



# Effective Interviewing

## Clients with Mental Illness and Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities

### Participant Guide

Presented by:

Amanda Notto and

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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.

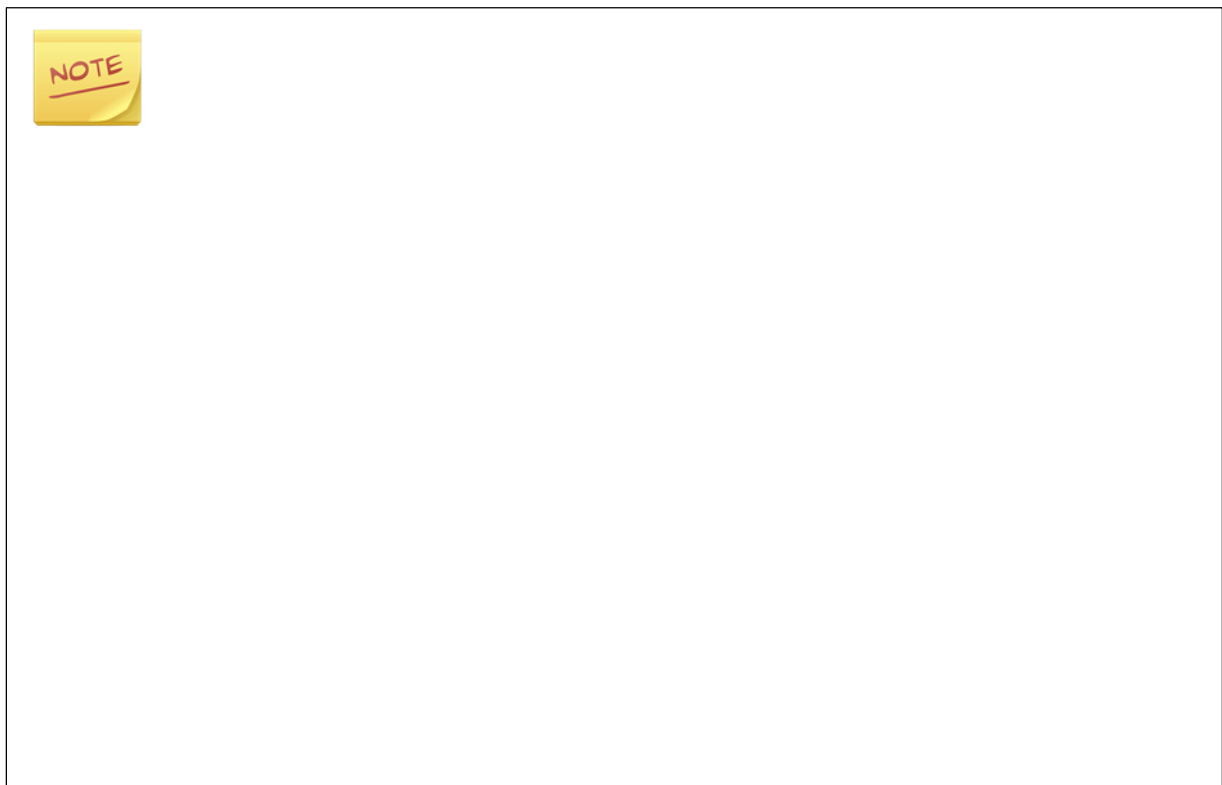
- 1) Name two things about the perpetrator that predisposed her to commit abuse.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 2) Name two things about the client that made her a likely target of abuse.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 3) What are two things about the situation that made abuse a predictable outcome?



## 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.



A large empty rectangular box for writing pre-planned responses. In the top-left corner, there is a yellow sticky note icon with the word "NOTE" written on it.

**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?**

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

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**How can I best respond?**

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# 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.

START



# Objectives

- Overcoming **common obstacles** in communication.
- Recognize how **self-awareness** may influence a crisis or escalating situation.

START





# 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

A man with short brown hair, wearing a grey zip-up sweater, is seated at a wooden workbench in a workshop. He is focused on a task, possibly assembling or inspecting a wooden component. The background shows a blue pegboard, a fire extinguisher, and stacks of cardboard boxes. The lighting is warm and indoor.

## 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

A black and white photograph showing a close-up of a person's hands gripping a steering wheel. The person is wearing a light-colored, long-sleeved shirt. The background is dark and out of focus, showing parts of the car's interior. A semi-transparent, rounded rectangular box is overlaid on the right side of the image, containing text.

## Life as an Employee

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



# Motivation

## Employee Motivation

Avoid punishment

Support co-workers

Treated with respect

Have their sympathy and  
good will recognized





# Motivation

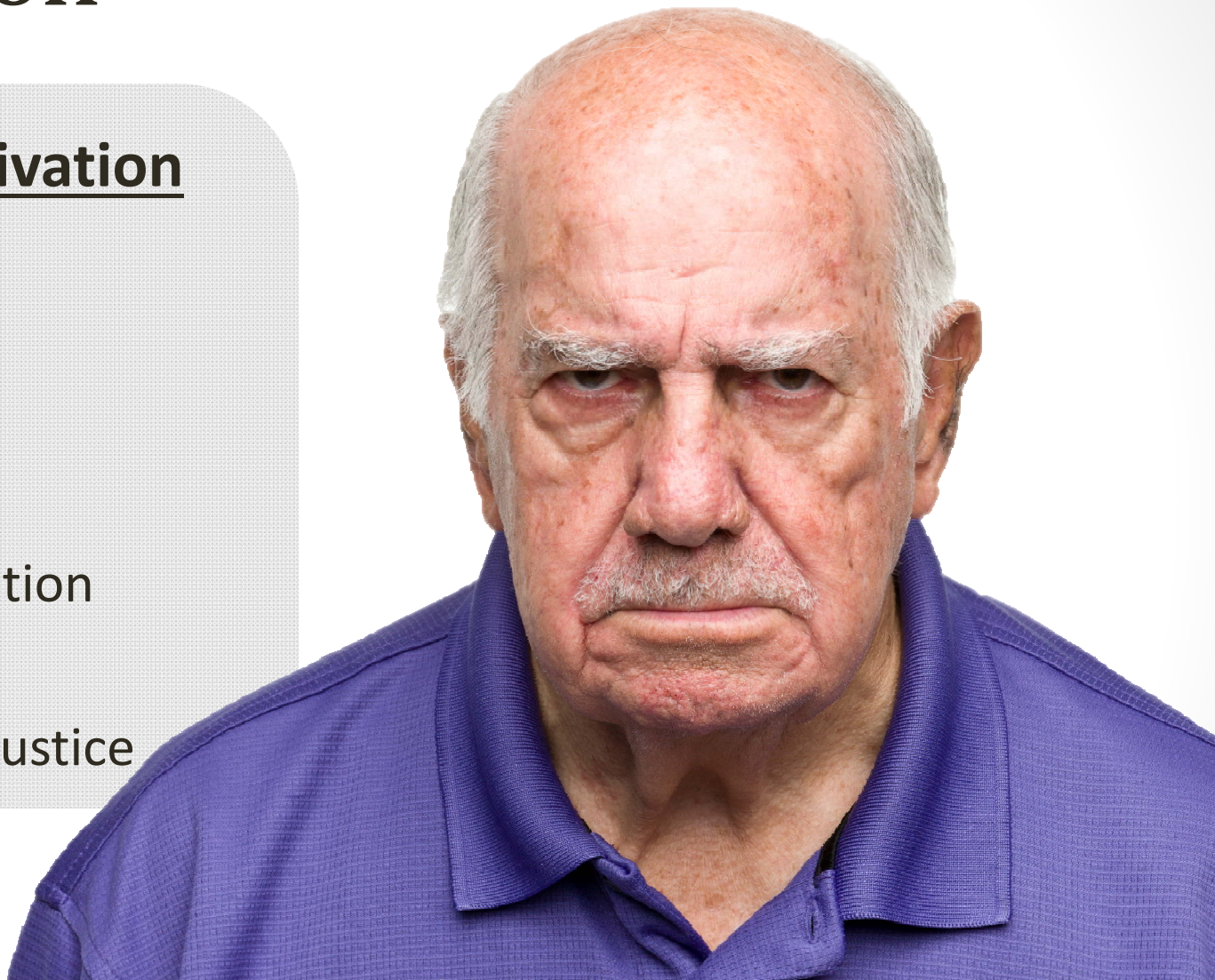
## Client Motivation

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



A woman with long dark hair is shown from the chest up, covering her face with both hands. She has a somber expression. The background is dark and textured. The text 'Overcoming Common Obstacles' is overlaid on the left side of the image.

# 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



# Soliciting Disclosure

## Spontaneous Disclosure

Credibility

Retaliation

Acquiescence

## Questions

- Abstract
- Leading
- Yes or No
- Multiple choice



# Soliciting Disclosure

A close-up photograph of a person's hands. The left hand holds a blue ballpoint pen over a white document. The right hand is pointing at the document with the index finger. The background is a dark, textured surface. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent grid pattern.

Routines

Secrets

Feelings

Experiences

What clients want you to know



# Activity

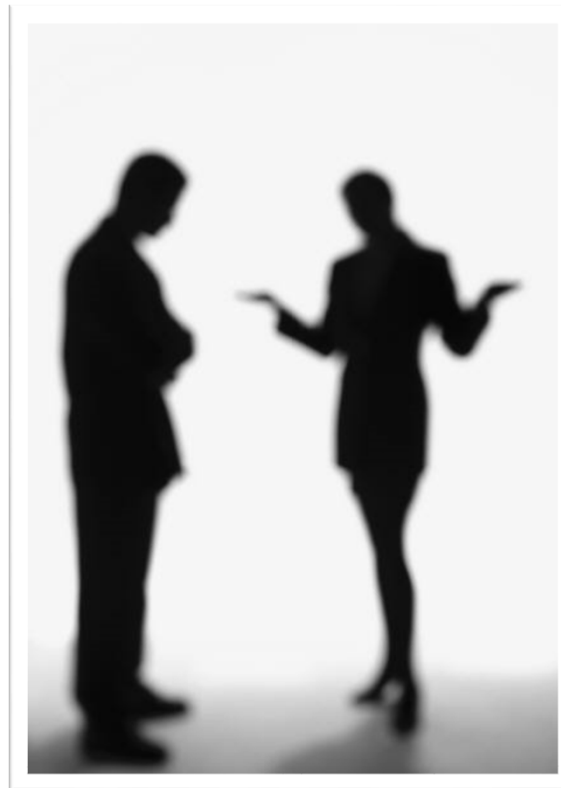
# Making Statements: Verbal

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 used

# 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?



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# Insafe 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](http://www.thearc.org))
- American Speech-Language-Hearing Association ([www.asha.org](http://www.asha.org))
- Center for Child Protection ([www.centerforchildprotection](http://www.centerforchildprotection))
- The Forensic Assessment Center Network ([www.facntx.org](http://www.facntx.org))
- Person Centered Practices ([www.person-centered-practices.org](http://www.person-centered-practices.org))



Thank You

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