

Consulting to individuals and teams regarding individuals with personality disorder

This section addresses competences relevant to consultations whose aim is to promote better understanding of clients with personality disorder, making it more likely that they receive appropriate care.

When individuals with personality disorder form relationships with clinical (and non-clinical) staff and with teams they can receive unhelpful or suboptimal care. This risk is enhanced when the reactions of staff inadvertently worsen (rather than alleviate) unhelpful patterns of interaction.

Because these consultations inevitably include sharing personal and clinical information about the client, this section should be read in conjunction with those areas of the framework that relate to confidentiality and consent.

Knowledge of the aims of consultation

An ability to draw on knowledge that the aim of a consultation is to help individuals and teams maintain a constructive and therapeutic stance in relation to clients with personality disorder

An ability to draw on knowledge of the areas on which consultations usually focus, e.g.:

consulting to individual clinicians or to teams to help them work more effectively with specific clients (e.g. clients whose behaviours are challenging for a team, or for individual clinicians within the team)

helping team members reflect on their work with clients with personality disorder and consider (for example):

the effectiveness of their interactions with clients

the influence of team dynamics on the effectiveness of their work

the influence of team attitudes that reduce staff member's confidence in their capacity to work with people with personality disorder

changes to the way the team functions that will promote more effective engagement

Managing confidentiality and consent when sharing information

An ability to draw on knowledge of the principles governing confidentiality and consent in order for consultants and consultees to determine:

what information needs to be conveyed in order to achieve the aims of the consultation

with whom information is should be shared

how information is conveyed and contextualised

how the client is informed about any decisions to share information

how the client is involved in decisions about the information to be shared

Using a formulation to help understand difficult and/or challenging behaviours

An ability to work with consultees to develop a case formulation that helps them reach a better understanding of clients by:

using a language and style that takes account of the culture, norms and expectations of the organisation within which the consultees are located

helping staff to contextualise difficult and challenging behaviours by locating these into the broader context of the client's history and their difficulties

helping them to develop a better understanding of the function of the client's actions

An ability to encourage discussion of the formulation by consultees in order for them to appraise its utility for themselves, and:

to express it in using their own terminology and language

to help identify any areas where the formulation has been misunderstood or misapplied

Using a formulation to modify unhelpful patterns of interaction and communication

An ability to help staff make use of the formulation in order to identify unhelpful patterns of interaction that the client tends to develop with others, and has formed with the team, in order to:

consider ways in which their own reactions to, and communication with, the client, contribute to the development of these patterns of interaction

identify the functions of these interaction patterns and their usual (if unintended) consequences for the client and for the staff team

identify alternative strategies for interacting with the client that are likely to achieve more appropriate and rewarding functional outcomes for the client

identify which strategies can be put into action and in which sequence

identify any likely barriers to implementing new strategies, and the ways in which these might be overcome

Helping teams reflect on unhelpful or unproductive patterns of interactions with clients with personality disorder

An ability to help staff identify, discuss and reflect on unhelpful patterns of interaction with clients with personality disorder (e.g. responding to clients in an unsympathetic or rejecting manner)

An ability to help the team arrive at a formulation that helps them understand the reasons for the development and maintenance of unhelpful patterns of interaction e.g.:

using case examples to consider how the clients with personality disorder can 'pull' unhelpful responses from others

identifying the feelings generated in response to challenging behaviours and considering how these contribute to subsequent interactions

An ability to encourage consultees openly to discuss their view of, and reactions to, challenging behaviours

demonstrating an understanding of their negative reactions to the client (e.g. being overwhelmed, avoidant or rejecting)

helping staff to discuss any negative reactions more openly

considering ways in which negative reactions relate to the client's characteristic style of interaction, and the ways in which this acts to evoke reactions from others

An ability to help teams identify discuss and reflect on unhelpful team dynamics that may reduce the effectiveness of interactions with clients with personality disorder (e.g. splits and disagreements within the team that reflect strong differences of view about how clients should be managed)

An ability to help staff identify any changes in the ways the team is organised or in which services are delivered in order to promote more responsive/effective interactions with clients with personality disorder e.g.:

changes in staff behaviour

training needs

changes in service policies or management plans

needs for further support or consultation

Ability to evaluate change

An ability to help individuals and teams identify criteria/ indicators that can be used to evaluate the effectiveness of changes that they implement (e.g. to patterns of interaction with the client, or changes in patterns of service use)