

TRAINING FOR NON-PROFESSIONAL HELPERS: COMMUNICATING FOR CHANGE

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Workforce Development Training

WHAT IS HELPING

- Life enhancing outcomes for those in need
 - Not just naming and describing
 - Diagnosis and symptom identification
- Learning how to help oneself
 - Problem solving often disappears when in crisis
 - Helper success is determined by client efficacy
- Prioritizing prevention
 - Difficult because prevention is invisible
 - Helpers make it visible

CRITICAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS¹

- Listening
- Empathizing
- Attending
- Probing

LISTENING

- Stories
 - Content & Context
 - Thoughts, feelings and behaviors
- Meaning
 - Making sense of events/feelings
 - Multiple meanings
- Congruence
- Emphasis



EMPATHY

- Empathy - Feeling with the client
 - Problem solving
- Sympathy – Feeling for the client
 - Problem prolonging
- Mirroring
- Authenticity
- The “Big Lie”
- The “Paradox”

ATTENDING



- Physical Orientation
 - Eye contact
 - Posture
- Psychological Orientation
 - Listen and don't worry about
 - What to say next
 - Advice

PROBING

- Open-ended V. Closed-ended
- Clarifying
- Encouraging and Affirming
- Reflecting
- Summarizing
- Interpreting – be careful
- Themes and Patterns

ACTIVITY

- Participants pair off and interview each other (10 minutes each)
- Both complete LEAP Assessment form (10 minutes total)
- Discuss results (10 minutes total)

THE RIGHTING REFLEX²

- To fix or make right is human
- Helpers have strong righting reflexes (RR)
- Most are ambivalent (CA) about change
- $RR + CA = \text{Disaster}$
 - Helper forces her view and/or “finds” alternative solutions
 - Helpee defends “ambivalence”
 - Helpee labeled as resistant or in denial
 - Helper and client become entrenched

QUESTIONS THAT LEAD TO CHANGE³

- Evocative
 - How would you like things to be different
- Scale the mountain (with self anchored scales)
 - 0-10 – how important to you is the change
 - 0-10 – how confident are you in your ability to change
- Memory book
 - Talk about a time before the problem existed (how were things better?)
- Miracles Happen
 - If you went to sleep and ...
- Grounding
 - Examples, always examples. Avoid psychobabble

AFFIRMATIONS

- You're a strong person, a real survivor.
- I appreciate your openness and honesty today.
- That was a lot of work.
- You pulled it off.
- You don't give up, even when it's tough going.
- You worked so hard to figure it out.
- You didn't know if you could do it, but you tried anyway.
- It took a lot of courage to come in today.
- I appreciate your efforts despite the discomfort you're in.
- You are determined to get your health back.
- Thank you for all your hard work today.
- You're determined to make changes.
- Despite your difficulties, you're still willing to try.
- You are clearly a very resourceful person.
- Even though things are difficult right now, you try so hard to...
- You handled yourself really well in that situation.
- That's a good suggestion.

ACTIVITY IN GROUPS OF 3 PROBLEMS VERSUS SOLUTIONS

Part I

Problem based conversation

- 10 minutes
- Gather as much detail as you can about a problem the client shares
- Helper tries to assess problem severity

ACTIVITY IN GROUPS OF 3
PROBLEMS VERSUS
SOLUTIONS

Part 2

Solution Based Conversation

- 10 minutes
- Gather as much detail as you can about something that went right for the client
- Helper tries to assess who did what to make good things happen

ACTIVITY DEBRIEF

CLIENT

- What was it like to be asked the problem assessment questions?
- What was it like to be asked about something that went well?
- Which were easier to answer?
- Which were harder?
- Did you react differently to the interviewer based on the questions they asked?

INTERVIEWER

- What was it like to ask the problem assessment questions?
- What was it like to ask about something that went well?
- How did your reactions to the client change?
- When did the client listen more carefully?
- When did it seem the client was working harder?

CLOSING POINTS

- Those who share their stories with you want to change
- They likely know how
- It may seem too difficult
- Change talk is not convincing someone of their want or desire to change
- Change talk is language someone uses that reflects a desire to change
- Our job is to “catch” them engaged in that talk
- To catch them we must:
 - Use a basic set of communication skills
 - Try not to fix them

ENDNOTES

1. Egan, G., & Reese, R. (2021). *The skilled helper: A client-centered approach*. Andover, United Kingdom: Cengage.
2. Miller, W. R., Rollnick, S. (2012). *Motivational interviewing*. New York: the Guilford Press
3. Souders, B. (2021). 17 Motivational interviewing questions and skills. Retrieved from <https://positivepsychology.com/motivational-interviewing/>
4. Ruff Institute of Global Homelessness. Homelessness Resource Center. (2021). *Motivational Interviewing: Open Questions, Affirmation, Reflective Listening, and Summary Reflections (OARS)*. Retrieved from <https://www.ighhub.org/resource/motivational-interviewing-open-questions-affirmation-reflective-listening-and-summary>