Reflecting Skills

Paraphrase and Reflection of Feeling

Reason for Reflecting

- Reflecting is a verbal way of communicating empathy
- A form of feedback that enables the client to confirm or correct the impression he or she is giving
- Stimulates further exploration
- Captures important aspects of the client's message that might have remained camouflaged.
- Help the client to enlarge and enrich their stories.

Reflecting is not:

- just repeating verbatim what the client says
- going into a story of how you can relate to the situation’
- passing judgment on what is being said
- giving your opinion on what “should” be done
Reflecting Skills

**Paraphrase**
Shorten, clarify, and feedback other’s comments.

**Reflect Feelings**
Reflect feeling/emotions of the client

Attending--a quick review

- Head nods and positive facial expressions
- Open gestures
- Minimal verbs – “Ummm” or “Uh-huh”
- Repeat key words from last statement
- Silence with appropriate nonverbal behavior

Paraphrasing

- Indicates your are attempting to understand what the client is saying
- Helps to create a working relationship
- Helps client to crystallize his/her thoughts
- Gives direction to the interview.
Paraphrasing

- Paraphrasing is a skill used to address the first level (cognitive level)
- In the beginning of the counseling relationship a client can feel more comfortable if you are able to reflect content.
- In most cases you cannot really understand the deeper layers until later on.

Basic formula for a paraphrase:

- Listen carefully to the client’s story
- Reflect back to the client a condensed, nonjudgmental version of the facts and thoughts.
- Do not parrot!

Paraphrasing (reflecting content)

Facilitate client exploration and clarification of issues:

1. Choose a sentence stem.
2. Use other’s key words and main ideas.
3. Briefly state essence of other’s talk.
4. Check for accuracy.

Aspects of the paraphrase may be in your own words, the main ideas and concepts should reflect the client’s view of the world, not yours!
Common sentence stems

- It seems that…
- It sounds/looks like it might be…
- I hear you saying that…
- Right now it’s…
- My sense of what you’re saying is…
- Let’s see if I understand you correctly…

Review of steps

Ex. Client, a 40-year-old woman, says: “How can I tell my husband I want a divorce? He’ll think I’m crazy. I guess I’m just afraid to tell him.”

Steps
1) Recall the message and restate it to yourself covertly
2) Identify the content and key ideas of the message
   Ex. Wants divorce, but hasn’t told husband because he will think she’s crazy

Steps continued…

3) Translate the key content into your own words
   Want a divorce= break off, split up, ending, etc.
4) Select an appropriate beginning to start paraphrase
   E.g., “It sounds like,” “You think,” “I hear you saying,”
   E.g., “It sounds like you haven’t found a way to tell your husband you want to end the relationship because of his possible reaction. Is that right?”
5) Confirm the accuracy of the paraphrase
When should I Paraphrase?

- When you need to understand the facts
- When you need to clarify the facts in the client’s story
- As you get more information, paraphrasing helps you focus on key issues
- Stating the facts back for confirmation without passing judgment, just expressing understanding.
- Remember we are trying to understand the client’s thoughts and how they view the issue or event.

Roadblocks to paraphrasing

- Parroting
- Your “internal noise”
- Worry about what to say next
- Being judgmental- “your coworkers mistreat you” vs “you believe your co-workers may be critical of you”

Video

- Video Example on Paraphrasing
Examples of paraphrases:

- Client: “I’m not sure why you’ve asked to see me today, unless it’s because I’ve missed a few meetings this month.”
  - I’m sure you know why I called you in to see me.
  - You think that your attendance could be a reason for my concern.
  - We do have to talk about your tardiness.

Example

- Client: “My daughter is 15 and we are having trouble with her. She stays out all night and we do not know where she is.”
  - Has your daughter ever been in trouble with the law?
  - I guess you’ve had a lot of problems with your daughter.
  - The fact that your daughter does not come home at night is a big problem for you.

Example:

Client: “and this is having an effect on my wife’s heart condition. She’s already had one heart attack.”

- So, you also have your wife’s health to consider in this.
- You’re really feeling worried about your wife.
- Your daughter must be a real problem for your wife.
Things that Impede the Process

- “Mental Noise”
- Worrying about what to say next!
- “remember your job is to respond to the last thing the client said rather than stimulate a new topic or ask a question.”
- Taking sides/being judgmental

Why Reflect feelings?

- Makes feeling and emotions explicit and clear
- Makes implicit or hidden emotions clear to client
- Brings client to deeper levels of self-disclosure
- Conveys counselor empathy
- Avoids intellectualizing

Primary Feelings

- Joy
- Sadness
- Anger
- Guilt/shame
- Fear
- Disgust
- Grief
- Surprise
- Interest/excitement
Steps:

- Observe the feeling
- Name the feeling (to self)
- Repeat to the client

How to recognize key emotions

- Emotional words used by other
- Implicit emotions—not actually spoken
- Nonverbal expressed emotions—body language
- Mixed verbal and nonverbal cues
Steps in more detail

1. Choose a stem
2. Label feeling
3. Use appropriate tense
4. Check for accuracy

Examples

• “I hear you say you feel_____”
• “Feels like_____”
• “You feel sad”
• “You must have felt ____”
• “I gather that you are feeling ____”
• “I can tell that ____”
• “In other words, you feel ____”

Use a brief statement of context

• Helps to broaden the context
• “you feel____ when….“
• “you feel____ because….“
• You feel___ about....“
Things to think about:

- Clients usually express mixed feeling
- Failure to reflect a client’s mixed emotions can result to undue attention to a single aspect of the problem
- A client may say one thing with words while expressing something entirely different with actions

Roadblocks

- Waiting too long to reflect feeling
- Turning reflection into a question “do you feel sad when your husband ignores you?”
- Combing a question with the reflection. “you feel sad when he ignores you. What do you want to do?”
- Focusing on the wrong person
- Letting the client go on and on (rambling)
- Overshooting and parroting

Nonjudgmental Listening Cycle

- Good
  - Open question
  - Minimal encourager
  - Door opener
  - Paraphrase
  - Reflection of feeling
  - Reflection of feeling
  - Reflection of meaning
  - Summary

- Not so Good
  - Open Question
  - Minimal encourager
  - Door opener
  - Closed question
  - Paraphrase
  - Closed question
  - Closed question
Examples

• “I try and I try, but hardly ever succeed. Every time I try to do what he wants, it doesn’t work out. When I try to do the things the way I think they should be done, he doesn’t like that either. I just don’t know what to do.”
• Choose the work that best represents the client’s feelings:
  - Guilty
  - Angry
  - Frustrated

Examples

• (discussing a close friend) “it bothers me, and I really worry about him. I want to help, but I just can’t get through to him.”
• Choose the word that best represents the client’s feelings.
  - Resigned
  - Frustrated
  - Concerned
  - Happy

Examples

• (A former drug addict) “What can I do? I have no money, no skills, and no one to help me. I should do something, but don’t know what to do”
  1. You sound bewildered at the moment
  2. You seem as though you have given up hope
  3. All of that must be very frightening to you.
Examples

- (Describing the discovery of an accident in his home) "I turned on the light and saw him lying on the floor. There was blood everywhere. It was unbelievable."

  1. What on earth did you do?
  2. You must have been paralyzed with fear
  3. You must have been shocked.

Examples

- (A widow talking about her only son, and crying) “I am really glad my son is going away to college"

  - You must be extremely proud of him! Where is he going?
  - You are happy he is going to college, but you will be lonely without him.
  - You are unhappy about his decision to go to college.