Study Unit 3

Specific Skills

Study Unit Outline

Specific skills

- Specific skills one
- Starting and structuring a Unit.
- Facilitating problem solving
- Quick think exercises
- Formative exercises

Study Unit Duration

This Study Unit requires at least 8 hours of formal study time.

You may spend additional 8 hours for revision

Introduction

Do you want to know if community mental health specific skills would be beneficial to you and if it would be worth your time and effort? Few community-serving workers, in fact, would not benefit from improved mental health knowledge and intervention abilities. Working in social services, health care, law enforcement, or education, for example, exposes you to mental health difficulties on a regular basis, even if you aren't aware of it.

Learning Outcomes of Study Unit 3

Upon completion of this study unit, you should be able to have the:

3.1 Specific skills of a good start to a unit.

3.2 Specific skills of a well structure problem solving unit.

3.1   Components of a Good Start to a Unit

<u>Starting and Structuring a Unit.</u>

> **Review and Bridge-in:** Listening summative assessment; listening observations and listening log.
>
> The importance of good beginning enables clients to feel confident about accessing help**.** Invite participants to talk about their experiences of good beginnings and bad beginnings to a conversation or a time together with others or a visit to a doctor.

> **Learning Objectives:**
>
> ✓ To enable participants to identify the components of a well-structured unit.
>
> ✓ To enable participants to support clients as they start talking in units (invitation to speak)
>
> ✓ To enable participants to have a good summarising skills, for reflecting segments of conversations.
>
> ✓ To enable participants to structure unit or parts of units to facilitate a helping conversation/ interaction.

<u>Starting and Structuring</u>

Because of our setting and the flexibility, we have in the way we work we have the advantage of starting the helping process in friendly and functional ways, there are several skills that help us to get going.

<u>Permission/Invitation to speak</u>

These are brief statements that invite the client to tell their stories and enable the helper to show that they are ready to listen. They are 'door openers' giving your message that you are interested

and prepared to listen and that you are there to discover information and assist them to discover information about themselves too. These invitations should always be geared toward enabling the client to develop their own resources rather than rely on the helper's resources all the time.

The following statements can get the sessions off to a wrong start can you think why?

❖ 'How can I help you?'

❖ 'what can I do for you'

---

after permission to talk has been granted all of the helpers' messages, including body and vocal messages, are very important in indicating that they can be relied on. The essence here is to create a safe emotional climate by:

✓ Speaking clearly

✓ Speaking relatively slowly

✓ Using messages (including body messages) to demonstrate full attention and interest

In addition to getting started with a session, permission to talk can also be used in situations where the helper senses that that the client has an issue they really want to talk about but may require a little extra encouragement to share.

Quick think exercise

Below are examples of permission to talk. They are two kinds (although in the list they are jumbled up together) can you group them into two groups? Do you have any that you really like and work best for you? Do you have any additional ones to add to this list?

1. Can you please tell me why you are here?

2. Please tell me what has brought you here?

3. Is there something on your mind?

4. Please tell me what is concerning you?

5. I am available if you want to talk.

6. Please tell me what is the problem?

7. Please put me in the picture?

8. You seem unhappy today (expressed with sympathy)

9. Where would you like to start?

10. You have been referred by _____. Now how do you see your situation?

In addition to the above you can also use the following as a follow up. Can you think of scenarios where you would use these?

1. It's pretty hard to get started.

2. Take your time

3. When you are ready

Record Keeping: Sometimes there are organisational requirements for basic information, record keeping, evaluation etc. You need to be flexible on how and when to record this. Information gathering shouldn't jeopardise your opportunity to form a collaborative relationship in and safe emotional climate.

Sometimes it might be necessary (or easier) to record helping sessions, however clients have to give explicit consent for this.

Summarising Skills

These are brief helper statements following a series of exchanges (or a segment of) during a helping session. Think of looking into a mirror...

The objective of such summaries is to:

- ✓ **Basic reflection summary**: summarise and pull together points and issues raised

- ✓ **Checking summary**: clarify and reflect back statements made

- ✓ **Identification summary**: identify themes and problem areas

At the start of a session: You can reflect and summarise from the previous session or following the response 'permission to speak'. These summaries might:

- ✓ Mirror back what clients have said

- ✓ Check back to clarify and fully understand

- ✓ Identify themes, problem areas and problem situations

In situations where clients have talked for a lengthy period of time, helpers can use summary to establish their presence and have a facilitative conversation.
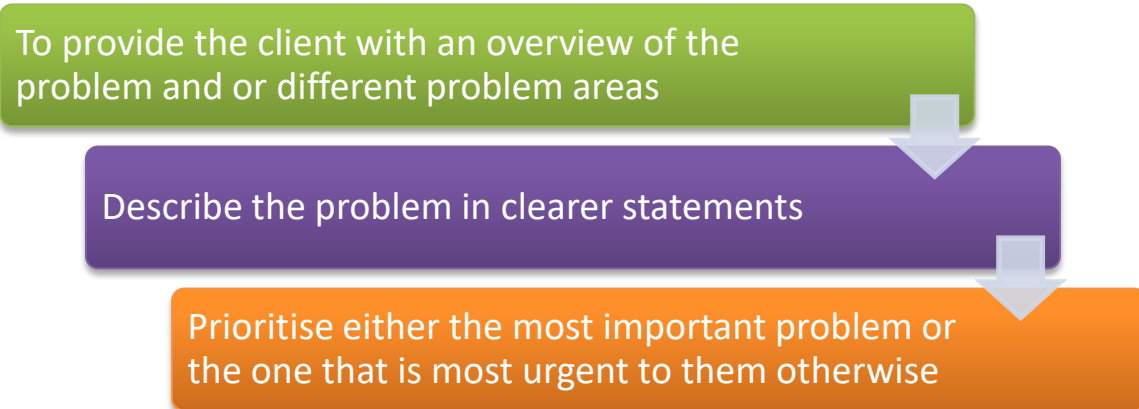
Where anxious clients have delved into telling their story very fast, a helper summarising in a measured rate can calm the client down.

Summaries are your way for reflecting on units of communication, such summaries:

1. Bring together the important feelings and details of what the client said

2. bridge segments of sessions or two sessions enabling clients to continue with the same topic

3. enable the helper to demonstrate their active listening and reward the client with it

4 can help link emotions, feelings and reasons to perceptions etc

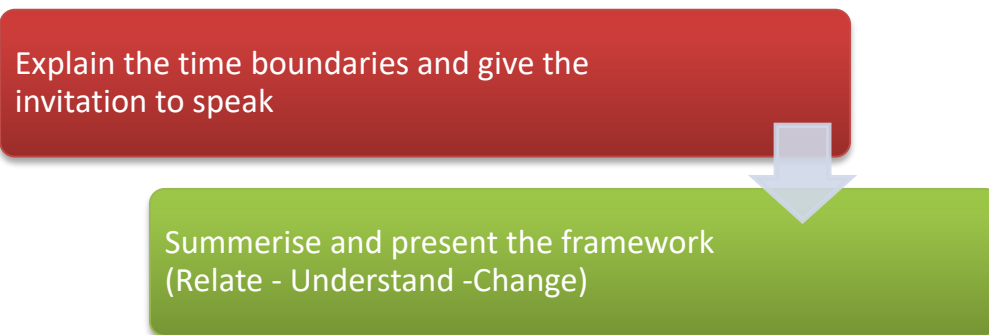Taken together the above will enable you to:

To provide the client with an overview of the problem and or different problem areas

Describe the problem in clearer statements

Prioritise either the most important problem or the one that is most urgent to them otherwise

Quick think exercise	
Below are examples of summaries one is basic reflective summary the other one is a problem identification summary and there is also one clarification summary. See if you can identify which summary fits the description for each.	
Summary	**Type**
Recently diagnosed patient	
You feel better now that you have received the actual diagnosis and although it is going to be a long road to recovery the doctors seem to know what they are doing. You have been so used to looking after your family that it is a shock that you will have progressively less energy to do so much for them until you get better again. You don't like having to be dependent on other people and your children. And now you want to gather your thoughts around the different options for treatment.	

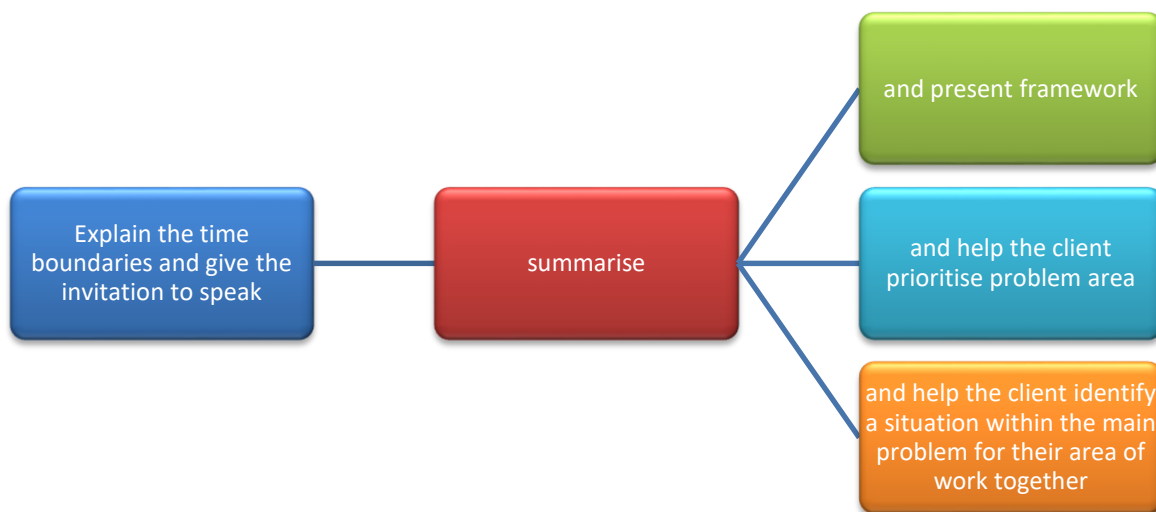|	
A young woman who came for welfare advise	
The way I see it you have described at least four problems to me. One is the problem of getting somewhere safe to live at a price you can afford. Another is how to stop arguing with your parents so frequently and then there is the problem of how to keep your relationship with your boyfriend going when he lives so far away. Last you are unhappy about the kind of work you keep getting and want a better job to reflect your qualifications. Is that a fair summary?	
A woman referred to mental health outreach work for bouts of depression	
Is it right, that although you have been referred to me because of late you have been very sad and less communicative and many people have noticed that, but you are not too worried about it because you consider it to be part of your new way of life?	

Structuring Skills

Structuring sessions well will help you make your clients understand the helping process better, making it less threatening for them. You ought to explain the time-line, the frame work as well as the techniques you are going to use.

This is best done in two steps

Explain the time boundaries and give the invitation to speak

Summerise and present the framework
(Relate - Understand -Change)

But often the client doesn't present a single or main problem, rather there may be several problems or no specific problem that is emerging and hence the above scenario will look more like this

Explain the time boundaries and give the invitation to speak

summarise

and present framework

and help the client prioritise problem area

and help the client identify a situation within the main problem for their area of work together

Please describe what kind of structuring is taking place in each of these two scenarios

Quick think exercise

Opening statement

Please tell me why you have come to see me today ?

Activity Area

Scenario 1

You have given me some idea about the situation. Now since time is limited, I wonder if we can select a specific aspect of your problem (specify) that we can work on. Through our discussions I will try and understand the situation more fully and see if we can then look at solutions. Is that ok with you?

Scenario 2

You have given me a good idea about several situations (summarise the different situations). Which of these would you like to focus on? [after the client makes the selection]. Now I wonder if we can identify particular situation within this problem that is important for you to address better. This will enable us to explore the situation more fully and perhaps think about useful solutions for dealing with it. Is that all right with you?
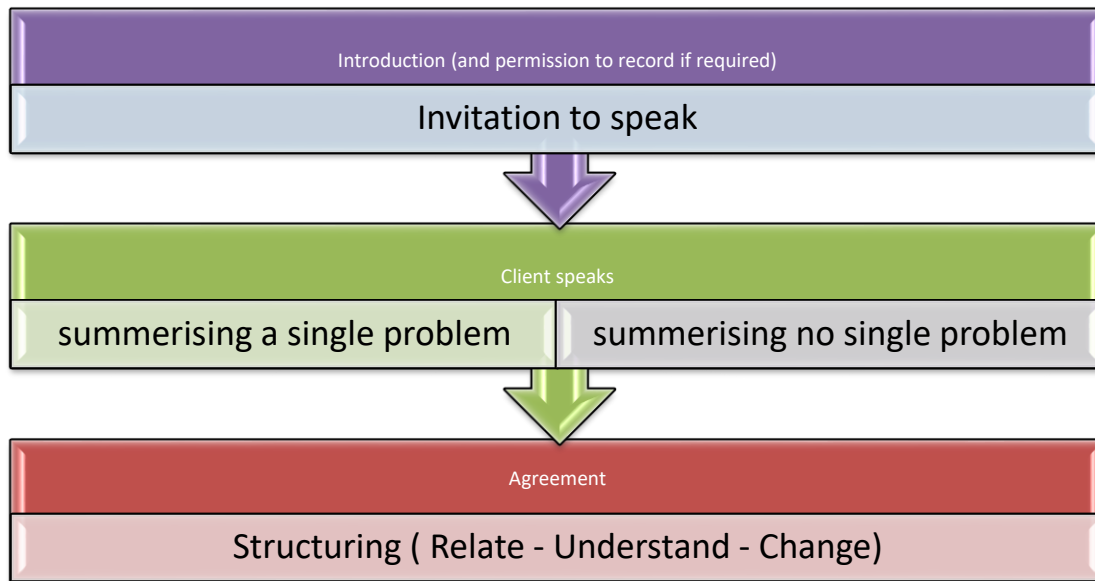
An effective structuring will strengthen the collaborative working relationship by:

✓ Establishing the agenda

✓ Setting goals

✓ Obtaining agreements

You should avoid being lured into a prolonged discussion on framework; by describing the framework you will use briefly and confidently (what you are going to do)

Summary

A session looks like this

Introduction (and permission to record if required)
Invitation to speak

Client speaks	
summerising a single problem	summerising no single problem

Agreement
Structuring (Relate - Understand - Change)

Assessment 3

Describing a case scenario of your own please write (or record) a transcript of the following:

1. Making an opening statement

2. Giving permission to talk

3. Reflecting feeling/s

4. Summarising

5. Making a structuring statement

3.2   Components of a well structure problem solving unit

There are five special skills in this aspect:

Facilitating problems solving

Much of the approach for the work of a counsellor or helper is either facilitating problem solving or improving communications/actions or thoughts.

The main objective of this session is to focus on the problem solving approach and is intended to enable helpers to be equipped for facilitating problem solving by:

- ✓ Improving their listening skills

- ✓ Improve their goal clarification skills

- ✓ Improve their ability to explore options and strategies

Clarifying goals

The objective of clarifying goals is to enable your client to have a clearer understanding of the key dimensions of the problem or problems. Once they have defined the problem situation in their own terms they are better able to clarify their goals and attain them.

Using active listening skills (listening to the internal frame of reference) you are able to facilitate your clients to find their own resources to enable them to better handle the problem situation.

A combination of this skills and approaches are required:

Active listening: an emotionally supportive and facilitative atmosphere enabling clients to get in touch with their authentic feelings as a crucial ingredient for effective actions. The skill here is to be there as a skilled listener while the client does their own work

Summarising: follow up, summarise and tie together the focus areas of the problem situation to facilitate clarification of goals and steps for dealing with the problem. Where clients are overwhelmed a calm summarising can lead to them sufficiently calming down and can then think fairly rationally about their goals.

Structuring: this entails tactfully assisting clients to address issues of change, enabling them to move onto to clarification of their goals. A clear goal is easier to attain. Here the helper is able to build on the identification and summarising and move the conversation onto clarifying goals.

Setting goals: clients are not always creative about their goals, it is the role of the helper to assist their client to generate and consider a range of goals by asking for more options and combinations. The helper can use positive goals ('what do you want to achieve') and negative ones ('what do you want to avoid?').

Useful tip: overwhelming the client by bombarding them with questions should be avoided. Instead they should venture a few well chosen questions that enable the client to get to the heart of their goals (achieve and avoid). However sometimes helpers could facilitate an in-depth exploration of goals and the values that underpin them.

In all circumstances helpers recognise the importance of allowing the cardinal right of the client to set their goals.

Quick think exercise

What aspect of facilitating problem solving, does each of the following statements represent?

1. Let's look at the issue that has brought you, please tell me all about it and how you think I can help you to make the situation bearable?

   a) Invitations to speak and active listening

   b) Structuring

   c) Summarising

   d) Clarifying

2. Now that we have identified the main problem and how it affects you and how often it affects you perhaps you can tell me what goals you can have for changing the situation?

   a) Invitations to speak and active listening

   b) Structuring

   c) Summarising

   d) Clarifying

3. What do you want to achieve in the situation? Is there anything you want to avoid?

   a) Invitations to speak and active listening

b) Structuring

c) Summarising

d) Clarifying

4. I understand you have been finding, coping with your new responsibilities as a mother difficult. You seem to be struggling to cope with the demands of the babby, your family and your partner. Is that right?

a) Invitations to speak and active listening

b) Structuring

c) Summarising

d) Clarifying

Answers: 1 a, 2 b, 3 d, 4 c

Generating and exploring options

Once a desired goal (or goal) have been identified and clarified the helper moves to facilitating the generation of options to achieve that goal.

Generate options: the essence here is to avoid being stuck with the first option that comes to mind. Skilled questions help your clients to generate and explore various options. Your role here is:

✓ to help them to think clear and to think creatively

✓ to help them to relay on their wisdom

✓ to help them gain confidence in their resourcefulness

Think about consequences: once as many options as possible have been generated and listed helpers can help address some of the consequences of these. Helpers shouldn't get started with consequences prematurely or there will be a risk of clients not daring to be creative with options.

Keep matters simple and keep a list: remember to keep things simple (at least in the beginning). You may want to explore one goal at time to help keep things simple. You can also limit the number of options that are generated (make sure you don't compromise creativity though). If it is possible use a notepad or use a board to make the list.

All questions used to generate options should ensure that the onus for generating options and ideas is with the client. You should always resist the temptation to take over.

X Do you want me to tell you what I would do?

X I once had a similar problem....

Generate options		
consequences for option 1	consequences for option2	consequences for option 3
1	1	1
2	2	2
3	3	3
4	4	4
Keep it simple!		

Quick think exercise

Look at the following case study and think about potential questions that will help you generate the options listed and then assess consequences

The problem

Ferida is 17 she has come to you worried about her deteriorating relationship with her dad. Ferida is unhappy about the aggressive way that her father sometimes treats her mother. As a result her relationship with her dad is sometimes aggressive and sometimes withdrawn.

Farida admits that her father does a lot for the family and is kind to her and her siblings and she thinks that if she were to treat him better it might help him improve his relationship with their mother. Of late she has been worried that her aggressive approach might be making things worse, she really wants her relationship, with her father, to improve.

As a result of this anxiety she has been withdrawing from her friends and has been unable to maintain her circle of friends and feels very lonely at times. She wants to go out more and be with people her age, rather than with her mum all the time.

Farida's goals:

1. **Develop better relationship with dad**

| 2. To have more friends my age			
Options for goal 1	Consequences	**Options for goal 2**	Consequences
Greeting dad in a friendly manner when he gets home		Complaining less about home when I am out with my friends	
Saying 'thank you' when he does something for me		Making time to go out more with my friends	
Letting him know what is going on in my life		Being more open and accepting invitations from my friends	
Telling him how upset it makes me when I hear them row		Participating in more out of school activities	
Finding something that dad and I can do together		Inviting some of my friends home	

Assisting planning

Once clients have generated options and considered consequences, helpers can assist them to develop the plans they will implement. The role of the helper here is:

Formulate the plan**:** this includes assisting the choosing of options, encouraging them to be as specific as possible about how they can implement the options and where possible developing a timeline and a sequence for the various actions.

 Exploring commitment: this enables the client to explore any difficulties and potential setbacks and how to deal with them.

Monitor progress**:** this is where clear milestones are also laid to help progress monitoring either together or for the client to do it on their own (if there are no options for subsequent sessions).

Plans can be simple or complex but they need to be realistic.
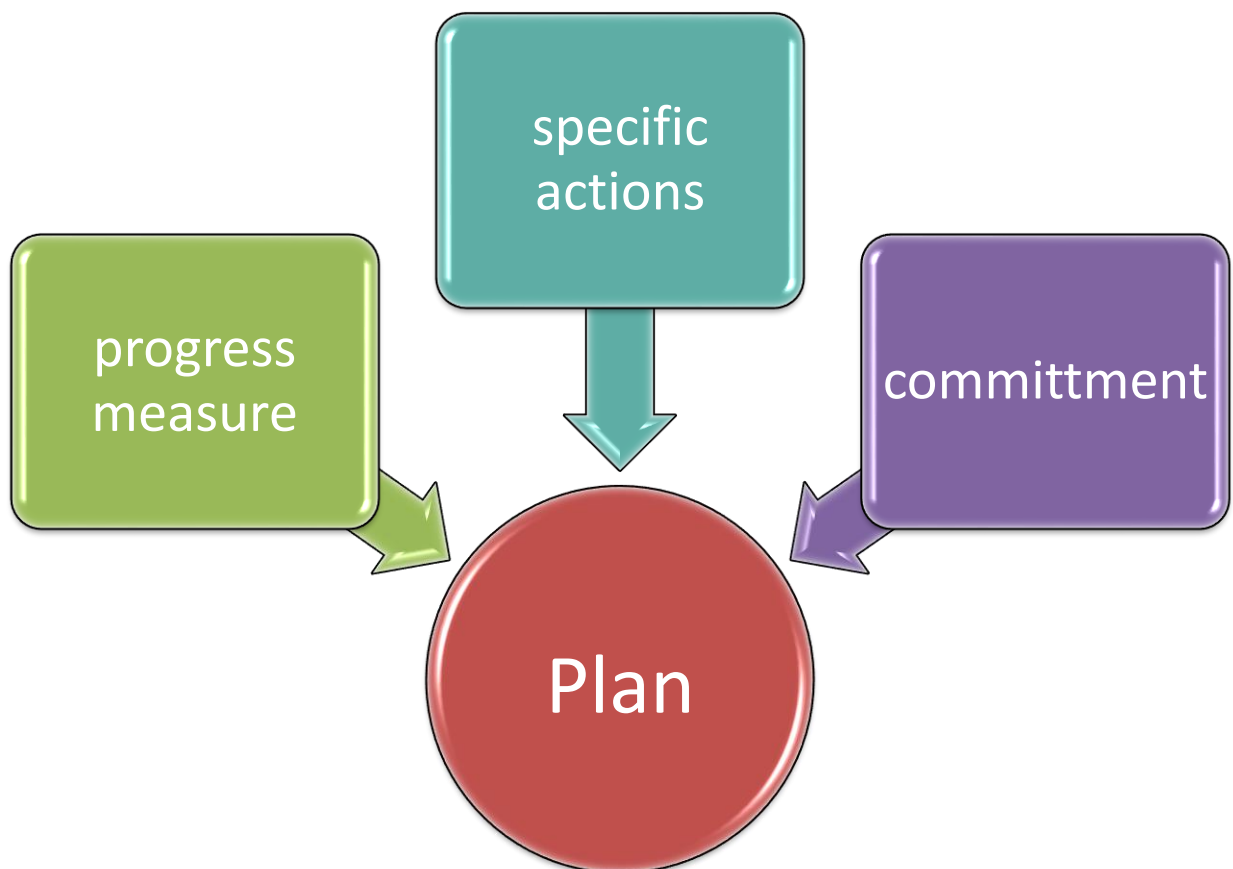
Quick think exercise

Building from the work you did in the previous section please make a plan for how she would plan for achieving goal number one. You can use the plan below and enter the time line for it.

The problem

Ferida is 17 she has come to you worried about her deteriorating relationship with her dad. Ferida is unhappy about the aggressive way that her father sometimes treats her mother. As a result her relationship with her dad is sometimes aggressive and sometimes withdrawn.

Farida admits that her father does a lot for the family and is kind to her and her siblings and she thinks that if she were to treat him better it might help him improve his relationship with their mother. Of late she has been worried that her aggressive approach might be making things worse, she really wants her relationship, with her father, to improve.

As a result of this anxiety she has been withdrawing from her friends and has been unable to maintain her circle of friends and feels very lonely at times. She wants to go out more and be with people her age, rather than with her mum all the time.

GOAL: Develop better relationship with dad

Options for goal 1	Time line

1. **Greeting dad in a friendly manner when he gets home**	☐ Starting today
	☐ Starting seven days from now
	☐ Starting two weeks from now
	☐ When I am ready
2. **Saying 'thank you' when he does something for me**	☐ Starting today
	☐ Starting seven days from now
	☐ Starting two weeks from now
	☐ When I am ready
3. **Letting him know what is going on in my life**	☐ Starting today
	☐ Starting seven days from now
	☐ Starting two weeks from now
	☐ When I am ready
4. **Telling him how upset it makes me when I hear them row**	☐ Starting today
	☐ Starting seven days from now
	☐ Starting two weeks from now
	☐ When I am ready

5. **Finding something that dad and I can do together**	☐ Starting today ☐ Starting seven days from now ☐ Starting two weeks from now ☐ When I am ready
1 today, 2 seven days, 3 two weeks, 4 when ready, 5 when ready	

3.1.2 Terminating

Introduction

Under ideal circumstances termination would be upon the attainment of mutually agreed goals or the problem has become manageable without assistance. However sometimes there are situations where you have to terminate therapy because it has become physically impossible to carry on with the relationship for one reason or another. Termination should be part of the process and should be a planned part at that, it should never come as a surprise to the client.

Unplanned termination, or termination that is sprung at your client:

- ✓ Does not enable them (and you) opportunities to process what termination means,
- ✓ Does not give time for considerations of how the client will handle the end of the relationship,
- ✓ Does not account for the need to perhaps do follow-up contacts and/or the need for referring on

Termination should actually be discussed as part of the opening processes. You must clearly outline right from the contact, that main objective is actually to help the (client) function without our support.

It is your ethical responsibility to outline

✓ how long you will be available to them for,

✓ to discuss openly the timeline of your relationship

✓ to make appropriate referrals or recommendations at the conclusion of your relationship. Termination is a stage of counselling that clients need to be prepared for and counsellors need to address early on in the counselling process to avoid abandonment.

How to end therapy with your clients

1. **Making sure that your client has other avenues for meeting their basic emotional needs**

✓ You can achieve this by establishing a clear agenda of what you are working towards from the very beginning

✓ It should always be clear 2w1q1111qthat your role is to address the specified objectives and you should remain focused on these

✓ helps the clients be clear about what these needs are and how to meet them effectively in their own life

2. **Keep the original goals in focus**

This only happens if you have already set the agenda properly from the outset

✓ The ending time and processes should be clarified at the start

✓ When the stated goals have been achieved they are drawn to the client's attention

✓ Both the client and the therapist know what the signals of achieving the goal is

For Endings

You came to see me because you wanted to tell your parents that you are moving out to live with your friends, you wanted to tell them in a clear and confident way that reassures them. You knew you were going to meet some resistance and maybe even anger.

> You wanted to be able to reassure them by showing them that you are confident and independent.
>
> And we agreed we will know that you are getting there when you:
>
> ✓ Start talking to them in a calm and confident way about other things
> ✓ Start to behave in matured and independent way on other less contentious matters
> ✓ You have reduced other behaviours that reduces their anxiety (spending less, taking more responsibility)
> ✓ Finding the right time to tell them about your decision
> ✓ Telling them your decision
>
> Now that we have achieved our original goals are there any other areas you want to work on?

3. Making the ending clear from the beginning

Although you can't be sure of the number of sessions required to work through the agenda for change that you have agreed with your client. You can give your client an indication, using statements such as:

✓ Many people work through these issues in a few sessions, some even after a single session, so be open to that
✓ If after several sessions (say four or five) you still haven't moved on much then we should review the approach and see if there is something that needs changing (including changing the therapist)
✓ Ofcourse I will not just leave suddenly we will plan when and how to end but the aim here is that we achieve our goal and move one. When you stop needing to come here or see me then we have been successful.

Unplanned termination

What if your client wants to end therapy for various reasons (unplanned or when you are not sure that goals have been achieved)?

If terminated prematurely by client, the counselor should:

- ✓ Make possible referrals
- ✓ Offer assistance if and when needed
- ✓ Remind the client that it was their choice

Formative assessment 18 Facilitating successful endings				
Issues during termination	From the outset	1-3 sessions before final session	The session before the final sesion	On the final session
Remind client of the approaching end				
Draw attention to achieved goals and build confidence in their ability to handle things without you				
Set agenda for change and achievable goals and signals that these have been achieved				
Review progress and give credit for accomplishments				

Allow clients to openly talk about their feelings related to endings (don't avoid or encourage avoidance).			
Take note of any negative feelings you yourself may have about ending.			
Review the techniques and skills that had been acquired during the therapeutic engagement			
Provide a re-referral or bank sessions system, if in case the client wants to come back to you at a later stage			

Conclusion

You must carefully consider the most effective way to terminate each client. Asking the following questions:

- ✓ How will termination impact the client?
- ✓ What is your client's history with regards to previous separation?
- ✓ Is the client likely to regress?
- ✓ What are their thoughts and reactions about termination now?
- ✓ Is my client able to see termination as a positive step?

VII.   Summative Assessment

Quick think

Write a short paragraph on how you would terminate therapy under the following circumstances:

1. Both client and therapist are aware and agree that work is accomplished
2. No clear cut ending has been achieved but therapy has continued beyond usefulness
3. Continuing with therapy is against client's interest (e.g. they are becoming dependent on therapist/sessions)
4. Incompatibility
5. Client moves away
6. Therapist has to move jobs

Issues during termination	From the outset	1-3 sessions before final session	The session before the final session	On the final session
Issues during termination		✓		
Remind client of the approaching end	✓			
Draw attention to achieved goals and build confidence in their ability to handle things without you	✓			
Set agenda for change and achievable goals and signals that these have been achieved		✓		
Review progress and give credit for accomplishments	✓		✓	
Allow clients to openly talk about their feelings related to endings (don't avoid or encourage avoidance).	✓		✓	

				✓
Take note of any negative feelings you yourself may have about ending.				✓
Review the techniques and skills that had been acquired during the therapeutic engagement				✓
Provide a re-referral or bank sessions system, if in case the client wants to come back to you at a later stage				✓

Assessment 4

Facilitating problem solving

In a short paragraph , present either one of your helping sessions or a situation where a friend/family member came to you with request for help with a problem.

1. Demonstrate how you would form a collaborative working relationship to clarify the problem situation and write down a helper's summary that you would present to your client. (min 250 words)

2. Then present how you would facilitate problem solving by (min 250 words):

   - Clarifying goals

   - Generating and exploring options

   - Developing a plan

   - Exploring commitment and a plan for setbacks and difficulties

Fact is we all talk to ourselves and self-talk doesn't determine sanity, it is how we talk to ourselves, before, during and after difficulties that determines whether our self-talk is useful (healthy) or harmful to us. there are two types of self talk:

Negative self-talk: that leads to self-defeating feeling and actions is what causes the difficulties they face. Characteristics of negative self-talk include:

- ✓ Self-disparagement

- ✓ Concluding that things will always get worse or get out of control

- ✓ Focusing only on past set-backs

Coping Self-talk: In contrast to negative self talk is **Coping Self-talk**, this enhances the likelihood of your clients your clients will do as well as they reasonably can. This includes both not having unrealistically high standards as well as having too low an expectation of themselves too. Coping self-talk has three dimensions:

- ✓ Self calming

- ✓ Self-coaching

- ✓ Self-affirming

Types of self -talk

self disparagement

negative self-talk

focused on past set-backs

concluding the worst

calming self-talk

coping self-talk

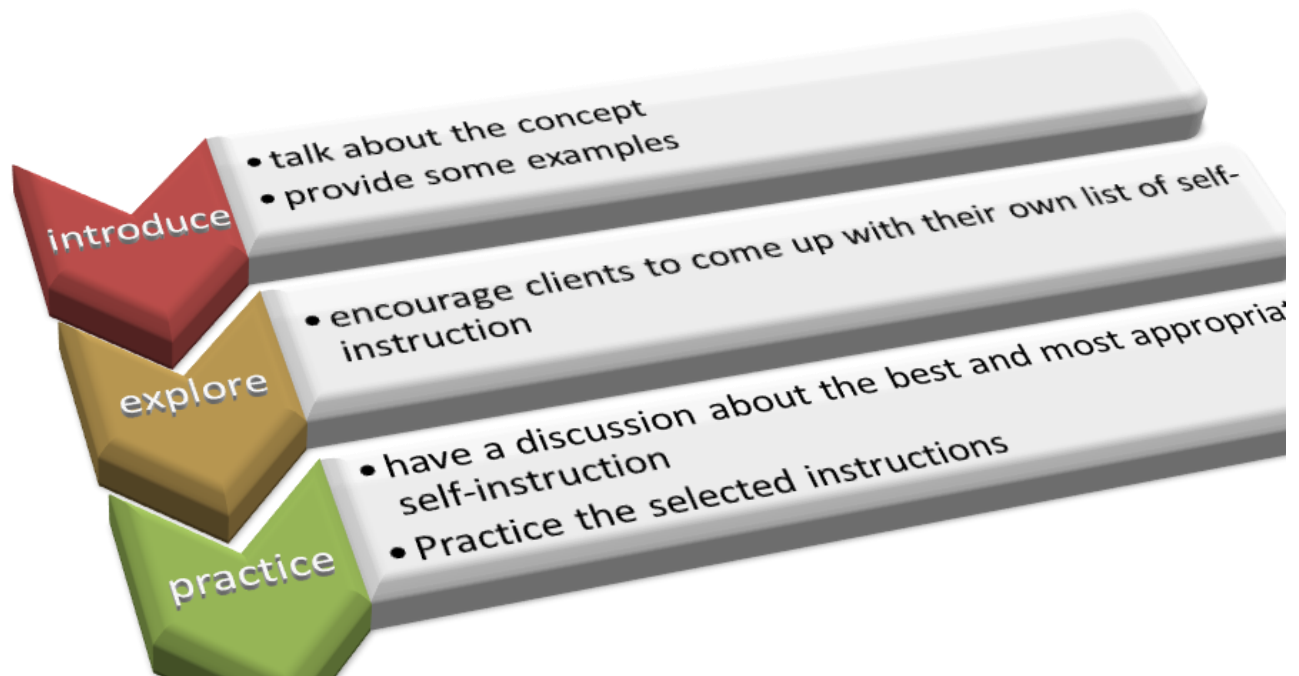affirming self-talk

coaching self-talk
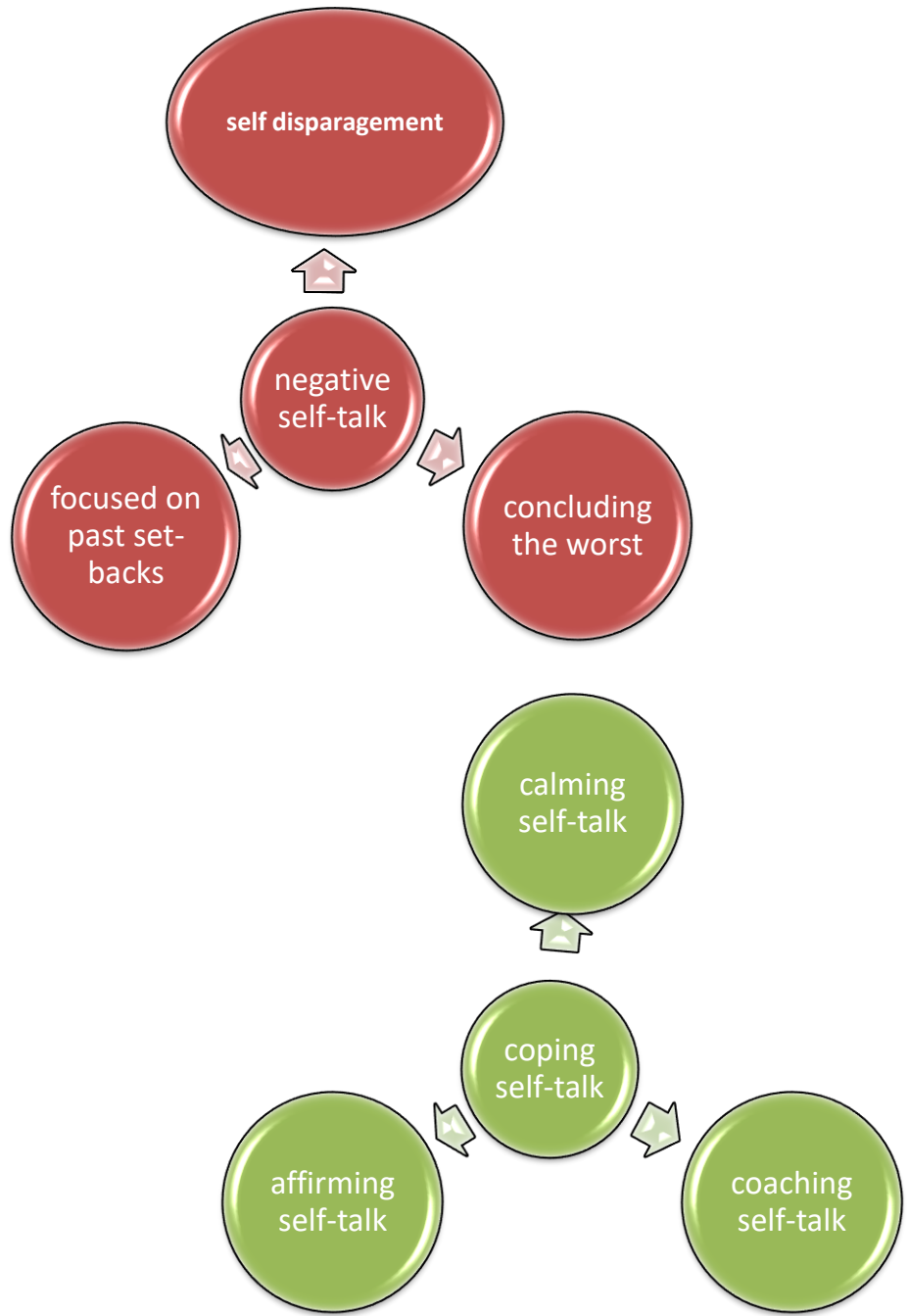
Self-calming talk helps clients to deal with problem situations better. This can be before, during or after a given situation. With a calm and clearer mind, they have a better chance of dealing with the situation more effectively.

- ✓ They become better able at dealing with negative feelings of anxiety and excessive anger. This makes it easier to handle the problem situation.

- ✓ Calm and relaxed minds makes the generation of solutions to problems with many creative ideas being generated (sharp and creative thinking)

- ✓ Are more likely to talk through their problems

Are more likely to be more reflective and get in touch with their feelings

1.3 Creating a calming self-talk

introduce
- talk about the concept
- provide some examples

explore
- encourage clients to come up with their own list of self-instruction

practice
- have a discussion about the best and most appropria[te] self-instruction
- Practice the selected instructions

3.1.3 Coaching self-talk

This relates to the ability to give oneself instructions on the steps to execute the plan of action. This often needs to be done in steps. It avoids the stress that people experience when faced with a problem situation that may appear unresolvable.
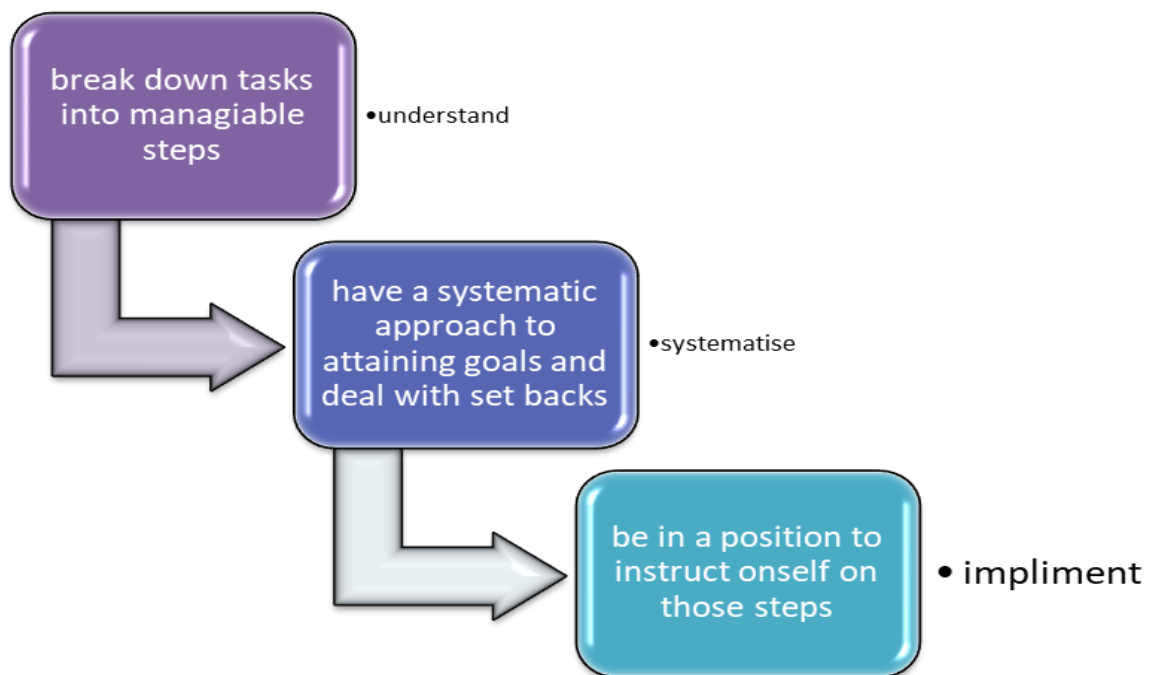
Self-instructions are often about both vocal and body messages and hence the self-instruction for each of these messages ought to be worked out in the safe environment you have created for your client.

Example: Hadiya wants to tell her parents that she is moving out with a couple of her friends from work into a shared flat on the other side of town. She knows that her parents will not agree to this as they are over protective of her and believe that living away from home will taint her reputation. She also knows they will use emotional blackmail to make her stay. In the past, similar discussions have ended up with her staying at home but feeling extremely frustrated and angry.

In her session with her helper Hadiya has decided to tell her parents about her plans over the weekend. She has worked through the risks and advantages and she has also planned the details of her implementation and timing. She has discussed how she will deal with her own nerves, he mother being upset and her father's anger. She has the following two goals during her announcement:

- ✓ Calm but firm vocal message
- ✓ Good confident eye contact and pleasant facial expressions

In the session the helper can assist the client to practice the targeted role they have come up with. Role-plays can be used effectively

Affirming self-talk this is very different from positive self talk which can give false positives, rather affirmation is about the resources and attributes that the client has. The opposite of negative self-talk isn't necessarily positive-self talk but self-affirmation talk. Affirmative self-talk has three dimensions

- ✓ Messages that 'I can cope'

- ✓ Acknowledging strengths already there

- ✓ Acknowledging supportive people around

- ✓ Acknowledging strengths already there

- ✓ Acknowledging supportive people around

so when you put it together you arrive at a statement that your clients can use to help them during problem situations.

In the case of Hadiya

Calm down remember the calm firm voice and confident body messages, I have talked this through with many people and have convinced them of the merits of my moves.


Assessment 5

Using the above points please develop another helpful self-instruction statement for Hadiya

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3.1.4 Improving Client's Rules

These refer to the readymade guides that we all have for how we deal with every day demands. We don't have to think through these very often and for most of us our rules are rational and realistic and appropriate. But some people find that they themselves contribute to their own unhappiness and distress by doing things that are unhelpful (self-jeopardising). often this is because they possess some rigid or demanding rules, that lead them to making irrational and unrealistic demands on themselves, on others and the environment. You can help identify if there are such rules affecting your client and assist them to correct these.

This can be done in three steps as follows
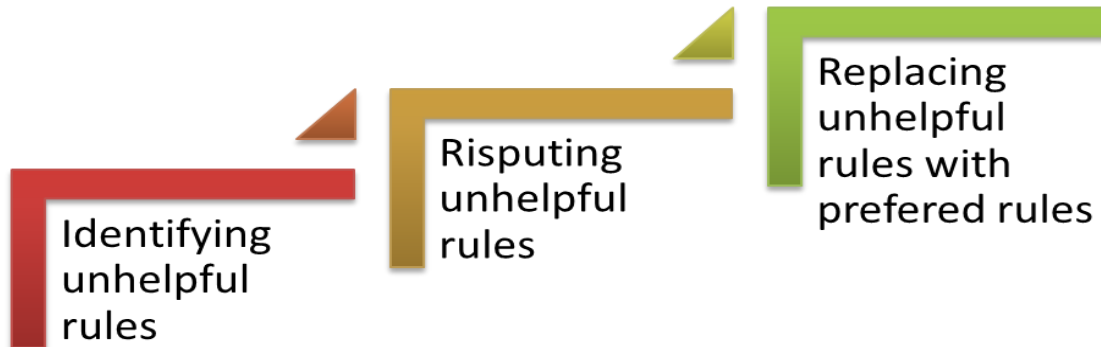
Identifying the unhelpful rules: these are rules that result in people's expectations from others and from their environments; for instance your clients may have rules that demand that they are respected and appreciated by others at all times. Now these demands can be realistic but they can also be unrealistic your helping role is to identify the irrational rules or elements of irrationality in some otherwise rational rules. Here are a few hints to look out for:

- ✓ Unhelpful language patters (e.g. must, ought, should rather Inappropriate feelings (e.g. extreme anger)

- ✓ Inappropriate body reactions (e.g. persistent tensing of muscles)

Disputing the Rules**:** challenging these demanding rules can be done by compelling your clients to use logic, reason and facts to support or discard a given rule. These are divided into two:

Functional disputes relate to asking clients how well the rule is serving them attain their goals:

- ✓ Is it helping you?

- ✓ How is continuing to behave this way affecting your life?

Empirical disputing

This aims to help clients evaluate the functional elements of the rule

- ✓ Where is the proof that you being at home when the children come every day is helping them in their achievements?

- ✓ Where is the proof that it is your divorce that caused your father's untimely death?

- ✓ Where is it written that you have to become a lawyer to be considered a success?
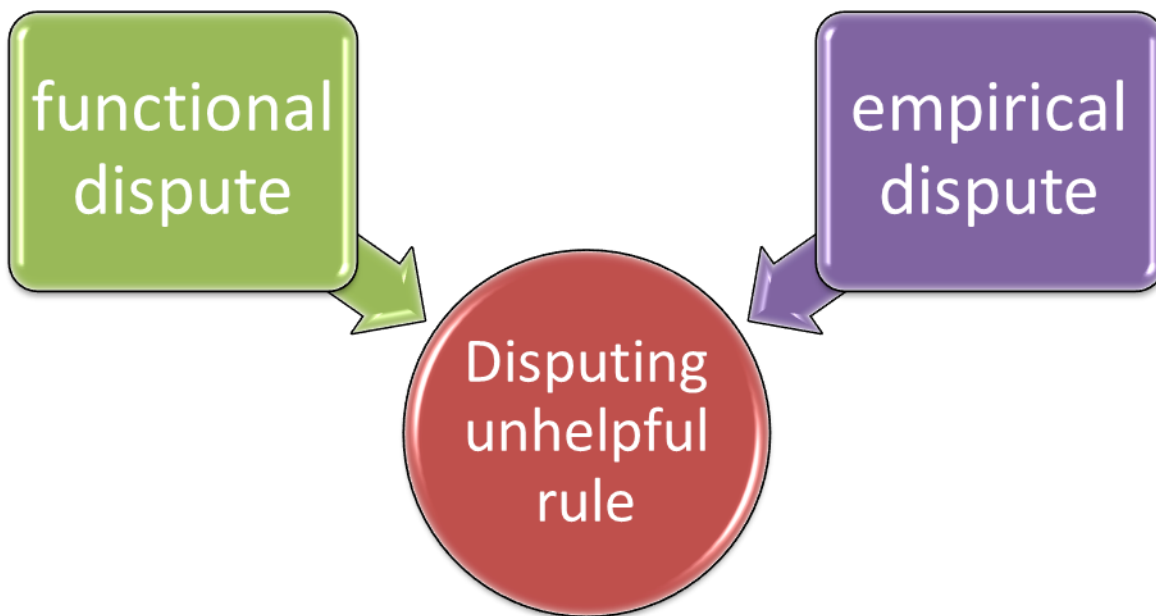
This should be done gently and only when collaborative working relationship is ascertained. Helpers should listen actively and respond gently . ultimately the objective is to enable your client to dispute these rules by themselves.

Stating and replacing with preferential rules

As mentioned the main objective of challenging and disputing is to enable clients to replace the rules that are demanding and not working well for them:

✓ Rules about total mastery can be replaced by rules that accept 'doing as well as one can under the circumstances'

✓ Rules that are based on the conclusion of the exaggerated awfulness of the world can be replaced by acceptance of imperfection but avoiding exaggerations

✓ 'I can't stand it' attitude can be replaced with I can cope

you need to encourage you client to work and practice hard to embed their preferred rule, the can also put together a list of prompts and reminders.

Communicate the new rules

Finally your client should ensure that they communicate and act inline with their preferred rule

3.1.5 Improving Client's perception

Like rules perceptions are also divided into two, accurate and inferred. The way we perceive and interpret, events, actions, sequences etc has a lot of impact on how we react to them. If we hear a crush upstairs while we are sitting downstairs, we could assume it was a burglar or we could assume it is a window left open and the wind has caused something to crush. Our assumptions will alter the way we perceive the crush and hence the way we then decide to act or react. In addressing problems that might emerge from problems associated with perception, the helper could enable their client to identify automatic perceptions and inferred perceptions and then help with checking accuracy.
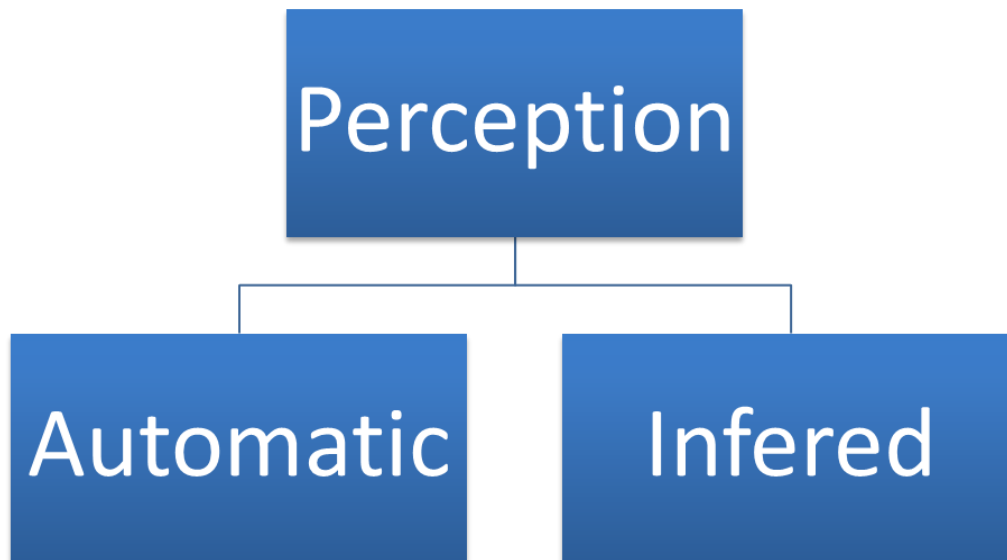
You can help your clients to know:

- ✓ that there is more than one way of interpreting a situation and the way they interpret a situation has implications for how they act/react to it

- ✓ There is a difference between fact and inference

- ✓ Understandautomatic perceptions (bias)

Once you help them identify the source of their perception then you move on to assessing accuracy by joining them in an investigation of:

- ✓ The evidence for the accuracy of the perception

- ✓ Identification of whether there are other ways of perceiving the situation

- ✓ Identifying a better fit between perception and reality (or facts)

Once any perception bias is corrected then reaction and action change follows automatically. However you need to still go through an assessment of any associated risks here too.
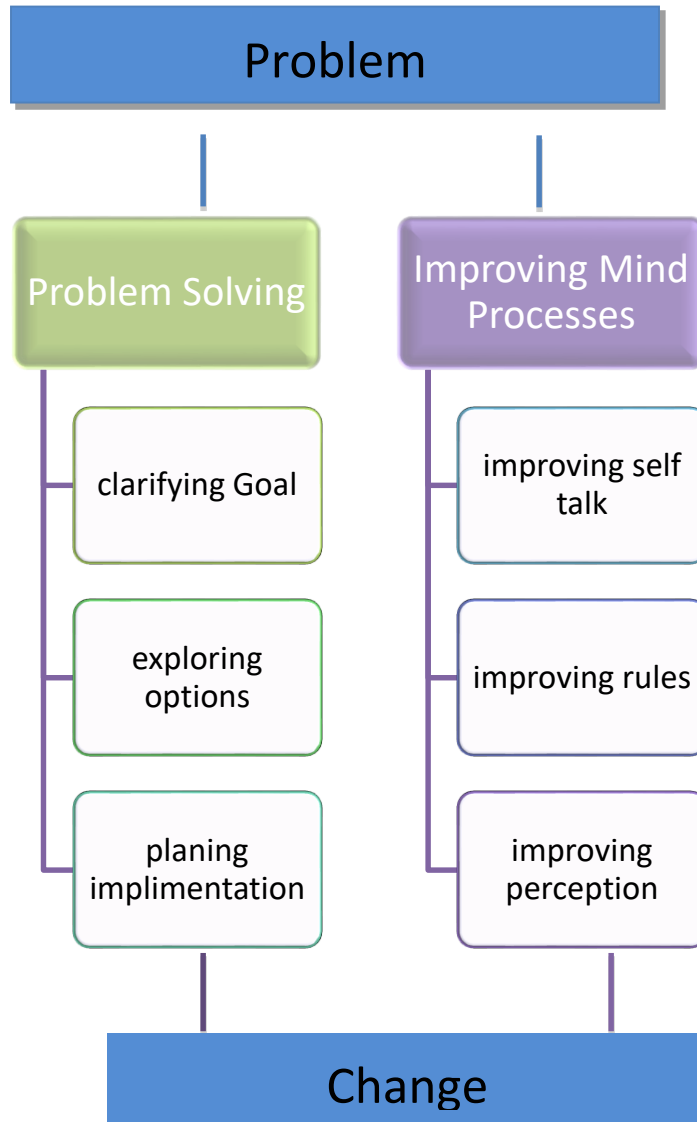
Assessment 6

Hannah thinks her son is involved with a dangerous gang because he comes in later than he used to and seems to spend more time locked in his room and is totally uninterested in gaming and TV like he used to. She has noticed his bag looks bulkier than it ever did. However no one else seems to think this is a problem, especially his 6th form college have nominated him for an award for the progress he made and he has told her of his plans for university . There is a drug culture among youth his age in the neighbourhood, although she has seldom seen her son hanging out with any of the young people she fears he might be associating with. She is very tense about the whole thing and their relationship has deteriorated and she is even considering sending him back to Africa to avoid the inevitable.

Identify and investigate the accuracy of Hanna's perceptions

Pulling it Together

Problem

Problem Solving

Improving Mind Processes

clarifying Goal

improving self talk

exploring options

improving rules

planing implimentation

improving perception

Change

Assessment 7

1. Give an example of the following

a) Self-calming talk

b) Self-coaching talk

c) Self-affirming talk

2. What are unhelpful rules and how would you help your clients to change them?

3. How does the way we perceive events/actions affect how we react to them ? and how can you help your client avoid faulty perception?

3.1.6 Conducting Mid-Session

Mid sessions refer to sessions that take place after the initial session/s and before the last sessions. They tend to be sessions where most of the work related to problem solving and improving mind skills occur. It is the changing step in the RUC (Relate-Understand-Change) model we discussed in fundamental skills.

Relate → Understand → Change

Helping sessions have four phases: this is for each of the sessions whether they are beginning sessions, middle sessions or termination sessions. This training looks at the structure of a middle session.
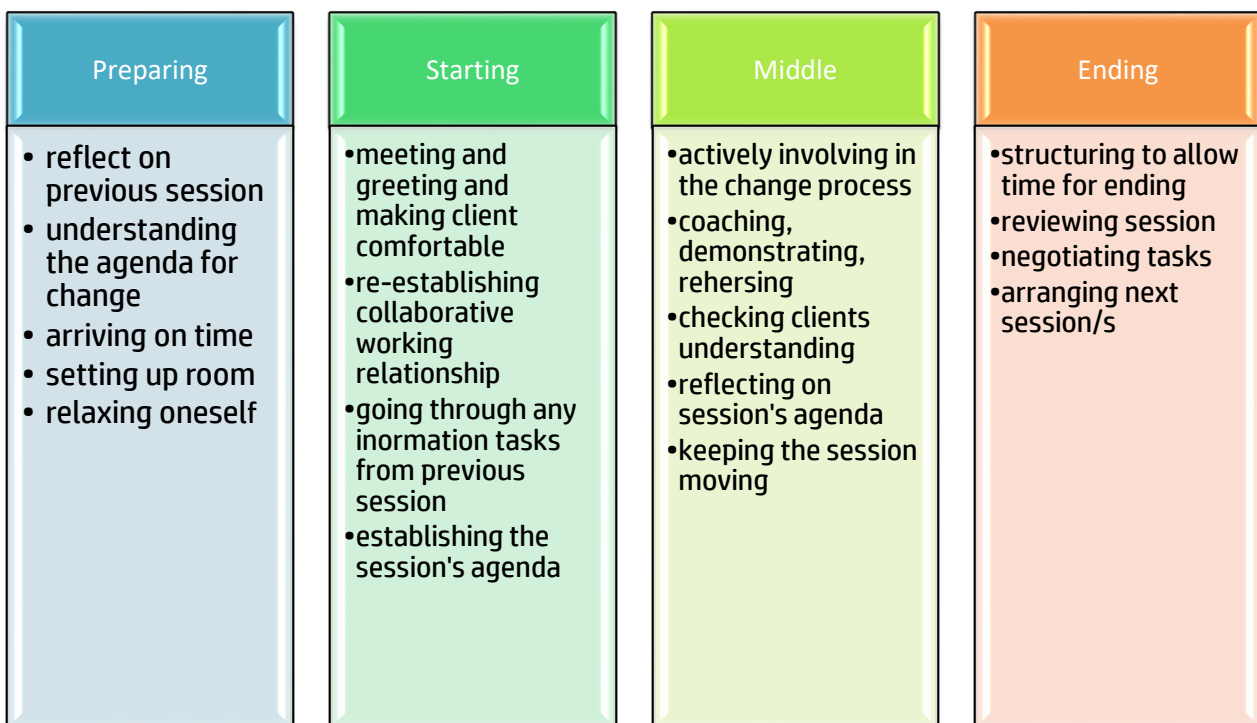
- ✓ Preparing

- ✓ Starting

- ✓ Middle

- ✓ Ending

Assessment 7

Place the actions listed below under the relevant headings of: **Preparing, Starting, Middle and Ending**

• actively involving in the change process

• arranging next session/s

• arriving on time

• checking clients understanding

• coaching, demonstrating, rehearsing

• establishing the session's agenda

• going through any information tasks from previous session

• keeping the session moving

• meeting and greeting and making client comfortable

• negotiating tasks

• re-establishing collaborative working relationship

• reflect on previous session

• reflecting on session's agenda

• relaxing oneself

• reviewing session

• setting up room

- structuring to allow time for ending
- understanding the agenda for change

Preparing	Starting	Middle	Ending
• reflect on previous session • understanding the agenda for change • arriving on time • setting up room • relaxing oneself	•meeting and greeting and making client comfortable •re-establishing collaborative working relationship •going through any inormation tasks from previous session •establishing the session's agenda	•actively involving in the change process •coaching, demonstrating, rehersing •checking clients understanding •reflecting on session's agenda •keeping the session moving	•structuring to allow time for ending •reviewing session •negotiating tasks •arranging next session/s

Preparing for Middle Sessions

The need for adequate preparations for any session cannot be over emphasised. Mid sessions are sessions where much of the problem solving and improving mind skills takes place so it is even more important to ensure enough preparations for facilitating these sessions.

These preparations include:

Before session

- ✓ Review previous session (if necessary discuss with colleagues and supervisors)

- ✓ Understand the problem and any strategies thoroughly

- ✓ Revise any strategy as necessary

- ✓ Practice delivery of strategies as necessary

- ✓ Make sure you have done gathering any information you promised, phone calls you agreed to make etc

On the day of session

- Arriving early or on time

- Making sure the setting is safe, comfortable and professional

- Any equipment you need is working

You shouldn't invite clients into a session that they are not prepared for, however you should also be flexible in approaching each session as a collaborative working relationship relays on your ability to consult with your client at all times.

Starting a Middle Session

The starting phase has three main tasks namely:

- ✓ Re-establishing collaborative working relationships

- ✓ Reviewing between session activities and progress

- ✓ Establishing the session's agenda

You can use your invitation-speak-skills to get your clients to start talking if they are finding it difficult to get going. Remember to create a psychologically safe space before you move on to the problem solving or improving behaviour or skills task.

Following the opening, you can ask additional questions as appropriate as well as use the opportunity to encourage clients on any achievements that week. Changes in thought process, changes in communication, changes in behaviour or relationships etc.

At some point near the start of the session you will need to establish the agenda for the session, you can set out the whole agenda and the chronological order in one go, or you can get started and then have a follow up agenda agreement. This is where your structuring and summarising skills are at their most engaged.

Again flexibility is a crucial key as involving the client is crucial to the collaborative working relationship. If you have a particular reason for prioritising something your client isn't you can share it as an observation and then allow your client to determine the agenda and priority order.

Formative Assessment 8

Think of statements that fit into each of these phases

1. Opening session

2. Reviewing progress from previous session

3. Establishing a session agenda

The middle of a mid-session

Once a session agenda is established, you move to the middle phase where the work, of achieving the goals is then done.

You need to involve your client to:

✓ The choices for approaching the specific skill

✓ How much time they want allocated to each task

You are tasked with keeping the session moving, while at the same time ensuring that you are not rushing the session and leaving your client confused and overwhelmed. Similarly, you shouldn't let the session drift aimlessly, often replicating the difficulties the client is facing in the first place. It is very important to have the skills and confidence for moving things on at the appropriate time.

Ultimately it is also your responsibility to session time is allocated productively across the tasks identified. You should avoid making moving on statements if you don't have enough time left to address the next item.

Assessment 9

Assort the following statements into these categories:

A. moving on from a session that is at risk of drifting

B. moving on a session that is at risk of running out of time

- Do you want to take more time and work on this area or are you now ready to move on?

- You are coming with a number of good ideas do you have enough to be going on with or shall we add more

- Was there anything you wanted to add before we end?

- I notice we have to end in about 10 mins, perhaps we should spend some of this time looking at what you might do before our next session?

Ending a mid-session

This is the point in the session where you have to skilfully bring the work you have done to a successful closure. During this phase you will:

- ✓ Review the session (particularly if it has been difficult for your client to stay focused)

- ✓ Highlight the various learning and action points (and write them down if necessary)

- ✓ Negotiate and clarify a between-sessions activity

- ✓ Arrange for the next session

A good structuring statement earlier would help you make a smooth transition to your successful ending.

E.g. STRUCTURING: we will be working on your goal of telling your parents about your moving out in a calm and confident manner. We will practice both your vocal and non vocal communication and work on the timing of this. Towards the end I will get you to make quick reminder notes

ENDING: I notice we have about 10 mins of the session left you have very good ideas and have worked hard on your communication skills, do you want to put together a quick list of reminders of these?

You may at this point also want to:

- ✓ Ask if there is any urgent business they want to raise, or questions to ask

- ✓ Ask them for feedback on their experience

It is ALWAYS important to leave vulnerable 'at risk' clients with emergency contact details and clarify under what circumstances they should contact you.

Assessment 10

Assuming that you have related and understood the situation of your client and assuming that your client has identified a goal, describe how you would conduct a middle session addressing each of the following phases (500):

1. Preparations for the session

2. Starting the session on the day

3. Middle of the session

4. Ending the session

Please briefly introduce your client, your understanding of the problem, the goal that you are working on in this session.