

Meta-competences

Attitudes, values and style of interaction

An ability to adapt practice to the needs and presentation of a person so as to:
maximise their active involvement in the process of assessment, planning and intervention
address any tensions between meeting their personal needs and any organisational requirements that inform 'usual' practice (such as local protocols for assessment)

Confidentiality and capacity

An ability to interpret legal definitions of competence, capacity and guidance regarding confidentiality in relation to the specific circumstances and needs of each person
An ability to judge when it is in the best interest of the person to disclose information, taking into account their wishes and views about sharing information, but holding in mind considerations of competence, capacity and risk
where there are concerns about the person's capacity to act in a way that maintains their own safety, an ability to judge how to proceed in a manner that is aligned with their best interests
an ability to judge what and how much information (both written and verbal) should be shared and with whom (in the light of the person's specific situation and the protection of the public)

Working with people from a range of backgrounds

An ability for practitioners to be aware of their own values and to reflect on the ways that these values affect (positively and negatively) the people with whom they are working
Where a person discusses practices at variance with the norms and values of the practitioner, an ability to judge when this difference should be respected and when it represents a concern that should be responded to
Where there is evidence that social and cultural difference is likely to have an impact on the accessibility or acceptability of an intervention, an ability to make appropriate adjustments to the intervention and/or the manner in which it is delivered, with the aim of maximising its potential benefit

Engagement

An ability to judge when to continue focusing on working with difficulties and when to step back, based on the level of engagement with a person
--

Assessment

An ability to balance the benefits of a thorough assessment against the need to initiate a timely intervention, and to judge:

when assessment has been optimal and sufficient to take the next step, even if it is currently incomplete

when the assessment has identified sufficient understanding for an intervention to proceed and where more information is required before an intervention can be carried out safely

An ability to adopt a flexible and responsive approach to assessment that balances the need to obtain information against the person's readiness and willingness to share this (e.g. because they have had only limited opportunities to form a relationship with the practitioner)

Assessing risk

An ability to draw on knowledge of the difficulty of predicting risk in an individual person and so be able to:

synthesise information from theory and research with multiple sources of information about the person

integrate information from questionnaire-based sources with information from discussion-based assessment

integrate information from a range of sources

Implementing interventions in a flexible but coherent manner

An ability to judge the degree to which an intervention should focus on the immediate management of self-harm or suicide, and when a broader focus can be adopted (e.g. to consider longer-term issues that contribute to the person's self-harming or suicidal behaviours)

An ability to implement an intervention or a model of therapy in a manner that is flexible and responsive to the person's needs and wishes, but which also ensures that the central components of the intervention are included

An ability to judge when and how to balance adherence to a 'protocol' against the need to attend to any issues that arise and which require an immediate response (e.g. a breakdown in the therapeutic relationship or major disruptive life events)

Adapting assessments and interventions in response to feedback

An ability to identify and respond to implicit or explicit indicators that the person is at risk of disengaging from the assessment or intervention, for example by:

responding to, and openly discussing, *explicit* feedback that expresses concerns about important aspects of the assessment or intervention

responding to *implicit* feedback that indicates concerns about important aspects of the therapy (as indicated, for example, by comments, non-verbal behaviour, or significant shifts in responsiveness)

identifying when it seems difficult for people to give 'authentic' feedback (i.e. responding in accordance with what they think the practitioner wishes to hear, rather than expressing their own view) and discussing this with them

Recognising limits

An ability for the practitioner to judge when they have reached the limits of their responsibility and competence and when to seek advice or supervision, or refer on to others

Using supervision and support

An ability to be aware of the inevitable personal feelings elicited by challenging behaviours (such as hostility or suspiciousness) and to judge when support or supervision is necessary in order to:

continue working effectively

ensure that decisions about the best way forward are taken on the basis of careful reflection (e.g. whether to persist, adapt or stop the intervention)

An ability for the practitioner to judge when an assessment or intervention is creating excessive emotional demands and to put in place appropriate levels of self-care

Team working with other practitioners and professionals

When sharing information with others, an ability to judge what information needs to be shared, and with whom, titrating the level of confidentiality against the need for colleagues to have sufficient information if they are to act in the interests of the person

When undertaking work with other agencies, an ability to make a judgment about the potential impact of factors such as differences in statutory responsibilities and the operation of service constraints, and to take these into account when planning a shared intervention

An ability to judge when there is sufficient evidence that professional colleagues are not performing their roles appropriately, or are performing them incompetently, and to act in line with professional, organisational and legal obligations