What are Observation skills

Kirkland Mitchell
10/25/2010
What are observation skills? Observation skills are when you observe your own behavior and clients’ behavior, anticipate individual and multicultural differences in nonverbal and verbal behavior (Allen E. Ivey, Mary Bradford Ivey and Carlos P Zalaquett, 2010). Here are a few things that counselors should observe while interviewing clients. Counselors should observe attending patterns of client behavior, observe nonverbal behavior, observe verbal behavior, observe conflict, incongruence’s and discrepancy, and observe individual and multicultural issues in nonverbal behavior, counselor also need to encourage the client, paraphrase what the clients is saying and summarize.

The reason why counselors should observe attending patterns of clients’ behavior is because improving your observation skills is by noting your own and client’s style of attending behavior (Allen, Mary, Carlos Zalaquett, 2010). For example, when I do interviews at my job most of my clients, break eye contact, change their body language and change their voice of content. They change their voice of content because they trying to sound proper so they can get the job. Also, when I interview, my clients give me that eye of confusion, when I ask them why do you think you are qualified of doing this job and what can you bring to the to this company. By observing these attending behavior of patterns of clients can help us as interviewers to improve on our observation skills.

The reason why observing nonverbal behavior is important is because nonverbal behavior can tell you if the clients are discomfort in what you are saying. For instance, I asked my friend, why she always shake when she is around someone new. She would say “because she is nervous around people she do not know. Also, most of the times hand and aim gestures tell you and the client how you are going to organize things. Random discrepant gestures may say that your
clients are confused, for instance, person seeking control or organizing things may move hands and arms in straight (Allen, Mary and Carlos Zalaquett, 2010). On the other hand, smooth, flowing, gestures, those in harmony with the others saying that you and the clients is connecting together. These gestures let you be more relaxed with people you are around.

Counselors should observe verbal behavior because language is basic to interviewing and counseling (Allen, Mary, and Carlos Zalaquett, 2010). For instance, selective attending behavior, most clients like to talk about what counselors are interested in hearing (Allen, Mary, Carlos Zalaquett, 2010) We as counselors need to focus on the major issues of the client. For example, if a client is talking about her friend is beating her up every day; she will need to give me as a counselor concrete example, so we can work on that specific issue. This is why verbal behavior is important.

Also, counselors should observe key words that the clients are using. For example, if you listen carefully to clients, you will find that certain words appear again and again in the description of the situation (Allen, Mary and Carlos Zalaquett, 2010). I believe keywords can help a counselor figure out the picture of what the client is telling us as the counselors. Also verbal underlining through vocal emphasis is another helpful clue in determining what is most important to client who you are counseling (Allen, Mary and Carlos Zalaquett, 2010). This is why it is important to listen to keywords of what the clients are telling you.

It is also important to observe conflict incongruence’s and discrepancies. Out of awareness of verbal and nonverbal behavior will come an increased the ability to notice conflicts of many types. (Allen, Mary, and Carlos Zalaquett, 2010). This will help counselors to observe issues that can give them deeper understanding is the client is real in the situation they are telling
the counselor. For instance, my friend always tells me that her boyfriend is hitting her all the time, but she is always saying he is the best boyfriend in the world. Discrepancies can tell you that your client is contradicting themselves in the interview.

Also, the “I” statements and other statements is important while you are counseling the client. We as counselors need to be aware of what is happening in and for our clients as well as learn what occurs in their relationships with others and in their families and communities (Allen, Mary and Carlos Zalaquett, 2010). For instance, my friend would always tell me that it somebody else fault instead of blaming herself for the situation. Counselors need to help individuals look at their issues, but also to help them consider how these concerns relate to others and the surrounding environment (Allan, Mary, and Carlos Zalaquett, 2010). An “I” statement can serve as helper to improve somebody lives. For instance, there is a guy who was doing drugs every week, we as counselors need to tell him to say he is a drug addict, for part of his recovery of drugs. The “I” statement can be helpful and hurtful in a counselor session.

Next, we as counselors need to encourage, paraphrase and summarize to understand what the clients are talking about. The reason why we need to encourage clients is because to help them continue talking. For instance, if girl say that her boyfriend and her are improving their relationship by going out every weekend, we need to say that is very nice to hear. We also need to paraphrase because we need feedback of what has been said. For example, if we as counselors daze off a little in the counselor session, we need to put in our own words and clients main word when we are paraphrasing to the clients. Summarization we help you and the client over a longer time span. Summarization may be used to begin or end an interview, to move to a new topic, or to clarify complex issues. (Allen, Mary Carlos Zalaquett, 2010) Encouraging, paraphrasing and summarizing can be helpful in counselor sessions.
Also, counselors need to recognize the reflection of feeling in the client. The first task in eliciting and reflecting feelings is to recognize the emotional words that are expressed by the clients (Ivey, Ivey, Zalaquett). For example, my friend always use to tell me when he was younger that he use to cry all the time and feel sad about when his father and his mother always get into an argument. There are also many unspoken feelings expressed in client’s statements (Ivey, Ivey, Zalaquett). For instance, my friend not only would express his emotion by words, but he will express them by body language, such as, body tense and anger. Body language can tell you a lot about a person in general because it says it all. Reflection of feeling of the clients can help their emotional life more clearly and counselors could figure out how to handle the situation.

Finally, as counselors observing attending patterns of the client behavior is important because it would help you know your client behavior more after more sessions. Observing nonverbal behavior is important because it tells you if the client is comfortable in what you are saying. Also, by encouraging your client can help the client tell their story more effective. By paraphrasing the client story you can effectively give the client feedback in whatever situation the client is going through. By during all the key steps, I believe counselors would know more about their clients and develop a better and long lasting relationship with their clients.
Reference

Intentional Interviewing and Counseling: Allan Ivey, Mar Ivey and Carlos Zalaquett, (2010))