

# CONVEYING EMPATHY & AUTHENTICITY VERBAL FOLLOWING, EXPLORING, & FOCUSING SKILLS COMMUNICATION SKILLS

LAB DAY



# WEEK SIX PLAN

## AGENDA

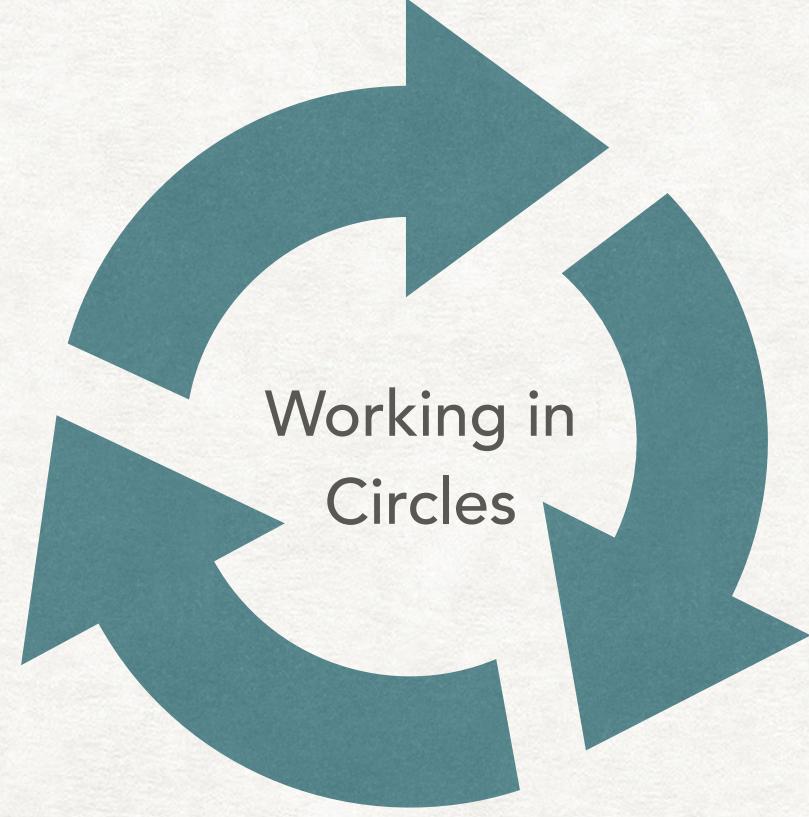
- Check in about learning so far
- Teaching empathy to clients
- Following skills and practice implementing them
- Sharing following skills

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Reflect on personal experiences with empathic communication
- Develop strategies for teaching empathy to clients in diverse practice settings
- Apply verbal following skills in a dynamic practice exercise
- Deeping your connection with the skills associated with following skills

# WHAT WE HAVE BEEN LEARNING

## CHECKING IN



Respect the talking piece

Speak from the heart

Listen from the heart

Trust that you know what to say

Say just enough

(Clifford, 2013)

- What are some things that you feel like you can take away from this class so far?
- What are ways that you are implementing or incorporating things you have been learning in any of your classes into your life?
- What do you need to be a better social worker as you progress through your education?

# OBSERVATION YOUR CONVERSATIONS LAST WEEK

WHAT  
HAPPENED?

- A. As you interact with others and observe others' interactions during the week, notice how frequently infrequently people send empathic messages. Also, observe the types of messages that are sent and how these messages influence the course of conversations.
- B. As you interact with your spouse, parents, children, friends, and fellow students, practice listening carefully and responding with empathic messages when appropriate. Be alert to how empathic messages influence interactions and to the feeling tones that these responses create.



# PRACTICE WITH EMPATHIC COMMUNICATION

- Single woman, age 80 [to social worker concerning her request to move to an independent living complex provided for ambulatory older persons]:
- Goodness, the more I think of moving, the more scared I get. I have neighbors here who look after me, and I won't know a soul there. I'm afraid I'll be all alone.

# PRACTICE WITH EMPATHIC COMMUNICATION

- Male, age 16 [in weekly visit to social work probation officer]:
- I don't see the sense in having to come here every (expletive) week. I haven't been in any trouble now since I went to court a month ago. You should know by now you can trust me."

# TEACHING EMPATHY

## HOW TO SHARE WITH CLIENTS

- Teach clients the paradigm for empathic responding.
- Introduce clients to the list of affective words and phrases and to the Leads for Empathic Responses list.
- Intervene in sessions when clients ignore or fail to validate messages.
- Give positive feedback when clients listen to each other.



Photo by [Paulina Milde-Jachowska](#) on [Unsplash](#)

Work in teams of three or four to design a planned intervention for teaching empathy. What population would you work with? How would you teach them empathy? What would some of the sessions look like? You will have approximately 15 minutes to generate ideas, and then you will share them with the group.



Photo by [Paulina Milde-Jachowska](#) on [Unsplash](#)

# FOLLOWING SKILLS

FURTHERING RESPONSES

REFLECTION RESPONSES

CLOSED-ENDED RESPONSES

OPEN-ENDED RESPONSES

PROVIDING & MAINTAINING FOCUS

SUMMARIZING

SEEKING CONCRETENESS



# FOLLOWING SKILLS FURTHERING RESPONSES



- Nonverbal minimal prompts
- Verbal minimal prompts
- Accent responses

# FOLLOWING SKILLS

## REFLECTION RESPONSES



### REFLECTION OF CONTENT

emphasize the cognitive aspects of client messages, such as situations, ideas, objects, or persons

### REFLECTION OF AFFECT

In reflections of affect, social workers relate with responses that accurately capture clients' affect and help them reflect on and sort through their feelings

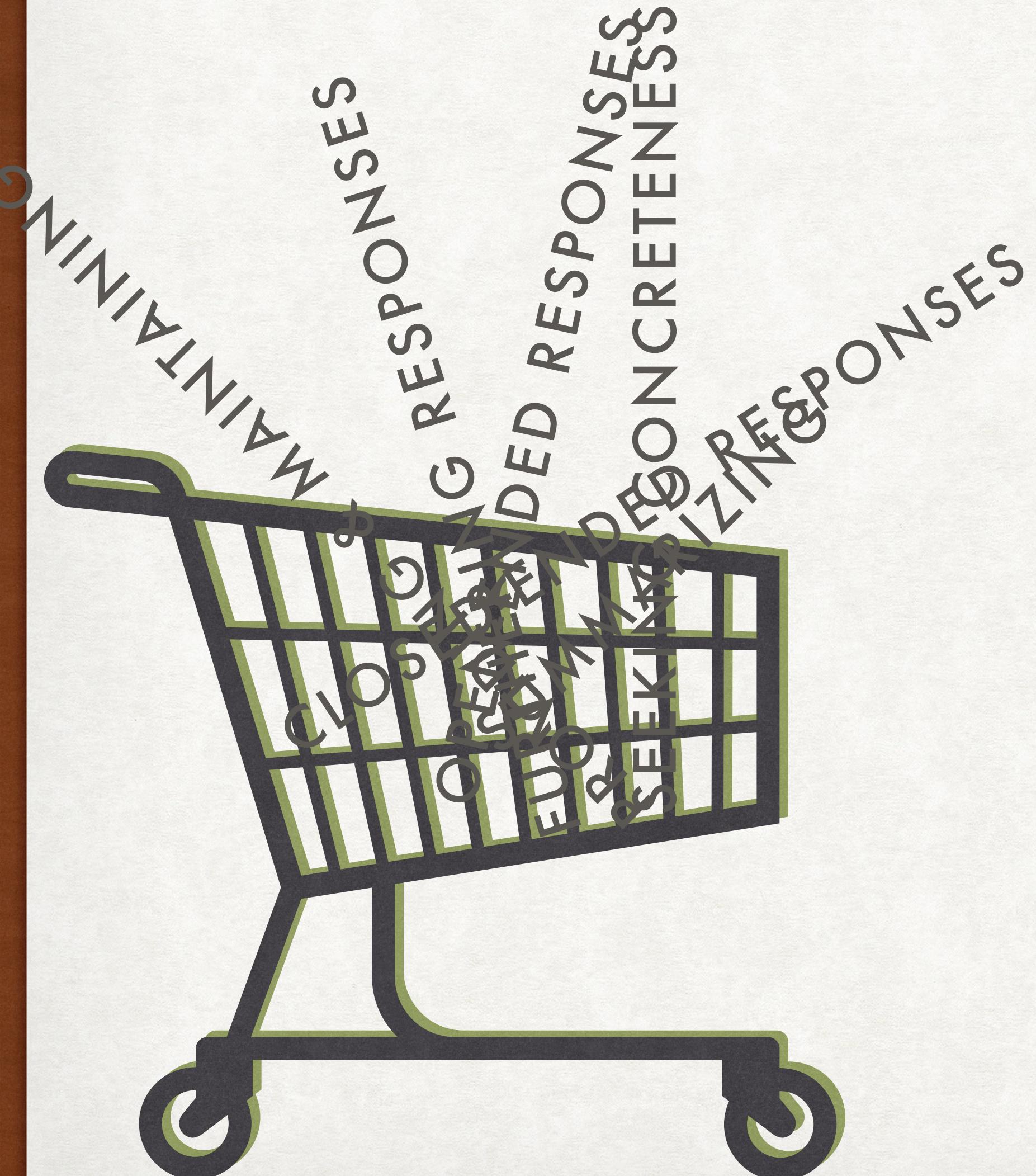
## I am Home



From LaGravenese, R. (2007, January 5). *Freedom Writers* [Drama]. Paramount Pictures.

# FOLLOWING SKILLS

## REFLECTION RESPONSES



REFLECTION OF CONTENT

REFLECTION OF AFFECT

**Simple Reflections:** which identify the emotions expressed by the client, are carried over from nondirective, client-centered counseling

**Complex Reflections:** go beyond what the client has directly stated or implied, adding substantial meaning or emphasis to convey a more complex picture

**Reframing:** is another form of adding content. Here, the social worker puts the client's response in a different light beyond what the client had considered

# FOLLOWING SKILLS

## CLOSED-ENDED RESPONSES



# FOLLOWING SKILLS

## OPEN-ENDED RESPONSES



Invite expanded expression and leave the client free to express what seems most relevant and important.

# FOLLOWING SKILLS PROVIDING & MAINTAINING FOCUS



1. Selecting topics for exploration
2. Exploring topics in depth
3. Managing obstacles to focusing

# FOLLOWING SKILLS

## SUMMARIZING



1. Highlighting key aspects
2. Making connections
3. Reviewing major focal points
4. Recapitulating highlights and progress

# FOLLOWING SKILLS

## SEEKING CONCRETENESS



- Checking out Perceptions
- Clarifying the Meaning of Vague or Unfamiliar Terms
- Exploring the Basis of Conclusions Drawn by Clients
- Assisting Clients in Personalizing Their Statements

# FOLLOWING SKILLS

## SEEKING CONCRETENESS



- Eliciting Specific Feelings
- Focusing on the Here and Now
- Eliciting Details Related to Clients' Experiences
- Eliciting Details Related to Interactional Behavior

# FOLLOWING SKILLS

FURTHERING RESPONSES

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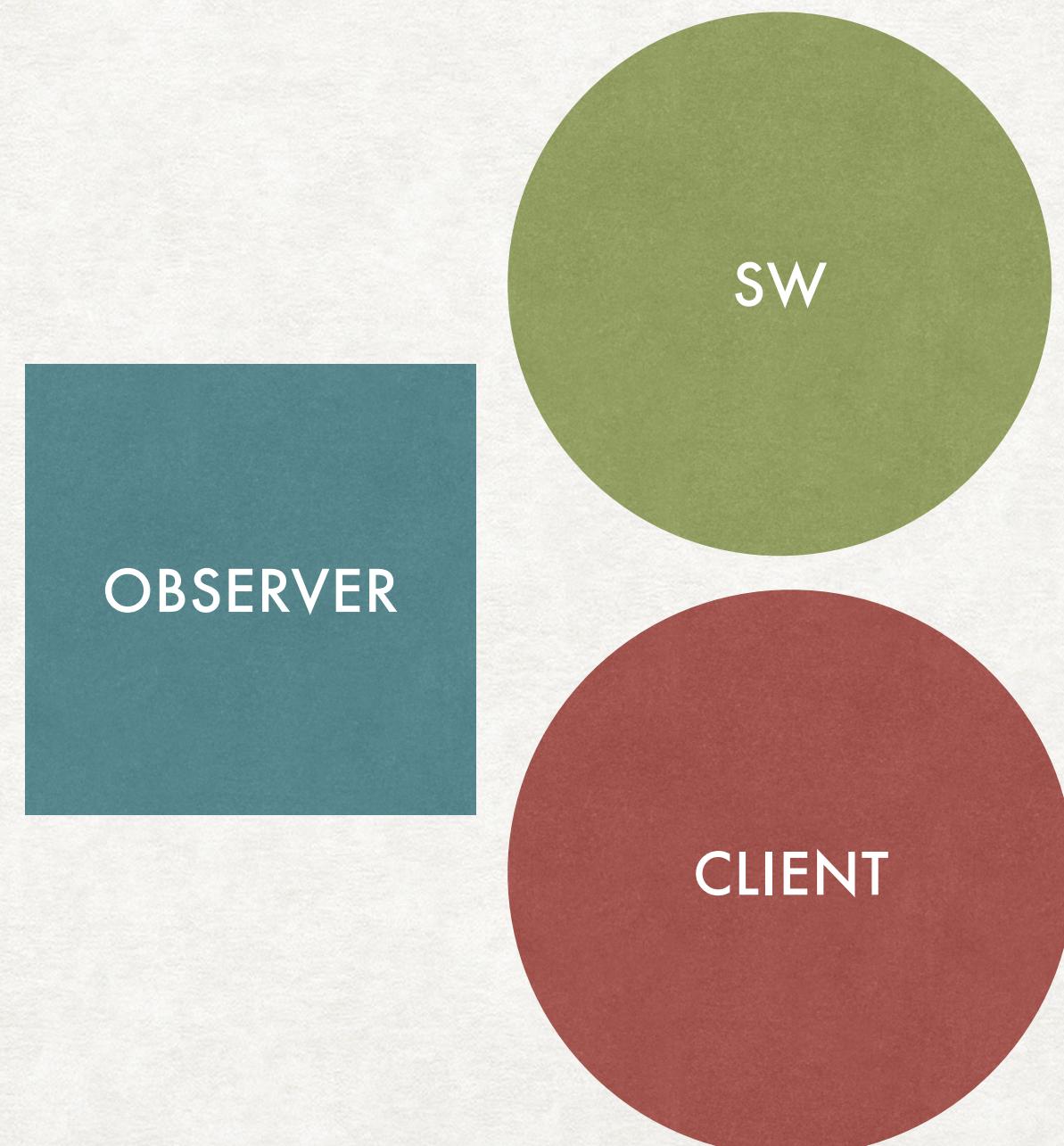
# FOLLOWING SKILLS & INITIAL INTERVIEW

Activity	✓	Comments
Explores what brings client in for contact		
Explains client rights		
Briefly explains agency function		
Paraphrases		
Uses minimal prompts		
Uses accent		
Uses open-ended response		
Uses closed-ended response		
Focuses		
Seeks concreteness		
Summarizes		

BEFORE

Brainstorm what potential information you would want to know about for this scenario, or what are some common experiences for people in this situation

DEBRIEF AFTER



- How did it feel as the interviewer to use the techniques?
- How did it feel as the interviewee?
- What did the observer notice?  
Share feedback from form

You are a BASW student and have been referred to meet with your field practicum placement adviser to help determine what practicum placement you will be going into next year.

# DEMONSTRATION

# ROLE PLAY SESSION 1

You are a freshman college student. You went to a student health clinic because you were having difficulty sleeping and were experiencing anxiety. They have referred you to the counseling clinic for an assessment. You are anxious about this referral, wondering if it means that you are going crazy. You are homesick and miss the people back home. You sometimes wonder if you are ready for this. You have begun to drink with people in the dorm; it makes you feel less lonely.

Before  
Interview  
After

OBSERVER



# ROLE PLAY SESSION 2

You were referred to domestic violence services by a friend who is concerned about the behaviors that your significant other has been engaging in and is hoping that you will seek further help. You feel conflicted, acknowledging that there is some violence, but feel that marriage is sacred, that you should be loyal, and that things will just work out.

Before  
Interview  
After

OBSERVER



# ROLE PLAY SESSION 3

You have been homeless for the last few months after a relationship ended. You have been couch surfing and staying with various friends. You are seeing a therapist and they referred you to case manager to help find options around housing and to practice working on some coping skills.

Before  
Interview  
After

OBSERVER



# TEACHING THESE SKILLS



## FOLLOWING SKILLS

FURTHERING RESPONSES  
REFLECTION RESPONSES  
CLOSED-ENDED RESPONSES  
OPEN-ENDED RESPONSES  
PROVIDING & MAINTAINING FOCUS  
SUMMARIZING  
SEEKING CONCRETENESS