

COUNSELING SKILL - ASKING QUESTIONS

WE ASK QUESTIONS MAINLY TO:

1. To obtain information
2. To explore feelings
3. To facilitate participants to express themselves
4. To learn what a person wants

BASIC QUESTIONS TO BEGIN WITH

1. How are you doing?
How are you getting along?
How is life going for you?
2. How have you tried to resolve it?
What have you done about it?
What have you tried in the past?

Mainly, be interested in the individuals.

TYPES OF QUESTIONS

OPEN VS. CLOSED

1. OPEN QUESTION - is broad; solicits views, opinions, thoughts, feelings; may lead to good rapport. Invites the person to elaborate. Responses may get off the track and provide irrelevant information. If client is not verbal, may be uncomfortable. Examples: What? How? Can/Could you . . .? Why?

2. CLOSED QUESTION – is narrow, limited to specific answers and depth of information; usually demand cold facts – doesn't enhance good rapport. Examples: Have you . . .? Who . . .? Do you . . .? Is that . . .?

EXAMPLES:

OPEN - How did you feel after the death?

CLOSED - You felt sad after the death, didn't you?

OPEN - Some people like rock music; others don't. How about you?

CLOSED – You like rock music, don't you?

CLOSED WITH ANSWER- It is perfectly clear that this is how she would feel after what you said, isn't it?

QUESTION ASKED SO PERSON WILL AGREE WITH INTERVIEWER - You didn't mean what you said about your sister – did you? She really loves you and you know it, don't you? (Not getting the information you want).

DIRECT VS. INDIRECT

1. DIRECT - is a straight question; to the point (How old are you? Where do you live?)
2. INDIRECT - inquires without seeming to do so; usually has no question mark; does not seem like a question, but shows interest. Often these questions are statements.

EXAMPLES:

"I didn't catch that. Maybe you could say more about that."
"It must be tough to be single parent."
"I wonder how the anniversary date will be for you."
"It's been 4 weeks since we've seen each other. There must be a lot you want to talk about."

QUESTIONS TO AVOID

1. DOUBLE QUESTIONS – Confusing. Limits individual to one choice of two, or neither. Better to ask two questions.

EXAMPLE: Do you like your mother or your father?

2. YES-NO QUESTIONS - Better to ask questions where a person expresses him/herself more than answer yes or no.
3. WHY QUESTIONS - Often demands an explanation or reason. Person becomes defensive or feels threatened. Will not feel free to explore. Delays establishing trust. HOW and WHAT questions are more effective.

WHY questions can be used appropriately to get action, to obtain facts - rather than feelings.

4. PROBING PERSONAL QUESTIONS - May not want to share parts of personal life. Respect privacy.
5. BOMBARDMENT – Too many questions, may be confusing, may set up pattern where individual only answers questions and does not elaborate. Just answering questions does not help a person discover more about oneself or create a positive relationship.
6. It puts the client in the position of having to challenge the mold she/he's been put in; puts the client on the defensive. Example: "You're good at budgeting your money, aren't you?"

WHEN INDIVIDUAL ASKS US QUESTIONS

1. Do not reply to every question. A person may just be wondering out loud.
2. Re-frame question and give back to person. Helps him/her find his/her own answers.

**WAYS TO ENCOURAGE CARE-RECEIVERS TO TALK
ABOUT THEIR FEELINGS**

OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS:

- “How did you feel about that?”
- “How are you feeling right now?”
- “What is going on inside of you?”
- “What are your feelings right now inside of you?”
- “How do you feel deep down about that?”

CLOSED QUESTIONS:

- “Are you feeling angry right now?”
- “Did you feel frustrated at that point?”

LEADING STATEMENTS

- “I wonder if you are feeling angry.”
- “I bet you felt angry when that happened.”
- “I would imagine you are feeling pretty happy about that.”

**STATEMENTS THAT HELP THE OTHER INDIVIDUAL
VERBALIZE HIS ATTITUDES AND FEELINGS**

Key Active Listening Techniques

TYPE OF STATEMENT	PURPOSE	TO ACHIEVE PURPOSE	EXAMPLES
A. SILENCE	1) To encourage individual to verbalize.	Be silent.	
B. ENCOURAGING	1) To convey interest. 2) To keep individual talking.	Don't agree or disagree with the individual. Use noncommittal words with positive tone of voice.	1) "I see . . ." 2) "Uh-huh . . ." 3) "That's interesting."
C. RESTATING	1) To show that you are listening and understanding. 2) To let the individual know you grasp the <u>facts</u> .	Restate the individual's basic ideas, emphasizing the facts.	1) "If I understand your idea is . . ." 2) "In other words this is your decision . . ."
D. REFLECTING	1) To show that you are listening and understanding. 2) To let the individual know you understand <u>how</u> he feels.	Reflect the individual's basic feelings.	1) "You feel that . . ." 2) "You were pretty disturbed by this . . ."
E. SUMMARIZING	1) To pull important ideas, facts, etc. together. 2) To establish a basis for further discussion. 3) To review progress.	Restate, reflect, and summarize major ideas and feelings.	1) "These seem to be the key ideas you have expressed . . ." 2) "If I understand you, you feel this way about the situation . . ."