

## LITERACY AND NUMERACY INFORMATION FOR JOB NETWORK CONSULTANTS, ADVISERS AND PERSONNEL WORKING WITH JOB SEEKERS

### DOES MY CLIENT HAVE A LITERACY AND/OR NUMERACY PROBLEM?

Because there are so many demands on consultants who assess or interview clients, it is often necessary to fill in the forms for them. This may mean that vital clues regarding their literacy abilities could be missed.

#### Some questions to consider:

- Did your clients fill in forms by themselves?
- Did they bring friends or family members to speak for them?
- Did they ask you to read it aloud because they had forgotten/lost/broken their glasses and the writing was too small to read?
- Did they suggest that they take forms home and return them when they were filled in?
- Did they ask questions such as:  
"What does this mean?"  
"Could you explain this?"
- Did they write single word answers when more information was required?
- Are the writing style, spelling and grammar very basic or incorrect?

If there is doubt about clients' literacy/ numeracy status, it is sometimes helpful to look at their history of work, education and training to provide vital clues.

#### Background

- Did not like school and left early.
- Early education interrupted by frequent relocation due to:
  - Moving to homes and schools in different towns/states
  - Parents having seasonal work
  - Migration to Australia
  - Parents in Defense Forces
- Does not wish to provide information about school life/history.
- Finds it difficult to get a job and then fails to keep it.
- Feels he/she can only do labouring or menial jobs.
- Tries to change the subject when you get too close to truth.

**Other literacy Indicators may become evident in the behavior of clients with literacy deficits.**

- In groups he/she may be the clown.
- Disruptive member of a group - may become abusive / aggressive.
- Rarely hands in work - excuses as to why (child tore it up; lost it).
- Regularly misses appointments, classes, workshops, interviews.
- Creates diversions in group work so he/she won't have to write or read out loud.
  
- Spoken skills are not developed - short sentences or single word answers.
- Has limited vocabulary. Often blusters and swears to cover inadequacy.
- Gets frustrated if asked to explain an idea / feeling / event.