

INITIAL CONTACT

At the point of referral, and before making direct contact, consider those people involved with the client and possibly affected by their drug and alcohol use. Whilst you may wish to make a first contact with the referred person, there are many circumstances where involving the partner, family or whanau from the outset would be highly effective. Listen carefully, however, to the client's reasons for not including family members as these may indicate safety issues. If pursuing initial contact and assessment with the client only, continue to review the involvement of others as treatment progresses.

In engaging with the referred person consent can be constructively obtained through invitation as in the following example.

Counsellor: "Kia ora, thank you for contacting our service. We can give you an appointment on Friday at 2 pm, is that OK?"

Client: That's fine

Counsellor: Who would you like to bring to the appointment? There may be family or whanau members or a support person that can be of help to you.

Client: Why do I need to bring someone?

Counsellor: In the time we will spend together we will be talking about what's been happening in your life recently and if your support person is available they can have a part in what we call an assessment."

As you work together, the client will identify other people important to them in their community who will be a part of their recovery and may or may not be directly involved in the counselling.

Work with client support networks can be initiated at any stage of the client's treatment.

Allow the client to determine who it is important to involve. Younger people, in the first instance, may identify peers as their most available support system. Many European adults may identify their intimate partner as important to involve, whilst people from different cultural backgrounds may identify members of their extended family or whanau as crucial.

BEGINNING THE SESSION

The skills used in greeting clients readily transfer into Family Inclusive Practice. Where appropriate make eye contact, shake hands, greet people by name and introduce yourself. Be sensitive to family structure, consider greeting more senior family members first, use appropriate language to include children and acknowledge their developing relationship with the client.

Once seated, acknowledge people's willingness to participate and their commitment to address change. Invite the family to determine how they wish to start this session. For example, a karakia, a poem or acknowledgment of those not present. Ensure people are comfortable, aware of facilities and establish how each person in the room wishes to be addressed.

Take time to make certain that children know and understand what is happening and that they will have opportunities to participate if they wish. Convey that people can relax; that children can play, that the family remain responsible for their children, and any other expectations specific to your setting.

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