

Your Guide to Spectrum Treatment

INTRODUCTION	2
ATTENDANCE.....	3
PARTICIPATION	4
CONFIDENTIALITY	4
SELF-HARM	5
SAFETY IN GROUPS	6
SAFE COMMUNICATION	6
BORROWING MONEY.....	6
RELATIONSHIPS OUTSIDE OF SPECTRUM	7
SECRECY.....	7
SUBSTANCE USE & MEDICATION	8
ASSAULTIVE, AGGRESSIVE OR VIOLENT BEHAVIOUR	9
BEHAVIOUR THAT MAY RESULT IN LEAVE OR DISCHARGE FROM SPECTRUM.....	10

INTRODUCTION

These guidelines apply to clients involved in any direct treatment with Spectrum such as group treatment or individual treatment.

Spectrum aims to create a non-institutional, safe and therapeutic environment where people diagnosed with personality disorder can receive treatment in an atmosphere that promotes autonomy, self-responsibility, care and connection. Spectrum staff and clients have developed these guidelines over a number of years to assist with balancing self-responsibility and choice with care and connection to others. We hope these guidelines assist clients of Spectrum to be clear about expectations and to enable better communication and understanding between clients and staff.

Spectrum accepts people with personality disorders often feel overwhelmed. At times of severe stress these overwhelming feelings can lead to behaviours such as self harm, hard to control aggressive feelings and difficult interactions with others. At these times it can be difficult to stick to guidelines like those contained in this document. However Spectrum expects both staff and clients to make a commitment to learning healthier ways of coping, and to respect each other and the community as a whole. This is what makes treatment possible.

This document does not exist as a tool to judge or punish people, however persistent lack of respect for these guidelines may result in leave or discharge from Spectrum treatment, depending on the circumstances. If a person is unable to show a commitment to these guidelines, it usually means they are not ready to benefit from Spectrum's style of treatment at that time. That doesn't mean they can't try again in the future. The expectations Spectrum has of its staff and clients are outlined in the following pages.

ATTENDANCE

In order for people to get the most out of Spectrum treatment, clients and staff commit to regular and punctual attendance at sessions and groups.

- Clients commit to attending all groups and individual sessions agreed to as part of their treatment plan. Changes to the plan (including changes to the number of group or individual sessions) can be negotiated with your Spectrum clinician.
- Clients and staff agree to be ready to commence individual or group sessions at the specified time. If a client arrives more than 15 minutes late for a group session without informing staff prior to the start of the group, they will probably not be allowed in as it would be disruptive to others. If clients or staff are going to be late for an individual session, every effort must be made to communicate this prior to the start.
- Due to the intensity of the emotional work occurring in some sessions, it is recognised clients may find participation difficult. Clients agree to practise skills in order to attend and remain in sessions, such as talking with your Spectrum clinician about your difficulties, negotiating 'time out' periods from the group, or other solutions that might be relevant to you and agreeable to others. Spectrum staff are committed to assisting wherever possible to help you attend and remain in treatment.
- During group sessions, if a client needs to leave a session without negotiation, they do not return to that session. This is because impulsively leaving and returning to groups is disruptive and may impact on others. As stated above, staff agree to provide opportunities to help clients work through any impulsive urges to leave a group and talking with your Spectrum clinician. Talking about the problem in the next group would be encouraged.
- Staff agree to prioritise scheduled appointments, and will give reasonable notice if for some reason they cannot attend. Client absences from sessions are understandable when someone is physically unwell, or has an urgent personal matter or medical appointment to attend. Clients agree to inform staff of non-attendance prior to their absence.
- Staff are committed to supporting clients through periods of ambivalence or times when they feel unable to attend. Continued non-participation or absence from agreed group sessions may result in suspension or discharge from that group. Every effort would be made by staff to discuss this with you prior to taking such a step, and it would not necessarily mean discharge or suspension from all Spectrum treatment. For example, a plan may be agreed on involving only individual sessions.
- If client needs to leave an individual session early without explanation, the therapist or coordinator will usually be available for the remaining session time (unless there is an alternative strategy agreed). If you did not return to the session, you could make phone contact at a later time, or attend your next scheduled appointment and discuss it then. Continued problems with staying in sessions will be discussed with the aim of finding the meaning of any difficulties you're having, and to find ways for you to use the sessions effectively.

PARTICIPATION

Clients and staff sometimes find it hard to get started on the psychological work in individual or group sessions. Engaging in an activity can warm us up and help to let go of what holds us back. Warming up to the work is not always comfortable, it can be like stretching a muscle in a physical warm up. Spectrum encourages staff and clients to try to participate fully, and at the same time, it is acknowledged the best a person can manage sometimes is to just turn up.

- Staff and clients agree to take up all opportunities for participation in the therapies outlined in the treatment plan. At times of difficulty, mindfully observing your choices around participation can be an important part of warming up.
- If a client attends a group but chooses not to participate, they are encouraged to remain present in the room as a mindful observer. In individual sessions, these moments will be resolved on the basis of any agreement you have with the Spectrum clinician. Talking about discomfort is always encouraged by Spectrum staff, whatever the setting.

CONFIDENTIALITY

- Staff and clients agree to maintain confidentiality. In groups or residential treatment this means “what’s said in the group, stays in the group.” Also, information revealing a person’s identity is not discussed with others.
- Staff are committed to maintaining confidentiality ethically, and do not share information with members of the public, other clients, family members or friends, or professionals outside Spectrum, without permission. Staff also value good communication between different professionals supporting a particular person, as this allows the best possible treatment. So staff will speak together about your treatment, and will ask your permission to speak with other members of your treatment team outside of Spectrum. In life-threatening emergencies, information may be shared with others by staff, in line with privacy laws and professional ethics.

SELF-HARM

Spectrum recognises that after self-harm, it is often difficult for clients to act in line with the values of self-care and consideration for others. However, these principles are central to all Spectrum treatments.

- When attending Spectrum appointments or groups, clients agree to have already received adequate treatment for any self-harm, meaning:
 - *wounds must be bandaged and/or covered until they heal*
 - *self-harm requiring medical treatment (wound requiring suturing, overdosing, poisoning) must be treated before attendance at Spectrum or appointments with Spectrum staff.*
- If a client self-harms at a Spectrum individual or group session, or while a resident at Spectrum, they agree to let a Spectrum staff member know and to get medical treatment immediately. This must occur prior to attending any further appointments or groups. If the self-harm does not require treatment, they agree to manage their own first aid before attending any further appointments or groups.
- Clients agree not to discuss self-harm actions in detail in Spectrum groups, or individually with other Spectrum clients.
- Clients agree not to involve other Spectrum clients in their self-harm by discussing self-harm plans, asking for help to gain the means to self-harm, or any other attempts to include others.
- Clients do not go with other Spectrum clients who are receiving medical attention for self-harm. Though it can feel like an act of support, accompanying someone else while they have their self-harm treated can be detrimental to that person's progress in treatment, and can impact on you as well.
- As psychological and physical safety for all Spectrum participants is highly valued, any self-harm behaviour in the presence of others, or any encouraging or assisting of others to self-harm is highly likely to result in suspension or discharge from Spectrum treatment, depending on the circumstances.
- If self-harm by a group or residential client affects any other Spectrum clients sharing treatment with that person, the issue may be raised with the aim of repairing relationship damage and giving others the opportunity to share their thoughts, feelings and experiences of the incident.

SAFETY IN GROUPS

Some Spectrum treatment groups involve the use of your body in the form of physical activity or contact with others. Different individuals have different levels of comfort with physical activity and if you are attending a physically oriented group, you will have selected this group for a reason, such as challenging old patterns of distress with physical movement or contact.

- Clients agree that when physical connection occurs, consent to this will be negotiated.
- Clients' different levels of comfort with physical activity will be acknowledged and respected in groups. At the same time, clients and staff will be encouraged and supported to step outside their comfort zones.
- Any issues may be discussed with your Spectrum coordinator to ensure you are well supported.

SAFE COMMUNICATION

Spectrum values clear and respectful communication in all areas, including face to face contact, phone conversations, SMS's and email.

Therefore, staff and clients agree to:

- take responsibility for feelings using 'I' statements
- listen to, rather than interrupt others
- being aware of judgements and take responsibility for these as they arise
- not criticise, blame, attack or use hurtful or sarcastic statements
- not shout or speak in a threatening manner or tone
- not gossip i.e., say to others what you wouldn't say directly to the person
- request 'time out' from groups or sessions if feeling unable to contain damaging responses.

BORROWING MONEY

Spectrum clients often find it difficult to say 'no' when they would like to, and one area in which this occurs is the lending of money. Connected to the value of self-responsibility, clients agree not to ask staff or other clients for loans of money.

RELATIONSHIPS OUTSIDE OF SPECTRUM

Encounters between staff and clients, intentional and non intentional, may occur outside of Spectrum. Such contact can create feelings of unease in the relationship however can be worked through in therapy. Sexual partnerships between clients who attend the same groups or programs are highly disruptive to the flow and progress of therapy. Dynamics of the group are compromised, and relationships with other clients are significantly affected. The clients' own therapy is also severely impacted by this kind of relationship.

Therefore, Spectrum staff and clients agree to the following:

- If we encounter each other outside Spectrum, staff and clients agree to consider their behaviour, respect each other's boundaries, and adhere to the Spectrum ways of relating.
- If any contact outside Spectrum threatens to impact on treatment in unhelpful ways, this will be discussed in group or individual sessions and a strategy developed that helps treatment get back on track.
- To ensure physical and psychological safety during a residential admission or course of group treatment, commencing and continuing a sexual relationship with another resident or member of the group is not permitted (see below).

SECRECY

Everyone has thoughts, feelings, fantasies and ideas they want to keep private. Spectrum respects people's privacy and encourages them to determine for themselves what is private and what feels comfortable to share with others. At Spectrum the idea of "privacy" is different to "secrecy". Secrecy occurs when you are told or know about an issue that is damaging to another person (perhaps someone you attend a treatment group with), and feel you cannot say anything about it (you may feel a sense of loyalty or not want to be a 'dobber'). We have found that secrets that undermine the principles of these guidelines can be particularly damaging. Being sworn to secrecy by a client with whom you are sharing treatment can generate a range of stressful inner experiences that feel impossible to express. You may feel angry or experience conflict with your values, such as honesty and for some it can trigger troubling memories and feelings that may be destabilising to them and the rest of the group. If this happens, there is a danger people start to feel worse rather than better.

Spectrum staff agree to help clients to minimise secrecy by:

- providing an open invitation to approach staff to share the problem
- providing coaching to resolve or clarify the problem
- offering this support to all who may be involved

SUBSTANCE USE & MEDICATION

Spectrum recognises clients often use drugs and alcohol to try to cope with emotional pain. This is understood as a strategy that might work in the short-term, but brings many problems in the long-term. It also interferes with progress in therapy undertaken at Spectrum and is ultimately not compatible with people's values and hopes for a better life. Furthermore, Spectrum is committed to providing an environment which is as psychologically and physically safe as possible. Using drugs and alcohol, or misusing medication, often creates a lack of safety for the person under the influence as well as others.

Therefore, Spectrum staff and clients agree to the following:

- No alcohol or illicit substances are to be consumed or stored on any Spectrum site or during any Spectrum activity, including when a client is being seen by a Spectrum staff member in their own locality.
- Clients agree to be non-drug affected and sober when attending Spectrum sites, appointments and activities (this includes taking more than the prescribed amount of medication).
- Spectrum clients agree not to ask each other for the supply or loan of medication. This applies to prescribed and over the counter medications, such as paracetamol.

ASSAULTIVE, AGGRESSIVE OR VIOLENT BEHAVIOUR

Spectrum holds clear and non-negotiable boundaries around aggressive and violent behaviour.

Some examples of ASSAULTIVE or VIOLENT behaviour are:

- having a weapon and intending or threatening to use it
- threatening another person with the intent to cause physical injury
- touching another person in a threatening manner, such as grabbing
- throwing an object at a person with the intent to cause injury.

The consequences of these assaultive or violent behaviours are:

- suspension of Spectrum treatment.
- the police being notified.
- charges possibly being laid if an injury occurs as a consequence of property damage, even if it was accidental.

Some examples of AGGRESSIVE behaviour are:

- throwing, kicking or damaging property
- threats of violence to another person i.e., "I will/am going to..."
- abusive comments and remarks i.e., "You're a stupid..."
- threats whether direct and indirect

The consequences of these aggressive behaviours are:

- talking with the person at an appropriate opportunity.
- an agreement to repair damage to relationships with people who may have been offended, and demonstrate commitment to reducing such behaviour.
- an agreement that a Spectrum client who damages property will repair or replace it at their own expense.

BEHAVIOUR THAT MAY RESULT IN LEAVE OR DISCHARGE FROM SPECTRUM

While it is usual for Spectrum clinicians to attempt to find a way to maintain treatment, we have found from experience that there are some things that disrupt the treatment too much. The behaviour that may result in leave or discharge from Spectrum treatment, includes:

- behaviour that could result in criminal charges, e.g. theft, property damage or violence.
- violence or threats of violence toward any Spectrum staff or client.
- bringing an illegal weapon or that requiring a licence to a Spectrum site or appointment.
- commencing and continuing a sexual relationship with another client who is attending the same residential or group treatment.
- consuming alcohol or illicit substances while attending Spectrum appointments or activities, or at Spectrum sites.

During any suspension of Spectrum treatment a Spectrum clinician will attempt to remain in contact with the client to assist with the development of strategies to repair damage and return to treatment.