



## Scope of Practice

*Disclaimer: This video is designed to be a conversation starter on the topic of working within a scope of practice in a remote aged care context. The facilitator should make use of other resources to ensure the learner receives further information on their scope of practice within their job role.*

Care staff need to understand the parameters of their job role. Going beyond their scope of practice can place a person receiving care in danger and may be working outside the law.

This video explores some common areas where care staff might be inadvertently working outside their scope of practice simply because they want to help a client.

### Medications

Helping a person receiving care to take their medications is one area many care workers find confusing. For example, can they help a person if their medication is in a 'blister' pack?

In the video, Samuel learns there is more to helping a person take their medications than simply 'popping out' the pills. Lance points out things like the medication pack belonging to someone else. He explains that there are things that Samuel needs to learn before he can help people with their medications and that he continues to learn more.

- *Talk about things someone might need to learn before they can start doing that job for a client, including providing personal care or preparing a special diet.*

Lance also explains that there are some things that he cannot do even though he is trained to help someone with their medication. For example, he cannot give an injection to someone; he explains that giving needles is outside his scope of practice.

- *Talk about what your policies and procedures cover on medication incidents that might happen at the centre. For example, what to do if a person receiving care says they don't want to take their medication, or you find a tablet of the floor of the centre or the person's home.*

### Position Descriptions

A person's scope of practice is often described in their position description. It might not be defined as 'scope of practice', but if the person looks at the duties they are expected to perform, this helps them to understand their scope of practice.

- *Look at the person's position description and perhaps those from other team members. Help the person to identify their own duties and those that other people in the team will perform.*
- *Help the person explore their scope of practice and determine what they can and cannot do.*
- *Talk about why you might have been able to do something at another aged care service but not at this one – organisation policies or the role might be different.*



## Training

Lance also talks about how training can increase someone's scope of practice.

- *Use this opportunity to talk about training opportunities for the person and how this can help them increase their knowledge and scope of practice.*

## Responses to requests outside the current scope of practice

Sometimes a person receiving care, or their family carers ask a care worker to do something outside their scope of practice.

Care staff should be prepared for this and understand how to respond appropriately; this includes being able to say 'no' and helping the person or their family carer to understand why.

- *Discuss scenarios where the person might be asked to do something outside their scope of practice. This might include things like:*
  - *Preparing a special meal for someone or being asked to puree the person's dinner by the family carer without understanding the person's meal requirements*
  - *Crushing a tablet for the person because they say it is difficult to swallow the medication*
  - *Helping inject a person with a dial-up insulin pen because they feel too unsteady*
  - *Being asked to provide support to someone with their showering when no training has been provided*
  - *Giving advice to a person on what they should eat to manage a health condition.*

## Links to additional resources

Code of conduct for aged care – Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission:

<https://www.agedcarequality.gov.au/sites/default/files/media/Code%20of%20Conduct%20for%20Aged%20Care%20-%20guidance%20for%20workers%20and%20governing%20persons.pdf>

Guiding Principles for medication management in the community – Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care:

<https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/guiding-principles-for-medication-management-in-the-community?language=en>

Framework for the scope of practice – NAATSIHWP:

<https://www.naatsihwp.org.au/framework-scope-practice>