

## Worksheet 6.9: Letter-writing to repair ruptured relationships

There are likely to be times when there is a great deal of tension between carers and care teams, and unhelpful comments can be made by both parties. This exercise is designed to help you to use your skills to encourage a truly collaborative approach, even when the relationship might seem to be in tatters. With the right approach, any carer/care team relationship that seems ruptured can be repaired.

### *Scenario continued from Worksheet 6.8*

Jenny and Steve arrive at the MDT meeting feeling hopeful and prepared. They bring their list of questions that they would like to bring up. Unknown to them the MDT has had an incredibly difficult morning with several meetings ending with carers storming out with threats that they will be making a formal complaint. The meeting quickly deteriorates as the MDT explains that Adele will not be being discharged any time soon. They also suggest a new medication with no explanation of why Adele needs it or what the benefits might be. Steve becomes increasingly frustrated. The MDT are all referring to a report, but this has not been shared with the parents. Every time Steve asks a question it seems to be deflected back with 'Well if your daughter wasn't here with us, she wouldn't be around.' The meeting ends with both parties feeling aggrieved, and Jenny and Steve feeling as if things have gone backwards.

Using motivational language, how can Steve use the skills he has learned to attempt to start to repair this ruptured relationship and maximise the chances that he and Jenny will be as involved as possible in their daughter's care program? How could they best liaise with the care team to come up with an acceptable compromise?

Ask carers to use the ABC approach to come up with a possible menu of options, and then use OARS or anything else they have learned on this course to construct a letter to send to the consultant.

**Table 6.4** Functional analysis table identifying a caring behaviour

Antecedent	Behaviour	Consequence
	Steve became really cross in the meeting and said a few things he now regrets.	

Considering a wide range of options can be really useful as it helps carers to consider the pros and cons of each, rather than following their instinct, which might not always be the most helpful answer.

Use OARS to come up with a collaborative approach for a possible letter that Steve could write and deliver to the unit next time they visit.

It is not uncommon for there to be tension between the care team and the carers, especially at the early stages of the treatment program. Through the workshops you will learn to have empathy for the plight of the under-resourced care teams, and also to use the communication skills you have learnt to get the most out of the care teams in a truly collaborative way.