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HS 325

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Interview #1 Self Evaluation

My first interview took place in the first floor lobby of Gray Wolf Hall. In my role as the interviewer, I sat at about a 45º angle from my client because of the chair layout in the lobby; we were trying to obtain the best recording of the interview and there was no table in between us. We were both leaning towards each other at a comfortable distance.

My role in this interview was that of a social worker with a new client. I asked my client how she would like me to address her, and I introduced myself. She was here to talk to me about her dying uncle, and she had a lot to say.

The interview began with me asking what I could do for her; I heard myself asking my client if there are other people within the household to help take care of her uncle. Every time I heard myself speak I was thinking about what to say next, I heard myself saying “um” in between every other word since I had no idea what to ask next. I drew up some information that came from my own experiences. I mentioned that the medical practice her uncle attends might have information or referrals to associations or programs able to help with medical costs or offer counseling. I also know that some members of churches sometime volunteer their time as caregivers, counselors, or medical doctors, so I asked if the family is associated with a church or religious group.

I demonstrated several strengths during the course of the interview; I heard myself agreeing with my client and letting her know I was listening. I asked if she and her uncle have looked into hospice care for the future. I mentioned that a thanatologist might help the family prepare for her uncle’s impending death.

I heard empathy in my voice as I asked about the people directly in contact with the uncle and how these people are coping with the situation. I perceive myself as a good listener as I was able to tell my client was at ease as she shared her story with a lot of detail (Murphy & Dillon, 2011).

The problems I encountered as I listened to my taped interview were the lack of disclosure of a confidentiality agreement. I failed to set up the course of the interview. There was no spoken definition of the roles of the client or my role as a professional. There were no expectations set up for the encounter. I did use the word “resources” too many times.

My number one goal is to learn how to identify the needs of the client, establish a confidentiality agreement, and be able to set up the roles of interviewer and interviewee. I need to guide the interview, recognizing the amount of information I must obtain from the client. An interview plan needs to be in place. My client and I must agree on the expectations we both have for the encounter. This may seem like a lot for one goal, but since I am new at this, I see it as the essential structure of an interview in which there are no isolated steps.

My second goal is to be able to project confidence in my voice throughout the entire interview and greatly reduce or eliminate the number of “um” utterances that are distracting and could even take away credibility and confidence in me as a professional. I believe this to be an attainable goal as I learn and practice more.

I found this exercise interesting and motivating. It is very humbling to think about all the learning and self-awareness that comes into play in order to grasp the fundamentals of interviewing in the Human Services profession. I will study, research, and practice in order to improve my skills as an interviewer.

Reference

Murphy, B. C., & Dillon, C. (2011). *Interviewing in action in a multicultural world.* (4th Ed.). Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole.