# Effective Remote Staff Training of Objective and Subjective Session Notes

- Piazza, J.L., Leaf, J.B., and Lanier, L.L. (2021)

# Introduction

**Overview of Session Notes: Session notes are the foundation of effective communication among team members and provide data for decision-making.**

**Objective Notes vs. Subjective Notes: Objective notes are based on observable behaviors and measurable data, while subjective notes describe emotions, feelings, and perceptions of behavior.**

**Importance of Both Types: Combining both types of notes enhances understanding of a client's behavior and improves treatment plans.**

# What are Objective Session Notes?

**Definition: Objective session notes are based on direct, observable, and measurable data from the session.**

**Characteristics:**
- **Free from Interpretation: The focus is strictly on the behaviors or actions that are seen.**
- **Quantifiable Data: These notes include data such as frequency, duration, rate, or intensity of a behavior.**

**Role in Treatment: Objective notes guide data-driven decisions and interventions.**

# How to Write Objective Session Notes

**Clear and Specific Descriptions: Avoid vague terms; use measurable, concrete language to describe behavior.**

**Types of Data: Document frequency, duration, intensity, or latency of behaviors.**

**Consistency: Consistently use the same format and language to ensure clarity.**
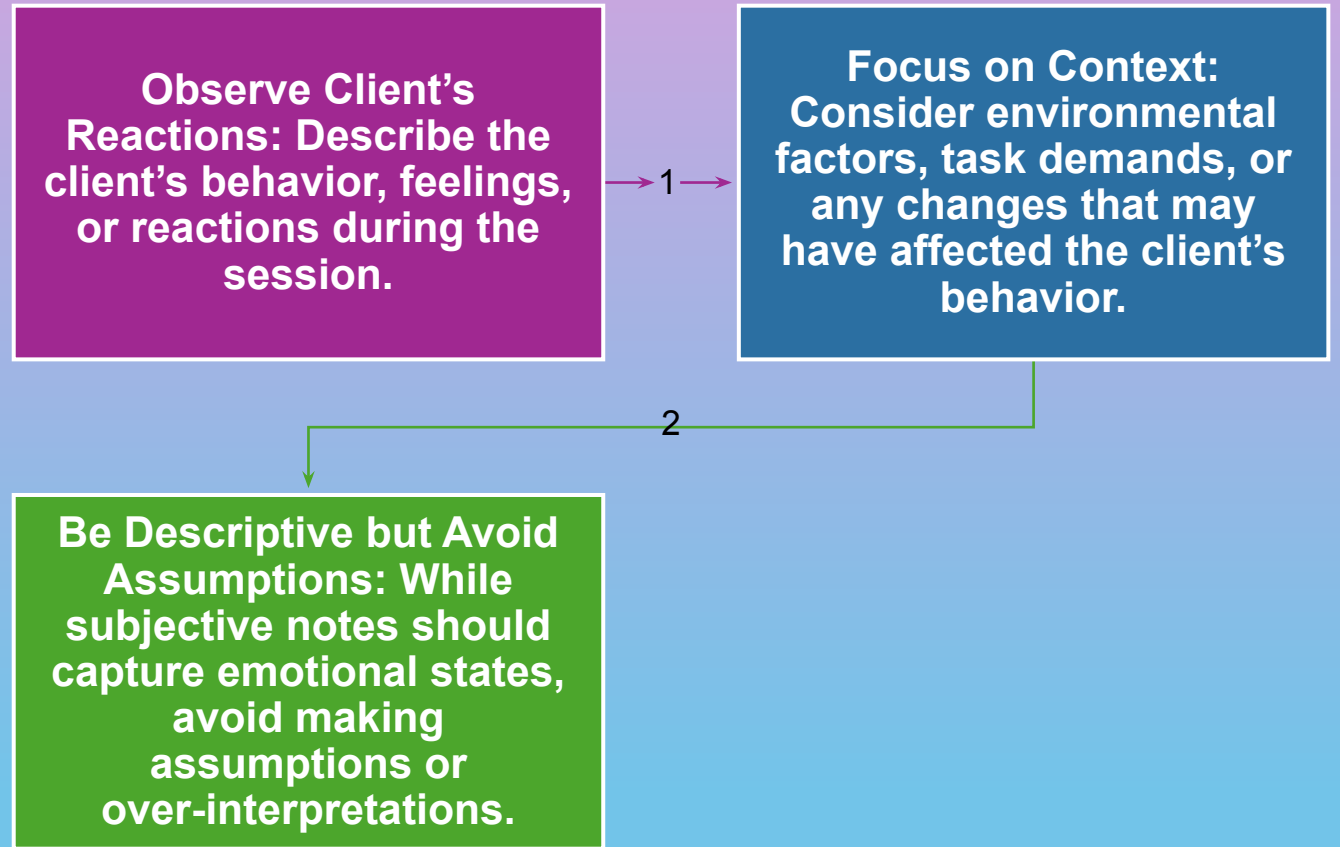
# What are Subjective Session Notes?

**Definition: Subjective session notes are based on the observer's perceptions, feelings, and interpretations of the client's behavior.**

**Characteristics:**

- Emotional and Behavioral States: These notes focus on how the client felt or appeared emotionally.
- Contextual Factors: Provides insight into factors influencing the client's behavior (e.g., environment, task difficulty).

**Role in Treatment: Subjective notes offer context and inform potential interventions or adjustments to treatment.**

# How to Write Subjectiv e Session Notes

**Observe Client's Reactions: Describe the client's behavior, feelings, or reactions during the session.**

1 →

**Focus on Context: Consider environmental factors, task demands, or any changes that may have affected the client's behavior.**

2

**Be Descriptive but Avoid Assumptions: While subjective notes should capture emotional states, avoid making assumptions or over-interpretations.**

# Balancing Objective and Subjective Notes

**Complementary Roles: Objective notes provide hard data, while subjective notes provide the emotional and contextual understanding.**

**Enhancing Treatment: Combining both offers a fuller picture, improving the ability to make informed decisions.**

**Examples of Integration: "The client completed 80% of tasks independently (objective), but seemed anxious when transitioning to the next task (subjective)."**

# Training for Remote Staff

**Tools for Training:** Video demonstrations, practice exercises, and real-time feedback.

**Importance of Clear Guidelines:** Staff need clear criteria for distinguishing between objective and subjective notes.

**Remote Training Benefits:** Flexibility in scheduling and the ability to observe staff remotely during real sessions.

# Common Pitfalls in Writing Session Notes

•Objective Notes: Using vague language (e.g., 'seemed to') instead of precise measurements.

•Subjective Notes: Over-interpreting client behaviors without understanding the full context.

•Bias and Assumptions: Avoid letting personal feelings or biases influence the observations.

# Sample Objective Notes

✓ **"The client completed 6 out of 8 tasks independently, with prompts given for the remaining tasks."**
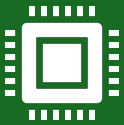
**Example 2: "The client engaged in 3 instances of manding for a break, with each instance lasting 5 seconds."**

**Example 3: "The client spent 12 minutes on the task without displaying off-task behavior.**

## Sample Subjective Notes

**Example 1:** "The client appeared frustrated when asked to complete the task independently."

**Example 2:** "The client seemed engaged and motivated during the physical activity portion of the session."

**Example 3:** "The client smiled and appeared happy after receiving praise for completing the task."

# Practicing Objective and Subjective Notes

**Task: Practice writing both objective and subjective notes based on the following scenario:**

"The client was asked to complete 12 tasks. They completed 8 independently and required prompts for the remaining 4. After the 4th task, they appeared frustrated and attempted to leave the area."

# Conclusion

**Summary: Accurate session notes—both objective and subjective—are crucial for effective behavioral interventions and tracking client progress.**

**Best Practices: Consistency, specificity, and a balance of both types of notes are key to effective documentation.**

**Final Thought: Integrating both objective and subjective notes improves understanding and treatment effectiveness.**

# REFERENCE

•Piazza, J.L., Leaf, J.B. and Lanier, L.L. (2021), Effective remote staff training of objective session

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