

## Appendix E: Practical 10A

### Role-play 3: Initial Session with a client in crisis – Emily Skoro

#### Participant's Briefing Instructions

##### Instructions for Role-play Volunteer (Emily Skoro)

These are the instructions for the person helping the student with Role-Play 3 by acting in the role of the client, Emily Skoro. You must use the following information to assist you in your interactions with the student during the role-play. The role-play will consist of the student conducting an initial counselling session with you. While you are encouraged to use your creativity and judgement during the role-play, you must also follow the instructions provided.

Please note that the volunteer's gender 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.

**Please note:** This role-play focuses on a client in crisis, including domestic violence. Please consider your suitability for participating in this role-play before continuing. If you require support, a helpline is available from Lifeline [13 11 14], and support can be provided by counsellors and other mental health professionals.

##### Background Character Information

You are Emily Skoro, a 19-year-old mother, with a one-year-old baby, Tegan involved in a frightening situation. Emily recently experienced domestic violence and is now seeking immediate safety for herself and her young baby. This traumatic experience has left her feeling overwhelmed, frightened, and unsure of what steps to take next.

Emily's journey into motherhood came unexpectedly, and she has been navigating the challenges of parenthood mainly on her own. The relationship with her partner, once thought to be a source of support, has turned into a nightmare of fear.

Despite her young age, Emily is determined to protect herself and her baby from further harm. She recognises the need to reach out for help and support, which led her to seek assistance from the Wellness Counselling Centre. Emily's decision to seek help demonstrates her strength and resilience in the face of adversity.

Though she may appear fragile, Emily possesses an inner strength that has allowed her to persevere through difficult times. However, the trauma of the recent events has

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shaken her confidence and left her questioning her ability to keep herself and her baby safe.

As Emily enters this counselling session, she desperately needs support, validation, and guidance. She is looking to the Wellness Counselling Centre for assistance accessing resources and services to ensure her safety and well-being. In this vulnerable state, Emily relies on the counsellor to provide her with the compassion and understanding she desperately needs.

### 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 and welcome you – you should reply naturally to any small talk they make.
- When the student starts the counselling conversation and asks how you are, you should respond by saying, "I'm... I'm really scared, to be honest. Everything feels like it's falling apart, and I don't know what to do. I've never felt so alone and helpless in my life. My baby and I are just trying to stay safe, but I don't know where to start. It's like I'm living in constant fear, and I don't know how to stop it. I never thought things would get this bad, you know?"
- When the student questions you further, you should use the information provided in the 'background character information' to respond to the student's questions and prompts. Respond in a way that comes to you naturally based on the questions asked while using the background information. **Note:** don't simply read this information out – instead, respond in a manner that makes sense to the conversation you are having with the student.
- If the student asks you if he has harmed you or your baby, use the following information to respond:
  - He has been drinking a lot lately and has become aggressive and verbally abusive. You are both having financial struggles, and he is not coping.
  - You had a big argument the other night, and he verbally threatened to hurt you and threatened to harm your baby.
  - He hasn't physically harmed you or your baby yet, but you feel scared he will if this keeps going.
  - **Note:** Don't simply read out this information – instead, use this information to respond to any questions the student asks you.
- If the student asks you about the support you have, you should indicate that you are very close to your mother and know that you should talk to them because it

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will help but that you just can't bring yourself to do it. If the student further questions why, you should. You don't want your mother to be worried or stressed as she lives in a different state, and you don't have the money to travel there.

- When the student explains that they, as a counsellor, have a legal obligation to report their partner to Child Protection, agree that they can do this. But say you are scared it will make things worse, and you need to find somewhere to stay to keep your baby away from him.
- You should respond to any further questions or prompts in a manner that seems natural to you based upon the 'background character information' and your discussion with the student during the role-play. Be receptive to the counsellor's guidance and suggestions, actively participating in developing strategies to cope with your crisis.

Thank you for assisting the student with the role-play!