2023 VCE VET Community Services external assessment report

General comments

In 2023 the VCE VET Community Services examination provided students with an opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of three units of competency from the VCE VET Community Services program:

* CHCCCS016 Respond to client needs
* CHCCDE003 Work within a community development framework
* CHCCDE004 Implement participation and engagement strategies

Students generally performed well in the 2023 VCE VET Community Services examination.

The examination comprised three sections: Section A, which contained multiple-choice questions; Section B, which contained short-answer and extended-answer questions; and Section C, which contained short-answer questions with multiple parts based on two case studies.

The multiple-choice questions were generally well answered and students demonstrated a competent knowledge of the concepts, theories and application required of the VCE VET Community Services. Students who read the questions carefully did well in their responses. Many students needed to read the questions more carefully to avoid confusion in their responses.

Specific information

Note: Student responses reproduced in this report have not been corrected for grammar, spelling or factual information.

This report provides sample answers or an indication of what answers may have included. Unless otherwise stated, these are not intended to be exemplary or complete responses.

The statistics in this report may be subject to rounding resulting in a total more or less than 100 per cent. Shading indicates the correct answer.

Section A – Multiple-choice questions

Shading indicates the correct answer.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Question | Correct answer | % A | % B | % C | % D | Comments |
| 1 | D | 5 | 2 | 9 | 85 |  |
| 2 | D | 1 | 3 | 14 | 82 |  |
| 3 | A | 98 | 1 | 1 | 1 |  |
| 4 | C | 3 | 18 | 78 | 1 |  |
| 5 | C | 1 | 32 | 59 | 7 | Many students were unable to differentiate between review and evaluation.  |
| 6 | A | 99 | 1 | 1 | 0 |  |
| 7 | C | 2 | 1 | 81 | 16 |  |
| 8 | B | 46 | 49 | 5 | 1 | Students confused ‘social interaction’ (Option B) with ‘individual values and beliefs’ (Option A). This suggests that students’ understanding of ‘theories’ was unclear. |
| 9 | B | 1 | 95 | 2 | 2 |  |
| 10 | C | 12 | 0 | 86 | 2 |  |
| 11 | A | 92 | 1 | 6 | 2 |  |
| 12 | A | 95 | 2 | 1 | 2 |  |
| 13 | D | 3 | 4 | 5 | 87 |  |
| 14 | A | 69 | 19 | 7 | 5 |  |
| 15 | C | 1 | 7 | 91 | 0 |  |

Section B

Question 1

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Mark | 0 | 1 | 2 | Average |
| % | 47 | 24 | 28 | 0.8 |

This question required students to nominate two professional development activities that could be used to improve work practice in community services or community development work.

Any two of the following:

* training or workshops for specific work-related tasks
* research
* attendance at network meetings
* attendance at conferences
* participating in supervision activities
* obtaining formal qualifications.

Some students misunderstood the question as professional development that they could provide to other workers.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

A self-reflection survey about how well they have been meeting the set goals, allowing room for discussion on improvements. Working with other community workers to increase your knowledge.

Question 2a.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Mark | 0 | 1 | 2 | Average |
| % | 4 | 11 | 84 | 1.8 |

This question required that students understand the importance of trust in community development.

Any two of the following:

* Trust will assist the community development worker to understand the community and their needs.
* Trust will support the development of an action plan that meets the community needs.
* Trust will support more successful outcomes because people are more likely to communicate better and collaborate effectively.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

It is important to build trust, as communities are more likely to share opinions with community development workers if they feel their opinions are valued.

Question 2b.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Mark | 0 | 1 | 2 | Average |
| % | 5 | 18 | 77 | 1.7 |

This question asked students about strategies to build trust with the community they’re working with.

Responses typically listed ‘actively listening’ and ‘use open and closed questions’. While many responses were accurate and reflected the examples set, no student answered with ‘Seek out and value the input and contributions of community members’.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response:

Building rapport – establishing a relationship with community members.

Interpersonal skills (active listening) – using eye contact, body language etc., show real interest.

Question 3a.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Mark | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Average |
| % | 6 | 12 | 12 | 21 | 0.8 | 47 | 3.4 |

This question required students to demonstrate their understanding of the stages of community development projects.

1. assess community priorities
2. monitor and review
3. develop an action plan
4. engage key stakeholders and establish a planning group
5. evaluate the project
6. make adjustments to the project
7. implement the action plan
8. finish the project and celebrate success.

Many students confused ‘evaluate the project’ with ‘monitor and review’.

Question 3bi.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Mark | 0 | 1 | 2 | Average |
| % | 5 | 15 | 80 | 1.8 |

Question 3bii.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Mark | 0 | 1 | 2 | Average |
| % | 3 | 15 | 82 | 1.8 |

This question required students to choose two stages of the community development process and describe what each stage involves and why it is important.

Stage 1: Assess community priorities

* What it involves: Research, find out and understand the community context, local history, demographics, socioeconomics, culture and languages; gather statistical data, what are the community assets/resources. Review other research that has already been done with the community, local government and agencies data, and reports on the outcomes of previous surveys/consultations conducted with the community.
* Why it is important: Communities come in different forms and will have different ways of approaching their priorities/goals. A worker may think they know what a community’s priorities are; however, priorities and needs should be determined by the community (not the worker). Doing prior research will assist to overcome barriers to engage with the community and for change to happen, by understanding factors that have an impact on the community’s priorities and aspirations. Unless there is a collective vision of common goal/s, there will be little if any buy-in from community members, unmotivated volunteers and little support from funders and stakeholders.

Stage 2: Monitor and review

* What it involves: Monitoring and reviewing occurs throughout the project development and implementation of actions to assist with checking/measuring progress. This is done at various set intervals/milestones. The planning group should regularly check actions and timelines and review how each step of the process has gone, including both things that have gone well and things that haven’t. The planning group may also want to survey or check in with key stakeholders.
* Why it is important: The planning group needs to ensure the project is meeting set milestones to ensure the project is meeting its objectives. Reports of progress along the way may also be needed by funding bodies. It is important to monitor progress to ensure that the project is not getting off track and to identify issues early so that they can be rectified.

Stage 3: Develop an action plan

* What it involves: Identify goals and strategies and resources to achieve these. Identify who will be responsible for each action/strategy and the timeframes in which these need to be achieved. Put into a document and share with relevant stakeholders. Identify when the action plan will need to be reviewed. Can also include the evaluation method to be used.
* Why it is important: To ensure success of the project and that it remains on track. The action plan ensures everyone is clear about their responsibilities as well as the steps and actions needed. The action plan can be referred back to and refined/amended as needed as the project progresses.

Stage 4: Engage key stakeholders and establish a planning group

* What it involves: Identify who the key stakeholders are (e.g. community groups, local council, state government departments, schools, neighbours, other residents). Have discussions with key stakeholders early in the planning process to assist and understand priorities, expectations, how the project should be delivered, what successful outcomes are and who is key in the decision-making process. Identify who is interested in joining a planning group, ensuring that the group is able to represent the views and perspectives of different stakeholders.
* Why it is important: It is essential to engage with key stakeholders so the community has ownership of the process and of what the community would like to see happen. It’s imperative key stakeholders are genuinely listened to, to enable relationships and trust to build and strengthen. A planning group needs to reflect the views and perspectives of key stakeholders. The planning group will both do the work as well as ensure key stakeholder views and priorities are considered in every step of the process.

Stage 5: Evaluate the project

* What it involves: Using the evaluation methods selected that will appropriately measure the desired project outcomes; for example, using surveys, questionnaires, photos and focus groups. Then collate and analyse the responses to develop a project report and recommendations.
* Why it is important: To ensure the project is on track and meets the goals or objectives. Identifying areas for improvement throughout the project ensures accountability to the stakeholders, including project funders. Evaluation can also be used as evidence for a further grant.

Stage 6: Make adjustments to the project

* What it involves: During the monitoring process, issues may be identified. How to address or rectify these issues needs to be determined. These rectifications then need to be actioned to ensure the project is able to meet its objectives and timelines. The planning group and/or key stakeholders may need to adjust how they are approaching or implementing certain aspects or actions.
* Why it is important: Adjustments to the project may need to occur for various reasons to enable the project to meet the goal/objectives. For example, if an aspect of the project is not being met or set milestones are not being achieved, it may mean that the scope of the project may need changing, additional resources may be required or that tasks may need to be rescheduled to when more resources are available.

Stage 7: Implement the action plan

* What it involves: The planning group have now planned out the project including timelines, resources needed and who will do what. Then the actions will start being implemented according to these plans. This is when the project is getting underway and is rolling out.
* Why it is important: If the action plan isn’t implemented then the project won’t occur and the community priorities won’t be met. The community will be let down, stakeholders disappointed, funding bodies may withdraw funding, and trust in the lead organisation and/or planning group will be lost.

Stage 8: Finish the project and celebrate success

* What it involves: Review the project and report on outcomes based on the evaluation – identify achievements and make recommendations for improvement if needed. This defines the end of the project and involves all stakeholders; it could involve a celebration or gathering of stakeholders to mark the end of the project.
* Why it is important: To mark the end of the project, everyone can come together and acknowledge individual and group contributions and achievements – including volunteers and everyone who has been involved and contributed. An important step is to make recommendations for improvement and sustainability should the project continue.

The following are examples of high-scoring responses.

Engage key stakeholders and establish a planning group

This allows all stakeholders to have a say and feel empowered to input their ideas to the project so that project can accurately target the needs of the community.

Assess community priorities

It involves identifying the issues the community is facing that need to be addressed and is important because it ensures the project will make actual positive change that is needed.

Develop an action plan

This involves collaboration with stakeholders and coming up with a plan of action to make the project run more efficiently.

Monitor and review

After implementing the action plan it is important to frequently watch and assess the effectiveness of the action plan in order to review parts in which the action plan can be improve for better effectiveness towards the community’s needs.

Make adjustments to the project

After monitoring and reviewing the project /action plan, it is important that the errors or areas which cold be improved are altered so that the action plan is more effective toward the community’s needs.

Evaluate the project

It involves analysing the effectiveness and success of the project in addressing the issues and is important as it make sure the project is running smoothly and achieving its suggested goals.

Question 4a.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Mark | 0 | 1 | 2 | Average |
| % | 5 | 25 | 70 | 1.7 |

This question’s purpose was for students to understand a scenario, identify one social issue and explain their reasoning.

Any of the following social issues:

* lack of housing
* lack of transportation
* unemployment

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

A social issue is unemployment in Sunnyville. This is a social issue as it affects the community.

Question 4b.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Mark | 0 | 1 | 2 | Average |
| % | 8 | 13 | 78 | 1.7 |

Economic issue: Unemployment

Reasoning: Unemployment is an economic issue because it relates to scarcity of resources (i.e. employment) resulting in difficulty meeting needs (such as lack of money to meet living expenses) which could lead to poverty.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

An economic issue is housing. There are not many affordable options for renters in Sunnyville.

Question 4c.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Mark | 0 | 1 | Average |
| % | 12 | 88 | 0.9 |

The historical issue described in this scenario was the closing of the train line.

Question 5a.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Mark | 0 | 1 | Average |
| % | 6 | 94 | 0.9 |

Collaboration in this question refers to the process of two or more individuals or organisations ‘working together’ for a common purpose. The question was mostly well answered.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

[Collaboration] is working alongside other workers for the benefit of a client.

Question 5b.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Mark | 0 | 1 | Average |
| % | 7 | 93 | 0.9 |

Collaboration is important

* to avoid duplication
* to share and make efficient use of resources, skills or knowledge
* because it is more efficient and achieves better outcomes than working alone
* because it is necessary to accomplish a shared vision.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

It is important as it ensures that everyone’s needs can be heard and provide many options to give them the best access to resources and solutions such as funding.

Question 5c.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Mark | 0 | 1 | 2 | Average |
| % | 10 | 14 | 76 | 1.7 |

If appropriate collaboration is not undertaken it can lead to mistrust between stakeholders, negative impact on morale, funding/financial loss, poor outcomes, no shared goals, conflict, poor use of resources, unsustainability and/or lack of community involvement leading to unmet needs.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

Community projects may not address the correct issues or projects may not be able to receive the right support, resources, funding, access to volunteers or venues that are needed.

Question 6

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Mark | 0 | 1 | 2 | Average |
| % | 26 | 24 | 50 | 1.2 |

The purpose of this question was for students to demonstrate how they would resolve an ethical dilemma.

Responses needed to include at least two actions:

* consult with supervisor
* follow organisational policies and procedures
* refer to the organisation’s Code of Ethics or Code of Conduct
* seek legal advice
* seek guidance from the code of ethics of professional associations such as the Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW) or Australian Community Workers Association (ACWA)
* consult with experienced colleague.

Most student were able to answer with two of the nominated actions, but very few students referred to professional association guidelines or the organisational Code of Ethics or Code of Conduct.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

Assuming that it is not outlined by the organisation’s policies and procedures, a worker’s safest bet is to bring the issue to a supervisor and find the course of action collaboratively.

Question 7

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Mark | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | Average |
| % | 6 | 1 | 5 | 5 | 9 | 9 | 13 | 10 | 15 | 10 | 17 | 6.4 |

This question’s purpose was to demonstrate how community development principles are actioned. The scenario focused on the failure of a community worker designed project that had as its target a group of people of the age of 60. The activity was planned solely by the community development worker without input from the community. The question had four parts:

* Identify and explain one thing that might have gone wrong.
* Student responses were varied. A high proportion wrongly assumed that the project failed because of the intended participants’ age (60+) and not because of the worker’s lack of engagement with the community.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

Tamsin developed a program based on her own likes instead of the client’s needs and capabilities, causing the program to fail.

* Identify one community development principle and explain how Tamsin did or did not follow it.
* Empowerment: Tamsin did not empower the community as she did not engage with key stakeholders to identify their priorities or how they would want these met, therefore key stakeholders were not able to be part of implementing the program and had no ability to have a say in it.
* Human rights: Tamsin did not respect the rights of people to develop and engage in a program that they would like. But people did have the right to not show up, so in one way Tamsin’s project did enable people to have the right to participate or not participate.
* Participation: While the program was open to people to choose to participate and did not cost anything, Tamsin didn’t enable participation in all stages of the project and therefore this project does not meet the CD principle of participation.
* Inclusion: Tamsin did not provide opportunity for people to be included in this project so there was no buy-in, and the project may not be meeting people’s needs or wants. Also, advertising the project in the way she did may have been exclusive rather than inclusive because not everyone will be walking around the streets to see the flyers or attending the organisation where she works. The advertising was also only in written format and it doesn’t say that Tamsin thought of or addressed any accessibility needs of different people who may want to be involved.
* Social justice: social justice aims to eliminate inequalities and support equal rights. Tamsin’s project did not adhere to the principle of social justice as people were not given the opportunity to identify what they wanted or how to address their wants/needs. The project didn’t address different accessibility needs so did not support equality.

The following are examples of high-scoring responses.

Empowerment: Tamsin did not follow this principle as she did not provide the people over 60 years with information about running a program that was targeted to them and did not empower them to make their own decision about the program and what they would like the program to be about.

Participation: Tamsin did not follow in that she did not assess the communities’ priorities. She based the project on what she likes and not what the specific demographic needed.

Social Justice: A community development principle that Tamsin did not follow was structural disadvantage and inequality. The elderly community members may feel isolated.

* Identify two different stakeholders in this situation and describe Tamsin’s responsibilities towards them.
* People over 60: Tamsin has the responsibility to listen to and engage with these stakeholders. Tamsin has the responsibility to ensure people are able to participate in decisions that affect them and in all stages of a project.
* Organisation where Tamsin works: Tamsin has a responsibility to work according to her work role and to undertake the work assigned by the manager. This includes working according to the principles of community development as that is what Tamsin has been employed for.

Most students identified the correct stakeholders.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

Stakeholders in this program are older people in the local area and the not-for-profit organisation.

Responsibilities to:

(i) Older people in the local area – Tamsin’s responsibilities to this group is to make sure their needs are being met and they are enthusiastic about participating in the program

(ii) Not-for-profit organisation – Tamsin’s responsibilities are to make sure that her program aligns with the organisation’s values and mission and vision.

* Describe the steps that Tamsin could take to rectify this.

Most students used community development principles to answer this question.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

Tamsin can participate in stakeholder engagement to understand what program would work best for older people in the local area. She could then make adjustments to the project. Tamsin could also find various ways of promotion e.g. local newspaper and social media.

Question 8

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Mark | 0 | 1 | Average |
| % | 5 | 95 | 0.9 |

The purpose of this question was for students to demonstrate their understanding of confidentiality and its importance.

One of the following:

* to develop and build trust between a worker and a person
* to protect a person and their right to privacy
* to minimise the risk of harm to a person seeking help
* to prevent misuse of confidential information
* confidentiality is a legal responsibility.

Indicating the centrality of ethics and trust were needed in positive responses. Clients need to know their information is private so they feel safe to share their personal information with the worker.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

Confidentiality is important to respect and protect the personal information of clients.

Question 9

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Mark | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | Average |
| % | 7 | 16 | 29 | 48 | 2.2 |

Any three of the following:

* there are concerns about the person’s immediate safety
* there are concerns for the safety of others
* information is subpoenaed or required by a court of law, or there is a police warrant to review documents
* a client discloses they have committed a serious crime
* in situations where the worker is mandated to report (e.g. if there is a child who is being abused, neglected or at risk of these)
* any disclosure of self-harm or harm to others.

Student responses were varied and covered all the above points. The majority of students listed two situations instead of the required three or reworded one response.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

When a client may cause harm to themselves.

When a client may cause harm to others.

When a client may be in danger and duty of care is required.

Question 10.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Mark | 0 | 1 | 2 | Average |
| % | 10 | 9 | 81 | 1.7 |

In this question students were required to describe the relationship between consent and sharing information with a third party.

A possible response:

The community services worker will need consent from the client before sharing any personal information with a third party. Consent means giving permission or saying yes that it is ok to share personal information. Consent may also be given for certain things to be shared and not other things. Workers must adhere to the consent that has been given and not share anything they have not been given permission to share.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

If the community services worker wishes to share information about a client with a third party, they are required to first ask for the client’s consent to give them the information which means they give permission.

Question 11a.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Mark | 0 | 1 | 2 | Average |
| % | 0.3 | 4 | 96 | 2.0 |

The purpose of this question was for students to demonstrate their understanding of linking clients to community programs. Specifically, the students were to understand how to work with a client to develop an intervention plan, set goals and differentiate between client and worker responsibilities.

Presenting issues (two of):

* unemployment
* homelessness
* poor rental history

Most students identified two presenting issues.

Question 11b.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Mark | 0 | 1 | 2 | Average |
| % | 6 | 13 | 81 | 1.8 |

The focus of this question was holistic assessments and interventions. Students were required to nominate additional referral information, such as physical, social, economic, cultural, psychosocial and emotional assessments, that the worker would need to collect to holistically support the client.

Possible responses include:

* Where has the client been sleeping – does the client need to find somewhere to stay tonight?
* Does the client have family in the area they could move in with?
* What work was the client doing and are they interested in finding more of the same type of work – what skills does the client have, does the client have a resume?
* Does the client have any sources of income such as Centrelink?
* Has the client eaten recently – does the client need assistance with food?

Most students were able to answer correctly. Some students added background information and details such as address.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

Financial situation, long-term and short-term goals, physical capabilities.

Question 12a.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Mark | 0 | 1 | 2 | Average |
| % | 17 | 24 | 59 | 1.4 |

Two reasons why self-determination regarding social, cultural and economic needs is important for Australia’s First Nations Peoples include:

* the ability to have power and control over affairs and life/destiny
* to be treated respectfully and fairly
* to be able to make decisions that affects their community
* to be able to control their own lives and to practice culture
* to recognise and respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as First Nations with their own decision making and knowledge systems
* to be empowered to make choices and have freedom and dignity
* to address trauma and support healing
* to respect human rights
* to address racism and promote cultural safety
* to transfer power and resources to communities.

The answers to this question were mixed. Many students were able to offer only one culturally competent practice, while many offered no answers. No student referred to the First Nations Peoples’ experience of historical discrimination nor were the answers linked to the supplied quote.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

By making their own decision without outside interference, First Nations communities can ensure that decision are in their own best interests.

Question 12b.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Mark | 0 | 1 | 2 | Average |
| % | 10 | 21 | 69 | 1.6 |

Two ways that community development organisations can show that they value and respect First Nations Peoples include:

* ensure the organisation has a Reconciliation Action Plan
* include an Acknowledgement of Country at the start of events and meetings
* actively work with ATSI members of the community to ensure the organisation is supporting the needs of the ATSI community
* employ ATSI people within the organisation
* involve cultural artefacts or symbols in services and everyday activities.

A significant number of students did not answer this question.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

By hanging up the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander posters and artwork as well as Acknowledgement of Country and First Nations Peoples at the start of meetings.

Question 13

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Mark | 0 | 1 | 2 | Average |
| % | 43 | 11 | 46 | 1.0 |

Students needed to demonstrate their understanding of a key community development principle, the phrase ‘nothing about us without us’ and explain how it applies to community development work.

While students generally understood the concept ‘nothing about us without us’, they struggled to give examples of ‘participation’ and ‘representation’ in the decision-making process.

Possible responses include:

* This phrase highlights the principles of community development and that workers do not ‘do’ things to communities or decide what a community needs. Community development workers cannot know what marginalised groups want or need without their input. It also highlights the importance of ensuring the community is involved in all stages of a project from identifying priorities to how they will be actioned and who should be involved, otherwise community priorities may not be met, distrust rises, funds are not appropriately spent.
* When developing a project, workers need to ensure there is both participation and representation of the community in the decision making that affects them. Decisions about community priorities and/or projects should not be made about people without the people that it affects being involved.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

Marginalised groups often experience structural disadvantage and inequality. Facing issues with solutions that are decided by external facilitators without empowering or including people from those marginalised groups – so it refers to the perceived stereotypes and information people think about the marginalised groups without actually talking to them and letting them feel empowered and have a voice and making decisions.

Question 14a.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Mark | 0 | 1 | 2 | Average |
| % | 20 | 31 | 49 | 1.3 |

Community development is founded on the principles of social justice, with an explicit focus on the redistribution of power to address the causes of inequality and shifting the power relationships in the interests of powerless people/community who are voiceless, marginalised, oppressed or exploited. This can be problematic if community development workers already have power over communities, for example through their position of employment. It can be difficult for workers to step aside and let others in to make decisions, yet this is essential as communities have a right to have their say and to influence decisions that impact them. Individuals within communities are experts in their own lives and hold solutions for their community.

Overall students struggled to explain the concept of power relationships between organisations, worker and community members.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

Disempowering individuals and communities leads to work not being able to achieve goals or resolve needs identified by the community. So acknowledging power imbalances through empowerment of all people can help achieve shared goals and increase self-determination.

Question 14b.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Mark | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | Average |
| % | 5 | 25 | 5 | 65 | 2.3 |

The majority of students ordered the list correctly.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Description of power | This is an example of being ‘done to’, ‘done for’, ‘done with’ or ‘done by’ |
| Collaborative approach: power is shared between community members and organisations. | ‘done with’ |
| Top-down approach: organisations hold the power and decide what the community needs. The experts know best. | ‘done to’ |
| Bottom-up approach: the community holds the power. Community members are active agents. | ‘done by’ |
| Top-down approach: organisations hold the power. The community’s capacity to meet their own needs is devalued. | ‘done for’ |

Question 15a.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Mark | 0 | 1 | Average |
| % | 42 | 58 | 0.6 |

An asset-based community development approach (ABCD) recognises and builds on the strengths and resources of individuals and communities to create sustainable communities. It’s a bottom-up way of working with communities that focuses on community strengths and assets rather than on deficits and problems.

Student responses were inconsistent. Incorrect responses were characterised by an inability to describe the importance of building on community strengths.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

Building on current assets and strengths within the community so that community members feel positive about change.

Question 15b.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Mark | 0 | 1 | Average |
| % | 76 | 24 | 0.2 |

Mobilisation is the process of bringing together stakeholders to raise people's awareness of the need for a particular program or service. Mobilisation enables action and strengthens a community’s ability to participate.

Student responses indicated an inability to understand the concept of mobilisation.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

Mobilisation means bringing together all the available resources such as people, and the physical resources i.e. assets.

Question 16

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Mark | 0 | 1 | Average |
| % | 19 | 81 | 0.8 |

Possible responses:

* It is important for a community services worker to understand their role boundaries to ensure workers are working ethically and according to their job role to ensure the safety of clients and workers.
* If we have boundary problems we may breach our ethical standards or break the law.
* Boundary problems will impact our clients negatively, such as exploiting them, and could result in loss of job or prosecution.
* If workers cross boundaries they may be seen as unprofessional.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

To maintain professional relationships with clients and minimise conflicts of interest.

Section C – Case study

Question 1

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Mark | 0 | 1 | Average |
| % | 27 | 73 | 0.7 |

One of the following:

* Mikael has attended the service with his carer. He is the person asking for support with his goals.
* It is Mikael’s needs that are the focus of the work, not his mother’s needs.

This question was easily answered by most students.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

Mikael has come to seek information in a professional work environment. He needs assistance with personal care and will need support living independently.

Question 2

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Mark | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | Average |
| % | 2 | 4 | 9 | 85 | 2.8 |

Any three of the following skills:

* active listening
* give person your full attention
* be respectful
* use appropriate body language
* ask appropriate questions
* listen carefully
* ask clarifying questions
* use empathy
* thank the person/family
* avoid jargon
* use appropriate language for the situation.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

Positive body language.

Actively listening.

Ask open and closed questions.

Question 3a.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Mark | 0 | 1 | 2 | Average |
| % | 4 | 9 | 87 | 1.8 |

Any two of the following:

* to gain employment
* to engage in education or training
* to build friendships
* to improve social connections
* to develop and participate in hobbies
* to access NDIS programs
* to maintain religious observance rituals.

This question was answered well by most students.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

(a) Mikael may like to make friends.

(b) Mikael may want to join a social group.

Question 3b.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Mark | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | Average |
| % | 8 | 2 | 6 | 17 | 67 | 3.3 |

Students needed to answer part a. correctly to receive marks for part b.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Goal identified in part a. | List two steps that Mikael could take to help reach his goal | List Mikael’s responsibilities | List your responsibilities as Mikael’s community services worker  |
| * To access NDIS programs
 | * Phone the NDIS
* Complete an access request form
* Identify and contact local NDIS provider
 | * Make contact with the NDIS provider
* Identify his personal wants and needs
 | * Advocate on his behalf
* Support him to identify his needs
 |
| * To engage in education or training
 | * Identify what he would like to learn, or what skills he would like to gain
* Research possible education or training options in the area
 | * Identify his goals
* Discuss various support needs with the worker
 | * Assist Mikael to identify options
* Advocate on his behalf
* Make a referral if needed
 |
| * To gain employment
 | * Identify skills and experience
* Develop a résumé
* Research local job opportunities
 | * Participate in the development of his résumé
* Research job opportunities
* Organise references
* Apply for jobs
 | * Support Mikael to become ‘job ready’ – prepare résumé, practice interviews
* Advocate on Mikael’s behalf to new employers
 |
| * To build friendships
 | * Initiate conversations and ask questions
* Organise to meet up with another program participant outside of the program
 | * Be respectful
* Be approachable and open to making new friends
 | * Work with Mikael to help build his confidence
* Facilitate access to friendship group or catch up or programs
 |
| * To improve social connections
 | * Join a social or interest/hobby group
* Use social media or online platforms
 | * Look for opportunities for social interactions
 | * Work with Mikael to develop strategies to build social connections
* Support Mikael with travel training
 |
| * To develop and participate in hobbies
 | * Identify or research interest or hobby
* Getting the materials required to undertake the hobby
 | * Find a hobby and participate in it
 | * Help identify his strengths and options
* Support with resource purchase/access
 |
| * Maintain religious observance rituals
 | * Let program facilitators know what his needs/requirements are
* Provide the centre with some religious information
 | * Express what his needs are
* Undertake his religious practices
 | * Advocate on behalf of Mikael if required
* Attend cultural awareness training
* Remain open-minded and ask questions if unsure
 |

Question 4a.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Mark | 0 | 1 | Average |
| % | 32 | 68 | 0.7 |

Informed consent is a person’s voluntary agreement to receive a service or treatment, following the provision of accurate and relevant information about what it entails and what is being offered, including the benefits, risks and alternatives. This allows the person to make an informed decision and choose the option that is best for them.

Many students answered this question correctly.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

Informed consent is making sure the client knows all information, where it is being used and what is being said before giving consent.

Question 4b.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Mark | 0 | 1 | Average |
| % | 22 | 78 | 0.8 |

Informed consent is an ethical and legal practice so the person fully understands and agrees to release their personal information or disclose or seek information about them from a third party to protect their privacy and ensure the person is fully aware of what this may mean and what they can say no or yes to. It is important because it allows the person to make an informed decision that is their choice and not the worker’s choice.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

So that the client understands what information is being shared and so he can make an informed decision and isn’t confused.

Question 4c.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Mark | 0 | 1 | 2 | Average |
| % | 25 | 7 | 68 | 1.4 |

Amira’s informed consent is not needed as Mikael is an adult and is able to make his own decisions. There is no reason to believe that Mikael is unable to fully understand his options or make decisions for himself. Mikael may wish to confer with his mother about decisions; however, ultimately it is only Mikael’s consent that is needed.

The majority of students answered correctly that Amira’s consent was not needed.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

No, because Mikael is an adult who is consciously able to make decisions on his own. He is intellectually capable.

Question 5

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Mark | 0 | 1 | 2 | Average |
| % | 11 | 14 | 75 | 1.6 |

Any two of the following:

* personal information including name, contact details, date of birth
* special needs
* disability
* whether consent has been given
* emergency contact details
* spirituality and religious needs
* health, medication, allergies
* reasons for wanting referral
* referring agency contact information.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

The agency needs to know Mikeal’s disability, age, name, culture and religious practices.

Question 6

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Mark | 0 | 1 | 2 | Average |
| % | 8 | 9 | 83 | 1.7 |

Two of the following:

* access to activities and services that can improve quality of life
* learning new skills in a safe, caring supportive environment
* improving social connections and friendships and reducing feelings of isolation
* developing confidence
* promoting/increasing independence
* increased awareness of services available.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

Two benefits for a person with a disability attending these is that they can learn more effective communication skills with others, not be so isolated and form health relationships, and they could have a better sense of belonging.

Question 7

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Mark | 0 | 1 | 2 | Average |
| % | 12 | 19 | 70 | 1.6 |

Two of the following:

* accessibility
* ramp to enter building
* wide doorways
* lift to upper floors
* bench heights
* accessible toilets / change room
* cultural/spiritual safety
* workers running the program have the skills and knowledge to support Mikael appropriately
* Mikael’s support needs.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

Accessibility for wheelchair users. Provisions for religious nature for Mikael’s daily prayers as a Muslim.

Question 8a.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Mark | 0 | 1 | Average |
| % | 15 | 84 | 0.9 |

The purpose of this question was to apply a cultural lens to Mikael’s access of the program and the program’s ability to meet Mikael’s cultural needs, specifically Mikael’s religious practices.

One of the following:

* having their rights and beliefs respected
* providing a sense of belonging, pride in their identity and community
* feeling safe to express their voice
* feeling valued within their own beliefs
* supporting social connections with others.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

Faith and religion allows feeling of connection to community and holistically empowers an individual to feel comfortable themselves.

Question 8b.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Mark | 0 | 1 | 2 | Average |
| % | 9 | 16 | 75 | 1.7 |

The purpose of this question was for students to problem solve a cultural exclusion problem. The community development worker was to use a collaborative approach and involve the key stakeholders in both understanding the significance of religious practices and the need for cultural competence practice.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

Ask Mikael for the specific requirements he needs for prayer and collaborate with the program providers to ensure their capabilities for Mikael’s participation.

Question 9a.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Mark | 0 | 1 | Average |
| % | 7 | 93 | 0.9 |

The purpose of this question is to apply an ethical perspective to the scenario.

Mikael should not accept the dinner invitation because it could be considered as a boundary problem/violation – you are Mikael’s worker not a friend and it is important to maintain this.

The question was mostly well answered, and student responses identified the invitation as a boundary violation.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

To overstep professional boundaries – going over for dinner is inappropriate and breaches their professional relationships.

Question 9b.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Mark | 0 | 1 | Average |
| % | 10 | 90 | 0.9 |

One of the following:

* Thank the family and remind them of your role and the organisation’s policies regarding professional nature of worker-client relationships.
* Remind the family of the discussion that would have taken place in the first meeting, about your role, and about boundaries and the limits that occur.
* Let them know that their thanks is enough and that you are happy that Mikael has been able to achieve his goals.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

Thank them for their offer but decline by clearly explaining rules outlining a client-worker relationship and how interaction must remain only in the workplace.