

Communication Skills Training

Building Relationships with Clients

Indian Health Service
Division of Diabetes Treatment
and Prevention
Spring 2008

Learning Objectives

- Identify the six techniques important in building relationships with clients
- Apply the six techniques in a simulated counseling session
- Describe one change you can make to your practice to improve relationships with clients.

Techniques

- Listening to self
- Nonverbal Communication
- Verbal Communication
- Readiness to change
- Basic Listening Skills
- Evoke Empathy

Listening to Self

- Helps you to identify your own reactions i.e., dread, frustration, feeling ineffective
- Tells you to try something different or new
- May tell you to be careful and slow down
- Helps you remember your desire to be successful and helpful
- Tells you to work on making a connection
- Be careful of taking 'charge'

Nonverbal Communication

Nonverbal communication tells you:

- Client may feel hopeless.
- Client may not feel connected or understood.
- Client may be saying "I'm not ready for change."
- Client may have been unsuccessful or fears failure.
- Client may be angry with 'being told what to do'
- That the client does not want to be there.

Verbal Communication

- Listen to the quality and tone of the verbal responses.
- Client may
 - Not be ready to commit to her part in treatment
 - May be bored, uninterested
 - May not understand the issues
 - My feel singled out and blamed for having diabetes

Readiness to Change

Recognize where the client is:

- Precontemplation – not ready for change
- Contemplation – thinking about change
- Preparation – getting ready with a plan
- Action – follow through and make changes
- Maintenance – change becoming part of life

Basic Listening Skills

- Helps with assessing readiness to change
- Use open ended questions (not using yes and no questions) to allow client to express ideas and feelings
- Reflect the emotional and factual content of what the client says
- Affirm the client's feelings by letting them know you understand
- Summarize the session by letting the client know what you heard

Evoke Empathy

- A relationship is based on understanding each other.
- Have consideration for the other person's experience, role and world view.
- Try to understand what it would be like to be the client.
- Avoid talking too much about yourself at the expense of the client.
- Allow client's experience to be the dominant focus; use your own experience with care.

Select one of the six techniques to practice of the next few months...

- Listening to self
- Nonverbal Communications
- Verbal Communications
- Readiness to Change
- Basic Listening Skills
- Evoke Empathy
