



PROGRESS TRACKER

Chapter 1 CHCCCS016 – Respond to client needs



STUDENT NAMES	1A Inquiry Task - Working in community services	Quick Learning Engagement – What are Human Rights?	Quick Learning Engagement – Privacy, confidentiality and disclosure	1B Inquiry Task – Codes of conduct	Quick Learning Engagement - Dignity of Risk	Quick Learning Engagement - Balancing WHS with other considerations	Reflection Bank – SET A	1C Inquiry Task – Interrelationships between issues	1D Inquiry Task - Interrelationships between issues	Quick Learning Engagement - Identifying types of indicators of harm, neglect or abuse	Quick Learning Engagement - Privacy and confidentiality	Reflection Bank - SET B	1E Inquiry Task - Referral options in your local area	1F Inquiry Task - Mandatory reporting laws	Reflection Bank - SET C	1G Inquiry Task - Identifying where additional support may be required	Quick Learning Engagement - An empowering approach	Quick Learning Engagement - Supporting clients to exit the service	Reflection Bank - SET D	Road Map to Success	
1																					
2																					
3																					
4																					
5																					
6																					
7																					
8																					
9																					
10																					



STUDENT NAMES	1A Inquiry Task - Working in community services	Quick Learning Engagement – What are Human Rights?	Quick Learning Engagement – Privacy, confidentiality and disclosure	1B Inquiry Task – Codes of conduct	Quick Learning Engagement - Dignity of Risk	Quick Learning Engagement - Balancing WHS with other considerations	Reflection Bank – SET A	1C Inquiry Task – Interrelationships between issues	1D Inquiry Task - Interrelationships between issues	Quick Learning Engagement - Identifying types of indicators of harm, neglect or abuse	Quick Learning Engagement - Privacy and confidentiality	Reflection Bank - SET B	1E Inquiry Task - Referral options in your local area	1F Inquiry Task - Mandatory reporting laws	Reflection Bank - SET C	1G Inquiry Task - Identifying where additional support may be required	Quick Learning Engagement - An empowering approach	Quick Learning Engagement - Supporting clients to exit the service	Reflection Bank - SET D	Road Map to Success
11																				
12																				
13																				
14																				
15																				
16																				
17																				
18																				
19																				
20																				
21																				
22																				
23																				
24																				





QUICK LEARNING ENGAGEMENT

What are Human Rights?

Watch this video: What are Human Rights? <https://youtu.be/WJsUfck01Js> (5:10mins), by the *Australian Human Rights Commission*, then come back and answer the questions.

1. Explain briefly what human rights are.

Human rights are the ground rules for how we should treat one another with dignity, respect, equality and fairness.

2. What is the name of the foundation document adopted by the United Nations on 10th December 1948?

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

2. In what decade was the Australian Human Rights Commission established?

The Australian Human Rights Commission was established in the 1980s.

3. Explain briefly, what the word 'ratified' means.

It means to make something officially valid.



QUICK LEARNING ENGAGEMENT

Privacy, confidentiality and disclosure

Match the following key considerations for client privacy, confidentiality and the requirement to disclose information to their correct description.

- A. Obtaining consent.
- B. Legal obligations.
- C. Transparent processes.
- D. Security of information.
- E. Training for service workers.

Description	A, B, C, D or E
Providers must implement secure systems to protect client information from unauthorised access and misuse.	D
Client consent is a cornerstone of privacy and confidentiality, but there are exceptions when disclosure is necessary, such as when there is an imminent threat to life or health.	A
Regular training on privacy and confidentiality is essential for staff to understand their responsibilities and best practices.	E
Service providers must adhere to legal frameworks, such as the Privacy Act and ethical guidelines, when handling client information.	B
Clients should be informed about how their information is collected, used, and disclosed.	C



1B INQUIRY TASK

Codes of conduct

Task 1

To gain an insight into the codes of conduct for workers in the community services sector, begin by first accessing and reviewing an overview provided by the Australian Government's Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission on the *Code of Conduct for Aged Care*

<https://www.agedcarequality.gov.au/for-providers/code-conduct>

You will see in this overview, the Code of Conduct for Aged Care outlines 8 elements of expected behaviour. From these 8 elements, which one relates to your duty of care to saying something if you believe it is in the best interests of protecting the client from harm?

#6 Promptly take steps to raise and act on concerns about matters that may impact the quality and safety of care, support and services.

OR

#8 Take all reasonable steps to prevent and respond to:

- ***all forms of violence, discrimination, exploitation, neglect and abuse***
- ***sexual misconduct.***

Task 2

Next access the *NDIS Code of Conduct* and review the overview provided by the Australian Government's NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission.

<https://www.ndiscommission.gov.au/rules-and-standards/ndis-code-conduct>

You will see there is an overview of the code of conduct in a bulleted list as well as explained in a video.

From these points, which one relates to your duty of care to saying something if you believe it is in the best interests of protecting the client from harm?

Promptly take steps to raise and act on concerns about matters that might have an impact on the quality and safety of supports provided to people with disability.



QUICK LEARNING ENGAGEMENT

Dignity of Risk

Answer True or False to each of the following questions. Provide a brief explanation for why you chose each answer.

Q1: TRUE OR FALSE?

Dignity of risk means that in community services you should always prioritise safety above all else, even if it means restricting a client's choices.

False: Dignity of risk is about balancing safety with a client's right to make choices, not prioritising safety to the point of unnecessary restriction.

Q2: TRUE OR FALSE?

Upholding a client's dignity of risk involves understanding and respecting their right to make choices and take actions, even if those choices involve some level of potential harm.

True: This is the core principle of dignity of risk – respecting autonomy and the right to make choices, even with potential risks.

Q3: TRUE OR FALSE?

Implementing dignity of risk means completely ignoring potential safety concerns and allowing clients to do whatever they wish without any support or risk assessment.

False: Dignity of risk involves understanding and mitigating risks, not ignoring them. It's about informed choice and support, not abandonment.

Q4: TRUE OR FALSE?

Duty of care and dignity of risk are mutually exclusive concepts in community services and support workers must choose to prioritise one over the other in their work practices.

False: Duty of care and dignity of risk are interconnected and should be balanced. Duty of care involves taking reasonable steps to prevent harm, while dignity of risk acknowledges the client's right to make choices within that framework of reasonable safety.



QUICK LEARNING ENGAGEMENT

Balancing WHS with other considerations

Imagine you are a support worker assisting a client with a mobility impairment who wants to continue gardening (as in our earlier dignity of risk example). You have determined there is WHS concern with regards to uneven walking paths, combined with the client's reduced mobility may pose a trip hazard for both the client and also for you in assisting them.

1. Provide at least one example of applying WHS in practice.

I would conduct a risk assessment of the garden, identify specific hazards, and implement control measures (e.g., suggesting the client uses a stable chair, clearing pathways, ensuring the worker uses proper lifting techniques if assisting).

2. Explain how you would balance safety with dignity of risk.

Instead of simply forbidding gardening (which might be the safest option from a purely hazard-elimination perspective), I would collaborate with the client to find safer ways for them to continue engaging in this meaningful activity, respecting their choice and autonomy while mitigating risks.

REFLECTION BANK



- A. Provide three or more examples of basic human rights.

- ***The right to be safe and not be hurt.***
- ***The right to have your own thoughts and beliefs and to share them.***
- ***The right to an education.***
- ***The right to have enough food and a safe place to live.***
- ***The right to be treated equally, no matter your background or what you believe***

- B. Name the Australian federal anti-discrimination law to protect individuals based on their age.

The Age Discrimination Act 2004 (Cth)

- C. Explain the concept of privacy in the community services sector.

Privacy in community services is about respecting an individual's right to keep personal information hidden, including health, financial, and family details. This includes protecting information from unauthorised access and use.

- D. What is your duty of care in the context of working in the community services sector?

CHCCCS016 – Set A



Duty of care in community services workplaces is my fundamental obligation to take reasonable steps to protect all clients and others from foreseeable harm.

E. Provide at least one example of what upholding your duty of care can look like.

- ***It requires that I undertake proactive risk management***
- ***Practice ethical conduct***
- ***Adhere to professional standards and workplace policies***
- ***Uphold a commitment to the well-being and safety of the clients I support***

F. Who are the individuals protected under mandatory reporting laws in Australia?

Children (and adults in some states or territories)

G. Name at least three key communication skills you can use to establish the trust and respect of clients.

- ***Active listening***
- ***Empathy***
- ***Respectful language and tone***
- ***Non-verbal communication***
- ***Building rapport***
- ***Clear and concise communication.***

H. Once you have established clear professional boundaries for the client relationship, what is important to do over the longer term, and why?

I must consistently adhere to the professional boundaries. Inconsistency can be confusing for the client and will erode trust if it appears I do not keep my word.

I. What are the two phases in the structured approach of supporting a client needs?

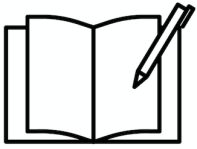
Phase 1. Identifying areas of concern
Phase 2. Determining the options for action.

J. What is the fundamental principle of dignity of risk?

Dignity of risk is all about respecting someone's right to make their own choices and take some chances in life, even if there's a possibility of things not going perfectly. It means we shouldn't wrap people in cotton wool just because we're worried about them getting hurt or making mistakes.

K. List three or more areas of WHS that may apply when working with clients in community service roles.

- ***Home visits – assessing the safety of the client home***
- ***Safe manual handling procedures***
- ***Risks around aggression and violence***
- ***Infection control protocols***
- ***Transportation of clients***



1C INQUIRY TASK

Interrelationships between issues

Domestic violence, mental health, and financial issues.

This task requires you to examine and unpack the interplay of issues for a client in need of support.

The client: *Samiya has been experiencing long-term domestic violence from her partner, Mark. There is constant emotional abuse, threats, and occasional physical violence which have led Samiya to develop severe anxiety and depression. Mark controls all the finances. He doesn't allow Samiya to work, monitors her spending closely, and often withholds money as a form of control.*

Name some potential impacts of domestic violence on Samiya's mental Health.

Samiya may experience frequent panic attacks, have difficulty sleeping, and feel constantly on edge. She could isolate herself from friends and family due to Mark's controlling behaviour and her own feelings of shame and worthlessness. This could significantly impact her ability to function day-to-day.

What are some potential impacts of domestic violence on Samiya's financial situation?

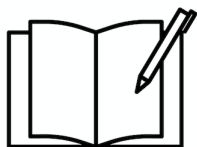
Financial abuse and control can leave Samiya with no independent income or savings. She would feel trapped because she would have no financial means to leave.

What interrelationship lies between mental health and financial issues due to this ongoing domestic violence?

Samiya's depression and anxiety would make it incredibly difficult for her to even think about looking for work or managing finances if she were to leave. Her lack of self-esteem and energy, coupled with the fear of Mark finding out, creates a significant barrier to her gaining financial independence. The financial control Mark exerts would further worsen her mental health, making her feel powerless and dependent.

Identify the potential need for further support for Samiya.

Samiya would likely need support from domestic violence services for safety planning and emergency accommodation. She would also benefit from mental health support (therapy, potentially medication) to address her anxiety and depression. Financial counselling could help her understand her financial situation and plan for the future. Legal aid might be necessary for protection orders and any potential family law matters.



1D INQUIRY TASK

Interrelationships between issues

Trauma, AOD Use, and Homelessness issues.

This task requires you to examine and unpack the interplay of issues for a client in need of support.

The client: Benny has a history of significant childhood trauma, including neglect and witnessing domestic violence. Benny began using alcohol and cannabis in his teenage years as a way to cope with the intense emotional pain, anxiety, and nightmares stemming from his traumatic experiences. Benny's use of AOD has led to job loss, strained relationships with family and friends, and difficulty maintaining stable housing.

Name some potential impacts of trauma on Benny's use of AOD.

The substances can provide temporary relief from his overwhelming feelings. Over time, this develops into a substance use disorder (SUD).

What are some impacts of trauma and AOD use on homelessness for Benny?

For those struggling with addiction, the priority often becomes obtaining substances, leading to financial instability and an inability to pay rent. Erratic behaviour due to intoxication further contributes to eviction and an inability to secure new accommodation. Trauma often makes it difficult for individuals to trust support services, and AOD use can be a barrier to accessing some housing options.

What interrelationships lie between Benny's trauma, AOD use and homelessness?

The trauma would fuel Benny's AOD use as a maladaptive coping mechanism. The AOD use, in turn, can exacerbate his instability and contribute directly to his homelessness. Being homeless would expose him to further potential trauma and make it harder to access consistent support for his AOD use and the underlying trauma. The lack of a safe and stable environment makes recovery significantly more challenging.

Identify the potential need for further support for Benny.

Benny would likely benefit from trauma-informed AOD services that address both his substance use and the underlying trauma. Mental health support, specifically trauma therapy, would be crucial. He would also need assistance from homelessness services to find safe and stable accommodation. Addressing any potential physical health issues related to his AOD use and homelessness would also be important. Building trust and a sense of safety will be paramount in engaging Benny with support services.



QUICK LEARNING ENGAGEMENT

Identifying types of indicators of harm, neglect or abuse

Complete the sentences by filling in the missing words.

1. Things you might see on someone's body or in their environment are **physical** indicators.
2. Changes in how someone acts or feels are **behavioural** and **emotional** indicators.
3. **Verbal** indicators are things someone might say.
4. Things you might notice about someone's living situation or care are **environmental** indicators.

REFLECTION BANK



F. Match each of the issues to the descriptions upon how they can potentially impact clients.

Potential impact on clients	Answers A-K	Issue
Issues like abuse or neglect can have devastating and long-lasting impacts on a child's physical and mental health, development, and future opportunities.	C	A. Physical health
Can create barriers to accessing education, employment, housing, and social participation. It can also impact physical and mental health and financial stability.	E	B. Mental health
While often sources of strength and support, cultural or religious differences can sometimes lead to discrimination, isolation, or conflict, impacting well-being and access to services.	K	C. Child protection
Poverty and lack of money can lead to stress, difficulty affording basic needs (food, housing, healthcare), and can worsen physical and mental health.	H	D. Domestic violence

CHCCCS016 – Set B

Can affect mood, thinking, and behaviour, making it hard to cope with stress, maintain relationships, and participate in work or study. It can also have physical symptoms.	B	E. Disability
Can lead to physical and mental health problems, addiction, relationship difficulties, financial problems, legal issues, and homelessness.	I	F. Homelessness
Can result from experiencing or witnessing frightening or dangerous events. It can have significant and long-lasting effects on mental and physical health, relationships, and behaviour.	J	G. Unemployment
Involves harm or control within a relationship and can cause physical injuries, emotional distress, fear, isolation, homelessness, and financial hardship for victims and their children.	D	H. Financial issues
Results in loss of income, financial strain, reduced self-esteem, social isolation, and can negatively impact mental and physical health.	G	I. AOD
Means lacking safe and stable housing, leading to exposure to the elements, poor health, safety risks, difficulty accessing services, and significant stress.	F	J. Trauma
Can lead to pain, reduced mobility, difficulty participating in daily activities, and increased healthcare costs. It can also impact mental well-being and the ability to work.	A	K. Culture and religion

- G. Explain why it is really important to understand that there may be interrelationships between issues that clients are facing.

Addressing one issue might require addressing others. Simply finding someone housing might not be enough if their mental health isn't also supported. It helps to see the bigger picture to better understand the root causes of a client's difficulties and develop more effective and holistic support plans. Recognising these interrelationships highlights the need for different services and professionals to work together to provide comprehensive support.

- H. List two or more physical indicators that an adult or child may be living in a situation of neglect.

- ***Poor hygiene, unclean body, matted hair, soiled clothing.***
- ***Malnutrition or dehydration, appearing very thin, sunken eyes, dry skin.***



- ***Inadequate clothing for the weather.***
- ***Lack of necessary medical or dental care.***

I. List two or more things someone might say that indicates they are living in an abusive or controlling relationship.

"I'm always getting into trouble at home"

"They never let me go out"

"I don't have access to my money"

"It was my fault, I asked for it"

E. What are the five main sources of information to determine client needs?

1. Primary source - The client.

2. Internal sources - Existing records and documentation.

3. External sources - External referral agencies and other professionals.

4. Family, carers, and support networks - Where client consent has been obtained.

5. Contextual Sources - Relevant legislation, policies, and guidelines.

F. Name two or more methods for engaging with and obtaining information from your client.

- ***Direct conversation and active listening***
- ***Structured intake forms or questionnaires***
- ***Narrative and storytelling***
- ***Strengths-based approach.***

G. What information can be obtained within a client's file, and what value could this information have?

A review of previous records, case notes, assessment reports, or service plans related to the client can provide historical context, identify recurring issues, and highlight past interventions.

H. Name two or more external sources of information to support in determining the client's needs.

- ***Referring agency reports***
- ***General Practitioners (GPs) and other healthcare professionals***
- ***Schools and educational institutions***
- ***Other community service organisations.***

REFLECTION BANK



- A. When a client has multiple or complex needs, what do you need to support them with, and why?

If a client presents with multiple or complex needs and/or risks, you will need to prioritise them in order of urgency and importance. Realistically, it may not be possible to address all at the same time.

- B. Explain briefly the benefits of taking a collaborative approach in supporting a client work through their needs and goals?

A collaborative approach should be used at all times to empower the person and provide opportunities for them to both express and prioritise their own needs and goals for themselves.

- C. Why is it important for community service providers to carry out a review of their internal capacity?

Each service provider should have a clear understanding of their current capacity to meet the diverse needs of clients, to identify areas for growth, and plan strategically for the future.

- D. When determining resourcing in a capacity review, what are some sources of information the organisation can draw upon?

- ***Staffing levels, qualifications and experience***
- ***Gathering feedback from frontline staff***
- ***Team meetings and discussions***
- ***Physical resources such as current physical spaces, equipment, and technology***
- ***Existing partnerships with other organisations in the surrounding region***
- ***Input from managers and leadership.***

- E. Finish each sentence regarding best practice for identifying capacity by adding the missing words.

- Capacity assessment should not be a one-off exercise but an ***ongoing*** process that is regularly reviewed and updated.
- The assessment of capacity should be linked to an ability to achieve ***positive*** outcomes for all clients.
- Gathering ***input*** from staff at all levels, management, and where appropriate, even clients.
- Acknowledging both the organisation's ***strengths*** and ***limitations***.
- An accurate understanding of ***capacity*** is essential for ethical service delivery and effective referrals.

- F. For a provider offering mental health support services, what is typically included in their organisational crisis management plans?

Crisis management plans include protocols for staff for responding to mental health crises, including risk of suicide or self-harm.

- G. For a provider working in the specialised area of child protection, what official checks must be carried out for all staff that have direct contact with children?

The provider must ensure all staff and volunteers who work with children have appropriate clearances. Such as a Working with Children Check (WWCC)

- H. What does the term 'person-centred planning' mean in service provision?

Services must be person-centred, focusing on the individual's goals, strengths, and preferences.

- I. What does the term 'trauma informed care' mean in service provision?

Trauma informed care involves understanding, recognising, and responding to the effects of all types of trauma.

- J. Explain briefly, why mandatory reporting legislation is enforced in Australia?

Mandatory reporting laws exist to ensure the safety and well-being of all children by mandating that identified personnel must report suspected child abuse or neglect. In some states, abuse or neglect of adults must be reported as well.



1G INQUIRY TASK

Identifying where additional support may be required

This task requires you to look at each client scenario and practice determining your observations and then discussing with your work supervisor the type of additional support needed, such as a referral to a specialist service.

Interactive tip: You may wish to work in pairs with a partner to role play each of the client scenarios for you.

The first one has been completed for you as an example response.

1. Physical Health

Client scenario: You are working with a client who comes to a community garden group you facilitate. They often seem fatigued, complain about persistent headaches, and recently mentioned they've been losing weight unintentionally. They say they haven't seen a doctor in years.

Identified need for additional support: The client's persistent symptoms (fatigue, headaches, unexplained weight loss) and lack of recent medical attention suggest potential undiagnosed physical health issues that need professional medical assessment.

Your report to your work supervisor: "The client is getting tired very quickly in the garden and mentions a constant headache. I notice they're looking a bit thinner. This makes me think they might need to see a doctor (GP) for a check-up."

2. Mental Health

Client scenario: You are helping a client with resume writing. During your conversation, they express feeling overwhelmingly sad most days, have trouble sleeping, and mention they've lost interest in hobbies they once enjoyed. They struggle to concentrate on the resume task.

Identified need for additional support: The client's symptoms (persistent sadness, sleep disturbance, anhedonia, difficulty concentrating) align with potential depression or another mental health condition that requires professional assessment and support.

Your report to your work supervisor: "The client is finding it really hard to focus on their resume and talks about feeling sad all the time and not sleeping well. I think they could really benefit from talking to a counsellor or a psychologist."

3. Child Protection

Client scenario: You are visiting a family at home to help with budgeting. You notice the youngest child (around 5 years old) has several unexplained bruises on their arms and legs. They seem very withdrawn and flinch when a parent moves quickly. The home environment also appears unkempt and unsafe.

Identified need for additional support: *The child's injuries, withdrawn behaviour, flinching, and the unsafe home environment raise concerns about potential child abuse or neglect. This triggers mandatory reporting obligations.*

Your report to your work supervisor: *"I saw bruises on the child that didn't look like accidental ones, and the child seemed scared. The house also wasn't safe. I need to contact Child Protection Services to report my concerns."*

4. Domestic Violence

Client scenario: *A female client you're assisting with finding accommodation frequently cancels appointments at the last minute, seems very anxious, and avoids eye contact. She mentions her "partner gets angry if I'm not home when he expects me," and you notice she has a recent, faint bruise on her wrist.*

Identified need for additional support: *The client's anxiety, last-minute cancellations, mention of an angry partner, and the visible bruise suggest she may be experiencing domestic violence and requires safety planning and specialised support.*

Your report to your work supervisor: *"The client seems very nervous and has a bruise, and she talks about her partner getting very angry. I'm worried about her safety and think she needs help from a domestic violence support service."*

5. Disability

Client scenario: *You are helping an elderly client manage their finances. They have early signs of dementia and struggle to understand complex documents. They mention they are finding it increasingly difficult to shower and dress independently, and their family lives far away.*

Identified need for additional support: *The client's cognitive decline (dementia) and increasing difficulty with daily living tasks (showering, dressing) indicate a need for disability-specific support and potentially NDIS or aged care services.*

Your report to your work supervisor: *"The client is finding it hard to remember things and do daily tasks like showering. I think they need help getting support for their day-to-day living, maybe through the NDIS or aged care services."*

6. Homelessness

Client scenario: *You encounter a young person sleeping rough under a bridge. They tell you they've been kicked out of home and have nowhere to go, but they're hesitant to approach formal services. They appear hungry and dishevelled.*

Identified need for additional support: *The immediate and obvious need for shelter, food, and basic safety indicates a requirement for homelessness support services.*

Your report to your work supervisor: *"This young person has nowhere to sleep and hasn't eaten properly. They need immediate help with shelter and food, so I'll try to connect them to a homelessness service."*

7. Unemployment

Client scenario: *A client comes to you for support with job applications. They are clearly demoralised, have very limited computer skills, and haven't had an interview in years. They lack confidence and feel overwhelmed by the job market.*

Identified need for additional support: *The client's lack of skills, confidence, and long-term unemployment suggest they need comprehensive support beyond just resume help, including skill development and job-seeking strategies.*

Your report to your work supervisor: "The client is struggling with computer skills and feeling really down about finding work. They need more than just resume help; they could use a job active provider or vocational training to build their skills and confidence."

8. AOD

Client scenario: You are providing housing support to a client. You frequently smell alcohol on their breath, they miss appointments due to being "unwell," and they mention "drinking too much" to cope with stress. They seem to prioritise buying alcohol over food.

Identified need for additional support: The client's consistent alcohol use, impact on their daily life (missing appointments, financial strain), and use of alcohol as a coping mechanism point to a potential alcohol dependence that needs professional intervention.

Your report to your work supervisor: "The client often smells of alcohol, misses appointments, and spends money on drinks instead of food. It sounds like they might need help with their drinking, so I'll suggest AOD counselling."

9. Trauma

Client scenario: A client is seeking help to manage anxiety following a car accident a few months ago. They become very distressed when talking about the accident, have nightmares, and avoid driving or even being a passenger in a car. They jump at loud noises.

Identified need for additional support: The client's symptoms (distress when talking about the event, nightmares, avoidance, hypervigilance) are classic indicators of post-traumatic stress, requiring trauma-informed therapy.

Your report to your work supervisor: "The client is really distressed about the car accident, having nightmares, and avoiding cars. They seem to be reliving it. They need help from a trauma-informed counsellor or psychologist to process what happened."



QUICK LEARNING ENGAGEMENT

An empowering approach to motivate and encourage clients

Now it's your turn to demonstrate how to facilitate an approach that will empower and support the client. This example focuses on accessing legal aid for a minor legal issue.

Client scenario: Liam is a young person who has received a minor fine for littering that he believes was issued incorrectly. He's stressed about it, doesn't know how to challenge it, and feels overwhelmed by official paperwork. He's never interacted with the legal system before.

Disempowering approach (Not what we want)

"Don't worry about that littering fine, Liam. Just give it to me. I'll call Legal Aid for you, explain what happened, and see if they can sort it out. I'll let you know what they say."

An empowering approach

You: "Liam, getting a fine can be really stressful, especially when you feel it's unfair. The good news is, you usually have the right to challenge it or get advice if you think it's wrong."

There are free services like Legal Aid or community legal centres that can give you advice and help you understand your options. They're there to help people who can't afford a private lawyer."

"They can tell you if you have a case, how to write a letter, or what steps to take. They often have walk-in clinics or phone lines. Let's look at how you can get in touch with them."

(Open the Legal Aid website or a Community Legal Centre website specific to your region).

"See here, they have information about fines, and also how to contact them for advice. You can often call their advice line, or sometimes they have a service where you can drop in for a quick chat."

Supporting navigation (Gradual independence)

Liam: "It just looks like so much paperwork. I don't even know what to ask them."

You: ***"That's a really common feeling, Liam. It can be confusing at first. Let's break it down. First, we need to gather the basic info: what the fine is for, the date, and your details. Then, when you call them, you can just start by saying, 'Hi, I've received a fine for littering and I think it's wrong. I'm looking for some legal advice on what I can do.' We can even jot down a few bullet points of what you want to say or ask." (Helping him prepare and demystifying the interaction).***

"Do you want to try calling their advice line now? I can sit here while you make the call, or if you prefer, we can write down the number and the key things you want to say, and you can call them when you get home." (Offering choice and a safe space).

(You help him find the specific phone number for their advice line). "Okay, here's the number. Remember, just explain your situation calmly. They're used to hearing from people who are stressed about legal issues."

Liam's actions: ***(Makes the call, explaining his situation. You remain present, offering silent support).***

Liam's response: ***(After the call) "Wow, that wasn't as bad as I thought! They told me I can write a letter of appeal, and they even gave me some pointers on what to include. They said if that doesn't work, I can call them back."***

You: ***"That's fantastic, Liam! You did a brilliant job explaining your situation and asking for what you needed. See, you were able to navigate that all yourself. Now you know for next time, and you've got a clear plan for your fine."***

The outcome

Liam successfully contacted Legal Aid, understood their advice, and feels empowered to take the next step in challenging his fine. He has learned how to access and interact with a legal service, a valuable life skill, rather than becoming dependent on someone else to handle his legal matters.

REFLECTION BANK



- A. What is the key to identifying where additional support may be required?

The key is to listen, observe, and recognise when something falls outside my direct expertise or available resources, and then connect them to someone who can provide that specialised help.

- B. Explain briefly, the benefits in empowering clients to navigate services independently.

Empowering clients to navigate services independently builds their confidence, self-efficacy, and long-term capacity. The goal isn't just to do for them, but to teach them how to do it themselves.

- C. What is the difference between a disempowering approach and an empowering approach?

A disempowering approach is one where the support person or care giver takes control and does what is needed without involving the client in the process at all. An empowering approach is one where the support worker or care giver facilitates the process of guiding the client through taking action as necessary, depending on the situation.

- D. What are six key elements of empowerment?

- ***Information - Explaining what the service is and why it might be helpful.***
- ***Choice - Allowing the client to choose the method of engagement (phone vs. online, who dials).***
- ***Gradual support - Providing assistance only where needed, gradually reducing it as the client gains confidence.***
- ***Skill building - Explicitly or implicitly teaching the client how to do something (e.g., navigate a website, make a phone call).***
- ***Positive reinforcement - Acknowledging and praising their efforts and successes.***
- ***Ongoing availability - Reassuring them that you're still there for support if they encounter difficulties.***

- E. Name two or more key strategies for linking client needs with resources.

- ***Develop a local resource map: Create or utilise an existing map of key services in your region and the surrounding areas, including contact details and service descriptions.***
- ***Maintain up-to-date information: Regularly review and update your knowledge of local services, as organisations and programs can change.***
- ***Facilitate referrals: Understand the referral processes for different services and assist clients in making connections. This might involve providing information, making direct referrals with consent, or advocating on their behalf.***

F. What are NGOs? Provide two or more examples of these in the community services sector.

- **NGOs are Non-Government Organisations.**
- **Housing and homelessness services: Organisations like Launch Housing or the Salvation Army in Victoria can assist with emergency accommodation and long-term housing options.**
- **Mental health support: Local headspace centres, the Mental Health Line, and other mental health-specific NGOs.**
- **Domestic and family violence services: Specific services for women and men experiencing domestic violence like the Safe Steps family violence response centre and other local women's refuges.**
- **Alcohol and other drug services: Local AOD support services and referral networks.**
- **Disability support organisations: Beyond NDIS providers, other disability-specific organisations such as Action for More Independence and Dignity in Accommodation (AMIDA) provide housing advocacy and NDIS appeals advocacy. Melbourne City Mission also offers a range of disability support services throughout Melbourne and Victoria.**
- **Financial assistance and support: Welfare assistance services such as those provided by Uniting and Anglicare in Victoria.**
- **Cultural and religious organisations: Local groups that can provide culturally appropriate support and connection.**

G. What is the process for explaining to a client their transition away or exit from your service?

- **Start early and be transparent.**
- **Clearly outline the process, step by step.**
- **Emphasise the client's involvement, rights, and choices.**
- **Provide clear timelines and written documentation.**
- **Be supportive, empathetic, and focus on the client's strengths.**