

The Role Of Micro-Counselling Skills In Client Growth

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Introduction

Effective counselling skills play an important role in the field of psychology and mental health, helping therapists form strong relationships with clients to support them on their journey toward better mental health and a more fulfilling life. The strong alliance between therapist and client creates a foundation for effective therapy and counselling by fostering trust, understanding, and empathy between them. Clients often seek help with problematic situations, which can only be coped with by therapists with effective counselling skills to guide them through essential problem-solving techniques. Whether it is about building resilience, improving communication, or managing emotions, counselling skills contribute to better relationships and enhanced self-esteem to facilitate change and growth.

Theoretical Background

The book “Intentional Interviewing and Counselling” particularly focuses on the micro-counselling skills hierarchy, emphasizing specific skills that facilitate effective communication and rapport-building. According to this valuable resource, as Allen Ivey describes in his model, the approach of attending behaviour involves demonstrating genuine interest and the foundational skill of active listening during the conversation, which indicates attentiveness and engagement. Such behaviours through verbal or non-verbal cues make clients feel heard and valued in order to encourage them to continue sharing. Furthermore, reflecting feelings involves summarizing the emotions of the clients to demonstrate understanding and build trust. The questioning process involves asking open-ended and closed-ended questions to elaborate the information to help clients explore their feelings and thoughts. Similarly, the process of summarization, in this regard, involves condensing the key points and techniques of counselling that are discussed during the session in order to see the clients’ progress (Ivey et al., 2018). These concepts guide counsellors in eliciting relevant information and building rapport to facilitate the growth and ethical development of the clients. By mastering these micro-skills, counsellors create a supportive environment for their clients to explore their goals.

Description of the Client Scenario

Name of the Client: Joseph Bennett

Age: 35

Gender: Female

Occupation: Mechanical Engineer

Cultural Background: Joseph is a first-generation immigrant from South Korea who is currently living in the United States.

Family Situation: Joseph is married with a young child aged 5.

Issues: Joseph experiences cultural differences while he struggles to balance his demanding job as a mechanical engineer with his responsibilities as a father to his child and a son to his parents. While managing his work-life balance, he often feels overwhelmed and misses his extended family back in South Korea. He also feels guilty about not spending enough quality time with his family and child. The major issue Joseph is encountering right now is that he and his wife frequently argue due to their differing parenting styles and expectations. The anxiety and stress from these conflicts between the couple affect Joseph's overall well-being, due to which he neglects self-care, leading to exhaustion and emotional fatigue.

Challenges Requiring Counselling: Joseph needs effective strategies to set boundaries, manage stress, and prioritize self-care to address feelings of anxiety and guilt, which is crucial for his mental health and overall well-being. Effective counselling can help him navigate parenting challenges and conflicts between the couple through communication with his family and wife. Moreover, Joseph would benefit from exploring cultural adjustment and building a support network in his new place of living and country. As a counsellor, I would focus on providing coping strategies and validating Joseph's experiences to help him create a more balanced life.

Application of Counselling Skills

Based on the client's profile, the key counselling skills from Ivey's model would be tailored to Joseph's individual needs and cultural context. As Joseph's counsellor, I would actively maintain eye contact, listen to him actively, and show genuine interest in his experiences so the attending behaviour helps build trust and rapport. I would also use open-ended questions to explore his experiences and feelings related to cultural adjustments, such as asking him, "Tell me more about your work stress and conflict with your wife." Eventually, I will use the skill of reflection of feeling while Joseph expresses his emotions so that I can reflect those feelings back to him to validate his emotions and encourage him to continue about his feelings for further exploration of his challenges. For instance, I will ask him, "You're feeling overwhelmed by your work expectations at your workplace and guilty by your family expectations when you're home." I would also consider multicultural counselling principles if Joseph faces challenges related to cultural adjustments.

Conclusion

In sum, continuous learning plays an important role in the development of effective counselling skills such as effective communication, empathy, and active listening to foster client growth. Ivey's micro-counselling model emphasizes flexibility to meet the unique needs of each client as well as intentionality to be purposeful in applying counselling techniques. The significant Ivey's work through the micro-counselling approach also recognizes the importance of cultural competence in effective counselling. Thus, continuous learning and skill development through self-reflection, education, and supervision ensure that counsellors stay up to date with evolving practices in order to refine their skills and provide support to their clients who are facing numerous challenges in their lives.

References

Ivey, A. E., Ivey, M. B., & Zalaquett, C. P. (2018). *Intentional interviewing and counseling: Facilitating client development in a multicultural society*. Cengage Learning.