

# Counseling Practicum I Lecture 6 Clinical Interview Process

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# Introduction

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This lecture will discuss the process of counseling as a clinical interview process from the first contact with the client up to termination of therapy.

The counseling process has different stages and action points by both the therapist and the client.

Counseling student ought to have practiced basic counseling skills and application of theory ahead of field practicum



# Introduction

However, the real practice with clients in a strange environment can be challenging and therefore regular revision on how to go about it is encouraged.

This lecture will describe the stages of intake interview process and discuss what happens in each stage.



# Expected Learning Outcomes



At the end of this lecture, you will be able to:

- (i) Describe the counseling process
- (ii) Demonstrate how an intake interview process is conducted
- (iii) Apply the counseling skills in the in the interview process

# Exploration Stage

This stage focuses on finding out what the client's issues are. The counselor uses assessment and diagnostic methods to get real issues but also couple that with motivational interviewing with the client.

For beginning counselors, it is safer to use the basic counseling skills in this stage. These skills are applied as discussed in this session.



# Exploration Stage



*Contracting* - this forms part of the initial contact with client (it can be verbal or written).

It includes seeking and receiving consent from the client, clear communication of what is expected of the client, charges if any, process rules of engagement and once done, the two can sign a contract form.

# Exploration Stage



*Structuring* – This is physical structuring of the counseling room, psychological structuring of the relationship (done with both the qualities of creating a working relationship and use of the relationship building skills). The client knows what to expect and how to behave and the counselor guides the process as such. The client must experience an egalitarian relationship at this stage.

# Exploration Stage

## *Structuring*



The counselor must make them feel like an equal by all standards including using suitable comfortable seats, seeking consent, respect for diversity and attractive attributes like trustworthiness and trust in the counselor.

# Exploration Stage

*Observation* - The counselor observes how the client presents themselves in therapy. Key to observe is how they are dressed, their speech (is it coherent?), reality check (are they living in the present reality?), facial expressions (flat or happy, excited, or dull?), body movement (are they still or fidgety?) among other behaviors that you can observe and shelve it for further analysis.



# Exploration Stage

*Application of Relationship Skills* - this includes active listening, summarizing, paraphrasing, reflection of feelings, reflection of content, empathy, focusing, unconditional positive regard, genuineness, minimal prompts, prioritizing among others.

The basic goal here is to have the client trust the counselor and the process.



# Exploration Stage

*Therapeutic listening* - This entails listening without judgement and using supportive skills described as relationship building skills. This listening should be active and pick what is said verbally and what is not said verbally.



# Exploration Stage

*Assessment* – The counselor must be good at doing assessing underlying issues in the client's narrative.

Sometimes some criterion on assessment is given in the practicum site while others are informed by the training and prior practice.

Whichever method you use, ensure that it is logical, systematic and truth laden to avoid making the wrong diagnosis.



# Exploration Stage

*Diagnosis* – following a thorough objective assessment and testing, the counselor can now make a diagnosis that can help in developing treatment goals, intervention, and review.

A good intervention precedes a proper diagnosis and treatment goal planning and intervention with positive predictive treatment outcome.



# Motivational Interviewing Questions

Some of the interview questions asked by the counselor include:

Let	Kindly let me know what bring you here
Let	Let me hear how you got this far
Let	Let me know what has made your story worse



# Some of the interview questions asked by the counselor include:

- i. Allow me to ask you what has made you survive this far
- ii. Who has been there for you in this suffering?
- iii. What do you expect to happen during therapy?



# Moving from Exploration

This is realized when the client; has no more narrative to share about their presenting problems

- When the client looks bored with story telling
- When they basically keep repeating themselves
- When they ask to move on
- When they keep emphasizing that now they know better and start asking you to help them to move on



# Understanding Stage

In this stage, the counselor is making sense of what is happening to the client. The client also realizes that they too played a role knowingly or unknowingly to bringing suffering to themselves. The counselor can now hold the client accountable for their treatment outcome and can join hands to develop a joint therapy plan.



# Understanding Stage

All the supportive applied in stage one is also applied in this stage to maintain a trusting relationship between the client and the therapist.



# Understanding Stage

Some of the interview process questions may include:



Do you think you had a role in your pain/suffering?

How did you contribute to making your situation worse?

How can you get out of this suffering?

# Understanding Stage

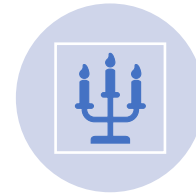
Some of the interview process questions may include:



iv. Do you understand what has been happening to you?



v. Do you wish to stay in this state?



vi. What is the worst that can happen if your situation does not change?



# Moving to Action

- The client starts to share how they have changed
- They share good relationship with significant others
- They appreciate that it was worth coming to see you
- When they tell you life has been good and that they hope to maintain the new them
- When they share personal solutions to their problems outside therapy
- They have high self esteem and ready to move on



# Action

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This is the implementation stage where the client implements goals of therapy or recovery plan. This is a stage that is mostly challenging for interns.

Most of them can explore and make the clients accept the need to change and take responsibility yet are not able to help them carry out the set therapy goals. This is the most crucial stage in behavior change.



# Action

Interns need more support from supervisors to ensure that they master this stage that brings closure to therapy process. All the discussions during therapy are translated into action.



# Action

This stage uses all skills (support , challenging and action ) and techniques that match the problem and intervention strategy/goals.

**Some of the most helpful interview questions are:**



What do you think will bring positive change in your situation?



What do you need to bring desired change in your situation?



What help do you need to bring this change?



# Some of the most helpful interview questions are:

- i. What can you do to bring lasting change?
- ii. What do you see as barriers to this change?
- iii. What can you do to manage these barriers?
- iv. Who can walk with you in this journey of change?



# Challenges

During this action stage, the counselor helps the client to identify those barriers that might hinder them from behavior change or achieving therapy action goals.

Some of the challenges include lack of support from significant others, peer influence, lack of self confidence , lack of resources among others



# Support Systems

The client is asked to share who and what can make their change journey easier. Support systems include family members, colleagues, peers and resources at their disposal.

The support system play the role of encouragement making the action stage more successful.

NB: The counselor encourages inner motivation from the client to foster change despite external factors



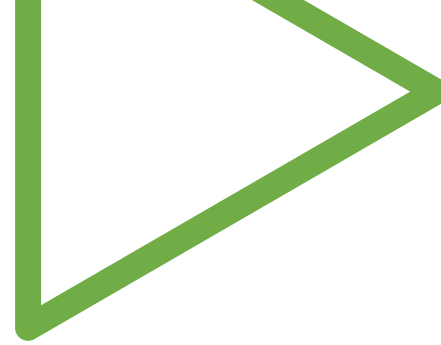
# Termination

- All issues have been addressed
- All plans for change are done with all action points agreed upon in therapy are accomplished
- The client is ready to terminate therapy
- Issues of change management, loss and grief are dealt with
- The client can choose a ritual for termination (writing a journal sharing their journey, a poem or a song, keep an item for memory)
- Write a report



# Beyond Therapy

- Follow up is planned
- Give contact
- Give a schedule
- Give room for change
- Say goodbye



# Conclusion



This lecture has reviewed the counseling journey and related the journey with the skills and questions that move the process in each stage. The counseling intern needs a lot of support in the stages. This will help them reduce cases of premature termination of therapy in future practice. The skills mastery is done by reviewing how each stage question(s) are answered.

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**THANK YOU!**

