# 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* Being withdrawn or isolated in the class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.**

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| **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: |