Effective Interviewing
Clients with Mental Illness and Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities
Participant Guide

Presented by:
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Effective Interviewing - Clients with Mental Illness and Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities

With: Amanda Notto and Lesley L. Williams

We will discuss "Effective Client Interviewing." Client can be anyone who is over or under the age of 65 who has been diagnosed with a mental illness or intellectual/developmental disability. Come prepared to learn about dynamics and how these risk factors can contribute to Abuse, Neglect, and Exploitation. We will focus on basic skills for interviewing clients who are verbal and non-communicative. In addition, we will discuss how to overcome common obstacles in communication.
Activity 1: Dynamics of Abuse, Neglect, and Exploitation Case Scenario

Nicole is an employee of a state supported living center. She just had a third child two months ago and the father of the child is not contributing to the baby’s care in any way. Nicole has moved in with her sister, Jana, who has a problem with alcohol and drugs. Jana and her two teenaged children are constantly screaming and yelling at one another. The oldest teen also has a drug problem. Nicole’s other two children are three and five. The five year old attends kindergarten. Nicole and her kids must all sleep in the living room area, since her sister has only a two-bedroom house. Nicole barely makes enough money to feed and clothe her children and has begun working very long hours.

Kim is a resident of the state supported living center. She has a diagnosis of bipolar disorder and functions in the mild range of intellectual disability. She is very hostile toward Nicole. It is Nicole’s job to help Kim with her daily bath and other personal care tasks.

One day Nicole comes to work after having been up all night with the baby, who seems to be coming down with a cold or virus. She goes into Kim’s room to help her get ready for her shower. Kim begins cursing Nicole and shouting obscenities. Nicole takes Kim’s arm and repeatedly urges her towards the shower room. Kim spits in Nicole’s face. Nicole then grabs Kim’s arm with more force and pushes her toward the shower area.

1) Name two things about the perpetrator that predisposed her to commit abuse.

2) Name two things about the client that made her a likely target of abuse.

3) What are two things about the situation that made abuse a predictable outcome?
Activity 2: Pre-planned Responses

What is your pre-planned response to the following?

1) A client refuses to speak to you.

2) A client is discussing matters that are off topic.

3) A client is very emotional and is having difficulty articulating the facts.

4) A client won’t sit still long enough for you to take a statement.
Activity 3: Overcoming Common Obstacles

Easy Words: List simple words for the ones listed

Physical Abuse - ________________________________
Neglect - ________________________________
Exploitation - ________________________________
Emotional Abuse - ________________________________
Injury - ________________________________
Sexual assault - ________________________________
Semen - ________________________________
Threaten - ________________________________
Excessive force - ________________________________
Witness - ________________________________
Venereal disease - ________________________________
Statement - ________________________________
Mechanical restraint - ________________________________

Activity 4: Overcoming Common Obstacles

Anchors: List some examples of anchors to describe time

1. ________________________________
2. ________________________________
3. ________________________________
4. ________________________________
5. ________________________________
Activity 5: What Clients Want Investigators to Know

- Please understand that what I am telling you is real to me. It hurts me when I can see you don’t believe me.
- Please understand that the medication I am on may affect my memory. It is important that you take my statement as soon as possible after I report the allegation.
- Please understand that because of my medication I may function better at some times than others. You may need to visit me more than once.
- Please understand that my perception of details may be impaired because of my mental illness. Ask other clients if they saw the incident.
- Please understand that I am scared of staff retaliation for reporting abuse. Do what you can to make me feel safe.
- Please calm my fears of being abused again, in case you don’t confirm my report of abuse this time.
- Please don’t get angry at me when it is clear that I am seeking attention by reporting abuse. You may be my only contact from the outside.
- Please take your time in listening to me. I often feel that people are too busy to hear what I have to say.
- Please understand that because of my illness or my medication I may not be able to write. You may have to help me write my statement.
- Please understand that I may be terrified, even of you. It may be necessary to ask me if I would like to have someone I trust be with me during the interview.

- Mary Dees
  Mental Health Consumer Advocate
Activity 6: Self-awareness

Investigators need to be keenly aware of their own feelings when confronting an individual in crisis. Anxiety is infectious and if an investigator cannot control his or her own anxiety, anger, or other emotions, the investigator is likely to be less helpful and more likely to escalate the crisis. Investigators must practice controlling his or her own reactions and utilize preplanned responses, supervision, training, agency resources, and peer support to help maintain professionalism during crisis situations.

What am I feeling?
________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________

What does the person I'm interviewing need or want?
____________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________

How can I best respond?
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
Effective Interviewing

Amanda Notto, Texas APS Curriculum Developer/Training Specialist
Lesley L. Williams, Texas APS Lead Curriculum Developer/Training Specialist
Objectives

• Identify **dynamics** of Abuse, Neglect, and Exploitation and how **risk factors** contribute to the likelihood of abuse.

• Understand **basic skills of interviewing** verbal and non-communicative clients with mental illness and intellectual/developmental disabilities.
Objectives

• Overcoming common obstacles in communication.

• Recognize how self-awareness may influence a crisis or escalating situation.
Texas APS Programs

In-Home

- Persons age 65 and older
- Adults age 18-64 with a disability
- Resides in community
- Provide protective services
Texas APS Programs

Provider

- Receives services in a state operated, contracted facility; or
- Receives Medicaid Long Term Services and Supports
- With a mental illness, physical/intellectual disability
Mental Illness, Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities

Mental Illness

• Schizophrenia
• Bipolar Disorder
• Dementia
Mental Illness, Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities

- Down Syndrome
- Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder
- Spina Bifida
- Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Cerebral Palsy
Dynamics of A/N/E

Life as a Resident

- Limitations
- Dorm life
- Medication side-effects
Dynamics of A/N/E

Life as an Employee

- Low pay
- Mistrust
- Work routine
- Enforce rules
- Exposed to verbal and physical abuse
Motivation

- Avoid punishment
- Support co-workers
- Treated with respect
- Have their sympathy and good will recognized
Motivation

Client Motivation

- Gain power
- Punish staff
- Fear of retaliation
- Outrage of injustice
Risk Factors to A/N/E

- Physical or cognitive impairment
- Isolation of the victim
- Caregiver stress
Risk Factors to A/N/E

- Dependence of the abuser
- Mental capacity of the victim
- Behaviors on part of the victim
Case Scenario
Tips for the Investigator

- Prepare
- Show genuine warmth and respect
- Listen
- Allow silence
- Pay attention to non-verbal behaviors
- Don’t make promises
- Ask for clarification
- It’s okay to say, “I don’t know.”
Activity
Overcoming Common Obstacles

- Exhibit empathy
- Don’t turn the client into a child
- Chose easy words
- Use anchors to clarify timeframes
- Use victims words for sexual acts and body parts
Overcoming Common Obstacles

- Allow victims to express feelings
- Use open-ended questions
- Check for understanding
- Recognize cultural factors
- Take breaks
Activity
Interviewing Clients

- Use short, plain words
- Be patient
- Truth and lie test
- Ask for demonstration/drawing
- Don’t feed into psychosis
- Location of Interview
Interviewing Clients

- Don’t belittle
- Avoid pressure on the victim
- Be conscious of your own non-verbal communications
- A promise to listen
- A promise to act
Spontaneous Disclosure

Credibility

Retaliation

Acquiescence

Questions

• Abstract
• Leading
• Yes or No
• Multiple choice
Oliciting Disclosure

Routines

Secrets

Feelings

Experiences
What clients want you to know
Activity
Taking Statements: Verbal

Use standard interviewing techniques
Internal cues
Listen
Cooperative drawings
Strive for PROGRESS

Not PERFECTION
Augmentative Alternative Communication

Aided
- Body language
- Sign language

Aided
- Equipment
- Interpreter
Augmentative Alternative Communication

Aided devices
• Picture boards
• Computers

Things to consider
• Confidentiality
• Translation
• Criteria for specialist use
Documenting the Interview

- Describe the factors
- Document the *what* and the *how*
Self-Awareness

What am I feeling?
What does the person I’m interviewing need or want?
How can I best respond?
Self-Awareness

What am I feeling?

What does the person I’m interviewing need or want?

How can I best respond?
Self-Awareness

What am I feeling?

What does the person I’m interviewing need or want?

How can I best respond?
Self-Awareness

What am I feeling?

What does the person I’m interviewing need or want?

How can I best respond?
Unsafe Attitudes to Avoid

Denial and grandiosity
Unconscious resentment
Condescension toward individual
Guilt
Excessive fear and anxiety over the possibility of violence
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Conclusion

Identify **dynamics** of Abuse, Neglect, and Exploitation and how **risk factors** contribute to the likelihood of abuse.

Understand **basic skills of interviewing** verbal and non-communicative clients with mental illness and intellectual/developmental disabilities.

Overcoming **common obstacles** in communication.

Texas External Resources
Any Questions?
Special Thanks

Hear my Voice Video
• Larry Wortham
• Jerre Wortham
• Joe Delgado
• Christy Ashworth
• Jaeliza Morales
• Ramon Lluveras

Music
• Zack Hemsey
  “Redemption”

Video and PowerPoint
Created by
• Juan Santellan
Resources

• Texas APS In-Home and Provider Policy Handbooks
• The Arc (www.thearc.org)
• American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (www.asha.org)
• Center for Child Protection (www.centerforchildprotection)
• The Forensic Assessment Center Network (www.facntx.org)
• Person Centered Practices (www.person-centered-practices.org)
Thank You

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