


**Work Health Safety: Safe Work Practice: Support**

**Assisting client with mental health issues**

 <b>Risks</b>	<b>Risk rating</b> **	<b>Risk Controls</b>
Injury to staff or others from client assault	Likelihood: E Consequence: 1 Rating = HIGH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Client Risk Assessment to identify clients with higher likelihood of risk</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Only staff/volunteers who are competent are to assist clients with mental health issues</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ensure adequate staff:client ratio and supervision for clients with higher likelihood of risk</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Affirm clients abilities by not giving more help than is required</li> </ul>
Injury to client from self harm	Likelihood: E Consequence: 1 Rating = HIGH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Client Risk Assessment to identify clients with higher likelihood of risk</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Where there is a strong risk of suicide staff need to be competent in SWP Responding to Suicidality</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ensure adequate staff:client ratio and supervision for clients with higher likelihood of risk</li> </ul>
Distress to staff and others from delusional and inaccurate information from client	Likelihood: E Consequence: 1 Rating = HIGH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Client Risk Assessment to identify clients with higher likelihood of risk</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Only staff/volunteers who are competent are to assist clients with mental health issues</li> </ul>
** These ratings are based on the assumption that the person has a relatively stable psychiatric condition – the rating would be higher for those whose condition is more erratic or severe		

**Equipment required:**

<i>Mercy Services equipment</i>	<i>Others equipment</i>
Mobile phone, first aid, Worker to wear <u>footwear</u> that is fully enclosed, slip resistant sole, water repellent/resistant and provides adequate support. <b>Personal Protective Equipment required:</b>	

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Worker behaviour</b>	<b>Client/other’s behaviour</b>
1. Prepare	a. Phone/talk to the client before the activity – this way you can: (1) ensure they are awake (people on strong medications can oversleep), (2) ensure they are ready (3) assess that the client is well enough to participate in the activity	a. Client/carer to tell staff if the client is having difficulty controlling behaviour that day
2. If client has impaired thinking <i>e.g., might</i>	a. Try to ensure other clients are not sitting next to this client if you believe they may become distressed or agitated by the client	a. client to adhere to appropriate standard of behaviour

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Worker behaviour</b>	<b>Client/other's behaviour</b>
<i>talk about things that are not true or give inaccurate information</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>b. If they talk about criminal or serious issues impacting on them tell them they need to talk to your Coordinator about this – offer to arrange for them to talk – say there is nothing you can do</li> <li>c. If client repeats question/request – politely answer them each time</li> <li>d. Ask only one question or give one task at a time</li> <li>e. Provide an alternative focus for their attention – involve them in an activity or keep the conversation on non-controversial, present day and simple topics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>b. client to follow staffs instructions</li> </ul>
3. If client has odd behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Be understanding and patient of rituals and odd behaviour – do not mock or draw attention to their behaviour</li> <li>b. Ask why they are doing these actions if you are unsure or think there may be some other issue that needs addressing</li> <li>c. Provide an alternative focus for their attention – involve them in an activity or keep the conversation on non-controversial, present day and simple topics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. client to adhere to appropriate standard of behaviour</li> <li>b. client to follow staffs instructions</li> </ul>
4. If client is anxious	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. If the environment is crowded or noisy offer to take the client to a safe, less busy location</li> <li>b. Briefly listen to their concerns and respond with empathy (acknowledge their feelings and your concern for them)</li> <li>c. Clarify the limitations of your role and time</li> <li>d. Encourage them to breath slowly and deeply</li> <li>e. If they are worried about an appointment or issue you may be able to assist clarify this or find someone else who should e.g., house staff</li> <li>f. Provide an alternative focus for their attention – involve them in an activity or keep the conversation on non-controversial, present day and simple topics</li> <li>g. Contact Co-ordinator for a decision if client says they are not able to continue with the activity</li> <li>h. Ask client if they want you to ask Co-ordinator to talk to them to discuss their concerns.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. client to follow staffs instructions</li> <li>b. client to apply techniques that have helped them in similar previous situations</li> </ul>
5. If client becomes aggressive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Be attentive to the client's warning signs e.g. clinched fist, tone of voice</li> <li>b. Assess environment always – place yourself between client and exit</li> <li>c. If the environment is crowded or noisy offer to take the client to a safe, less busy location</li> <li>d. If frustration levels start to rise suggest a break for a drink, smoke or toilet stop – if applicable</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. client to follow staffs instructions</li> </ul>

Activity	Worker behaviour	Client/other's behaviour
	e. Staff must not put up with aggression – firmly say “stop that please!” f. Take all verbal threats seriously g. Defuse difficult situations - Act confidently – even if you feel afraid - Stay calm (speak slowly & quietly, don't rush them, use open hand gestures - don't point or cross your arms) - Anger often arises from frustration & lack of control – calmly keep them talking about what they want and what led them to be angry - Avoid confronting them on issues (wait until they are home and calm) h. Ensure others are comfortable and not in the way i. Contact Co-ordinator for a decision if you believe it is not safe to continue trip	
6. Follow-up	a. Report details of client conversations/behaviours to Coordinator as they may be able to confirm if there are issues that need addressing b. Document any incident and report it to your Coordinator immediately c. Be prepared for post trauma reactions following aggressive incidents, even supposedly minor ones. These reactions are entirely normal and usually diminish over time, and do not be afraid or embarrassed to ask for debriefing or counselling if reactions are difficult or persistent	

**As at 27/09/16 this Safe Work Practice is authorised for use in:**

<i>Service</i>	<i>Position</i>
Community Transport	Driver
Day Centre	Activity Officer and Coordinator
Home Care Packages	Community Care Assistant
Home Support Program/NDIS	Community Care Assistant
McAuley Outreach	Counsellor and Coordinator
McAuley Parenting	Family Worker, Parenting Support Worker
Residential Aged Care	Assistant in Nursing
Support Coordination	Case Manager and Coordinator

**Date for review of safe work practice:** September 2019 (or if injury or changes require)

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## COMPETENCY ASSESSMENT

### *Assisting client with mental health issues*

Employee \_\_\_\_\_

Assessor \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Desired Outcome:**

For staff to assist a client who have a stable psychiatric disability or intellectual disability without causing injury or distress to self or client

**Knowledge required:**

Performance Criteria	Competence demonstrated	Comment
<b>1. Prepare</b>		
a. Phone/talk to the client before the activity		
<b>2. If client has impaired thinking</b>		
a. Seat clients so they won't distress or agitate each other		
b. If they talk about criminal or serious issues impacting on them tell them they need to talk to your Coordinator about this – offer to arrange for them to talk – say there is nothing you can do		
c. If client repeats question/request – politely answer them each time		
d. Ask only one question or give one task at a time		
<b>3. If client has odd behaviour</b>		
a. Be understanding and patient of rituals and odd behaviour		
b. Ask why they are doing these actions if you are unsure or think there may be some other issue that needs addressing		
c. Provide an alternative focus for their attention		
<b>4. If client is anxious</b>		
a. Consider taking the client to a safe, less busy location		
b. Briefly listen to their concerns and respond with empathy		
c. Clarify the limitations of your role and time		
d. Encourage them to breathe slowly and deeply		
e. If they are worried about an appointment or issue find someone to assist clarify this		
f. Provide an alternative focus for their attention		
g. Contact Co-ordinator for a decision if client says they are not able to continue with the activity		
h. Ask client if they want you to ask Co-ordinator to talk to them to discuss their concerns.		
<b>5. If client becomes aggressive</b>		
a. Be attentive to the client's warning signs e.g. clinched fist, tone of voice		
b. Assess environment always – place yourself between client and exit		
c. If the environment is crowded or noisy offer to take the client to a safe, less busy location		
d. If frustration levels start to rise suggest a break for a drink, smoke or toilet stop – if applicable		
e. Staff must not put up with aggression – firmly say “stop that please!”		
f. Take all verbal threats seriously		
g. Defuse difficult situations		

h. Ensure others are comfortable and not in the way		
i. Contact Co-ordinator for a decision if you believe it is not safe to continue trip		
<b>6. Follow-up</b>		
a. Report details of client conversations/behaviours to Coordinator as they may be able to confirm if there are issues that need addressing		
b. Document any incident and report it to your Coordinator immediately		
c. Be prepared for post trauma reactions following aggressive incidents, even supposedly minor ones. These reactions are entirely normal and usually diminish over time, and do not be afraid or embarrassed to ask for debriefing or counselling if reactions are difficult or persistent		

Is the worker assessed as being competent?     YES     NO

Any required follow up action/training:  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of employee..... Date.....

Signature of assessor ..... Date.....