

Clinical Strategies

The following set of clinical strategies is recommended to facilitate a good therapeutic relationship with the patient. These strategies have been empirically demonstrated to enhance the quality of support provided to drug users and to maximise the probability of behaviour change occurring.

PATIENT CENTRED APPROACH

<i>Regard the person's behaviour as their personal choice</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • acknowledge that there are two sides to behaviour, benefits as well as costs • understanding and acknowledging the patient's choices enhances their autonomy and responsibility
<i>Let the person decide how much of a problem they have, i.e. how important it is for them to quit</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • systematically explore benefits (likes) and costs (dislikes) as perceived by the patient • use the examples and issues that the patient raises • encourage the patient to rate their motivation and confidence out of 10. If the score is low, explore what would need to happen to increase this score. If the score is high, why?
<i>Avoid argumentation and confrontation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • confrontation <i>within</i> the patient is the goal • separate information from the "persuasive imperative"
<i>Encourage discrepancy</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • change is likely to occur when a person's behaviour is seen to be in conflict with their personal goals • use the decision balance to identify the areas of discrepancies
<i>Help patients re-evaluate their substance use</i>	<p>Three ingredients are necessary for any behaviour change:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • concern with the current behaviour • belief that change will lead to improvement or things being better • belief that change is possible (self-efficacy)

Source: Chapter 13, Psychosocial Interventions. Clinical Strategies Table. 2003, *Alcohol and Other Drugs: A Handbook for Health Professionals* (3rd Edition). Canberra. Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing.