Audiological Counselling

This document outlines the scope and aims of Audiological Counselling. Counselling procedures aim to alleviate the client's concerns and facilitate understanding of hearing loss or other auditory impairment, tinnitus and balance disorders.

Expected Outcome

Clients and their families/carers gain an understanding of the hearing loss or other audiovestibular impairment and the impact on communication.

Audiologists assist clients and their families/carers to develop appropriate goals and strategies for adjustment to and management of hearing loss or other audiovestibular impairment.

Counselling consists of listening to, identifying and clarifying the client’s concerns, developing empathy and rapport with the client and offering information to address those concerns including recommendations for further follow up, other examinations or referral to more specialised professionals where indicated.

Clinical Indications

Counselling services are offered as part of prevention, assessment, treatment, habilitation or rehabilitation protocols or upon request or referral. Counselling is an integral part of each audiologist-client interaction.

Clinical Process

Counselling helps the client group to make the necessary practical changes in their lives to develop the strengths to cope with their hearing loss, tinnitus, balance problems or other audiovestibular impairment. Counselling services for clients and their families include both support counselling and content counselling.

Support counselling: helps in showing understanding, developing rapport and maintaining relationships with the client group.

- Listening and understanding the concerns of the client
- Understanding emotional dynamics of the process, including grief, loss, anger, guilt, depression, feelings of inadequacy, vulnerability and confusion
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**Content** counselling includes:

- Discussion, identification and clarification of habilitation and rehabilitation needs
- Provision of information to promote understanding, change adaptation and empowerment
- Provision of appropriate information about hearing and tinnitus instruments and assistive listening devices
- Information about hearing loss prevention

Audiologists are responsible for remaining aware of the limitations of their counselling skills in respect of Principle II, Rule B of the NZAS Code of Ethics:

"Individuals shall engage in only those aspects of the profession that are within the scope of their competence, considering their level of education, training and experience."

Audiologists are responsible for referring the client and family/carer for further specialised counselling as required but, in doing so, must also ensure that they are mindful of the Health Information Privacy Code. Referrals to and consultation with Psychologists, Social Workers, Medical Practitioners, Ear Nose and Throat Specialists, Speech & Language Therapists, Geneticists and other professionals may be an integral component or outcome of counselling.

**Setting/Equipment Specifications**

Counselling is conducted in an appropriately sound treated and furnished room and in a setting conducive to client and family/carer comfort and confidentiality and uninterrupted privacy.

**Documentation**

Documentation includes identifying information, pertinent background information, results of tests, clients needs and agreed goals, and recommendations, including the need for further counselling or referral.

**Related references**

- Clark J.G. & Martin F.N. Eds) (1994). Effective Counselling in Audiology: Perspectives and Practice. Prentice Hall, New Jersey *** this may not be applicable depending on how much of Richard additions I have deleted***
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