

Case study: Working for the client in busy practice

Peter has a full day ahead of him, working as an adviser in a Public Employment Office in a large town with a high rate of unemployment. As a publically-funded service they have targets to meet, but Peter wants to help the person he is working with, Tanja, who is originally from an Eastern state in Europe. It is important that Tanja understands the limitations of what he can do, so Peter mentions the policies that govern his work and refers to a particular form that Tanja needs to complete, using its abbreviated name. Once satisfied that he has covered all of this, he looks at the clock and says, "I'm here to help. In order to facilitate the process of you initiating a claim on B361, I'll ask you questions and fill in the form for you. Let's get started on this and then later we can discuss the jobs that might suit you, going forward."

Case study: Working with the client in busy practice

Jacques works in the same office and also has a busy day and is, similarly, aware of the targets he needs to meet. He has an appointment with Silvia (also from an Eastern European state) who he expects wants to discuss work, but first they have to engage with the paperwork. Jacques begins by ensuring that Silvia is aware of the time available today and checking the reason why she is attending at the centre, so that he is clear about her priorities. He then explains why they need to complete the form. He shows her the form and asks if it would be helpful to work through this together. Jacques has found that this helps him to assess the person's language skills without 'testing' them in a formal manner. He clarifies that they will then be able to spend time at the next appointment thinking about the work that interests Silvia, what is available and how to apply. Jacques looks at the clock and confirms that today they have 20 minutes, but they will book the next appointment before Silvia leaves. He asks, "How does that sound to you Silvia, will this be useful?" Silvia says, "Yes

Reid, H.L. (2016) *Introduction to Career Counselling & Coaching*. London: Sage. Pp 123-143.

this will help me.” “OK” says Jacques, “and as we do this you can tell me a little about yourself, which will help me to get to know you a little and help us to complete the form.”

In the first example discussing issues in jargon is not helpful to the client and, in its effects, oppressive. In the second example, speaking plainly and clearly is helpful and enables the client to understand the issues and to be involved in the decision making process that affects their life. At the service level, anti-oppressive practice is about working with clients in client-centred ways in the development of the service and its practices. This collaborative relationship assists the individual or group to develop their own ideas about the level of involvement that is appropriate for them, in their context. There are factors however, over which the practitioner may have no control where, for instance, the age, gender or sexuality of the practitioner might be perceived as oppressive by the client.

(Reid, 2016: 133)