

Interviewing Techniques

Psych 454 - Clinical Psychology
Gary S. Katz, Ph.D.

Goals of Interviewing

- Establish rapport
- Gather information efficiently
- Form clinical impressions
- Supplement testing information

Links Between Interviewers and Interviewees

- Social Facilitation
 - We tend to act like those around us.
 - If the interviewer is tense, the interviewee will be tense; if the interviewer is relaxed, the interviewee will be relaxed.
 - Works during interviews, as well as during crisis intervention
 - Also seen in developmental psychology

Principles of Effective Interviewing

- Proper attitude
 - interpersonal influence
 - the degree to which one person can influence another
 - is related to interpersonal attraction
 - the degree to which people share a feeling of understanding, mutual respect, similarity
 - Most important factor in patients' evaluation of interviews: their perceptions of the interviewer's feelings.

Principles of Effective Interviewing

- Most important factor in patients' evaluation of interviews: their perceptions of the interviewer's feelings.
 - When the interviewer was seen as cold, defensive, uninterested, uninvolved, aloof, or bored, interviews were seen as "poor."
 - When the interviewer was seen as warm, open, concerned, involved, committed, and interested, these interviews were seen as "good."

Principles of Effective Interviewing

- Responses to avoid in an interview
 - Those that increase stress
 - Judgmental statements
 - puts interviewees on guard
 - communicates approval or disapproval of the interviewee
 - Evaluative statements
 - also communicates approval or disapproval
 - may inhibit self-disclosure if interviewee feels that their statements are being evaluated

Principles of Effective Interviewing

- Hostile statements
 - unnecessary if trying to gather information
 - may be used in a “stress interview” but not to be done without experience in this area
- Probing statements should be used carefully
 - At times, probing statements are necessary but should be made with care.
 - Avoid: “Why did you ...”
 - Better: “I’m curious as to how ...”
 - In general, “how’s” are better than “why’s”

Principles of Effective Interviewing

- Effective Responses
 - Open-ended questions
 - those that cannot be answered specifically
 - are better than closed-ended questions
 - those that can
 - Open-ended questions promote the flow of information, provide a wide range of area for the interviewee and interviewer to explore.

Principles of Effective Interviewing

- Other ways to keep interactions flowing
 - Transitional phrases
 - Verbatim playback
 - Paraphrasing and restatement
 - Summarizing
 - Clarifying
 - Empathizing / Demonstrating understanding

Principles of Effective Interviewing

- Other ways to keep interactions flowing
 - Transitional phrases
 - “I see”... “Um hm”
 - sometimes fall flat
 - best to back up to something relevant to what the interviewer just said
 - Verbatim playback
 - Repeats information that interviewee just stated
 - Reinforces the fact that you are listening
 - Also useful in that using the interviewee’s words “connects” you to the interviewee

Interviewing Skills: Active Listening

- Paraphrasing / Restatement
 - rephrasing the content of what has been said
 - reinforces the fact that you are, in fact, listening
 - “checks in” with the client, to make sure that you’ve interpreted the information correctly.
- Summarizing
 - paraphrasing combined with reflection
 - pulls together the meaning of several responses
 - used to organize previous information
 - can be used to direct the interview

Interviewing Skills: Active Listening

- Clarification
 - asking questions to better understand statements made during interview
- Reflection / Empathy / Understanding
 - rephrasing the *feelings* associated with what has been said
 - reinforces listening
 - verifies feelings

Initial Interview Objectives

- Identifying information
- Reason for referral
- Referral source
- Parental objectives
- Family History
- Prenatal history
- Perinatal history
- Postnatal period
- Infancy
- Developmental milestones
- Medical History
- Abuse
- Treatment history
- Job / School history
- Social History
- Current behavioral concerns
- Diagnostic criteria

Asking the right questions ...

- Interviewing skills require not only knowing what questions to ask, but also *how* to ask them.
 - Does your baby have any problems sleeping?
vs.
 - What time does she usually go down for the evening? Does she sleep through the night? How many times does she awaken during the evening? How easily does she get back to sleep. When is she up for the day? Is she a morning + afternoon napper or just a once-a-day napper? How long does she nap for? Do you ever have to awaken her for meals?

Interviewing Exercise

- Choose a partner to interview.
 - Goals:
 - Basic identifying information.
 - Family (of origin) history.
 - As detailed as possible.
 - Disclose only as much as you are comfortable sharing.
 - 15min interview per person.
 - After 15min, swap.
 - Share interviews & check accuracy.