



# Non-Therapeutic Responses



# Probing

- ✱ Serves to control the nature of the client's responses
- ✱ Questioning resembles interrogation rather than an interaction—client may feel overwhelmed and withdraw
- ✱ Tends to put patient on the defensive
  - ✱ *“Why do you do this?”*
  - ✱ *“Why do you feel this way?”*

# Challenging

- ✦ Forces a patient to “prove” his or her point of view
- ✦ The feelings of the patient go unrecognized
- ✦ Challenging a patient’s unrealistic ideas or perceptions will not weaken them
  - ✦ *“How can you say your wife doesn’t care when she is here for every visiting session?”*
  - ✦ *“If your leg is missing, then how can you walk up and down the hall?”*

# Advising

- ✱ Undermines clients' ability to solve their own problems
- ✱ Renders clients dependent and helpless
- ✱ Giving advice is different from giving information
  - ✱ *"If I were you, I would have the ECT."*
  - ✱ *"I think you should do what the doctor says."*

# False Reassurance

- ✦ An attempt to dispel a person's anxiety by implying that there is no cause for worry or alarm or fear
- ✦ This belittles, devalues, or rejects the patient's feelings
- ✦ Communicates lack of understanding and empathy
  - ✦ *"Everything will be all right."*
  - ✦ *"Don't worry about it, you'll soon be ok."*

# Giving Approval

- ✦ Can lead a patient to strive for praise rather than progress
- ✦ Client must ultimately approve of his or her actions
  - ✦ *“That’s good.”*
  - ✦ *“I’m glad that you feel that way.”*

# Disagreeing

- ✦ The doctor criticizes the client who is seeking support
  - ✦ *“I definitely don’t agree with your view.”*
  - ✦ *“I really don’t believe that.”*

# Defending

- ✦ The doctor attempts to protect the person, place, or thing that the pt is criticizing
- ✦ The doctor implies that the pt has no right to express his or her negative feelings
  - ✦ *“Dr. Lee is a very busy man.”*
  - ✦ *“This is the finest hospital in the city.”*
  - ✦ *“I’m sure your therapist had your best interest at heart.”*

# Belittling Feelings Expressed

- ✦ No comfort to tell a pt that other people have the same or bigger problems
- ✦ This shows lack of understanding and empathy
  - ✦ *“How can you say that? You have a good family.”*
  - ✦ *“I don’t know why you’re complaining, you should hear the problems your roommate has.”*

# Making Stereotyped Responses

- ✦ Meaningless cliches and trite expressions have little place in the interaction
- ✦ Communicate a doctor's disinterest
  - ✦ *"Keep your chin up."*
  - ✦ *"Just do what the doctors tell you and you'll be home in no time."*

# Changing the Subject

- ✦ Takes the direction of the conversation away from the pt
- ✦ Demonstrates the doctor's anxiety
  - ✦ *Patient:*
    - ✦ *"My mother always puts me down."*
  - ✦ *Doctor:*
    - ✦ *"That's interesting, but let's talk about..."*

# Not Listening

☀ doctor is preoccupied with other thoughts

☀ *“I’m sorry; what did you say?”*

☀ *“Could you start again? I was listening to the other doctor.”*

# Judging

- ✱ The doctor's responses are filled with his or her own values and judgments
- ✱ Demonstrates lack of acceptance
  - ✱ *"You are not married. Do you think having this baby will solve your problems?"*
  - ✱ *"That is certainly not the Christian thing to do."*

# Self-Focusing

- ☀ The doctor focuses attention away from the client by thinking about or sharing his or her own problems
  - ☀ *“That may have happened to you last year, but it happened to me twice this month which hurt me a great deal.”*