

Video Discussion Guide: *Managing Conflict and Encouraging Client Engagement*

Developed by Marissa Bell

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APSWI Video- Managing Conflict and Encouraging Client Engagement Video Discussion Guide

Objective:

This video discussion guide is designed to facilitate learning and enhance skills demonstrated in the Adult Protective Services Workforce Innovations (APSWI) training video: [Managing Conflict and Encouraging Client Engagement](#).

- In the video, APS professional Asif Darwish visits the home of client, Ethel Gibbs. Ethel's son, David Gibbs, answers the door and attempts to prevent APS from meeting with the client. David Gibbs is the Alleged Perpetrator (A/P).

How to Use:

Supervisors and learning facilitators can use this video discussion guide to complement the learning experience from the [Managing Conflict and Encouraging Client Engagement](#) video to facilitate conversations, encourage critical thinking, and enhance interpersonal effectiveness when conducting home visits and eliciting engagement with APS.

This guide can be used during instructor-led training, onboarding/induction, unit meetings, or individual supervision or coaching.

With staff, watch the 20-minute video portraying an APS professional conducting an unannounced home visit.

- The video discussion questions are organized into six skill areas:
 1. [Managing Conflict](#)
 2. [Rapport and Trust Building](#)
 3. [Creating Privacy for Client Interviewing](#)
 4. [Person-Centered Approach](#)
 5. [Cultural Considerations](#)
 6. [Assessing for Safety and Risk \(both for client and APS professional\)](#)
- All of the skills can be explored, or particular skills may be chosen for staff development.
- Suggestions are provided. Adding your own expertise and agency policy is encouraged.
- Allow for discussion on what participants might do differently.

In addition to the discussion questions, there are:

- Some [best practices when conducting APS home visits](#) that can be shared with learners.
- [Optional activities](#) to incorporate if desired.

Content Warning:

We recognize that APS work is both challenging and rewarding, and APS professionals are whole human beings who have their own experiences before and during APS work. Questions and discussion may activate feelings based on personal or professional experiences, including vicarious trauma, and we encourage everyone to do what they need to do in order to safely engage in this transfer of learning.

General Discussion

1. What were your overall reflections of the video?
2. What do you feel went well?
3. What would you do differently?

Managing Conflict

1. David was defensive with Asif almost immediately. Which de-escalation techniques did Asif use to defuse that hostility? What are some other techniques he could have tried?

Suggestions:

- **Remain calm:** It's easier to act calmly when we remember that that a person may escalate due to a variety of circumstances in their own life that have nothing to do with APS
 - **Modulate tone:** Asif spoke in a calm, direct, and respectful tone
 - **Body language:** Asif used non-threatening/non-confrontational body language
 - **Express good will:** Asif explained his intention to assess client's safety and offer resources or services
 - **Find common ground:** Asif suggested that he and David both want what's best for the client
 - **Active Listening:** Asif acknowledged that the unannounced visit may be intrusive
 - **Clarify any misunderstandings or misconceptions:** Asif clarified that he's not accusing David of neglecting his mother
2. What is your preferred demeanor when interacting with AP's and clients?
 3. Is there any time when an APS professional should be more assertive?

Suggestion:

- It's appropriate to be direct and assertive with an AP or client if you remain respectful, helpful, and use effective de-escalation techniques

4. David created a barrier for Asif by blocking the door, explaining Mrs. Gibbs wasn't home, etc. What are your options when this happens while conducting home visits? Have you ever encountered this? What steps did you take and what was the outcome?

Suggestions:

- Negotiation/explanation of services
- Explain legal obligation to see client face-to-face
- Offer to return at another time (discussion- when is this appropriate, or not appropriate?) An example of when this would not be appropriate, is if there are concerns about client's *immediate* safety, health, and/or well-being.
- Attempt to contact the client using an alternate method
- Contacting law enforcement (is this a last resort? Why or why not?)

Rapport & Trust Building

1. In what ways did Asif make efforts to build trust and rapport with David and/or Mrs. Gibbs?

Suggestions:

- Asif did the following:
 - Showed his work badge to verify his identity
 - Explained to Mrs. Gibbs that the interview might include uncomfortable and/or personal questions
 - Explained to Mrs. Gibbs that she has the right not to answer any questions
 - Explained to Mrs. Gibbs the purpose of the assessment and why APS asks questions about finances
 - Explained the reason for his visit in clear language
 - Offered Mrs. Gibbs choices for a more private interview

2. What did you think of Asif's explanation of APS and the role of APS?

Suggestions:

- Sometimes clients are not familiar with APS, what kinds of situations APS responds to, and how APS operates. It's a good idea to briefly educate the client about the role of APS. Explain the program without overwhelming the client with information and professional jargon

3. Mrs. Gibbs wanted to know who the reporting party (RP) was. What are some ways to respond to this question?

Suggestions:

- **Policy:** there are confidentiality policies that prevent APS from sharing the identity of the RP, and this can be explained to the client
- **Explain:** there are mandated reporting laws
- **Redirect:** if possible, refocus the conversation on the purpose of the visit and/or the client's safety

Facilitator note:

If desired, take a moment and invite participants to practice how they handle (or would handle) answering questions about the reporting party. Share that it can be helpful to think in advance about how they might answer these questions, so they are prepared.

4. Why do you think Asif waited to introduce the topic of the financial abuse allegation?

Suggestions:

- Discussing financial matters is often a sensitive topic. Since Asif was still trying to establish a rapport with Mrs. Gibbs, waiting to ease into the topic financial exploitation could increase her comfort level to share information.
5. What indicators did you notice in the video that showed that Asif established good rapport with Mrs. Gibbs?

Suggestions:

- Mrs. Gibbs did the following:
 - Called Asif and asked him to return
 - Thanked Asif for his help and stated that she felt hopeful
 - Was willing to consider some of the suggestions and interventions recommended by Asif
 - Was forthcoming about her concerns after previously being uncertain about sharing information
 - Joked and smiled with Asif

Creating Privacy for Client Interviewing

1. Asif needed to address both with David and Mrs. Gibbs the need to speak with Mrs. Gibbs in private. What do you think about the way Asif handled this? Would you have done anything differently? How would you handle an AP who refuses to leave or grant privacy for APS to interview the client?

Suggestions:

- Explain to the AP that the client's privacy is important and you'd like to respect that by speaking with the client in private.
- Leave, and return at another time with a colleague who may be able to interview/distract the AP while you're interviewing the client
- Ask the client if you and they can move to a more private area (maybe step outside with the client, go into another space in the home if it feels safe to do so) or meet at another location
- Determine if there's a specific time/date that the AP will not be home, and return then
- Consider involving law enforcement if necessary and/or consult with your supervisor regarding the situation

2. Mrs. Gibbs did not feel comfortable speaking to Asif with David in the vicinity. There are times when a client may not feel safe to disclose information due to the presence of someone else in the home. What methods did Asif use to establish safety and comfort in this situation?

Suggestions:

- Asif did the following:
 - Asked David to leave
 - Asked Mrs. Gibbs if there was anyone else in the home with them
 - Asked Mrs. Gibbs if she felt safe in the home with David
 - Provided Mrs. Gibbs with several options for meeting without David present

3. What are other ways you can achieve privacy to interview a client?

Suggestions:

- The APS professional can find out if the client has a cell phone that only they (the client) has access to
- The APS professional can establish a “code word” or phrase with the client, such as “I’m tired” or something else, to signal that they no longer feel safe to talk, if another person arrives home or walks into the room

Person-Centered Approach

*Person-Centered Approach can be defined as an approach towards others that encompasses unconditional positive regard, upholding dignity and respect, and setting aside one's own agenda to listen for understanding to what's important to others, respecting their choices, and collaborating in such a way that encourages them to reach their full potential.(NIH, 2023)

1. What person-centered language or techniques did Asif use with Mrs. Gibbs?

Suggestions:

- Asif did the following:
 - Offered choice and options for conducting the interview
 - Validated Mrs. Gibbs's feelings and concerns
 - Informed Mrs. Gibbs that she had a right not to speak to him
 - Explained to Mrs. Gibbs that the conversation might be uncomfortable
 - Expressed concern for Mrs. Gibbs' physical, emotional, and financial safety
 - Asked Mrs. Gibbs what steps she'd like to take
 - Suggested counseling/therapy in acknowledgement of her struggles with grief and the situation with her son

- 2. In what ways do you practice a person-centered approach with your clients?

- 3. Is there anything about your practice that could become *more* person-centered?

Cultural Considerations

1. Asif told David that if he doesn't allow him to see Mrs. Gibbs, he may need to contact law enforcement to facilitate his visit. When interacting with people who may have historically had a complicated, harmful, or untrusting relationship with law enforcement, what should be considered here? If David had further escalated during this interaction, how could the situation be de-escalated?

Suggestions:

- Involving law enforcement should always be a last resort, when all other options have been exhausted
- What other strategies could be used instead of calling law enforcement?
- **TIP:** Refer back to de-escalation techniques in [Managing Conflict](#) of this discussion guide.

2. What kinds of questions can the APS professional ask the client to be culturally responsive and increase the client's comfort level with the visit?

Suggestions:

- Is there anything you'd like me to know about your family, support system or cultures that affects this situation?
- What are your expectations from our interaction today?
- Can you help me understand your perspective on _____?
- Are there any cultural or system barriers that you have encountered in seeking support?

Assessing for Safety and Risk

1. Asif made a point to ask Mrs. Gibbs about her safety. However, an APS professional must ensure their safety as well. Did you identify any risk factors upon Asif entering the home or during the interview? And if so, what were they?

Suggestions:

- Asif walked into the home and David (AP) walked *behind* him
- Asif did not assess for weapons
- *What he did well:* Asif sat facing the door, he asked if anyone else was in the home, he did not start the formal interview until David left the room

2. Once Mrs. Gibbs began to talk about her finances, how did Asif ask about her financial safety?

Suggestions:

- Asif asked Mrs. Gibbs how David found out about the money and if David or anyone else had access to her accounts.

3. What are some of the risk factors that you identified in the video?

Suggestions:

- Living environment: conflict in the home with David
- Psychosocial: Spouse recently died, concerns about power and control dynamics with David
- Financial: Recently received a large amount of money
- Mental Health Status: Grief and stress
- APS interventions: What is the potential for David to escalate if/when he finds out his mother may not give him the money he's demanding?

Best Practices for Conducting Home Visits in APS

- ✓ Cultural Responsiveness
 - Be humble and curious about a client's cultures. If you're not sure, ask questions
 - Understand what cultural practices and differences exist. Be aware of your own culturally learned assumptions
- ✓ Ask clients how they'd like to be addressed (pronouns, Ms./Mrs./Mr., etc., first or last name, preferred language -avoid making assumptions)
- ✓ Acknowledge and validate feelings (anger, anxiety, fear, etc.)
- ✓ Use a strengths-based and person-centered approach
- ✓ Support improvement and small steps towards well-being
- ✓ Use active listening
- ✓ Express empathy
- ✓ Limit use of professional jargon
 - Many clients may not be familiar with APS professional jargon. Use commonly understood words and phrases, and adopt to the client's language for the words they use to describe their situation
- ✓ Be cognizant of your tone and lower your voice if necessary
- ✓ Speak slowly and reassuringly
- ✓ Avoid asking "why" questions (clarifying questions only)
- ✓ Keep body language open and non-threatening
- ✓ Be aware of risk factors when entering a home
- ✓ Be respectful that you are a guest in their residence
- ✓ Limit options for resources (don't overwhelm client)
- ✓ "Client" implies that APS professionals are there to serve them. Always keep in mind that you are there to provide a service and promote their safety and well-being

Optional Activities

Participant Role play (10-20 minutes)

Dyads or Triads

Reinforces concepts from Managing Conflict

Ask participants to choose a partner.

- One will play the APS professional, the other will play an AP who is creating barriers.
 - Encourage the AP to be challenging, but not so much that it distracts the purpose of the exercise.
 - Encourage the APS professional to try different approaches using body language, tone, narrative, etc.
- Ask participants to switch roles after 5 minutes.
- If in triads, have an observer who is able to help keep the exercise moving and provide feedback.
- Once each has played both roles, discuss how they felt in each role and what went well and areas of improvement before providing feedback.

Who is APS? (5-10 minutes)

Dyads

Reinforces concepts from Rapport and Trust Building

During a coaching session, supervision or training moment, ask staff to practice explaining the APS program in the way they would explain it to a client or AP.

Facilitator note: You can play the role of the client or AP, asking questions and for clarification on a variety of points.

Question suggestions:

1. Why didn't you make an appointment or call me first?
2. Who reported this/who called you?
3. Why are you asking me these personal questions?
4. What are you going to do with this information?
5. Why should I trust a government organization?

Being Culturally Responsive (20 minutes)

Group Discussion

Reinforces concepts from Cultural Considerations

APS professionals are diverse themselves and work with a diverse group of people.

- How do we either respectfully decline or respectfully engage in someone's cultural, religious, or familial practices when meeting with them?

References and Resources

Academy for Professional Excellence (Developer). (2024). *Managing Conflict and Encouraging Client Engagement* [video]. Retrieved from <https://theacademy.sdsu.edu/programs/apswi/apswi-videos/>

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REVOLUTIONIZE
THE WAY PEOPLE
WORK TO ENSURE
THE WORLD IS A
HEALTHIER PLACE.



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6505 Alvarado Road, Suite 107; San Diego, CA 92120 (619) 594-3546