

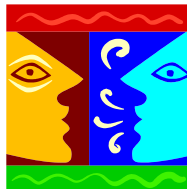
Using the Interactional Helping Skills to Engage Families in Child Welfare

PRELIMINARY or PREPARATORY PHASE SKILLS:

1. Tuning in to Self
Getting in touch with potential feelings/concerns/beliefs that the worker him/herself may bring to the helping encounter.
2. Tuning in to Others
Getting in touch with actual and potential feelings and concerns that the client may bring to the helping encounter.

BEGINNING or CONTRACTING PHASE SKILLS:

3. Clarifying Purpose, Function, and Role
Stating the helping professional's role/function at the agency, specifically as it relates to the identified problem or issue at hand, including a simple, non-jargonized statement by the helping professional about the general purpose of the meeting/session.
4. Reaching for Feedback
Encouraging others to respond to the helping professional's explanation of why the meeting is occurring, his or her role/function at the agency, etc. Confirming a client's understanding of or thoughts/feelings about anything that has been spoken or done.
5. Dealing with Issues of Authority
Using communication that invites and assists expressions of concerns and complaints about the helping professional's power or the client's sense of vulnerability in the helping process.
 - a) Dealing with anger, hostility, fear or other powerful emotions
 - b) Allow for "venting" of these emotions



Using the Interactional Helping Skills to Engage Families in Child Welfare (Continued)

MIDDLE or WORKING PHASE SKILLS:

6. Questioning

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

- a) **Open-ended questions:** Used for the purpose of stimulating conversation, without limits. ("Can you please describe what you saw?" "Then, what happened?")
- b) **Closed-ended questions:** Used to elicit specific information by restricting the answer to one or several words. ("What is your birth date?") There is only one correct answer to a closed-end question. *Forced choice questions* require a "yes" or "no" or some other choice option as an answer. ("Did you take Olivia to the hospital on Tuesday or Wednesday?")
- c) **Probing questions:** Used when an issue needs clarification at progressively deeper levels. ("Tell me, how was Jessica hurt?")
- d) **Directiveness:** Used to tell the other person what information is needed or what course of action is expected, 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 and refocus if the information being given is unproductive or not relevant. ("Now I need you to give me some specific information about how the child was hurt.")

7. Reaching Inside Silences

Exploring the meaning of silence by putting possible feelings into words. ("I'm wondering what you are thinking about as you sit there quietly?")

8. Communicating Information

Sharing 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.

ENDING or TRANSITIONING PHASE SKILLS:

9. Summarizing

Identifying the main themes of the discussion during a session/meeting as a way of closing that part of the work. It includes:

- a) Recapping the key points
- b) Identifying the next steps
- c) Closing the session or ending the client relationship

