Problem Management Plus (PM+) Competencies

1. RECOGNISING SOLVABLE & UNSOLVABLE PROBLEMS

Check all behaviours demonstrated in each category.		
Unhelpful or potentially harmful behaviours	**Basic helping skills**	**Advanced helping skills**
❑ Blames client for problems (e.g., 'You got yourself into this situation, it's your job to get yourself out') ❑ Says all of client's problems are too difficult or cannot be solved	❑ Brainstorms with client on new or previous problems client has mentioned ❑ Lists out problems with client ❑ Describes or gives examples on difference between solvable and unsolvable problems ❑ *None of the above*	❑ *Completes all Basic Helping Skills* ❑ Facilitates client to prioritise problems ❑ Checks-in with client to clarify if prioritised problems are solvable or unsolvable

Check the level that best applies (only one level should be checked)

❑ **Level 1** *any unhelpful behaviour* ❑ **Level 2** *no basic skills, or some but not all basic skills* ❑ **Level 3** *all basic skills* ❑ **Level 4** *all basic helping skills plus any advanced skill*

Notes:

2. SELECTING THE PROBLEM

Check all behaviours demonstrated in each category.		
Unhelpful or potentially harmful behaviours	**Basic helping skills**	**Advanced helping skills**
❑ Chooses the problem for the client ❑ Selects problem that is out of client's control	❑ Works with client to select a specific problem that is in the client's control ❑ Asks for client's feedback on selected problem (e.g., 'Do you feel comfortable to start defining this problem?') ❑ *None of the above*	❑ *Completes all Basic Helping Skills* ❑ Explains each step of selecting a problem clearly to the client

Check the level that best applies (only one level should be checked)

❑ **Level 1** *any unhelpful behaviour* ❑ **Level 2** *no basic skills, or some but not all basic skills* ❑ **Level 3** *all basic skills* ❑ **Level 4** *all basic helping skills plus any advanced skill*

Notes:

3. DEFINING THE PROBLEM AND GOAL

Check all behaviours demonstrated in each category.		
Unhelpful or potentially harmful behaviours	**Basic helping skills**	**Advanced helping skills**
❑ Tells client the problem is hopeless ❑ Mocks client for potential goals (e.g., 'That goal is impossible, why would you think of that?')	❑ Generates some ideas with client to define the problem and goal ❑ Establishes a specific definition for the problem with client ❑ *None of the above*	❑ *Completes all Basic Helping Skills* ❑ Focuses on practical elements of the problem that can be influenced ❑ Motivates and prompts client to imagine the problem as solved ❑ Works with client to break problem in small pieces or steps to make it more specific

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Notes:

4. BRAINSTORMING SOLUTIONS

Check all behaviours demonstrated in each category.		
Unhelpful or potentially harmful behaviours	**Basic helping skills**	**Advanced helping skills**
❑ Asks suggestive questions about solutions brainstormed by client (e.g., 'That is not really how you want to solve it, is it?') ❑ Encourages or focuses on unobtainable solutions ❑ Focuses only on solutions that 'fix the entire problem' ❑ Tells client how to solve the problem (e.g., 'You should…')	❑ Facilitates client to come up with 1 or 2 'practical' solutions ❑ Unrealistic or unhelpful solutions are eliminated ❑ *None of the above*	❑ *Completes all Basic Helping Skills* ❑ Works with client to freely brainstorm as many solutions as possible without judgement (e.g., silly, realistic) ❑ Actively prompts client to encourage brainstorming (e.g., 'What would you recommend a friend to do in your position?')

Check the level that best applies (only one level should be checked)

❑ **Level 1** *any unhelpful behaviour* ❑ **Level 2** *no basic skills, or some but not all basic skills* ❑ **Level 3** *all basic skills* ❑ **Level 4** *all basic helping skills plus any advanced skill*

Notes:

5. CHOOSING A SOLUTION

Check all behaviours demonstrated in each category.		
Unhelpful or potentially harmful behaviours	**Basic helping skills**	**Advanced helping skills**
❑ Chooses an unrealistic solution or a solution with a negative impact (e.g., 'Run away from home') ❑ Tells client what solution to choose ❑ Judges client for the chosen solution (e.g., 'That will never work')	❑ Removes unrealistic solutions ❑ Helps client select an achievable solution with least negative impact and most potential to be helpful ❑ *None of the above*	❑ *Completes all Basic Helping Skills* ❑ Finds out how client has previously solved problems and discusses what works and does not work ❑ Discusses (dis)advantages OR positive & negative consequences of ALL listed solutions

Check the level that best applies (only one level should be checked)

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Notes:

6. DEVELOPING AN ACTION PLAN FOR THE SOLUTION

Check all behaviours demonstrated in each category.		
Unhelpful or potentially harmful behaviours	**Basic helping skills**	**Advanced helping skills**
❑ Tells client what to do ❑ Creates barriers for client or discourages client from trying (e.g., 'Your husband would never allow this') ❑ Criticises client's input ❑ Dismisses barriers or does not problem-solve for them	❑ Creates an action plan with steps that are specific and measurable ❑ Sets a timeline for the action plan ❑ Remains encouraging and helpful ❑ *None of the above*	❑ *Completes all Basic Helping Skills* ❑ Sets reminders ❑ Discusses potential barriers to implementation of the action plan ❑ Helps client create an alternative plan (e.g., 'If you get too worried, do breathing exercises')

Check the level that best applies (only one level should be checked)

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Notes:

7. REVIEWING MANAGING PROBLEMS

Check all behaviours demonstrated in each category.		
Unhelpful or potentially harmful behaviours	**Basic helping skills**	**Advanced helping skills**
❑ Blames or scolds client for incomplete tasks ❑ Tells client what should and should not have been done (e.g., 'It's your fault, you should have been braver')	❑ Discusses implementation of action plan ❑ Praises client for any attempt to implement action plan, even if not successful ❑ Explores and normalises any challenges client mentions ❑ *None of the above*	❑ *Completes all Basic Helping Skills* ❑ If not (completely) successful, adapts action plan with client accordingly (e.g., sets more effective reminders) ❑ Chooses new problem or solution that is more feasible as needed ❑ If client was successful, discusses steps to continue managing problem

Check the level that best applies (only one level should be checked)

☐ **Level 1**
any unhelpful behaviour

☐ **Level 2**
no basic skills,
or some but not all basic skills

☐ **Level 3**
all basic skills

☐ **Level 4**
all basic helping skills
plus any advanced skill

Notes:

8. PSYCHOEDUCATION FOR STRESS MANAGEMENT & RELAXATION

Check all behaviours demonstrated in each category.		
Unhelpful or potentially harmful behaviours	**Basic helping skills**	**Advanced helping skills**
❑ Judges client for symptoms or feelings (e.g, 'Why worry and feel body discomfort about such simple things?') ❑ Rushes explanation	❑ Explains or gives examples of how feelings may affect our bodies or create physical discomforts ❑ Introduces plan to learn techniques (e.g., breathing) for relief ❑ *None of the above*	❑ *Completes all Basic Helping Skills* ❑ Gives examples of common types of discomfort ❑ Identifies client's experienced symptoms or feelings and explains how these might create uncomfortable body sensations ❑ Explains why technique is useful ❑ Uses metaphors to explain

Check the level that best applies (only one level should be checked)

☐ **Level 1**
any unhelpful behaviour

☐ **Level 2**
no basic skills,
or some but not all basic skills

☐ **Level 3**
all basic skills

☐ **Level 4**
all basic helping skills
plus any advanced skill

Notes:

9. INTRODUCE BREATHING STRATEGY (THEN PRACTICE AND REPEAT)

Check all behaviours demonstrated in each category.		
Unhelpful or potentially harmful behaviours	**Basic helping skills**	**Advanced helping skills**
❑ Forces client to practice breathing strategy ❑ Criticises client on performance (e.g., 'That's all wrong; you need to do it this way') ❑ Rushes through practice or uses a loud or harsh voice ❑ Gives nonspecific or unhelpful suggestions (e.g., 'Try breathing better')	❑ Introduces new technique (e.g., breathing) to willing client ❑ Guides client through practice, checking-in along the way ❑ Uses appropriate hand placement and gestures for demonstration ❑ Paces instruction and breathing steps (e.g., paces count of 1,2,3,4) ❑ *None of the above*	❑ *Completes all Basic Helping Skills* ❑ Ensures client does not feel need for perfection (e.g., 'This takes practice, you'll know what is comfortable for you') ❑ Praises client for practicing strategy and normalises any struggles ❑ Adapts strategy as needed to ensure client's comfort ❑ Uses metaphors (e.g., balloon metaphor) or helps client prepare body (e.g., 'Shake out your body')

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any unhelpful behaviour

❑ **Level 2**
*no basic skills,
or some but not all basic skills*

❑ **Level 3**
all basic skills

❑ **Level 4**
*all basic helping skills
plus any advanced skill*

Notes:

10. STRESS MANAGEMENT REVIEW: CHECK IN AND ENCOURAGE CONTINUED PRACTICE

Check all behaviours demonstrated in each category.		
Unhelpful or potentially harmful behaviours	**Basic helping skills**	**Advanced helping skills**
❑ Judges client on performance or negative experience with home practice (e.g., 'That is awful; you did it wrong') ❑ Discourages client from practicing independently (e.g., 'You will hurt yourself if you try alone; you're hopeless')	❑ Checks-in with client on experience of practicing strategy at home ❑ Praises client's attempt to practice at home ❑ Normalises any challenges experienced by client and helps to overcome them ❑ Encourages client to continue practicing independently ❑ *None of the above*	❑ *Completes all Basic Helping Skills* ❑ Briefly reviews and practices breathing or other technique together with client in the session ❑ Works with client to find best times and places to practice independently ❑ Explores and solves potential barriers client might face to independent practice

Check the level that best applies (only one level should be checked)

❑ **Level 1**
any unhelpful behaviour

❑ **Level 2**
*no basic skills,
or some but not all basic skills*

❑ **Level 3**
all basic skills

❑ **Level 4**
*all basic helping skills
plus any advanced skill*

Notes:

11. SCHEDULING ACTIVITIES & TASKS

Check all behaviours demonstrated in each category.		
Unhelpful or potentially harmful behaviours	**Basic helping skills**	**Advanced helping skills**
❑ Makes activity schedule without client's input ❑ Schedules activities that are vague or unobtainable in the short-term (e.g., 'Get a new job,' 'walk in forest') ❑ Blames client for feelings or negative behaviours or activities (e.g., 'It is your fault')	❑ Brainstorms list of different types of activities with client ❑ Asks client to choose one task and one pleasant activity to begin with ❑ Schedules specific days, times and locations for selected activities ❑ *None of the above*	❑ *Completes all Basic Helping Skills* ❑ Connects activities with reminders or with other events or commitments ❑ Reviews potential barriers or challenges ❑ Effectively uses worksheet

Check the level that best applies (only one level should be checked)

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Notes:

12. STRENGTHENING SOCIAL SUPPORT

Check all behaviours that are demonstrated in each category.		
Unhelpful or potentially harmful behaviours	**Basic helping skills**	**Advanced helping skills**
❑ Discourages client from contacting other people, agencies or community ❑ Only suggests contact with emergency services ❑ Judges client for difficulties in communicating with family, friends or community members	❑ Identifies social support in client's life ❑ Explains meaning of strengthening social support ❑ Works with client to identify new or various social support networks ❑ Encourages client to make contact with others ❑ *None of the above*	❑ *Completes all Basic Helping Skills* ❑ Schedules action plan with client including when and whom to reach out to for support ❑ Discusses overcoming barriers and challenges ❑ Recommends skills/techniques to support relationship goals

Check the level that best applies (only one level should be checked)

❑ **Level 1** *any unhelpful behaviour* ❑ **Level 2** *no basic skills, or some but not all basic skills* ❑ **Level 3** *all basic skills* ❑ **Level 4** *all basic helping skills plus any advanced skill*

Notes:

Acknowledgement