Contents

Develop rapport

There are micro skills you can use for developing rapport as soon as you meet a person with support needs. Gerard Egan, in his book *People Skills*, outlined some micro skills that have proved successful in developing rapport with others. He used the acronym SOLER. Here is what SOLER stands for.

SOLER
S - Sit or stand SQUARELY to the person - usually at a 5 o'clock position so as not to startle them.
O - Use an OPEN posture at all times to ensure you do not set up any physical barriers to communication. For example, don't cross your arms.
L - LEAN slightly toward the person to show you are interested and engaging in the conversation with them.
E - Maintain appropriate EYE contact. You will need to consider any cultural needs here. For example; you would make less eye contact with an indigenous Australian.
R - Take a RELAXED approach. If you are relaxed then the other person will be as well.

Respect different values

Values are the rules and beliefs by which each of us live and that guide our behaviour. Our values are influenced by our culture, religion, experiences, family, friends and teachers. The following explores the impact our own values have and the need to accept the differences in other's values.

The diversity of people with support needs requires you to suspend all judgements and assumptions and take the time to listen to each individual, their needs, requirements and communication preferences. All people deserve to be treated with respect and not judged according to your own beliefs, values or standards of behaviour.

Impact of values
▶ You may have many different values; for example, acceptance, composure, faith, honour, and honesty. Our own values can sometimes affect our efforts to understand a person's needs and provide the assistance they require; it is important to always maintain an awareness of this possibility so that you can avoid it.

Acceptance of values
▶ Not everyone has similar values. The way you greet others should be consistently polite and pleasant regardless of whether their values contradict yours. For example, you may believe that a mother should stay with her baby for the first three months. That value should not impact the support you offer to a woman who wants to apply for a place in your childcare centre for her young baby.

Read body language

The following gives some examples of body language and their possible meanings. These are a guide only and care must be taken not to make assumptions. Instead, use this information as one piece of a jigsaw puzzle that helps you understand a person's emotional state.

Body language	Meaning
Standing with hands on hips	Readiness, aggression
Arms folded across chest	Defensiveness, reluctance
Shoulders hunched, hands in pockets	Dejection
Hands clasped behind back	Anger, frustration, apprehension
Playing with hair	Lack of self-confidence, insecurity
Tugging or pulling at ear	Indecisiveness
Rubbing eyes	Feeling upset, tiredness, disbelief
Nail biting	Frustration, suppression, nervousness
Clench fists	Hostility, defensiveness
Finger-pointing	Aggression, threatening
Wringing hands, crossing or uncrossing feet/legs	Nervousness, concern, stress, anger
Blinking rapidly, tense facial muscles	Fear, vulnerability, anxiety

Verbal cues

The way a person speaks can also provide some clues about their emotional state. For example, the tone, pitch, volume, inflection, rhythm and rate of speech can provide useful information about how a person is feeling. Think about how you use your voice when you express sarcasm, anger, affection, fear, happiness or confidence.

Here are some examples of emotions that a person's voice might reveal.

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Tone

A flat tone may indicate that the person would rather be elsewhere. An abrupt tone may mean irritation.

Pitch

A high pitch can indicate nervousness, excitement, fear or anger. A low pitch can indicate despair, sadness or loneliness.

Volume

A loud voice can indicate anger or aggression.

Recognise behaviours

People with support needs may be anxious, overwhelmed, at risk of losing control or may have lost control over their own emotions and behaviour. They may be affected by feelings of mistrust, shame, anger or avoidance.

The way you respond to distressed people can either reduce or increase the likelihood of aggressive or violent behaviour. Be observant of cues about a person's emotional state. The following gives examples of emotional indicators you may observe in people with support needs.

Verbal

- ▶ Abusive language
- ▶ Direct threats
- ▶ Fast, non-stop talking
- ▶ Shouting/yelling

Behaviours

- ▶ Grinding teeth
- ▶ Fists clenched or clenching and unclenching
- ▶ An inability to sit still
- ▶ Uncontrolled gesturing
- ▶ Flaring nostrils

Intuitive

- ▶ Your own sense that there is something wrong
- ▶ Your own feeling of suspicion
- ▶ Your own fear or apprehensiveness

1C Respond to diverse people and behaviour

Community services work is based on a set of core values. These include that every person has a right to be treated with respect and dignity, to equal opportunity and social justice, to be as self-determining and independent as possible, and that no person should be discriminated against on the grounds of race, ethnicity, colour, age, gender, sexual preference or disability.

As a support worker, it is essential that you learn to respond appropriately to diverse people and behaviour in line with organisational requirements when providing information and services.

Recognise diversity

Some points to consider when supporting people of diverse backgrounds and abilities are outlined below.

Social background

▶ Be aware that person's personal circumstances may influence their behaviour.

▶ Treat all people as equal and avoid making assumptions, either positive or negative, based on their social background.

▶ Recognise social disadvantage and work to increase social justice and inclusion wherever possible.

Cultural background

▶ Consider both cultural and ethnic backgrounds.

▶ Consider how culture may affect expectations and behaviours; for example, concerning gender roles, age and time.

▶ Learn as much as possible about an individual's cultural and ethnic background so you can provide appropriate services.

▶ Respect all cultural and religious beliefs.

▶ Use appropriate cross-cultural communication strategies and/or interpreters when necessary.

Physical abilities

▶ Recognise that most people with physical disabilities do not have intellectual disabilities as well.

▶ Work with a person-centred focus so the person has the opportunity to make decisions and choices about the services that best suit their needs.

▶ Focus on what the person can do, not on what they can't do.

Communicate appropriately

Diversity in the workplace may make communication challenging between support workers and the people accessing their services. It is essential that you communicate in a way that responds positively to individual and cultural differences.

Clear and effective communication requires strong cognitive empathy, which is understanding how a person is feeling and thinking. Communicating effectively by understanding, reading and responding to the emotional cues in different cultures and environments underpins the important link between diversity and emotion in the modern workplace. You must learn to understand how the people you support perceive certain interactions and consider preparing your communications in a variety of formats to suit individual preferences.

Your ability to understand diverse perspectives quickly will contribute to the development of positive relationships with the people you support.

Here are some communication tips.

Communication tips
▶ Use active listening skills and verbal encouragers to show you are listening, and ask questions to clarify information.
▶ Ensure your body language gives the person your full attention and is appropriate according to their cultural preferences.
▶ When speaking, be patient, polite and use suitable industry terminology, avoiding jargon or colloquial language.
▶ Build rapport by showing empathy, interest and understanding in your conversations.
▶ Accommodate for language differences by obtaining a translator or using technology to translate business communications.
▶ When interacting with a person who is part of a group, be aware of your susceptibility to stereotype, as this could lead to false or negative assumptions about the individual.
▶ Be aware of negatively biased tendencies you may have and make a conscious effort to learn more about a particular group.
▶ Where appropriate, seek input from people representing diverse groups or perspectives during decision-making processes.
▶ Request peer feedback as to any potential patterns of preference you may be displaying in your communication technique.

Report observations

An organisation is likely to have specific procedures you must follow when reporting observations that you make at the first point of contact. Whether you report your observations in writing or verbally depends on these procedures. If a person with support needs wants to use one of the services your organisation provides, you will usually complete a registration or intake form. In most cases the observations you make about the person when discussing the reason for their visit and the information you obtain while completing the form will help you work out which staff member they need to speak or meet with next.

Discuss concerns or problems

When discussing concerns or problems relating to a person you support, you must always use discretion. It is not appropriate to make notes about a person's behaviour in front of the person, nor speak about a person's needs in front of other service users or colleagues who do not require the information. In situations where the person with support needs is distressed or agitated, doing this may make things worse. Wait until you are away from the person to make any comments or observations.

The types of behaviours you might discuss with your supervisor are explored below.

Body language

Consider how the person appears. For example, do they appear angry or euphoric? What is their posture?

Given their circumstances, is their body language appropriate? (For example, someone in shock may not exhibit much emotion). Observe the person's verbal and nonverbal behaviour to identify differences between what they are saying and what they are doing (mixed messages).

Speech

▶ Does the person speak fast or slowly, loudly, shout, babble or ramble?

▶ Do they respond to questions with only yes/no or very brief responses?

▶ Are they slurring their words or repeating themselves?

Understanding and awareness

▶ Does the person seem able to concentrate, know where they are and who they are speaking with?

▶ Do they appear confused or disoriented?

▶ Do they speak to themselves or have conversations with someone who is not there? If so, note the tone of their speech and body language.

Topic 2

In this topic you will learn how to:

2A Collect and document information

2B Discuss reasons for contact with the service

2C Explain and uphold rights and responsibilities of the person with support needs

Collect routine information

Some people with support needs will want general information that may be available in a brochure. Others may want an application form or timetable for activities provided by your service. People with support needs may require access to your service or a referral to someone else in your own or another organisation; for example, to a counsellor.

Your organisation's policies and procedures can help you determine whether all contacts need to be logged. Information collected from people should only relate to what is needed. It is important that people accessing your service understand why the information is being collected and what will be done with it. The people accessing your service should also be advised of their rights relating to confidentiality and accessing their own records.

Recording information

All consultations with your organisation must be recorded in a manual or electronic database. Any information collected as a result of a person contacting your organisation is considered personal information.

Maintaining records

Your organisation should have processes in place to ensure that records of personal information remain accurate, complete and up to date, including by verifying the information with the person each time they use your services, or from other sources. The records are retained for up to 25 years as is usual with health information.

Using personal information

Your organisation will collect, store, use and disclose personal information for the following reasons:

▶ the provision of information on, and supporting access to, relevant support and care services for individuals

▶ maintenance of a central service user record to improve service delivery

▶ management of the aged care system by the Commonwealth government

▶ assisting government departments to provide health services or address issues raised by service users

▶ matching service delivery data with health information for service improvement

▶ compilation and analysis of statistics relevant to public health and safety

▶ compliance with legal obligations.

Sharing personal information

Your organisation may share relevant information with other health services and/ or government agencies in the event of a national or jurisdictional health disaster, in order that an appropriate health response can be provided.

Personal information may also be used to make follow up calls to service users for feedback on their satisfaction with service delivery.

Disclosing personal information

Personal information will generally not be disclosed to anyone except as described in your organisation's privacy statement, where the person consents to a particular disclosure, or where the identifying data is removed.

There may be other disclosures where the person would reasonably expect the disclosure to occur. When information is disclosed to third parties, your organisation should make all reasonable efforts to ensure you disclose only relevant information and that it is accurate, complete and current.

Protecting personal information

Your organisation will have systems and procedures in place to protect personal information from misuse and loss, and from unauthorised access, modification or disclosure.

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Security of personal information
An organisation must take reasonable steps to protect personal information it holds from misuse, interference and loss, and from unauthorised access, modification or disclosure. An entity has obligations to destroy or de-identify personal information in certain circumstances.

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Access to personal information and 13 Correction of personal information
Outlines an organisation's obligations when an individual requests to be given access to personal information held about them by the organisation.

13

Correction of personal information
Outlines an organisation's obligations in relation to correcting the personal information it holds about individuals.

Safeguard confidential information

It is important to maintain the confidentiality of your service users and ensure systems are in place to protect their personal information. A person's record is highly confidential and you may be required to sign a confidentiality agreement when you are employed, saying you will not divulge any information you have acquired during or after your involvement with service users unless legally required to do so.

Facilities or agencies holding personal information must take all reasonable steps to safeguard security. Make every effort to ensure that a person's trust is not abused in any way.

Access to information should be restricted to the appropriate workers on a need-to-know basis. In some circumstances, service users may request that certain information is not to be shared with family, carers, friends or their advocate. It is essential that you adhere to their request.

To help protect the interests of the person accessing the service, follow the guidelines listed here.

Protect personal information

▶ Keep personal information safe to prevent unauthorised access, loss, modification, disclosure or other misuse.

▶ Ensure only authorised personnel have access to personal information.

▶ Do not pass on information read in reports or entrusted to people who are not entitled to it.

▶ Be discreet when speaking on the telephone as private conversations can be easily overheard.

▶ Never provide personal information about a person over the phone without prior permission.

▶ Take care not to discuss service users with anyone else unless it is in the person's best interests.

▶ Take all reasonable steps when transmitting personal information by email or fax, including information using data encryption, to ensure its safety, integrity and confidentiality.

Written information

Remember that any written documents, form, emails or service user records are permanent and legal documents. For this reason, you should be very particular in the way you record written information in your workplace. Care documentation is recognised as evidence in a court of law.

When writing confidential documents, write clearly and legibly in black or blue pen. Do not use liquid paper; if you need to correct errors, draw a line through the error and initial it. Always double-check the name of the service user or resident you are writing about.

Make sure completed documents are filed appropriately, such as in a locked filing cabinet or a password-protected file.

The types of documentation a manager may need to prepare or manage include:

- care plans
- care records
- handover sheets
- progress notes
- communication books

- incident or accident reports
- assessment tools
- admission and discharge reports
- time sheets
- personnel files.

Electronic and manual record keeping

While some organisations prefer manual record-keeping systems, most organisations use an electronic record-keeping system, making it easier to capture information, generate reports and meet legal and taxation reporting requirements.

When setting up a record-keeping system in your organisation, you must consider the advantages and limitations of electronic versus manual systems, described below, and decide what is most appropriate for the needs of your organisation.

Electronic record keeping

Most organisations use accounting software programs to simplify electronic record keeping and produce reports. Electronic record keeping allows you to:

- record financial transactions, including income, expenses and payments to workers
- use less storage space
- easily generate employee pay records or inventory reports
- keep up with the latest tax rates, laws and rulings
- allows multiple people to access, update and makes notes to records in real time
- backs up records and keeps them safe in case of fire or theft.

2C Explain and uphold rights and responsibilities of the person with support needs

All people with support needs have the right to privacy, to be treated with dignity and respect, and to be provided with the information and support they require to be able to make informed decisions. These rights are outlined within your organisation's policies and procedures, with which you must comply. There are also some rights specifically put in place by legislation. Workers also have rights and responsibilities.

Rights of service users

As a support worker, you are responsible for explaining and upholding the rights and responsibilities of the people accessing your services.

Support workers must confirm that service users understand their rights and responsibilities by asking questions, requesting the service user to sign any relevant policies, procedures, codes or service agreements, or by providing the person with written materials about the services provided.

The rights of service users are described below.

The right to dignity

Your service users have the right to be spoken to and treated with respect and concern for their feelings and entitlements. Maintaining a person's dignity means not talking down to them and having regard for their individual, cultural and religious rights.

People should be able to retain their personal, civic, legal and consumer rights and be assisted to achieve active control of their own lives within the community. Factors that contribute to a person's dignity include a sense of control, the capacity to communicate, recognising friends and family members, having adequate pain and symptom management, and being continent.

It is also important to avoid inappropriate prolongation of dying; this is addressed when care teams take a palliative approach, which enhances the person's dignity and their quality of life.

The right to privacy

You need to respect and value the service user's privacy. Privacy can be applied to a person's physical environment and possessions, their physical and bodily needs, and their personal relationships, information and needs. Privacy relates to many areas including the right not to be watched, listened to, or reported upon without consent and not to be the focus of uninvited public attention. Privacy is protected by legislation as well as common law.

Your service users also have a right to expect that their personal information will remain private and secure. They have the right to access their own health and personal information. This includes all care records and personal information shared with you by the person and others, as well as communications from other agencies and medical information from health professionals.

Topic 3

In this topic you will learn how to:

3A Identify urgency and nature of need and refer accordingly

3B Identify and respond to issues of personal safety within scope of role

3C Recognise situations beyond scope of role and seek assistance

Identify priority of need

The people that come to your organisation for support have varied needs. Some are urgent and require immediate attention, while others, though important, are not urgent and can be attended to as soon as possible. For you to be able to meet people's needs, you must understand the operations of both your own organisation and organisations that may also be in a position to support the people accessing your services.

Some people may have issues that can be potentially unsafe for them, you and others in your workplace. You need to fully understand the processes to follow when an unsafe situation arises. Most importantly, you need to be very clear about how to seek assistance when you need it.

Personal information is private and confidential, and the person's consent should be sought for that information to be shared with others. It is important that you understand your own organisation's policies and procedures for incoming referrals.

Inform individuals

Informing people about their referral involves:

▶ details about the organisation and why you are referring them there

▶ what the other organisation will expect from them (for example, if any fees and charges are associated with the referral)

▶ what information you provide to the other organisation.

Accept referrals

Methods for accepting referrals include:

▶ a telephone call, with you logging details of the referral directly into your organisation's database or onto a paper form – in some cases the person with support needs will be present when this referral occurs

▶ an email or an online form

▶ the person attending with a letter or other written document from the referring organisation.

Example

Identify urgency and nature of need and refer accordingly

Todd is a volunteer in a community services organisation that provides information and support. David comes into the office and says that he is tired of binge drinking and taking drugs and is scared that he's losing control of his life. He says that his girlfriend is threatening to leave him unless he 'straightens himself out'. Todd asks David if he would consider a referral to a local youth alcohol and drug counselling service, but David says that he doesn't want to go somewhere local in case he runs into people that might know him. Together they agree on a service that is 20 minutes away in another suburb. Todd explains that the service is free, but they will expect David to keep the appointments he makes.

David agrees and together they complete the referral form. Todd goes through each question on the form so that David understands what information is being provided to the alcohol and drug counselling service and can ask questions and express concerns. Todd then faxes the form through to the alcohol and drug counselling service and advises David that he should receive a call to make an appointment within the next 48 hours.

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Minimise the potential for violence

Workers can take steps to minimise the potential for violence occurring in their workplace. These are listed below.

Methods to minimise potential for violence
▶ Attempt to defuse the situation by speaking quietly and calmly, using language that the person can understand.
▶ Answer all questions honestly and clearly.
▶ Ensure there are no objects nearby that could be used as weapons.
▶ Know your organisation's policies and procedures for dealing with violent people – this could include using a hidden security alarm.
▶ When meeting a person in a private meeting room, always making sure your exit path is clear.
▶ Keep a reasonable distance from the person and do not turn your back on them.
▶ If a person shows signs of imminent violence, isolate the person from others in the vicinity.
▶ Suggest that the person may wish to discuss their concerns in a private meeting room where there are no distractions.
▶ Address all threats immediately – service users must be advised that threatening behaviour is not acceptable at any time.
▶ Follow the guidelines set out in your organisation's policies and procedures.

Scope of practice

Scope of practice refers to the area of practice that people with specific qualifications or experience must adhere to. You and your work colleagues should not undertake roles that are the responsibility of other professional or occupational categories.

If a person requires support in areas outside your scope of practice, you should refer them to another service or health professional.

Community services workers are responsible for:

▶ providing support
▶ personal care
▶ case management
▶ assessment.

Scope of role

You need to understand your obligations within your scope of practice to meet the legal and ethical requirements of your role. You should clarify any misunderstanding or confusion in these areas.

If you do not understand your legal and ethical responsibilities within your scope of practice you may risk breaching your duty of care obligations, or not responding to situations in a responsible or reasonable manner.

Ambulance

If a person accessing your service is in a critical situation, an ongoing communication with an ambulance in transit may be necessary. Many community services organisations have a qualified first aid officer or nurse on duty, who should be on hand to talk to the ambulance staff if required. Your organisation may have an arrangement with the local hospital for advice over the phone.

Example

Recognise situations beyond scope of role and seek assistance

Fahid is a support worker in a community services organisation that provides support to people with alcohol addiction. Fahid meets with a potential service user, Zara, to discuss how the organisation can assist her. While they are discussing Zara's needs, she suddenly becomes very aggressive and starts shouting obscenities. Fahid would normally suggest that they continue the meeting in a more quiet area, but he does not know Zara and he feels that the situation is unsafe.

Fahid's organisation provides panic buttons under each desk and the policy is that immediate action must be taken in any situation where a person becomes aggressive. It is outside the scope of Fahid's role to respond to the situation without requesting assistance. Fahid presses his panic button, which alerts management and automatically calls the police, who arrive within minutes. By following his organisation's procedures, Fahid reduces the risk of any harm to himself, Zara or others.

Practice task 10

1. Why is it important for support workers to understand the scope of their role and responsibilities?

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2. List two questions a support worker could consider to recognise situations beyond the scope of their role.

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3. Identify two specialists or other services a support worker could seek assistance from to deal with situations beyond the scope of their role.

Summary

1. For you to be able to meet people's needs, you need to understand the operations of both your own organisation and organisations that may also be in a position to support the people accessing your services.

2. Some people may have to wait before receiving a service, whether it involves access to workers within your own organisation or an external organisation. You need to determine whether a person needs immediate support or whether they can possibly wait a little longer.

3. Identifying and responding to issues of personal safety allows you to take steps that protect yourself and others, while attempting to minimise the potential for violence.

4. Community services organisations and workers have a responsibility to provide a duty of care to ensure the safety and wellbeing of people in receipt of their services.

5. As a support worker, you should be able to recognise situations that are beyond the scope of your role and seek assistance where necessary.

6. You need to understand your obligations within your scope of practice to meet the legal and ethical requirements of your role.

Address service user needs

The needs of people accessing your service must be addressed by your organisation. The multi-faceted nature of community services means that an organisation may include many different features, and each person's need must be linked to an appropriate service within the organisation to best serve their needs.

The goal of an organisation will be set by the relationship between the services it is equipped to provide and the needs of the community it serves. Communities come in many different forms and will have different ways of approaching their goals and meeting their needs. Consider conducting a community needs assessment to identify the common goals and highest priority needs of the community you serve. Review the results and develop a plan to make improvements to your existing service, or develop new strategies that meet the identified needs of your community.

Conduct a community needs analysis by:

▶ interviewing influential people in the area of services you provide, including community group leaders, local personalities, or government officials

▶ asking existing service users, or members of the general community, to complete surveys that provide feedback on how people feel about issues that concern your organisation

▶ holding focus groups by gathering a selection of existing and/or potential service users, or other stakeholders, around a table to discuss the options, services and information provided by your organisation

▶ holding a community forum to provide community members with opportunities to raise questions, and discuss their issues and concerns, that relate to the service your organisation provides.

Types and features of services

Each organisation provides different services. You need to understand exactly what services your organisation provides so that you can give people accessing your service, accurate and complete details about what they can expect.

Some organisations provide one or two specialist services, while others provide many related services. Some organisations offer referral services, and others simply provide information about different types of service providers and where people can seek further help. Examples of different service user groups and the types of relevant service organisations available are identified in the following table.

Potential service user group	Type of community service for this target group	Services provided
Families and friends of alcoholics	Family support services	Support group meetings to help families and friends of alcoholics
General community, older people, young people, people with disability	Community garden	Organic fruit and vegetable community garden, social activities, sustainable living advice

Culturally and linguistically appropriate information

Support workers must ensure that services are provided with sensitivity to and an awareness of the cultural beliefs and practices of people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds. This is inclusive of the awareness of needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, their families and communities.

Many of the people accessing your service will be CALD. Here are some tips when presenting information to CALD individuals.

Provide service information to CALD people
▶ Learn as much as you can about the cultures of people who are likely to seek information from your organisation.
▶ Do not assume that a person who has a language difficulty or does not speak English is intellectually impaired.
▶ Consider making a list of workers in your organisation who can speak languages other than English, so that you can ask for their assistance.
▶ Seek assistance from an interpreter service.
▶ Have brochures and information available in languages that reflect your organisation's service user group.
▶ Where possible, use diagrams and pictures in brochures and other sources of information.
▶ Consider factors such as religious or cultural differences.
▶ Consider that some CALD service users can have different understandings of community organisations due to previous negative experiences.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

Cultural factors, such as etiquette and language, may impact your interactions with the people accessing your service. The following lists cultural factors that may affect interactions with Indigenous Australians.

When interacting with Indigenous Australians:

▶ always use language that can be easily understood

▶ acknowledge that Indigenous Australians may have a lack of trust of institutions and personal support may be required to build a relationship with them

▶ giving people your time and attention has more meaning for many Indigenous Australians than written or online information

▶ if regular visits from Indigenous Australians occur, make the reception area more welcoming by putting up an Aboriginal flag, artwork or posters.

Assist people to contact other services

While some people can source their own information or make contact with organisations to which they are referred, many people cannot. This may be due to a physical or intellectual disability, or because the person does not have access to necessary communication tools. It is important to consider the level of assistance needed by people to access services. The following explores when and how to access services on behalf of a person with support needs.

Access services on a person's behalf

Where a person needs support to access other services, you may choose to access the other service on their behalf; for example, you may telephone the other service to make an appointment for the person (in this situation you should take care to maintain the person's confidentiality and only reveal information with their consent). You could also encourage the person to contact the other organisation while you are present.

Obtain informed consent

Always remember that you require the person's consent before passing information to another service provider. This includes case information and personal details. To assist a person in making the decision to transfer to another organisation, you may need to explain why they are being referred. Do so in respectful language and using empathy.

Links with other service providers

Many community services providers are linked with other organisations who provide similar, or complementary, supports and services. The intersections between different health settings and providers means organisations must work together to meet a person's individual needs and address their personal goals.

As a person's primary service provider, you should connect with existing networks at the local and regional level, and with other case managers and care coordinators at the individual level, to provide a person-centred, individualised support to service users. For example, linking Medicare Locals and community services organisations to undertake needs analysis and develop service delivery models identifies and meets the needs of disadvantaged and marginalised groups.

Link with other service providers by:

▶ developing new relationships that improve access and equity

▶ working in partnership with community based services that reached disadvantaged people and marginalised communities to develop alternate models of care in a range of settings

▶ improving linkages between community services organisations, primary care providers and acute health care services to improve discharge planning

▶ connecting with case managers and care coordinators through the primary health care system

▶ developing multi-disciplinary and cross-sectoral models of care to meet the needs of people with complex and multiple needs

▶ promoting the ongoing engagement between Government agencies and community services organisations in the implementation of health and community services reform.