. Below is an example of how to use industry terminologies in memos:

  > *The service has sent out a memo about the changes in the format of the **case plan** being used by **case workers.***

- **Manuals** – These refer to documents given to the service members to be aware and knowledgeable of the service's policies. This may also involve the service's expectations of the performance and behaviours of its members. Below is an example of how to use industry terminologies in manuals:

  > *Section 7 of the service manual talks about the policies regarding **admission** and **discharge.***

- **Reports** – These refer to workplace documents that use facts and evidence to look at findings, issues and situations. Different reports are being used in the service. This may involve sales reports, meeting minutes, incident reports, progress reports or case studies. Below is an example of how to use industry terminologies in reports:

  > *Staff in the school-age care service prepares a report about the number of children in **informal** and **regulated childcare.***

2.3.5 Using Industry Terminology in Digital Communication

Digital communication refers to any type of communication that involves the use of technology. This may involve the following:

Email	Phone call	Video conference	Instant message

- **Email** – As discussed in Subchapter 1.2, email refers to using a computer in sending and receiving messages. Emails are used mainly in sending memos, letters, reminders, files and documents. Below is an example of how to use industry terminologies using an email:

  > *'Hi, Colleague! Mr Morgan's family is requesting **transition care**. You may contact the residential aged care facility through this number: 0123-4567.'*

- **Phone call** – This refers to conversations with relevant people over the phone. Below is an example of how phone calls can be used in using industry terminologies:

  *Colleague#1: 'Hi, this is Randy from Lotus Services. May I speak with Ms Brianna? This is regarding her request on the **diagnosis** and **medications** of the patients.'*

- **Video conference** – This refers to an online technology that allows the users to hold face-to-face meetings in different locations. Below is an example of how a video conference is used in using industry terminologies:

  *The service holds a video conference with the **allied health professionals** to talk about the changes and updates in the hospital.*

- **Instant message** – This refers to a type of communication in which two or more people converse in real-time using a device. Below is an example of how instant message is used in using industry terminologies:

  *A new service staff sent an instant message to a colleague to clarify something about the process of **admission**.*

2.4 Follow Communication Protocols

All industries and organisations have their sets of protocols that their employees need to follow. *Protocols* are referred to as established procedures that the members of an organisation need to go by. Just like organisations, health and community services have their own protocols. These protocols are vital for the service members and other relevant people to be aware of the practices they need to follow.

A *communication protocol* is a formal process that defines the types of information needed to be communicated to specific groups of people. Health and community services must minimise communication gaps. This is to ensure that all members of the service receive the necessary information they need to know.

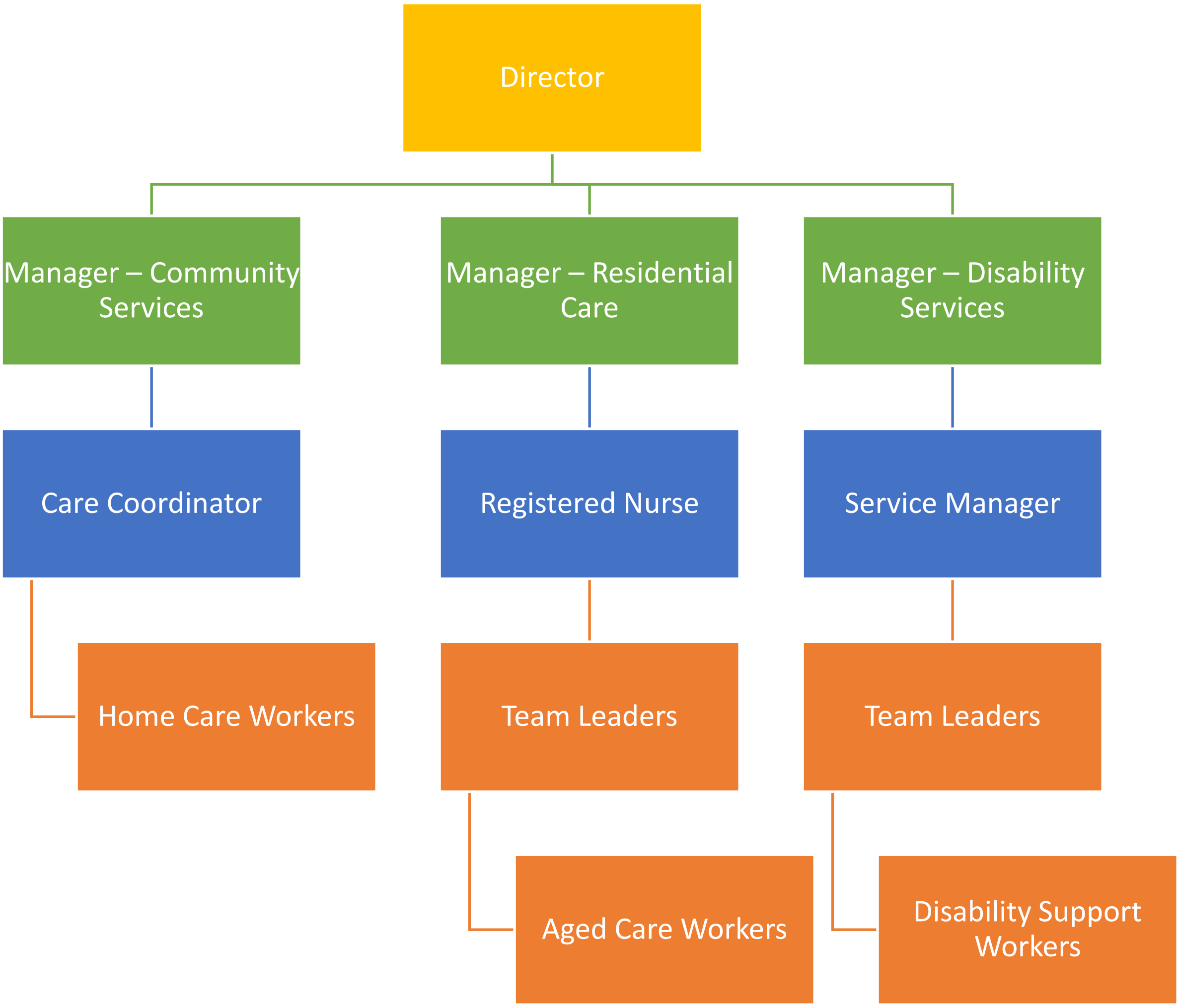
Communication protocols must be followed for the services to have an organised way of communication. Below are some of the benefits of following communication protocols:

- Builds consistency in communicating necessary information
- Ensures shared responsibility
- Connects all members of the service and other relevant people
- Identifies communication expectations between colleagues

2.4.1 Lines of Authority and Relevant People

Lines of authority refer to the connection between the people behind an organisation. The classical organisation theory suggests that this can be seen in organisational charts. This is also based on the chain of command. This encompasses the formal line of authority, communication and responsibilities within an organisation.

Generally, below are the typical roles included in a community services' lines of authority:



- **Director** – They are in charge of planning, directing and coordinating the service's activities. This involves overseeing the whole program, including its budget. They also supervise the service's policies concerning the requirements and the benefits it delivers.
- **Manager** – They are the ones who meet with the community to discuss their programs. They also coordinate the programs to support the community's wellbeing. Their job also involves managing the workers providing such services to the clients.

- **Care Coordinator** – They function as a case manager who coordinates health care and support services for those with health care needs. They help their clients in identifying their goals and help them in practising self-management. They work together with their client's families and caregivers to achieve patient-centred care.
- **Registered Nurse** – They work with clients and their families to maintain their health. They also help in preventing and treating illnesses. They aim to support their client's healthy lifestyles through the help of their carer.
- **Service Manager** – Their job is to manage a diverse, multi-disciplinary team. They are the ones responsible for leading the delivery of client services. They also oversee the compliance of the service with legal and ethical standards, policies and procedures.
- **Team Leaders** – They are the ones responsible for setting team strategy. They are also the ones who train the team members and monitor their progress towards their objectives. They communicate directly with the support and care workers regarding their roles in the service.
- **Support/Care Workers** – They are the ones who provide direct services to the clients. Their responsibilities involve assessing care plans. They also ensure that their client's needs are met by providing them with the needed service.

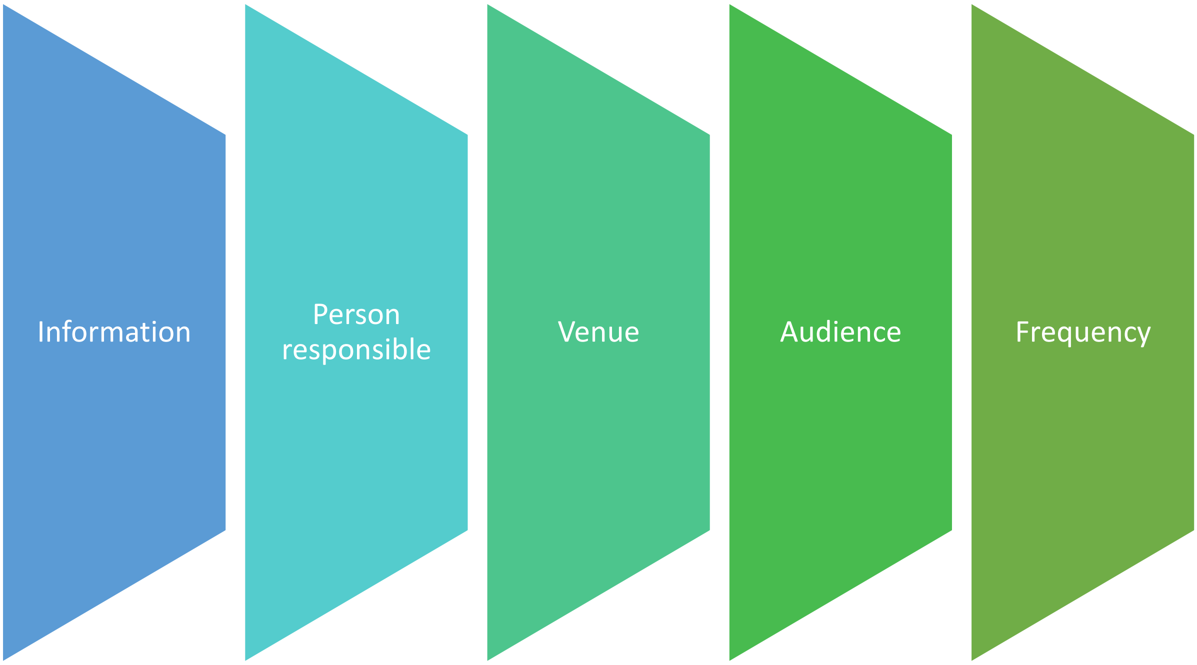
These lines of authority work with other relevant people. This involves working with:

Clients	Allied Health Professionals	Legal Professionals

- **Clients** – These are the people in need of service provision. Most of the discussions about clients are mentioned in the unit Introduction.
- **Allied Health Professionals –** These refer to health care workers who are experts in different disciplines. Most of the discussions about allied health professionals are mentioned in the unit Introduction.
- **Legal Professionals –** These are people who provide guidance and advise in order for organisations to meet the necessary standards and requirements.

2.4.2 Communication Protocol

A communication protocol may contain the following:



- **Information** – This refers to the message or topic that needs to be shared with relevant people. This may involve service updates, meetings, reviews, feedbacking or workload matters.
- **Person responsible** – This refers to the person who will take charge of the delivery of information. The idea of who will be responsible depends on the type of information that needs to be cascaded. The most common people who deliver information are the following:
    - Chief executive officers
    - Managers
    - Leaders
    - Department heads
    - Committee chairs

- **Venue** – This refers to the setting of where and how the information will be delivered. This may involve on-site locations such as the following:

  - Conference rooms
  - Meeting rooms
  - Virtual conferences
  - Emails
  - Calls

- **Audience** – This refers to the people to whom the information is dedicated. Identifying the audience depends on the information that needs to be cascaded. Service-wide information is often delivered to all members of the service. Sets of data about a specific department must, of course, be provided to members of the department.
- **Frequency** – This refers to the number of occurrences of the delivery of information. This indicates how often the delivery of data must take place. Some sets of information must be delivered weekly, and some updates may be provided monthly.

Multimedia

Linked below is a video about communication protocol. Click the link to access the video.

Communication Protocol

You, as a health care worker, must follow communication protocols when interacting with lines of authorities and other relevant people. You must refer to communication procedures and guidelines that your organisation adheres to. It is important for you to be aware of the contents of a communication protocol as discussed in the previous page. This helps you understand the sets of information that must be relayed, who can relay them, what channel they must use, who this sets of information must be given, and how often these must be done. This way, you can determine which events you must partake and which information you must be knowledgeable of.

Below is a sample communication protocol in interacting with lines of authorities in the health and community services:

Information	Person responsible	Venue	Audience	Frequency
Strategy update: ▪ Performance plan ▪ Forecast ▪ Sales and marketing	Director	Conference room	Managers and care coordinators	Quarterly
Service update: ▪ Review of service plans and goals ▪ Service development ▪ Performance update	Director	Email	All service employees and relevant people	Monthly
Quarterly meeting: ▪ Progress review ▪ Achieved plans and goals ▪ Opportunities for improvement	Service manager	Conference call/Virtual meeting	All service employees and relevant people	Quarterly

Information	Person responsible	Venue	Audience	Frequency
Departmental meeting: ▪ Team updates ▪ Announcements ▪ Performance improvement ▪ Feedback and recognition	Team leaders	Conference room	Carers and workers	Weekly

Below is a sample communication protocol in interacting with relevant people in the health and community services:

Information	Person responsible	Venue	Audience	Frequency
Service updates: ▪ New features ▪ Service development ▪ Changes in the service provision	Information officer / staff	Website, Email	Clients	Timely
Updates relevant to a client's health, including: ▪ Issues ▪ Improvements ▪ medications	Health care worker	Call, Email	Allied Health Professionals	As needed
Updates relevant to legal requirements	Manager	Email, Conference	Legal Professionals	As needed

Checkpoint! Let's Review

1. The most basic way of clarifying your understanding is by asking questions. This must be done immediately to avoid misunderstanding.
2. Determining the line of communication is essential for the process of communication to be smooth and accurate.
3. Well-defined terminologies help the service members communicate more efficiently.

Learning Activity for Chapter 2

Well done completing this chapter. You may now proceed to your **Learning Activity Booklet** (provided along with this Learner Guide) and complete the learning activities associated with this chapter.

Please coordinate with your trainer/training organisation for additional instructions and guidance in completing these practical activities.

III. Address Constraints to Communication

The previous chapter discussed how to collaborate with colleagues. It involves the knowledge and skills that you need to develop when dealing with other service members.

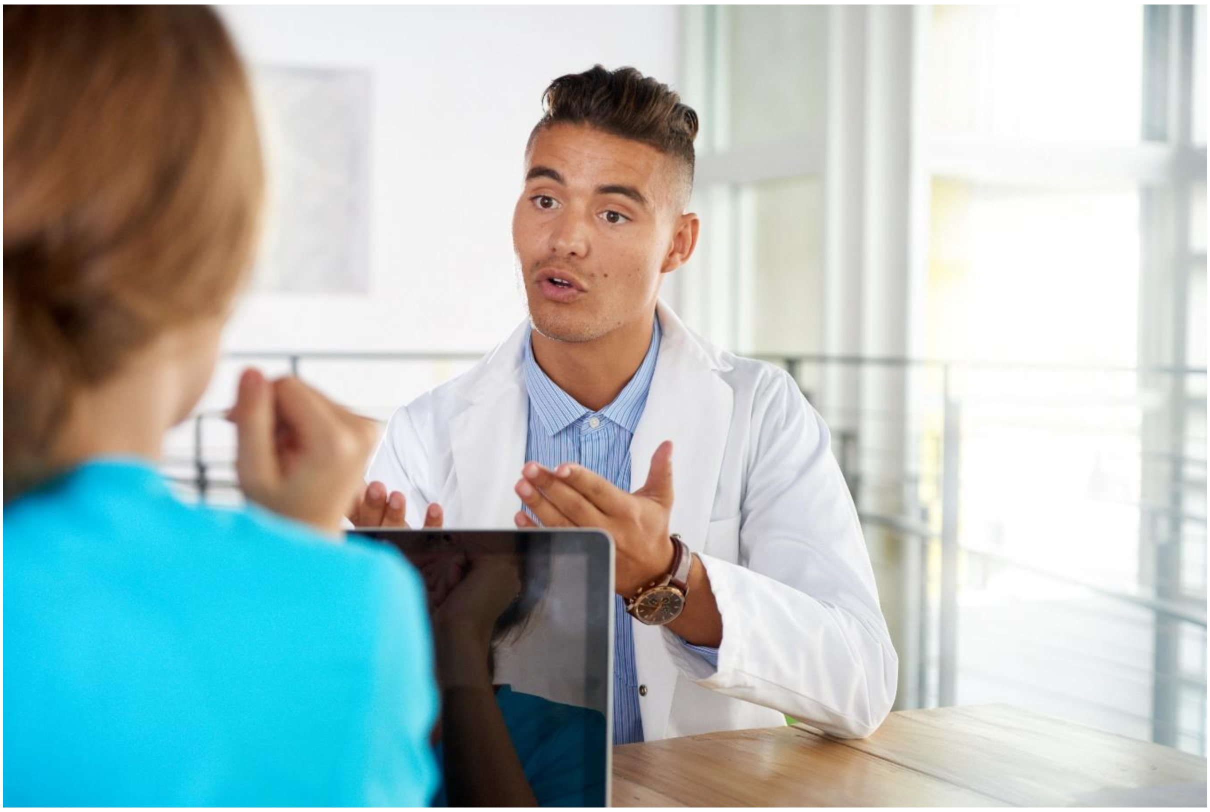
In this chapter, you will acquire the knowledge and skills on how to address constraints to communication. These are essential to maintain a collaborative relationship. These apply not just to colleagues but to other relevant people as well.

Constraints refer to limits or restrictions that stop something from happening. The presence of constraints hinders a smooth flow of communication. Messages and information being shared or gathered may be misunderstood due to constraints. These constraints need to be addressed immediately. This helps in maintaining clear and meaningful communication between relevant people.

With this, this Learner Guide will discuss the different tasks that you should perform to address constraints to communication. In general, this subchapter will discuss the following:

- Identify signs of potential conflict and report according to organisation procedures
- Identify communication constraints and resolve using communicate strategies and techniques
- Avoid, defuse and resolve conflicts using communication skills

3.1 Identify Signs of Potential Conflict and Report According to Organisation Procedures

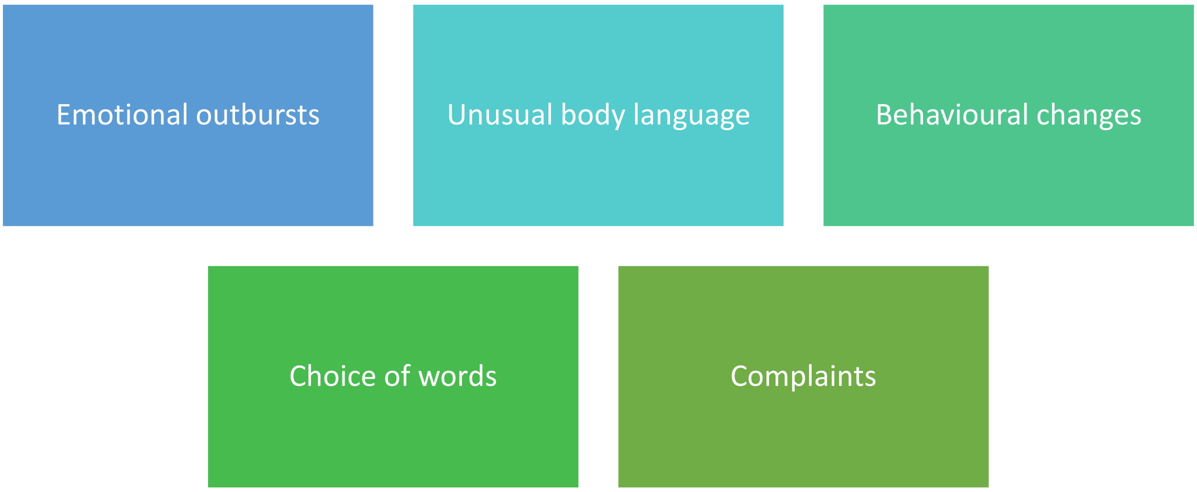


Before actual constraints arise, you will be observing early signs of potentially tricky situations in the service. These early signs must be identified for them to be addressed immediately. In most situations, negotiations and settlements can be done. This is to prevent actual conflicts from occurring. However, there are certain cases where there is a need to report such incidents.

Reporting is essential and helps in different purposes. Cascading such incidents to the supervisor prevents them from worsening. The supervisor can provide advice that may help both parties in resolving the situation. The reporting process must be according to the organisation procedures. Doing so will promote fairness, and the concern of both parties will be considered.

3.1.1 Identifying Signs of Potential Conflict

Below are some of the early signs of a potentially complicated situation:



- **Emotional outbursts** – This refers to the sudden outpouring of the emotion of the people you are talking to. This involves anger, overreaction or when they become hysterical. Such outbursts may lead to misunderstandings as they are more focused on their feelings and emotions. Also, there might be underlying reasons behind the outbursts that need to be addressed immediately.

  For example, a client becomes angry because of not immediately receiving a document they requested. They keep on insisting that they need the document despite having confidentiality practices explained.

- **Unusual body language** – Another early sign of a potentially tricky situation is when a person displays unusual body language. This involves their facial expressions and the way they express themselves. There might be something wrong when a person cannot maintain eye contact, frowns or has their arms crossed. These imply that there is something that needs to be discussed as soon as possible.

  For example, you noticed that your colleague had been consistently frowning during a meeting. Based on their body language, you understood that they disagreed with the suggestions being made.

- **Behavioural changes** – Changes in their usual behaviour also indicate that something is not right. This involves displaying different actions or attitude that is out of their typical character. They may suddenly have a shift of belief or behaviour due to specific causes.

  For example, you have been asking your colleague to return the document that they borrowed from you. You then noticed that their responses were inconsistent. After a few attempts of asking, another colleague said that the document was lost.

- **Choice of words** – You will also notice an early sign of potential conflict based on the words that they are using. Often, their use of words becomes emotive when they are feeling upset or disappointed. Some of them may even be rude and make use of inappropriate comments when they are angry.

  For example, you witnessed that two of your colleagues are arguing. Due to extreme anger, one of them said insulting words, which caused the filing of the resignation of the other.

- **Complaints** – Another indicator is when people are raising a lot of complaints. It can either be complaints about the service, their work role, requests or anything relevant to the service. Complaints may either be received in face-to-face encounters or surveys conducted.

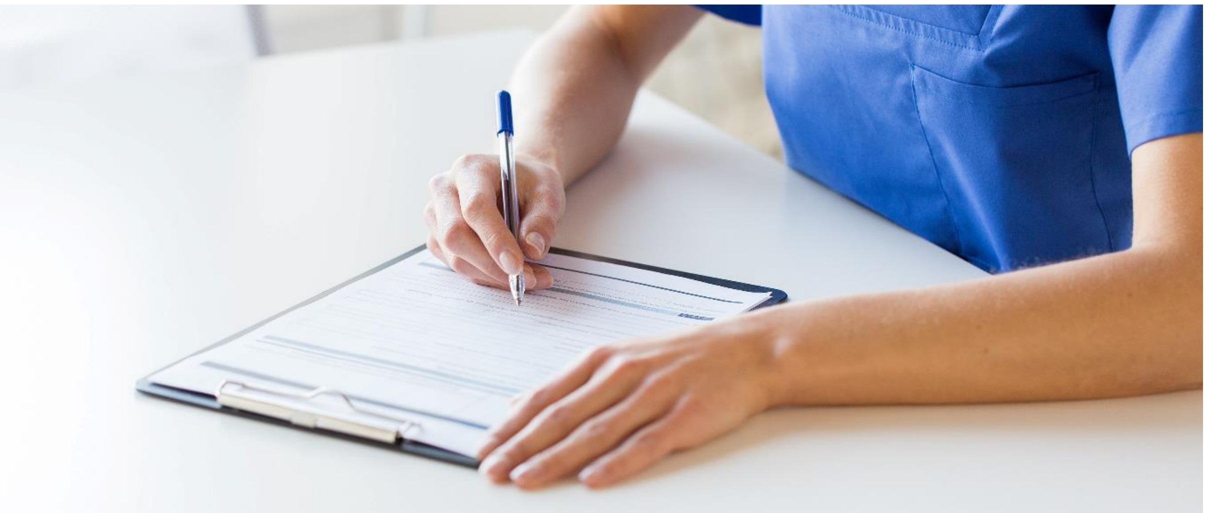
  For example, you have been receiving client complaints from the survey conducted online. Most of their responses focus on their dissatisfaction with the services they are receiving.

3.1.2 Report According to Organisation Procedures

Early signs of potentially complicated or challenging situations must be addressed immediately. Doing this will help prevent these conflicts from arising and from worsening. Ensure before reporting, make sure that you consider talking it out within yourselves. Negotiations must be done to avoid such conflicts from occurring. If you notice a need for immediate action or assistance from appropriate people, then that is the time to consider reporting. Reporting is one of the ways that must be done upon encountering early signs of potential conflicts in the workplace. These conflicts may involve different people such as the clients, your colleagues and other relevant people.

You must ensure that you follow your organisation's procedures in reporting these signs to relevant people. *Organisation procedures* provide guidelines for decision making processes within the organisation. Below are some of the most common organisation procedures when reporting potential disputes:

- All concerns and incidents must be reported to their supervisor. This must be done for identification and control. It is necessary to identify these potential conflicts to control and prevent them. It is essential to inform the supervisors for them to attend to the potential conflicts immediately.
- Signs of potentially complicated situations do not just occur within the workplace. When difficult situations are encountered outside the service, they must be immediately reported. This can be done through a phone call to the workplace supervisor.
- All reports must be documented using the forms and templates being used in the service. These can be used as evidence or supporting documents in case actual conflicts arise within the service.
- Such forms and templates must be accomplished within 24 hours. These must be submitted to the supervisor upon completion.



3.2 Identify Communication Constraints and Resolve Using Communication Strategies and Techniques

At the beginning of this chapter, constraint refers to putting a limit or restriction that stops something from happening. There are many possible constraints to communication, and these may arise at any phase of the communication process. These constraints may hinder the process of communication. These may also cause misunderstanding or confusion.

These constraints must be resolved for effective communication to take place. When constraints are resolved, messages can be clearly and accurately conveyed. This helps the communication process become smooth sailing, thus enabling you to save time and resources.

Resolving constraints can be done by using the appropriate communication strategies and techniques. While there are varied strategies and techniques, not all of them fit all situations. Selecting the proper strategy or technique is essential to address the constraint accordingly.

3.2.1 Identify Communication Constraints

Constraints to effective communication affect the clarity and the delivery of information. When communication is not smooth, it might result in conflicts and disagreements. Below are some of the most common constraints to effective communication:

- External noise
- Differing perceptions
- Varying abilities
- Absence of non-verbal cues
- Cultural differences
- Psychological state
- Attitude towards situations

- **External noise** – This refers to unnecessary sounds that interrupt effective communication. A conversation will not be clear if there is loud and disturbing noise. It interrupts effective communication in a way that information is distorted. This may result in misunderstanding or misinterpretation.

  For example, when external noise is present during a conversation with a colleague, one of you might mishear a critical detail. Not clarifying this detail might lead to performing a task that is different from what is expected. External noise can be minimised by means of holding important meetings in quiet areas.

- **Differing perceptions** – Each person has a different perception and point of view. Constraint arises when two or more people argue due to having varying thoughts and ideas. It is usual for people to have different perceptions, which may happen in any situation in the workplace. Often, differences in perception become evident during meetings. This may also occur whenever there is a need for suggestions or opinions.

  For example, one of your colleagues has a different way of solving a client-related problem. However, you think that their way may just worsen the situation. You suggested another way that contradicts theirs. This kind of situation needs to be addressed by effectively communicating and negotiating each other's suggestions to develop a solution.

- **Varying abilities** – Community and health services often have diverse members and employees. Some of them might be having varying abilities, such as disabilities, additional needs or special needs. One example is having colleagues with physical disabilities. This includes those who have hearing problems or speech difficulties. There is a possibility of misunderstanding when they misheard or delivered the wrong information.
- **Absence of non-verbal cues** – Non-verbal cues are essential when conveying a message to other people. There will be times when you will be communicating with other people using different methods aside from face-to-face conversation. This may involve phone calls, text messages or emails. In these methods of communication, non-verbal cues are not present. This makes communication less effective.

  For example, a client may be intimidated by your natural loud speaking voice. This is because they are not physically seeing that you have a calm and reserved disposition since you are conversing through a phone call. They can minimise this constraint by paying close attention to their tone of voice and word usage to avoid misinterpretations.
- **Cultural differences** – Each person has a different culture. Each of them may have their personal beliefs as well as languages. The ways or methods of communication vary in different cultures. Some of them may not have English as their first language, and you must adjust for a better understanding. You must also know when to use non-verbal cues, as some of them might not be the practice in some cultures.

  For instance, you are talking to a client from another place, thus having a different culture. They do not want to follow the instructions given by the physician regarding their medications and want to stick with their beliefs. Situations like this may affect the effectiveness of service provision for the client.

- **Psychological state** – A person's psychological state may also influence communication. People must manage their feelings and emotions for communication to not be affected. Stress, anger and disappointment often impact communication. They may be focused on their feelings and not on the context of the conversation.

  For instance, when a client is suffering from a recent incident, you must empathise with them. Understand that they might not cooperate at times and offer support as much as possible.

- **Attitude towards situations** – This refers to the attitude of the people towards the problem they encounter. This involves a lack of motivation towards work or resistance to change. A person who lacks motivation and resists change is usually close-minded. Their understanding is limited to their own opinions.

  For example, you noticed that one of your colleagues is disappointed with specific health care protocols changes. They believe that the previous protocol is much better than the changes made. This kind of situation might affect your colleague's motivation as there are chances that they might not follow the protocol change. When this happens, service provision may also be affected. This constraint can be minimised by listening to the person's reasoning and communicate with them to reach a compromise.

3.2.2 Communication Strategies and Techniques

Constraints to effective communication must be resolved immediately. The information must be shared or gathered clearly and smoothly to avoid wasting time and resources. To address constraints to effective communication, you must consider using the following:

Communication strategies	Communication techniques

Communication Strategies

Communication strategies refer to the ideas that must be considered to resolve constraints to communication. These strategies will turn into decisions of putting everything into action. Below are some of the communication strategies that can be used to settle constraints in communication:

- Stay in a peaceful environment when communicating with different people.
- Focus on the information and not on the person you are talking to.
- Communicate with people in a timely manner.
- Be consistent with the use of positive language.
- Utilise different means of communication in facilitating information.
- Keep instructions clear and concise.
- Broaden your knowledge and understanding of different situations.
- Value and respect other people's thoughts and ideas.
- Be aware with the use of non-verbal cues.
- Consider inclusivity and diversity at all times.

These strategies will help maintain effective communication with clients and relevant people. When these strategies are considered, communication constraints may be lessened. You will be able to utilise your time and resources wisely if there are no issues and concerns.

Communication Techniques

Communication techniques refer to the ways of sharing or gathering information. These techniques require specific skills for each of them to be utilised effectively. While you are free to use each of the following communication techniques, you have to be aware of when each of these should be applied. Each technique is appropriate for different situations to resolve constraints to effective communication.

Below are some of the following communication techniques:

Open-ended questions

Affirmations

Reflections

Summaries

Motivational interviewing

Coercive approach

Collaboration

Confrontation

- **Open-ended questions** – This refers to questions that are not answerable by 'yes' or 'no.' It requires responses to explain thoughts and ideas further. This usually helps in seeing the reason for an issue or concern from both parties' perspectives. Below are some examples of open-ended questions:
    - 'What can you say about this?'
    - 'What do you think must be done to finish this?'
    - 'Is there something that you want me to do, like adjusting the font size?'
    - 'Which among these do you think is the best way?'
    - 'How do you do it in your culture?'
    - 'How do you say this in your language?'

  Open-ended questions like the ones above may help resolve constraints in communication. Getting the opinion of one another and respecting each other's ideas is critical for effective communication. These types of questions also help negotiate with other people to come up with the best decision.

- **Affirmations** – These refer to positive statements that can help in conquering negativities. This helps in having a positive mindset towards different situations. When you think of positivity, you tend to calm your mind, which contributes to achieving positive outcomes. The affirmation also helps in preventing yourself from experiencing stress and pressure. It helps in increasing your productivity and improving your self-esteem. Below are some examples of affirmation:
  - 'I can do this!'
  - 'I enjoy talking to different people.'
  - 'I like helping other people and providing them their needs.'
  - 'I am a flexible communicator.'
  - 'I am a good listener.'
  - 'I remain calm regardless of the situation.'

  These affirmations may help you resolve actual constraints in the workplace. Having a positive mindset will help you control your emotions. This also applies when dealing with different people, especially during challenging times.

- **Reflections** – Reflection is done to clarify your understanding of what other people have said. It is important to reflect for both of you to be on the same track. There are two main techniques in reflecting:

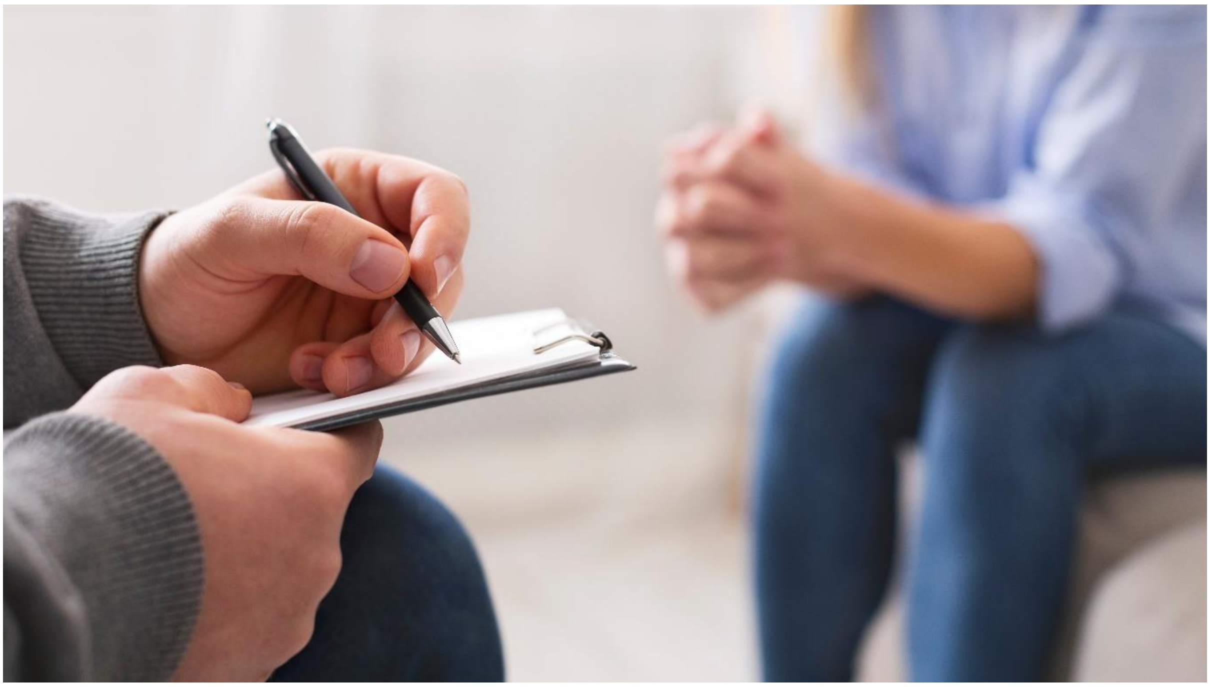
Mirroring	Paraphrasing

  - *Mirroring* refers to the form of reflecting wherein you exactly repeat what has been said. In mirroring, you have to remember the keywords of the speaker's statement, including the last few words spoken. This lets them know that you are listening and that they must continue speaking. Take note that over mirroring may lead to distracting the conversation.
  - *Paraphrasing* refers to the use of relevant words to reflect what has been said. This lets them know that you are listening and that you understand what they just said. Make sure that paraphrasing should not be affected by your own opinions and judgements. An example of paraphrasing is 'If I understood it correctly, what you mean is….'

These techniques in reflecting may help resolve actual constraints in the workplace. Those involved in the conversation are given a chance to clarify what they mean or to explain their thoughts further. When this happens, misunderstandings and assumptions are avoided. Thus, this contributes to having effective communication.

- **Summaries** – Summarising is one of the most critical skills for effective communication. This refers to coming up with a brief outline of the necessary points from a conversation, meetings or workplace document. Summaries can help in verifying the understanding of all people involved in the communication. Below are some of the things to consider when summarising:
    - Identify the main idea of what the person is trying to say.
    - Organise the main points and add supporting ideas.
    - Suspend your own judgements and write based on what you are hearing.
    - Make sure that the summary is concise.

  Summaries will also help in resolving actual constraints of ineffective communication. The conversation will be documented in a summarised manner. This helps in tracing back the conversation if ever there is a need for clarification or confirmation. Summaries can serve as evidence of the communication which may be used in verifying understanding.



- **Motivational interviewing** – This refers to an approach used to help people manage uncertain feelings and insecurities. This is done for them to be motivated in exhibiting positive behaviours. It is person-centred as it encourages the person to be inspired on their own. The following principles are being applied during motivational interviews:
  - Empathising with a person helps you understand their behaviours and the reasons behind their actions. You must put yourself in their shoes to understand them. This helps in letting them know that they are heard, encouraging them to share their experiences.
  - You must support the person and make them believe that they can change for the better. Encourage them to share their experiences and successes. This helps others with the same situation to resolve communication constraints.
  - Instead of challenging resistance, go along with it. Respect the person's way of managing themselves and their freedom of choice, including their way of communication. When they are accepted for who they are, they are encouraged to think of solutions to challenges they encounter.
  - Make them understand that their behaviours must align with their goals and objectives. When they observe that their way of communication is not practical, they must realise them. This will help them apply the necessary change.

Motivational interviewing will help in resolving constraints to communication. They will be given autonomy to learn from their own mistakes. This will encourage them to realise what they need to do in solving their difficulties.

- **Coercive approach** – This approach is focused on forcing an individual to change behaviour. It does not recognise the person's ideas and feelings, resulting in resistance and workplace conflicts. Coercion happens when they are told what to do, having reprimands awaiting them if they do not follow.

  Below are some of the possible situations when a coercive approach is employed in the workplace:

  - Members of the service may be used to telling white lies to accomplish a task that they must do immediately.
  - Some people may be discriminated against. They need to follow communication standards imposed by the management strictly.
  - Some of the members of the service may be manipulated. They may be provided with misleading information, which can affect their communication with other people.
  - Those in power may abuse other members. This may be done by giving them additional tasks not included in their roles and responsibilities. This may affect their scheduled communication with relevant people.

  Between motivational interviewing and coercive approach, the latter will be less effective in resolving constraints in communication. The people will not be given the free will to learn from their own mistakes. They will be forced to follow communication norms that may not align with their strategies and beliefs.

- **Collaboration** – This is an approach that is concerned with both parties in a conversation. The goal of this approach is to have a win-win solution. This means that both parties' thoughts and opinions must be considered and must be able to settle down, satisfying both ends. This approach can be used in:

  - building lasting relationships between clients, colleagues and other relevant people
  - improving flexibility in the workplace
  - engaging people in healthy conversations
  - generating new and innovative ideas.

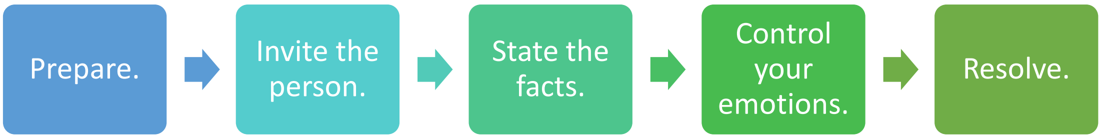
Collaboration helps in resolving constraints in communication. This is by considering the ideas and opinions of both ends. This allows the people involved to settle their disagreements and come up with the best solution.

Multimedia

Linked below is a video about collaborative problem-solving in the workplace. Click the link to access the video.

Collaborative Problem Solving

- **Confrontation** – This refers to an approach wherein you directly tell a person your feelings, emotions and what you want to happen. This happens when there is a face-to-face encounter with another person to inform them of what they do not want to hear. This approach is challenging because there is a high chance for that person to feel upset or disappointed. Below are example steps on how confrontation can be done:



1. **Prepare yourself for the confrontation.** This includes rethinking the situation and reflecting on it. In preparing, you must consider your attitude on how you will approach the person. Although confrontation may deliver a negative message, you must convey it constructively.
2. **Make sure that you are in the right mind before confronting the person.** Respectfully invite the person if they can have some time with you and talk about the issue. You may say, 'Something has been bothering me for the past days. Would it be okay if I sit and share it with you?'
3. **State the facts by telling the person the things that you want to say.** Make sure that the way you convey the message is constructive and not in a blaming manner. Attentively listen if they have something to explain. There must be a give-and-take method for you to understand each other.
4. There is a high chance that one of you will feel upset, disappointed or even angry. When this happens, you must **control your emotions.** You may consider putting an end to the confrontation for both of your feelings to settle down. You may also apologise to the person if they felt that way. This may help in draining off the intensity of the emotion.
5. **Think of solutions to resolve the issue.** Negotiation must occur, and this can be done by considering both your ideas and thoughts to come up with the best solution.

Confrontation helps in resolving constraints to effective communication. Issues and concerns are brought up directly to the respective people. They become aware of the actions and behaviours that they must avoid doing for the welfare of others. To prevent conflicts from arising, the collaboration will be a better approach. This way, situations will be controlled. No confrontations will happen if all ideas and thoughts are being considered collaboratively.

Consider how some of the communication strategies and techniques are used in the following case studies below:

Open-Ended Questioning

During a team meeting, one of the agenda is focused on how communication with clients may be improved. Colleague A suggested that stricter rules must be imposed to avoid encountering demanding clients. Colleague B thought that it would be unfair for the clients to be deprived of their autonomy. Before contradicting Colleague A's suggestion, Colleague B decided to clarify things out. They did it by asking open-ended questions. Colleague B clarified what Colleague A meant by the term 'difficult clients.' Colleague A then explained that what they meant was to impose rules to prevent patients from not taking in their medications. Colleague B then agreed to the suggestion.

In situations like these, it is wise to clarify understanding first before going straight to another action. Not doing this may affect the flow of communication or may worsen them. Asking open-ended questions help in clarifying what your colleagues meant with their statement. You might have a different understanding of the words they used, and it is wise to explain their perception.

Non-Verbal Cues

As a kid, you always have a mannerism of continuously tapping your feet up and down. This usually happens, especially when you are nervous and feeling uneasy.

One day, your supervisor talked to you regarding updates on service provision. Your supervisor is telling you what you need to consider when providing care to your clients. Unconsciously, your mannerism displayed while your supervisor is talking. They perceived that you were in a hurry and that you wanted the conversation to end right away. Seemingly bothered, your supervisor asked you if you were feeling okay. You noticed your mannerism and explained them to your supervisor.

In situations like these, you must be aware of non-verbal cues. Some of these might be perceived differently by the person you are talking to. It is a good thing that the supervisor communicates respectfully. However, there will be instances when you will be encountering people who get annoyed with such manners. You must train yourself to display a cheerful and professional disposition when talking to different people.

3.3 Use Communications Skills to Avoid, Defuse and Resolve Conflict Situations

Communication skills are one of the essential skills that you should acquire. It would be best to communicate with relevant people in a professional manner. The way you communicate with them must be consistent and must not be affected by certain situations.

It is important to use communication skills to avoid, defuse and resolve conflict scenarios. Conflicts in the workplace are inevitable. Therefore, you must adjust to different scenarios and make use of your communication skills.

Avoiding conflict means preventing communication issues from arising. In cases where disputes are already present, these communication skills will help defuse or lighten the situation. These communication skills are also essential in settling conflicts for them not to cause harm to the service and the relevant people.

The following communication skills will help in avoiding, defusing and resolving conflict situations:

- **Active listening** – This refers to making an effort to hear the words and the message that a person wants to communicate. This can be done by paying attention to the person by considering the non-verbal cues such as eye contact and gestures. This also involves providing short feedbacks such as 'go on' or 'and then' to let them know that you are attentive. Below is a table that shows how active listening can be applied in avoiding, defusing and resolving conflict situations:

Avoiding Conflict	*Situation*: A client is requesting a list of hospital affiliations. *Application*: Listen to the client actively. This will help you gather essential information such as their preferred location, doctor's expertise and type of care.
Defusing Conflict	*Situation*: You felt upset because you thought your colleague called you using an insulting word. *Application*: Active listening can help you focus on what your colleague is saying. Asking your colleague again and listening to them attentively may help defuse the conflict.
Resolving Conflict	*Situation*: Two of your colleagues were involved in a fight due to a misunderstanding. *Application*: Both of your colleagues must actively listen to one another. This will help in understanding one another and for them to come up with a solution to their misunderstanding.

- **Clarity** – This refers to making clear points and providing clear information. This can be done by focusing on one specific message at a time. This also involves delivering vivid ideas. This will help in conveying meaningful messages. Below is a table that shows how clarity can be applied in avoiding, defusing and resolving conflict situations:

Avoiding Conflict	*Situation*: Your colleague is asking for your help regarding the process of documenting events. *Application*: You have to give clear instructions for your colleague to finish the task accurately.
Defusing Conflict	*Situation*: A client is disappointed because the document you have given them is not what they are requesting. *Application*: You may remind the client to double-check the form they filled out before submitting their request. They might have ticked the wrong item.
Resolving Conflict	*Situation*: Your supervisor is disappointed upon receiving a report that contains misleading information. *Application*: Apologise for the error and make sure to correct the mistakes on the report. Ensure them that it will not happen again.

- **Confidence** – This refers to being sure about what you want to say and the behaviours you exhibit. This involves displaying a confident appearance when talking to different people. When you are confident with what you are saying, they tend to build trust and believe the information you will be providing them. Below is a table that shows how confidence can be applied in avoiding, defusing and resolving conflict situations:

Avoiding Conflict	*Situation:* A couple is inquiring about the services being offered by the hospital. *Application:* You must show them that you are confident in answering their queries. Look them straight into the eyes and smile to gain their trust. Confidence will also help you to explain the necessary information clearly.
Defusing Conflict	*Situation:* Your colleague believes that your process of documenting is incorrect. *Application:* Be confident enough and explain to your colleague that what you are doing is based on the service process. You may opt to show them evidence to support your statement. Make sure that the conversation is made respectfully.
Resolving Conflict	*Situation:* Your manager is disappointed. This is because you accidentally submitted a false report during a presentation. *Application:* Be confident enough to admit your mistakes. You must take responsibility for what happened and apologise for your lapses. This will let your manager know that you are responsible enough and that you just overlooked the report.

- **Empathy** – This refers to putting yourself in the shoes of other people. You have to understand their feelings and realise the reasons behind their behaviours. When this happens, your understanding broadens, and this helps you adjust to the situation quickly. Below is a table that shows how empathy can be applied in avoiding, defusing and resolving conflict situations:

Avoiding Conflict	*Situation:* A client who has visual impairments went to the service to inquire about something. They must be able to fill out a form to process the inquiry. *Application:* Empathise by offering help to the client. You may assist them by interviewing them and filling out their forms for them.
Defusing Conflict	*Situation:* You observed that your colleague is stressed and burnt out. They accidentally shouted at you during break time, then cried afterwards. *Application:* You must be the one to adjust in situations like this. Try your best to understand that your colleague might have a big problem that they cannot manage properly. Empathise by comforting them and by letting them know that you are there to listen.
Resolving Conflict	*Situation:* You have been absent for a couple of days due to sickness. You felt worried because it might affect your salary and your performance. *Application:* The management must empathise with the members of their service. They must consider such situations and be compassionate. This can be done by asking how they are feeling and providing necessary assistance.

- **Kindness** – This refers to doing something good for other people. There are different ways to display kindness. This may be done by being generous, being thoughtful or being considerate. When you show compassion to other people, there is a high chance for them to cooperate positively. Below is a table that shows how kindness can be applied in avoiding, defusing and resolving conflict situations:

Avoiding Conflict	*Situation:* A mother and her child went to the service to have a follow-up check-up. You noticed that the child looked scared. *Application:* Show kindness by smiling and greeting the child. You may also show kindness by complimenting them.
Defusing Conflict	*Situation:* A colleague is having difficulty finishing a workplace document. *Application:* Show kindness by offering help and tips on how the workplace document may be done easier.
Resolving Conflict	*Situation:* Your colleague, who has a scheduled interview with a client, unfortunately, had an emergency at home. The client is disappointed because they felt that some of their time had been wasted. *Application:* Show kindness by volunteering to conduct the interview. Make sure to have the necessary information and documents that will help in the interview process.

- **Open-Mindedness** – This refers to being flexible in understanding different situations. This involves considering other people's points of view even when they are against your own belief. When this happens, you develop a broad understanding of many possibilities and act on them with various solutions. Below is a table that shows how open-mindedness can be applied in avoiding, defusing and resolving conflict situations:

Avoiding Conflict	*Situation:* You noticed that you have a new colleague who came from a different country. *Application:* You can show open-mindedness by being aware of your new colleague. This includes knowing their culture, beliefs and values. These must be considered to have a trusting relationship with them.
Defusing Conflict	*Situation:* One of your colleagues disagrees with your opinion during a small discussion. *Application:* Open-mindedness can be shown by accepting that not all people will agree with your opinion. You must understand that it is essential to respect each other's beliefs to defuse possible conflicts.
Resolving Conflict	*Situation:* A client insists that their way is the right thing to do in providing care for their child. However, it is not the same with the practices of the service. *Application:* You must understand that clients may also have different beliefs. Let them know that you respect them and that the service considers their principles.

Checkpoint! Let's Review

1. Early signs of potentially complicated or difficult situations must be addressed immediately. Doing this will help prevent these conflicts from arising and from worsening.
2. Resolving constraints can be done by using the appropriate communication strategies and techniques.
3. Conflicts in the workplace are inevitable. Therefore, you must adjust to different scenarios and make use of your communication skills.

Learning Activity for Chapter 3

Well done completing this chapter. You may now proceed to your **Learning Activity Booklet** (provided along with this Learner Guide) and complete the learning activities associated with this chapter.

Please coordinate with your trainer/training organisation for additional instructions and guidance in completing these practical activities.

IV. Report Conflicts

The previous chapter discussed how to address constraints to communication. It involves the knowledge and skills that you need to acquire in resolving workplace conflicts. In this chapter, you will gain the knowledge and skills to report problems to your supervisor. Your supervisor is the one you directly report to. Problems within the service must be escalated to them first. Supervisors may provide the necessary guidance and advice for such issues to be solved. They are also the ones who will communicate with relevant people in case of the issues associated with other departments or other relevant people.

With this, this Learner Guide will discuss the different tasks that you should perform to report problems to your supervisor. In general, this subchapter will discuss the following:

- Comply with legal and ethical responsibilities and discuss difficulties with supervisor
- Refer breach or adverse event to relevant people
- Refer issues relating to rights and responsibilities
- Refer unresolved conflicts to supervisor

4.1 Comply With Legal and Ethical Responsibilities and Discuss Difficulties With Supervisor

You must understand the legal and ethical requirements and the organisational policies of the service. This will help you understand and know the rights of clients that you must uphold and protect. As a health or community service worker, your knowledge must not be limited to communicating and working in health and community services. You must also take the initiative to review and understand the regulatory and legal requirements, ethical requirements, and organisational policies.

It is vital to adhere to such requirements because:

- They provide a basis and standards for quality service and support programs for clients and service members
- They allow service members and staff like you to support and uphold their rights
- They help create a safe workplace and healthy environment
- They ensure the consistency of processes and structures
- They give a fair and objective basis for judgement and decision-making.

Below are examples of how you can adhere to organisational policies, regulatory and legal requirements when providing services to clients and when working with colleagues:

- Be knowledgeable of the organisational policies, legal and ethical requirements.
- Be aware of client needs and challenges.
- Commit and protect client and employee rights.
- Uphold client rights according to policies and procedures.
- Maintain integrity and honesty as an employee and a professional.
- Communicate to supervisors about the challenges you encounter.
- Acknowledge mistakes and receive corrections from supervisors.

You will be equipped to perform your role and responsibility as a health and community service worker confidently and professionally. You will have the law as a basis and reference. This will guide you on how to help clients and colleagues to:

- Exercise their rights
- Protect their welfare
- Support their needs.

4.1.1 Complying With Legal Responsibilities

Legal responsibilities set the national standards for providing services for clients. These are geared toward the legal considerations concerning health and community services. It was mentioned in this unit's introduction that legal considerations refer to how a policy, procedure or process is based on the legal requirements. On the other hand, *legal responsibilities* refer to what service workers need to do according to the legal requirements. As discussed in the introduction, below are the legal requirements concerning health and community services:

- Privacy, confidentiality and disclosure
- Discrimination
- Duty of care
- Mandatory reporting
- Translation
- Informed consent
- Work role boundaries – responsibilities and limitations
- Child protection and safety
- Adult disclosure

There are specific actions and responsibilities that service workers must exhibit. These must be followed to comply with the legal considerations. Below is a table that shows some of the responsibilities that each service work must do:

Legal consideration	Legal responsibilities
Privacy, confidentiality and disclosure	▪ Collect and use the personal information of clients, service members and other relevant people for service provision purposes. ▪ Take responsibility for the misuse of information. ▪ Ensure accuracy of the information collected. ▪ Provide access to clients' and service members' information. ▪ Avoid sharing information with people outside the organisation. ▪ Avoid actions or statements that may ruin the image of the organisation.
Discrimination	▪ Treat clients, colleagues, service members and other relevant people equally regardless of but are not limited to the following: ○ Age ○ Disability ○ Race ○ Sex. ▪ Uphold the rights of all people, including the clients, service members, employers and other relevant people.
Duty of care	▪ Identify and eliminate possible sources of harm. ▪ Guide clients in following safety guidelines. ▪ Check all equipment and report any defect which may cause harm to clients.

Legal consideration	Legal responsibilities
Mandatory reporting	▪ Report any sign of, but are not limited to the following: ○ Physical abuse ○ Sexual abuse ○ Emotional abuse ○ Neglect ○ Exposure to family violence. ▪ Report violation of rights.
Translation	▪ Be aware of cultural sensitivities. ▪ Avoid using idioms, metaphors and jargon when translating. ▪ Use plain English when writing documents. ▪ Consider the language and dialect of the clients. ▪ Adhere to confidentiality requirements.
Informed consent	▪ Inform the clients of the following: ○ Purpose of using the information ○ Ways the information will be used ○ People who will have access to their data ▪ Do not force the clients to give their consent. ▪ Ensure that consent is given by a person capable of giving consent. ▪ Answer questions and clarify misunderstandings with the person involved. ▪ Collect the written consent of the person allowing you to use the information.

Legal consideration	Legal responsibilities
Work role boundaries – responsibilities and limitations	▪ Perform according to role boundaries depending on the title and level. ▪ Avoid performing beyond each worker's responsibilities. This may affect quality service provision. ▪ Follow guidelines, policies and procedures when performing work roles and responsibilities.
Adult disclosure	▪ Provide immediate support and comfort. ▪ Immediately report cases of abuse and neglect. ▪ Follow confidentiality requirements relating to the information that the child disclosed.
Child protection and safety	▪ Always consider the interests of the child. ▪ Provide early interventions for the child. ▪ Encourage children's participation in decision-making processes. ▪ Report harassment or victimisations.

4.1.2 Complying With Ethical Responsibilities

The *Australian National Code of Conduct for Health Care Workers* are guidelines on values and choices. These influence the decision-making of health care workers and professionals. These are regulations that assert specific actions. They are identified as appropriate or inappropriate to an employee's role.

According to Queensland's National Code of Conduct for Health Care Workers, health care workers must provide services safely and ethically. Health care workers must comply with the following:

- A health care worker must maintain the necessary competence in his or her field of practice.
- A health care worker must not provide health care of a type that is outside his or her experience or training or provide services that he or she is not qualified to provide.

- A health care worker must only prescribe or recommend treatments or appliances that serve the needs of clients.
- A health care worker must recognise the limitations of the treatment he or she can provide and refer clients to other competent health service providers in appropriate circumstances.
- A health care worker must recommend to clients that additional opinions and services be sought, where appropriate.
- A health care worker must assist a client in finding other appropriate health care services, if required and practicable.
- A health care worker must encourage clients to inform their treating medical practitioner (if any) of the treatments or care being provided.
- A health care worker must have a sound understanding of any possible adverse interactions between the therapies and treatments being provided or prescribed and any other medications or treatments, whether prescribed or not, that he or she is, or should be, aware that a client is taking or receiving, and advise the client of these interactions.
- A health care worker must provide health services in a manner that is culturally sensitive to the needs of his or her clients.

Sourced from The National Code of Conduct for Health Care Workers (Queensland), used under CC BY-ND 4.0. © The State of Queensland (Queensland Health) 1996-2022

These ethical responsibilities are the moral obligations expected from health and community service workers. These must be followed as part of the service and as employees in their respective states and territories. Aside from these responsibilities, there are specific values that health care and community workers must follow. These are according to Australia's public and education sector, which may also apply to public sectors of health care. These values are the foundation of ethical behaviour in the public and education sectors of South Australia:

Department for Education, the Government of South Australia, Exploring ethics - newsletter series looking at the code of ethics for the South Australian public sector, Sourced on 9 November 2021, https://www.education.sa.gov.au/

4.1.3 Discuss Difficulties With Supervisor

Complying with legal and ethical responsibilities is one of the most important things to do. There are instances where it is easy to comply with the said legal and ethical requirements. However, you may also experience difficulties in complying with some of them. This may involve difficulties in:

- Maintaining patience with difficult and aggressive clients
- Working with colleagues who may have conflicting interests
- Performing a work role beyond the responsibilities given to them.

It is essential to discuss these difficulties with your supervisor. They may be the ones to help you and guide you on how you can comply with the legal and ethical responsibilities expected from you. In discussing these difficulties with your supervisor, you may consider the following actions:

Describe your difficulties to your supervisor. Provide a general overview of the problem.

↓

Explain how you think these difficulties might affect your work and the service's goals.

↓

Suggest solutions or different approaches that you think may help you in addressing the difficulties.

↓

Explain how these solutions and approaches may benefit you and the service.

↓

Listen to your supervisor's advice and guidance.

↓

Perform the necessary action to address your difficulties.

↓

Take responsibility for the possible outcome.

4.2 Refer Breach or Adverse Event to Relevant People

Working in health and community services is a challenging job. You will be experiencing different situations with different people. This involves encountering breaches of standard procedures and adverse events.

Standard procedures refer to the prescribed processes by the service. These procedures are based on legal and ethical requirements. All service members and relevant people need to adhere to such procedures. One of your jobs is to refer breaches to standard procedures and adverse events to appropriate people.

Breaches refer to practices that are deemed non-compliant based on legal and ethical requirements. These breaches result from poor implementation of procedures or inconsistencies in the procedures themselves. On the other hand, an *adverse event* refers to an unexpected problem that occurs during medical treatment.

It is essential to refer breaches and adverse events to appropriate people. They can direct the vital steps and processes to resolve the conflicts. They are the ones who can provide guidance and advice on what needs to be done in situations like these. You must be able to take responsibility for referring upon encountering such problems.

4.2.1 Breach or Adverse Event

Different standard procedures are being followed in health and community services. These are procedures that service members need to follow while working and communicating with relevant people. Below are some, but are not limited to the tasks that need to adhere to standard procedures:

- Communicating service information
- Exchanging information
- Using workplace terminologies
- Following communication protocols
- Reporting workplace conflicts
- Completing workplace documents

Breaches to Standard Procedures

While working with clients and other people, you will be noticing breaches to standard procedures. Below is a table that shows examples of breaches to standard procedures relating to the tasks mentioned above:

Task	Breach to standard procedures
Communicating service information	▪ One of your colleagues provided private information to potential clients. ▪ Someone posted an inappropriate video on the service's social media account.
Exchanging information	▪ The information of a minor was collected without their carer's consent. ▪ A patient's confidential information was released to a different patient.
Using workplace terminologies	▪ A report contains terminologies that are not being used in the service. ▪ A colleague communicated with potential clients using industry terminologies.

Task	Breach to standard procedures
Following communication protocols	▪ A team leader never conducts a meeting that needs to be done weekly. ▪ A manager refuses to include a service member during an organisation-wide conference.
Reporting workplace conflicts	▪ A colleague refused to report the incident that happened between them and a client. ▪ A service member posted a picture of an accident in the workplace to their personal social media account.
Completing workplace documents	▪ A colleague copied and pasted the entire medical history of one patient's record to another. ▪ A colleague changed the format and style of the workplace forms that the service is using.

Adverse Events

Aside from breaches to standard procedures, adverse events must also be referred to appropriate people. As mentioned in the introduction of this chapter, an adverse event refers to unexpected harmful occurrences during medical treatment. This may involve incidents relating to therapeutic goods.

Therapeutic goods comprise a broad range of medical things. They fall under the three main categories:

- **Medicines** – These involve over-the-counter medicines, prescriptions and vaccines.
- **Medical devices** – These involve equipment and instruments being used in medical processes. These may include bandages and pacemakers.
- **Other goods** – These involve other medical items such as blood products and disinfectants.

Below are some of the adverse events that may happen within health and community services:

Side effects to medicines or vaccines

Incidents involving medical devices

Near misses

- **Side effects to medicines or vaccines** – These happen when a problem occurs after taking or receiving vaccines. These may involve skin rash, diarrhea, constipation and other reactions depending on the medications taken.
- **Incidents involving medical devices** – These happen when there is a failure in using the medical devices. These can lead to serious deterioration or death. These can be a result of human error or technological failure. There must be timely maintenance and necessary training for people using them to avoid such incidents.
- **Near misses** – These refer to incidents that might have led to a serious injury or death. It is essential for health care providers to conduct a timely intervention to prevent such events from happening.

Like breaches, adverse events must be referred to or reported to the appropriate people. Specific processes must be followed in attending to these kinds of situations.

4.2.2 Referring to Relevant People

When you are faced with breaches and adverse events, you may refer them to other service members, managers, supervisors or compliance officers. In the table below, you can see how other people in your organisation can help you address breaches and adverse events:

Workplace role	How they can help in addressing issues or breaches	How the breach can be referred
Employees	▪ By giving suggestions based on their experiences at work ▪ By raising concerns of possible breaches and adverse events they encounter at work	▪ Formally or informally discussing the breach or adverse event with them ▪ Asking them their points of actions when they encountered the same situation
Your direct supervisor	▪ By giving advice based on previous management experiences ▪ By coordinating with regulatory authorities	▪ Setting a meeting with them to discuss the breach or adverse event ▪ Seeking advice from them on how to resolve or overcome the situation
Compliance officer	By providing information on and interpretation of compliance requirements	Seeking advice from them relevant to legal requirements and responsibilities

In some cases, you may need to seek external advice in addressing breaches and adverse events. In the table below, you can find information on relevant external entities. This also includes how they can help you address breaches of ethical or legal practice and adverse events:

External entity	How they can help in addressing issues or breaches
Safe Work Australia	By providing compliance advice relating to incidents within the workplace
Therapeutic Goods Administration	By providing advice related to reporting adverse events upon the usage of therapeutic goods
Fair Work Ombudsman	By providing advice related to employment and employee management practices
Health and community services legal professionals	By providing legal advice on compliance requirements based on national and state/territory health and community services legislation

If you need to refer issues and breaches to any external entities mentioned above, access the corresponding links for their contact information. Follow their procedures relevant to referring breaches or adverse event. Although there will be differences with the procedures and guidelines you need to follow, this will involve:

1. Setting a schedule with them
2. Providing them the necessary information relevant to the breach or adverse event
3. Seeking for their guidance on how to resolve the breach or adverse event

4.3 Refer Issues Relating to Rights and Responsibilities

Employees, employers and clients all have rights and responsibilities. These are all stated in international treaties and implemented through national laws. *Rights* are entitlements that belong to every person in a group for which the rights are written. These rights come with responsibilities. These *responsibilities* ensure that they must exercise these rights in a way that does not step on the rights of others.

Issues arise when such rights and responsibilities are not achieved within and outside the service. There are certain situations where the rights and obligations of people are not taken into consideration. When this happens, it is important to refer them to appropriate people. These people may help in providing guidance and advice on how these issues may be resolved.

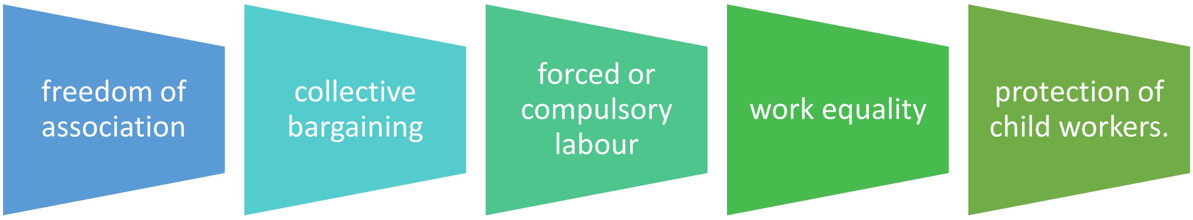
4.3.1 Employee, Employer and/or Client Rights and Responsibilities

Below are the rights and responsibilities of employees, employers and clients:

Rights and Responsibilities of Employees and Employers

The international organisation that handles issues related to labour is the *International Labour Organisation (ILO).* The ILO is an agency under the United Nations. They set guidelines that promote labour standards, including the rights of workers and employers. Standards developed by the ILO are submitted to the Australian Parliament. This is for enactments and applications of legislation that would enforce these standards.

The core standards set by the ILO in the Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work include provisions on:



The rights to work and rights in employment are also parts of a person's economic rights. This is according to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). These rights include:

- Right to work
- Right to just and favourable conditions of work
- Right to initiate and participate in trade union activities.

Based on Right to work and rights in work, used under CC BY 4.0.
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Further Reading

Detailed provisions on international labour standards set by the ILC are found in the document below. For more information, access the document through the link below.

Fundamental rights at work and international labour standards

The Australian Human Rights Commission published the discussion on ICESCR provisions. Follow the link below for more information.

Right to work and rights in work

When you engage in work, you are charged with general responsibilities in addition to your work role-specific duties. In the table below, you can see the general responsibilities of employees and employers.

Responsibilities of employees	Responsibilities of employers
Avoiding work practices that are harmful to the health and safety of yourself or others	Ensuring a safe work environment and providing protective equipment if necessary
Knowing what to do if the employer is not meeting their responsibilities	Ensuring that employees are free from discrimination and bullying
Knowing and understanding the terms and conditions of employment	Ensuring that employees receive all due entitlements

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Your organisational policies and procedures must contain provisions to adhere to compliance requirements. These must dictate and uphold the rights and responsibilities of workers and the employer. The primary laws covering the rights and responsibilities of workers and employers are the following:

- Fair Work Act 2009
- Work Health and Safety Act 2011

Chapter 3 of the Fair Work Act 2009 details the rights and responsibilities of employees and employers. This law includes provisions on:

- General protections
- Unfair dismissal
- Industrial action
- Right of entry
- Stand down
- Other rights and responsibilities
- Corrupting benefits.

Part 2 of the Work Health and Safety Act 2011 contains provisions on employees and employers' health and safety duties. Under this law, the employer has the primary duty of care to ensure the health and safety of all workers involved with the organisation.

On the other hand, employees must take reasonable care of their health and safety and other persons they work with. This includes abiding by organisational policies and procedures related to health and safety.

Rights and Responsibilities of Clients

Your clients in your line of work are people of different ages and races. The rights of your client's root in international human rights treaties. In the table below, you can see the treaties that protect the rights of different people. It also contains Australian legislation which implements these treaties.

<table>
<tr><th>International human rights treaties</th><th>Related Australian legislation</th></tr>
<tr><td>Convention on the Rights of the Child</td><td>Family Law Reform Act 1995</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="4">International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights</td><td>Human Rights (Sexual Conduct) Act 1994</td></tr>
<tr><td>Racial Hatred Act 1995</td></tr>
<tr><td>Australian Law Reform Commission Act 1996</td></tr>
<tr><td>Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986</td></tr>
<tr><td>Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women</td><td>Sex Discrimination Act 1984</td></tr>
<tr><td>Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities</td><td>Disability Discrimination Act 1992</td></tr>
</table>

Earlier, you learned that workers, employers and clients all have rights and responsibilities. These rights and responsibilities are grounded on the ethical principles of fairness and equality. Everyone must be treated fairly and equally. In the same way, each person has to treat others with justice and equality. Even if laws protect the rights and responsibilities of workers, employers and clients, it is still essential to know and apply ethical principles in the workplace. These principles guide areas of practice that are not covered by laws.

Workers, employers and clients have rights and responsibilities in addition to those protected by laws. These are shown in the table below:

Stakeholder	Rights	Responsibilities
Employees	▪ Fair and equal working conditions ▪ Equal access to workplace resources and processes ▪ Protection from any form of discrimination ▪ Work-life balance ▪ Proper and fair supervision and assignment of tasks ▪ Freedom to talk to other workers about their rights and the terms and conditions of employment ▪ File complaints about work conditions. ▪ Suggest or make modifications to improve work conditions. ▪ Participate in discussions regarding rights.	▪ Complete work tasks to ensure the proper delivery of services by the organisation. ▪ Protect and uphold their rights and that of other workers. ▪ Report violation of rights. ▪ Use work hours appropriately to complete tasks. ▪ Use work resources appropriately and as directed. ▪ Avoid actions or statements that may ruin the image of the organisation. ▪ Avoid sharing information with people outside the organisation. ▪ Avoid conflicts that may prevent performance of work role.

Stakeholder	Rights	Responsibilities
Employers	▪ Uphold policies and procedures to ensure proper organisational operations. ▪ Employ and terminate employment based on agreed-upon standards and policies. ▪ Define standards for work roles, work performance and behaviour. ▪ Make decisions to support the best interests of the organisation. ▪ Monitor use of organisational resources by employees.	▪ Protect the welfare of workers. ▪ Provide access to fair and equal working conditions. ▪ Ensure that workers have the resources to perform their assigned responsibilities. ▪ Ensure that workers are not discriminated against. ▪ Listen to and address concerns from workers and clients. ▪ Ensure quality service delivery to clients with the help of workers. ▪ Commit to promises made to clients with the help of workers.
Clients	▪ Standard and high-quality service and care ▪ Safety and security of clients while in the service ▪ Equal treatment ▪ Protection of privacy and confidentiality ▪ Information on health conditions and improvement in the service	▪ Provide information about client care needs. ▪ Provide client's health information and other information that may affect their care. ▪ Provide feedback to carers and the service.

To apply these rights and responsibilities in the workplace, organisations should have specific guidelines, policies and procedures. These must outline the rights and responsibilities of employees, employers and clients. It will also help to train employees and orient clients on their rights and responsibilities concerning the service. This will allow everyone to recognise and address unfair or unequal treatment.

4.3.2 Referring Issues Impacting on Achievement of Employee, Employer and/or Client Rights and Responsibilities

Various issues may impact the achievement of rights and responsibilities. Such problems occur when the employee, employer or client rights and responsibilities mentioned in the previous pages are not achieved. For example, one of an employee's rights is to file complaints with the tasks out of their work roles. It becomes an issue when they are prohibited from doing such actions. This may also apply to other rights and responsibilities discussed previously.

Just like breaches and adverse events, issues must also be referred to appropriate people. When you are faced with problems that may impact the achievement of rights and responsibilities, you may consult other employees, managers, supervisors or compliance officers. In the table below, you can see how other people in your organisation can help you address issues:

Workplace role	How they can help in addressing issues
Employees	▪ By giving suggestions based on their experiences at work ▪ By raising concerns about possible issues that they encounter at work
Your direct supervisor	▪ By giving advice based on previous management experiences ▪ By coordinating with regulatory authorities
HR officer	By providing information about employee and employer rights and responsibilities

In some cases, you may need to seek external advice in addressing issues relevant to rights and responsibilities. In the table below, you can find information on relevant external entities. It also includes how they can help you address issues pertinent to rights and responsibilities:

External entity	How they can help in addressing issues or breaches
Australian Human Rights Commission	By providing advice based on the investigations of complaints regarding human rights issues
Fair Work Ombudsman	By providing advice related to employment and employee management practices

4.4 Refer Unresolved Conflicts to Supervisor

As discussed, a supervisor is someone who manages and oversees the team. Their job is to ensure that the members are performing according to their roles and responsibilities. Aside from these, they are also the ones who handle unresolved conflicts within the workplace. You must refer to these conflicts for your supervisor to help and guide you on what must be done.

Unresolved conflicts refer to conflicts that cannot be handled anymore within the service. These conflicts may be about clients, work roles, disagreements or challenges with other relevant people.

Unresolved conflicts must be referred to the supervisor. Aside from the strategies or techniques that you have tried, you will gather different ideas on how these conflicts may be solved. When unresolved conflicts are not discussed with the supervisor, they are likely to worsen. This may affect not just the service but as well as its members and other relevant people.

4.4.1 Unresolved Conflicts

Conflicts need to be resolved immediately. However, there are instances when there are unresolved conflicts. These conflicts must be cascaded and discussed with the supervisor. This is important for the service and its members not to be affected by such unresolved disputes. Below are some of the possibilities of unresolved conflicts:

- The number of complaints may increase.
- Lapses in communication may worsen.
- Deadlines may be delayed or missed.
- Employee turnover may increase.
- Collaboration may be reduced.
- Members may become unmotivated.
- Clients may stop subscribing to services.
- Work culture may become toxic.

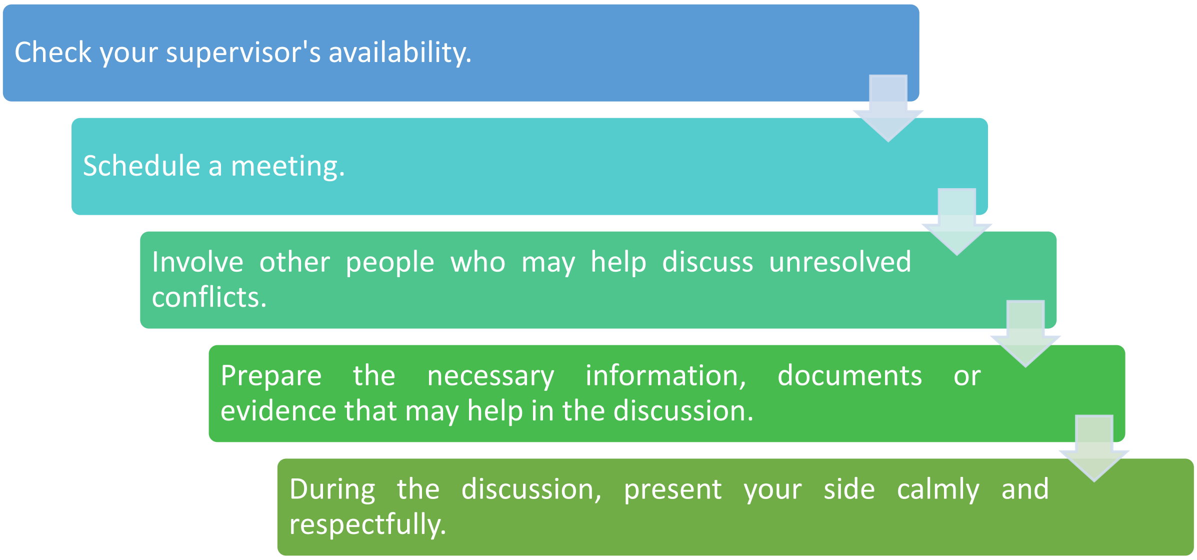
These possibilities may be avoided when the supervisor is aware of the conflicts in the workplace. The supervisor can help by doing the following:

- Considering the client's suggestions and recommendations for the service
- Arranging meetings for the members to settle their disagreements
- Listening to each of the member's concerns and issues
- Taking immediate action
- Implementing necessary programs
- Thinking of new strategies and techniques

4.4.2 Referring to Supervisor

Referring means to mention or discuss the necessary information with the supervisor. This involves explaining what happened and the reasons behind the conflict. Referring unresolved disputes to the supervisor may help in preventing these conflicts from worsening.

Below is an example procedure on how unresolved conflicts can be referred to the supervisor:



1. **Check your supervisor's availability.** – Although unresolved conflicts must be attended to immediately, the supervisor also has other matters to attend to. Always check their availability by communicating with their secretary. In cases where a supervisor does not have an assistant, you may send a request and include the reason. This may give them an idea that your concern is urgent and may adjust accordingly.
2. **Schedule a meeting.** – Schedule an appointment once you get a target date based on the supervisor's availability. This may be done by requesting it from their secretary. If the supervisor has no secretary, you may request by including the proposed date/s and time.
3. **Involve other people who may help discuss unresolved conflicts.** – You may ask your colleagues during the referral of unresolved disputes. They may help by supplying supporting documents. They may also assist in explaining the reasons behind the unresolved conflicts. You may also include suggestions and recommendations from clients when discussing conflicts with the supervisor.

4. **Prepare the necessary information, documents or evidence that may help in the discussion.** – Make sure to prepare all the required information that you will need for the meeting. This information may be used to support the discussion of unresolved conflicts. These will also help the supervisor in analysing the unresolved conflicts in a clearer and easier way.
5. **During the discussion, present your side calmly and respectfully.** – Present the necessary information in a clear and organised manner. Explain what happened and the solutions done to try to resolve the conflict. This way, the supervisor can think of new resolutions they believe may help in settling unresolved disputes.

Lotus Compassionate Care

Lotus Compassionate Care is the simulated community service environment referenced in our learning resources.

Below is a sample Meeting Minutes Template. You can access them through the link below.

Lotus Meeting Minutes

(username: new username   password: newpassword)

Multimedia

Linked below is a video about reporting a problem to the supervisor. Click the link to access the video.

How to Bring a Problem to Your Boss the Right Way

Checkpoint! Let's Review

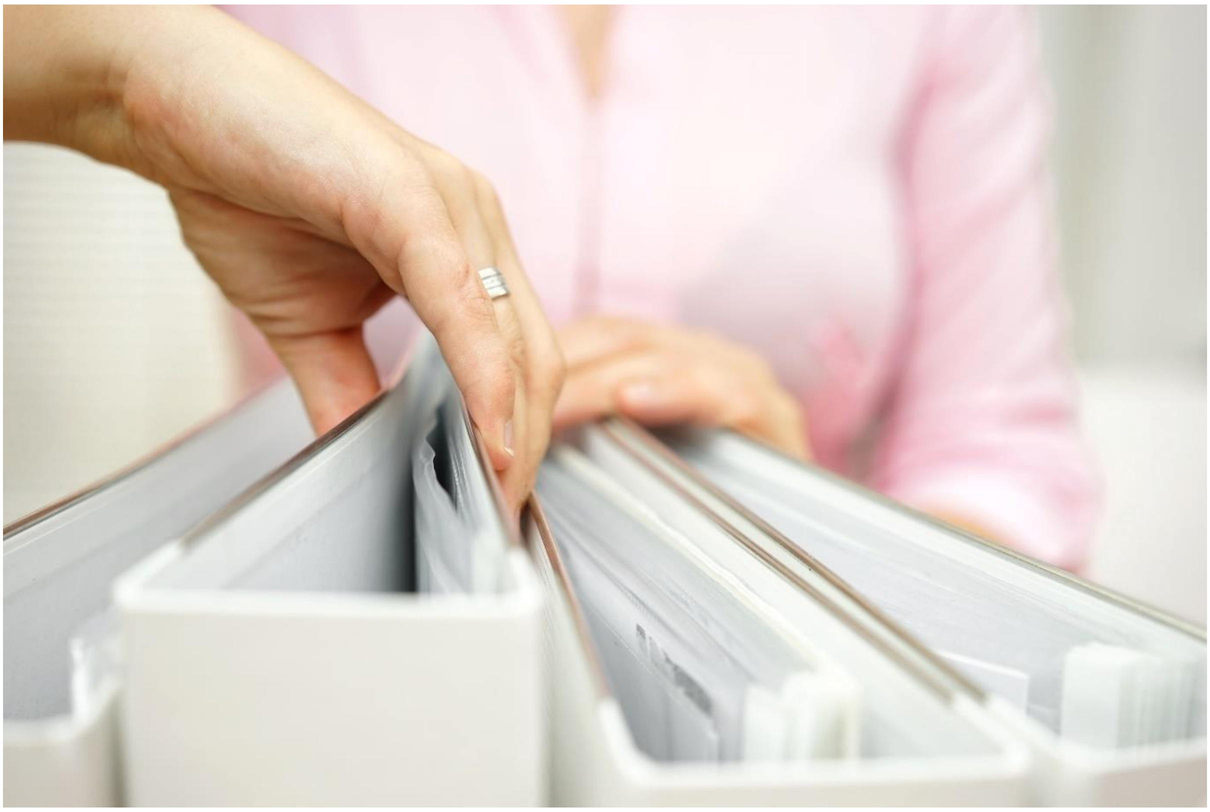
1. Understanding the legal and ethical requirements and the organisational policies of the service will help you understand and know the rights of your clients that you must uphold and protect.
2. It is essential to refer breaches and adverse events to appropriate people. They can direct the vital steps and processes to resolve the conflicts.
3. Unresolved conflicts must be referred to the supervisor. Aside from the strategies or techniques that you have tried, you will gather different ideas on how these conflicts may be solved.

Learning Activity for Chapter 4

Well done completing this chapter. You may now proceed to your **Learning Activity Booklet** (provided along with this Learner Guide) and complete the learning activities associated with this chapter.

Please coordinate with your trainer/training organisation for additional instructions and guidance in completing these practical activities.

V. Accomplish Workplace Correspondence and Documentation



The previous chapter focused on the things that must be considered when reporting problems to the supervisor. This involves the knowledge and skills that must be acquired in reporting conflicts. Documenting and completing workplace correspondence is also as crucial as reporting issues.

Workplace correspondence refers to documents in the form of letters or emails. These are used to exchange information or to respond to relevant people. On the other hand, *documentation* refers to the process of recording events or issues in the workplace to provide proof or evidence.

Both workplace correspondence and documentation must be completed. This will benefit the service by having authentic and transparent records. These may be about the clients and of the events that happened within or outside the service. These are also useful when relevant people need to request necessary documents provided they are given access to them.

With this, this Learner Guide will discuss the different tasks you should perform to complete workplace correspondence and documentations. In general, this subchapter will discuss the following:

- Complete Documentation According to Legal Requirement and Organisation Procedures
- Read and Clarify Role-Related Workplace Documents
- Complete Workplace Documents According to Organisation Standards
- Follow Communication Policies and Procedures for Using Digital Media
- Document Events Using Clear, Accurate and Objective Language

5.1 Complete Documentation According to Legal Requirement and Organisation Procedures

As discussed in this chapter's introduction, documentation is referred to as recording essential information of clients and processes in the workplace. These types of information must be documented for the clients to access files relevant to them. This also helps the service members for easy retrieval of documents.

Documentation must be according to legal requirements and organisational procedures. *Legal requirements* may refer to laws and legislation that services must adhere to. *Organisation procedures*, on the other hand, provide guidelines for decision-making within the service. These procedures are designed by the service based on the legislation.

It is essential to adhere to these legal requirements and organisational procedures. All relevant people within health or community services must conform to such requirements. It helps in building the credibility and reliability of the service. It also serves as protection for both clients and service workers for the safety and security of their information.

Completing Documentation According to Legal Requirement

Documentation involves capturing important day-to-day occurrences in the service. For health and community services, documentation is focused on the client's information and their health and safety.

Based on the program structure of your service, documented information may include:

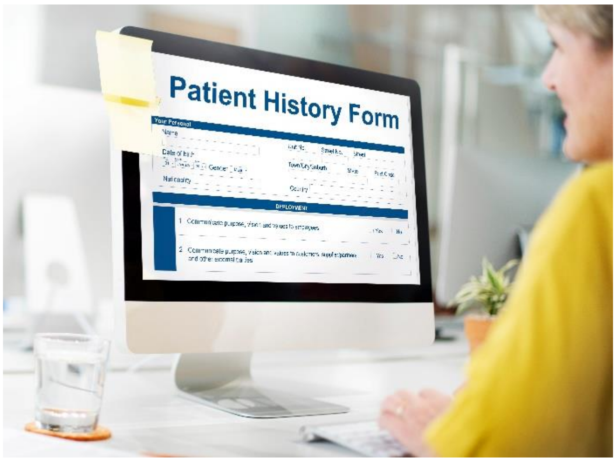
- Sufficient information to identify the patient
- Information about the medical practitioner who provides the medical treatment
- Clinical opinion reached by the medical practitioner
- The treatment plan for the patient
- Prescribed medications for the patient
- Advice given to the patient concerning any medical treatment
- Any medical treatment or other medical services given to or performed on the patient by the medical practitioner:
  - Date of the treatment
  - Nature of the treatment
  - Name of any person who gave or performed the treatment
  - Type of anaesthetic, if any, given to the patient
  - Tissues, if any, sent to pathology
  - Results or findings made concerning the treatment
- Any written consent given by a patient to medical treatment or other medical service proposed by the medical practitioner who treats the patient must be kept as part of the record relating to that patient.

In general, the level of detail in a record must be appropriate to the patient's case and the medical practice concerned.

- A record must include sufficient information concerning the patient's case. This is to allow another medical practitioner to continue management of the patient's case.
- All entries in the record must be accurate statements of fact or statements of clinical judgement.

Based on content from the New South Wales Legislation website at 29 September 2021. For the latest information on New South Wales Government legislation please go to https://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au.

Completing Documentation According to Organisation Procedures



Regardless of the type of document, you must ensure that they meet the organisational procedures. Below are some things to consider in completing documentation:

- Maintain the documentation of health care records following policy requirements.
- Ensure that the client's information included in the record is accurate and up-to-date.
- Identification of client must be seen on every page. This may involve their unique identifier, their full name, date of birth and sex.
- All dates of each entry must be included.
- Always use black or blue ink.
- Avoid using a white-out in handwritten documents. Instead, draw a line over the error and affix the date and your signature.
- Use understandable language.
- The information must be presented in a logical order.
- Draw a line for unused spaces.
- Write neatly and legibly.
- Use quotation marks when recording a client's statement.
- Do not complete documentation on behalf of other people.
- Any significant change in the client's physical, emotional, behavioural and environmental condition must immediately be conveyed to the supervisor.
- Avoid the use of non-permanent adhesive labels.
- Results of pathology, radiology and other tests ordered must be included in the documentation.
- All incidents must be documented in their health care record.
- Any records of complaints must not be included in the patient's health care record.

5.2 Read and Clarify Role-Related Workplace Documents

Before carrying out your tasks within or outside the service, reading and fully understanding the relevant documents is essential. *Workplace documents* are files or records pertinent to your role as a health or community service worker. This may involve different documents such as letters, contracts and other documents relating to service provision.

Some documents are too straightforward. However, there may be instances when you will misunderstand some parts of them. It is crucial to clarify your understanding with the supervisor. This is essential to have explicit knowledge of the document before carrying out the task. Not doing so may lead to misinterpretation, thus, carrying out unnecessary tasks.

5.2.1 Reading Role-Related Workplace Documents

For someone who works in health and community services, one of your jobs is to communicate with relevant people. Before acting, you must ensure that you understand all workplace documents that you have read. Below are some of the most common workplace documents in health and community services:

Letters	Contracts	Inquiries
Client records	Client feedback	Reports

- **Letters** – Before responding to people you communicate with, you must read their letters thoroughly. You must understand the content of the letter. Letters have different purposes. It may be used to inform, request or complain about something. Make sure that letters that need immediate response are attended to properly.
- **Contracts** – These refer to a documented agreement between two or more parties. When you communicate and work in health and community services, you may encounter relevant contracts. You must read and understand each of the statements written in it. This helps you become aware of what you must consider when dealing with different people and situations.
- **Inquiries** – You will encounter many inquiries if you are assigned to communicate with potential clients. Make sure that you understand what they are inquiring about. Often, this involves service provision, including the process that they may undergo.
- **Client records** – It is also essential to read the client records. The details included in a client record are essential before providing them with the necessary service. These pieces of information will also help you with proper documentation. Having the knowledge of the client and their medical history will guide you in providing the needed service.

- **Client feedback** – Feedback from clients must be considered at all times. Through this, you will know if they are satisfied with the service they are receiving. It also helps the service in identifying the workplace practices that need to be retained or further improved.
- **Reports** – You must also have the knowledge and skills to understand generated reports. This may involve analysing charts, tables and graphs relevant to the services. Such reports will help in identifying progress with the client's health status. These may also help in checking the effectiveness of service provision.

5.2.2 Clarifying Understanding With Supervisor

All service members need to understand written texts before doing a job. These are used as bases for decision-making and problem-solving. However, there may be instances where your understanding is different from what the workplace document contains.

To ensure that your understanding is correct, you must clarify it with your supervisor. They are the ones who can confirm if your comprehension is accurate. They can also explain further if there are certain matters that you need to know in addition to what you have read.

Below are the things that you may consider when clarifying understanding with the supervisor:

1. **Approach your supervisor.** – Talk to your supervisor and ask them if it is an excellent time to ask. Make sure that you respectfully approach them by greeting them. You may consider using words like 'Excuse me' or 'May I' when asking for their availability.
2. **State your concern.** – State your concern by telling what your point is all about. It is vital to give them an idea first before heading straight to your question.

3. **Describe your understanding.** – Describe your understanding of a particular part of a workplace document that you have read. You may also ask a question if your understanding is correct.
4. **Let them analyse.** – Give them ample time to absorb your question. Maintain a positive disposition while they understand your concern.
5. **Listen to their response.** – Listen actively to their response. You may check Section 2.1.1 for the things to consider when listening actively. This helps you understand the response much clearly and accurately.
6. **Take note of additional details.** – If there are further details, make sure to note them. These might help understand the workplace document before carrying out the tasks.

5.3 Complete Workplace Documents According to Organisation Standards

As discussed in Subchapter 5.1, documentation is referred to as recording essential information of clients and processes in the workplace. Workplace documents provide information or evidence relevant to the service.

Workplace documents can be completed through writing or with the use of electronic devices. *Written documents* are records that can be accomplished using pen and paper. *Electronic documents* are records that are completed using various gadgets. This may involve the use of computers and tablets among others.

Completing written and electronic workplace documents are essential in health and community services. These services are required to comply with the clinical and legislative standards, which include documentation standards. These records serve as evidence that may be used for different processes within the service. Such documentation will also help the service members in retrieving the necessary file for their work.

Aside from reading workplace documents, one of your roles is to complete written and electronic workplace documents. The workplace documents that you will be writing are something similar to the documents that you are reading. Below are some of the workplace documents that you will be completing while working in health and community services:

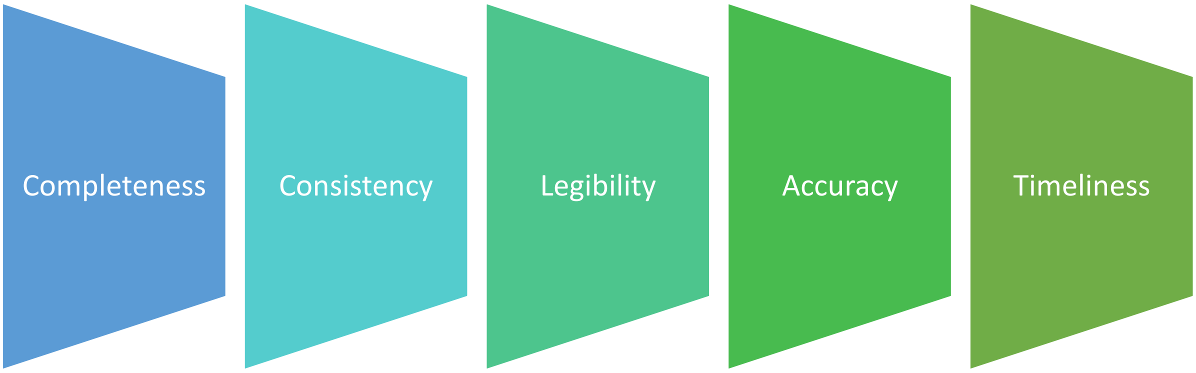
Letters	Digital responses	Client records	Reports

- **Letters** – One of your roles is to compose formal letters for relevant people. These letters are not limited to people in the service; they may also include other relevant people. This involves writing letters to partners, affiliated organisations and other relevant services. These may involve letters of request, transfer and the like.
- **Digital responses** – You will also be writing a couple of responses through digital means. This may involve replies to emails, social media or other electronic means. Just like letters, you have to make sure that your responses are written formally. Ensure that your sentences are composed professionally.
- **Client record** – This involves the client's personal information and other relevant information that may require consent. This may also include their medical histories, such as their previous illnesses or health status. If they are patients that need to be monitored, their records may also include measurements. Examples of these are vital signs, oxygen level or their medications. Take note that this information must be written based on the advice of physicians and other health professionals.
- **Reports** – This may refer to different kinds of reports relevant to the service. This includes reports relating to client progress, complaints, workplace incidents or conflicts. It is essential to document usual events in the workplace. However, unusual occurrences must also be given further importance.

These documents must be completed based on organisation standards. *Organisation standards* refer to the principles or requirements that the service complies with. These standards help the service in producing accurate and authentic documents.

These documentations help in providing evidence or records. Clients will be able to request documents they have access to. The service will also benefit when they need to generate and make reports.

Specific standards must be followed whether a document is written or electronic. Below are some of the standards in completing documentation of any kind:



- **Completeness** – Documents must contain the necessary details. Most workplace documents relevant to health or community services include the following information:
    - Accurate date and time
    - Correct spelling of names
    - List of tasks performed
    - Observations of the client
- **Consistency** – Workplace documents must also be coherent with the service's vision and mission. There must be consistent forms and templates to be used for each document. Below are some of the things to consider to maintain consistency with the workplace documents:
    - Constant use of industry terminologies
    - The care plan must contain the procedures for service provision.
    - Documentation must align with workplace policies.
- **Legibility** – Workplace documents must be readable to anyone who will be reading them. Below are some of the things to consider for the documents to be legible:
    - Handwriting must be legible.
    - The texts on the document must be written using black or blue ink.
    - Use block letters instead of cursive ones.
    - For electronic documents, stick to the format provided. Avoid changing font styles and colours.

- **Accuracy** – This means that the details contained in the documentation must be authentic. This helps in keeping reliable documents that may be used for other processes.

  Below are some of the things to consider for documentation to be accurate:

  - All spellings must be correct.
  - Numbers must be written accurately.
  - Record the facts and not your opinions.
  - Quote the client's exact words.

- **Timeliness** – Another important thing is completing documentation on time. This means accomplishing the necessary documents as soon as they are needed. Below are some of the things to consider to complete documents promptly:

  - Make use of the proper time format according to your workplace policies.
  - Record the exact start and end time.
  - Write crucial information immediately (e.g. vital signs, dictated phone numbers, etc.)
  - Accomplish and submit records as soon as they are needed.

Multimedia

Linked below is a video about writing workplace documents. Click the link to access the video.

Communicating in Writing - Writing Workplace Documents

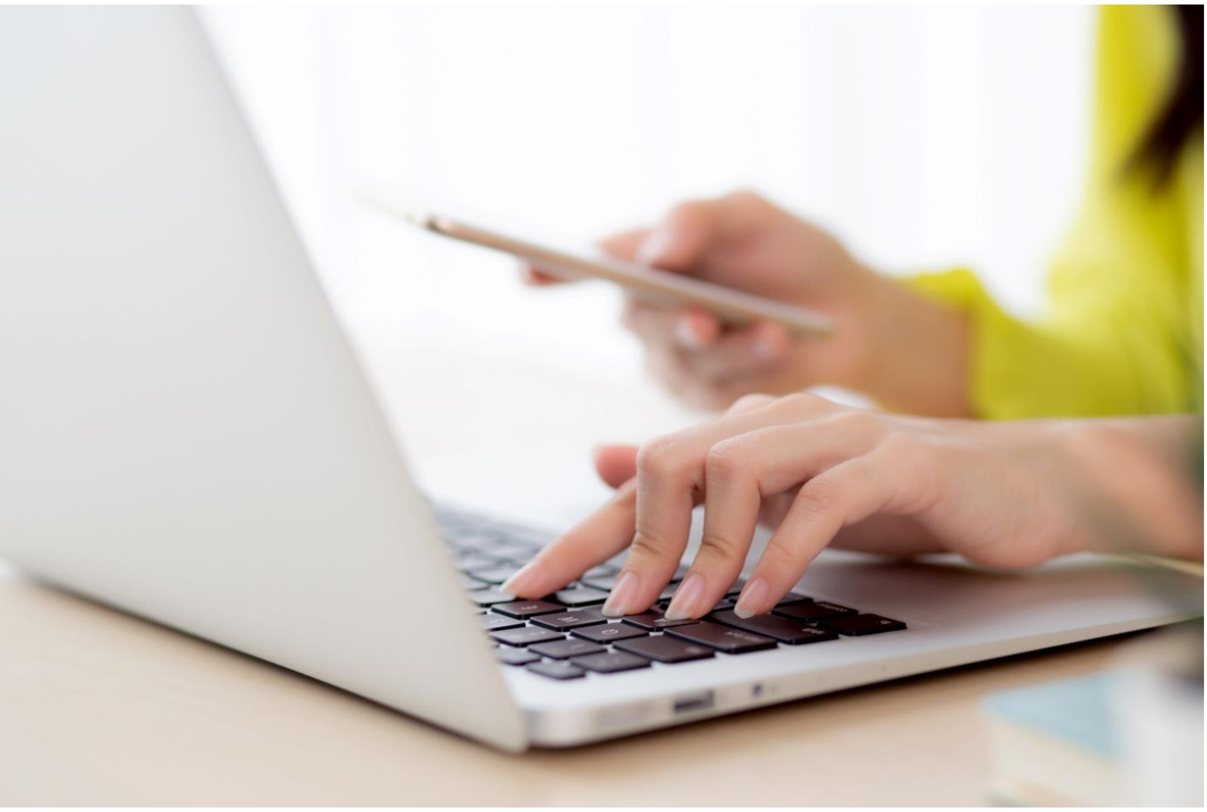
Below is an example of how client records must be completed in a written manner based on organisation standards:

Document	Standard
Client record	▪ The client's name, address, contact numbers, race and ethnicity must be included. ▪ The client's name or identification number must be included on each page of the document. ▪ Signatures must be legible. ▪ Initials may be used if the service worker's credential is included. ▪ If the document contains the client's medical history, the following standards must apply: ○ Past medical history ○ Current condition ○ Medications ○ Allergies ○ Immunisation record

The standards discussed above also apply when completing electronic documents. Below are some additional standards specifically for electronic workplace documents:

Document	Standard
Incident report	▪ The format for recording incident reports must be followed. ▪ There must be sufficient white spaces for additional notes. ▪ If possible, attach photos for evidence. ▪ Make sure the images or videos attached do not violate copyright laws. ▪ Make use of service watermarks when appropriate.

5.4 Follow Communication Policies and Procedures for Using Digital Media

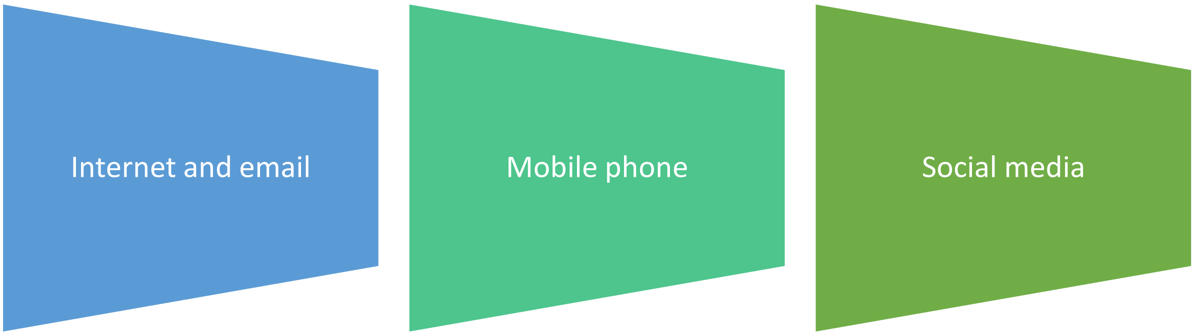


You will be communicating with clients and other relevant people using digital media. This involves the use of mobile phones, the Internet, email and even social media. Most often, potential clients will also reach the service using gadgets and devices.

You must be knowledgeable about the communication policies and procedures when using digital media. Following organisation policies and procedures is one of the legal requirements that services need to comply with. Aside from compliance, this also increases the reliability and credibility of the service. Compliance with organisation policies and procedures ensures that the clients, service members and other relevant people are safe and that their information is confidential.

Communication Policies and Procedures for Using Digital Media

Below are some of the digital media and the related policies and procedures for each:



Internet and Email Policies and Procedures

This policy outlines the Internet and email protocols when communicating with clients and other relevant people. It is used as a guide to advise service members when using the internet and their email when exchanging information with people. Below are some of the policies and procedures that must be followed to adhere to the policy:

- Use of internet email must not:
  - Affect the duties of the service and its service members
  - Interfere with the operation of the service
  - Compromise the security of documents being used in the service
  - Breach any standards and legal or ethical requirements
  - Compromise any confidentiality requirements of the service.
- Internet and email must not be used for:
  - Creating or exchanging messages that are offensive, insulting, indecent or threatening
  - Providing any sensitive or confidential information kept by the service
  - Generating, holding or delivering information that violates copyright laws
  - Generating or exchanging advertisements, solicitations and other unsolicited emails.

Mobile Phone Policy an Procedures

This policy outlines the protocols for using mobile phones when communicating with clients and other relevant people. It is used as a guide to provide advice for service members when using mobile phones when exchanging information with people. Below are some of the procedures that must be followed to adhere to the policy:

- The service may provide a mobile phone to allow contact with clients other relevant people regarding the service.
- Service members who have been provided with a mobile phone with email and internet access must also comply with the internet and email policy.
- The device must not be used in any way that may damage the legitimate interests of the service and its partners and affiliates.
- The mobile phone should be kept on to attend to client concerns and queries.
- The voicemail setup must be activated to inform the caller if the service member is unavailable. Voicemail must be set up and include the following details:

Greetings

Name and position of service member

Service name

Advisory (if they are unavailable or on leave)

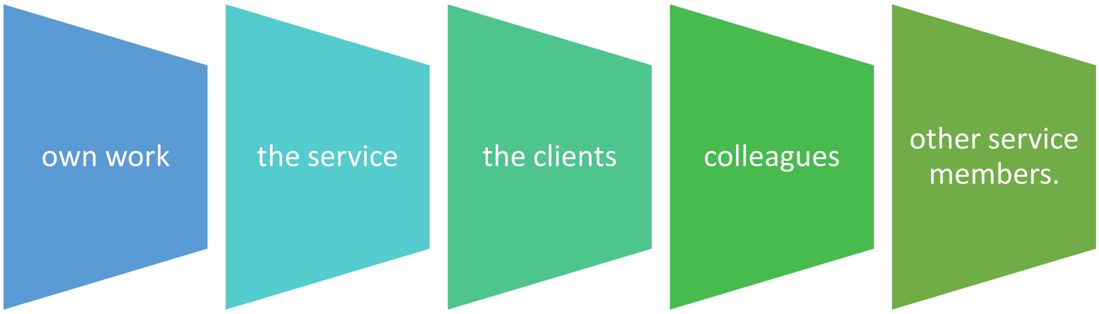
Assurance that their call with be attended to as immediately as possible

Asking them to leave a short message

Social Media Policy and Procedures

This policy outlines the protocols for using social media when communicating with clients and other relevant people. It is used as a guide to provide advice for service members when using their social media accounts. This may apply when they make public comments regarding the service. Below are some of the procedures that must be followed to adhere to the policy:

- Avoid making comments that are unlawful, indecent, insulting, threatening, harassing, discriminatory or hateful to:



- Avoid making comments that are:
  - Created on behalf of the service rather than a personal point of view
  - Extremely criticising the government or their respective policies, that the employee is no longer able to work professionally and efficiently
  - Unwarranted personal attacks that are connected with your employment.
- Clarify that any views expressed are your own and not those of the service.
- When considering making personal comments, employees should reflect if:
  - The comments could cause the service clients and other relevant people to lose confidence in their ability to work in a professional manner
  - The comments are consistent with how the community expects the service to run and perform
  - The comments lower the reputation of the service
  - The comments are lawful
  - Someone takes a screenshot of the comments, then circulates them.

Based on Social media policy, used under CC BY 3.0 AU. © Commonwealth of Australia

5.5 Use Clear, Accurate and Objective Language When Documenting Events

One of your roles as a health or community service worker is documenting events. This involves taking notes of the specific details for the event to be explained accurately. Documentations help record positive experiences in the service. However, it is also used when documenting incidents that may involve clients and other relevant people.

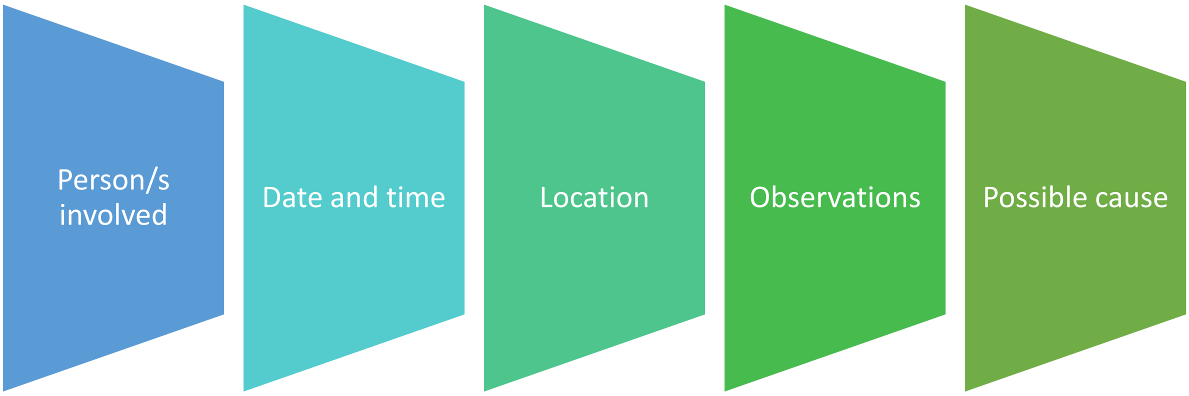
It is important to document events to have evidence. These documents will prove that you adhere to the practices, rules and processes of the service. When events are documented, they can be used as supporting documents when there is a need to:

- Keep track of updates about clients
- Maintain positive work practices
- Identify areas for improvement
- Come up with better ideas.

Your role is to ensure that clear, accurate and objective language is used when documenting such events. This will keep the documents presented professionally and respectfully. It also makes the service reliable when relevant people access such documentations.

5.5.1 Documenting Events

When documenting events, take note of the necessary details. These details must support in explaining the occurrence of the event. This may involve the following:



- **Person/s involved** – This refers to the person/s engaged in the event. This may include the clients, your colleagues, service members or other relevant people. You may also indicate these people's names, positions within the service and stands during the event.
- **Date and time** – It is also essential to document the exact date and time when the event took place. Such documents are kept well because of the date and time of occurrence. Date and time are one of the things that legally bind a workplace document. It may also help you protect yourself since you have the exact evidence which may be checked against attendance records or Closed-Circuit Televisions (CCTVs).
- **Location** – The location of where the event took place is as important as the date and time. Providing the exact spot helps in verifying the authenticity of the documentation. Those investigating actual events, such as emergencies and accidents, may examine the precise location. They may also ask nearby people for supporting details.
- **Observation** – When documenting events, you must include your observation. Write in detail what both parties did. You may also have sensitive information which you think may help for further investigation. Specify how each of the people involved acted during the event. This must be accurate according to the time when they took place.
- **Possible cause** – While observing, you will also have an idea or assumption of the occurrence's possible reasons. While it is important to verify before writing them down, there are instances when the causes are apparent. For example, a client slipped on the floor, pointing to the spill or leak as the cause.

5.5.2 Using Clear, Accurate and Objective Language

When documenting these events, make sure that the language you are using is clear, accurate and objective.

- **Clear** – The clarity of details is essential when documenting events. The documentation is clear if it can be understood by the relevant people who will be reading it. For the documentation to be clear, you must consider the following:
    - It must contain specific information about the event.
    - The details are arranged in a manner that is easy to follow.
    - There is a timeframe on when and how the event took place.
    - Industry terminologies are used consistently.
- **Accurate** – All details in the documentation must be accurate. This means that you must verify if the details you have written are valid, especially when it involves people's information. Below are some of the things to consider to ensure accuracy in the documentation:
    - Spelling and grammar are correct.
    - Proper format and writing conventions are followed.
    - The exact date, time and location of the event are written accordingly.
- **Objective** – Make sure that these events are documented objectively. This means that you must suspend your views, judgements and opinions. The details that you must be writing when documenting events are based purely on observation. You must be honest with the contents of the documentation as it may affect those people involved. Being subjective when documenting events may just worsen that situation. Below is a table that shows a comparison between the use of objective and subjective language when documenting events:

Objective language	Subjective language
'The client has *seven* stitches.'	'The client has *too many* stitches.'
'Person A said that Person B is *annoying*.'	'Person A said *a lot of hurtful words* to Person B.'
'The client's body temperature is 38° C.'	'*I think* the client's body temperature is at around 36, 37 or *maybe* 38° C.'

Checkpoint! Let's Review

1. Documentation involves capturing important day-to-day occurrences in the service. For health and community services, documentation is focused on the client's information and their health and safety.
2. Workplace documents can be completed through writing or with the use of electronic devices.
3. Due to technological advancements, you will be communicating with clients and other relevant people using digital media. This involves the use of mobile phones, the internet, email and even social media.

Learning Activity for Chapter 5

Well done completing this chapter. You may now proceed to your **Learning Activity Booklet** (provided along with this Learner Guide) and complete the learning activities associated with this chapter.

Please coordinate with your trainer/training organisation for additional instructions and guidance in completing these practical activities.

VI. Contribute to Continuous Improvement

Workplace culture is defined by the shared values and principles, behaviour and interactions of the people in the service. When a service promotes a culture that encourages learning and trying new things, it promotes an environment that fosters innovation and continuous improvements. This chapter discusses how you can contribute to continuous improvement.

To contribute to continuous improvement, it is necessary to promote the value of creativity, innovation and sustainability, and recognise successes in the workplace. Modifications cannot be achieved by working alone. It is significant to identify the different people you will need to work with and understand how to work with them effectively. With this, this Learner Guide will discuss the various tasks you should perform to contribute to continuous improvement. In general, this subchapter will discuss the following:

- Identify and voice improvements in work practices
- Promote and model improved work practices and procedures in accordance with organisation requirements
- Seek feedback and advice on skills and knowledge development
- Consult manager regarding skills development opportunities

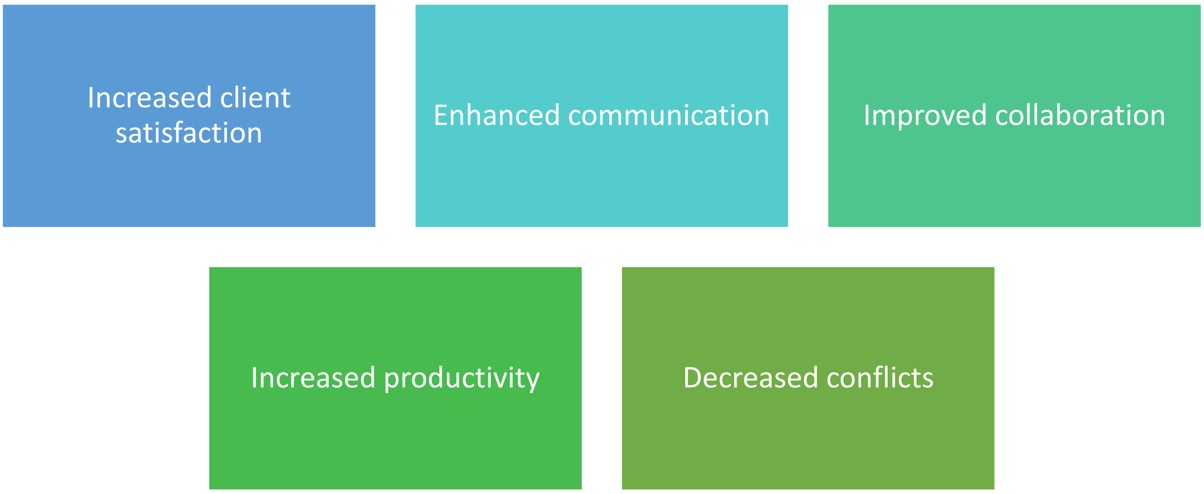
6.1 Identify and Voice Improvements in Work Practices

As a health or community service worker, you will be experiencing being involved in different situations. This allows you to see different perspectives when it comes to your work practices in the service. Points for improvement are often more noticeable. However, it would be best to always focus on the modifications within the work practices. You must be able to contribute to identifying and voicing improvements within the workplace. This may be done based on your experiences and observations.

This is essential for the service to be aware of the improvements, especially of unnoticeable ones. They need to see different perspectives from different people. Doing this will help them consider all views and opinions, which promotes autonomy for all service members.

6.1.1 Identifying Improvements in Work Practices

Below are some of the improvements you may notice:



- **Increased client satisfaction** – The main goal of any health or community service is to provide for those in need. Client satisfaction is one of the crucial improvements that must be seen in the workplace. This can be observed through their feedbacks and their continuous subscription to the service.
- **Enhanced communication** – Another essential improvement in the workplace is enhanced communication. Everyone, including the clients, the service staff and the managers, must be able to interact positively with one another. Having smooth communication will have a ripple effect. This helps the subsequent actions to be accomplished timely and appropriately.
- **Improved collaboration** – It is also crucial for the members of the service to collaborate. Through this, each of the members learns from others and works together for a common goal. This also helps in providing better service and in attending to the needs of relevant people. Each of the member's participation is essential for higher efficiency.
- **Increased productivity** – Increased client satisfaction is often an indicator that there is an increase in productivity. This refers to utilising time and resources wisely to achieve desired outcomes. An increase in productivity is critical for the service to provide the best that it can to those in need.
- **Decreased conflicts** – Smooth communication often lessens possible conflicts. When messages and information are conveyed clearly and timely, misunderstandings are avoided. Therefore, it reduces the chance for disputes to arise. When this happens, productivity also increases. Clients become satisfied, and service members become more motivated.

6.1.2 Voicing Improvements in Work Practices

Service members need to voice out. This means expressing their opinions, suggestions and concerns. This helps in further enhancing work practices. This also allows the management to see different perspectives and new ideas that will improve work practices. While voicing out is commonly done through speaking out, suggestions can also be given through other means. Below are some of the ways on how improvements in work practices may be voiced out:

Direct speaking | Representatives | Surveys/Feedbacks

- **Direct speaking** – This refers to speaking out about your concerns and suggestions for improvement. In this channel, you may be speaking directly to appropriate people. This is to let them know your thoughts and observations in work practices improvements. This usually happens during meetings or conferences when everyone is given the autonomy to speak.
- **Representatives** – Voicing work practices improvements may also be made through a representative. If you are in one team, your thoughts and opinions are collected by a team leader. They are the ones who act as a representative in voicing out the views of the team. During meetings and conferences, leaders and department heads are the ones who present updates and concerns within their departments. These are cascaded for the management to be informed and updated on the improvements in work practices.
- **Surveys/Feedbacks** – Improvements may also be voiced out through surveys and feedback. Service members are given the autonomy to say what they want concerning enhancements they observe. Through this, the management can be aware of the improvements in work practices based on the opinions of the majority. They will then have an idea of what programmes and benefits to retain for these work practices to improve consistently.

6.2 Promote and Model Improved Work Practices and Procedures in Accordance With Organisation Requirements

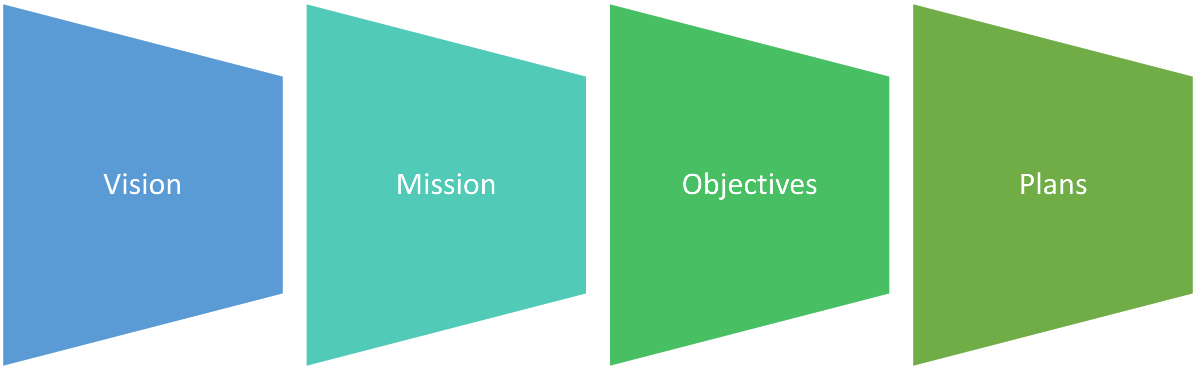
After identifying and voicing improvements in work practices, you must promote and model the changes. *Promoting* means supporting and encouraging other members of the service to do the same. *Modelling* means acting out the needed behaviours to display improvements in the work practices consistently.

Doing this will inspire your colleagues and other service members also to promote and model the changes. With these, there will be an increase in productivity, which helps maintain good service provision to the clients.

You must ensure that these actions are according to the organisation requirements. *Organisation requirements* may refer to the service's vision, mission, objectives and plans. There are also external requirements such as legislation and standards that the service needs to adhere to. This ensures that the actions and behaviours you will be exhibiting are in line with what the service is expecting.

6.2.1 Organisation Requirements

Most organisations have specific requirements that explain how it plans to progress for the future. As mentioned on the previous page, organisation requirements refer to the service's vision, mission, objectives and plans which this section will discuss in depth. This also involves external requirements such as legislation and standards that the service needs to adhere to.



- **Vision** – This refers to what the service wants to achieve or to become. The main goal of a service vision is to build a strong identity and be known in the industry. Generally, the vision of health and community services is to become the most reliable and trusted care and service provider.
- **Mission** – This refers to the specific actions that should be done to achieve the service's vision. This may involve what the service needs to fulfil. This may also include the opportunities that the service provides. For health and community services, this may refer to the services offered to the clients and relevant people. This involves how each of them will benefit from the service.
- **Objectives** – These refer to statements that describe the desired outcomes of the service. These objectives must be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound (SMART). A service may have a single overall objective or multiple objectives that should be attained together. For example, one aim of the service may be to provide person-centred support services to the clients.
- **Plans** – This may refer to different plans within the service, one of which is the strategic plan. A *strategic plan* is a document used to communicate the service's goals to its members. It contains the actions that each member needs to do to achieve the service's goals and objectives.

6.2.2 Promoting and Modelling Changes to Improved Work Practices and Procedures

You must now reflect on how such changes to improved work practices and procedures will be promoted and modelled. All of these must be based on the organisation requirements. Below are some of the workplace improvements as discussed in the previous subchapter:

- Increased client satisfaction
- Enhanced communication
- Improved collaboration
- Increased productivity
- Decreased conflicts

Below is a table that shows how each of these improvements can be promoted and modelled. These refer to the actions, behaviours and practices that you need to exhibit to adhere to the organisation requirements:

Improvement to work practices and procedures	Promoting changes	Modelling changes
Increased client satisfaction	▪ Ask and answer questions about better service provision. ▪ Reflect on the feedback gathered from previous and current clients.	▪ Attend to client needs as immediately as possible. ▪ Provide the necessary service they need and offer extra assistance when necessary.
Enhanced communication	▪ Be optimistic when talking to relevant people, even during challenging times. ▪ Encourage a sense of urgency when a matter needs to be cascaded immediately.	▪ Communicate with clients and the service members in a clear and timely manner. ▪ Communicate with the relevant people using the necessary communication skills.

Improvement to work practices and procedures	Promoting changes	Modelling changes
Improved collaboration	▪ Brainstorm with your colleagues regarding better service provision. ▪ Stay connected with your colleagues and other service members.	▪ Offer help when a colleague needs assistance. ▪ Celebrate team successes in meaningful ways.
Increased productivity	▪ Maintain proactivity despite encountering challenges in work roles. ▪ Be aware of the time when carrying out workplace duties.	▪ Accomplish workplace duties promptly. ▪ Allot time for practice to gain mastery of necessary skills.
Decreased conflicts	▪ Adequate time is allotted for reflection. ▪ Processes and procedures are followed when attending to conflicts.	▪ Clarify misunderstandings with colleagues and clients. ▪ Refer conflict situations to appropriate people as immediately as possible.

6.3 Seek Feedback and Advice on Skills and Knowledge Development

Areas may refer to the range of support and performance while dealing with clients and other relevant people. These areas may refer to the following:

- How you communicate with them
- How you collaborate in the workplace
- How you manage constraints and conflicts
- Your attitude in accomplishing workplace tasks

These areas must be identified to be aware of the skills and knowledge you need to enhance further. This will help improve and strengthen your skills and knowledge, but most importantly, for the benefit of the people in the service. Having enhanced skills and knowledge will help you in performing at your best. This helps by providing the clients better service and becoming a reliable and responsible colleague in the workplace. You will learn how to gather feedback and advice from appropriate people regarding skill and knowledge development areas. *Feedback* refers to comments, views and opinions that the relevant people will give. *Advice,* on the other hand, refers to the guidance or recommendation they will provide. Both feedback and advice are given based on how practical your skills and knowledge are. These are offered as bases for improvement for future purposes.

6.3.1 Areas for Skill and Knowledge Development

There are many different points to focus on while communicating and working in health or community services. However, you should ideally cover the following areas for skill and knowledge development:

- Communicating with people
- Collaborating with colleagues
- Addressing conflicts
- Completing workplace documents
- Providing service

- **Communicating with people** – Communicating with people is one of the most critical areas that you need to focus on. This involves how you interact with clients, colleagues, managers and other relevant people. Below are some of the things to consider to develop skills relating to communicating with different people:
    - Using communication techniques such as open questioning, affirmations, summaries and the like.
    - Using varied communication strategies in different situations
    - Considering different ways of communication to address their needs
- **Collaborating with colleagues** – It is also crucial that you build a lasting relationship with your colleagues. This involves being responsible and reliable when collaborating with them. Below are some of the things to consider to maintain healthy collaboration with your colleagues:
    - Learn to listen to and clarify what they are saying.
    - Negotiate and settle disagreements.
    - Be consistent with the use of industry terminologies.
- **Addressing conflicts** – Conflicts are inevitable in the workplace, and you must handle them immediately. You must be able to maintain smooth communication with the people you will be encountering. Below are some of the things to consider to address conflicts in the workplace:
    - Make use of different communication strategies.
    - Develop practical communication skills.
    - Take responsibility when involved in disputes.

- **Completing workplace documents** – As a health or community service worker, accomplishing accurate workplace documents is necessary. You must complete such documents for the service to have authentic records and evidence. Below are some of the things to consider in completing workplace documents:
    - Documentation must be based on legal requirements and organisation procedures.
    - Use clear, accurate and objective language during documentation.
- **Providing service** – The main goal of health and community services is, of course, providing service. You must ensure that services are delivered. This involves attending to the needs of the client to satisfy them. They must be assisted in developing or enhancing self-management skills. Below are some of the things to consider in providing services:
    - It must be person-centred.
    - You must consider the rights of every people involved.
    - Service provision must be based on legal and ethical considerations.

6.3.2 Seeking Feedback and Advice from Appropriate People

The most appropriate people to seek feedback from are those with whom you work directly. This may involve the clients, your colleagues and your supervisor. They are the most reliable persons to give you the feedback and advice you need to enhance your skills and knowledge.

Gathering feedback and advice is perhaps the most critical part of the review process. The integrated opinions of relevant people provide several perspectives. These can provide better insight into your skills and knowledge development. You may have various experiences while working in health or community services. However, there might be everyday aspects of work that you might miss. This includes alternative opinions about service provision worth considering. In this regard, it is critical to seek feedback and advice from appropriate people.

Multimedia

Linked below is a video about receiving feedback. Click the link to access the video.

Receiving Feedback

Seeking Feedback

It would be best to use basic research techniques to systematise feedback collection and analysis to gather information effectively. One technique for collecting data from the clients is through surveys. This is usually done after service has been provided to the clients. *Surveys* allow you to elicit information on close-ended and short-answer questions. Most often, these are used for gathering numerical and quantifiable data. For example, you might find this helpful when determining the effectiveness of your skills and knowledge based on how you provide services for the clients. This is also useful for generalising from large populations. For example, the full service includes members and staff.

This technique typically involves the following steps:

Select respondents.

Administer questionnaire.

Wait for the analysed results.

1. **Select respondents.** – In this case, your respondents are either your clients or your colleagues. Clients usually answer surveys after receiving the service that they need. Your colleagues may answer a survey about you during staff and employee evaluations.
2. **Administer questionnaire.** – When asking for feedback from clients and colleagues, printed forms are usually given. Questionnaires may also be administered online through websites or applications.
3. **Wait for the analysed results.** – A particular department in the service will then analyse the survey results. You will be given the outcome containing the feedbacks from the clients and your colleagues. For example, you may find out:

- how well you communicate with the clients
- how you handle and manage conflicts in the service
- the points for improvement in completing workplace documents.

Seeking Advice

You may also seek advice from your colleagues, supervisors or from higher authorities. Your colleagues may have alternative ways or methods that are more effective in the workplace. You may also seek advice from your supervisor and other higher authorities. They are more experienced in working in health or community services.

Below are the steps on how to seek advice from your colleagues, supervisors or higher authorities:

Start by asking their availability.

↓

Let them know your concern.

↓

Make sure to prepare for the conversation.

↓

Ask them for advice and tips in developing your knowledge and skills.

↓

Be grateful and appreciate their time and effort.

1. **Start by asking about their availability.** – These people also have their schedules, and it would be respectful if you ask them about their availability. For some colleagues, especially those you are comfortable with, you may ask them during their free time. This is if the concern or issue needs immediate action. If you are talking to supervisors or higher authorities, you must give formal requests. This can be in the form of a letter or email asking for their availability. While most of them would prefer a face-to-face discussion, some will inform you that you can communicate with them through other means.
2. **Let them know your concern.** – Respect their time by being direct to the point and letting them know your situation. You can tell directly by saying that it is about a piece of advice that you want to hear. For example, this can be done by simply stating that you need their help in communicating with demanding clients.

3. **Make sure to prepare for the conversation.** – Before communicating with them, make sure you construct the statements you need to ask. When facing your supervisor or higher authorities, make sure that you appear in a presentable manner. Be aware of your gestures and the way you talk to them.
4. **Ask them for advice and tips in developing your knowledge and skills.** – When seeking advice, make sure you set aside your own opinions and judgements. Listen to their thoughts, ideas and beliefs, and reflect on how it can help you enhance your skills and knowledge.
5. **Be grateful and appreciate their time and effort.** – Do not forget to thank them and be thankful for exerting their time and effort. If possible, give back by giving them simple tokens of gratitude and appreciation.

6.4 Consult Manager Regarding Skills Development Opportunities

Upon seeking feedback and advice from appropriate people, you will know the areas you need to improve. This may include your knowledge and skills in certain aspects of your job. It is now time for you to explore options for accessing skill development opportunities. Having the chance to access such opportunities will not just help you develop your skills. You will also benefit from this as you will gain additional knowledge relating to your job.

It is essential to consult with your manager regarding these options. They can coordinate the necessary opportunities that will fit your needs as a service member. They can as well offer support where you and the service can benefit from.

After consulting your manager regarding the options for accessing skill development opportunities, it is your job to initiate action. You must do your part for opportunities to come into a reality. You must take the necessary steps to gain new knowledge and skills to help you become better in your role.

6.4.1 Options for Accessing Skill Development Opportunities

There are many options for accessing skill development opportunities. Some of them can be one of your benefits in the service. You may also explore other options by exploring them yourself. Below are some of the options for accessing skill development opportunities:

- Training
- Mentoring
- Continuing education
- Seminar/Webinar
- Membership in organisations

- **Training** – This refers to undertaking sets of exercises and instructions to develop or enhance particular skills. Skills are further developed through practice and by following given instructions. Such training may be about the following:
  - Providing extensive service to the clients
  - Using technology in completing workplace documents
  - Designing a case plan
- **Mentoring** – This option is focused on having a mentor and you acting as the mentee. The mentor provides support and advice that you need to know in developing the necessary skills. Together with the mentor, you will be setting goals that you need to meet after the mentoring program. Below are some examples of mentoring goals:
  - Developing confidence in the workplace
  - Handling difficult situations in the workplace
  - Enhancing people skills
- **Continuing education** – This refers to additional formal learning to attain a higher degree of education. This means enrolling in graduate or post-graduate schools and universities. This also involves taking a qualification relevant to health and communication services. This helps with your professional growth and, most importantly, in providing better care for the clients. Below are some examples of continuing education relevant to health and community services:
  - Taking further courses relevant to health
  - Taking Vocational and Education Training (VET) courses to earn qualifications
  - Enrolling in medical schools

- **Seminar/Webinar** – Attending seminars or webinars may also be an option in developing skills. *Seminars* refer to small group sessions. They provide information through discussion of different topics. *Webinars* are like seminars but in an online form. Attending these types of options helps in providing additional knowledge and skills. Below are sample topics being discussed in health and community service seminars:
    - Building trusting relationships with the clients
    - Identifying the appropriate communication strategy
    - Understanding clients in the aged care
- **Membership in organisations** – This refers to joining professional organisations or voluntary associations relating to health and community services. This helps in giving you different ideas on how others do it in their workplace. Through this, you can see different perspectives on how your role can be further improved. Each health and community services sector has particular organisations. Below are some examples:
    - Gastroenterological Society of Australia (GESA)
    - Australian Society of Anaesthetists (ASA)
    - Australian Dental Association

6.4.2 Consulting With Manager

These options for accessing skill development opportunities must be consulted with the manager. Aside from the fact that they are more experienced with these matters, they may also help you decide which option is the best for you. They may also give suggestions that will provide you with clarifications on how to choose. Below is an example of a consulting process:

1. **Entry** – This phase refers to the introduction of the purpose of your consultation. This is where you mention your concern regarding the options for accessing skill development opportunities. During this phase, you present all your expectations and the specific skills that you want to enhance.

2. **Diagnosis** – This phase is where the manager analyses your concern. They are considering specific opportunities based on the expectations that you have given. They also think of the options that may fit your needs in developing the particular skills you have mentioned.

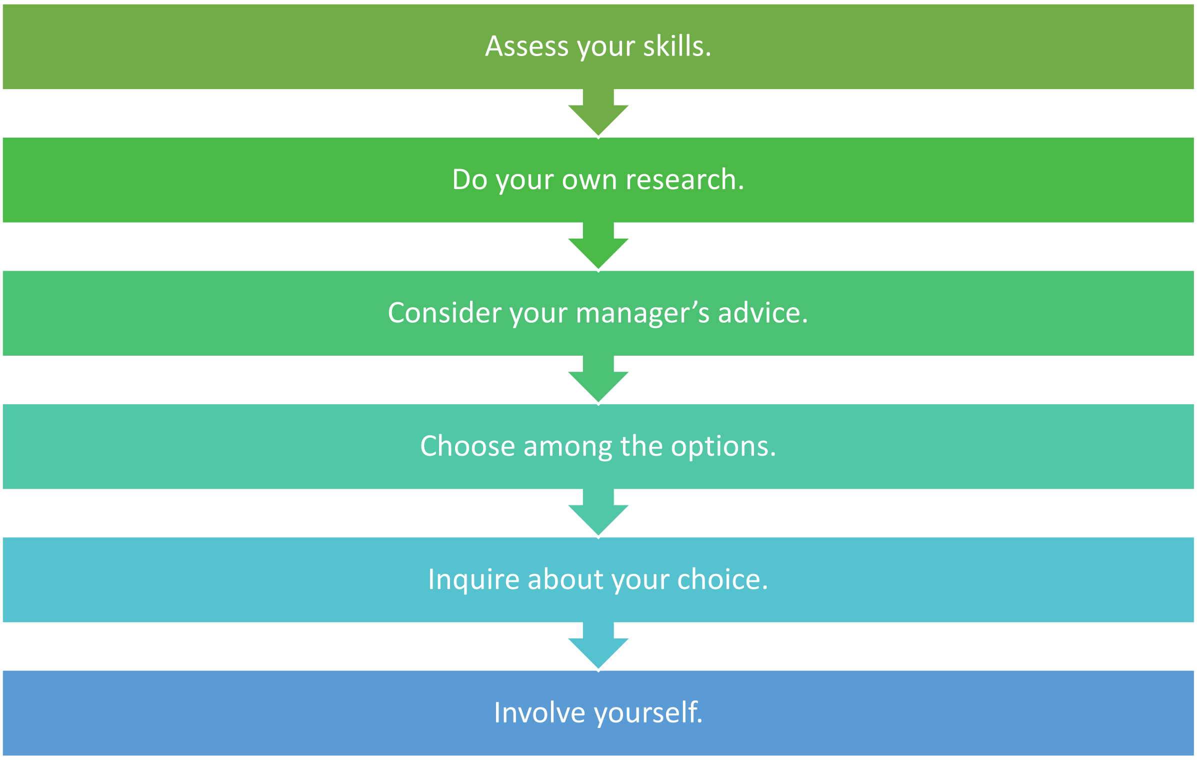
3. **Feedback** – Upon thinking of the possibilities and options, your manager then provides you with a variety of options that you may choose from. This may involve skill development opportunities that the service is providing as a benefit. They may also suggest other options which are out of the service's provisions.

4. **Implementation** – This phase is where a decision will be made. You will be informing the manager on which option you prefer the most. This is based on its capability in helping you develop necessary skills. Although the suggestions and advice of the manager are highly considered in this phase, you still have the final say.

5. **Closure** – This phase begins with the evaluation of the primary concern. This is where you assess if there is a need to extend the process. Sometimes, the consultation will not be closed unless you have already decided on which option/s you are taking into consideration. Once implementation is successful, that is the time that consultation will be closed.

6.4.3 Initiating Actions

Consulting with the manager is just the beginning. You have to initiate action for your skills to develop fully. You have to take the necessary steps depending on your choice among the options provided. Below is a sample procedure on how you must initiate actions:



1. **Assess your skills.** – The first step is identifying the areas for skill and knowledge development. This was further discussed in Section 6.3.1. You have to assess which among those skills need to be developed further. It is essential to pick one skill at a time to focus on them.
2. **Do your own research.** – After assessing and choosing a particular skill you want to develop, do your research. Explore different services or organisations that offer such type of skill development. Results may suggest you enrol in further studies, participate in seminars or undergo training.
3. **Consider your manager's advice.** – Aside from your own choice, you may also consider your manager's advice during the consultation. There is a high chance that their suggestion is relevant to what you want to achieve.
4. **Choose among the options.** – After considering your research and your manager's advice, it is now time you decide. You have to choose among the options discussed in Section 6.4.1. This time, you have to analyse which options will be the most effective one considering your time and resources.

5. **Inquire about your choice.** – After deciding, inquire about the option that you have chosen. If it is something that the service is offering, you may ask about it through the department that offers such benefits. If it is an external option, you have to reach the organisation through their contact details.
6. **Involve yourself.** – Finally, involve yourself in the process. Make extra time by attending the sessions or conferences that require you. Bear in mind that it may be hard in the first place, but it will be worthwhile afterwards. Always remember that this will help in developing your skills further.

Checkpoint! Let's Review

1. Increased client satisfaction is often an indicator that there is an increase in productivity.
2. The most appropriate people to seek feedback from are those with whom you work directly. This may involve the clients, your colleagues and your supervisor.
3. Having enhanced skills and knowledge will help you in performing at your best. This helps by providing the clients better service and becoming a reliable and responsible colleague in the workplace.

Learning Activity for Chapter 6

Well done completing this chapter. You may now proceed to your **Learning Activity Booklet** (provided along with this Learner Guide) and complete the learning activities associated with this chapter.

Please coordinate with your trainer/training organisation for additional instructions and guidance in completing these practical activities.

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