

Learner Handouts

CWS1305W The Helping Interview



VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF
SOCIAL SERVICES

LTD Local Training
and Development

COURSE AGENDA

Day 1

Activity A: Interviewing and Interview Phases

Activity B: Helpers and Influences on Helping

Activity C: The Helping Interview: Skills Related to Helping in the Early Phase (Empathy and Rapport-Building; Attending and Joining Skills)

Activity D: The Helping Interview: Skills Related to Helping in the Middle Phase (Facilitating Communication—Nonverbal Skills)

Activity E: The Helping Interview: Skills Related to Helping in the Middle Phase (Facilitating Communication—Verbal Skills)

TOL Activities: Review Questions Day 1, Activity E and Activity F: Transcript of Nicole's Interview with Maria

Day 2

Activity F: Skills in Action- modified to TOL Transfer of Learning Activity

Activity G: Facilitating Communication Feeling Skills

Activity H: Assessment and Problem Solving

Activity I: Managing Resistance and Hostility

Activity J: Terminating the helping relationship

Activity K: Closing

COURSE OBJECTIVES AND COMPETENCIES

Course Objectives

Trainees will be able to:

- Understand interviewing as a key to assessment
- Understand interviewing as a helping process that facilitates problem solving
- Describe key phases in the interviewing process (beginning, middle, and end) and key interviewing skills that are used in these phases.
- Identify techniques to facilitate interviewing adults including:
 - o Attending and joining skills for building rapport
 - o Developing and demonstrating empathy
 - o Active listening
 - o Selective use of verbal and non-verbal communication skills
 - o Managing conflict and resistance
 - o Acknowledging culture and its influence on the interview encounter
 - o Identifying and capitalizing upon customer strengths in assessment and problem solving.
- Demonstrate basic proficiency in interviewing adults

Course Competencies

The trainee:

- Will understand interpersonal communication as a transactional event
- Will recognize the dynamics of interpersonal communication
- Can identify phases of the interviewing process
- Can identify and implement techniques to facilitate interviewing effectively in each phase of the interviewing process
- Can apply interviewing techniques that relate specifically to problem assessment and problem solving
- Who works in child welfare practice (or other practice areas) can demonstrate basic competency in interviewing adults.

VALUES THAT GUIDE PROFESSIONAL HELPING RELATIONSHIPS

Dignity: Helpers believe that all people have worth and value.

Respect: Helpers demonstrate respect for their customers, even those customers who are challenging and difficult. Respect is demonstrated by always striving to be genuine and helpful in the helping relationship. Professional helpers treat their customers with dignity and sensitivity.

Self-Determination: All people have the right to do what they want, as long as they do not infringe on others' rights. Helpers do not force their opinions or choices on customers. Helpers help customers make choices; they do not make them for customers. Customers have the right to make their own decision.

Empowerment: As helpers, we empower customers by not telling them what to do or not do, but by exploring with them the possible positive and negative consequences of their choices. This reflects the values of dignity, respect, and self-determination. Customers are empowered by having access to needed resources and by receiving support from needed support systems. Customers are empowered by the helper's belief in their capacity for change and to manage their lives successfully. It is empowering for them to hear messages that suggest, "You can do it. I have faith in you."

Confidentiality: Helpers keep private information that the customer shares with the helper whenever possible. Respecting customers' confidentiality suggests that Helpers do not invade customers' privacy unnecessarily. We only ask for information that is really relevant and necessary for problem solving. Customers have a right to private thoughts, opinions, beliefs, and memories. All professional helpers have an obligation to report to the appropriate authorities when customers disclose their intentions to hurt themselves or others or disclose maltreatment of a child, senior, or disabled adult.

Strengths/Capacity-Focused: Helpers are committed to the idea that all people have strengths and everyone has potential. We purposefully look to balance problems against possibilities. We actively look for every strength that we can find, pointing them out to customers as we find them. We help them learn how to use their strengths in dealing with their problems. As a professional helper, it is your RESPONSIBILITY to believe in your customer's CAPACITY.

Collaboration: Helpers work with customers to identify their problems, goals, and actions. This demonstrates a commitment to providing them with dignity, and respect, and acknowledging their right to self-determination.

CULTURE

Decide which of the following statements is TRUE or FALSE.

Culture:

- T F Influences the way the helper and customer relate to each other.
- T F Shapes people's fundamental beliefs about behaviors, and how people should live.
- T F Shapes the way we see our own and others' problems.
- T F Influences our ideas about the appropriateness and value of potential solutions.
- T F Influences people's behavior and communication when participating in interviews.
- T F Transmits social, emotional, and behavioral norms.
- T F Influences how open people may be to asking for and receiving help.
- T F Is not exactly the same for everyone who is part of a particular cultural group—helpers must be careful not to assume that all members of a particular culture group thinks, believe, and behave in the same way.

USING TRANSLATORS AND INTERPRETERS

When a customer does not speak English, or the customer's English is broken and partial, it is often best to call in a native, or trained, third-party to facilitate communication. That person acts either as a translator or interpreter.

Consult with your supervisor and legal counsel regarding agency expectations or potential legal ramifications that might arise from using a translator or interpreter.

Consider these important guidelines for using translators and interpreters:

If at all possible, avoid using a family member or friend.

- A relative or acquaintance might intentionally or unintentionally mislead the customer and/or the helper.
- A relative or acquaintance might have a personal agenda.
- Confidentiality must be a concern. It may violate a customer's confidentiality to ask the customer to divulge sensitive information to a family member or acquaintance. Sharing this information might make the customer very vulnerable in the family or community.

Use a professional.

- Whenever possible, the helper should engage the services of a professional translator or interpreter, preferably in person, but if necessary through a service like the Language Line.
- Unless the translator or interpreter works in the agency with the helper or has been contracted from an agency with guidelines in place regarding confidentiality, then the person should be required to sign a **confidentiality agreement** to protect the customer's rights.

Make the right choice: translator or interpreter?

- A **translator** functions to simply translate the helper's and customer's words into the best-fitting words of the other's language. The translator is not there to offer any interpretation of the words or provide any contextual meaning.

Adapted from Murphy & Dillon, pp. 74-75

- An **interpreter**, however, translates the words but, is expected to interpret them in terms of his common understanding of the culture and the customer's experience. The interpreter can be asked to give a formal, or informal explanation for what the customer is saying. The interpreter can suggest whether the customer's statements make sense, fit with cultural assumptions, or are problematic in some way. The interpreter can be asked to cue the helper to any discrepancies or issues that might need to be confronted.

Have a plan and share service goals with the translator or interpreter.

- The helper should be very clear in the service she requests: strict translating or interpreting.
- Explain the purpose of the interview, the type of information to be gathered and potential questions you will need to ask.
- If you will need anything in writing translated, provide it as early as possible, since some things are not translated easily between languages.
- Give clear instructions. If the translator/interpreter should refrain from sharing information without clearing it with you first, make sure she or he knows that is your expectation...otherwise, the person is likely to tell the customer something from experience that may or may not be accurate or relevant in your case.
- For instance, some translators request that the helper say a cue word such as “stop” to cue the translator to begin translating or they have some other process that works for them
The translator and an interpreter should be willing to testify if necessary. They should be warned that it is possible that they might be petitioned to appear in court. Make certain this will not be an issue. If the person says they are unwilling to testify, find a different person to do the job.

Adapted from Murphy & Dillon, pp. 74-75

HELPING SKILLS FOR ENGAGING AND INTERVIEWING

Note: While most helping skills can be used during any phase—and are often used in more than one phase. They are grouped here by the phase in which they are most often used.

<i>The Beginning Phase</i>		
<i>Skill</i>	<i>Definition or Use</i>	<i>Example</i>
Developing Rapport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A sense of connectedness; a bond that conveys concern, trust and support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer: I did not think it would be helpful to talk to that worker, but I was wrong. He really “gets” me and understands what I am going through. He is really trying to help me.
Demonstrating Empathy Associated Characteristics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Warmth • Genuineness • Respect • Non- Judgmental/Unconditionally Accepting • Non-Defensive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ability to identify and understand another’s affective states (emotions) and problems as if you were experiencing them personally • The ability to differentiate a specific degree of affect across a continuum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “If my father had said that to me, I would feel very hurt” or “To hear that must have hurt deeply” or “It must be scary to sleep in that alley.” • “Wow! I imagine that when that happened, you didn’t just feel mad—I expect
Attending & Joining Skills for Stage Setting		
Active Listening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intently focusing on what the customer is saying so that you are not just listening to the customer, but are “hearing” the full range of messages being communicated verbally and non-verbally while reacting to those messages verbally and non- verbally 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer: One of the things I really like about this worker is that she really listens to me. I can tell that she is really paying attention to what I am saying. No one else listens to me the way she does. She seems to know just what to ask and just what to say—well, most of the time, anyway.

<p>First Encounter Behaviors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approaching and greeting the customer • Smiling • Firm/sincere handshake • Making positive remark to customer • Address customer by title and last name unless given permission to address informally • Positive, friendly “opening line” • Have agency identification available • Be polite and demonstrate empathy, no matter what the circumstances of the encounter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First impressions are crucial— whether they happen in person or not • First contacts should demonstrate respect , warmth, and professionalism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (In the lobby, approach customer) “Good morning. I am Judy Jones. I’m told you’re here to speak with me.” • (After being invited inside the customer’s home) “What a lovely photo. Is that your family, Ms. Rodriguez?” or “What a sweet dog!” or “I can tell from talking with your son that you’ve really worked hard to teach him good manners. He was so polite. I think that’s great!” • “Mrs. Jones, I’m Mr. Smith, but most people prefer to call me John. What do you prefer I call you?” • “I hope I can be of some help to you today. What has brought you in to see me?”
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect Personal Space to the degree possible in the interviewing environment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helps maintain the customer’s comfort level. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Imagine that both you and the customer are surrounded by invisible hula-hoops. A good distance would allow the edge of your hoop to touch the customer’s without either’s entering the space between the edge and the person.
<p>Eye Gaze</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eye contact demonstrates empathy and rapport and encourages conversation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alex, the worker, held her customer Carol’s gaze during the conversation, but was careful not to stare. At times, the conversation was too emotionally charged for Carol and she broke contact for several moments. Alex was careful not to look away, which Carol might have perceived as a negative response to the difficult things she had disclosed. • Because Mr. Jones was so hostile, Alex was careful not to force eye contact with him—an action he might have interpreted.

The Middle Phase		
Skill	Definition or Use	Example
Skills for Facilitating Communication		
Facial Expressions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facial expressions (the helper and the customer) intentionally or unintentionally communicate attitudes and emotions. • Facial expressions may be congruent or incongruent with verbal messages. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Erin, the worker, tried hard to maintain a neutral facial expression as Mr. Bowers recounted how he had assaulted his wife. Although she strongly disagreed with his behavior, her obligation was to remain unconditionally accepting—although at some point, it would be necessary to confront this unacceptable behavior. • Sharnice noted that her customer, Scott, was “beaming” as he bounded into her office for their weekly session. She said, “You’re smiling ear-to-ear, Scott. Is there something you want to tell me?” Scott sat down and looked at her. She noticed that his smile got even bigger—if that was possible. He said, “I went the whole week without getting in trouble...and I got an “A” on my big test!”
Head Movement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An encouraging head movement can signal the customer to continue talking. • Head movements can convey other messages—intended or not—including agreement or disagreement, confusion or understanding and approval or disapproval. • Be wary of nodding too much. • Be wary of unconsciously shaking your head “no”. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barbara was talking about her relationship with her husband. She stopped, as if unsure whether to continue. Elana, her counselor, still leaning towards Barbara to emphasize her interest, nodded for her to continue with her story. • Estrella heard Mr. Perez but did not quite understand what he meant. She cocked her head to one side and responded, “I’m not sure I understand that...what do you mean?”
Paralinguistic (Voice) Quality: Loudness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voice volume facilitates or inhibits communication. • Voice volume often communicates one’s affective state. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I’M SO ANGRY!” • When Charles, the worker, asked Sarani about the abuse, the child became quiet. After a few moments, she said, in a tiny voice...

Paralinguistic (Voice) Quality: Tone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voice tone facilitates or inhibits communication. • Voice tone provides an affective dimension to words. • Voice tone can be a clue to changes in a customer's affect. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Just from the tone of John's voice, Kelly could tell that her customer had not had a good day. • John might have said, "I'm fine," but his voice tone suggested he was not.
Paralinguistic (Voice) Quality: Pitch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voice pitch is the high or low quality of one's voice. • Voice pitch facilitates or inhibits communication. • Voice pitch can be a clue to changes in a customer's affect. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I told Ms. Humphries that I would be recommending that custody be returned to her. "Reeealllyyy???!!!" she responded, her voice high and tight with excitement.
Furthering Responses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helpers can strategically use noises and bodily gestures to facilitate communication—to further the conversation. • Furthering responses demonstrate to the customer that the helper is following along and is interested in what the customer has to say. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Mmmhmmm" • "Uh-huh" or "Uh-huh?" • "Hmmm" or "Hmmm?" • "ah" • Gestures such as nods and hand movements can signal the customer to say more, to keep going, to elaborate. • John said, "Well, I guess I came here to talk about the problem I'm having at work. It's with my boss..." Sally nodded her head and prompted him to continue speaking with "Mmmhmm." "Well," John continued, "We just don't get along."
Posture and Positioning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Similar to "Physical Positioning," posture broadcasts non-verbal messages that can inhibit or facilitate communication. • Posture has been found to strongly communicate affective states. • Body positioning and gestures communicate social messages. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaning forward/away • Looking toward/away] • Crossed arms/open arms' • Crossed legs/open legs • Shrugs • Clenched fists • Tapping foot • Looking at watch/clock • Peter knew it was time to wrap up the training activity. Around the room he noticed

		<p>trainees had started glancing, discreetly and not-so-discreetly, at the clock on the wall. "Time for lunch," he announced.</p>
Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No skill is as important for interviewing as understanding: ~how to ask appropriate questions ~when to ask particular questions ~how to phrase questions correctly ~when to use open questions ~when to use closed questions • Questions are used to gather information and address feelings. • As a general rule, avoid questions that begin with "why." Any "why" question can be rephrased and will usually be a better question. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "How did Johnny get that bruise?" • "Do you know how Johnny got that bruise?" • "Did you give Johnny that bruise?" • "Where did Johnny's bruise come from?" • "How did you cause that bruise on Johnny?" • "How do you feel about causing Johnny to have that bruise?"
Open-ended questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The question is phrased in a way that suggests the answer will require more than a one- or two- word response. • These questions are mostly used to get broad or general information. • These questions are less leading. • These questions allow the customer to start wherever they like in responding • Open-ended questions are not very good at capturing details clearly. • If the customer's response is "yes" or "no" or "maybe, then the question probably wasn't phrased well as an open-ended question • Most often begin with "what" or "how" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "What did you do to discipline Carl when that happened?" • "What were you thinking when you heard that?" • "How did she react when that happened?"

Close-ended questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The question is phrased in a way that suggests the answer will be short and focused on details. • These questions are mostly used to get specific information or details. • These questions are more leading. • These questions require the customer to respond with less leeway. • These questions are particularly useful when customers have limited verbal abilities or have a short attention span. • They are frequently used after an open-ended question has been asked and responded to in order to increasingly clarify what the customer has said by eliciting detailed information. • They are used to check for accuracy in the helper's understanding. • They help focus an interview and bring meandering customers back to topic • They often begin with "do", "have", "will", "are", "did", "can", or "is". 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Did you spank Matthew?" • "Who is supervising your son after school today?" • "Can you get to my office?" • "Will you be home at 4:30?" • "Have you arranged for Medicaid?" • "You said you spanked him. What did you spank him with?" • "Did you spank him with a belt?" • "Can you tell me about what happened?" • "Were you intoxicated or not?" • "Had you used cocaine on that day?"
Probe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A question used to clarify information, details or vague answers. • Probes are also used to encourage customers to continue talking. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "You said Johnny is having trouble in school. Can you tell me more about that?" • "What happened next?" • "So how did you handle that?" • "Can you tell me more about that?" • "Do you mean...?"
Prompt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Words or phrases used to nudge a customer to continue talking. • Often a prompt is a restating of part of a customer's statement. • Prompts communicate empathy and that the helper is tracking the conversation closely. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "And..." • "But..." • "Yes..." • "I see..." • "Wow..." • When Mary said, "He was talking back, so I hit him" I interjected "You hit him..." to prompt her to continue talking about that.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The difference between a probe and a prompt is that a prompt is not phrased as a question like a probe is. 	
Clarification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Miscommunication is common and the helper's responsibility is to get the most accurate understanding of the customer's statement as possible. • Clarification is used to check that the helper accurately understands what the customer intended to communicate. • Clarification is used any time the helper feels confused. • Clarification demonstrates respect and commitment to accurately understanding the customer's problem. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "So, you haven't beat Johnny. That's good. But, what exactly are you doing to discipline him instead of beating him?" • "You said your mother is 'crazy.' What do you mean by 'crazy'?" • "Let me be certain I understand what you've said. Your aunt will watch Suzie after school every day until you get home. Before school, you will take Suzie to your mother's house and she will catch the bus there. Is that right?"
Paraphrasing/Reflection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In order to demonstrate understanding and/or check for accuracy, the helper restates a portion of the customer's statement (reflection) or paraphrases the customer's words (paraphrase). • Using these skills facilitates communication and demonstrates attending. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms. Santiago stated, "Juan has always been a good boy. He goes to school and does his chores. He is respectful. He is never in trouble. I never have to get on him." John, the worker, paraphrased, responding, "So discipline is not an issue with Juan." • Mr. Brown said, "When the school called and told me Eric had skipped class yesterday, I was furious." Alisha reflected, "You were furious..."
Confronting Discrepancy/ Distortion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication is easily distorted...often accidentally, but sometimes intentionally. • When the helper feels pieces of information contradict each other or there is a pattern of conflicting statements, then the helper must confront the possible discrepancy to get an accurate understanding. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Ms. Clarke, I'm confused. On the one hand, you say you really like Samantha's foster parents. On the other hand, you often make sarcastic remarks about them. Something doesn't match up here." • "Ms. Clarke, you say Samantha is lucky to have her foster parents, but then you make

		<p>statements that suggest you think they are poor caregivers. Help me understand this. What is it you really feel about them?"</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Ms. Clarke, I hear you say you think the foster parents are great for Samantha and I also hear you say they are poor caregivers. These two statements conflict..."
Summarization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This skill is used to pull together the main themes and ideas that were shared and to make certain both parties have an accurate understanding of what was communicated. • Summarization is used during an interview, at the end of an interview, and at the start of a subsequent interview. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "So, Mr. Ortiz, let me be sure I have this correct: You work Monday through Friday. Your wife is here with Manuel before he leaves for school. You are here when he gets off the bus." • "Ms. Palmer, before we end, let me take a minute to go back over what we discussed today. You have been having problems with daycare. You agreed you would go ahead and apply for daycare assistance this week. I will check into other money that might be available and will let you know what I find when we meet next Tuesday." • "Well, Ms. Palmer, last time we met I remember that you were going to go apply for daycare assistance. I had promised to check into other funding that might be available. Is that what you remember?"

<i>Skills Related to Assessment and Problem Solving</i>		
Reaching for Feelings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouraging the customer to verbalize and clarify feelings by either pointing out that no feeling was expressed, by suggesting a feeling that might be appropriate given the circumstances, by acknowledging non-verbal behavior that expresses feeling, or by directly asking what feeling was experienced. • Reaching for feelings demonstrates empathy and contributes to rapport development. • Used when: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ~When no emotion is expressed in a situation that should call for emotion. ~When emotion is expressed non-verbally but not verbally. ~When the emotion expressed does not fit the circumstances. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “That must have made you very sad.” • “That sounds terrifying.” • “You’re crying.” • “Are you feeling angry about that?” • “How does that make you feel?”
Reflecting Feelings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Once a feeling has been expressed verbally or non-verbally, the helper reflects the feeling. • Anytime that a feeling has been reached for, the helper follows up by reflecting the feeling expressed. • The feeling is reflected by restating what feeling was expressed or by acknowledging that the customer has expressed a particular feeling. • Reflecting feelings validates the feeling for the customer, demonstrates empathy, and encourages rapport development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “You’re scared...” • “Yes, it makes sense that you feel angry.” • “It’s normal to cry when you’re that upset.”

<i>Skills Related to Assessment and Problem Solving</i>		
Finding Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The helper listens closely for evidence of customers' strengths and then reflects those strengths back. • Three techniques are useful: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ~Point them Out When You See Them ~Learning from Experience ~Offering a Compliment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Wow, to get all that done before the kids leave for school, you must be very organized." • "You have managed to make it despite some very serious odds...you really are a resilient person." • "Many people would have buckled under so much stress, but not you...you somehow managed to carry on despite the challenges." • "Hey, let me stop and point something out...I told you that you were being restricted on the unit because of what happened. You did not try to strike me—you would have a few weeks ago. You really handled the bad news well—clearly, you are getting much better at managing your anger, aren't you?" • "Clearly, you are doing great at work. How could you use the skills that allow you to successfully manage a business and apply them to your home life?"
Brainstorming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The helper encourages the customer to think of all possible solutions. • After all possible solutions have been generated, the helper and customer critically appraise the choices. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Well, Mr. Jones. Let's think about this...tell me every possible way you think this problem might be resolved...don't worry about how unrealistic an idea might be, just throw all of your ideas out on the table."
Partializing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is one of the most helpful skills that a helper can employ. • The helper and customer "break down" steps towards a goal into smaller, concrete, manageable pieces. • Partializing helps customers feel less overwhelmed by problems. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Ms. Robinson, you need daycare for your children to prevent them from being at risk. Let's talk about what exact steps you will need to take to find daycare...yes, finding a daycare is one of the steps, but let's break that down to smaller pieces..."

Prioritizing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Often, to the customer, all goals will seem to be competing and that can be frustrating and decrease motivation. • The helper should assist the customer in setting a priority for goals and determining the sequence in which steps should be accomplished. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Ms. Robinson, you know you need to get daycare and we have talked about the steps involved. Now, let us decide what the first step you need to take should be. What do you think you need to do first?”
Normalizing Ambivalence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is perfectly normal to feel ready to change...and not ready to change • The helper acknowledges to the customer that most people feel ambivalent about making changes in their lives, even when the changes could potentially improve their lives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Dan, most people I talk with say they want to stop using drugs...but they also don’t want to stop using drugs. It is hard to make that kind of change, even when people want to. Maybe we should talk about the pros and cons of stopping. What do you think would be a ‘pro’ for you if you stopped using?”
<i>Skills for Managing Resistance and Hostility</i>		
Acknowledging Resistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When the helper encounters resistance—a normal reaction to change—it can be helpful to acknowledge the resistance • Acknowledging resistance means the helper brings the resistance up and confronts it directly and/or intentionally considers the customer’s plans, goals, or needs • Another way to acknowledge resistance is to validate the customer’s perception and feelings • Strong resistance may be a sign that the helper is not empowering the customer or allowing the customer to exercise self-determination. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Mr. Rodriguez, you have had an excuse for why you can’t do any of the things I have suggested. Please tell me what you think you should do—and would be willing to do—to resolve this situation and let’s see if that’s workable.” • “Making a change like that is hard—it’s normal to waiver about being committed to it.” • “I can understand that you don’t want to talk to me. I would be angry, too, if someone accused me of abusing my child.” • “Tell me what the options are that you see, right now, for arranging after-school care for the girls.”

Confrontation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confrontation can be necessary and therapeutic. • Confrontation that is managed well is not a bad thing...poorly managed confrontation. • Public social service workers must be able to manage confrontation in a positive manner. • In most confrontation situations, it may be most helpful to encourage collaboration and to acknowledge the customer as the expert on his or her life experiences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Ms. Wade, I can tell you are angry that CPS received a report on you. As you said, it makes you feel someone thinks you are a bad mother. You are not a bad mother, but after-school care is an issue. You know what you that need would help you the most. Will you help me come up with ideas for how we can resolve this problem so that the kids aren’t at risk by being alone?”
Dealing with Angry Customers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Never argue with an angry customer • Step one: validate the anger—acknowledge the customer’s right to feel angry. • Step two: write down the facts the customer presents • Step three: ask the customer to repeat the facts— make corrections to the written summary as needed. • Step four: read the summary of the facts back to the customer and ask if they have been documented correctly. • Step five: explain to the customer what the helper WILL do with the facts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms. Pryor was very angry when I met with her. She said the receptionist had treated her very poorly. I stayed quiet and did not interrupt as she vented about her treatment at the agency. When she paused, I told her that I was sorry she felt she had been mistreated. I told her that would make me angry, too. I asked her to go back over her story with me, telling me the facts about what happened. Ms. Pryor was calmer now. Slowly, I had her repeat each fact as I wrote it down. Once we went through the story, I asked her to repeat the facts while I looked at my notes. Then, I briefly summarized my notes for Ms. Pryor. She was considerably calmer now and agreed that I had taken the facts down correctly. I told Ms. Pryor that I would forward her concern on to the receptionist’s supervisor. I told her our agency prides itself on good customer service, and the supervisor would want to know about Ms. Pryor’s negative experience. Ms. Pryor thanked me for taking it seriously. We were then able to move on to the issues at hand. When I returned to the office, I forwarded the concern to the reception supervisor, along with a request that she contact Ms. Pryor directly.

The Ending Phase

Communicating a Positive Ending Message	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Customers deserve a positive ending whether the helping relationship has consisted of one interview or several.• Verbal and non-verbal messages communicate to the customer the helper's feelings about the helping relationship.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• When the interview was over, I opened my office door and returned to sit at my desk. I said, "We're done." I waited for the customer to realize she should leave. (Bad ending message!)• When the interview was over, I said, "Ms. Parks, it has been a pleasure to meet you. I hope our talking has been helpful to you." I stood and offered my hand. She stood and we shook hands. I walked Ms. Parks out of my office and back to the front door. We chitchatted as we made our way to the lobby.• I was so proud of Bobbie-Sue and how far she had come since I first met her. When our final session ended, I said, "Bobbie-Sue, I have really, really enjoyed working with you. I am just so proud of the work you have done over the past weeks. You deserve a hug and pat on the back...may I?" She nodded and I could see she was getting emotional. I hugged Bobbie-Sue and patted her on the back— maybe three or four times—just a gesture of support. She was sniffing—and I was probably just a little teary-eyed, to, to tell the truth about it. We released each other then I opened my office door and we walked back to the lobby in companionable silence. At the door, I said, "Bobbie-Sue, I have every confidence that you are going to be just fine, but if you ever need to talk again, I hope you will consider coming back to see me."
Offering a Final Summary	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The helper should remember that customers are often overwhelmed, worried, anxious, mad, or for some other reason have difficulty concentrating during the interview. As a result, they may forget parts of the discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• "Mr. Roberts, we talked about a lot of things today. I hope that you found our discussion helpful. Before you leave, just so I can be sure we have the same understanding, can you sum up for me what we talked about and what you are going to do once you leave?"

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As a way to wrap up the interview—or series of interviews—ask the customer to provide a brief summary of what has transpired. • If important details, goals, or commitments are missing from the customer's summary, then those issues can be discussed further. • When the helping relationship has lasted for a series of interviews, it can be helpful to summarize the work that was done, emphasizing the customer's strengths and accomplishments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Ms. Bluford, I can’t believe we’ve been meeting for six weeks already—but we have been. Over that time, I have gotten to know you quite well. You are an amazing woman...and you have done so many great things in your life. When we started working together, you were depressed and feeling that you had no purpose—you were just waiting for life to end. Now, you seem to be filled with gusto—you have identified an agency where you wanted to do volunteer work, you have been going there every day and the staff and customers love you. You are sharing your wisdom and the benefit of your experience with women who are facing challenges. They could not have a better role model than you are! It’s been wonderful to work with you and a privilege to know you.”
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Questioning Strategies

There are some strategies for questioning that can make an interviewer more successful:

When the helper has to ask about a particularly sensitive topic, it can be very helpful to build up to the most sensitive questions by starting out with relatively neutral questions and asking increasingly sensitive questions until the most important ones seem appropriate to ask.

Hypothetical questions can be helpful when the client seems reluctant to share a view or opinion or resists answering the question as it relates to him or her personally.

For example, if the client is not ready to talk about what is specifically wrong in her own marriage, or seems unwilling to answer personal questions about the relationship, the helper could use a question such as, “What do you think an ideal marriage should look like?” or “What kinds of problems do you think are really serious in a marriage?”

When the questions a helper is going to ask are particularly sensitive or personal, it can be helpful to preface them by explaining why it is necessary that the helper ask them. This can also help reduce the helper’s trepidation about asking.








For example, if you are interviewing a senior who was sexually assaulted by a nursing home staff member, one way to preface the sensitive questions might be, “Ms. Smith, I realize that it may feel very embarrassing for you to talk about some things with me...particularly sexual subjects. I’m sorry, but I’m going to have to ask you some very personal, potentially embarrassing questions about what happened. I wouldn’t ask them if they weren’t so important. They are important, though. I’ve heard one side of things and now I need to hear your side, and that means asking you some questions about details.”

Another reason to preface questions by explaining their importance would be when the helper anticipates the question will break cultural taboos—for instance when the question is likely outside “polite” conversation within the culture group.

Sometimes, depending on the work, the helper simply has little choice but to “accelerate” the questioning because time with the client is limited or particular information is urgently needed to make a decision. This is commonly the case in some interviews in protective services with adults and children. In these situations, it is especially important that the interviewer choose to use the questions most likely to elicit the needed information.

Adapted from Gambrill; Murphy & Dillon

FEELINGS VARIATIONS

Intensity Level	 Happiness	 Sadness	 Fear	 Uncertainty	 Anger	 Strength/ Potency	 Weakness/ Inadequacy
Strong	Excited Thrilled Delighted Overjoyed Ecstatic Elated Jubilant	Despairing Hopeless Depressed Crushed Miserable Defeated Abandoned Desolate Inconsolable Bereft Grief-stricken	Panicked Terrified Afraid Frightened Scared Overwhelmed	Bewildered Disoriented Mistrustful Discombobulated Confused Ambivalent	Outraged Seething Hostile Furious Angry Hateful Mean Vindictive	Powerful Authoritative Forceful Strong Potent	Ashamed Powerless Vulnerable Cowardly Exhausted Impotent
Moderate	Good Happy Optimistic Cheerful Enthusiastic Joyful	Dejected Dismayed Disillusioned Lonely Bad Unhappy Pessimistic Sad Hurt Lost Upset	Worried Tense Anxious Threatened Agitated	Doubtful Mixed Up Insecure Skeptical Puzzled	Aggravated Irritated Offended Mad Frustrated Resentful "Sore" Upset Impatient Obstinate	Tough Important Confident Fearless Energetic Brave Courageous Daring Assured Adequate Self-Confident Skillful	Embarrassed Useless Demoralized Helpless Worn out Inept Incapable Incompetent Inadequate Shaken
Weak	Pleased Glad Content Relaxed Satisfied Calm	Down Discouraged Disappointed "Blue"	Jittery Jumpy Nervous Edgy Uptight Uneasy Apprehensive Hesitant Uncomfortable	Unsure Surprised Uncertain Undecided Bothered	Perturbed Annoyed Grouchy Hassled Bothered Disagreeable	Determined Firm Able Strong	Frail Meek Unable Weak

Adapted from Sevel, Cummins, & Madrigal, 1999, p. 256

HOW TO MANAGE CONFRONTATION

Helpers engage in confrontation. In fact, confrontation is common in some kinds of practice like child and adult protective services.

Sometimes confrontation is necessary to assert the helper's authority, for instance if the helper must intervene to protect a child or vulnerable adult in a high-risk situation.

Sometimes helpers use confrontation for more therapeutic reasons—to help motivate the client to change or to point out when behavior is inconsistent, incongruent or dangerous.

Regardless of the reason the helper uses confrontation, when confronting a client the helper should never be accusatory.

In these instances, the helper should present the facts as she believes them to be, use as many specific examples as possible, and should adopt a constructive, open demeanor.

It is important to ask questions instead of voice assumptions.

Helpers sometimes manage confrontation poorly...particularly when the confrontation was unexpected or the helper finds it difficult to manage confrontation, hostility, and strong feelings.

- Do not be evasive—respond to the client's allegations/concerns as directly and openly as possible.
- Do not give false assurances such as "You doing that wouldn't result in your child being taken into care" if the behavior could result in just that outcome.
- Do not cross professional boundaries in an attempt to seem more like a friend than an authority.
- Do not confront back at that time. The helper who has been confronted should not confront the client in that moment. That will likely only raise the hostility level and be perceived as an attempt to shift blame to the client and avoid responsibility.
- Do not shirk your responsibility as a child welfare or adult services agent—or an authority. Though it may feel good at the time to shift responsibility to the agency or your supervisor, ultimately that approach tends to backfire. The client needs to accept your responsibility and authority now and in the future.

Statements to avoid include:

"If it were up to me, I wouldn't make you do this."

"My supervisor says this is what I have to do."

"I know these are stupid questions, but my boss makes me ask them."

"I think it was really unfair that the court ordered you to do that, but I've got to check up on you to make sure you do it."

- Always try to remain calm when being confronted.
- Always ask questions—even difficult ones. Questions allow the helper to gather details to develop a fuller picture of a situation. They also give the client a feeling of being listened to and that their comments and opinions are important.
- Always offer to listen to hostile people—just listening can validate their feelings and help reduce their hostility significantly.
- Always keep your mind open while listening to the client's story—the client may have information the helper did not have, the client may have a good idea or a reasonable explanation, and sometimes clients really have been treated unfairly.

HELPER SAFETY

Routinely conduct a Safety Assessment before leaving the office

- Is there likely to be a confrontation?
- What is the client's history (anger management, mental illness, drug and alcohol use, domestic violence, sociopathic behavior)?
- Has the client had previous violent encounters with anyone (helper, law enforcement, relatives, other persons)? Prior violence is considered the best predictor of future violent behavior.
- Will there be a removal? Violence is more likely in removal situations than any other time.
- What mental/emotional state am I likely to find the client in?
- Do I need to be accompanied by another worker or law enforcement?
- Would calling first diffuse or increase tension?
- Was a firearm or weapon mentioned in the service referral?

Determine a Safety Action Plan before leaving the office

- Have I informed my supervisor/colleague/or receptionist where I am going?
- How would the agency know whether I left a home visit or not? Should the agency be concerned if you don't check-in after a home visit?
- Will a co-worker or law enforcement officer accompany or meet you?
- Follow the safety protocols established by your agency

Carry a cell phone

- Is the phone charged?
- Is emergency assistance reached by dialing "911" or a special number combination?
- Know the address and phone number of residences you are visiting. In an emergency, you may need to provide this information to Emergency Services so they can locate you quickly
- Know your agency's main number—better yet, have it and your supervisor's number programmed in Speed Dial

Adapted from Family & Children's Resource Program, Jordan Institute for Families, n.d.

In General	<p>Take a self-defense class</p> <p>Leave jewelry (even fake but expensive looking) at home</p> <p>If possible, leave purses, brief cases, messenger bags at the office or home</p> <p>Remove clothing or other items that could be used to choke or otherwise cause injury</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stick-pins or broaches should not be worn• Rope or heavy-cord jewelry poses a risk• Scarves pose a risk• Neckties pose a risk• Long hair is a risk• Wear comfortable shoes with a low heel• Can my name badge be used as a weapon? (i.e., if it is on a necklace-type holder, can it be twisted to choke you? Does it have a pin on the back?) <p>Remain alert and observant</p> <p>Identify potential safety risks as you interact with clients</p> <p>Remain calm</p> <p>In discussion, maintain a calm tone and non-threatening body language</p> <p>Never get loud or yell at a client</p> <p>Avoid adopting a defensive demeanor</p> <p>Be respectful at all times</p> <p>Keep physical space between yourself and clients</p> <p>Never turn your back on a client</p> <p>Do not touch an angry person</p> <p>Do not stand between an angry person and a door</p> <p>If you feel endangered, end the interview and leave immediately</p> <p>If you are prevented from leaving, call out for help</p> <p>If you are assaulted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Try to protect your head—block blows with arms, clipboard, cushions• If you fall, block with legs and feet• If you are choked, quickly raise both arms straight up and turn as you raise them. You can use your arms and shoulders to break the hold.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you are bitten, push into the bite, ignoring the normal response to pull away • If your hair is pulled, press down on the person's hand with both of yours • The thumb is a very vulnerable part of the body. If possible, pull back on the attacker's thumb to release a hold
In the Office	<p>Eliminate objects in your office that can be used as a weapon or thrown</p> <p>Arrange seating so that your chair is closest to the door</p>
In the Client's Community	<p>Consider the neighborhood/area where you will be visiting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there cell phone reception? • Is there known criminal activity? • Is there known drug activity? • Do I need to take any precautions? • Is the car I'm driving in good working order? • Do I have valuables in my car? • Do I have adequate fuel? • Can I gain entry to my car quickly in an emergency? • Do I have anything to protect myself with in my car? • Is the location isolated? • Would anyone notice my presence? • Who is hanging around in the area? • What does the atmosphere seem to be? <p>ALWAYS look before getting into your car—look into the backseat through a window</p> <p>Drive by the residence to determine if anything suspicious is happening before stopping.</p> <p>Notice as many exits and entrances to the parking area as possible</p> <p>Do not park directly in front of the residence</p> <p>Be wary if street lights are out</p> <p>Be cautious of whether shrubs or bushes might impair your vision</p> <p>Be wary of vicious animals</p> <p>Keep a key in hand (that could be used to jab) as you walk to and from your car</p> <p>Walk with confidence</p>

<p>In the Client's Home</p>	<p>Listen outside the door before announcing your presence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there yelling and screaming, crying, sounds of a fight? <p>When knocking on the door, always stand to the side, never directly in front of the door</p> <p>Introduce yourself clearly; have your identification ready</p> <p>Assess the demeanor of the person(s) you are talking with—does anyone appear intoxicated, agitated, or mentally unbalanced?</p> <p>If it looks dangerous, don't go inside by yourself. Come back when you are accompanied by a colleague or law enforcement</p> <p>Note the location of doors in the room you are in (or throughout the home)</p> <p>If the client locks the door, ask the client to unlock it</p> <p>Try to sit so that you can see anyone come through a door—if possible, avoid sitting with your back to other areas of the house</p> <p>Try to sit close to an exit if at all possible</p> <p>Scan the environment for weapons (knives, guns) and items that could be used as weapons (to attack you or to defend yourself with)</p> <p>Note any drug paraphernalia</p>
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**IF YOU FEEL UNSAFE, YOU MAY BE.
IF YOU FEEL SAFE,
THAT DOESN'T MEAN YOU ARE.**

“Ready for my home visits!”

