

## Appendix F: Practical 5A

### Role-play 2: Part A: Fourth Session with Michelle Smith

#### Participant's Briefing Instructions

##### Participant's Briefing Instructions

##### Instructions for Role-play Volunteer (Michelle Smith)

These are the instructions for the person helping the student with role-play by acting in the role of the client, Michelle Smith. You must use the following information to assist you in your interactions with the student during the role-play. The role-play will involve the student conducting a fourth counselling session with you, using solution-focused and cognitive behavioural counselling techniques. While you are encouraged to use your creativity and judgement during the role-play, follow the instructions below.

Please note that the gender of the volunteer doesn't need to match the gender of the character they will be playing as long as the volunteer can accurately portray the character as described in the following instructions.

##### Background Character Information

You are Michelle Smith, a 45-year-old woman who has been seeing a counsellor for a few weeks. You sought counselling because you are a very busy and "stressed out" woman. You work full-time, study for your CPA (Certified Practising Accountant) qualification part-time, and are a full-time wife and mother. You are married to Jake (aged 46), and together you have two children, Trent (aged 17) and Rebecca (aged 15).

You feel you constantly struggle to stay on top of your various family, work, and study commitments. You have attended three counselling sessions so far. You discussed many issues during these sessions, including stress and time management. So far, you have made a lot of progress in understanding why you are stressed. However, your main goal for counselling is to learn how to manage your time and stress levels better. You know some days are better than others, but you can never replicate the good days.

In the past, you have tried to schedule your time and set aside blocks for studying, but you very rarely stick to your schedule. You find yourself spending time you had scheduled for studying, helping your children with homework, taking them to and from various extracurricular activities, or doing household chores instead.

You feel as though you can never find the time to study except when everyone else is asleep (and you don't study well at this time because you are so tired). You explored this pattern and your anxiety when studying in your previous sessions.

## Participant's Briefing Instructions

So far, you have passed every CPA unit you have completed with high marks, but you have felt like each unit has been a struggle because you get anxious when it comes time to sit down and study.

You think of yourself as a bad student, which makes you feel anxious, and you feel better if you spend that time achieving other tasks you need to do – you see it as a more efficient use of your time. You feel better because you have achieved something and temporarily escape the anxiety your study produces.

You complete most of your study in the week before your exams. During this period, you barely get any sleep – you tend to study from when the kids go to bed at around 8:30 pm until around 4:00 am and then get just a couple of hours of sleep before waking up again to get the kids ready for school and go to work. This week, you feel highly irritable, your work standards fall, and you feel unhappy with your life. You don't like this pattern, and you want to change it. You would prefer to space out your study by completing it during scheduled study blocks.

### During the Role-play:

Some specific instructions about things you must say/do during the role-play:

- At the beginning of the role-play, the student will greet you and welcome you back to counselling – you should respond naturally to any small talk they make.
- The student will then briefly introduce working from a solution-focused approach. You should ask any questions that come naturally to you based on the student's explanation of this approach and, ultimately, agree to explore this approach during the current session.
- If the student asks you 'the miracle' question in which they ask you what would be different if a miracle happened and your problem was solved overnight while you were sleeping, you should respond initially respond that you don't know. If the student prompts you to think again or asks any other prompting questions, you should respond that you would wake up feeling calm and stress-free and that your house would be tidy, everything would be organised, and you'd feel centred and on- track with life. Based on the background information, you should respond to any additional questions/prompts in a manner that feels natural to you.
- If the student asks you about times you have felt stress-free or managed to stick to your schedule, you should explain that this occurred a few times. Suppose the student asks you about those times. In that case, you should paint a picture of a few occurrences during which you planned things out in advance or delegated responsibilities to your husband, which freed up time and allowed you to focus on studying. For example, you may explain that there was one time when you had planned everything out in advance, the house was clean, your husband, Jake, had taken Trent and Rebecca to their extracurricular activities, and you had made a casserole in the slow cooker that morning.

## Participant's Briefing Instructions

Hence, there was nothing else to do, and you could study during your scheduled time. You felt calm, and your anxiety didn't creep in.

- During the role-play, when the student is helping you explore possibilities for improving your time management skills, you should exclaim, "It's hopeless anyway – I'm just a bad student. I'll never get any better." If the student wants to explore the evidence/accuracy of this belief, you should respond to their questions in a manner that feels natural to you and acknowledge that you have passed every unit of your CPA so far.
- You should respond to any other questions and prompts in a manner that feels natural to you based on the conversation that you are having with the student. You should work with the student to identify your strengths and resources and the possibilities to improve your time management skills. Ultimately, it would help if you were optimistic about your possibilities.
- If the student suggests a task for you to complete before the next session, you should ask any questions that you might naturally have (e.g., clarify anything unclear) and then agree to the task.