FILE NOTES

WHEN YOU SHOULD WRITE FILE NOTES

- After all client interactions;
- During your research;
- After any interactions with product providers;
- After you make any decision regarding the advice you are going to give;
- Advice presentation; and
- At implementation.

WHAT TO INCLUDE IN YOUR FILE-NOTES

- Client name(s);
- Date and time;
- Who was present;
- Type of meeting – face to face / telephone / Skype;
- Subject and outline of the conversation;
- Any warnings you may have given;
- Anything that is not covered in your fact-finding documents;
- Actions;
- Formal acknowledgment. Ideally, your client's signature. This may be more difficult when the file itself is not hand-written, but you can also confirm your discussion by
- sending an email.

WHAT YOU SHOULD FOCUS ON

- Your Client's perspective and assumptions;
- The clarity and legibility of your note (where hand-written);
- The reasons for specific views and catalysts for the client decisions;
- Client concerns or questions;
- Explanations (or educative material) that you provided;
- Your client's acknowledgement and understanding of your reasons, your advice and the risks and implications.

Be **clear** the best file-notes present relevant information is a consistent and considered manner.

Be **contextualised** -The better file-notes manage this limitation by doubling down on context; they explain what was meant, why things were said and the emotion behind those conversations. Good advisers are naturally attuned to the rhythm and sub-text of their client's conversations, the better advisers record it to better explain what occurred and why.

Proximate - Ideally, file-notes of conversations and events will be written at the time they occur (contemporaneous) but, it's enough that the record is created near the time of the conversation or event (proximate).

ASK YOURSELF

- Is your language objective, neutral non-judgmental?
- Have you made assumptions or departed from known or established facts?
- Do your notes properly attribute comments and statements?
- Do you record the context and circumstances around your comments and observations?
- Are your comments and observations adequately contextualised?
- Are your notes ambiguous?
- Has your client signed your file-note?
- Are your notes contemporaneous or reasonably proximate?
- Are your file-notes dated, clear and accurate?

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

A goal:

- Provides the bigger picture, and does not usually contain a high level of detail;
- Must be achievable and capable of being shown as achieved (by either qualitative or quantitative measures);
- Is contextual, objective and subjective;
- Creates the need for forward direction and a plan;
- Is identified by your client; and
- Can be emotional, inconsistent and lacking clear priority.

An objective

- Outlines individual steps to be taken;
- Contains a higher level of detail;
- Are successive or progressive measures;
- Should be specific, measurable and achievable; and
- Are relevant to the identified goal.