Counseling Skills (I)
Attending and Listening

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Learning Objectives

- Explain the importance of rapport building
- Demonstrate the skills of attending
- Discuss appropriate use of verbal and nonverbal communication skills
- Demonstrate the skills of active listening
- Application of basic counseling skills
Outline

- Introduction
- Building rapport
- Counseling skills
- Attending skills
  - Behaviour aspects of attending
  - Encouraging as a part of attending
  - Non-verbal attending
Outline ...

- Listening
  - Active listening
  - Poor listening
  - The steps to good listening
  - Blocks to effective listening
  - Aids to effective listening
- Conclusion
- References
Introduction

- What is the standing of Tanzanian culture in attending and listening in consideration of
  - Gender
  - Age
  - Status?
Introduction ...

- Counsellor join and make connection with the client during the first meeting
- They both need time to feel each other out and start to become comfortable with one another
Building Rapport

- Create an environment that promotes feelings of safety, respect, and understanding
- Voice - have a soothing, comforting tone
- Eye contact - natural eye contact, animated facial expression
- Language - keep in mind education level and experiences of clients; genuineness in counsellors vocabulary
Building Rapport ...

- Demonstration of confidence in process and directives
- Framing the purpose of counseling
- Make use of informed consent
  - freedom to choose whether to enter into or remain in a counselling
  - adequate information about counselling process
  - rights and responsibilities of both the counsellor and the client
Building Rapport ...

- Counselling office
  - Arrangement of furniture - no big objects between counsellor and client
  - Maintain a comfortable distance between counsellor and the client
  - Credentials – hang degree, licenses, certifications, registrations on wall
  - Comfort level
Building Rapport ...

- Understand the client in his or her context
  - The person of the client
  - How client acts in session will elicit responses for counsellor
    - i.e. if client is withdrawn, counsellor may use skills that help bring him/her out; if client gregarious, counsellor may use skills to cut-off
  - Sensitivity to diversity
Counseling Skills

- Divided into three groups
  1. Attending skills
     - Giving physical contact, gestures, eye contact, listening
  2. Following skills
     - Stay focus, listening, door openness, questions
  3. Reflecting skills
     - Feedback, paraphrasing, summarizing
Attending Skills

- Attending is the act of truly focusing on the other person

- It involves consciously making ourselves aware and interested of what the other person is saying and of what they are trying to communicate both verbally and nonverbally
Attending Skills ...

- **Purpose:**
  - To help client tell story
  - Draw out appropriate background and contextual information
  - Communicate understanding
  - Facilitate deeper level of exploration make connections
  - Demonstrate empathy
  - Provide emotional support to the client
Attending Skills ...

- Attending helps the counsellors
  - Better understand the client through careful observation

- Client
  - Relax and feel comfortable
  - Express their ideas and feelings freely in their own way
  - Trust the counsellor
  - Take a more active role in their own sessions
Attending Skills ...

- **Physical Attending**
  - Posture, eye contact, and general body position that communicates the counselor is paying attention to the client

- **Psychological Attending**
  - Ability to pick up on the client's non-verbal as well as the verbal messages
Attending Skills ...

- Attending involves attention
  - Concentration of mental activity
  - Cognitive process selectively concentrating on one thing while ignoring other things
Attending Skills ...

- Divided attention
  - Occurs when try to distribute attention between two or more competing task

- Selective attention
  - Occurs when two or more messages are presented simultaneously where a person must focus attention on one message and ignore very thing else
Attending Skills ...

- Burnard 1994 provide possible zones of attention
  - Attention out - counsellor is fully listening to the client and paying attention to all verbal and non-verbal cues
  - Attention in - counsellor caught up with his or her own thoughts and feelings with partial attention to the client
Attending Skills ...

- Attention focused on fantasy [internal dialogue] - counsellor is busy trying to work out theories (ideas or beliefs) about the client, interpreting or attributing what is going on

- Counsellors cannot know other things about people, their thoughts or feelings unless they ask them

- Assumption will lead to assumption then confusion
Attending Skills ...

- Counsellors have to focus directly on the other person with occasional moves to the domain of their own thoughts and feelings but they learn, also to attempt to avoid the domain of fantasy (Burnard, 1994)
Behaviour Aspects of Attending

- Egan 2010, postulate SOLAR as acronym for showing behaviours that encourage listening
  - Sit Squarely in relation to the client
  - Maintain an Open posture
  - Lean slightly towards the client
  - Maintain reasonable Eye contact with the client
  - Relax
Encouraging as a Part of Attending

- Verbal and nonverbal ways of attending involve usage of small prompts to lead into further exploration or clarification
  - “Uh-huh”
  - “Mmm”
  - “Yes”
  - “I see”
  - “Ah”
  - “Oh”
  - Nodding of head
Non-verbal Attending

- Both client and counselor nonverbal can communicate
- Client nonverbal
  - Give context to the information the client is sharing
  - Support or discredit the validity of what the client is expressing
  - Serve to provide additional understanding to words the client is using
Non-verbal Attending ...

- Counselor nonverbal
  - Give clients clues about counselor confidence
  - Degree to which counselor is listening to them
  - Relationship trustworthiness
Non-verbal Attending...

- Nonverbal information can be gained through observation of:
  - Facial expressions
  - Eye Contact (*consider cultural differences)
  - Appearance (clothing, grooming)
  - Gestures/Body movements (i.e., fidgety)
  - Spatial behavior (how did client position him/herself)
  - Posture
Non-verbal Attending ...

- Information gathered from nonverbal
  - Assessment of general mood
  - Clues to inner states
  - Mental status
  - Verbal and nonverbal congruency
  - Signals of distress
  - Unconscious reactions
Non-verbal Attending ...

Counselor’s should

● Notice how they are being affected by the other person’s nonverbal messages

● Practice and observe
  ● Experience is the best way to become adept at picking up the nonverbal cues in self and others

● Make sure their nonverbal behavior exert positive influence on the other person
Listening

- Is a process of hearing the other people which involves not only noting the things that they say but also a whole range of other aspects of communication (Burnard, 1994)

- Through listening counsellor can note
  - Linguistic aspects - words, phrases, figures of speech
  - Paralinguistic aspects - range, volume, tone
  - Non verbal aspects - facial expression, gestures, body movement, eye contact, proximity
Listening

- Listening fulfills three of our most deeply felt human needs
  - Needs to ventilate our feelings
  - Need for emotional intimacy
  - Need to have our self-esteem validate and affirmed

- Good sensitive listening comes across to person feelings as praise and makes a person feel affirmed and worthwhile
Active Listening

- Focusing on all aspects of a client's expression
  - Resist distractions
  - Listen to the client's tone of voice
  - Listen for cues to the client's feelings
  - Listen for generalizations, deletions, and distortions
  - Listen for common cognitive and emotional themes
  - Use minimal prompts i.e. head nods, yes’s, mm’s
Active Listening ...

- Active listening happens when counselor “listen for meaning”

- The listener says very little but conveys empathy, acceptance and genuiness

- The listener only speaks to find out if a statement (or two or twenty) has been correctly heard and understood
Poor Listening

- Poor listening is blame
- The way we listen poor including:
  1. Refusing to listen
  2. Pretending to listen while having decision on a mind or mind to be far away
  3. Listening without patience, think the person taken your time or in hurry
Poor Listening ...

4. Listening but not understanding or blame the person
5. Listening without an adequate response without a comfort
The Steps to Good Listening

1. Stepping out of personal world out of own thoughts and feelings, by putting them aside for the moment
2. Entering in another’s world, understand their point of view
3. Sensing by searching for deepest feelings
4. Giving an adequate response
Blocks to Effective Listening

- Counsellors
  - own problems
  - stress and anxiety
  - inattention
  - value judgments
  - interpretations
  - wondering mind

- Uncomfortable seating (*Burnard, 1994*)
Blocks to Effective Listening ...

- Attraction
- Physical condition
- Concerns
- Over-eagerness
- Similarities of problems
- Differences (Egan, 1986)
Aids to Effective Listening

- Attention focused out
- Suspension of judgment by the counsellor
- Attention to behavioural aspects of listening
- Comfortable seating
- Avoidance of interpretation
- Development of free floating attention
- Judicious use of minimal prompts (Burnard, 1994)
Conclusion

- Try and practise each skill

- Trying out new skills in a safe environment is often a better proposition than trying them out with real clients

- Counsellors should not initiate action without responding or understanding
References


