

HSC379 Support individuals who are substance users (Level 3)

Elements of Competence

- HSC377a** Enable individuals to adopt safe practices associated with substance use
- HSC377b** Support individuals when they have used substances
- HSC377c** Support individuals in reducing substance use

About this unit

For this unit you need to support individuals who are substance users by enabling them to adopt safe practices, providing care and support following an episode of substance use and supporting individuals' efforts to reduce or cease substance use. Substances would include alcohol, opiates, hallucinogenics, amphetamines, cannabis, prescribed medication, solvents and other volatile substances; their use may be experimental, recreational or dependent.

Scope

The scope is here to give you guidance on possible areas to be covered in this unit. The terms in this section give you a list of options linked with items in the performance criteria. You need to provide evidence for any option related to your work area.

Communication: speech and language; actions, gestures and body language; space and position.

Risks: physical; emotional; social.

Effect: immediate; longer term.

Needs: washing; food and drink; clothing.

Effects upon: relationships; life-style; recreational and leisure pursuits; emotional and physical state.

Progress: significant progress towards goal of reducing or ceasing substance use; little or no progress.

This is Drugs and Alcohol National Occupational Standard (DANOS) AB2.

Key Words and Concepts

This section provides explanations and definitions of the key words and concepts used in this unit. In occupational standards it is quite common to find words or phrases used which you will be familiar with, but which, in the detail of the standards, may be used in a very particular way. **Therefore, we would encourage you to read this section carefully before you begin working with the standards and to refer back to this section as required.**

Appropriate person	May be another member of the care team or external counsellor or advisor working with the individual
Degree of reduction in substance use	Will differ between individuals - for some the goal is to reduce the frequency and/or volume of substance use, for others the goal is to cease substance use
Further assistance and support	May be for you or for the individual (such as emergency aid)
Making the environment as safe as possible	Will be dependent on the substance used and the condition of the individual
Pain or discomfort	May include injury, hallucinations or withdrawal symptoms (such as nausea, sweating)
Physical risks	May relate directly to the way that the substance is used (e.g. use of needles and risk of infection) or may relate to the effects that the substance has on the individual (both the short term effect of the substance and the longer term effects on the body)
Proposals for change	may include modifications to goals or objectives, such as the individual deciding not to reduce or cease substance use, or changes in the methods or strategies used
Social risks	Includes risks related to legislation (such as possession, driving with excess alcohol) and to relationships (such as the effects of the individual's substance use on others)

HSC379a Enable individuals to adopt safe practices associated with substance use

Performance Criteria

You need to show that,

1. your communication with individuals about substance use and its associated risks is at a time and in a manner likely to maximise the likelihood of the individual understanding it
2. you explain the risks to individuals from the substances taken and the methods used in a manner, and at a level and pace appropriate to them
3. you offer individuals guidance, support and advice on ways in which methods of substance use and activities affected by it can be practised more safely
4. you support individuals who wish to use supplies of safe drugs, equipment and other materials to do so in a manner which is appropriate and consistent with their right of choice
5. you support and encourage individuals to dispose of hazardous materials and equipment in a safe manner and place immediately after use
6. you encourage and support individuals to discuss their circumstances and history of substance use and this information is used to plan and provide appropriate support and assistance
7. you give support and assistance to contact people who can help where individuals ask for further information and advice which is beyond your role

HSC379b Support individuals when they have used substances

Performance Criteria

You need to show that,

1. your actions to support individuals who have used substances are consistent with your agreed role and agency policies and procedures
2. you make individuals aware that you are available and willing to help
3. your interaction with individuals is in a manner which recognises each individual's needs and rights
4. your actions to support individuals are appropriate to the substance used, the effect which the substance has had and the condition of the individual
5. you encourage individuals to describe any pain or discomfort which they are experiencing
6. you move and handle individuals with the minimum of discomfort and only where it is necessary for their safety
7. you request further support and assistance needed to help the individual without delay
8. you make the environment as safe as possible and remove all dangerous substances and materials

9. you support and enable individuals to meet their needs and requirements after the effects of the substance have worn off
10. you clearly and accurately report information about episodes of substance use to an appropriate person and record it in the required format

HSC379c Support individuals in reducing substance use

Performance Criteria

You need to show that,

1. you encourage individuals who have made a commitment to reduce substance use to review their reasons for doing so
2. you identify and explore the effects of the individual's choice on their daily life and any difficulties which they might have in a supportive manner
3. you identify accurately and discuss in detail strategies and methods for alleviating difficulties encountered by the individual
4. you communicate with individuals in a manner, and at a level and pace, appropriate to them
5. you offer support to individuals in a manner which respects their individual rights and choice, and is appropriate to their needs and is realistic within the limits of the resources available
6. you give appropriate support and assistance to contact people who can help individuals who ask for advice and support which is beyond your role
7. you assist individuals to review their progress in reducing substance use, realistically assess their achievements and identify opportunities for improvement
8. you accurately and fully record the results of discussions on progress and any proposals for changes and pass these promptly to an appropriate person
9. you acknowledge and manage your own feelings about the individual's progress or lack of this in such a way as to minimise their impact on the support provided

Knowledge Specification for the whole of this unit

Competent practice is a combination of the application of skills and knowledge informed by values and ethics. This specification details the knowledge and understanding required to carry out competent practice in the performance described in this unit.

When using this specification **it is important to read the knowledge requirements in relation to expectations and requirements of your job role.**

You need to show that you know, understand and can apply in practice:

Values

1. individual's rights in making decisions regarding their health, including their right to ignore advice

Legislation and organisational policy and procedures

2. substance use which is legal and illegal (including the illegal use of prescribed drugs), agency policy and how this affects the role of the worker (e.g. if individual is using illegal drugs - the ways of dealing with this)
3. legislation relating to the supply and use of substances, and to particular individual groups (e.g. Children Act) and how these affect your role and responsibilities
4. legislation and agency policies and guidelines on the storage and use of substances (including Health and Safety at Work Act) and your role in relation to these
5. resources within and outside the agency to assist the substance user to control or minimise the risks of the use (such as a supply of new syringes, accommodation, rehabilitation centres)
6. the different specialist advice/therapy agencies and national/local support networks involved in supporting substance users
7. resources within and outside the agency available to assist the substance user to cease or reduce use, including the different specialist advice/therapy agencies and national/local support networks involved in supporting substance users
8. your role and responsibilities in relation to the individual and how these should affect any relationship between you and the individual

Theory and practice

Factors which influence what you do:

9. the different forms of substance which individuals might use, how they are used (e.g. drinking, injecting, sniffing, smoking) and their likely effects
10. the ways in which individuals may combine substances and the different effects which might arise from this
11. the risks involved with substance use both in the short and the long term (such as overdose, dependence, associated health risks such as HIV, Hepatitis B and C)

12. different forms of cleanliness (from social cleanliness to sterilisation) and the links between forms of cleanliness and harm reduction strategies (such as the re-use of needles)
13. the range of activities that may be affected by substance use and harm-reduction strategies that can be adopted in relation to these
14. harm reduction strategies, how and why these may differ from individual to individual
15. the range of safer sex practices and how individuals can be encouraged to use these
16. hazardous materials and equipment, nature of the hazard that they create and safe methods for disposing of them (and the available options given the facilities that the individual has access to)
17. the indicators of substance use the different forms of substance which individuals might use and their likely effects (in order to be able to recognise the abnormal and potential health emergencies)
18. the risks involved with substance use both in the short and the long term (such as overdose, dependence, associated health risks)
19. the indicators of pain, discomfort and that the effects of the substance are posing a significant threat to a individual's well-being (such as alcohol poisoning, overdose) and the action that should be taken in relation to each
20. the range of after-effects of substance use and what the needs of the individual may be following substance use
21. how views of substance use may differ
22. your role in the environment and the boundaries and limits of that role
23. the impact which your feelings may have on the support which can be effectively offered to the individual
24. factors that influence individuals to use substances and how these may be inter-related or combined
25. reasons why individuals decide to reduce or cease substance use
26. the range of potential effects of reducing or ceasing substance use upon relationships, life-style, recreation and leisure activities, physical and emotional health
27. the type of difficulties that are likely to arise in attempting to cease or reduce substance use and strategies and methods for alleviating them
28. the effects which your own beliefs and feelings about substance use may have on your behaviour and why it is important to work with individuals in a supporting and non-judgmental manner, even when your own beliefs conflict with the individual's actions

How to achieve important outcomes:

29. methods of moving and handling individuals which are likely to be the safest for you and the individual and why individuals should be moved only when necessary
30. emergency aid for situations where the substance causes a health emergency
31. methods of supporting individuals at times when they have used substances
32. how to assist individuals to make realistic assessments of their progress and

how you can offer views in a supportive manner

33. ways of supporting individuals who are seeking to reduce or cease substance use

Good practice:

34. the importance of acknowledging and dealing with your own feelings in relation to the substance use concerned
35. why the language used should be consistent with the individual's own form of expression (for example, not clinical) and strategies that can be used to maximise the possibility of information being heard and understood
36. why the individual should be supported to talk through their circumstances and history of substance use
37. why the individual should be supported to contact others for further advice and assistance and the forms which such support and assistance might take
38. methods of making one's presence and availability obvious to the individual without attracting aggression
39. why the individual should be supported to describe any pain or discomfort which they are experiencing
40. the importance of assisting individuals to meet their own needs and requirements after the effects of the substance have worn off and ways of doing this
41. why information should be reported and recorded
42. why it is important to review with individuals their reasons for deciding to reduce or cease substance use and the motivational effects of this
43. the importance of acknowledging individual's rights in making decisions regarding their use of substances