



Australasian **Housing** Institute

Supporting housing professionals

Effectively Engaging Customers

A one-day experiential workshop for client services staff

Overview

Housing and other human service personnel engage with clients who present with a board range of behaviours, issues and needs. They also engage with clients for a range of reasons from the initial contact through to involving clients in consultation and capacity building activities.

This experiential workshop examines skills and strategies as the foundation for effective relationship-building and the broad communication skills that underpin an effective engagement process.

Workshop participants will explore the key skills involved in engaging more effectively with a wide range of clients across a range of circumstances. As well, the skills that may be required to manage some of the relationship or communication problems that may emerge will be explored.

You will have the opportunity to gain an understanding and practical use of strategies to support you in the work place by sharing an array of strategies and ideas that may be helpful. Like all experiential training programs, participants' contributions from their own workplace will enhance the learning environment.

Content

The program will cover three key areas of engagement:

1. Engaging customers to deliver the best quality customer service
2. Engaging with customers as part of consultative mechanisms
3. Engaging with customers to build community capacity and improve big picture outcomes

These sessions will combine to examine key elements of quality customer service at a range of levels and how might these apply in a housing environment including:

- Practicing simple ways to make the first contact effective in a high volume work environment and building and maintaining long term relationships and trust with residents
- Exploring attitudes and values and how these can impact on customer service
- Identifying and utilising appropriate communication strategies to meet the needs of clients
- Assisting customers make choices, defusing potentially dissatisfied customers and delivering the bad news
- Practicing immediate conflict management and resolution skills to support engagement
- Engaging with people specifically when we want to ask their opinion
- Developing a framework for consultation: ensuring clarity of purpose, identifying what's in it for the people being consulted and understanding the importance of feedback and how the consultation is used
- Exploring the purpose and the possibilities of capacity building activities
- Seeking feedback and learning from experiences

Learning outcomes

- To gain a greater understanding of conflict situations, their assessment and conflict mapping
- To examine negotiation skills
- To develop relevant communication skills
- To examine relationship-building or maintenance skills when in challenging situations
- To gain a broad appreciation of mediation strategies
- To understand and articulate limitations of work practice – and mechanisms for assertive referral and personal/ professional support
- To practice structured strategic solutions

Who should attend?

This workshop is aimed at social housing professionals whose work involves direct contact with clients.

Presenters

John Flanagan, *B Soc Wk, Masters of Gestalt Therapy*

Participant feedback

“I thought the course was very good. The presenter was of the highest calibre & made it fun... I’m legendary for not being effusive about training; most of the time they way over-promise and under deliver. However I thought this was excellent & worth the drive.”

“Informative and in line with what actually happens on a daily basis. The presenter had a good perception of the clients and the issues they face.”

“It was obvious that John understands our client group. The day was presented in a fun way. It was a full day.”

“It was all good but I think I related best to the role playing. We deal with these situations every day.”

“Loved the group interactions, thank you great session.”