

Interactional Helping Skills

1. Tuning in to Self

The worker's efforts to get in touch with potential feelings/concerns/beliefs that the worker him/herself may bring to the helping encounter.

2. Tuning in to Others

The worker's efforts to get in touch with actual and potential feelings and concerns that the client may bring to the helping encounter

- a) Supportiveness
- b) **Non-verbal supports:** Using body language, eye contact, and voice (pitch, tone, and pace) to make others feel supported and comfortable in order to enhance communication and relationship building.

a. Displaying Understanding of Other's Feelings

Nonverbal and verbal communication aimed at demonstrating that the helping professional comprehends the client's thoughts and feelings.

- a) Putting client's feelings into words.
- b) Re-framing
- c) Re-phrasing
- d) Clarifying
- e) Supportiveness

3. Clarifying Purpose, Function, and Role

Statement of the helping professional's role/function at the agency, specifically as it relates to the stated problem or issue at hand. Also includes a simple, non-jargonized statement by the helping professional regarding the general purpose of the meeting/session.

4. Reaching for Feedback

Encourages others to respond to the helping professional's explanation of why the meeting is occurring, his or her role/function at the agency, etc.

5. Dealing with Issues of Authority

Use of communications that invite and assist expressions of complaints about the helping professional or the helping process (e.g., allow for "venting.")

- a) Dealing with anger and hostility.

Interactional Helping Skills (continued)

6. Questioning

Making requests for more information as to the nature of the problem/situation to get a fuller picture of the concern expressed.

- a) **Open-ended questions:** Can be used for the purpose of stimulating conversation. (“Can you please describe what you saw, step by step?”)
- b) **Closed-ended questions:** Restricted questions that are useful for eliciting specific information. (“Did you take him to the doctor?”)
- c) **Probing questions:** Used when an issue needs clarification at progressively deeper levels. (Tell me, how was Jessica hurt?)
- d) **Directiveness:** Give directions and tell the other person what information is needed, without being authoritarian or bureaucratic. (“We can best help Isaiah if we know some specific information. I will ask you some questions, and I’d like for you to answer them as best you can.”)
- e) **Redirection:** Used to interrupt if the information being given is unproductive or not relevant. (“Now I need to you give me some specific information about how the child was hurt.”)
- f) **Miracle Questions:** an open ended, solution focused interview question (“If you had three wishes, what would they be”)

7. Reaching Inside Silences

Exploring the meaning of silence by putting possible feelings into words.

8. Communicating Information

Communication aimed at imparting important information or clarifying issues about the casework process, including mutual expectations, goals and services, legal issues, timelines, court processes, and next steps, while giving others the opportunity to ask questions and express feelings.

9. Summarizing

Helping someone to identify the main themes of the discussion during a session/meeting.

- a) Cover next steps
- b) Ending the encounter