

SKILLS PRACTICE SESSION AND REFLECTION

A skills practice session is a role play or simulation that allows you to try out the skills you have learnt about in your course. The role play may be completed in class, or you may be required to record the session on video. A skills practice session is usually between 10 to 20 minutes in duration.

After the skills practice session, you are usually required to reflect on your experience, which might involve participating in a class discussion or writing a self-critique. You may work with another student to complete the skills practice session, but must work alone to write the self-critique.

How do you do a skills practice session?

Content: Most skills practice sessions are based on a case study scenario. This means that you will be given information about a situation and/or client, and you will take the role of a counsellor, case manager or youth worker in that scenario.

The skills practice session may focus on evaluating different skills, such as:

- Your communication skills, e.g. opening a session and building rapport
- Your understanding of professional requirements, e.g. your ability to explain your position on confidentiality and record keeping to the client
- Your application of certain techniques, e.g. your use of counselling therapies discussed in the module



Structure: The skills practice session should be appropriately sequenced. For example, you will usually first need to open the session and make the client feel comfortable, then you may need to ask questions to gather relevant information before making recommendations or a plan of action. Also ensure you close the session appropriately.

If you are recording the role play, you need to begin the recording by stating your full name, your student ID number, the name of the module and the assessment number.

Style: Ensure your language is professional when doing the role play. Remember to speak clearly and not too quickly. Be relaxed, confident and natural. This is easier said than done, but it's vital to your success.

Tip

If you are doing a video recording, ensure the camera has a clear view of the people in the role play. Also ensure that they are able to be heard clearly and that there are no background noises or distractions.

Tips for preparing for your skills practice session

- Read the scenario carefully. Ensure you fully understand what is expected of you during the role play.
- Prepare the opening and closing of the scenario. Having a pre-planned opening (just a few sentences) will help you settle into the exercise and also ensure you make a confident first impression. Similarly, a strong closing will wrap things up well and leave a good lasting impression.
- Plan your approach but keep it flexible. Having a plan for the session is essential but it's also important that the role play unfolds as naturally as possible. As you obtain more information during the role play, you will need to "think on your feet" and respond appropriately.
- Prepare some questions to gather relevant information in the session, make sure you listen to the answers. Open-ended questions are useful, such as "Tell me about..." "Can you expand on..." and "Could you talk to me about..."
- Practice, practice, practice. Nothing will improve your performance on the day more than familiarity with the exercise. It will improve your competence and also help you stay relaxed.



How do you write a self-reflection?

Content: The reflection is usually based on guidelines or questions given with the assessment information. For example, you may be asked to identify the strategies you used to build rapport or describe the counselling and/or communication skills you used and discuss how effective they were. You might also need to transcribe or paraphrase parts of the dialogue to give as examples. You will usually also be asked to reflect on areas for improvement and future development.

Tip

Write the self-reflection soon after the session while it is still fresh in your mind. If you recorded the session, you may wish to play it back before writing your reflection.

Structure: The structure of the reflection should follow the guidelines or questions given with the assessment information. If you are responding to short-answer questions, it is a good idea to include the numbered questions in your assignment, so it is clear exactly which question you are responding to.

Style: In the written reflection, first person (*I, me, we*) can be used as you are talking about your personal experiences, observations or opinions. However, avoid using first person when referring to theories or course content.

Try to avoid writing in an overly emotive or subjective way. Even though you are expressing your own experiences, you must convey this information in a professional style. Here are some examples of sentences that have been rewritten more professionally.

- ✗ The client complained that her kids were really naughty.
- ✓ The client stated that her children were not well behaved.
- ✗ Even though I felt tense about giving advice, think my plan of action was good.
- ✓ Even though I was apprehensive about giving advice, I think my plan of action was appropriate.