THE BASICS OF INTERVIEWING

What’s this interviewing thing all about?

INTERVIEW

- Main task is to identify the presenting problem
- Single most important means of data collection

- Can do with a number of people:
  - Client
  - Family members
  - Teachers
  - Former therapist
A GOOD INTERVIEWER

• Must be able to work with a number of people
• Three features:
  • Obtains the most amount of accurate info
  • In a short time
  • Creates a good working environment

INTERVIEWING

• The need for comprehensive information
• The importance of practice

THE REFERRAL QUESTION

• All psychological evaluation begins with a referral
• The referral question shapes the type of assessment to be done
• Examples of referral questions
INTERVIEW VS. CONVERSATION

- Interview is designed to obtain certain goals
- Interview may require discussion of unpleasant thoughts, feelings, or events
- Interviewer is in control
- One-sided

STRUCTURED VS. UNSTRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

- Structured
  - Increased reliability & validity
  - Decreased flexibility
  - May miss idiosyncratic info
  - May increase defensiveness and resistance
  - Allows for comparisons
  - Used in research and clinical settings
  - Can be scored by computer
- Unstructured
  - Decreased reliability & validity
  - Increased flexibility
  - Picks up idiosyncratic information
  - Increases rapport
  - Creates favorable changes and encourages self-exploration
  - Used in clinical settings

PSYCHOMETRIC PROPERTIES OF INTERVIEWS

- Reliability
- Validity
WHAT TO DO IN AN INTERVIEW

- Opening and Introduction
- Time Factors
- Settings
- Taking Notes
- The Opening Question
- Free Speech
- Establishing Rapport

WHAT TO DO IN AN INTERVIEW

- Managing the Early Interview
- History of the Present Illness

HINTS TO HELP

- Use open-ended questions
- Only ask a single question
- Talk in the client’s language
- Choose the right probing question
  - Avoid “Why”
  - Focus on facts
- Avoid negative phrasing
HINTS TO HELP

• Encourage precision
• Keep questions brief
• Keep on the lookout for new leads

INTERVIEWING ABOUT FEELINGS

• Evaluate both negative and positive emotions
• Ways to get clients to discuss feelings
• Once you have a feeling statement, probe for examples
• How to handle an over-emotional client

AREAS TO EVALUATE IN THE INTERVIEW

• See Interview Sheet and follow along.