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| **(#)** | **Client / Counsellor Dialogue** | **Skill** | **Purpose of Skill** | **Effect of skill** |
|  | **FRAME 1: PRESSURE WITH BOYFRIEND** | | | |
| 1 | Hi Alia. It’s great to meet up with you. Previously, you told me that you were dealing with a lot of stress and wanted to discuss that in today’s session. | Overview | Short statement at the beginning of a counseling session that outlines the focus (Hiebert & Jerry, 2002, p. 3). Furthermore, an overview gives the client a sense of what is to be expected in the session (Hiebert, 2001, p. 5) | This helped Alia and I get on the same page right away. |
| 2 | Is that still what you want to talk about today? | Closed question | Purpose to obtain direct information (Hiebert & Jerry, 2002). Also the counsellors in almost all the videos in the assignment video clips asked this question. | By confirming our discussion and the goal of our session, I was creating a working alliance with Alia by agreeing on the goals (Bordin, 1979). |
|  | Yes |  |  |  |
| 3 | So, how are you feeling today? | Open question | To obtain information in an open manner to get the conversation flowing (Hiebert, 2001, p. 8)  Furthermore, open ended questions promote the client to think about aspects of their situation in an unbiased fashion (Hiebert, 2001, p. 8). | This question allowed me to gage how Alia was feeling in general and to see where the conversation could flow. |
|  | Very stressed actually |  |  |  |
| 4 | Tell me more about that please | Declarative Probe | This is a request for more information in a polite way (Hiebert, 2001, p.9). | By getting a deeper sense of how Alia is feeling I can begin to work with her. |
|  | I just feel like there is a lot going on in my life, whether it’s my financial situation, my boyfriend, school, or work. It is just all so much stress and a lot to manage. |  |  |  |
| 5 | So it sounds like you are under a lot of pressure? | Reflecting affect | To understand what the client is feeling and to be on the same wave-length (Hiebert, 2001, p.13) | I am letting Alia know that I understand how she is feeling. This is important because |
|  | Yes, definitely. The pressure is slowly building up on everything, especially with my boyfriend and finances. |  |  |  |
| 6 | Ok. Let’s focus the pressure you feel with your boyfriend first. | Overview | “Preparing her mind” to discuss this topic (Hiebert & Jerry, 2002, p. 3) | Alia told me the two main things she feels pressure within her life and I chose the first one she mentioned to discuss. |
| 7 | Is that OK? | Closed Question | Professionals follow an overview with a closed question to make sure the client is comfortable (Hiebert, 2001, p. 6) | Confirming that this was OK for the first topic to discuss was important for both us of to be on the same page. |
|  | Yeah |  |  |  |
| 8 | Tell me about your boyfriend. | Declarative Probe | To receive elicit information (specifically on her boyfriend) in an open-ended fashion (Hiebert & Jerry, 2002, p. 3) | This allows Alia to control what she wants to tell me about him. |
|  | Well I’ve been with Aadil since January. He’s someone that I love very dearly. He’s caring, thoughtful, and understanding. He’s been recently saying that he thinks I’m the one, and that he has never met anyone like me and that he wants to marry me and it’s only been 6 months and I don’t know what to think. |  |  |  |
| 9 | By your tone of voice it sounds like you think it is too soon to be married. | Reflective meaning | Understanding the message that the client is trying to send (Hiebert, 2001, p. 13)  Asking myself, “What did the client mean by that?” (Hiebert, 2001, p. 13) |  |
|  | Yes I love him but it is way too soon to be thinking about marriage. But coming from a Pakistani background quick marriages are very common. |  |  |  |
| 10 | Elaborate a bit please | Declarative Probe | Request for more information (Hierbert, 2001, p.9) | This probe allowed me to learn more which will allow me to build a therapeutic alliance to fully understand how she is feeling and also thinking. |
|  | Well you date for a couple of months and then all of a sudden you are married. That’s just how it goes. That’s what my parents did and what my cousins did and what my siblings will do. It’s what you do in my culture. |  |  |  |
| 11 | So what I’m hearing is that you’re not aligning with your cultures’ values on marriage. | Paraphrasing verbal content | Paraphrasing allows clients to know that you are listening to them and that you are paying attention (Hiebert, 2001, p. 16). Furthermore, paraphrasing allows you to get the gist of what the client has said (Kuntze, van der Molen, & Born, 2009, p.176). | Paraphrasing allows Alia to know that I am attending to her and as Hierbert (2001) stated, “with them” in this process, p. 15) |
|  | Yeah definitely. One of the reasons why I started to date him was because I felt like our time lines match for accomplishing our goals in our lives. There is no rush to get married. But now all of a sudden he is saying that he wants to get married soon. |  |  |  |
| 12 | How does that make you feel? | Open question | To leave the nature of the conversation open to the client (Hiebert, 2001, p.8) | This allowed me to gain a further understanding of how marriage is influenced in her culture and how she feels about marriage to Aadil in general. |
|  | Anxious and really stressed because I feel like I need to finish school, start my new career hopefully as a counsellor, and most importantly to make sure that my parents are financially ok. I’m just not ready to pay for a wedding and pay off school all at the same time. I don’t want to end things with him. I just feel like things are going too fast. |  |  |  |
| 13 | Tell me about how you could manage the stress you feel regarding how fast this relationship is moving for you? | Declarative Probe |  | At this point I know Alia really stressed and is under a lot of pressure and I want to her “see the light” so to speak about how she could deal with this pressure instead of getting her feeling and maybe relationship get worse down the road. |
|  | Well I really should just talk to him. I know I should. I want to tell him things are going too fast and I want to go back to the pace where we were a couple months ago. I know I need to share my feelings with him. |  |  |  |
| 14 | Tell me how you think he would react if you told him how you were feeling? | Declarative Probe |  | I am hoping to gain a sense of how Alia will talk to him, what she would say, and if this can realize some of the pressure she feels. This allows Alia to know that I am trying to help her relieve some pressure. |
|  | I think he would actually be fine with me telling him. It is just scary to think about but really when I think about it, he is so understanding and loving and cares about me so much. I think I just need to talk to him. |  |  |  |
| 15 | So what we have discussed is the pressure you feel with your boyfriend because you have only been together 6 months and he is already saying he wants to marry you but in your heart the right thing to do is talk to him and ask him if you two can slow down and still continue to date. | Summarizing | Summarizing helps capture the bottom line meanings that the client has expressed and serve as a wrap up of a particular portion of the session (Hiebert & Jerry, 2002, p. 3). | This helps Alia recall the main points from our conversation regarding her boyfriend and how she will move forward with this issue. |
|  | Yeah definitely. |  |  |  |
|  | **FRAME 2: PRESSURE WITH FAMILY FINANCES** | | | |
| 16 | Now you had mentioned at the beginning of our session that you also felt a lot of pressure with your finances. I would like to take some time and discuss this as well. | Transition | Transitions are ways to signal a change in topic within the session (Hiebert, 2001, p.8) | This skill reduces any confusion to Alia of where the conversation is now headed. |
| 17 | Is that OK with you? | Closed Question |  | Confirming that this was OK to discuss the next topic is important for both us of to be on the same page. |
|  | Yeah |  |  |  |
| 18 | Tell me about some of the financial stress and pressures you have been dealing with lately? | Declarative Probe |  | Alia told me the two main things she feels pressure within her life and now we will discuss the second one with is her financial stress. |
|  | Well I’ve been supporting my family financially for almost a year now. I live at home and my dad was laid off from work and my mom had left her job due to a grandparent being sick. Both of them have not been able to find work even though they have tried very hard. |  |  |  |
| 19 | It seems like your family really relies on you. | Reflecting meaning |  | This skill allows me to understand and confirm the question, “What does the client mean?” (Hiebert, 2001, p.13) |
|  | Yes they do. It’s very a frustrating situation because I’m working full time and in school. And what is even more frustrating is that my job as an educational assistant does not pay much. So I am supporting a household with very little income. |  |  |  |
| 20 | It sounds like you feel very overwhelmed with this amount of responsibility. | Reflecting affect |  | This skill allows me and Alia to further our bond by Alia knowing I feel empathic with her and shows her I understand how she feels. |
|  | Yes I feel very overwhelmed and very conflicted because both my parents had very hard jobs. My dad worked for an automotive junk yard, his job was very labour intensive and no matter the weather outside he was always on the job for 6 days a week. My mom had worked in retail the majority of her life. She also found that very exhausting and labour intensive. I feel like because they worked so hard so far us I should work hard for them. |  |  |  |
| 21 | Your parents worked hard their whole lives to give you a good start in life and now you want to give back to them. | Paraphrasing verbal content |  | This effectively allowed me to provide minimal feedback as Hierbert (2001) states, “Not day dreaming) p. 16 |
|  | Yeah. I feel like it is time for me to give back. They are so good to me and I just want them to be OK but it’s just hard. |  |  |  |
| 22 | Tell me more. | Declarative Probe |  | This probe helped me understand what exactly is “hard”. |
|  | Well it’s hard because a part of me does not want them to go back to work because they have worked their whole lives and they are old now but the other part is saying that they should. |  |  |  |
| 23 | Elaborate a bit please. | Declarative Probe |  | This probe helped me gain further insight into Alia’s internal conflict. I hope that her elaboration allowed her to explore both sides of her feelings regarding her parents going back to work. |
|  | Well I don’t want them to go back to work because they are old, they have worked so far their whole lives, and they have sacrificed so much for my siblings and I. I worry about them and how old they are getting. It scares me and I just want them to be safe and not have to work at another labour intensive job again. Then the other part of me wants them to work because then it would relief some of my stress. If they both worked I could finally start saving money to pay off my loan, save for future expenses and travel. I want to travel so badly and I have this dream of traveling once school is done but how I am ever supposed to do that. It feels like I can’t move on with my life. My whole paycheck goes to supporting my family and the household. Then I go back and think I shouldn’t be selfish and that it’s time for me to give back and as the oldest I should be helping the most. |  |  |  |
| 24 | It seems like you feel very conflicted on whether or not your parents should work again. | Reflecting affect |  | This skill was used to show Alia that I am truly listening to her and that I am on the same wave-length as I reflect her feelings back to her. |
|  | Yeah maybe middle ground would be if they worked part-time somewhere but they have been trying for almost year as I said to get a job and nothing is happening so far. |  |  |  |
| 25 | What would be the best case scenario you could think of with your parents working and financial situation? | Open question |  | The skill was used for further questioning because Alia is so conflicting – always going back and forth if whether or not she thinks her parents should work. I wanted to ask her to obtain more information in an unbiased fashion and to promote thinking. |
|  | Well..ughh… I think the best case would really be if they got easier jobs that worked as much work on them, maybe something where they can sit at a desk and where they don’t have to be on their feet all day. Just something enough so that they could support themselves. This would really be best case because what makes me even more stressed and sad about this situation is that my younger brother was fresh out of graduating from University when my mom left her job and my dad lost his. He also lives at home and he has been helping me with the burden of running a household. I guess I just feel guilty about that. |  |  |  |
| 26 | Explain please. | Declarative Probe |  | This probe was used to understand more about the guilt she mentioned. I did not want to just have that slide. |
|  | I feel guilty because when I was in University in Toronto I felt pretty care free. I mean I still got student loans but I was out with my friends, going out, really living the typical University student life. I really never thought about my parents finances then. I just feel like he has not been able to live his early 20’s with a carefree attitude that someone his age should feel. |  |  |  |
| 27 | So you have really felt the pressure to financially support your family because your mom left her job and your dad lost his and you feel as the oldest sibling you should help the most. | Summarizing |  | This summary was used as a review to serve as a wrap to this portion of the session. |
|  | **FRAME 3: FEELINGS OF GUILT** | | | |
|  | Yeah. I just feel like that is my responsibility and I just feel this sense of guilt. |  |  |  |
| 28 | Tell me more. | Declarative Probe |  | This probe was used to get an idea of what kind of guilt she was feeling. |
|  | I feel guilty that my younger siblings both will have to worry about my parents finances at such a young age. It is not something they should have to worry about. |  |  |  |
| 29 | It seems like you want to protect them from this burden. | Reflecting meaning |  | This allowed Alia to know that I understand the message she is trying to tell me about the worry she feels. |
|  | Yeah. I don’t want them to feel this pressure. They are still young and shouldn’t have to worry about my parents finances. I just feel guilty in a sense that I should be doing more or tutoring more after school but with my own school it is so much work and time consuming that I don’t have time after work to tutor anymore. |  |  |  |
| 30 | You feel guilty for not doing more | Reflective affect | Purpose is to show an understanding for the more emotional aspects of the client’s story (Kuntze, van der Molen, & Born, 2009, p.176). | This skill allows me to confirm that I understand how she feels and that I can empathize and not just nodding along. |
|  | Yeah. It just never seems like enough. Sometimes I feel guilty that I decided to go back to school. It costs a lot and it time consuming and just so busy. I know deep down I should worry about my own finances first and do what’s right for me but I feel like it’s my responsibility to take care of and family and family is what is most important. I also feel like if I did get married within a year or two, how would my parents support themselves? I have dreamt of a beautiful wedding one day and maybe to Aadil and if I am ready within a year or two, what if my parents both aren’t working? I would feel so guilty if I left them and then my two younger siblings would take on this burden. |  |  |  |
| 31 | Have you communicated these feelings of guilt or the pressure you feel with anyone? | Closed question |  | This skill allowed to me know if Alia was talking to anyone else besides me because I could tell she feels very stressed and I think talking about how she feels is really important for her mental health. |
|  | No… not really. |  |  |  |
| 32 | Explain. | Declarative Probe |  | I am hoping this allows Alia to gage why she hasn’t opened up to anyone and explore any other feelings she might have. |
|  | Well I don’t want to worry my parents and I know they are stressed already but I should tell Aadil more things about my family’s financial situation and also that I need to slow things down. I have told you now Kelly and that is good to release some of the pressure I feel and to really think about it. |  |  |  |
| 33 | OK Alia. Today we discussed the pressure you have felt with your boyfriend somewhat moving too fast in the relationship, the stress and pressure you feel financial by really being the head of the household by financially caring for your parents, and the guilt you feel because now your younger siblings are taking on this pressure as well and you feel like you need to start your own life by saving for your own future. Thank you for allowing me to talk with you today. | Summarizing | The counsellor structures what clients have said by ordering the main points in their story (Kuntze, van der Molen, & Born, 2009, p.177). | The purpose of the summary here was that it was the end of our session and to encapsulate the ideas, beliefs, and meanings that Alia shared with me. I thanked her for her time as I was very grateful to her and for this opportunity. |

**Positive Skills**

Reflecting on my work and this counseling session, one thing I think I did well was develop a strong therapeutic alliance with Alia. Castongauy & Constanino (2006) argue that the client/counselor relationship matters and to develop a successful alliance it needs to consist of therapist empathy, positive regard, and congruence. Furthermore, counselors should strive to monitor and maintain a positive bond and a strong level of collaboration (Castongauy, Constanino, & Holtforth, 2006). I believe that Alia and I developed a positive bond as the conversation flowed naturally and I was very empathic to her struggles, was never negative or disrespectful during our session. Finally, one important aspect that we developed was a basic level of trust. Bordin (1979) states that trust marks the therapeutic relationship towards and increases a deeper bond between the client and counselor. I think that Alia trusted me because she really opened up to me and told me some very personal and private issues.

Another thing I did well during this counseling session was the use of the skill taxonomy developed by Hiebert (2001). I used all of the skills that I had learned throughout the course and the first three assignments. I also tried to mix up when I used each skill, for example, if I used an open-ended question, I would try to use a different skill after and not use the same one over and over. I remained attentive and engaged throughout this session with Alia. Hiebert (2001) argues that the skill taxonomy is a system used to help promote meaningful communication. I believe that I implemented these skills very well and Alia felt comfortable with how I executed them as she always opened up to me with every question I asked her. This strong working alliance developed with Alia encouraged self-exploration and disclosure of pertinent information.

**Skills to do differently**

One skill I need to work on and perhaps could have used differently in this session was my use of declarative probes. Hiebert (2001) argues that some professionals feel that declarative probes can sound harsh, and I definitely felt this way as well. In this sense, if I felt harsh asking for more clarification, saying such as, Elaborate, so I would add please at the end to make the request more polite. I tried to somewhat use the same style of declarative probes as I saw on all the videos during this course. I felt nervous and sometimes awkward using declaratives probes so I need to work on the flow of my conversation and my confidence in these skills. One way I can work on this skill is practice more and really continuing to learn more about when is an appropriate time to use probes versus open ended questions.

One skill I need work on and become more confident with, especially if I want to be a competent counselor and build an alliance with my client is using multicultural counseling skills. I felt nervous at times during our session as Alia is from Pakistan and I thought her struggles and pressure regarding family and her boyfriend related a lot to her cultural values and ideals. I didn’t dig too keep into learning more about Pakistani culture as I didn’t want to offend her if I asked a particular question. Avoiding intimate cultural aspects of a person’s identity will not enhance the counseling experience and can potentially hinder it (Sue & Sue, 2015). I need to work on the skills to become a culturally competent counselor and always work my hardest to build a trusting alliance. I can do this by using the tripartite framework used in Sue & Sue (2015) as this is a framework for understanding the multiple dimensions of identity which include the individual, group, and the universal level.

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