

Opening Doors Initial Assessment & Planning Worker Prompt Sheet



The following information provides a series of prompts which will help you gather relevant information from clients. The Initial Assessment and Planning worker should only ask for information that is pertinent to the assessment and that will help to clarify client needs and risks. Whilst we have provided a list of possible questions, a narrative-style assessment is encouraged by asking questions that are relevant to the client's circumstances. Encourage the client tell their story. Not only is this beneficial for information gathering but it also helps the client feel listened to and more engaged. It may also provide an opportunity for the client to become aware of their own needs, in turn helping them choose the course of action that best suits them.

1. Engagement 2. Identify needs and risks 3. Prioritise needs and risks 4. Develop a plan

Target group	Considerations	Needs Analyses
People affected by alcohol and other drugs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider if the person is substance affected. Ask them and let them know that it will not affect their application Keep information clear and simple Deal with immediate issues and follow up when they are more able to cope with other medium or long-term issues 	<input type="checkbox"/> Explain rules about substance use at residential facilities and check for understanding before matching <input type="checkbox"/> Are there issues which may affect location of housing? <input type="checkbox"/> What is their current or past substance use and what impact does it have on their current income?
Asylum Seekers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are likely to have suffered trauma May have associated health issues Could be living with extreme uncertainty 	<input type="checkbox"/> Language(s) spoken (is an interpreter required?) <input type="checkbox"/> When did they arrive in Australia? <input type="checkbox"/> What type of visa do they hold? <input type="checkbox"/> Were they released from detention? <input type="checkbox"/> Do they have support (professional, family, community)? <input type="checkbox"/> Do they have access to income or Centrelink benefits? <input type="checkbox"/> Can they work? <input type="checkbox"/> Do they have access to Medicare?
Children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children are particularly exposed to the impact of homelessness and family violence. Parents may have experienced previous interventions with Child Protection and may be hesitant to discuss their children's needs. 	<p>Questions relating to children should be prefaced with an explanatory introduction which sets the context for such personal probing e.g., "I would really like to hear about your children."</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Do your children have any immediate needs i.e., health, material aide, etc. <input type="checkbox"/> Are your children currently receiving support (ie GP, counselling, etc) <input type="checkbox"/> Do you have any concerns for the safety of your child/ren? <input type="checkbox"/> Does your child/ren attend childcare/school?
People released from a correctional institution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be open-minded and give reassurance 	<input type="checkbox"/> Do they need to be located in a certain area for parole/bail reporting or to avoid trouble? <input type="checkbox"/> Do they have any pending community housing applications or existing tenancies?
People with a disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May be more vulnerable to discrimination and exploitation 	<input type="checkbox"/> Can they communicate verbally? <input type="checkbox"/> Do they require the use of the National Relay Service? <input type="checkbox"/> Do they have any formal or informal supports in place? <input type="checkbox"/> Will the proposed accommodation facility meet their needs?

Target group	Considerations	Needs Analyses
People who have experienced family violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family Violence is any behaviour that in any way controls or dominates a family member that causes them to fear for their own or other family member's safety or well being. To maximise the opportunity for a person to disclose, the Initial Assessment Workers should, as a matter of course, preface all initial assessments by telling clients about the service's commitment to their safety and ask them if they feel safe. The Common Risk Assessment Framework (CRAF) offers a clear process for identifying risk and taking action to reduce/control risk. Initial Assessment Workers will usually use the Preliminary Assessment Tool. Work from a strengths and rights based approach. Respect clients' answers and provide information about help that is available. Don't tell them what to do. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Are you feeling unsafe? <input type="checkbox"/> Can you tell me what has been happening to you lately? <input type="checkbox"/> Is there someone that you are afraid of?
Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex (GLBTI)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May have experienced prejudice Fear of being misunderstood or discriminated against Emphasise confidentiality and consider privacy issues especially in rural areas Consider safety implications — especially for congregate care 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Are there any accommodation considerations because of your sexual identity?
People released from hospital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poor health may increase a person's vulnerability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Do they have a discharge plan from the hospital? <input type="checkbox"/> Do they have any temporary accessibility requirements?
Indigenous people	<p>Indigenous people are more likely to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> have family connections and community obligations more likely to be distrustful of authority, government and paperwork more likely to take in homeless friends and family members Don't regard lack of eye contact as a sign of non engagement (cultural context informs this practice) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Is there a preference for an Indigenous specific service? <input type="checkbox"/> Are there community or family issues that affect where you live?
People with possible mental health issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be non-judgemental, give reassurance, encourage self help strategies, encourage the person to get professional help if needed. 	<p>Use the following prompts with care as they are designed to determine whether a person may have a serious psychiatric illness:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Have they recently been an inpatient? <input type="checkbox"/> Are they taking prescribed medication? <input type="checkbox"/> Do they regularly see their doctor or a mental health worker? <input type="checkbox"/> Could they pose a suicide risk or is there a risk of self-harm?
Young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Young people experiencing homelessness are a vulnerable group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> When did they first leave home? <input type="checkbox"/> Do they have a support network? <input type="checkbox"/> Would they prefer a specific youth homelessness service? <input type="checkbox"/> Do they have access to income?

Other considerations

- Do any other people's details need to be recorded on the client's form?
- Can the client be contacted on the phone number provided?
- What type of income do they receive? When will they be paid next?
- When your service or another service assists the client with an application for public/social/private rental housing, then you may consider collecting further information such as - an overview of their housing history, and whether there are any outs
- Does the client have access to transport?