

BASIC LISTENING SEQUENCE AND MULTICULTURAL ISSUES / CONFRONTATION



1. Discuss in detail how the basic listening sequence will play itself out during the five stages of the interview? Please, give an example

The basic listening sequence is one of the most important elements in interviewing for social workers. Ivey, Ivey, Zalaquett and Quirk (2011) describe the basic listening sequence, or BLS, as "the basic structure of the client's story". Social workers are expected to utilize their listening and interviewing skills to ask open and closed questions and encourage clients to be frank and open in their communication with the human service professional. However, every social worker must realize that the BLS will operate in a different manner at each of the five stages of the interview process. The first stage is asking an open or closed question, followed by encouraging and paraphrasing. The final stage is summarization, when the social worker uses his/her listening skills to bring together and summarize everything the client has revealed during the interview. While the first stages of the BLS are intended to set the stage and direction for the interview and encourage the client to speak out the truth about his/her problems, at the final stages BLS serves as a measure of confidence, certainty, and understanding. In other words, the counselor summarizes the essence of the interview to make sure that he/she understands the client's concerns and possesses complete information to develop effective interventions.

For example, for an adopted girl whose foster parents are known to be violent and abusive, the social worker may start with an open-ended question as to how the girl feels in her new family. The purpose of the following stages will be two-fold. First, paraphrasing will help to develop a better understanding of the girl's experiences and give her a sense of being heard. Second, encouragement will be used to facilitate communication with the social worker. As the interview nears its end, the BLS will provide the social worker or counselor with the logic tools needed to summarize the client's problems and use the information delivered by the client to solve these problems quickly.

2. Discuss in detail some of the key multicultural issues in the use of confrontation. Discuss why understanding this information is essential to your work as a human service provider

The use of confrontation frequently occurs in multicultural settings. Therefore, human service providers must always consider the multicultural aspects of confrontation use in social work. Basically, a social worker must anticipate a variety of symptoms, signs, and models of confrontation displayed by multicultural clients. As Ivey writes, with a wide diversity of cultures and backgrounds, the amount of incongruity between the client and the external world also increases. Here, the meaning of "culture" should not be interpreted as a synonym to ethnicity and race. Ivey writes about the so-called violent or criminal culture, which predetermine the behavioral reactions of those clients, who belong to them. It is not uncommon for social workers to confront antisocial and "difficult" clients, who require that the social worker uses a firm and strong

confrontational style. At the same time, when the client displays kindness, patience, tolerance, and willingness to share and solve his problem with the human service provider, the latter will hardly need to apply to aggressive confrontation.

A social worker must understand these issues, as well as be sensitive to the diversity of clients' cultural backgrounds. Social workers are expected to develop individualized approaches to every client. Such approaches require a deeper understanding of each client's uniqueness. If a social worker wants to understand the problem from the client's perspective, being aware of the multicultural issues in the context of confrontation is a must. Social workers must realize that different confrontational styles cannot be universally accepted by all cultures. By choosing the most suitable culturally-sensitive style of confrontation, a social worker will have greater chances to bring the client to the desired state of emotional, spiritual, and social balance.