INTERVIEWING

AS

A DIAGNOSTIC TOOL

IN

COUNSELLING

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DEDICATION

TO GOD ALMIGHTY - MY FATHER,
JESUS CHRIST - MY REDEEMER,
AND
HOLY SPIRIT - MY COMFORTER.
PREFACE

This book is designed to assist everyone who engages in the process of interviewing at one time or the other either as a professional or as a ‘lay man’ to have a better understanding of the process. The objectivity, insight and sensitivity of the interviewer in relation to the success of any interview can not be over-emphasized. If the interviewer is not careful, he may be distracted by the "story" of the interviewee to the extent that he may even forget the purpose of the interview. Nearly all interviews involve the process of obtaining information for the purpose of helping the interviewee.

The book presents in nine chapters the meaning, types and purposes of interviewing; essentials conditions for good interviewing; interviewer and the interviewee in the counselling relationship; observation and listening skills in interviewing; questioning and talking in interviewing; non-verbal communication and interviewing; things to watch out for in counselling interviews; the initial counselling interview and the progressive stages of the counselling interview. An adapted form of Counselling Interview Inventory is also included in this book as an appendix. Some revision questions are included towards the end of this book.

It could be inferred that without interviewing, there can not be counselling, while the reverse may not be quite true because people can engage in various forms of interviewing without counselling the interviewee. Interviewing, to be precise is an indispensable diagnostic tool in counselling.
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CHAPTER ONE

INTERVIEWING:- DEFINITIONS, TYPES AND PURPOSES.

Interviewing is an everyday affair in which everyone is involved at one time or the other. Parents interview their children about what goes on in their schools, prospective students are interviewed for admission into the secondary school, housewives interview the market women about the source and quality of their wares, applicants are interviewed for employment by the prospective employers. Because of the nature of their work, doctors, nurses, lawyers, judges, policemen social workers, personnel managers spend a lot of their time in interviewing and talking with people, to get information from them, helping and advising them.

Counsellors and social workers are ‘interviewers par excellence’ because their tasks tend to make them professional interviewers.

Counselling is closely linked with interviewing. The definition of counselling by Olayinka (1993) as “a face-to-face, person-to-person relationship in which a person (the client) seeks the help of or seek to effectively communicate with another person (the counsellor)” highlight this linkage as can be deduced from a survey of the definitions of interviewing by various authors.

Definitions of Interviewing - A survey.

Stoops (1959) defines the interview as “a face-to-face relationship which can provide much information about a pupil not otherwise obtainable and it is also the best method to present information to the pupil, since it provides an opportunity for both counsellor and pupil to develop valuable insights while in the process”.

Walter, (1961) defines interview as “purposeful conversation which
permits exchange of information, understanding of how others feel, and planning of future activities”. He explains further that despite advances in more subtle and complex techniques, the interview often remains the best method of finding out about children.

Frazer (1966) sees interviewing operationally “as a human interaction between two people most directly concerned for information gathering”.

Garrett, (1972) declares that the obvious fact about interviewing is that “it involves communication between two people” and that interviewing is “an art, a skilled technique that can be improved and eventually perfected primarily through continued practice”.

Napier, (1972) defines interview as “an oral type of questionnaire whereby the subject supplies needed information in a face-to-face relationship”.

Sax, (1974) views interview as “oral interactions between a respondent and an interrogator” and that it is “a non disguised intrusive, controlled observation of an individual’s behaviour in one to one situation”.

Also, Ubeku (1975) defines interview as “a way of knowing the professionals skill, interest, attitude and personality of an individual possesses towards a particular job so that he can be productive on the long run”.

Shertzer & Stone (1976) define interview as “a process of supplementing information gathered in other ways through conversation between two parties - interviewer and interviewees”. 
Watson (1978) sees interviewing as a meeting of person face-to-face for formal discussion. He goes further to explain it as "a formal meeting between an applicant for example, for a job and the person who is to examine his qualification".

According to Powney and Watts (1987) "An interview is a method of obtaining information about or from an individual usually through interaction with one individual.

Olayinka (1990) describes interviewing as "a face-to-face discussion between the counsellor and the client".

Olayinka (1993) refers to interviewing as the "interaction between the counsellor and the counsellor which is intended to help the counsellor develop problem solving techniques to solve his own problems".

Inspite of the basic fact that interview has been numerously defined and from various perspectives, these numerous definitions still boil down to the fact that "interview is a conversation between two or more people with the main purpose of deriving or eliciting information".

Interviewing can therefore be defined as a method of eliciting information from a person within a relatively short time by means of a standardized or an informal conversational situation. It is based on a process of communication or interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee. It is an oral type of questionnaire whereby the subject supplies needed information in a face-to-face relationship. A good interview is based on proper and appropriate motivation provided by the interviewer to the interviewee to achieve the desired satisfaction.

However because patterns of communication vary from cul-
ture to culture, some patterns of verbal and non-verbal behaviours are normative, hence the need for one to be mindful of the cultural differences while dealing with or discussing with another person of different cultural background.

CLASSIFICATION OF INTERVIEWS

Three main bases of classifying interviews are as follow:

(i) Function of the Interview

(ii) Number of persons participating in the interview.

(iii) Roles assumed by the interviewer and the interviewee.

![Diagram of Interview Types]

- Function: Diagnostic, Clinical, Research
- Participants: Non-directive, Focused, Depth
- Interviewee: Individual, Group
- Interviewer: Single Interviewer, Panel of Interviewers
Diagnostic interview:

This type of interview is used frequently in clinic and counseling session as well as by social workers. It proposes to locate the possible causes of an individual's problems through getting information about his past history, family relations and personal adjustment problem etc.

Clinical Interview:

Following the screening or diagnostic interview, clinical interview takes place as a means of introducing the patient/client to therapy. It may take the form of guiding friends and relatives (rather than the patient himself) in their dealings with the patient, or of an exit or termination interview before the patient is discharged from the clinic.

Research Interview:

For purposes of research, interview may be used as a tool for gathering data required by the investigator to test his hypothesis or solve his problems of historical, experimental, survey or clinical type.

Individual and Group Interviews:

Individual interviews, that is, the practice of interviewing one person at a time were much common in the past than the group interviews. But group interviews are now popular.

A proper setting for group interview requires a group of not more than 10 to 12 persons with some social, intellectual and edu-
A circular seating arrangement with the interviewer seated in a conspicuous place within the group is conducive to full and spontaneous participation of all. Group interview may have an advantage in the range of responses over the individual interview due to the process of group interaction.

It may, on the other hand, suffer from certain disadvantages if the group interaction turns into controversies or discussion which are unrelated to the topic, or in which aggressive members monopolise the discussion at the cost of others. The topic may not get fully explored in details if certain members hesitate to express significant responses in a quasi-public situation.

**Single interviewer / Panel of interviewers:**

Both individual and group interviews may be conducted by a single interviewer or a panel of interviewers, according to the design and purpose of the interview. Usually, interviews for selection and treatment purposes are held by a panel of interviewers composed of experts in different but related fields. Interviews for research purposes as well as counselling purpose are held by the single interviewer/investigator. The number of interviewers in a panel should not be more than three or four as a large panel tends to scare and confuse the respondents.

**Another classification of interviews could be:-**

(a) Non- Directive / unstructured
(b) Directive / structured
(c) Focused
(d) Clinical and
(e) Depth interviews.
In relation to the socio-psychological process of interaction, the interviewer and interviewee may assume different roles to suit the requirement of the interview. Non-directive, focused and depth interviews are terms used for types of interview which are all unstructured or unrestricted by a definite series of preplanned questions. In these types of interview the subject matter and field of inquiry may be definite but the interviewer is largely free to arrange the form and order of the questions, depending on the interviewee's peculiar nature.

(a) **Non Directive/unstructured interviews:**

The chief advocates of the unstructured interview have been clinical psychologists including counsellors like Carl Rogers (the brain behind the client centered therapy) who have used extensively the type of interview in which the conversation is left to the volition of the client. The argument has been that since the causes of particular characteristic of behaviour vary from person to person, questions that are appropriate for probing in one case are inappropriate in another. The clinician feels a need to vary his tactics as the situation demands. The non-directive interview includes questions of the open-end form and permit much freedom to the interviewee to talk freely about the problems under study. The flexibility of the unstructured or partially structured interview, if properly used, help to bring out the effective and value-laden aspects of the subject’s responses and to determine the personal significant of this attitudes. Not only does it permit the subject’s definition of the interviewing situation to receive full and detailed expression, it also elicit the personal and social context of beliefs and feelings of the client. This type of interview achieves its purpose to the extent that the subject’s responses are spontaneous rather than forced, are highly
specific and concrete rather than being diffused and general, are self revealing and personal rather than being superficial.

In non-directive interviewing, the interviewer's function is simply to encourage the respondent to talk about given topic with a minimum of direct questioning. He encourages the respondent to talk fully and freely by being alert to the feelings expressed in the statements of the respondent and by warm, but noncommittal, recognition of the subject's feelings.

The non-directive interviewer serves as a catalyst to a comprehensive expression of the subject’s feelings and beliefs and of the frame of reference within which his feelings and beliefs take on personal significance. To achieve this result the interviewer must create a completely permissive atmosphere, in which the subject is free to express himself without fear of disapproval, admonition dispute, and without advice from the interviewer.

(b) Directive or structured interview:

The directive or structure interview is usually a standardized form of interview which is the sort in which both the questions and the alternative responses offered to the interviewee are predetermained. In such interviews, the questions are presented with exactly the same wording and in the same order, to all interviewees. The reason for standardization is to ensure that all respondent are replying to the same question. If one interviewee is asked “would you like to see Family Support Programme (FSP) scrapped next year” and another is asked “do you think scrapping Family Support Programme (FSP) next year is desirable?”, the answers may not be comparable. Differences in question order may influence the meaning and implications of a given question.

Standardized interviews may differ in the amount of structuring of the questions used. They may present fixed alternative an
answers in which the responses of the subjects are limited stated alternatives. This approach is similar to the questionnaire approach. The only reason for using interview instead of written questionnaire is to reach subjects who are either not willing or not able to fill out questionnaire.

Structured interviews can also leave the respondent free to answer in his own words by using open-ended questions. This type's characteristic is that it merely raises an issue but does not provide or suggest any structure for the respondent's reply; respondent is given opportunity to answer in his own terms and in his own frame of reference for example, A student might be asked “Adeolu, what go you think about life on Unilag campus”.

Directive/structured interview is appropriately used in Research and tends to be very inappropriate for clinical interview. However, before a closed-question interview schedule is constructed, it should be preceded by more intensive, freer interviews with a sample of the population in order to discover the range of probable responses, the dimensions that are seen as relevant and the various interpretations that may be made of the question wordings. On the basis of such preliminary exploration, more meaningful closed questions can be formulated.

(c) Focused interview:

The focused interview concentrates on some particular event or experience rather than on general lines of inquiry about it. It aims at determining the responses of individuals to specific communication situations like a movie or speech. According to Ivey (1988) the main function of the interviewer is to focus attention upon a given experience and its effect. He knows in advance what topics or what aspects a question wishes to cover. This list of topics or aspects is derived from his formulation of the research
problem, from his analysis of the situation or experience in which the researcher has participated, and from the hypotheses based on psychological or sociological consideration. Such list constitute a frame work of topics to be covered but the manner in which questions are asked and their timing is left largely to the interviewer’s discretion. He has freedom to explore reasons and motives, to probe further in directions that were unanticipated. Although the respondent is free to express completely his own line of thought, the directions of the interview is clearly in the hands of the interviewer. He wants definite types of information and part of his task is to confine the respondent to discussion of the issue about which he wants knowledge.

The focused interview has been effectively used in the development of hypotheses about which aspects of a specific experience leads to change in attitude on the part of those exposed to it. The interviewer, being equipped in advance with the content analysis of the stimulus experience, can usually distinguish the objective facts of the case from the subjective definitions of the situation. Thus, he is alerted to the possibility of “selective perception” and prepared to explore its implications.

From these analyses, we can now broaden the definition of focused interview to be any interview in which the interviewer knows in advance what specific aspects of an experience he wants to have the interviewee cover in his discussion, whether or not the he (the interviewer) has observed or analyzed the specific situation in which the interviewee participated.

(d) Clinical interview:

Similar to the focused interview is clinical interview, the primary difference being that the clinical interview is concerned with broad underlying feelings or motivations or with the course of the
individual's life experiences rather than with the effects of a specific experience.

In this type of interview, too, the interviewer knows what aspects of feelings or experience he wants the client to talk about, but again the method of eliciting the information is left to his discretion. The “personal history” interview used in social case work, psychiatric clinics, counselling and social research is a common type of clinical interview. The specific aspect of the individual’s life history which the interview is to cover are determined by the purpose for which the information is being gathered.

(e) The Depth interview:

This is an intensive and searching type of interview with emphasis on such psychological and social factors as attitudes, emotions or conviction. It is an elongation of the clinical interview. It determines the respondent’s degree of detachment or attachment towards an experience or activity. It usually involves flexibility of the interviewing situation, focus on feelings and a restatement of implied or expressed feelings.

THE PURPOSES OF INTERVIEWING

The purpose of an interview would influence the method of conducting the interview tremendously. Some interviews are directed primarily towards obtaining information, some primarily toward giving help; most, however, involve a combination of the two. The main purpose is to obtain knowledge of the problem to be solved and sufficient understanding of the person troubled and of the situation so that the problem can be solved effectively.

Although the interviewer should be clearly aware of his purposes, it is not always advisable to seek to realize them by direct
action. Even when considerable information is desired, it is often best obtained by encouraging the client to talk freely of his problem rather than by asking him pointed questions. People are sensitive about their personal lives, family skeletons, poverty, past mistakes, and so on, and clear direct inquiry may alienate a client and cause him to erect protective barriers against what may seem to him unwarranted intrusion. But once convinced of the counsellor’s sensitive understanding, of his desire to know not out of wanton curiosity but only in order to help, and of the confidential nature of the relationship, the client would welcome an opportunity to talk about things that he would have suppressed earlier on.

The specific kinds of help an interviewer can render and consequently the specific sort of information he will seek, are determined to a considerable extent by the need of the interviewee. He may, for example, want to obtain the kind of information that will be needed to offer referral service for medical aid, or the kind needed for financial assistance, job placement, or employment. Within his general field he will be guided by the indications his client gives him of the special facts involved in the particular case. He will first listen to his client’s statement of his need and then guide the interview along those channels that seem most appropriate to the specific circumstance of the situation. A good counsellor alters his strategy for reaching a given objective according to changes in the situation, and as a good interviewer he should modify his techniques as circumstance demand.

If it is the counsellor that has initiated an interview and invited the client in, such a client should be put quickly at ease and be relieved of uncertainty in the face of the unknown by a straightforward statement, in terms the client can readily grasp, of the counsellor’s purpose in asking him to come in for an interview. When the interviewee asks for the appointment, the situations is a little different. So rather than greet the client with a barrage of questions and demand he is interested in answering, he should consider that the interview is for his own good and for the good of his client or is it the client who initiated the interview and asked for an appointment?
questions, it is better to let him state in his own words his problem and his purpose for coming in for an interview. Sometimes the client is nervous and incoherent, but he is most quickly reassured if he is allowed to begin the interview in his own way. Often the interviewer can learn much even from the hesitancy and indirect way in which the client approaches the account of his difficulty and problem.

Many people who come to the counsellor for advice are considerably troubled by their problems, as is evidenced by the fact that their anxieties have risen to such a pitch as to drive them to take the step of seeking for help. This anxiety may make it difficult for them to see their problems distinctly or state them clearly. A man who comes in to seek for a job may really need marital counselling or vice versa. A woman who expresses anxiety about the development of her children may have more real need to discuss her troubled relationship with her husband or her boss in the office.

The counsellor should keep in mind the possibility that his client is suffering from some trouble more difficult than he realises or is able to state. He should endeavour by various methods to put his client at ease, to stimulate him to talk relatively freely about his problem, and to help him to organize his own confused thoughts and feelings about his difficulties. Sometimes talking about the situation to a sympathetic listener will itself lead to a satisfactory resolution. The client's thoughts may be organised so clearly that he himself sees what action he should take. His fears and hesitancies may be removed, and then he may be encouraged to take whatever action is necessary.

But many times just talking may not be enough, hence the desirability of looking beyond manifest purposes to more fundamental latent ones that may be present.

It is, of course, possible to probe too far. Some sleeping dogs should be left undisturbed, particularly when the interviewer is not
equipped to deal with them should they be aroused. Even a skilled interviewer should use a good deal of discretion and wisdom in going beneath the surface.

There is a need for flexibility due to the fact that interviews bring to the light new knowledge of purposes and needs as well as new information about the relevant facts. The interviewer should therefore not let his plan of action be unalterably fixed in advance or determined too early in the interview.

The interview, with skillful interviewers, is much superior to other data-gathering devices required in counselling because:

- people are usually more willing to talk than to write, especially on intimate, confidential topics.
- the purpose and meaning of questions can be better explained to get valid responses.
- the sincerity and insight of the interviewee can be judged through cross-questioning.
- a depth of responses can be achieved in areas where human motivation is revealed in the reasons for actions, feelings and attitudes concerned.
- there is no chance for the client/respondent to edit his earlier answers in the light of later questions and thus disturb the advantage of saliency of the questions.

Often the interview is used for practical purposes, other than for data-gathering for research. It is also used for occupational adjustment, selection of candidates for education or employment, psychiatric work, commercial or social survey and legal proceedings, etc.
CHAPTER TWO

SOME ESSENTIAL CONDITIONS FOR GOOD INTERVIEWING

Certain conditions are essential for good interviewing to take place. In fact, understanding and skill may be invalidated unless certain specific preparations are made for interviewing and certain precautions are taken. Some of these conditions include:-

(A) Physical Setting of the Interview,
(B) Background Knowledge of the Interviewer
(C) Recording or jotting down of points
(D) The issue of confidentiality
(E) The length of the interview

(A) The Physical Setting:

The physical setting of the interview could serve as a potent determinant of its success or otherwise. Some degree of privacy is necessary to allow the client to open up to the interviewer. The setting should be comfortable and with relaxed atmosphere. The interviewee is not encouraged to give much information if the interviewer seems busy with other things, if people are rushing about and there are distracting noises. He would prefer to have the undivided attention of the interviewer during the interview. Interruptions and telephone calls should therefore be reduced to the nearest minimum. If the interviewee has waited in a crowded room for what seems to him a very long period, he may naturally not be in the mood to sit down and discuss what is on his mind. By that time the primary things on his mind may be his irritation at being kept
waiting, and he might feel it would be impolite to express his annoyance. If delay or interruptions have been unavoidable, it is always helpful to give the clients some recognition that these are disturbing and that we can naturally understand that they make it more difficult for him to proceed. At the same time, if he protests that they have not troubled him, we can best accept his statements at their face value further insistence that they must have been disturbing may be interpreted by him as accusing and he may conclude that we have been personally hurt by his irritation.

(B) Background Knowledge:

An interviewer is expected to possess certain body of knowledge, some specific and some general. The specific knowledge concerns the special purposes of counselling. The amount of such specific information required is often considerable, but it varies greatly from one orientation to another. On the other hand, there is a more general body of knowledge that every interviewer, no matter what orientation he is associated with, should command.

(C) Recording or Jotting down of points:

It might be better if interviewer can set aside a few minutes immediately after each interview for jotting down full notes concerning it, he will be saved the necessity of making many notes during the course of the interview itself. There are usually certain factual things - names, addresses, date, ages, places of previous residence or employment and so on - that are normally written down as soon as they are mentioned. The interviewee would regard it as been natural for them to be noted and is not disturbed by the momentary pauses needed for writing them out.

If note taking goes much beyond this point, however, the interviewee may feel that he is not getting full attention, and the dynamic may be interpreted by him as accusing and he may conclude that he has been personally hurt by his irritation.

A better alternative is to note down an outline of the interview and come out with that. The interviewer would note that the interviewee is not_getting full attention account. As the interview progresses, dynamic may come out more proper now.

Detail concerning may be attended view, but guiding should be done after the interview.

(D) The interviewee's role and talk in it

The interviewee has to answer the questions and talk in it.
interviewee may easily feel that he does not have the interviewer's full attention and may be distracted from the normal progress of his account. Also the interviewer's own participation may be interrupted or blocked by the exigencies of writing. Certainly when dynamic material is being revealed, the full attention of both interviewer and interviewee should be on the material itself. Even when an interviewer has an outline that must be filled in, he does not need to do so extensively. Often the answers to many questions would come out naturally in the course of the interview and can be inserted later.

A beginning interviewer may need to make a number of notes as he goes along. An open notebook in which these may be jotted down unobstructively may be of great help. With practice he finds that he can rely increasingly on mental notes rather than on written ones. Just a word or two in the already open notebook suffices to enable him to recall a whole phase of the conversation. With still more practice he finds that he can recall in amazing detail the full course of an interview.

Detailed notetaking should be replaced by understanding listening combined with guiding participation. An interviewers primary attention should not be on the record to be made of the interview, but on putting the client at ease, encouraging him to talk freely, guiding his conversation into the desired paths, interpreting and reinterpreting the clues given by his words and behaviour.

(D) The issue of confidentiality:

The client should be given some reassurance as to the confidential nature of the interview to enable the interviewee to go ahead and talk freely about what is troubling him and to even give information that is generally known might involve him with the courts or the school authority or create further family discord.
If interviewers are to build up respect for the confidential nature of their relationship with clients, they must in practice warrant this respect. Because of the relationship between the interviewer and the interviewee, the interviewee is often led to reveal himself more fully than he has to others and it is the interviewers responsibility not to misuse this confidence. It is sometimes tempting to use incident from an interview as anecdotes in a social gathering of colleagues. This practice may seem harmless because it does not directly affect the client, but actually it should be avoided, for it gives the impression to others that we take the confidences given us lightly.

The record should not be removed from the office not only because of the danger of its loss but also because of its confidential nature. It goes without saying that a case record should be used privately.

(F) The length of the interview:

This is dependent on the purpose of the interview that no optimum period of time can be fixed. In counselling practice, however, there is a great advantage in having the client know ahead of time that he will have a certain amount of time by appointment and that he may use it all or not, as he wishes. At times interviews may be as brief as fifteen minutes; in others, longer periods are necessary. In general, it is seldom helpful to have the interview last more than an hour. Interviews lasting several hours exhaust both the interviewee and the interviewer. They may indicate that the client has been trapped into telling more than he wanted to or that the interview has been inefficiently conducted so that too much time has been consumed in rambling. The fact that the client knows that his interview will terminate at a definite time may stimulate him to organise his material and present it concisely. There may be more than one may be what he lapse of view with direction for the mid.

It is views that aspects by the most efficient equacy that We est effic roundn during th
than one session of interview instead of having long interview, it may be better for the client to have time to digest and think over what he has said and what has been said to him and then after the lapse of an interval permitting the client to reflect, a second interview will be more effective. It gives the client a greater sense of direction and security if he and the interviewer fix a definite time for the next appointment rather than leaving it open.

It is desirable for an interviewer to have time between interviews to think over each interview quietly and note any significant aspects of it. Though efficiency is important, it cannot be measured by the number of interviews conducted within a given period. Rather, efficiency in the interview relationship is proportional to the adequacy of understanding that is obtained and such understanding that would make effective help possible. In the long run the greatest efficiency will be achieved by giving the client comfortable surroundings, undivided attention, and ample time to express himself during the interview.
CHAPTER THREE

THE INTERVIEWER AND THE INTERVIEWEE IN THE COUNSELLING RELATIONSHIP

It is important to note that the counsellor is being referred to as the Interviewer while the client is the interviewee in this context.

The interviewer’s effect

The interviewer is a human being, with unconscious as well as conscious motivation, ambivalence, prejudices and objective and subjective reasons for his behaviour. He brings to his relationship with the interviewee his own predetermined attitudes, which may profoundly affect that relationship. He has a natural tendency to impute to others his own feelings and may thus seriously misunderstand his client’s situation and problem. If he is unable to bear frustration or poverty, he may find it difficult to comprehend his client’s toleration of it. An interviewer who finds it difficult to reveal himself to others may decide that a client should not be “probed”, when as a matter of facts the client wants nothing so much as to be helped to talk. This goes a long way to prove that the interviewer needs to be particularly aware of his feelings in order to be able to help the client satisfactorily.

An interviewer who learns that he should be non-judgmental, should not become angry, should not become dependent upon the interviewee’s affection and response, may try to suppress his feelings, and as a result he may become artificial and stilted in his responses. It would be better to recognize the existence of such feelings and to learn to control their expression, for these feelings are
not unnatural but merely inappropriate in the professional situation. If an interviewer is aware that he is becoming angry, he is then in a position to regulate his own feelings better than if he denies to himself that he has such feelings. Control of feelings rather than absence of feelings on the part of the interviewer is what would achieve the right effect.

The interviewer's acceptance of the interviewee

It may not be easy to say how an interviewer can accept aberrant behaviour or attitude on the part of a client and yet maintain his own ethics and the community's standards. Interviewers sometimes learn that they should be accepting without knowing very clearly what is involved in acceptance.

In the upbringing of the individual, certain standards of behaviour are inevitably imposed, first by parents and later by the society. The individual in learning to condemn his own unacceptable behaviour, might include in his condemnation similar behaviour on the part of others. Toward almost every problem that a client brings, the interviewer has developed an attitude of approval or disapproval based on his own experiences and he tends to assume that this attitude represents the norm. As his professional training and experience grow, he learns to recognise that there is a wide range of individual variation in human responses to a given situation. This recognition may lead him to try to accept all such behaviour to refrain from evaluating it carefully. But this reaction clearly reveals and extremely limited understanding of the concept of acceptance. Real acceptance is primarily acceptance of the feelings given expression by behaviour and does not necessarily involve acceptance of unsocial behaviour. It involves positive and active understanding of these feelings and not merely passive refusal to pass judgement concerning them. A merely passive attitude of not passing judge-
ment on a client’s unusual behaviour is often interpreted by him as a condoning of that behaviour, a repudiation of a standard he himself accepts but has failed to live up to.

The success of interview technique depend on the skill of the person conducting the interview. The person must know how to enlist cooperation from the respondent, how to ask question tactfully that relate to the subject of concern to the respondent, how to obtain the desired information and how to avoid projecting his bias or permit the respondent to give only partial answer to questions. Training of interviewers are necessary to achieve this aim.

Some of the factors invalidating result can be viewed as follow:

**The interviewer's prejudices**

We often remark about the prejudices of others but seldom are conscious of our own, for in our own case we regard them as natural opinions. When we are irritated or enthusiastic, when we react with anger, disgust, shame, pride or love it seems as if such situation would naturally cause such feelings in any normal person. A helpful step in discovering our own prejudice is to jot down a list of those we know others to possess. A little self scrutiny will then convince us that these are not as salient to our attitudes as we may have assumed them to be.

We usually think of prejudices as large, overall attitudes, such as race prejudice, class prejudice, religious prejudice and political prejudice. But we should be concerned also with smaller matters subtler and more easily escaping notice. Such as our dislikes of loud people, skinny people, fat people, show offs, weak men, aggressive women etc.

While some interviewers would prefer self sufficient clients
who would state their cases inclusively, others may prefer meek and shy clients who need considerable help to express their needs, few can avoid responding with warm satisfaction to “grateful” client.

A comparison of our own list of prejudices with those of others will reveal the great variety in different individuals attitudes toward the same sort of occurrence. For example, everyone has distinct ideas of his own as to what is really intolerable. Some can easily tolerate and attempt to understand the alcoholic but find a lazy person intolerable. For another laziness stirs no personal emotion but lying is an unpardonable sin. Some one might say “I don't care what a person does so long as he is honest. I cannot bear to be deceived”.

In any interview in which one person conducts an inquiry into the inner life of another, the situation can be described as involving an observer and a person responding to an observer. The responses are a result of the behaviour of the observer and the characteristic of the observed. Therefore relatively minor changes in the behaviour of the observer could produce quite pronounced changes in that of the observed. So what you (interviewer) note is not only the product of the interviewee’s behaviour but also his reaction to you as an interviewer, and a person. Hence the following noted by Cross (1974) should be taken into consideration.

- Unless the interviewer is able to manifest uniform pattern of behaviour to all respondent he injects other confounding variable into the process. This may not be intended even by the respondent.

- Interviewing procedures usually assume that a person interviewed has insight into the causes of his behaviour. The assumption that it is possible to discover the causes of behaviour by means of a short interview is a conception of psychological research that has long been questioned.
There are difficulties in quantifying the data provided by the interview. Their variation in structure make it very difficult to quantify hence what is done mostly is to rate certain characteristics of the interviewee’s behaviour.

A person who is being studied by another may not be willing to give himself away. There is a real difference between the behaviour of a person who visits a clinical psychologist in order to seek help and a person who is not motivated in this way to lay bare his inner most thoughts. The latter will be very defensive and unwilling to reveal what is in his mind. These factors constitute impediments to the validity of the data raised through interview.

The development of excessive negative or positive feeling by the client's is often alarming to the interviewer who may be unaware of having done anything to arouse such feelings. An interviewer tends to want his client to like him, but sometimes in his eagerness to achieve this end he might encourage more dependency than he had realized was potentially present. A counsellor should realize that the development of an emotional rapport, positive or negative, between the client and himself is not abnormal but inevitable and that he should direct his attention not to eliminating this relationship but to controlling its nature and intensity. He must guard against misleading the client into an overly dependent relationship through appearing too personal friendly or appearing to promise too much, but he must at the same time, not lean over backward in avoiding this danger and make the client feel that he is an unresponsive and unsympathetic listener.

But if an interviewer notices that the relationship with his client seems to be developing negatively, he should not become overly alarmed, because the client’s attitudes may be due not at all to the interviewer but to factors deeply hidden in his (client) personality. He should review his own activity in interviews and make sure that
he has given no objective grounds for the antagonism the client seems to feel toward him. He may have given inadequate help, broken an appointment, or have developed negative feelings towards the client of which he was not fully aware. If there are no such objective sources of his client negativism, he can assure the client by a continued attempt to understand the reasons for his difficulties, that he (the interviewer) is not retaliating with disapproval of his own.

Reflected clients and the counselling interview

Many clients come to see a counsellor on a voluntary basis. These clients recognize that they have an unresolved problem - they have the motivation to obtain professional assistance, and they have made a commitment to involve themselves in the change process. Other clients, however, are referred to a counsellor involuntarily. They are compelled to enter the process by some pressure outside themselves. Dyer and Friend (1975) maintain that most of the clients seen in institutional settings are involuntary. Most of the referred clients may turn out to be

(a) The Resistant but committed client
(b) Reluctant and uncommitted client

(a) The Resistant but committed client

The resistant client may have volunteered to come for help, entered into the relationship, and became at least superficially involved in the counselling process but is unwilling to change his or her feelings, thoughts or overt behaviours. This resistance to reach a decision, to recognize symptoms, or to give up self-defeating activities is counterproductive for the client and quite frustrating for the counsellor. Some believe that resistance is pervasive through-
out all counselling and therefore present to some extent with every client (Peterson & Nisenholz, 1987).

Learning about oneself and taking the steps to change self-defeating thoughts, feelings or behaviour can be threatening. This resistance often is not a conscious attempt to thwart the counselling process, but it is a real barrier to progress. The resistance to avoid dealing with the issues and doing any hard work takes many forms. Some clients are silent, some appear very tired and listless, some act quite forgetful or evasive, some hide behind a barrage of words, and others become quite defensive or argumentative.

A counsellor can learn to deal with this resistance when clients manifest it. By anticipating that it may occur and not become anxious or defensive. By continuously showing, a warm, caring and concerned interest in the client. By trying to understand what is causing the resistance: whether there is an overt or covert payoff for the client if he or she does not change. And finally by dealing with the resistance in a constructive and helpful way. There are several alternative ways to handle this resistance positively. If the resistance is relatively mild, it may be best to ignore it and move ahead. If the resistance is more serious, you may wish to downplay it and direct the client to move ahead with the next step in the counselling process. If the client is highly anxious and fearful of moving forward, humour and diversionary tactics may be helpful. Gladding (1988) suggests that it is helpful to have clients take steps to do something quite minor and then somethings quite major, or to ask them to do something impossible and then something quite reasonable. Either way, some action is accomplished and a resistance block may be broken. Another way to handle this situation is to help the client understand that resistance is present and use the client’s awareness of it as part of the counselling process.
(b) The Reluctant and Uncommitted Client

Scissons (1993) describes the reluctant client as one who is unmotivated to seek help; if it was left up to this person, he or she would never talk to a counsellor. The counselling process is not seen as a reasonable or realistic approach. When a reluctant client does appear and starts this process, the likelihood that the counselling process will be incomplete is strong unless you take some effort to prevent this. In school and other institutional settings, involuntary clients include students referred for poor classroom achievement, disciplinary concerns, and other maladaptive or ill-advised behaviours. In rehabilitation and other community agencies, uncommitted clients may be referred by a concerned or overwhelmed parent, another agency, or the courts.

These uncommitted clients may be unwilling to become committed for a variety of reasons. Many see the counselling process as an affront to their own self-concepts. They believe that the way they are functioning is okay; any action showing a willingness to change or seek help is an admittance of their own weakness, a sign of failure. Others see the counsellor as part of the system that they are already at odds with - the very authorities who have caused the client difficulty are now using one of their colleagues to set the client straight! Still others are reluctant to change because their ill-advised behaviour may have given them some status with their peer group. Thus any change in behaviour will necessarily result in a change of status, and that may be quite undesirable. Others see the counsellor as a person who is trying to control their lives; therefore the clients’ attempts to be independent are threatened.

Client reluctance is manifested in many ways. Reluctant clients may refuse to discuss anything, and when they do they nod, shrug their shoulders or give short answers to any and all questions. Counsellors who are not prepared to deal with reluctant clients may
intensify their questioning, creating an interrogative atmosphere: they may eventually find out that they are not achieving much and their reluctant clients remain minimal communicators.

Another reluctant group consists of the avoiders, who are seemingly quite agreeable and compliant. They are willing to talk about anything and everything but the real issues. Their avoidance of work on the important topics is signalled by their loquaciousness, silly actions, or willingness to work only on small inconsequential concerns. Reluctance is shown in a third way by clients who have excuses for everything they do. Their defense mechanisms are powerful and serve as a protective shield. Another way that this unwillingness is displayed is by hostile actions. The angry client appears to have no tolerance for any institution or system and vents this hostility at the least provocation.

Handling the uncommitted and involuntary client is difficult for any counsellor and extremely frustrating for the beginning counsellor. Trying to deal with this type of client can cause counsellors to blame themselves, feel a sense of personal failure, and develop a lower professional self-regard. Furthermore, when little progress is made in counselling, there is a very strong possibility that a counsellor will reinforce the client's reluctance. This behaviour is reinforced by being impatient, ignoring the client's signals; getting upset and directing irritation at the client, to whom one should be sending signals of positive regard; and ultimately giving up and refusing to do any further work with the unwilling client.

To deal with an uncommitted client, the counsellor should first be aware of the need to establish realistic expectations for the client and the counselling session. Formulating realistic expectations will help to prevent feelings of frustration and positively influence the counselling process. There is need to continue communicating a warm, deep respect for the client because unless the client feels that the counsellor is on his or her side, the reluctance will be main-
tained. Also the client’s feeling of self and self-expression must be
dealt with in the counselling process. The reluctant client’s major
interest is the self. Therefore, almost any technique that enhances
the client’s self-understanding will serve to reduce or lower the
reluctance. Therefore, reluctance should be dealt with as it comes up
in counselling. As in dealing with any other deeply felt issue, the
counsellor will need to help the client gain an understanding of the
reluctance, become aware of this reluctance, and take steps to deal
with it in an effective manner. He must be in touch with the client,
acknowledge his or her feelings, and interpret the client’s behaviours
correctly.

The counsellor can say to the client; “Your reluctance to dis-
cuss this important topic may be saying to both of us that you are
quite comfortable in staying where you are”; or “Your not wanting
to discuss the important issues appears to be counterproductive”.
Counsellors can anticipate how they will work with reluctant cli-
ents by simulating these cases before they occur using role-playing
and role-reversal techniques.

Strategies that go beyond those used within the typical dyadic
counselling process are frequently very helpful when working with
reluctant clients. Many effective strategies have been developed to
work with clients who manifest ill-advised behaviours. In order to
help clients overcome some self-defeating behaviours, the counsell-
or may need to work with significant other persons in the client’s
world.

Silence and the counselling interview

Both the resistant but committed client and the reluctant and
uncommitted client can employ silence as a cover up. In the ordi-

nary social communication process, silence is often interpreted as a
negative response. If a person says something, he or she normally

expects a response. However, silence can be a very effective tool during a counselling interview. Used correctly, it is an active and positive response mode that fits into any number of the counsellor’s role functions.

For instance, silence actively demonstrates the counsellor’s capacity to attend and to listen to a client. Used as an attending response, silence can show that you are sincerely interested in your client and what he or she has to say. This receptive role provides the client the opportunity and indeed, in some cases, the pressure to speak about and focus on his or her problem. Used in this way, silence conveys the message “I care about you and I am interested in what you have to say”. According to Okun (1987), there are times when silence is the only effective way to attend to a reluctant client.

**Attending** has been defined by Doyle (1992) as the process of actively listening to another person and reporting back to that person what you believe was communicated to you. Attending responses include simple minimal verbals, reflections of content and feelings, accents, paraphrases, and nonverbal signals. Good responses are characterised by demonstrating interest in the other person, maintaining appropriate body language, responding to the underlying feeling and content of the other person, and employing appropriate tonal qualities in your voice. Silence can also show support for the client and provide motivation for the client to speak. Silently waiting for another person to speak indicates that you believe that the client is a significant person and worthy to be heard. For clients who are shy or less articulate, silence can actively show openness and respect and provide space for a client to speak. Silence also communicates to clients that they have the responsibility for major inputs in the counselling process. A counsellor-in-training will need to learn to use silence in this motivating way and avoid the temptation to talk or fill in to remove pressure from the client.
The counselor's silence provides an opportunity for the client to clarify his or her thoughts and feelings. This reflective use of silence allows the client to sort out, think about, and reflect on what has occurred so far in the interview. The client may periodically need to stop, observe what is going on, and gain some insights into his or her progress in the counseling session. This use of silence allows your client the space for his or her own growth-producing thoughts. According to Evans, Hearns, Uhlemann & Ivey (1989), clarifying is the process of clearing up any confusion that may be present in the counseling process. Clarification responses include perception checking, clarification among alternatives, and requests for elaboration. High level responses focus on critical issues or situations that need clarification and demonstrate a sincere and genuine interest in the client.

Silence can be used in the probing or inquiring mode. This inquisitive use of silence can be employed when you actively encourage the client to elaborate on a topic; focus on or delve deeper into a particular thought, feeling, or action; or perhaps weigh alternative courses of action. Silence used in this way communicates that more client information, thought processes, or insights are to be developed and expressed. Using silence as a quest for information reinforces to clients that they have responsibility for progress in the counseling session.

Silence is used in the resistive sense. This use of silence occurs when either you, the client, or both of you are intellectually or emotionally fatigued, or when the session has moved too quickly and a pause to rest is needed. You can employ this response mode to slow down the pace of the interview.

Silence is not an indiscriminate tool that can be used in an unsystematic, passive way. It must be used at appropriate times—that is, when it will enhance the role functions. The indiscriminate
use of silence often reveals a counsellor who is passive and reactive rather than dynamic and active.

According to Scissens (1993), passive silence is the hallmark of a counsellor who takes minimal responsibility for the therapeutic process. Beginning counsellors may use silence unintentionally for it does provide the beginning counsellor with a reflective time to understand the client’s internal frame of reference and to try to determine what to do next. However, this unintentional use of silence frequently serves concurrently as another role function for the client and hence can be a productive response for the client as well as for the counsellor.

A counsellor, should also be aware of the reasons clients use silence. Silence is used when clients are in resistive, reflective, inquisitive, or exhaustive stages.

The client’s resistive state may be caused by pain and discomforts or anger and hostility. In the former case, the client may find it hard to discuss something because it causes uneasiness or embarrassment. The client may not feel comfortable enough in the counselling relationship to reveal more about himself or herself (Brammer, 1988). In the latter case, the client may not want to discuss some aspect of the problem—the pain or discomfort may be too difficult to come to grips with in the session. When resistance is encountered, the relationship has not been well established, and as the counsellor you should focus on improving the relationship to enhance the trust between you and the client.

The client is in a reflective state when he or she is silently pondering something during the process of counselling. During this time of reflection, the client may be reviewing what has just occurred in counselling, thinking about what he or she wants to say, searching for some information that is not immediately at the conscious level, or solving some internal problem that may lead to some insight or step in the problem-solving process. This reflective use of silence (1988) on the counsellor’s part provides a means by which the counsellor can learn how to use silence rather than react to silence. It is important for the counsellor to become aware of the nature of the silence and to learn how to use it productively. The client’s use of silence and the counsellor’s response to it will modify the dialogue between the client and the counsellor, and in turn the outcome of the encounter. When the client expresses a need for silence, it is important for the counsellor to be aware of it and to respond to it in a productive manner. It is also important for the counsellor to be aware of his or her own use of silence and to be able to use it in a productive manner.

To be effective, the counsellor must be able to recognize the nature of the silence and to respond to it in a productive manner. The client’s use of silence and the counsellor’s response to it will modify the dialogue between the client and the counsellor, and in turn the outcome of the encounter. When the client expresses a need for silence, it is important for the counsellor to be aware of it and to respond to it in a productive manner. It is also important for the counsellor to be aware of his or her own use of silence and to be able to use it in a productive manner. To be effective, the counsellor must be able to recognize the nature of the silence and to respond to it in a productive manner.
The client is in an inquisitive state when he or she is confused and awaiting some action on the counsellor's part (Benjamin, 1987). Normally, the client is waiting for some information, support, evaluation, or assistance in the problem-solving process from the counsellor. You need to respond to this request for help in a way that will minimize a dependency relationship with the client. Frequently, it is in the best interest of the client and the counselling process to provide the information and assistance that is requested. However, to foster the client's sense of responsibility and to help the client learn how to do certain things, it is sometimes best to help the client learn how to obtain the information and assistance from others.

But because most counsellors-in-training have not learned how to use silence effectively in the counselling process, it often leads to rather awkward experiences. Learning how to use silence requires you to understand what clients are communicating by their pauses and to employ silence as an effective response.
CHAPTER FOUR

OBSERVATION AND LISTENING SKILLS IN INTERVIEWING

Interviewing might give the appearance of being a smooth and spontaneous interchange between the interviewer and the interviewee but the skill thus revealed is obtained only through careful study and years of practice. Even though it is possible to break down an interview into an number of component parts and discuss each separately, in actual interviewing, there is no sharp distinction. The interviewer must become conscious of the various components of interviewing before he can absorb them to his spontaneous responses. After being recognised in theory, they later become so much a part of the interviewer's skill that they are utilized naturally at each step without conscious notice. The major components are discussed as follow:

OBSERVATION: This pervades all aspects of interviewing. There are certain types of observation which are important in all interviewing. We should observe what the interviewee says and we should note equally what he does not say, what significant gaps there are in his story. We should note also such things as bodily tensions, excitability and dejection because they supplement and sometime even contradict, the picture given by the client's words.

Out of all the things to be observed, each interviewer will remark only a relatively small number. His selection will be determined by his own observational equipment as limited by his interest, prejudices, attitudes and training. Since it seems impossible to take note of things without adding a personal element of interpretation, his situation is usually similar to that of a detective who presents ideas as they develop, but as they seem. Security may be necessary. The essential point is that the observer is important, and his presence is important, at the scene of observation.
tion, he may even modify considerably in his own picture of the situation, the data actually presented to him.

That we cannot take for granted that our observation of an individual is accurate might initially be a blow to our self-confidence. However it may help to break down any preconceived ideas about our infallibility and pave the way to self-scrutiny and the development of a more observant capacity to seize up situations as they really are. It comes at first as a surprise that what seems like anger to one person may be sensed as anxiety by another. What seems like cocky self-assurance to one may be sensed as tense insecurity by another. What seems like “sweetness and light” to one may be recognised as hostility by another. Such differences in interpretation arise partly from the facts that people do not always behave and act as they feel, that they do not always say what they really mean, and that partly they are due to the fact that everyone necessarily looks at the rest of the world from his own immediate point of view, which always seems to him the natural, logical, sensible one. When an interviewer realizes that a client point of reference seems like the reasonable one to him, it becomes clear that it is important to attempt to understand how the situation looks from his viewpoint and why that seems to him to be the only correct way of looking at things. If we attempt to see the client’s points of view before trying to persuade him to accept what seems to us a more logical point of view, we may have at least begin to understand him.

Sometimes a client finds in the interviewer the first person in his experience who can listen understandingly and yet not intrude upon his feelings or attempt to redirect his behaviour. This experience for the client is sometimes surprisingly satisfying. As just noted, it alone is sometimes helpful. At other times it is merely one part of a helping process.

That people do not always say what they mean or act as they feel is continually apparent in interviewing.
Listening Skill

People listen for different purposes and with varying amounts of attention. For example, some people concentrate on discovering weak points in the speech of others. Whereas in counselling listening is a means of assisting people to clarify their thoughts and feelings and to increase their understanding of self, others and circumstances (Loughary and Ripley: 1979).

Listening is more than hearing. It is an active mental process which according to Gulley (1961) is made difficult in part because the mind can operate many times faster than the speaker can talk.

We do active, listening without passing judgement on what is being said, and mirroring back what has been said to indicate that we understand the feelings the client was putting across.

A listening statement is a simple declarative statement to a client followed by an implied question that asks “You said this or means this..... didn’t you”. Listening confirms your understanding of what another person is trying to tell you, and ensures that what someone wants to communicate to you and what you understand from him or her are similar in meaning. This communication from the client can be verbal or nonverbal, clear or vague (Egan, 1990).

The person who uses a listening style replies to the other person with an understanding of what has been communicated along with an implied question, “is that right”. These sets the stage for the other person to agree or disagree with the listener's perception and prevent misunderstandings.

A listening statement could sound out of place unless you hear the preceding statement. For example,

Client: Why is it that it seems everybody is against me?
Counsellor: You feel that many people do not like you.....
Client: Since we married, I have been doing what I thought I was supposed to......

Counsellor: You were doing what you thought you were supposed to do in your marriage but now it seems it is not working out as expected......

Repeat a few key words from a client’s previous statement to encourage him to continue with the conversation and to indicate that you are focusing and following.

A good interviewer is a good listener, but what constitutes a good listener? One who frequently interrupts to say what he would have done under similar circumstances is not a good listener, but neither is he who sits like a log of wood. Absence of response may easily seem to the talker to reflect absence of interest. Everyone knows from his own experience in telling a story that people like a listener who indicates by brief relevant comments or questions that he has grasped the essential points of one’s tale and who adds illuminating comments on certain significant features of one’s account that have not been stressed and might well have been overlooked by an inattentive listener. This attention to important details that have not been emphasized gives the storyteller the stimulating feelings that the listener not only want to, but does, understand to an unusual degree what he is try to say.

An experienced interviewer may be embarrassed by silences and feel that he must fill them with questions or comments, but a decent respect for silence is often more helpful. Sometimes the person interviewed is silent because he is a little reluctant to go on with what comes next in his story or because he does not quite know how to formulate what he plans to say. A too hasty interruption may leave this important part of the story forever unsaid. Sometimes, of course, a silence is due to other causes and, if allowed to continue, will only embarrass the person interviewed. In such cases a pertinent remark or question will encourage him to continue.
Listening to a client’s story is sometime helpful in and of itself. Everyone knows the value at times of “letting off steam”. When something happens that upsets a person, he tends to get over these feelings more quickly if he can find a sympathetic friend who will let him speak for a while. Relieved, he can then go ahead and use his energy more constructively. Without this opportunity to talk it out with someone else, he may be angry for days. He probably does not want anyone to tell him what to do or what he should have done differently but may merely want someone to listen and understand how upset he is. It is unfortunate that the average lay person is not a good listener. He usually feels he should to point out the other person’s mistakes and faults or give advice about what to do.

It is dangerous however to allow the client undirected expression of his feelings. They may be due not to a recent upsetting experience but to a long chain of experiences going back into the remote past. The early experiences may have become twisted and distorted and interrelated with other things through the years, so that mere talking does not bring relief. His need to talk may not be occasional but constant, and if the interviewer encourages too much release of feelings, areas may be opened up with which both interviewer and client are unequipped to cope. In general, according to Garrett (1972) catharsis through talking is more effective the more the disturbing feelings is related to a fairly recent experience, and it becomes of dubious value the more the feelings is due to long repressed experiences.

**Importance of listening**

The purpose of listening to clients can be categorised into three:

1. **Data collection**
2. **Relationship building**
(3) Facilitating positive change.

In practice, the purposes are often realized simultaneously. For example, as a counsellor you might collect data from clients about their relationship with their fathers and use listening to ensure that you have accurate information. At the same time you might use listening to build trust between you and your clients, to demonstrate that you care about them or to encourage them to focus on their feelings. Listening is not the only way to these things but it is a very viable one.

Data collection: is a major element of counselling. It is often important to find out about the background of the client, to understand the dimensions of the issues that bring the client for counselling and to gain knowledge of their (clients) goals. Listening, in conjunction with other skills, can be very effective in doing these things.

Listening is important when you want to collect data because questioning does not do the job. Even in situations such as police interrogation, where questions seem to be the order of the day, successful practitioners do not rely on questions alone. Listening is effective because of the typical reactions you get when you make listening statements to client. Here are some examples:-

Client A
I don’t know why I love him so much. I shouldn’t.

Counsellor
It's not good for you to love him but you do anyway............

Client
Yes I mean, he beats me. I say that I’m never going to have anything to do with him, but after a while I do anyway.
Counsellor
Even when he hurts you, it just interrupts how you feel for him. You still go back time and time again……

Client
Uh huh. I’ve tried by I just can’t make myself leave him.

Client B
Why does it matter if I go to school or not? Half of the people I know didn’t finish school.

Counsellor
Part of you wants to finish school, but the other parts says “Why bother…….”

Client
Yes, I mean what difference does it make? You can’t get a job whether you finish school or not.

Counsellor
If finishing school meant that you could get a job, that would be one thing. But when it doesn’t, who cares……

Client
Well, I don’t know. Finishing school would be good. I just don’t know if I can make it or not.

These examples point out two common reactions of clients to a counsellor’s listening: validation and elaboration. Validation means that listening statement are self-correcting. Once you make a listening statement, the client usually responds with answers that tell you if you are right, partly right, or wrong in your inferences. Usu
ally, if you are wrong or partly right, the client will correct you by supplying additional information to make certain you draw a more accurate inference.

Elaboration means that listening encourages client to supply additional information in the same or a related area. This customarily happens when you are correct in the inference you are verifying and the client responds with a "Yes and ...." answer. In the examples above, most of the responses by the client illustrate this aspect.

**Relationship building:** is a major use of listening. Some writers have postulated and some researches have demonstrated that client belief that the counsellor is (1) trustworthy and (2) feels unconditional positive regard and that empathy for the client is essential for effective counselling. Listening by the counsellor can help to positively reinforce the belief.

The desired client belief cannot be imposed or willed. It is a side effect when listening is used for other reasons. For instance, just the act of attending carefully can leave client feelings that you are empathic, interested in them and their problems and trustworthy. If you listening to follow up on things they say about themselves or feelings they express, these perceptions are augmented. Here is an example of how this might be done.

**Client**
The hardest time is at night that's when I feel most alone.

**Counsellor**
You are afraid at night because you can't avoid the feelings of being alone....

**Client**
Yes. I means that during the day there are people all around. Even though I don't have much to do with them, it's somehow reassuring
Counsellor
At night you can’t fool yourself any more....

Client
I suppose that’s true. What can I do about it anyway?

Counsellor
You are hoping there is something I can tell you that will make the night seem easier...

Client
I can’t seem to do anything right. Here I am in the same trouble again.

Counsellor
You don’t want to go round and round .........

Client
It’s frustrating to go round and round in the same circles......

Facilitating positive change : is another major reasons for using listening. Listening does this by encouraging the reprocessing of information by clients. Very often clients say something that is not well considered. Listening can be helpful in such circumstances because it allows you to reflect back to them your understanding of what they wanted to communicate with the implied question “Is that right”? This prompts the clients to reconsider what they have said or how they are feeling and often reconsideration leads to positive changes for clients. For example:
Client
I don’t know. I never seem to have the time to talk with Emeka. I mean to do it, but I don’t have the time.

Counsellor
Emeka isn’t on your mind as much as you think he should be and you feel guilty about it........

Client
(Pauses) May be......... may be if it was really important to me I would find the time.

Counsellor
Part of you is feeling guilty and part of you says “if I really felt bad, I’d do something about it........”

Client
I guess that’s where I’m coming from. May be I need to quit feeling guilty about doing something I don’t really think is wrong.

Counsellor
You’d like to quit feelings guilty for something others says is important .......

Client
I’m not sure what to do. I’ve never divorced anybody before.

Counsellor
Not sure what to do........not sure if you’ll be able to do what you know you have to do........

Client
May be that’s it. I guess what I have to do is pretty simple.
Counsellor
From where you are sitting now, you have to reconcile. But you are not sure if you have the guts to do it....

Client
Yes. I'm not sure how to start.

Counsellor
You're scared but you know that is the best thing to do.

Client
I just have to build up my courage. That's all. Brick houses can't be all that tough to blow down.

Counsellor
If you have enough courage, that would be all there was to it....

Client
I'm not sure. I've never had to blow down a brick house before.

Counsellor
Courage might be important, but there are other things you are thinking about....

Client
I guess there are. I've thought of one other thing. But I've always been so afraid of being trapped.

Counsellor
You think you've got a better idea, but you're afraid to put it to the test....
Listening seldom accomplishes only one thing at a time. Even when listening is used to help in facilitating change, at the same time it can help you to collect information or to build a positive relationship with your client. The utility of listening in counselling dictate that whatever your philosophical or theoretical orientation, you should use listening frequently but not exclusively.

Even counsellors whose philosophical orientations dictate that listening should be used as a major counselling technique do not use listening exclusively.

Client

Why didn’t I get the promotion to senior technician? I’m just as qualified, may be more qualified than those who did.

Counsellor

As far as you are concerned, you were cheated somehow.

Client

Well, yes. Doesn’t it look that way to you?

Counsellor

This thing has really got to you.......
Client

Well, I suppose that if I had completed the upgrading course the department sponsored, it would have helped.

Counsellor

I would have looked better on your record to have had the course....

Client

Well, may be. But, why does that matter? I’m still a good operator and I’ve put in my time.

Counsellor

You’ve waited a long time for this and you’re angry at the department and yourself because you didn’t get it this time........

Even though this exchange between the counsellor and the client may not resolve the problem, at least it does set the stage for problem resolution. It is appropriate at the end of this short exchange for the counsellor to move from collecting information to helping the client look at what could be done next time. Doing so will have more impact when undertaken at this point in the transaction than if the counsellor had led the conversation with questions or advice.

Acquisition of more skill in listening will enable the counsellor to be more comfortable in making statements that are based more on what you think others really mean by what they are saying than on the strict content of what they have said. This is referred to as making listening statement that are somewhat out of phase. Listening that are out of phase can be effective, but the counsellor must be careful in using them. With some client, such statement can have the effect of “putting words in their mouths”.

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Generally, in counselling, Listening can help to develop trust between counsellor and client because:
- Listening demonstrate to the client that the counsellor appreciates where the client is “coming from”. Client trust in the counsellor is an essential component of a successful counselling relationship.
- Listening convinces clients that you understand them. Such conviction is usually beneficial as a prelude to successful resolution of issues or problems.
- Listening encourages clients to reprocess what they have said to the counsellor. Sometimes clients say something that they have not considered very thoroughly. Responding to the implied question, “Is that right”? prompts clients to consider what they have said and what they mean. Sometimes, such reflection is the sole necessity for successful counselling.
- Listening ensures that you are on the right track. It can prevent your building a case based upon faulty inferences.
- Listening is an effective technique to collect information from a client. It is a desirable supplements to direct questioning because it avoids some of the latter’s potentially negative side effect (Martin, 1983).

LISTENING BEFORE TALKING

It is important to know that the first step in an interview is to help the interviewee relax and feel fairly comfortable. Naturally it is difficult to help the interviewee relax unless the interviewer himself is relaxed. Sometimes the client can quickly be put at ease by letting him state his purpose for coming, sometimes by given him a brief account of why he was asked to come. In either case an advisable next step is to encourage him to talk and then to listen.
carefully why he speaks of what is on the “top” of his mind in connection with the interview. Listening to the client give the interviewer a chance to become acquainted with him, to know what language he speaks, literally and figuratively. It makes clear the kind of questions comments and suggestions that should later be directed to him and the way in which they should be formulated.

Even when our primary interest in a given interview is to obtain the answer to a set of questions, we can profit much from letting the client talk rather freely at first. He is likely to reveal the answers to many questions without their being asked and often will suggest the best methods of approach for obtaining any additional information that is required.

Even when suggestions are to be made by the interviewer, it is more profitable to let the client express himself first. Sometimes he will even suggest the course of action that the interviewer intends to advise. In such a case his own suggestion can simply be confirmed and strengthened, and the fact that he regards it as coming from himself will make it more likely that he will carry it out. In other case the client may reveal a deep-seated hostility to the suggestions about to be made, and in such case the interviewer is warned to proceed with caution and to attempt to discover and remove or modify the emotional causes at the back of the hostility before proposing his plan.

Another advantage in letting the interviewee talk first is that it tends to counteract any preconceived ideas about him that the interviewer may have allowed himself to entertain. It gives the interviewer the immense advantage of being able to see the situation and the client’s problem from the client’s point of view. Because it is the client who eventually must act, it is obviously advantageous to start from where he is rather than from some vantage point of interviewer, even though the latter might be superior.

If someone comes in and asks for a job and the interviewer
proceeds at once to make a number of suggestions, he may well be surprised later to find that the client has adopted no one of them. Upon further examination the counsellor may then find out what he might well have discovered in the first interview if he had done more listening and less talking that the client’s real worry was that he could not hold a job if he got one, or that he did not see how he could take a job because his wife and children were sick at home and needed constant care. (Garrett, 1972)

**Problem associated with listening.**

It is important to know that problems with listening arise when a counsellor forgets that listening is only as good as the result that are achieved by using it, results that mirror its purposes; data collection, relationship building and facilitation of positive change. In such cases a counsellor moves ahead with listening solely because of a vague belief that listening is good even when it is evident that the client feels offended, misunderstood, or “counsellor-phobic”. The result is a client who does not yield good information, does not develop a favourable relationship with the counsellor, and is not receptive to positive change.

One potentially negative effect to look out for when using listening is that you may convince clients that they feel certain emotions or that certain things are important when neither is so. Your clients may agree with everything you say because they are unduly influenced by you or your opinions or because they are not reflective enough.

One way to test the two hypotheses regarding counsellor influence is to offer clients disparate listening statements based on similar information. For instance, you might make a listening statement like “You love your husband and don’t want to hurt him.....” and a few moments later make a statement like “You dislike your
husband intensely...." If the client agrees wholeheartedly with both, you will want to discuss the matter further. You should also be careful when using further listening statements with such a client.

The potentially negative effects of listening or any other communication style could be evident by monitoring the effect on the client of what you are saying and doing. Is the client becoming less fearful, more open, less self-condemning, or more self-examining? Does the client agree with seemingly contradictory postulations that you put forward? Does the client appear confused or uncertain when responding to listening statements?

The goals you want to achieve through counselling provide a solid basis for assessing the effectiveness of the techniques you are using. The goals should be manifest in the client’s progress and situation. If not, things are going wrong.

**Summarizing**

Summarizing is a special form of listening which is often used in counselling. Summarizing is the same as listening except that you use it to refer to several items that have been discussed earlier with the client. A statement such as “Ade, you attack the Administrator's servants to get their money. You use that money to give to poor people, and the more money you take the better you feel.....” summarizes what the client has told you. But like all listening statements, it turns the conversation back to the client to answer the implied questions, “Is that right”?

Summarizing statements are often used to structure or refocus a conversation (Meier, 1989) and to draw meaning from a series of seemingly unrelated events. They are also used at a transition point in a conversation. For instance, in the example above, after Ade agreed with and perhaps elaborated on the counsellor’s summarizing statement, the counsellor would be in a good position to move on in the conversation.
the conversation in a new direction. The counsellor might then respond to Ade by saying “I think I understand that pretty well”. Or the counsellor might respond by saying something like “Those things are clear to you now. But I sense that it means more to you to steal the money from the Administrator than it does to give the money away to the needy....” Such a follow-up would help to lead the conversation toward examining Ade’s motivation. When summarizing, systematically integrate the important ideas contained in a client’s comments and restate them.

**THE NEED FOR SUMMARIZING**

- **a.** summarizing provides concise, accurate and timely overviews of clients’ statements and helps them to organise their thoughts.
- **b.** It helps a client review what has been said.
- **c.** It stimulates a thorough exploration of themes that are important to the client.
- **d.** It also provides organisation for an interview

**It becomes necessary to summarize**

1. When a client’s comment are lengthy, rambling or confused.
2. When a client presents a number of unrelated ideas.
3. To add direction and coherence to an interview.
4. To move from one phase of an interview to the next.
5. To conclude an interview.
6. To provide an introduction to an interview by reviewing the previous interview.
CHAPTER FIVE

QUESTIONING AND TALKING IN INTERVIEWING

Questioning: The art of questioning can be considered as a central method of interviewing. Some of its many features include:-

(a) The process of the counselling interview employs the method of friendliness, the method of asking questions in order to understand and be of assistance. Clients soon recognise the attitudes of their interviewers and tend to respond to the best of their abilities when they feel the presence of a real desire to understand and to help. Tricky questions should therefore be avoided.

(b) The interviewer who puts his questions accusingly or suspiciously could only arouse fear and suspicion and not cooperation. The wording of the question is often less important than the manner and tone of voice in which it is put. The interviewer’s safeguard here is really to be interested in understanding and aiding; then his manner and tone are very likely to reflect that interest. For example, The question, “Are you looking for a job”? may sound suspicious, accusing, sarcastic, or friendly, depending upon how it is expressed and that expression in turn reflects how the interviewer really feels.

The interviewee should be helped to feel that each question is important and significant. In addition to this, it may be necessary to explain, in a way that will satisfy the interviewee the relevance of the questions to his own needs and interest. A question as to one’s
birthplace may seem irrelevant until the client realise its importance in determine citizenship. A question as to what floor the client lives on assumes more significance if he is afflicted with a heart ailment; questions about diet are called for when a person has diabetes while early developmental history has special significance in children's behavioural problems; the number of jobs held in the past ten years is important in gauging a man's potential for securing an employment.

**The questions should:**

a. be asked in a warm and expressive tone, made at an appropriate pace, and used to communicate involvement.

b. follow from the client's comments.

c. not change the topic or interrupt the client

d. relate to concerns expressed previously by the client when the topic being discussed is nearly exhausted.

e. be made with regard to both the verbal (content and tone) and the nonverbal (glances, gestures, and other physical reactions) behaviour of the client.

**The counsellor should:**

- ask questions that cannot be answered with just "yes" "No"
- ask a question that is on the topic.

**He should remember that:**

- "What" questions are mostly fact oriented
"How" questions are frequently people oriented
- "Could" and "can" questions provide a lot of flexibility for response.
- "Why" questions often provoke defensive feelings

He should therefore make open inquires to:-

- Give clients greater opportunity to discuss topics relevant to them.
- Gather information and help clients explore and clarify their concerns.
- Put clients at ease.
- Begin an interview.
- Facilitate elaboration of a point.
- Elicit specific examples of general situations.

Counsellor may ask questions:
1. to obtain specifically needed information and
2. to direct the client's conversation from fruitless to fruitful channels.

Examples of the latter would be questions that encourage him to talk in relevant areas in which he finds the going difficult and remarks such as "I don't quite understand," which will help him to elaborate more fully.

Most people tend to ask either too many questions or too few questions. Each interviewer should study his own tendency and seek to curb it. Too many questions will confuse and block the client, whereas too few may place too much of the burden of the
In general, leading, rather than pointed, questions and questions that cannot be answered by a brief “Yes” or “No” are to be preferred. They stimulate the client to talk freely and avoid the always present danger of putting answers into his mouth. Even if questions that imply an answer do not result in false answers, they tend to give the impression that the interviewer is lacking in fundamental understanding of the situation.

A counsellor should of course, try to adjust his pace to that of his client. To go too slowly suggests lack of interest or understanding. To push ahead too fast is to miss important clues, to confuse the client, and to suggest in a different way that we are not really interested in what he has to say. Again we must accept the client’s pace in the sense of not pushing him to reveal more than he is prepared to at any one time. To ask him to reveal confidences before we have won his confidence is to court defeat.

There are no magical questions that can be used effectively on all occasions. Sometimes in reading a case record, a counsellor may come across a question that was so timely and effective that he is tempted to use it in his own next interviews and is surprised that it does not bring the same rewarding results. In general, we seem to get further by being encouraging and sympathetic, by leading the client to talk freely, than by trying to drag information out of him by belabouring him with questions.

Closely related to questions are the comments of the interviewer. Sometimes the only difference between the two lies in the speaker’s inflection. “You found your last job difficult” is either a query or a comment, depending on whether one raise or lower the pitch of the last syllables. In any case both questions and comments are spec-
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cies of talking, and certain rules hold for both. In general, the interviewer should comment only for purposes similar to those for which he asks questions - to reassure or encourage the interviewee, to lead him on to discuss further relevant matters and so on. The one additional kind of talking that goes beyond these purposes is the definite giving of information. This stage should come after the interviewer is familiar enough with the client’s situation to know whether suggestions will be acceptable or even necessary.

According to Garret (1972), there is a great difference between expressing a meaning and communicating a meaning. Since the latter is the aim of the interviewer he must devote considerable care to his manner of expression. He must “think with wisdom” but speak the language of his client.

At times words used by one group are not easily understood by another. This tendency not to be understood is obvious through the use of technical words, such as resources, sibling, and eligibility and of the specialized terms of such fields as law, medicine and psychiatry. But also many everyday terms are used with quite different senses by different people. A person given to exaggeration may describe as “catastrophic” an event that another would call “small problem”. An interviewer who remembers his perplexities on such occasions can readily sympathise with his clients and even anticipate some of their difficulties.

Usually, it is not enough that all the words used by the interviewer should be understood; it is important also that they be understood as they were meant.

Language structure

Oral language has a dimension that goes beyond the words spoken. The paralinguistic dimension includes the actions we take to highlight or to gloss over certain aspects of what is being said.
also includes language structure, such as the use of the active or passive voice and double-edged communication like sarcasm. As is the case with body communication, the varying of expressed language structure is used by both clients and counsellor to convey meaning. (Carkhuff, 1969).

The counsellor should note the client’s language structure to identify the client’s feelings. He would need to:

- to attend to the affective component of what the client says and pay close attention to the client’s voice tone, rate of delivery, and other mannerisms and
- identify the full range of client’s emotions

According to Ivey (1988), while reflecting feelings, the counsellor should:

Use an appropriate introductory phrase followed by a clear and concise summary of the feelings the client seeks to be experiencing and
- Reflect mixed emotions

The client’s exact words should not be repeated often instead focus on current feelings, using the present tense and employ the use of a wide range of introductory phrase, not just a few over-worked ones.
- Such reflections would help clients become aware for their feelings,
- accept and explore such feelings and
- also help the counsellor demonstrate his understanding of what the client is experiencing or passing through

All of these would enhance strong relationship between the counsellor and the client.
CHAPTER SIX

NON VERBAL COMMUNICATION AND INTERVIEWING

Counselling involves verbal interaction between client and counsellor, but it also involves interaction of a more physical nature, the same kind of communication the television sponsor hope will induce you to buy its brand of product. As in commercials, body language in counselling is language with a purpose or it ought to be.

Body language is used by the counsellor to reinforce a verbal message or to convey a message that cannot be transmitted easily with words. The client does likewise, although perhaps not always with the same degree of premeditation as does the counsellor.

The face and the body are very communicative and should be observed very well in counselling. Even when people are together in silence, the atmosphere may be filed with messages. Non verbal behaviour has been defined as “all human communication events which transcend spoken or written words” (Haaser & Tepper, 1972).

At times, the facial expression, bodily motions, voice quality, and physiological responses of clients communicate more than their words. Even when non-verbal behaviours such as facial expressions are inconsistent with spoken words, facial expression are believed to be the true reflection of the inner self.

Some of the non-verbal behaviours are:-

1. Bodily behaviour - such as posture, body movements and gestures.

2. Facial expression - such as smiles, frowns, raised eyebrows and twisted lips.
(3) Voice - Related behaviour - such as tone of voice, pitch, voice level, intensity, spacing of words, emphases, pauses, silences and fluency.

(4) Observable physiological responses - such as quickened breathing, paleness and pupil dilation or eye blinking.

(5) General appearance - such as grooming and dressing.

As a counsellor, you need to pay attention to client’s non-verbal communication. Clients can ask questions, give opinions, and describe feelings without uttering a sound. Non-verbal communication can be explicit, as in giving someone a nod but many at times it can be more subtle than the spoken word. You must be vigilant to tune it in and to validate the inferences you form of its meaning.

The apparent contradiction by non-verbal communication of verbal communication should be monitored. You might notice, that a client seems to be angry - clenched teeth and tensed neck muscles - but he may vocally be laying claim to being in a state of serenity. Or you might hear a client, while laughing, profess great unhappiness over a marital separation. Or a client might declare that there is no problem but be unable to look you in the eye.

Of course, the above illustration do not necessarily indicate a conflict between the spoken word and the non-verbal communication although they hint strongly at one. Your lack of certainty occurs because drawing inferences from such non-verbal communication is less easily done than drawing inferences from the spoken word. Share your perception of the conflict with the client through dialogue. For example, in the matter of the seemingly angry client who vocalises serenity, you could respond in the following ways.

* "Part of you feels happy, but part of you is still angry over what has happened...."
"You are very angry about what happened but it is difficult for you to talk about it...."

Each suggestion brings up the dichotomy of interpretation in a muted way, a way that allows the client to discuss the matter without feeling blamed. This is an important aspect in the process of resolving a dichotomy of meaning. The client must not get a sense of censure or judgement as a result of the mixed message conveyed. It is very easy for the client to interpret their side of the conversation as “On one hand I hear this. On the other hand, I hear that. What’s the matter with you”?

Many counsellor trainees have trouble with the proper interpretation of client body-based communication.

Non-verbals communication could however be culturally and geographically bound. Many differences are evident among national and ethnic groups. And also many differences crop up in similar groups that are geographically separated. The counsellor should therefore become thoroughly familiar with the characteristics of the groups he is dealing with to avoid a number of errors in interpreting body-based language non-verbal communication.

It is not unusual for a client to display some incongruity between verbal and non-verbal communication. Very often one moderates or accentuates the other, and in such cases it may be of little importance for you to inquire into the differences.

When there is a considerable difference between a client two kinds of communication, try pursuing each in turn. It is not always necessary or desirable to confront a client about differences in a transmitted message. In fact, doing so sometimes causes him or her to be more circumspect in body communication, thus depriving you of a valuable source of counselling information.

You might want to ask clients the meaning of their body based communication but it is usually easier to get clients to agree with your inference as to possible meaning than it is to elicit their expla-
nations of meanings and client sometimes agree with the counsellor's incorrect inferences.

Monitor the relationship between your physical communication and that of your client, because your unintentional body movements are likely to have unintended effects on the behaviour of your clients.

The Counsellor's Non-Verbal Communication

Non-verbal communication is not restricted to clients. As you do in your everyday life, in your role as a counsellor you continually send body-based messages to your clients. Although you might be non-chalant about the messages you transmit in your everyday life, you cannot be quite so indifferent during counselling. This is because your body message can reinforce or obscure the message you convey to clients through words. There is nothing wrong with either message, provided that both are conveyed intentionally for therapeutic effect. Operating without your deliberate control, your body behaviour ceases to be an ally and may prevent you from accomplishing your counselling goal(s).

The most common non-verbal communication that you must remain aware of as a counsellor are mannerisms that may have become almost automatic to you and hence unnoticed but that may annoy your client. For example, playing with your hair or pen, scratching your ear, staring into space, smiling perpetually, frowning, at all times. In many cases personal mannerism may be as neutral in the counselling setting as in everyday world, whereas in other cases, they may have detrimental effect.

Probably one of the best ways to ascertain your mannerisms is to videotape yourself during mock or real counselling sessions (the latter requires client permission). View the tape yourself, and if possible with a colleague or friend, as a check for habits that have become such a part of you that you are no longer aware of them.
Your body posture as a counsellor

- should be natural, attentive and relaxed, to communicate your interest in the counselling procedure.
- your gestures should be easy and natural and
- your facial expression should be appropriate to the material under discussion.

Eye contact with physical proximity: are also key physical means of communication with clients. Very often counsellors are more comfortable than their clients about direct eye contact and being seated closely together. Although neither is likely to spark a client's revolt, neither is likely to help the counselling relationship if it makes the client restive. Whether we like to or not, clients set the standard for what makes them comfortable in non-verbal exchange with counsellors.

Eye contact as a means of focusing and following:-

a. could suggest that you are attending to what is being communicated.

b. Should be natural and direct without constituting a stare.

c. should be comparatively constant - frequent breaks in eye contact suggest inattention.

d. Is most likely to be interrupted when a break in discussion occurs or when either party is thinking.

However you should not rely on how you react to the body behaviour of others to predict how your clients might respond to the same behaviour on your part. Each person has a unique
reaction to body communication as to verbal communication. What might be interesting to one might be off putting to another. Rely on collecting your own information about actual reactions rather than on supposed reactions. Remember that elements of body communication include entire and personal demeanor. What might be free spirited to you might be unprofessional to your clients. Possible effects could be readily investigated through systematic change on your part.

Try to match your verbal and body-based communication. If you are talking about happy event, look the part. If you are discussing a serious matter, a sober posture is appropriate.

The office or other location where you meet clients may also convey messages that help or hinder your counselling efforts. Generally, beautiful but cool decor allows a room to serve as a good background to client's awareness and thereby removes a possible impediment to the purpose at hand.
CHAPTER SEVEN

THINGS TO WATCH OUT FOR IN COUNSELLING INTERVIEWS

The basic purpose of interviewing is to obtain understanding of the problem, of the situation, and of client who has come for help. Therefore the following areas should also be carefully considered:

Opening and closing sentences

The first words a client says are often of unusual significance. Even though they are about the political situation of the country they may indicate some reluctance to accept the professional value of the interview and a desire to keep it on a polite, social level. Sometimes the way in which a client first expresses his request gives the key to his problem and to his attitude about seeking help. He may start with “I don’t suppose you can help me but…” or “I came because my mother sent me”. The manner in which he states his problem should be noted.

Concluding remarks are also noteworthy. Often a client’s last remark indicates either his summing up of what the interview has meant to him or the degree to which his own forces have been mobilised for going ahead and working out his problem or that he has not really gained much from the process.

Recurrent references

In interviews we may notice a recurrent point of reference. A client may repeatedly return to a certain subject. This reference may be
specific - a job, his need for money, his difficulties with his wife or it may be more general. For example, we may detect throughout an interview repeated indications of difficulty with authority. The client complains about unjust treatment from his landlord, his father and his friend; his wife etc. Another person may constantly refer to his inability to express hostility.

The client may also “talk in circle”. He may talk freely enough but may not move forward. He repeats the same ideas over and over again. A man complaining about unfair treatment by his employer repeats and repeats his complaints. A wife tells over and over again the story of her childhood or of difficulties with her husband. Such circularity may present a stumbling block to an interviewer. When we have become aware that such an impasse has been reached, it is necessary to devise ways of inserting something new into the interview, and the interviewers choice of a subject to insert should be guided by the clues the client has given, perhaps some topic that has been mentioned before but not explained.

Association of ideas

When a client mentions somethings, such as lying stepmother, mother in law, divorce, a grandmother, there may have started in the interviewer a stream of association that has little to do with the client’s feelings about these topics. The interviewer must recognise his own associations because otherwise they may operate unconsciously. That is, he may read into the clients problem feelings that he has but that the client may not have. On the other hand, if he listen for the client’s own free association, he will gain many helpful clues about the things he is discussing. A father may be telling about his son’s running away and, instead of continuing logically in this discussion of his son, may begin telling about his own youthful runaway escapades, indicating that to him his son’s behaviour is
not a separate episode but is entangled with his own feelings carried over from his childhood. A mother may be telling about her inability to get along with her husband and switch suddenly to talking about her parents separation when she was a child and her unhappiness and shame about this situation, thus indicating that her own current problems are not isolated but are connected in her mind with her parents similar difficulties which may tend towards hereditary factor.

**Shifts in conversation**

It is at times difficult to understand why a client would suddenly change the topic of conversation. The reason may become apparent through a close study of what he was previously saying and the topic he begins with initially. The shift may be an indication that he was telling too much and desires not to reveal himself further or that he was beginning to talk about material that was too painful for him to pursue, perhaps too personal. On the other hand, it may be that what seems to the interviewer as a shift in conversation is really a continuation, that in the subconscious of the client the two discussion have an intimate relationship. For instance, the interviewee may be discussing his difficulties with his teacher and suddenly start discussing his childhood and the beatings his father gave him. The relationship in his own mind between his teacher and his father is obvious. Or he may be discussing his mother and suddenly make a personal remark about the lady interviewing him, indicating that in his own mind the interviewer reminds him of his mother in some ways.

**Inconsistencies and gaps**

In interviewing we may find out that the client’s story is not unified,
that he often contradicts himself. And that his real meaning is not clear. Such behaviour may indicate the operation of such internal pressure as guilt, confusion, or ambivalence or withdrawal syndrome. A man may report that he was always first in school and later tell how he was caned by his father for his failure in school. Another may seem sincere in his statement that he is making all efforts to find a job and yet be unable to mention specific places where he has applied.

On the other hand, a client may tell straightforward story but with unexpected gaps, areas in which the interviewer finds it impossible to elicit information. These areas are usually of particular importance to the clients. A woman may discuss in great detail certain difficulties she has been having with the children but say nothing about her husband. The significance of such gaps or inconsistency often becomes clearer through their cumulative force.

Concealed meaning

It is essential for the interviewer to accustom himself to listening to what his client means as well as to what he says. However, the presence of concealed meaning may not be too glaring, often it is only with the careful observation of slips of the tongue and attitudes and other clients that the interviewer can obtain any increased idea of the client's total meaning. A single mother who protests that she does not even want to see the father of her baby again may be concealing her love for him and her hurt that he has deserted her.

Interpretation

The interviewer's first objective is to understand as fully as possible his client's problem. To achieve this understanding, he must interpret correctly the many clues to the underlying situation that the
client present through his behaviour and conversation. The client may not be conscious of his own self to know and be able to give a straightforward account of the crucial factors that lie at the base of his difficulty. The interviewer must discover these factors himself by going beneath the surface of this client’s remark and understanding their real meaning.

The counsellor must look for the underlying anxiety or fear that is symptomatically indicated by hostility or dependency.

A trained counsellor would constantly be framing hypotheses as to the basic factors in the case confronting him, testing these, rejecting some while tentatively retaining others and seeking further confirmation. For example, if a woman in speaking of her husband, “accidentally” refers to him as her father, a sensitive counsellor note this reference but does not jump to the conclusion that her relationship to her husband is to a large extent that of daughter to father. He recognises this idea as one possibility and keeps his attention open for other supportive evidences. In practice many of the tentative hypotheses one forms have to be discarded. Flexibility, the ability to change our hypothesis with the appearance of new evidence, is a trait worth cultivating as professional counsellors.

A client can profit from the interviewer’s insight only if it becomes also the clients insight and this transfer cannot usually be made in so many words. The client must arrive at his own conclusions at his own pace. To be told that he feels anxiety, rejection, fear, and so on, may not help him. He must come to recognise the existence of such feelings himself with sufficient conviction so that he can voluntarily acknowledge their presence.

When an interviewer realises the existence of such underlying factors, he can often help his client to a recognition of them through discreet questions and comments, which include some element of interpretation.

By encouraging a client to elaborate more fully, the interviewer helps him to see for himself the relationship between the various
things he has said.

Maladaptive behaviour like more usual behaviour has its causes, but sometimes they are deeply hidden. In dealing with others it is seldom possible to understand fully the causes of their actions. It is essential, however, to realise that their behaviour is motivated. Its cause may lie in the depths of their personalities where neither they nor the counsellor can readily discover it. In a complex personality, with its many interconnected causal chains, the factors underlying a given bit of behaviour are usually many and varied. A single cause cannot be easily isolated, and to attempt to force the individual to name one may result to forcing him to resort to an inadequate rationalization about his problem.

The recognitions that much human motivation is unconscious will enable the interviewer to be more tolerant, less condemnatory, and thus better able to help his client effectively. Instead of becoming impatient with rationalizations, he will realise that motives that the client disguises even to himself are probably sources of deep and painful anxiety to him.

There are a lot of unconscious motivation than we ordinarily recognize in our attempt to understand people. It is common to look for intellectual grounds for behaviour rather than for psychological causes rooted in feelings and emotions. Drives are emotional in nature, and actions controlled by them have their source in feeling rather than in intellect.

In seeking to help people even in very simple situations we need to listen not only to their objective requests but also to the undertones that reveal their feelings and give us clues to perhaps even more serious subjective situation than is overtly revealed. A man's frequent absences from work may indicate neither unreliability nor laziness, but may be due to worry about his wife's illness or to anxiety about his children. In either case the underlying subjective factor, worry, is caused by an objective situation that may not be
Knowledge of subjective factors may be necessary to make possible the formulation of objective plans with some probability that they will be carried out.

The interviewer need to guide against hasty generalizations. He may tend not to trust in any matter a client who lies about his income and may regard as unreliable in other respect a boy who lies about his age in order to get a job. This all or non-attitude permeates everyday thinking. People are regarded as all good or all bad situations as completely right or thoroughly wrong. Such rigid classification must be avoided by the counsellor who wishes to understand his client. He must recognise that there are shades and variations of rightness and wrongness. A person who lies about one subject may not lie about another.

Any judgement utterly condemning another person may be mistaken. The all-or-none principle fails. On the other hand, it is probably a mistake to try to assess accurately just the respects in which a client is good and just the ones in which he is bad. It is much more important to understand him and to seek the causes of his behaviour even when it is anti-social.

Obtaining a sound understanding of the client's situation and his need and thinking about the most effective ways of helping him is the primary pre-occupation of a counsellor.

The counsellor should remember that for many clients, talking with someone who listen with non-judgemental understanding instead of criticising is a unique experience. This relationship with a person who does not ask anything for himself personally, but focuses his interest entirely on the client and yet refrains from imposing advice or control could be a very satisfying one.
CHAPTER EIGHT

THE INITIAL COUNSELLING INTERVIEW

The first counselling interview is usually referred to as the initial interview.

Doyle (1993) has identified two types of goals to focus on during the initial interview. The first type has to do with the client; the second, with the counsellor. Goals that affect the client refer to reasonable expectations of change on his or her part after the session is concluded. Some of these goals are:

Group A - The client should have:

- an understanding of what counselling is all about, including a reasonable expectation of its outcomes;
- the beginnings of feelings of trust and safety in discussing matters with the counsellor;
- a belief in the counsellor's interest in him or her and expressed concerns;
- a belief in the counsellor competence as a facilitator of development; and
- a positive orientation toward counselling that promotes an enthusiastic approach to it.

Group B - The counsellor should have:

- an understanding of the issues that bring the client to counselling;
- an understanding of the expectations that the client has for counselling and for the counsellor;
- an assessment of the counsellor's ability or inability to deal with the counselling issues that confront him;
- an assessment of the commitment of the client to change; and
an understanding of counselling processes and techniques that the counsellor could use in subsequent sessions. The counsellor should utilize other sources of information about the client that would foster good interviewing.

Scissons (1993) is of the opinion that although the primary means of obtaining information about the client is through the verbal interchange between the client and the counsellor, information is often obtained before and during the counselling process in a variety of other ways. The most common sources are:

(a) prior personal knowledge of the client,
(b) reports from significant others,
(c) life-history questionnaires,
(d) environmental or situational observations, and
(e) psychometric data.

Each of these data-collection techniques and resources is discussed briefly in the following sections.

(a) Personal knowledge of the client. Counsellors sometimes know their clients before beginning the counselling process. Many counsellors work in institutional settings such as schools, colleges or residential treatment programs and have previously met clients and observed them in a variety of situations within the institutional setting. This prior knowledge can minimise the amount of time spent on the initial introductory procedures and facilitates the expression of warmth. As a counsellor, you should acknowledge that previous information early in the counselling process in order to ensure that the interpretations of these previous observations are valid and known to both the client and the counsellor.
(b) Reports from significant others. Reports about the client may be written or verbal, brief or extensive, and may come from people who have known the client either in a professional or in a personal relationship. One of the more common forms is a report written by another professional person. These reports will vary in the type and extent of information supplied. One example is a minimally informative school anecdotal record, such as “Bola was quite slow in JSS One.” Another is an informative referral from a teacher, such as “Bola is performing poorly in JSS one.” He can respond well to verbal questions; however, on written tasks he responds poorly. I suspect his auditory learning style is good but his visual one is poor. Can you pursue this matter with Bola and/or his parents?” Another example is a rather extensive psychological report concerning the client’s past behavior and the prognosis for his or her future.

(c) Life-history questionnaire. New clients may be required to complete a life-history questionnaire prior to the initial or intake interview. The purpose of this questionnaire is to obtain a comprehensive picture of the client’s background. These questionnaires probe into the client’s background and often inquire about the following areas:

- General information: name, age, sex, height, weight.
- Residential data: address, phone number, living environment.
- Family data: marital status, children, parents, siblings.
- Educational data: schools attended, years of attendance, area of specialization.
- Occupational history: jobs held and companies worked for.
- Extra-Curricular activities: hobbies.
- History of physical health: previous illnesses and accidents.
present health status, medication currently being taken.
- The present problem: its history and any previous counselling experience.

(d) **Environmental or situational observations.** To gain a better understanding of their clients, counsellors need to see their clients in the environment that is related to the clients' concerns. This is particularly true for counsellors who work in institutional settings as well as for those who engage in marital counselling. For example, counsellors visit the classroom to see how a child or student is functioning with his or her peers in that class; rehabilitation counsellors visit the sheltered workshop to see how a rehabilitation plan is working; and marriage counsellors may need to see a couple together and also schedule sessions when the entire family can be present.

(e) **Psychometric data.** Standardized tests provide an objective and standardized methodology that counsellors in various settings often use. These instruments are employed for many reasons.
- They are used to identify individuals who can benefit from the counselling process. Counsellors who work in institutional settings are responsible for counselling large numbers of individuals, so they use various screening inventories or checklists for identifying clients who can most benefit from counselling.
- Counsellors use psychological instruments to help clients see an objective picture of their strengths and limitations. For example, school and rehabilitation counsellors administer and interpret scholastic aptitude tests, achievement tests, and interest inventories so that their clients can compare themselves to others objectively and gain further insight into their educa-
Counsellors use tests to measure the growth of individuals or groups of individuals over time or to see if a particular counselling intervention facilitated a particular growth. For example, a school counsellor may give Vocational Interest Inventory (VII) to a student before vocational counselling and again after the counselling to see if the individual’s interests have changed as a result of the counselling process.

Also counsellors sometimes use tests to gain knowledge about the counselling process by comparing the relative efficacy of two or more counselling approaches or interventions.

Different clients have different ideals about counselling and counsellors, all of which depend to one degree or another upon such factors as prior experience with counsellor, beliefs in the opinions of others, and contact with soap operas and others manifestations of pop psychology. Some equate counselling with teaching, and hope thereby to find answers to their troubles. Some see counselling as a chance to “pour out their hearts” and do not expect much more than that relief. Others regard counselling as an opportunity to validate past actions or future intentions.

Counselling often involves discussing feelings and matters that are otherwise private, an unusual dropping of reserve with someone newly met. Although clients may be motivated to enter counselling as a means to ameliorate pain, it does not necessarily follow that they will be initially receptive to the openness deemed appropriate.

Clients’ feelings of trust and safety do not just happen. They grow, usually slowly, and they are influenced by what the counsellor does during the counselling interview.
The counsellor should show concern for his Clients

The relationship that should develop between counselor and client is facilitated by the belief of the client that the counsellor cares about him or her. The belief is sometimes referred to as *unconditional positive regard* by client-centered counsellors (Egan, 1990). Of course, the belief is a client inference, but a counsellor can do much to foster such a helpful inference.

Showing concern for the clients is very much akin to instilling feelings of trust and safety in them. What you do not do is as important as what you do.

At the opening of the interview, the counsellor should welcome his client with a smile and greet him by name (if possible), then introduce himself in a friendly manner. A simple greeting such as “Ojo, Good morning. I am Mopelola Olusakin ......... How are you”.

- As a counsellor, one way to communicate your counselling orientation to clients is to be congruent: *live your orientation*.

It is confusing if you espouse the necessity for clients to make their decisions and then turn around and tell them what to do.

- Use situational responses by clients as points from which to inform or reinforce what counselling is all about. For example, if a client says, “I just can't make a decision. Which food should I order?” you might initially respond with a listening statement: “Ojo, you're so confused about which food to order that you've given up on finding a solution yourself...” Following a response to your listening statement, you might make a coaching statement such as “I can’t really make a decision for you Ojo. I can help you to examine your choices and may be that will help you to see your way more clearly.”

In most instances, the message needs to be reinforced throughout the initial session.
It may be helpful to include a brief statement of how you counsel as part of your introductory remarks. You might say, “Ojo, my clients often find it helpful when I explain to them what it is that I do, how I might be able to help them and what is expected of them. As a counsellor, I try to help you to understand yourself better. I want you to understand the alternatives available to you as well as their implications.” However, do not think that such remarks ensure an understanding of what counselling is about.

Support actions by your clients that are in accord with what you believe counselling to be about. For example, if your client moves closer to making an informed decision, a positive inferring statement from you might be appropriate. You might say, “Ojo, you’ve worked hard to decide which food to order. I think you’ll find that you are more satisfied with your decision than if you had just ordered the first one that came to your mind.”

With clients, reinforce the principle that counselling is action oriented. Although actions vary from perspective to perspective, your clients should have the impression that something will change as a result of counselling. Develop a positive outlook as a counsellor.

Enthusiasm about what you are doing can be contagious and infect your clients. Play the part and be the part. Smile! Bless the world with your good grace and cheer. If you cannot be genuinely happy in counselling, perhaps you have made a wrong career choice.

Encourage your clients to look at the positive aspects in their lives’ environments, rather than solely at the negative. This does not signify that you discount the problems that bring your clients to your door but that the clients ought not to dwell unduly on them. Encouragement is often accomplished...
summarizing statements wherein you focus on what has gone right as well as what has gone wrong. For example, “Ojo you were very confused about which food to order. These feelings overwhelmed you to the point that you could think about nothing but food. However, the more you dwelt on the decision, the more you knew you needed to do something constructive. And that’s what brought you in to see me...”

Wear bright, cheerful attire. Bright colours in office furnishings and decorations help to minimize gloom.

The counsellor should have a good understanding of the precipitating issues.

According to Doyle (1992), almost all orientations to counselling require the counsellor to understand the issues that bring clients to counselling. Although such understanding unfolds over the entire counselling process, it begins during the initial session.

During the opening moments of the initial session, some clients lay out the issues that brought them to you with remarkable clarity. Other clients will be equally frank but about issues that subsequently prove to be related only indirectly to the real issues that are troubling them. Still others may be deceptive; such behaviour is usually more pronounced in involuntary clients.

Sometimes the issues first presented by clients are seldom the major issues. As a counsellor, you must validate your inferences about the issues presented. Validation is important whether the issues are clothed in clear and apparently unambiguous language or in confused and perhaps misleading language. No counsellor can handle clients with any and all kinds of personal problems.

Once you have a reasonable perspective on the problems that motivate your clients to seek counselling, you must make professional decisions about your ability to address such problems. Most counsellors would feel inadequate to deal with severely schizo-
do you feel competent to deal with clients undergoing the breakdown of a personal relationship. Most clients you will encounter in your day-to-day work as a counsellor will range between these two extremes.

You should not deal with professional matters beyond the scope of your ability. But the limits to competency varies. You may not handle all the problems presented by your clients, but at the beginning of your career you may feel that you cannot handle any of them. This is not true.

Believe in yourself as a trained professional. You should have proprietary skills and understandings. If your approach is uncertain, your clients may infer that you are incompetent. Exhibit purpose and confidence in your stock of knowledge and abilities. But do not exhibit undue superiority complex.

Do not manifest shock or astonishment at what you hear from clients. Maintain a professional perspective that allows you to listen in a clinical - but not detached - manner. Your own feelings should not interfere with the course of therapy.

Dress and conduct yourself in ways that connote professionalism. Although standards in dress and demeanor vary from culture to culture, be aware that your appearance conveys a message. If the impression you make on the client is not on the plus side, everything else you do throughout the initial session will need to be especially effective to make up for a poor start.

Master the body of factual matters that pertain to your counselling practice. Whether you deal with battered spouses, financially depressed clients, teenagers with career concerns, or some other problem area, you should know the resources in your community.
nity and make use of such resources.

Do not be afraid to ask others for help. There is nothing wrong with using the initial meeting with a client purely as an introductory session. There is no requirement that you immediately begin to deal with the problems the client brings forward. Seeking assistance in interpretation or approach is integral to your growth as a counsellor.

Be prepared to stretch your capability. There is a first time for everything you do, and all beginning professionals must be prepared to face certain challenges.

Acquaint yourself with reputable referral possibilities. The more familiar you are with community resources relative to a wide variety of concerns, the more prepared you are to deal with a broad range of counselling situations.

Be aware of your own values and their influence on your counselling. Abortion, incest, battering, theft, adultery, and child molestation are some of the situations you may confront as a counsellor. Your personal values may have led to convictions with respect to them, convictions that may be very different from those of your clients. Remember that during counselling, your role is to understand and assist your clients, not to be confrontational or judgemental. If you cannot set aside your personal opinions when dealing with clients professing or living disparate values, you are likely to find counselling to be very trying.

The supporting and reassuring role of the counsellor during the initial interview. Everything that a counsellor does to build the foundation for a solid counselling relationship is a form of sup
Support and reassurance. The counsellor's attitude and effective use of attending and clarifying responses demonstrate support by showing a real interest in the client. To convey this support and reassurance in a more concrete way involves actively providing positive feedback; communicating feelings of security, reassurance, and encouragement; and reaffirming the client's sense of self. In effect, you are saying "I like you" or "You are okay" to the client. This role may be explicitly or implicitly communicated by nonverbal as well as verbal means. This role is often necessary in a counselling relationship because clients usually need to feel accepted, and they are at times unable to use their own strengths to engage in new behaviours, to bring about desired changes, or to find appropriate solutions to their problems without the counsellor's support.

The supporting or reassuring role is used when the counsellor wants to acknowledge the experience of the client as very real and to make the client feel that he or she is heard, understood, and accepted as a person of value even though his or her behaviour or specific actions may not be acceptable or liked by him or significant others. Benjamin (1987) suggests that reassurance responses help clients overcome blockages and deal with difficult problems and situations, and Brammer (1988) points out that supportive responses are used with clients who are grief stricken or in a state of crisis.

Supportive and reassuring responses should stress that the counsellor believe in the client's ability to resolve issues; have an understanding of the frailty of the human condition; and respect the dignity and worth of the client. In using supportive responses, the counsellor should avoid comparisons with others and focus on the idea of being and doing rather than on the attainment of a prize or another status symbol. The role is employed at various stages in the counselling process.

Supportive responses are used to communicate your belief and
faith in the client, provide emotional security, reduce client anxiety, and provide encouragement. Supportive responses according to Doyle (1992) include person-of-value responses, approval responses, consolation responses, and relaxation responses. Such responses would show concern for clients, reveal an understanding of the problems that human beings face, when they are presented in a warm and relaxed tone.

**Types of Supporting or reassuring Responses**

**a. A person-of-value response.** This type of response is designed to show unconditional respect. It communicates to clients that they are individuals of significant worth and value regardless of their actions. Responses of this sort focus on the uniqueness of the person; the intrinsic aspects of life rather than the extrinsic aspects; the person’s existence rather than the person’s productivity; the effort rather than the end product; and what one is doing rather than how one is doing. “You seem like a fine person to me” emphasizes one’s uniqueness. And phrases such as “You handled that nicely” and “It sounds like you had fun travelling with Moremi to Ille-life” separate worth from accomplishment and can provide encouragement and solid humanistic support to clients.

**b. An approval response.** This sort of response is used to help clients feel more positive about themselves. This is accomplished by showing approval, agreement, or reassurance for a particular thought, feeling, or behaviour that the client has revealed. The response may applaud some previous event, compliment some present activity, or reassure that a future event will turn out appropriately. Phrases such as “It was nice for you to help Mary”, “You look nice in your ‘agbada’ today”, and “You have the ability to do that” praise the person and try to make the client feel better.
c. **A consolation response.** Consolation responses communicate a caring concern and show clients that you are supportive of them when they are not feeling good about something. This kind of response can be very useful when a client has gone through a recent unhappy occurrence, is currently dealing with an uncomfortable situation, or is facing an unpleasant future event. The response may be an expression of comfort, support, or condolence. Phrases such as “What a trying experience for you”, “You have my support”, and “You are really facing a tough situation condolences” can show your understanding of the client’s problem and your support for the client.

d. **A relaxation response.** Relaxation responses can be very supportive when clients are tense, excited, and overstimulated. They are designed to get clients to pause, to become calmer, and to become more in touch with all their emotions. Phrases such as “Take a deep breath”, “Close your eyes for a few minutes”, and “I want you to think about a pleasant scene” can communicate sincere interest in the client.

Counsellor who use this role skillfully show respect for their clients, reveal an understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of human beings, normally employ a relaxed warm tone in their voice, and use attentive body gestures. The effective use of the role can help clients reduce the intensity of their feelings, lower their anxiety about some activity, feel more secure in the counselling relationship, and gain a sense of confidence. These responses should help clients mobilize their strengths by allowing them to put the past into perspective, explore alternatives, and face the future positively. Support and reassurance help reinforce desired behaviour. The role is ineffective and may be counterproductive when the counsellor fails to acknowledge the depth of the client’s feelings or the seriousness of the client’s concerns, and when it is used in some inappropriate ways.
Sincere interest, respect for feelings and ideas of the client and maintaining confidences which are brought out in the course of the interview are important for winning and keeping the client's cooperation and confidence.

Few problems can be resolved in a single interview. Also, a single interview may not be a very reliable basis for reaching the desired goals of the client. Deep-seated problems usually develop over a long period of time, hence they may require some time before they can be resolved.

The counsellor should not move too rapidly; take it easy. The effective counsellor moves at the client's pace and gives the client time to express himself, ask questions, and think without interruption. As a result, subsequent interview(s) may be scheduled to follow-up actions and decisions resulting from the initial counselling interview. Such subsequent interviews would enable the counsellor to ensure that appropriate decision has been made and that the particular problem of the client that engineered the counselling interview has been tackled relevantly.
CHAPTER NINE

THE PROGRESSIVE STAGES OF THE COUNSELLING INTERVIEW.

Scissons (1993) has identified five stages in the counselling interview as follow:

(a) The Relationship - building Stage
(b) The Exploratory Stage
(c) The Decision Making Stage
(d) The Working Stage
(e) The Termination Stage.

In addition to these five stages is the sixth stage which is the follow-up stage.

(a). The Relationship-building Stage
When the counselling process begins, the counsellor and the client ordinarily do not know one another, so the foundation for a collaborative working relationship must be developed. Building this relationship is the focus of the initial counselling stage, and it is achieved through four interrelated tasks:
* establishing the facilitative conditions;
* determining the initial counselling goals;
* structuring the relationship; and
* exemplifying ethical standards.

This initial stage is normally relatively short, ranging from a few minutes to several sessions.
Establishing facilitative conditions. At the beginning of this process clients are frequently unsure of themselves, unsure about the counsellor, and most of all, unsure about the counselling process. Furthermore, clients may even be unaware of their major concerns. Hence they may be cautious. This cautiousness means that clients may be quite guarded in what they say. Clients need to feel a sense of trust, genuineness, and respect. As a counsellor you should take the responsibility for providing the conditions that will facilitate open, honest, and complete communication. Clients need to feel a sense of being at ease in the relationship and of being accepted by you, and to feel that they are understood in appropriate ways. You need to communicate an interest and positive regard for clients and an understanding and respect for their feelings, attitudes, and concerns.

Determining initial counselling goals. Clients come to counsellors for a variety of reasons: to resolve a conflict, solve a problem, or obtain some help in becoming a more effectively functioning person. They may be extremely aware of their problems, or rather vague and uncertain about why they feel the way they do or even why they came to the counsellor. A client may present an initial problem that is not his or her major concern. Motivation to work on the solution to the problem may be weak, moderate or strong. In any case, some mutually agreed upon purpose for meeting together must be identified. This first goal may be an agreement to work on the presenting problem, to listen to the client in order to help the client gain some insight and a better understanding of himself or herself, or to explore the client’s rather diffuse concerns in order to develop an understanding of the client and thereby identify a more precise counselling goal.
Structuring the relationship. Counselling relationships need to be structured in order to provide the client with a sense of clarification, direction, and understanding of the process. Initially, a client may not have a clear picture of what to expect or how changes are likely to occur, and he or she may be uncertain of the logistic and procedural aspects of this process. As the counsellor you should develop a mutual understanding and agreement between yourself and the client regarding the dynamics and methodology of the process; the logistical, pragmatic, and procedural issues involved; and the client’s personal or consumer-oriented concerns.

To develop an understanding of the dynamics of the counselling process you may need to discuss how counselling works, the nature of the interaction, the responsibilities of both yourself and the client, and information about how positive results can be achieved. For example, as a college counsellor you may provide this structure to a student who is undecided about his vocational choice by stating, “My job is to help you think about the issues that are involved in making this decision. You are responsible for obtaining any additional information that you need, judging its relative importance, and weighing it in light of your own personal background and values.”

As the counsellor you should be sure that the arrangements are clear for all the important logistic and practical details, such as time, including time of meeting, session length, frequency of contact, and how long the process may last; location, including address, building, and room number; arrangements for absences, cancellation, and emergency situations; and other details. For example, as a rehabilitation counsellor you may say to your client, “Chukwu, we will meet every Friday afternoon between two and three in my office, Room B24, faculty of Education, University of Lagos”. If for some reason you cannot make it, please call the office and
leave a message for me. We can reschedule our session for another time the following week.”

The third aspect of structuring is to make sure that there is agreement about those items that deal with personal concerns of the client, such as the confidential nature of the relationship, arrangements for recording the sessions, the qualifications of the counsellor, and what the client’s responsibilities are in the process. For example, as a student counsellor on practicum posting you may tell your client, “Anything you say in these sessions will be kept confidential, but our sessions will be taped so that I can review the highlights of your case with my supervisor.”

The amount of structure that is provided differs from case to case and will depend on the need of the client, the environment setting, the type of problem presented, and your theoretical orientation. Frequently counsellors structure the relationship in general terms initially and provide additional structure as the need develops. Too much structuring can increase a client’s anxiety rather than lower it, and too little can create an erroneous perception of what the counselling process is all about.

**Maintaining Ethical Standards.** As the counsellor you need to exemplify appropriate ethical behaviour throughout the counselling process. At the initial stage of counselling, the major ethical concerns involve confidentiality, informed consent, and the appropriate representation of your skills and credentials. These issues should be addressed when you structure the relationship, but you will need to continue to be concerned about ethical standards throughout the entire counselling process.

(b) **The Exploratory Stage**

During the second transitional stage you should focus on assisting the client in exploring, perceiving, analysing, and under-
ing the parameters of self and his or her problem. To gain an understanding of the client and his or her internal frame of reference, it is most helpful to address the following four major tasks at this stage:

* explore the scope or depth and breadth of the client’s presenting problem;

* analyse the client’s degree of functioning in several major dimensions of the client’s life;

* understand the historical and idiosyncratic ways that this particular client has changed and the amount of resistance that presently exists toward change; and

* identify the client’s internal strengths and the external resources available to the client.

At this stage you may help your client move from a surface awareness of his or her concern to a recognition of any underlying issues that need to be addressed.

The attending role can be used at this stage with various degrees of effectiveness. When you use the role effectively, it shows that you understand both the content and feelings expressed by the client, tend to focus on issues and situations that appear most relevant, communicate to the client that you have heard the major message, and often get behind the stated words to capture or sense the client’s underlying message. High level responses communicate to the client that you are a person who is sincerely interested in the client and a person to whom the client can relate in a non-threatening, trustful manner. The role is used ineffectively when the counsellor responds only to the surface level concerns expressed by the client. This is often manifested by the counsellor’s repeating the content of the client’s message. This “parroting” usually causes a circular movement in the dialogue and feelings of discomfort on the part of the client (Evans, Hearn, Uhlemann, & Ivey, 1989). Low
level responses are often ineffective and may be counterproduc-
tive. They are often said in a tonal quality that creates a questioning
atmosphere rather than a permissive or encouraging one. Low level
responses can also imply disapproval and criticism of the client’s
thoughts, feelings, or behaviours.

The scope of the problem. The major task at this stage is to ex-
plain and understand the reasons why the client came for help. To
facilitate this exploratory process both the counsellor and the client
need to clarify whether the presenting problem is the major or real
problem; identify the context of the environmental situation where
the problem occurs; evaluate the nature, severity, and duration of
the problem; assess the consequences that this particular problem
has caused the client and significant others; and estimate the effects
that any change would have on both the client and significant oth-
ers in the client’s life. In supporting and encouraging the client as a
person of value, open-ended inquiries may be used, but care must
be taken to avoid creating a dependency relationship or an inter-
rogative atmosphere.

The client’s degree of functioning. To understand the client’s
internal frame of reference, it is usually helpful to examine the client’s
degree of functioning in several major aspects of life. As the ex-
ploratory process unfolds, you may form a professional judgement
about whether the client is progressing through the developmental
life stages with a minimum of problems; meeting his or her physi-
ological, psychological, and social needs in effective ways; func-
tioning at an appropriate cognitive level; relating in positive ways
to significant others; coping and adjusting well to the conflicts, frus-
trations, and other thwarting conditions encountered in life; and mani-
festing appropriate behavioural patterns. An examination of these
dimensions will provide further insight into the client and increase both the client's and your awareness of the ability of the client to function in a variety of dimensions of life.

**Historical patterns.** As the counselor you may want to help a client explore and understand how he or she has historically dealt with problems similar to the presenting one. For example, it may help a particular client for you to know if the client has discussed important problems with significant others, sought new factual information to clarify issues, tried out new experiences or roles, changed his or her environment, or took chances when the future was uncertain. This exploratory process can reveal the client’s resistance to handling life issues or his or her ability to deal with the uncertainty of the problem-solving process. During the exploration process, you will begin to formulate some tentative plans about the intervention strategy you may want to employ with the client.

**Strengths and resources.** The client’s internal strengths and the source and kinds of resources available to the client may also be explored during this stage. To understand the scope of the client’s strengths, it is helpful to ascertain the client’s sense of ownership for the problem, sense of responsibility for resolving the issue, awareness of strengths and limitations, and knowledge of available external resources. Helping clients obtain this awareness and a sense of responsibility is essential in counselling. The way you treat and respond to your clients will affect their willingness to take responsibility and ownership for their own thoughts, feelings, and actions. If clients experience you as a caring, trusting, and concerned helper, they will slowly become less defensive and more open to self-exploration and self-understanding. Helping clients uncover issues they may not be aware of brings about clarification of the problem and often suggests an intervention strategy.
(c) The Decision-Making Stage

The third transitional stage is intermediate between the exploration of a client’s concerns and the application of a particular intervention plan. Two interrelated tasks need to be accomplished at this stage: the goals of the counseling process must be mutually agreed upon by both the counsellor and the client, and a decision should be made by the counsellor regarding the particular intervention strategy that will be used. The initial goals may be redefined or revised on the basis of the understanding reached in the first two stages of counseling. It is critical that the goals be mutually agreed upon because progress will be most unlikely if you are working on one concern while the client has a need to work on something quite different. The extent to which this agreement should be explicit varies from one approach to another. If you plan to use strategies based on a person-centered approach, you could accept an implicit agreement; whereas if you plan to employ a behavioural approach, you would want to have a very explicit agreement.

Deciding on a goal is not always a clear-cut process. Some clients present a multitude of issues that may impede their ability to function effectively. In these cases it is strongly recommended that as a beginning counsellor you give serious consideration to working on one concern that is causing major discomfort and yet is a goal that can be reached within a reasonable length of time. Reaching a decision on a counselling goal and the type of intervention is a task that cannot be accomplished effectively unless the tasks of the prior stages have been met. There are a number of client, counsellor, and environmental variables that will influence the specificity of these counselling goals and the intervention strategy to be used.

Client variables. The client characteristics that strongly influence the counseling goal and the intervention approach include:
the type of problem - for example, does the client have poor interpersonal skills or does he or she have poor decision-making skills?
- the historical and idiosyncratic pattern employed to solve problems and resolve issues - for example, does the client typically let others make the decisions or does he or she have the habit of investigating all possibilities so thoroughly as to become paralysed in the process?
- demographic characteristics - for example, does the client's age, gender, or income level have a bearing on the college and the financial aid that he or she is eligible for?
- personality characteristics - for example, the dependent client will have to be handled somewhat differently from the independent client.

Counsellor variables. The counsellor variables that strongly influence the choice of the counselling intervention include the counsellor's:
- knowledge of the cognate area - for example, theories and research in motivation, cognition, relationship, adjustment, and individual differences and personality structure.
- knowledge and experiences in using various counselling approaches - for example, person-centered, cognitive restructuring, or behaviour modification / therapeutic approaches.
- level and skill in communicating appropriate high-level responses - for example, helping skills, verbal responses, and role-communication skills.

Environmental variables. The setting (school, college, vocational-rehabilitation establishments, or private practice) where the counselling takes place may have a moderate to strong influence on the appropriateness of a particular goal or intervention strategy. Counsellor
sellor who work in institutional settings often set their goals in order to help the client function more effectively within that setting. For example, a school counsellor working with a client who has an alcoholic parent must have an immediate goal of helping the student function more effectively at school despite the family problem.

(d) The Working Stage

The fourth counselling interview stage is the application of an appropriate intervention strategy. The major task at this stage is helping the client resolve his or her concern and learning to function more effectively. This may require you to provide emotional support, encouragement, and reinforcement of newly gained insights. You may want to use one particular strategy or a multivariate treatment strategy. The strategies employed in counselling can be classified as interventions that emphasise improvement in the client’s level of mental functioning, sense of well-being or emotional state, or ability to behave more appropriately. Thus treatment strategies may be cognitively focused, affectively focused, or performance focused (Psycho-motor). Cognitively focused interventions should be considered when you believe that the client needs assistance to obtain or retain factual information, when the client needs help making decisions, or when the client reveals faulty deductive or inductive thinking process. Affectively focused interventions should be considered when you conclude that the client reveals inadequate feelings of self-worth, poor acceptance of others, and minimal skills in dealing with his or her own attitudes, beliefs, emotions, or values. Performance focused interventions may be appropriate when the client’s behavioral repertoire is limiting his or her functioning. More often than not, counsellors will employ a multimodal approach using strategies from all three domains.

In the working or intervention stage of counselling, counsellors often use several resources to assist clients in resolving thei
Significant others. Frequently an appropriate intervention strategy involves significant others in a client’s life. The client may be required to interact in a different way than previously with a parent, spouse, child, teacher, or employer. When this is probable, your treatment approach must give careful attention to this aspect of the client’s life. At times, you may want to involve these significant other persons in the intervention strategy. When this is desirable, appropriate consultation with the concerned parties should be conducted with the permission of the client.

Community resources. Community resources are used in the counseling process for three distinct purposes. First, clients may be referred to another person or agency for complete treatment if you realise that the client has a problem that can best be resolved through the assistance of another professional person or of a particular group or association. Examples of such referrals include optometrists, psychiatrists, medical doctors, and speech and hearing specialists. Clients may also be referred for concurrent treatment if you recognize that other professional help is needed by the client as part of or perhaps parallel to the counselor’s intervention. For example, as a school counsellor you may refer a student who has poor academic performance to a nearby after school lesson for extra lessons in relevant subjects. Finally, community resources are also used to enable clients to obtain important information necessary to advance the counselling process.

(e) The Termination Stage

Ward, (1984) has described the termination stages as an extremely important period in which the counsellor need to focus...
accomplishing three interrelated tasks. Firstly, progress made should be summarized and evaluated. Secondly, other issues that require attention at this time should be brought forward. And thirdly, methods to foster client growth after the counselling process terminates need to be established. When these tasks are handled effectively, the counselling process is successfully completed. When these tasks are not dealt with, the process is adversely affected.

To evaluate the counselling process, the counsellor and the client should determine whether the desired goals were met. The major responsibility for accomplishing this first task should be placed on the client. The client may be asked to prepare a progress report indicating how the counselling goals were reached. This may entail having the client state how he or she has changed, what new learning has occurred, or how he or she is better able to deal with specific situations or significant other persons. To consolidate the progress you ought to review the client’s progress report carefully and then verbally summarise and review what happened and why it happened. This consolidation will serve to reinforce attainment of the goals.

To terminate at the right time requires an assessment of the client’s overall level of functioning and whether or not other client concerns or unresolved issues need to be addressed. One issue that frequently needs attention is dependency. There is often a natural tendency to maintain the bond that was established in the counselling process, and the dependent client is likely to manifest this tendency to a high degree. The dependency feelings must be dealt with before the termination process can occur. Clearly, not all client issues can be resolved; clients may never function fully in all aspects of their lives. But once the agreed-upon goals have been met, unless another goal that is mutually agreed upon is selected and the counselling stages are recycled, the counselling process should be set for termination.
made should that require thirdly, method terminates effectively, and these tasks require the client to be met. The form must be placed forth is report that may entail new learning and with special attention to view carefully and why it is important of the client needs to be current. The other client issue that is a natural concern the counsellor, but this tenor must be dealt not all clients in all have been selected in the process.

(f) The Follow-up Stage
The final task in the termination process is helping the client develop a systematic method to ensure that the growth and change process will continue. This may ordinarily include arrangements for periodic follow-up sessions, as well as developing a self-monitoring plan and rehearsing ways this plan will be implemented. Self-monitoring plans and follow-up efforts serve to improve clients' self-confidence and provide a necessary support system.

Since the counsellor relationship is based on effective communication between two people - the client who is the person who seeks some resolution of a problem and the counsellor who is the skilled professional who uses his or her skills and knowledge of human behaviour to assist the person in need and because the purpose of this interaction is to improve the client's well-being, the burden is on the counsellor to employ appropriate communication skills in the process of the counselling interview that will influence the shape, the duration, and indeed the eventual effectiveness of the counselling process. Interviewing is indeed an indispensable diagnostic tool in counselling.
REVISION QUESTIONS

CHAPTER ONE
(1) What is interviewing?
(2) Describe the various types of interviews.
(3) What are the major purposes of interviewing?

CHAPTER TWO
(1) Describe the relationship between physical setting and the interviewing process.
(2) The counsellor has to be of above average intelligence. Discuss.
(3) Of what importance is the issue of confidentiality to the counselling interview.

CHAPTER THREE
(1) Relate the interviewer's acceptance of the interviewee to the success of the counselling interview.
(2) How can the interviewer's prejudices affect the interviewee?
(3) Discuss the relationship between the Referred clients and the counselling interview.

Chapter Four
(1) Discuss the necessary observation skills in the counselling interview.
(2) Explain the importance of listening in interviewing.
(3) What are the problems associated with listening?

CHAPTER FIVE
(1) Explain 'questioning' in relation to the interviewing process.
(2) Discuss 'talking' in interviewing.
(3) Relate the importance of the client's language structure to the understanding of his perceived problem.

CHAPTER SIX
(1) Of what relevance is the client's body language to the whole interviewing process.
(2) Explain the importance of the counsellor's non verbal communication in the counselling interview.
(3) Describe 'eye contact' as a means of focusing and following.

CHAPTER SEVEN
(1) What are 'opening and closing sentences'
(2) Describe the 'recurrent references' and 'association of ideas'
(3) Of what relevance is the client's concealed meaning.

CHAPTER EIGHT
(1) What do you understand by the 'initial interview'?
(2) Why should the counsellor be supportive and reassuring in the counselling process?
(3) Describe the different types of supporting or reassuring responses.

CHAPTER NINE
(1) What are the major stages of the counselling interview?
(2) Discuss the 'relationship-building' stage of the counselling interview.
(3) The 'termination' stage of the counselling interview could be the most difficult stage. Discuss.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


APPENDIX

COUNSELLING INTERVIEW INVENTORY (CII)

Here are twenty entry-level adult counselling situations. In each situation the client makes an initial statement that requires a response from the counsellor. Five possible responses are given. On the Answer Sheet provided rank in order the five possible answers from your first to your fifth choice, according to how you think you would respond in the cited situation.

Duplicate the answer and scoring sheets that follow these questions, and use the copies to record your answers and to score and profile your results.

1. A woman in her 30s wants assistance with her elderly mother, who lives with her. With a touch of annoyance in her voice, the woman says "My mother is lonely and has nothing to do during the day".
   a. Your mother takes up a lot of your time because she has no outside interest?
   b. How long has your mother lived with you?
   c. You need to come up with some ideas to get your mother active again.
   d. Having an elderly person underfoot can drive a person nuts.
   e. Don't let this get you down. Things will work out.

2. Your client, a 30 years old male, present an array of complaints about his wife. He begin, "My wife needs glasses and
I can’t afford, and even if I could, that wouldn’t make any difference. I think she needs a psychiatrist.

a. Then why are you here?
b. Your wife is unhappy and so are you?
c. You will have to look at issues one at a time if you are to sort out your problems.
d. From what you are saying, I think you both need someone to talk with.
e. It is not easy to have personal problems.

3. Your client, a female aged 24 talks with slurred speech and smells of liquor. She starts out, “Life isn’t worth living. Nobody cares what happens to me”.

a. There is always someone who cares.
b. How long have you been drinking heavily?
c. You feel alone right now?
d. I want you to start at the beginning and tell me what is going on in your life.
e. You are depressed and the booze is not helping you.

4. A 50 years old woman is very upset because her unemployed son has moved back home. She begins, “When my son left home four yours ago, I thought that I was finished raising my family. We fight every day. I want him out of my home”.

a. Life, sure has its trying moments.
b. Why did you let him move in if you didn’t want that?
c. Life would be easier without your son at home?
d. I guess you are going to have to ask him to leave.
5. Your client is worried about her husband, who drinks excessively and is troublesome. She begins, "Recently he said that he would beat me up if I didn’t watch what I was doing. I’m not doing anything”.
   a. You love him but are afraid of what he might do?
   b. Do you believe him?
   c. Don’t worry. I am sure that we can work everything out.
   d. Tell me what you think he would do if he were provoked.
   e. It’s not right for one person to cause so much pain and worry for another person.

6. Your client is very upset. He feels that his marriage is falling apart and want to save it. On occasions his wife has threatened to file for divorce and to take the children with her. Your client is frightened by the threat and says, “I don’t know what I will do if she leaves”.
   a. What a worry....
   b. You love your children very much and don’t want to lose them?
   c. You need to focus on what is in the best interest of the children as well as the family as a-whole.
   d. Do you want to try to save your marriage or just try to gain custody of your children?
   e. Kids are not enough to hold a poor marriage together.

7. A male client has been suffering from a fear of open spaces for
sometime. His fear is becoming so intense that he frequently misses work. He states, I’ll lose my job if this keeps up and I can’t afford to have that happen again.

a. How many jobs have you lost because of this fear?
b. You have lost jobs before because of this condition and you don’t want to lose another job?
c. It is very normal to want to hold your job.
d. Tell me about the events that occurred in past job that resulting in your losing your job.
e. Ah, life can be really tough.

Your client is a widower with two young children. He feels that he cannot manage to earn a living and raise the children at the same time. He begins by saying “I think that I am going to crack with all of this stress. I can’t handle kids and my job at the same time”.

a. Don’t feel bad. I’m sure it’s not that bad.
b. You have reached your limit and the demands at home and work are not going to change?
c. How long have you been feeling this way?
d. Perhaps you need to evaluate alternative to the ways you currently do things at home and at work to reduce your stress.
e. Don’t let this situation beat you. I am sure you have been through worse times and survived.

9. Your client is about to retire next year. He is worried about the financial and personal aspects of retirement. He states,
What am I going to do with all of my time? I have always worked and love it. And the money! I’ll have to reduce my standard of living.

a. Don’t worry. It takes a while to get used to change.

b. Exactly what are your worries about retirement?

c. Retirement has been on your mind for quite a while and you are scared?

d. I am glad that you came to talk with me about your retirement concerns.

e. I want to hear more about the different worries you have when you think of retirement.

10. Your client, a female about 40, feels tired. She cannot sleep and has lost her appetite. She begins by saying, “I don’t understand what is going on. I feel bad and my chest is tight all the time.”

a. That really must be a problem for you.

b. Are there recent events that have changed in your life?

c. You feel anxious but you don’t know why?

d. The more you worry, the more pains you will get in your chest.

e. Try to think of recent events that may be related to your anxiety.

11. Your client, a young female, has problems with her boyfriend. She says that she loves him very much but that he is very demanding of her time. “He is too possessive. He wants me to stay home with him all of the time and to ignore my friends.”
I can’t do that.”

a. You want some time to spend with your friends?
b. Why don’t you go out anyway?
c. Your boyfriend is too possessive. You seem like a responsible person
d. Give me an idea of the kinds of things you would rather be doing.
e. Lots of men are like that.

12. Your client’s husband hit her and pushed her down the stairs the night before you met her. She took their children and slept at a friend’s house. She says to you, “I am afraid to go back home and I can’t drag my neighbours into my personal affairs”.

a. Let’s see if we can find you a safe place until we sort out this thing.
b. Do you have another place to go where he can’t find you?
c. You don’t know what your husband will do if he finds you?
d. If you were at risk, you did the right thing.
e. I know this is too much for you.

13. Your client, a young male, is very sad. His girlfriend has just left him and he has no outside activities to occupy his leisure time. He begins, “I lost my girl. I have nothing to do. And the job is not too great either.”

a. Why is everything going wrong at the same time in your life?
b. Now that your girlfriend is gone, there is nothing to fill the void.

c. It’s just one rotten things after another for you.

d. You shouldn’t feel so bad. At least you have a job to see you through these tough times.

e. Let’s focus on what happened between you and your girlfriend.

14. Your client lost her husband three years ago and is still depressed and withdrawn from her friends. She says, “Nobody knows what I have been through. They just don’t understand my situation.”

a. What are your friends saying to you?

b. You are entitled to your feelings. They are very real.

c. Life certainly has its trying times.

d. Your friends think you should get on with your life, but you still feel sad over the loss of your husband.

e. Maybe you need to talk with somebody who won’t tell you how to think and feel.

15. After two years of marriage, your client reports problems with his wife. He states firmly, “I try hard to please my wife. I buy her gifts and take her out to dinner when I’m not working. No matter what I do, it’s never enough”.

a. You are frustrated that nothing you have tried so far satisfied your wife?

b. Things always look worse than they are.

c. Your wife obviously wants more than presents. She wants
16. Your client is a 21 year old single parent who has been on welfare for five years. She indicates that she wants more out of life than poverty. She sighs “Where do I start? I don’t even have any qualification.
   a. Let’s review some realistic options for your future.
   b. You want to make some changes for the better in your life, but the changes must be realistic?
   c. Do you want to review some options for the future with me?
   d. It’s tough, even when you try your best, to see what options might be realistic.
   e. A review of realistic options is the best thing to do.

17. Your client, a young woman in her early 20s sits across from you. She is very close to tears. When asked why she is seeking counselling, she quietly says, “I’m not really sure”.
   a. Keeping everything inside will only make matters worse.
   b. It is difficult to talk about personal things.
   c. What would you like to talk about?
   d. Things don’t seem very clear to you right now.
   e. Sometimes if you start talking about somethings, it makes it easier to talk about what is really bothering you.

18. Your client is a secretary, about 40 years of age, who is about to lose her job because of a branch closure. She will have to
relocate to a branch in another city or face unemployment. She laments, “After all these years with the same company, what am I to do”?

a. You feel unprepared to make such a tough decision right now?

b. That really is too bad. Sometimes things just take a while to work out.

c. Are you ready to review both options and make a choice?

d. Perhaps it will help if you look at why you feel unprepared to make such a decision right now.

e. Indecision doesn’t help anyone. You’ll feel much better once your decision is made.

19. Your client, a 30 years old journeyman mechanic, has been laid off from his job. He talks briefly about the layoff and continues, “I know what I want, but I’m not sure I can get it without putting a strain on my wife and kids”.

a. Your family’s well being is important to you?

b. What do you want?

c. Tell me what you want, and let’s see if there is an option that won’t put an undue strain on your family.

d. I admire your concern for your family. Finding a balance between work and home isn’t easy.

e. You’ll make it. Don’t worry.

20. Your client, an unemployed teacher, does some substitute teaching for the school board but has not been offered a full time job in the eight years that she and her family have lived in the
community. She states with frustration, “They don’t seem to want me on a full-time basis”.

a. What reasons has the board given you?

b. The board like your work but not enough to give you a permanent position?

c. School boards have an obligation to keep others informed.

d. Keep your chin up. You’ll eventually get it.

e. Give me an idea of what the board’s reasons might be.
COUNSELLING INTERVIEW INVENTORY
ANSWER SHEET

In the space provided, rank order the five possible responses according to the following code:

1. I would be most likely to say something like this
2. I would be somewhat less likely to say something like this
3. I would be even less likely to say something like this
4. I would be very unlikely to say something like this
5. I would be least likely to say something like this

1. a b c d e
2. a b c d e
3. a b c d e
4. a b c d e
5. a b c d e
6. a b c d e
7. a b c d e
8. a b c d e
9. a b c d e
10. a b c d e
11. a b c d e
12. a b c d e
13. a b c d e
14. a b c d e
15. a b c d e
16. a b c d e
17. a b c d e
18. a b c d e
19. a b c d e
20. a b c d e
Transfer the answers from your answer sheet to this scoring sheet, putting the number (1,2,3,4,5,) you have for each letter (a,b,c,d,e) in the appropriate place. Note that the letters (a,b,c,d,e) are generally not in the same sequence on the scoring sheet as on your answer sheet. Be careful in making the transfers. Sum each column to obtain subtotals. Then sum the two subtotal scores for each communication style column to get a total score for each style (grand totals) Each of the five communication styles is represented by its first letter. Listening, Questioning, Coaching, Inferring, or Supporting.

1. a b c d e
2. b a c d e
3. c b d e a
4. c b d e a
5. a b d e c
6. b d c e a
7. b a d c e
8. b c d e a
   c b e d a
10. cbeda
11. abdce
12. cbeda
13. baedc
14. daebc
15. adecb
16. bcaed
17. dceab
18. acdeb
19. abcde
20. baecd

L Q C I S Subtotals

Grand totals

L Q C I S