

Before You Begin PSY 562

DR. RICK GRIEVE

WESTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY

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Basics of Psychotherapy

What is therapy all about?

It is a series of structured interactions between someone who needs help and someone who provides the help.

It is a verbal intervention

- So, we are very particular about what you say and how you say it.



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Psychotherapy Is Not A Conversation

Psychotherapy	Conversation
Focused	Diffuse
Client-Centered	Equally-Centered
Time Limited	Not
Therapist Directed	Take Turns Directing
Only Clients Self-Disclose	Both People Self-Disclose
Power Differential	Equal Power

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Foundations and Preparations

There are some things to consider prior to beginning therapy

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Foundations and Preparations

The Room

- Keep it private
- Manage or control the atmosphere
- Minimize interruptions
- Don't lock the door
- Manage interruptions when they occur

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Foundations and Preparations

Seating arrangements

- A 90-120 degree angle is probably most comfortable for most people
- We should probably not insist on particular seating—but instead consider the patient's individual needs and comfort

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Foundations and Preparations

Office Clutter and Décor

- Manage your clutter
- Consider letting your personality come out a little bit

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Foundations and Preparations

Self-Presentation

- Grooming and attire: Dress in a way that is likely to take advantage of first impressions
 - If you are working with children:
 - You WILL crawl on the floor
 - They WILL grab things
 - Dress appropriately
- Presenting your credentials: Be honest and straightforward

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Foundations and Preparations

Note Taking

- It's good to try conducting therapy taking notes and not taking notes—to get a sense of the difference

Note Taking Rules

- Don't let it interfere with flow or rapport
- Explain why you're taking notes
- Never hide or cover your notes
- Never write anything you don't want to show your patient
- Let patients read your notes if they request to

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Foundations and Preparations

Video and Audio Recording

- Get permission first
- Keep it unobtrusive
- Double check your set up and watch out for Murphy's Law

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Foundations and Preparations

Time

- Be clear about your time boundaries because time is, in many ways, the commodity you are offering
- Start the session on time: Work your hardest to be punctual
- Ending on time: Do your best to stick to the ending time—even though there are many reasons to keep on talking

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Foundations and Preparations

Confidentiality

- Yes, I know that they have signed a HIPPA form before they see you; it is still important to review issues of confidentiality with patients.
- Although almost everything is private, there are exceptions to confidentiality—mostly involving safety issues
 - Harm to self or others
 - Abuse
 - Court Order
 - Authorization for Release of Information
- Inform patients of the limits of confidentiality at the outset of the interview
- What to do if your patient is a minor.

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Foundations and Preparations

Technology

- Types Used in Psychotherapy
 - Pen and Paper
 - iPad
 - Cell phone
 - Electronic Medical Records
- Importance of being aware of limitations with technology
- Professional Will
- Apps for therapy
 - National Center for Telehealth and Technology
 - Virtual Hope Box
 - Sea Hero (Alzheimer's Dementia)
 - Suicide Safe (SAMHSA)
 - Triangle of Life (CBT for kids)
 - NIH Stroke Scale

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Basic Attending and Listening Skills

Attending Behavior

- Positive Attending Behavior
- Negative Attending Behavior
- Individual and Cultural Differences

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Basic Attending and Listening Skills

Positive and Negative Attending Behaviors are usually divided into 4 inter-related components; these include:

- Eye contact
- Body language
- Vocal qualities
- Verbal tracking

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Basic Attending and Listening Skills

Eye Contact

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

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Basic Attending and Listening Skills

Body Language

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



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Basic Attending and Listening Skills

Vocal Qualities refer to the tonal and inflections of your voice and not the content of what you say

- In many cases, it will be appropriate and effective to move slightly toward matching the patient's vocal qualities; this is referred to as pacing
- You can also use your vocal qualities to lead the patient

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Basic Attending and Listening Skills

Verbal Tracking

- This attending behavior involves using your words to demonstrate to the patient that you're accurately following what he or she is saying
- It includes restating or summarizing what your patient has said

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Basic Attending and Listening Skills

Negative Attending Behavior

- Positive attending behaviors can become negative or annoying if you use them too much
- Specific negative attending behaviors include (a) turning away from your patient, (b) infrequent eye contact, (c) leaning back from the waist up, (d) crossing your legs away from the patient, or (e) folding your arms

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Basic Attending and Listening Skills

Individual and Cultural Differences

- Every individual is unique and so you may need to vary your listening behaviors to accommodate individuals
- Patients from diverse cultures may also need some modification to optimize listening; for example, clients from some cultures may prefer seating arrangements that allow for less eye contact

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