

Workplace Literacy Project.

Image of support worker reading a computer screen and taking notes.

This is an accessible version of the Writing objective progress notes trainer guide for use with a screen reader.

This document is intended to be used by the person conducting the training session.

# Writing objective progress notes –

# Trainer guide

## Includes session plan and trainer prompts

Reviewed 16 May 2017

## Session objectives

At the end of the session support workers will be able to:

* Define objective writing
* Recognise the benefits of objective writing
* Identify when to write objectively
* Write objectively, appropriate to workplace documents

## Resources required

* Whiteboard, markers and eraser
* Timer
* ‘Writing objective progress notes – trainer guide’ a copy for the trainer (this document)
* ‘Writing objective progress notes – workbook’ a copy for each learner
* Pens for learners
* Highlighters
* Name tags
* Registration form
* Evaluation forms

## Duration

One hour

## Learner group

Disability Support Workers

## Context

To be held during team meeting or as a stand-alone training session

**Note**

Each session needs to have someone attend who can confirm that content that needs to be included in progress notes.

Writing objectively is the tip of the iceberg – it can evidence the approach to practice. The practice on the floor is the remainder of the iceberg. A workshop can look at the actual task of writing, however the content needs to be informed further by practice leaders. If workers make assumptions about behaviour in practice, then they will document it that way. We can’t expect that document writing will change if the approach to analysis of behaviours doesn’t change. This is an ongoing focus for many disability service providers. This workshop can address this in a limited way, but need to be backed up by the organisation’s practice leaders.

If someone attends who can address this aspect of the content as it arises during the sessions, it might save some potential confusion and lead to an overall more successful outcome from the training.

## Session Plan

| **Time** | **Focus** | **Aim** | **Activity** | **Grouping** | **Resources** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 5 | Introduction | Learners understand purpose of session | Discussion | Whole group | Workbook page 1 |
| 5 | Purpose and audience influence the content needed | Learners understand:   * Why progress notes are used * Who reads progress notes * What information is needed | Discussion and writing | Whole group | Whiteboard  Workbook page 2  Trainer prompts |
| 5 | Define objective writing | Learners understand the difference between objective and subjective writing | Discussion | Whole group | Workbook page 3 |
| 10 | Be aware of objective and subjective writing | Through exploration of disability specific examples, learners demonstrate their understanding that:   * Subjective words express interpretations, assumptions and opinions * Objective writing records observations | Practical activity and discussion | Pairs  Whole group | Workbook page 3  Trainer prompts  Matching cards (prepared from trainer guide) |
| 5 | Benefits of objective writing | Learners recognise the benefits of writing objective progress notes | Discussion and writing | Whole group | Workbook page 4 |
| 5 | Getting started | Learners understand:   * The steps to take * That objective progress notes can still reflect their interpretation, but it needs to be identified as such | Discussion | Whole group | Workbook page 5 |
| 7 | Practise writing objective progress notes | Learners demonstrate that they can write objective progress notes | Writing and discussion | Pairs  Whole group | Workbook page 6 |
| 5 | Guidelines for writing objectively | Learners understand that progress notes:   * Need to be factual * Can report on things that are heard, but need to identify this * Need to be accurate and specific * Need to be logical * Need to be edited | Discussion | Whole group | Whiteboard  Workbook pages 7 and 8 |
| 10 | Practise writing objective progress notes | Learners fine tune their writing | Writing | Individual | Workbook page 9 |
| 5 | Close | Learners know where they can seek further training | Discussion | Whole group | Whiteboard |

## Trainer prompts for page 2

The purpose of writing progress notes is:

* To record events and activity
* To communicate information with the team
* To provide evidence of events, which may be used in an investigation
* To demonstrate what the organisation is doing to assist the person to meet the goals in their individual plan

The progress notes will be read and used by:

* The person being supported
* The person’s family and/or carers (with appropriate permission)
* Case managers
* Team members
* Team leaders
* Key workers
* Senior practitioner
* Allied health clinicians

The information we need to include in progress notes is:

* The activity the person undertook in relation to their plan
* Any unusual events or activity
* The person’s level of participation
* The person’s achievements and changes
* Appointments attended/referrals made
* Any group activity involvement
* Any information given to the person

Add in new items raised by the group. You can use these in your next session.

## Trainer prompts for page 4

Benefits of writing objectively are:

* Enables different people to use different pieces of information from the notes
* Patterns and changes in behaviour, experiences, events, etc. can be identified
* Does not rely on one person’s interpretation, judgement, etc.
* Information can be matched to personal support plans
* Helps identify triggers that can inform a behaviour support plan
* Active support is documented
* Can provide information for use in other workplace documents
* Assists to provide information in a logical order, e.g. chronological

## Trainer prompts for page 5

Show the learners the documents on the last page of the booklet. Explain that these can be used as a reference by taking them off the booklet, if they want to.

Explain the difference between the way we used the same information in the table about responding to and reporting behaviours of concern for two slightly different purposes.

In the game, we used the cards to show the difference between subjective and objective. We didn’t distinguish between the appropriateness of the different interpretations.

In the poster, which is as it this information was originally laid out, there is an intention to move away from the subjective interpretations in the left column, and consider if the behaviour exhibited is actually the person’s way of communicating one of the options on the right, or something else. It’s beyond the scope of this session to discuss too much about this, however it is important to note. Practice will inform the way progress notes are written. If we want objective notes, then we need to promote objective analysis of behaviour in practice.

This is why it is really important to make sure someone with the appropriate skills about the content of the notes is available in this training session. Defer to them, as needed during this discussion … but be careful of your timeframe. They might need to run a separate session about this as a follow up.

## Trainer prompts for page 6

Ask the group, “What information was missing in the original notes?”

Ask each group to read out their notes.

After all have been read, discuss whether:

* There is other information that could be included
* There was anything that didn’t need to be included

## Activity – be aware of objective and subjective writing

Adapted from ‘Positive behaviour support - Getting it right from the start: Facilitators reference manual V2’.

Print out a set of cards for each pair of learners. You will need to cut them out into cards before the workshop.

| Objective observations | Alternative subjective interpretations |
| --- | --- |
| The person follows staff or family members around the house, touch others inappropriately, attempts to pass objects at seemingly inappropriate times, teases others, interrupt others or act in a way that is found to be annoying. | * Attention seeking * Initiating relationships – they want friends * Seeking company – they are lonely * Seeking reassurance – they are scared * Seeking help or support – they lack skills or confidence * Personality issues |
| The person rocks, twists or plays with their fingers and toes; slaps their face or their legs persistently; twirls around; pokes at their eyes; hums or signs inappropriately. | * Self-stimulating * Bored, overwhelmed or over stimulated and may need to calm * Unable to identify or initiate an alternative activity * Syndrome specific behaviours, possibly related to neurological problems * Health and medical needs |
| The person picks at their skin, cuts themselves with sharp objects, places objects in their body cavities, pulls their hair out, eats or drinks to excess. | * Self-injuring * Nervous * Anxious * Depressed * Psychiatric issues * Bored/Boredom |
| The person does not do things as they are asked to do them, when they are asked, or does not finish things they start. | * Non-compliant * Not interested * Not understanding * Not being asked the right way * Not having sufficient skills * Not having sufficient stamina (tired) * Recalling bad memories of a past experience |
| The person talks or makes noises at inappropriate times, yells, interferes with the work or activities of others or break things. | * Disruptive * Frightened * Scared * Stressed * Lacking understanding of the situation |
| The person throws objects or hit out at others. | * Aggressive * Not knowing what is expected of them * Frustrated or even threatened * The requirements of the current situation exceed their skill or level of tolerance * Other attempts to communicate are not responded to |