

(B) Examination:

(iv) Assessing social and family situation

This assessment is aimed at identifying the strength of client and his/her family and the best possible support for the client in his/her treatment plan and continuous rehabilitation.

(I) Social situation:

There are various reasons that hinder clients providing accurate information on their different areas of life. In order to have an understanding of client's real social situation, social worker/drug worker should first establish a trustful relationship with the client. With accurate information, workers can identify positive and negative factors in the client's environment and social networks so as to plan for intervention.

Client can be helped to have reflection on his/her own path and to identify his/her life crisis/achievement by using "Time Line". Significant people and important events can be traced, while client's feelings on those people and events can be explored so as to find out whether the client's problems have been or are being affected by them.

(1) Leisure and Recreation –

- a. Before drug use, what are your interests and hobbies? Is there any change after drug use?
- b. How did you spend your day mostly in the last 3 months? Where to go? With whom?
- c. How would you spend your leisure time? What do you do most? With whom? Do they use drugs?

(2) Intimate Relationship –

- a. Are you involved in a relationship currently? How long have you been in it? Are you satisfied with it? Please state why you are satisfied or not satisfied with the relationship.
- b. Is your boy/girl friend a drug user? If yes, what does he/she use?

It usually reflects something in the client's intimate relationship. When the client is ready to disclose, his/her sexual practice can be explored.

- c. Do you have sexual experience? (If "yes", we can further explore the influence of drug use to his/her sexual practice by the following questions.) If "no", go to **Question (3) Peer Relationship**

- d. Do you practise safe sex (using contraceptives or condom)?
- e. What is the relationship between you and your sexual partner? (steady, casual, or paid sex)
- f. Your sexual partner(s) in the last 3 months is/are _____ (only females, only males, both sexes, no sexual partner)
- g. Do you think drug use has any effect on your sexual practice? Does your sexual practice have anything to do with drugs? If yes, how?

(3) Peer Relationship –

- a. What do you think is the proportion of being accompanied and feeling lonely in the past 3 months?
- b. When is the last time that you feel lonely and isolated? What do you do when you are alone or when you feel lonely or isolated?
- c. What do you do mostly when you gather with your friends?
- d. In the last 3 months, how many people you hung around with use drugs? Who are they? How is your relationship with them? Are you using the same drug(s)?
- e. In the last 3 months, how many people you hung around with do not use drugs? Who are they? How is your relationship with them?
- f. How many good friends do you think you have?
- g. Is there anyone that you can trust? Do you think you can talk to them about your problem? Who are they? Are they using drugs or they are non-users?

(4) Social Support –

- a. Who else can you talk to about your problem? (family members, relatives, teacher, social worker, medical staff, others: _____). Do you think you can talk with them openly and freely?
- b. Are you or your family receiving any support or service from other agencies? What kind of support or service do they provide? How often do you or your family meet them? How do you and your family feel and respond to such help?
- c. Did you have conflicts with anyone in the following: family members, friends, colleagues and employer in the past 3 months? What is the cause? How did you handle it? Whom did you seek help from?
- d. When encountering crisis, from whom did you seek help in the past years? Whom do you seek help from at present?

(II) Family situation:

To assess the family situation of the client means more than information gathering. It serves the function of exploring how the drug-taking behaviour of the client affects the family and how the family attitudes and dynamics have affected or are still affecting the drug-taking behaviour of the client. If other family members can also be interviewed, a more complete picture of the drug-taking, lifestyle, and background of client can be drawn; whereas important information can be confirmed and further explored. We can start from examining the immediate family situation, then we can further explore other extended family members' connection or support.

(1) Attitudes Toward Drug-taking –

- a. Does your family know about your drug taking? Is there anybody you would need to conceal from?
- b. What is your partner's or your parents' attitude towards your drug taking?
- c. Is anyone of them also a substance user/abuser? If your family member(s) (especially your parents, siblings, and partner) also use/abuse substance (tobacco, alcohol, etc.), how do they view your drug taking?
- d. What will your family be like/what will be their response if you have quit taking drug?

(2) Supports –

- a. Who in your family do you think will support you when encountering crisis?
- b. What kind of support you think he/she may offer? (Including concrete support; emotional support; affiliational support; information and advice, etc.)
- c. What does each of these supports mean to you?
- d. Will your family continue to support if you continue to use drug?
- e. Will your family support you in seeking treatment? Who will do that?

(3) Roles –

- a. What kind of roles have you played in your family so far (i.e. son/daughter, spouse, parent, brother/sister, cousin, uncle/aunt etc.)? How do you feel about these roles? Which role do you like/hate most?
- b. How well do you think you are performing these roles? Does drug use affect your performing of these roles?

(4) Relationship –

- a. How do you find your relationship with your family? Who do you feel close to? Who do you feel distant from?
- b. How would you describe your family? What is your home like?
- c. How do you get along with the members of your family?
- d. If your partner is also a drug user:
 - How do you affect one another on drug-taking behaviour?
 - How is your relationship with him/her?
 - Has he/she ever sought treatment?
 - Will both of you think about seeking treatment simultaneously?
- e. If your partner is not a drug user:
 - Has your drug-taking behaviour affect your relationship with him/her?
 - If yes, in what way(s)?
 - How would you describe your relationship with your partner?

(5) Communication –

- a. How often do you talk to your partner/family members (please specify)?
- b. What are the topics/contents while talking to your partner/family members (please specify)?
- c. How would you communicate with your partner/family members (i.e., direct pattern: face to face; indirect pattern: another family member to convey messages, written communication, etc.)?
- d. Can you communicate openly and freely with your partner/family members?
- e. Do you talk about your needs and feelings to your partner/family members? If yes, what are the needs and feelings you have talked about? How does your partner/family members respond? How do you feel?
- f. Do you talk to your partner/family members about your drug problem? Do your partner/family members talk to you about your drug problem? Can you describe their usual communication when talking about your drug problem?

(6) Family Crisis –

Is there any past or recent family crisis:

- a. Developmental family crisis (crisis happened along the family life cycle)?
- b. Dramatic family crisis (sudden and significant change or loss)
- c. Structural family crisis (i.e. the family faces with new pressures and demands that activate past unresolved family “secret” or behaviour, e.g. parent’s or grandparent’s history of substance abuse or experience of physical or sexual abuse, etc.)

(Muisener, 1994, pp.86-88)

- (7) Family Culture and Beliefs – (Being aware of the culturally differences and beliefs of client’s family may help to identify both their positive or negative impacts on client’s present problem/behavior and would be helpful in identifying the needs and concerns fo the family.) The following questions would help:
- a. Where did your family come from and under what circumstances that brought your family to this city?
 - b. What is most important to your family?
 - c. Describe some good things that have happened to your family? How did your family respond?
 - d. Describe some bad things that have happened to your family? How did your family handle those crisis/changes? (McGill, 1992 and DeMaria, Weeks, & Hof, 1999 in Thomlison, 2002, pp.41- 44)
- (8) Family Traditions and Rituals – (By looking at the rituals and traditions of the family, we can get a better understanding of the dynamics, hierarchies and boundaries within the family.)
- a. Does your family have any rituals in daily living? What are they? Who is responsible?
 - b. Does your family do anything on special days or special occasions, e.g. birthdays, festivals, marriages, etc.? What does your family usually do? Who would be in charge? (DeMaria, Weeks, & Hof, 1999 in Thomlison, 2002, pp.44-45)

(III) Client’s current concerns:

- (1) In the recent month, do you worry anything about
- a. your family? What is it?
 - b. your social life? What is it?
- (2) Are your current **family or social** problems arisen from or adversely affected by your drug use?
- (3) At the present moment, do you need to seek counselling or other services on your:
- a. family problem?
 - b. social problem?
- (4) Is/Are there any other significant thing(s) that you want to discuss about?