

Counselling Clients with Complex Needs

Counsellors in drug and alcohol settings work from a variety of models. When counselling people with cognitive impairment, it's essential you have strategies to tailor sessions to their needs.



Modify Content

For people with attention or concentration difficulties, it is recommended they attend shortened sessions. Modifying content to include more concrete language and offering greater counselling support to assist the person in identifying and changing problematic beliefs and thought patterns are essential.



Use aids

Narrative techniques that require a high degree of verbal competency and comprehension will need to be modified to include simplified language and diagrams or pictorial representations.

Cognitive Function

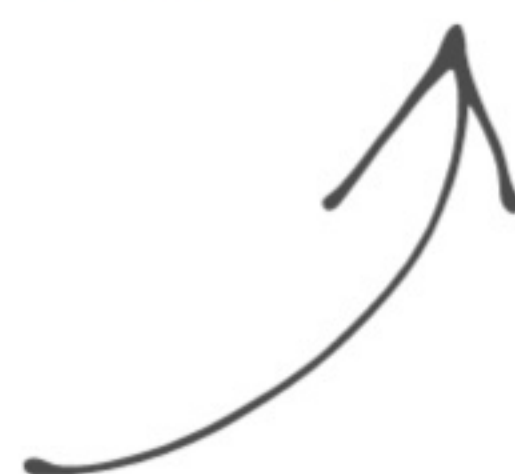
A person requires numerous cognitive functions (verbal skills, memory, attention, problem solving and abstract reasoning) to benefit from the many strategies used in drug and alcohol counselling.

If the person's level of cognitive functioning is not considered, 'll experience poorer treatment outcomes.



Motivational Interviewing

has been highlighted as a particularly useful technique in working with people with complex needs



Group Work and Participation for the client with complex needs

Groups can often be challenging for people with complex needs, so special considerations are needed. There are also simple steps you can take to improve their level of engagement in your service's programs.

Environment

Changes to environment (both physical and social) should be considered to better support a person with complex needs.

Planning

Treatment planning needs to reflect the adjustments, strategies and interventions that might be made in support of the person.

Remember

Employees need to consider the person may be unable to work independently as planning and organising can be very difficult for a person with a complex need.

Understand

People with complex needs learn and behave differently. They are usually expected to change and adapt to the world when in fact they can't change.

Manage Expectations

A change to more appropriate assumptions and expectations will create better working, living, learning environments and produce successes instead of failures.

Modification

People with complex needs think differently and have usually felt like 'failures' at school, at work, and in previous programs. Because of this they'll often have difficulty participating in a program where it's likely these issues will crop up again.

Programs need to be modified to suit the needs of a client who may have some level of cognitive impairment or behavioural differences.

Service Directory

www.aadant.org.au/service-directory

