

JENNY

PROFILE

Jenny is studying a Certificate IV in Fashion Design. She is 27 years old. She was studying full-time but began to feel overwhelmed by this and dropped to a part time study load. Jenny lives alone and her family all live interstate. She has some friends. Jenny has a history of mental health concerns and diagnoses of PTSD, anxiety, depression and borderline personality disorder. Jenny regularly uses illicit drugs. After some difficulties in class, Jenny took some time to engage with student support and has since built a good relationship with the support adviser at her campus. Student Support put Jenny in touch with health support services in her local community and she now has regular specialist support. In class Jenny struggles with mood swings that impact on her and those around her. Jenny can become angry very quickly and has disclosed that at times her perception of events is not always clear.

IMPACT ON JENNY

- Social withdrawal
- Isolation
- Difficulties interacting with others
- Rapid and elevated volume speech
- Can appear agitated, frustrated, angry
- Often anxious – has intrusive thoughts
- Disorganised thought processes
- Difficulty in organising and planning ahead
- Difficulty concentrating and remembering
- Lack of confidence and low self-esteem
- High levels of anxiety
- Learner appears tense, worried and restless
- Drowsiness and lethargy
- Changes in medication may impact Jenny

IMPLICATIONS FOR LEARNING

- Fear of interacting with others
- Avoidance of group tasks

- Exclusion by other learners because of 'different behaviour'
- Overwhelmed if given too much information
- Difficulty with time management and planning ahead
- Memory lapses
- Difficulty in recalling information
- Short attention span making it difficult to focus on the task at hand
- May be distracted by racing thoughts and intrusive images affecting concentration
- Low expectations of own ability
- Being withdrawn or isolated in the class
- Oversensitive to negative feedback
- Misses classes and has prolonged absences
- Inability to concentrate for long periods
- General sense of being unwell
- Fearful of "failure"
- Falling behind with assessment tasks

EVENT

Jenny is working in class – sewing a skirt. Suddenly, her mood appears to change, and she appears frustrated with the activity. When the lecturer approaches to offer help, Jenny is not receptive to this and rejects the lecturer's suggestions. The lecturer steps away, but Jenny becomes increasingly agitated and this is upsetting some of the other class members. Eventually the lecturer approaches Jenny again to attempt to defuse an escalating situation. What can the teacher do to support Jenny?

Discuss with your table and nominate 5 important priority strategies.

Inclusive Educator Strategies
Have patience with student's decision-making process; reframe or redirect the topic
Set realistic achievable tasks and outcomes
Provide extra time to complete learning activities where appropriate
Help with study and organisational skills and learning to learn strategies
Ensure opportunities to revise what was covered in the previous class
Provide different types of learning activities in a session that show early

success
Allow for frequent rest breaks – if needed
Minimise distractions in learning setting
Prepare a quiet space for students to work if necessary
Simplify task instructions - one task at a time- smaller steps
Help with identifying key information; class discussion and scaffolding the learning
Empathise where a student is experiencing difficulties and challenges
Use a consistent teaching approach and keep variations to a minimum
Make clear to all students upfront that you are available for any issues and concerns
Provide opportunities for interaction in pairs or small groups rather than just the whole class
Give oral feedback in a positive manner supported by written feedback on assignments/assessments
Acknowledge and understand that behaviour is often related to our well-being and mental health
Always be ready to encourage students to participate even where it may be challenging
Work to include all students in all activities
Acknowledge frustration and try to understand/empathise with the cause
Be calm, patient and empathise with how the student is feeling 'I can see that you are upset. Is there something I can do?'
Be ready and flexible to accommodate a student needing a break, coffee or a walk to calm down
Acknowledge student diversity and perspectives
Show genuine interest in the student's well-being: seek common interest to connect with the student
Understand that disinterest in classroom activities is not necessarily a criticism of your teaching

Ensure the student has a reliable and effective system to communicate with you and if necessary, set aside a time each week to meet
Have a structured daily or weekly timetable and prepare students adequately for changes to schedules
Plan for consistent strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour, accepting that behaviour may relate to a communication need
Focus on positive behaviour and the student's strengths
Use and support a study mate system in class
Negotiate with student an option to take work home if needed
Identify and discuss alternative formats with the student prior to assessment: e.g. oral or practical demonstrations of competency
Set realistic achievable goals and outcomes. Provide extra time to complete learning activities and reduce the number of activities if appropriate
Contact Student/Equity services immediately If concerned about a student's general wellbeing
Explore supported pathways (internal and external) for a student to build language skills
Facilitate ongoing enrolments with the capacity for students to re-enrol next semester if work not completed
Make expectations clear about all aspects of training including standards of work and assessment requirements
Provide lesson notes prior to training delivery (electronic and/or hard copy) to help student prepare
Provide opportunity for the student to withdraw from the group when necessary
Model positive behaviour, self-talk and problem solving
Make sure a student is not put on the spot by being targeted to do things they feel uncomfortable doing
Review progress, goals and student expectations periodically
Minimise any unnecessary requirements regarding oral presentations if the student feels uncomfortable

Arrange to show students around the campus/facilities if they missed induction

Respect a student's need to work on their own

Understand that some may need to negotiate to arrive late so they can come in when everyone is settled and quietly settle themselves

Demonstrate flexibility and show respect if a student needs to leave early (planned and unexpected)

Direct safe questions to group and don't single out individuals

Reduce anxiety by giving prompt feedback

Maintain contact with students and be observant of any unexpected withdrawal from participation

Provide seating near the door and freedom to leave if a student is feeling panicky

Design assessment tasks where possible to allow students to have choice about how they will present their learning

Other strategies: