

Competency 2

Mental Health Assessment with Children and Adolescents

Transition to Child and Youth Mental Health
Practice Core Skills Project 2008



Queensland
Government
Queensland **Health**

Unit 2.1: Child and Youth Mental Health Assessment

Unit Descriptor

This Unit on Child and Youth Mental Health Assessment has been developed to equip clinicians with the core skills to assess children and adolescents with mental health problems. The assessment process plays a crucial role in understanding children and adolescents presenting with mental health disorders, and can assist clinicians to develop a formulation, determine an accurate diagnosis and to plan an appropriate treatment.

Within this unit there are three DVD's in which experts demonstrate how to conduct an assessment using different assessment techniques to acquire information and engage the client. More specifically, the DVD's demonstrate a contextual assessment with an adolescent and parent, a narrative assessment of a child, and a child interview utilising play/projective techniques. Within the package, there are accompanying resources and learning materials that compliment the DVD's and practical exercises that can be completed to assist your learning.

Learning Objectives

1. Gain an understanding, and knowledge of, different assessment techniques that can be utilised to gather information and engage young people
2. Develop an ability to utilise different strategies and assessment techniques/styles to elicit information and engage a client in the assessment process
3. Acquire an understanding of the components of a mental health assessment (such as history of current problems, past psychiatric problems, developmental history, medical history, family history, personal and social history, cultural and linguistic factors, drug and alcohol history, forensic history, suicide risk, strengths and needs)
4. Apply the relevant elements of the mental health assessment process to the clinical situation to acquire appropriate information from suitable sources
5. Develop an understanding of the factors that enhance and impact on interviewing children and adolescents, and how these may impact on your clinical practice

Unit 2.1

Child and Youth Mental Health Assessment

Overview

When completing a thorough assessment, the clinician needs to take into account both subjective and objective information.

Subjective information includes:

- Parent/ carer interview reports
- Collateral observations from involved others such as school teachers, youth workers
- Client statements

Objective information includes:

- Mental State Examination observations
- Assessment results from standardised sources eg: Outcome measures, Psychological assessments, speech language assessments, sensory processing, school examination reports, visual perceptual and developmental assessments.
- Referral information for example from GP – medical and developmental history, clinical observations

Assessment Forms

CYMHS approved forms on which to write up the assessment information gained. See the section entitled 'Forms' for the Queensland Health approved intake and assessment forms including:

- Consumer Demographic Information
- Consumer Intake
- Consumer Assessment
- Drug Assessment Problem List
- Physical Examination and Investigations Form
- Mental Health Child Protection Form

DVD references on conducting CYMHS assessments

1. Frameworks for thinking about and proceeding with the assessment interview – DVD 1 and DVD 2
2. Techniques to use in interviewing young children and adolescents. – DVD 3 and DVD 4
3. Techniques to use when assessing substance use problems - DVD 5
4. Strategies to use when assessing suicide risk seen - DVD 6
5. Demonstrations of clinical interviews with a young person – DVD 2, 3, 4, 5 & 6