

Self-Reflection

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Skills Learned to be an Effective Counselor

There has been an abundance of information and skills I have learned on how to be an effective counselor. The concepts most significant and captivating to me were SOLER Skills and Non-verbal Communication. “People constantly “speak” to one another through their non-verbal behavior” (Egan & Reese, 2019, pg. 104). Prior to this course, I believed the extend to non-verbal behavior was simply a bad facial expression. Now, I understand the complexity of non-verbal communication and how it can affect the client/counselor relationship. Counselors must be aware of their eye contact, posture, appropriate sitting distance from the client, any excessive fidgeting and not react to surprising information. It is vital for counselors to learn these skills so their non-verbal behavior is not misinterpreted by the client. This is because misinterpretations can lead harm to the client.

I’ve had an experience with bad non-verbal communication with my first counseling session. Because it was my first time seeing this counselor, I was asked to fill out an Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) Questionnaire. After filling out the questionnaire honestly, I had a score of 10. When I gave the questionnaire back to the counselor, her eyes got wide, she took a deep breath, sat back in her chair and slightly shook her head. I was mortified and wanted to walk out the door. It made me want to never go back to counseling again. Fortunately, a confidant of mine convinced me to try again with a different counselor.

An important skill that surprised me was the concept of challenging. When first reading about challenging, I felt as though challenging was going to make the client uncomfortable or become withdrawn. I was afraid if I challenged a client to much that I was going to compromise the client/counselor relationship. After learning more about gentle challenging, I was able to

understand it more about helping the client face themselves realistically in an empathetic and caring way, instead of stern and directly (confrontation).

Strengths as a Potential Counselor

I feel a big strength I have as a potential counselor is the ability to show empathy towards others because of my life experiences. People go through some sort of trauma in their lifetime. This helps them to truly empathize with others more effectively because of those experiences. I will be able to use my past childhood experiences (Mental and physical traumas, child abuse, domestic violence, substance abuse etc...) to empathize with future clients, along with the empathy skills I've learning in this course.

Handicaps as a Potential Counselor

Even though empathy is a strength of mine, it can also be a weakness. At times, I can be an empath. So, I can take on other people's emotions. So, when someone is angry, I will suddenly notice I am irritated. Also, if someone is extremely upset, afterward I will be sad. Psychological Fitness is a disposition that I had to take in account when I wanted to become a counselor. I knew that I had to make sure that I dealt with my past trauma before I could counsel others. I am aware of my unfinished emotional and mental health issues and I am currently attending counseling to resolve them.

Referral Considerations in Value Objectivity Situations

A consultant-counselor helps solve problems in businesses and organizations to help things run more smoothly. They offer their expertise of human behavior to observe, collect data, provide support and offer suggestions to help rectify problem within the organization (PsychologySchoolGuide.net, 2020). For example, a company is seeing high turnover rate of employees. They hire a consultant-counselor to speak to employees figure out why they are

quitting. Once the consultant-counselor finds out many employees feel the manager's outlandish behavior is too much, they quit, it's up to the counselor to help the manager improve their communication style. I personally don't see myself being a consultant-counselor in a business or organization. My career path is more aimed to trying to teach others or opening my own private practice.

References

- Egan, G., & Reese, R. J. (2019). The skilled helper: A problem-management and opportunity-development approach to helping (11th ed.). Retrieved from <https://viewer.gcu.edu/MUj6UR>
- PsychologySchoolGuide.net. (2020). Consulting therapist career: Job duties, skills and education. Retrieved from <https://www.psychologyschoolguide.net/psychology-careers/consulting-therapist/>