

Engagement means forming a trusting, respectful relationship which is the foundation for helping clients learn, adapt and change.

Trust develops when clients feel heard and understood. • Core to this is the use of good communication skills and motivational interviewing skills can be useful

Factors that may impact on engagement include: previous negative experience of services; adolescent brain; change and transitions; difficulties committing to relationships

Why is it important?

Good engagement supports collaboration and an intentional, directional focus on enhancing and enacting the client's motivation to change. This is known as a therapeutic relationship

Clients may be seen as “hard to reach” or “difficult to engage” and this places the emphasis on the client without taking into account their unique set of circumstances which may be both internal and external such as poverty, ill health – physical and mental, domestic abuse, access to services

Making an effort to engage those who are most vulnerable can help reduce health inequalities

How do we do it?

The Family Nurse (FN) uses **motivational interviewing** skills such as OARS:

Open questions

Affirmations

Reflections

Summaries

- The FN is **strength-based**, sensitive but assertive
- The FN makes the effort.
- The FN **agenda matches** by balancing the goals of the client, the practitioner and the desired outcomes of the programme or intervention
- The FN **individualises** the relationship.
- The FN models **resilience** – not taking client behaviours personally, reflecting on and appreciating reasons for these.
- The FN is **persistent** in the face of engagement challenges
- **Rupture and repair** – engagement is not linear, the client might disengage at various stages. The FN makes the effort to repair the relationship by keeping the client in mind and making every effort to re-engage using a range of strategies.
- FNP advocates this approach in all areas of the service: creating a positive ethos of good communication, listening and flexibility throughout, from admin staff to clinicians and managers
- Maintaining engagement can be draining; every practitioner needs access to skilled supervision for support & emotional [refuelling](#)

For more information:

Family Nurse Partnership (FNP) can deliver workshops as part of the Knowledge and Skills Exchange on:

- Attachment
- Communication Skills
- Adolescent Brain
- Engaging marginalised clients
- Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and Trauma Informed Practice



One Minute Guide
Client Engagement in Family Nurse Partnership (FNP)



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