

UNIT 4: HELPING SKILLS

KMC 1083: Basic Helping Skills
Counselling Department
Faculty of Cognitive Sciences &
Human Development



Helping Skills

- ❖ **Aim** – to convey understanding, encourage sharing, build trust.
- **Minimal response**– encouraging client to talk, conveying helper is listening. Example: Hmmm.....,OK..... Ohhh..
- It can be in the form of non verbal reactions like head nods, open gestures, and positive facial expressions.



Helping Skills

➤ **Restate** – merely stating the exact words of client – to let client know you are with him/her. Not to do it too often – parroting!

➤ Example:

Client: I am not feeling comfortable talking to her.

Helper: You are not comfortable talking to her.



Helping Skills

- **Paraphrase** -helper translates client's idea/feeling into simple sentence without changing meaning. Purpose: to test the understanding of client's meaning. To communicate to client that helper is following his/her story.
- Example:
 - Client: I just don't understand. One minute she asks to do this, and the next minute she wants me to do another work. I get fed-up sometimes.
 - Helper: You are confused over her requests/demands.



Paraphrase

- **An accurate paraphrase consists of 4 dimensions:**

1- A **sentence stem** sometimes using the client's name. Names help personalize the session. Example: Dira, I hear you saying.....

2- The **key words** used by the client to describe the person or situation.

3- The **essence** of what the client has said in summarized form. Helper helps the client to transform client's descriptions into meaningful and clarifying statements.

4- A **check out** for accuracy. The check out is a brief question at the end of the paraphrase. Eg: Am I hearing you correctly?, Have I got it right?, Is that close?

Helping Skills



- **Clarifying** – to make discussion more focus and does not get lost along the way. State helper's feeling to avoid implication of criticism.
- Example:
 - I am not sure that I understand you. Could you explain about that incident again?

Helping Skills

- **Checking** - To check whether your listening is correct.
- Example:
 - Am I right in saying that you did not really care for her?





Helping Skills

➤ **Reflection** – Being in client's frame of reference, to convey understanding and empathy.

1- Reflection of feeling- to focus on feelings, to bring expression of feeling clearly so that client owns the feeling.

Client: I don't understand why he broke up with me. I couldn't sleep thinking about it. It's not fair to be left like this.

Eg. It really hurts to be rejected by someone you love.

Helping Skills

2- Reflection of content/meaning:

- Eg: - You mean....., You value,....Your reasons are
- The key words for reflection of content are- meaning, value, reasons, intent, cause.
- Eg: Client: I have all the symptoms of the fear, even though it is something I want.
- Helper: The fear somehow hits you at the core. Is that what you mean? (note reflection of meaning, followed by check out)

Helping Skills



- **Questioning** – The main purpose is to get information and to encourage client to talk. Use open questions more by using the 4W and 1H concept, though ‘why ‘ is not really encouraged.

- Example:
 - How that happened?
What make you decide....
Can you tell me when that happened?

Helping Skills



- ◎ **Closed questions:** should be followed by open questions unless it is to get specific information only. Close questions would not help client to open up.
- ◎ Close questions always follow by 'Do you...', 'Are you...', 'Can you...'. Can be useful and save time especially when helper needs short and specific answer.



Eight Major Issues Around Questions

1- Questions help begin the interview

- What would you like to talk about today?
- How have things been since we last talked together?

2- Open questions help elaborate and enrich the client's story

- Could you tell me more about that?
- What else comes to your mind?





Eight Major Issues Around Questions

3- Questions help bring out concrete specifics of the client's world

- *Client*: Nelson makes me so mad
- *Counselor/Helper*: Could you give me a specific example of what Nelson does?/What does Ricardo do specifically that brings out your anger?/ What do you mean by “makes me mad”?

4- Questions are critical in assessment

- Who is the client?, What is the client's problem?, When does the concern occur?, Where does the problem occur?, How does the client react to the challenge?, Why does the problem occur?



Eight Major Issues Around Questions

5- The first word of certain open questions partially determines what the client will say next

- **What** questions= often lead to facts
- **How** questions= often lead to a discussion about processes/sequences
- **Why** questions= often lead to a discussion of reasons
- **Could, would** and **can** questions are considered maximally open and contain some of the advantages of closed questions in that the client is free to say “ No, I don’t want to talk about that”



Eight Major Issues Around Questions

6- Questions have potential problems

- **Bombardment/grilling:** too many questions will tend to put many clients on the defensive.
- **Multiple questions:** interviewers may confuse their clients by throwing out several questions at once
- **Questions as statements:** some interviewers may use questions to sell their points, like: Don't you think it would be helpful if you studied more?
- **Why questions:** often put interviewees on the defensive and cause discomfort.
- **Questions and control:** bear in mind that excessive use of questions can destroy the relationship built by use of attending skills.



Eight Major Issues Around Questions

7- In cross cultural situations, questions can promote distrust

- If your life background and experience are in relative synchrony with those of the client, you may find that you can use questions immediately and freely.
- If you come from a different background, your questions may be met by distrust and only grudgingly answered.



Eight Major Issues Around Questions

8- Questions can be used to help clients search for positive assets and patterns of wellness

- Could you tell me a story about a success you have had sometime in the past?
- Few problems happen all the time. Could you tell me about a time when it did not happen?
- Johan, so far we have focused mainly on your difficulties. But let's stop a moment and look at your strengths.
- Can you recall a friend or family member of your own gender who represents some type of hero in the way he/ she dealt with adversity?



Questioning Techniques



- Avoid firing questions one after another as they would sound like an interrogation.
- Avoid giving 2 alternatives in a question.
- Give time for client to think before asking another questions.
- Choose questions that are helpful and not to use it for the sake of asking.
- Avoid starting the session by asking series of closed questions, it might give a wrong idea to client that he/she needs to answer 'yes' or 'no'.

Questioning: Systematic Inquiry



- SI means seeking information in an organized manner, logical and orderly by posing closed and open appropriate questions focusing on specific topic to be discussed or resolved – not jumping from one topic to another.
- Based on Feeling questions, Eg. How do you feel after that incident?’ or Thinking questions, Eg. What prevent you from achieving your dreams?’ or Action question, ‘When would start doing your work?’

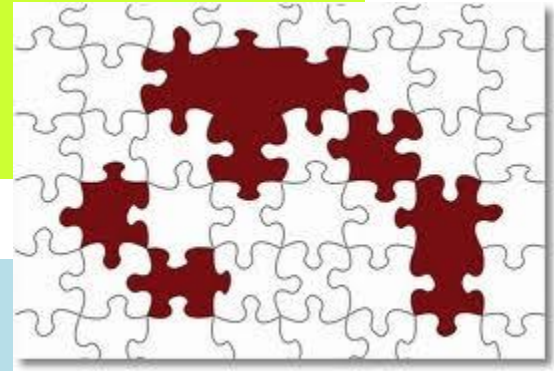
Questioning: CHUNKING



➤ **Chunking**

- Listen carefully to what client says and use chunking techniques so that helper can response appropriately.
- **Chunking** is organizing key words to explore content systematically.
- Eg: **'behaviour'** by chunking involves action, thinking and feeling.
- Eg: How do you feel when you fail? Why do you think you fail? What did you do when you failed?

Questioning: CHUNKING



- **Chunking**
- From the behaviour, helper can explore the effects on people (parents, friends, family members etc)
- Eg: What will happen to your graduation? Who would be most affected?
- Activities or actions (plan to act) Eg: to retake the course, to hire a tutor etc.
- How this affects the helpee's behaviour. Eg: In what way can you change your study habit?, How would you do it?

Questioning: The Direction

- Helper's question can lead the helpee's direction.
- Example:
- *Client*: I felt disappointed when I found out I failed my last ethic exam last Monday.
- Possible content: the Ethic exam.
- *Possible helper responses*: Is Ethics course is a difficult one for you? Or 'Are there any other courses that you've failed? Or 'What is something special about the exam?'

Questioning : The Direction

- Possible **feelings**: ‘ You felt disappointed.’ or ‘ Tell me exactly about your feelings when you fail.’ or ‘How does this disappointment affect you?’
- Possible **implied actions**: ‘ How did you prepare for this exam? Or ‘ What did you do prior to the exam?’

Questioning : The Direction



- Client's words '**....I failed my last exam.**'

Possible questions for direction, 'Is this the first time you've failed?' or 'Have you failed this subject before?' or 'How was your performance in other courses?'

Questioning: The Direction



- **Responding to entire statement**, Eg: 'Tell me more about this.' or 'Uhmhhh...'

Verbal and non-verbal language like this may encourage client to talk more about the concern and allow the client to choose the direction and the relevant content.

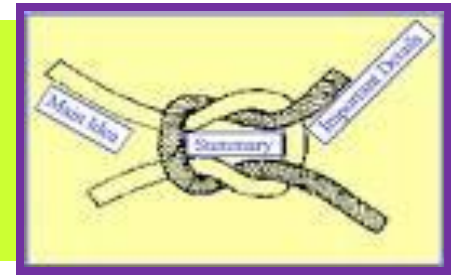
Summary: Questioning:

- **Open questions:** as invitation to elaborate, often begins with words such as who, what, when, where, why and how, Cannot be answered with a yes or a no response.
- **Closed questions:** Helpful in pinpointing specific information in limited time, can be answered in yes or no or in very short response, even though client may have much more information), often begin with phrases like Do you... Are you... Have you...., limit the information especially from quiet person.

Summary: Questioning

- **Systematic Inquiry** – seeking information in organized manner, involve asking combination of open and closed questions to gather information before moving to another topic.
- Effectively use when rely a lot on reflecting feelings and other contents besides asking questions, helpful if helper focuses on certain topic such as feelings, thoughts and actions, the situations or other contents, chunking to organize content.

Helping Skill



- **Summarizing** – important to pick the important points of discussion so that both helper and client are clear of the issues discussed.

Eg: We have talked about your anger toward your friend, the possible steps you could talk to avoid conflict and you also have decided to move house next month.

Helping Skill

FOCUSING:

- is a skill that enables multiple telling of the story and will help you and clients think of new possibilities for restorying.
- helps to increase client cognitive and emotional complexity.
- helps to have better understanding of the viewpoints of others.
- more complete involvement of family and cultural issues.



Ways to FOCUS attention in the interview

1- **Individual Focus:** Beginning interviewers need to start by focusing on the individual client.

Eg, “Chong, you are feeling sad and discouraged right now about having to place your mother at nursing home”

2- **Main theme or problem focus :** We also need to spend time listening to client concerns and issues.

Eg, “Chong, I hear you saying **that this home may not be best place** for her, but you had no practical alternatives as she now needs constant supervision”

Ways to FOCUS attention in the interview

3- **Other focus:** The client will often talk about significant others including friends, family members, etc.

Eg: “ You say that **her friends** are angry with you for putting her in the home. What have they done to help?

4- **Family focus:** You can focus in helping client to see himself in relation to family history and experiences.

Eg: “ You told me that you are Vietnamese, could you tell me a bit more about some of your family traditions?, How they affect you?

Ways to FOCUS attention in the interview

5- Mutuality focus: Puts the client and interviewer/helper on an equal level.

Eg: “ How can we work together?”, “ How would you like me to help?”

6- Interviewer focus: The interviewer/helper may provide feedback, opinions, or advice from his/her perspective.

Eg: I had to put my father in a home 2 years ago myself. It is very difficult and hurt a lot. Is that close to what are you feeling?

Ways to FOCUS attention in the interview

7- Cultural/environmental/context focus: This focus can include issues of gender, race/ethnicity, religion/spirituality, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, and multiple contextual issues.

Eg: “ How are the finances going to be handled when you place your mother at that home?”, How has your spirituality helped you get through all this?”.

HELPING SKILLS

SUMMARIZING

When to use summarization?

- At the end of every session
- At the termination of the counselling relationship.
- When client give too many information and helper needs to understand the story.
- In the middle of session to reinforce the discussion.

Examples: Summarizing

1- **To begin a session-** “Let’s see, last time we talked about your feelings towards your close friend.....you told me that you wanted to meet her...Then, how did that go?”

2- **Midway in the interview-** “ So far I have seen that the plan did not work well. But you able to called her. You plan to continue unaccomplished plan next weeks. Is that about it?”

3- **At the end of session:** In this session, we have reviewed your feelings toward your close friend. Some of the following were discussed throughout the session: First.....Second..... Third..... Does that sum it up?”

EXERCISE

- Role play the helping process by using the skills that have been taught in class.
- ✓ Restate
- ✓ Paraphrase
- ✓ Reflection
- ✓ Clarifying
- ✓ Questioning
- ✓ Summarizing



HELPING SKILLS

- ✓ **Self-disclosure** – therapeutic but to use sparingly and appropriately.
- ✓ **Dealing with silence** – to give time to client and helper to think and ponder.

HELPING SKILLS



➤ Feedback

Why feedback important?

- ❖ Supply true information to client about what you see, feel or suspect about him or her.
- ❖ Positive feedback help people grow.

HELPING SKILLS

✓ **Why helper gives feedback?**

- ❖ To indicate how client's behaviour affect the helper.
- ❖ To evaluate client's progress.
- ❖ To supply the client with information based on helper's observation.
- ❖ Example of feedback, 'As I see your progress you've done well in improving your grade.'
- ❖ Feedback sometimes may be rejected by client because the 'truth hurts'
- ❖ Giving and receiving feedback is learning about self-awareness and self-growth.

HELPING SKILLS



- Feedback - How to give?
- ✓ **Do not attack personality traits** – eg. 'You're so stupid! (poor). 'When you do something that is not right, it's not helping at all.' (not finding fault)
- ✓ **Be specific and nonjudgmental** – eg. 'You're so irritating and stubborn.' (poor). 'I find it annoying when you repeated the same mistakes.'

HELPING SKILLS

- ✓ Ask permission before giving feedback - 'I would like to share with you some comments made by our members, is it OK?'
- ✓ Touchy issue, say in tentatively - e.g. 'Last time you said you're not at fault and now I find you're doing the same thing as he does.' (accusing). 'I got the impression that you're still not happy with him but I observe you're behaving as he does.'

HELPING SKILLS

✓ **Do not give too many feedback at the same time**

'I think you should dress properly. You look unruly. Just now I saw you throw away rubbish on the floor, you shouldn't do that.' (poor).

'I think you should dress properly in class. Wear a collared t-shirt and tuck it in.'

HELPING SKILLS

- ✓ **Feedback on client's strength** – I told you to speak louder but you still whisper. How can your friends hear you?'
- ✓ ' I find you make an effort to speak louder than before. I could hear you now from the back.'

HELPING SKILLS

- ✓ **Use checking question to see how feedback is received**
 - e.g. Last week I pointed out to you that you have been complaining about your room-mate, what is your reaction to what I said?

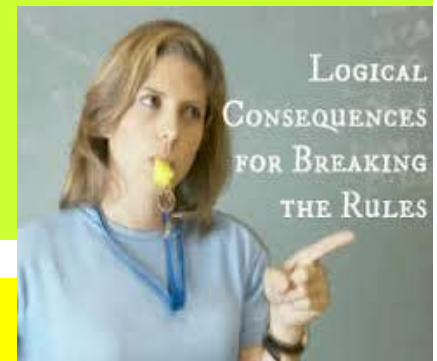
HELPING SKILLS



REFRAMING:

- Provides the client with an alternative frame of reference from which to view life situations and generate new stories.
- *Client:* I am in trouble because I missed so many days of class.
- *Helper:* You are really troubled and worried. You have been missing a lot of work and you know your lecturer does not like it. As I listen to you, I sense that the issue of your absenteeism is due to your problem with one of your classmate. How do you react to that (reframe: allows the client to view the new frame of reference)

HELPING SKILLS



LOGICAL CONSEQUENCES:

- Enables the client to look at the possible results of alternative actions.
- Encouraging someone to take certain risks or attempt new tasks.
- Warnings are one way to tell someone about logical consequences.
- Primarily work within the concrete orientation of “if.....,then.....”
- Eg: We first learned, Alisia, that *if* you did not stand up for yourself to attend class, *then* you would continue to be ignored. *If* you go to class frequently, *then* you will get good attention from from your classmates”

HELPING SKILLS

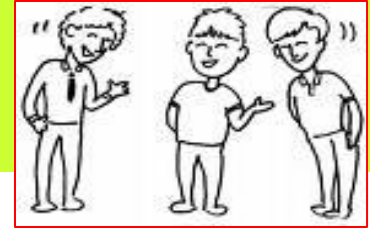


➤ **Confrontation**

- Helper helps client to realize the conflicting information, behaviour and emotion he/she showed. The aim is not to find fault.

e.g. You talked about being kind and understanding to your friends but from what you do you're hurting them with your unkind words.

HELPING SKILLS



➤ Referral

Arrangement made by helper for referral for specific purpose or issues that are beyond helper's competence.

While waiting for referral, helper maintains supporting and encouraging relationship.

HELPING SKILLS

➤ Termination

- An important process.
- Reasons for termination – goals achieved, self-termination, transfer etc.
- Helper has to make sure that client termination happens without any unfinished business, transition to daily life should be smooth.

HELPING SKILLS



➤ Follow-Up

Some clients need follow-up after termination. The purpose is to encourage and support decision or step taken, to make sure that change is being maintained. Client knows that helper still cares.

However, helper must be careful not to encourage dependency. Follow-up has limit and to allow client to function independently. Can be done through visits, telephone, letters, email

WHAT IS CASE NOTE?

- ✓ Clinical case notes are records kept by counsellors about their counselling sessions. To understand clients more.
- ✓ Contained detail information about the content of the session , include details of what clients told counsellors, counsellor's clinical impression of client, and sensitive and personal information about client. It is not a personal note for counsellors.
- ✓ Case note might be viewed by others e.g. court, authority , clients and others. Should be careful of what to write.

CASE NOTES



✓ **Advantages:**

- Helper will remember client's case.
- Helper able to identify systematically client's issue.
- Helper can separate important and unimportant issue to address.
- Helper able to plan problem-solving structure or plan.
- Helper able to systematize ideas in helping client.
- Helping can be more systematic.

RIGHTS TO CASE NOTES



- ✓ Clients have the right to view and make copies.
- ✓ Clients have right to demand case note to other professional.
- ✓ Clients can subpoena case note when they are involved in litigation.
- ✓ Other parties can subpoena (command) case note if involved in litigation (court case).
- ✓ If client deceased, the legal representation can subpoena case note.
- ✓ Case note can be publicized.

PURPOSE OF CASE NOTES

- ✓ **Purpose of case notes:**
- ❖ To provide quality counselling services to clients.
- ❖ To document decision you have made and actions taken.
- ❖ e.g. client is in danger of injuring self or others. Actions to prevent it. To protect self if questioned.

Essential for counsellors to write notes during sessions or immediately after sessions

CASE NOTES FORMAT

➤ SOAP

S = Subjective (information reported by client eg feelings, reactions, goal, plan etc)

O = Objective (results of the counsellor's test and other assessment administered, facts eg expression, dressing, mood).

A = Assessment (the counsellor's impression generated by data, diagnostic, clinical impression, need proofs).

P = Plans (diagnosis and treatment plan, along with any modifications to them, refer to whom, consult who?)

EXAMPLE OF SOAP

- Date_____Time_____Place_____

- **S (Subjective)**

Client shared her feelings of anger toward her father. Did not understand why she was treated differently from her other siblings. She believes she is an unwanted child. She plans to ignore them and goes her own way

(This component is difficult to differentiate whether subjective or objective. Record only client's feelings, plans, thinking, how serious she thinks the issue is as well as her behaviour, resistance towards counselling etc. Write actual words when necessary only)

EXAMPLE OF SOAP

- **O (Objective)**

Facts only – through observation eg. self-presentation, ability to understand issue, objectivity in giving feedback. Through information gathered eg. test result, medical report etc. **(Counsellors avoid personal evaluation, statement of own feeling and reaction, labelling eg rebellious, low self-esteem etc.)**

EXAMPLE OF SOAP

- **A (Assessment)**
- Summarization of the counsellor's clinical thinking. The assessment serves to analyse the data from subjective and objective portions of notes.
- **(Counsellor need to ask “Are there adequate data here to support client diagnosis?”)**

EXAMPLE OF SOAP

- **P (Planning)**

Counselling **interventions** used. Factual information eg date of next session, intervention planned, tasks, progress, Referral (if any, to include to whom), consultation (if any).

Prognosis – What the counsellor **thinks** the benefits of counselling to client. What the client needs eg support from individuals. What she has achieved so far (good, unsatisfactory, slow etc). How she can improve.