



Chapter Orientation

- Most people know a good listener when they meet one
- This chapter analyzes the mechanics of effective attending and listening skills

Learning Objectives

- This chapter will help you be able to:
 - Explain the difference between therapist skill and therapist attitude
 - Adopt a therapeutic attitude in your work with clients
 - Organize your listening behaviors into three categories
 - List and apply nondirective listening behaviors into your clinical interviews
 - Modify your listening skills to fit male and female clients and clients from different cultural backgrounds

Listening Skills

- Listening skills are sometimes also called facilitation skills or microskills
- Carl Rogers didn't refer to these as skills
- Instead, he believed that it was therapist attitude (not skills) that produced therapeutic change

Adopting a Therapeutic Attitude

- Neurogenesis and Listening with Empathy
- Communication is Always Two-Way
- Attending Behavior
- Why Non-Directive Listening is also Directive

Neurogenesis and Listening with Empathy

- Neurogenesis is the birth of neurons
- Because whatever behavior you practice stimulates neural growth, you should:
 - Commit yourself to listening well
 - Develop an empathic listening practice
 - Engage in active listening activities
 - Resonate with emotions whenever possible
 - Reflect on these experiences and repeat

Communication is Always Two-Way

- Messages are traveling both directions at the same time
- You cannot not communicate
- Which is why you should practice looking like a good listener

Attending Behavior

- Attending Behavior is the Foundation of Listening
- Positive and Negative Attending Behaviors are usually divided into 4 components:
 - Eye contact
 - Body language
 - Vocal qualities
 - Verbal tracking

Eye Contact

- Cultures vary in what is considered appropriate eye contact
 - Asian and Native American cultures often view direct eye contact as aggressive
- Most clients will be comfortable with:
 - Providing more eye contact when you're talking
 - Providing less eye contact when they're talking
 - but this can vary

Vocal Qualities

- Vocal Qualities are tonal and inflections of your voice and not verbal content
- It's often best to slightly match or pace the client's vocal qualities
- Practice your therapy voice
- You can also use your vocal qualities to lead the client
 - Use your voice tone to energize or calm down the client

Verbal Tracking

- This involves using your words to demonstrate to clients that you're accurately following what they're saying
- It includes restating or summarizing what clients have said
 - Paraphrase Content
 - Reflect Emotions

Body Language

- Positive body language usually involves leaning slightly toward the client, maintaining a relaxed but attentive posture, mirroring, and more
- Mirroring involves matching the clients facial expression and body posture

Factors Influencing Psychotherapy

- Open Body Posture vs. Closed Body Posture



Negative Attending Behavior

- Positive attending behaviors can become negative if you use them too much
- Specific negative attending behaviors include
 - turning away from your client
 - infrequent eye contact
 - leaning back from the waist up
 - crossing your legs away from the client
 - folding your arms

Why Non-Directive Listening is also Directive

- You cannot not communicate and you cannot not influence
- You do this just by paying more attention to some things your clients say and less attention to other things
- Your theoretical perspective also influences what you hear

The Listening Continuum in Three Parts

- Non-directive listening behaviors facilitate *client talk*.
- Directive listening behaviors facilitate *client insight*.
- Directive action behaviors facilitate *client action*.

Nondirective Listening Responses

- Attending behavior (covered already)
- Therapeutic silence
- Paraphrase or reflection of content
- Clarification
- Reflection of feeling
- Summarization

Therapeutic Silence

- Therapeutic silence is well-timed silence that facilitates client talk, respects clients' emotional space, or provides clients a chance to find their own voice
- It's important to practice:
 - talking with clients about silence
 - coping with and using silence as an interviewing technique

Paraphrase (or Reflection of Content)

- This is a verbal tracking skill that involves restating or rewording what a client is saying to you
- There are several types of paraphrases

The Simple Paraphrase

- This is a straightforward form of a paraphrase that doesn't add any meaning or direction
- It involves the rephrasing of the core meaning of the client's message

The Sensory-Based Paraphrase

- The sensory-based paraphrase involves embedding the client's sensory words into your paraphrase
- Neurolinguistic programming popularized "representational systems" to refer to visual, auditory, or kinesthetic communication modalities

The Metaphorical Paraphrase

- This involves using analogy or metaphor to capture and summarize the client's core message
- Can you think of an example right now?

Intentionally Directive Paraphrases

- Paraphrases can be used to lead clients toward positive interpretations of reality
- You select the most positive part of the client's statement or even adding to or twisting what the client said
- O'Hanlon referred to this as Carl Rogers with a Twist

Clarification

- The purpose of a clarification is to clear up any confusion between client and interviewer
- A common clarification is a tentative paraphrase followed by a closed question like, "Am I getting that right?"

Reflection of Feeling (aka empathy)

- This is an emotionally oriented paraphrase
- The purpose is to let clients know that you hear the emotional content of their statement
- Nondirective feeling reflections do not involve adding to or interpretation of emotional statements

Summarization

- The guidelines for summarization include:
 - Keep it informal rather than formally numbering your points
 - Be collaborative and involve the client in the summary
 - Be supportive and encouraging
 - Include positives or client strengths that might help in dealing with life problems

The Pull to Reassurance

- It's natural to feel the pull to reassure your client
- Reassurance and self-disclosure are both therapy techniques that should be used intentionally

Ethical and Multicultural Considerations

- The Ethics of Not Directing
 - Some ethnic and cultural groups will prefer an authoritative counselor (e.g., Asian Americans)
 - Clients in crisis or who have severe mental disorders might require more active and directive interventions
 - If you have useful information, you should not withhold it just to stay nondirective

Ethical and Multicultural Considerations II

- Gender, Culture, and Emotion
 - Client willingness to tolerate feeling reflections is likely based on a mix of cultural, gender, and individual experiences
 - Instead of emotionally specific words (e.g., angry, sad, scared, guilty), you might use emotionally vague words (e.g., frustrated, upset, bugged).

Not Knowing What to Say

- It's natural to wish for a perfect guide so that you always know the right thing to say
- Being comfortable with uncertainty and developing humility is also a central part of becoming a competent clinician
- Dr. Grieve's magic words for when you are lost

In Conclusion

- Go forth and multiply
- That is, practice these techniques so that you feel comfortable with nondirective listening
