

Organization in Psychosocial Assessments

It is **not** appropriate to record everything the client (or other data source) said, thought, felt, evidenced since he or she was known to your agency, otherwise all one would have to do is turn on a video-recorder and the “record” would be the tape.

We sift or filter what we write and sequence it within logical sections in order to be **EFFICIENT AND COMPREHENSIBLE**, e.g. the reader can “cut to the chase” quickly. Everything should be pertinent – NOT MORE and NOT LESS – and whatever appears should be placed in its proper section.

Avoid reports of “clinically irrelevant” information and extraneous words that don’t add to meaning:

Examples:

- Client **really** is having a hard time. (“Really is an extraneous word)
- **Client wanted to go to the program today but had to wait for the bus, so she was 5 minutes late.** (The information in this sentence is unimportant – being 5 minutes late because of a late bus is not ‘remarkable’ – or anything that needs to be reported. It is uneventful in most of our lives.)

Yet, if you wrote:

- **Client wanted to go to the program today but had to wait for the bus, so she was 5 minutes late. She said she was so anxious about being late that she toppled out of her wheelchair when the bus left her off. She was sent to the nurse as soon as she arrived at program.** (The information here makes the late bus arrival ‘remarkable’ and clinically important. It shows us something striking, perhaps extreme about the client’s reaction to getting to the program on time.)
- **Client said she was proud of her son when he brought home the positive report card last week, she was pleased, and it made her happy.** (The three descriptions of client’s reaction to her son’s report card are similar enough; only one is needed).
- In the mornings, the client attends a job workshop where she **like** has to develop a few skills – **an example of this is that she is developing her skills at** how to look for a job. (“Like” is an extraneous word. The phrase “an example...” does not add anything to the sentence – it contains extra words that are not needed.)

Make “**mental footnotes**” of material that may not be clinically significant at the moment, but you may want to remember it for the future.