2010 Web Seminar Series

Clinical Interviewing Guidelines

Presented by: Gloria M. Miele, Ph.D.
Training Director
Greater New York Node

Produced by Liz Buttrey, NIDA CTN CCC Training Office

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Training Outline & Goal

- Outline
  - Building rapport
  - Maintaining confidentiality
  - Ensuring interviewer and participant safety
  - Interviewing techniques for different types of interviews
    - Structured
    - Semi-structured
    - In depth interviews
- Our Goal
  - Promote good clinical interviewing practices that facilitate the collection of reliable and valid research data

Poll!

Hot Topics

Sex

Drugs

Money

Abuse

Drinking

Relationship Problems

Building Rapport

- Friendly
- Unbiased
- Good listening skills
- Empathic

The Interviewer's Attitude

- Warm
- Personable
- Professional
- Open
- Supportive

Introducing the Interview

- “Set the tone” with an introduction
  - Explain the purpose of the interview
  - Emphasize the value of the respondent's participation
  - Address interview-specific issues

Know Your Biases

- Self-awareness is key
- Understand your reactions and assumptions
- Limit self-disclosure
  - Participants like to please, so your attitudes can influence their responses

Word Association

- Addiction
- Heroin
- AIDS

Avoiding Bias

- Ask open-ended questions
- Ask follow-up questions using the participant's own words
- Remain neutral
  - verbal and non-verbal
- Avoid "leading" questions
  - "Don't you think that was excessive?"

Poll!

The reason why we have two ears and only one mouth is that we may listen the more and talk the less

Zeno (300 BC)

Effective Listening

- Listening is an active process
- Ask yourself these questions as the participant responds:
  - Is it clear what that means?
  - Is that really relevant to the question?
  - Is the answer complete?
  - What does that tone of voice mean?
  - Should I interrupt to probe or should I wait?

Listening

- Do not assume answers or understanding
  - “Just a little…”
- Code a respondent’s answer only if it meets the intent of the question
- Listening carefully to respondent’s answers is equally important as reading questions as they appear
- Remember information the respondent volunteers that is relevant to subsequent questions

Empathy

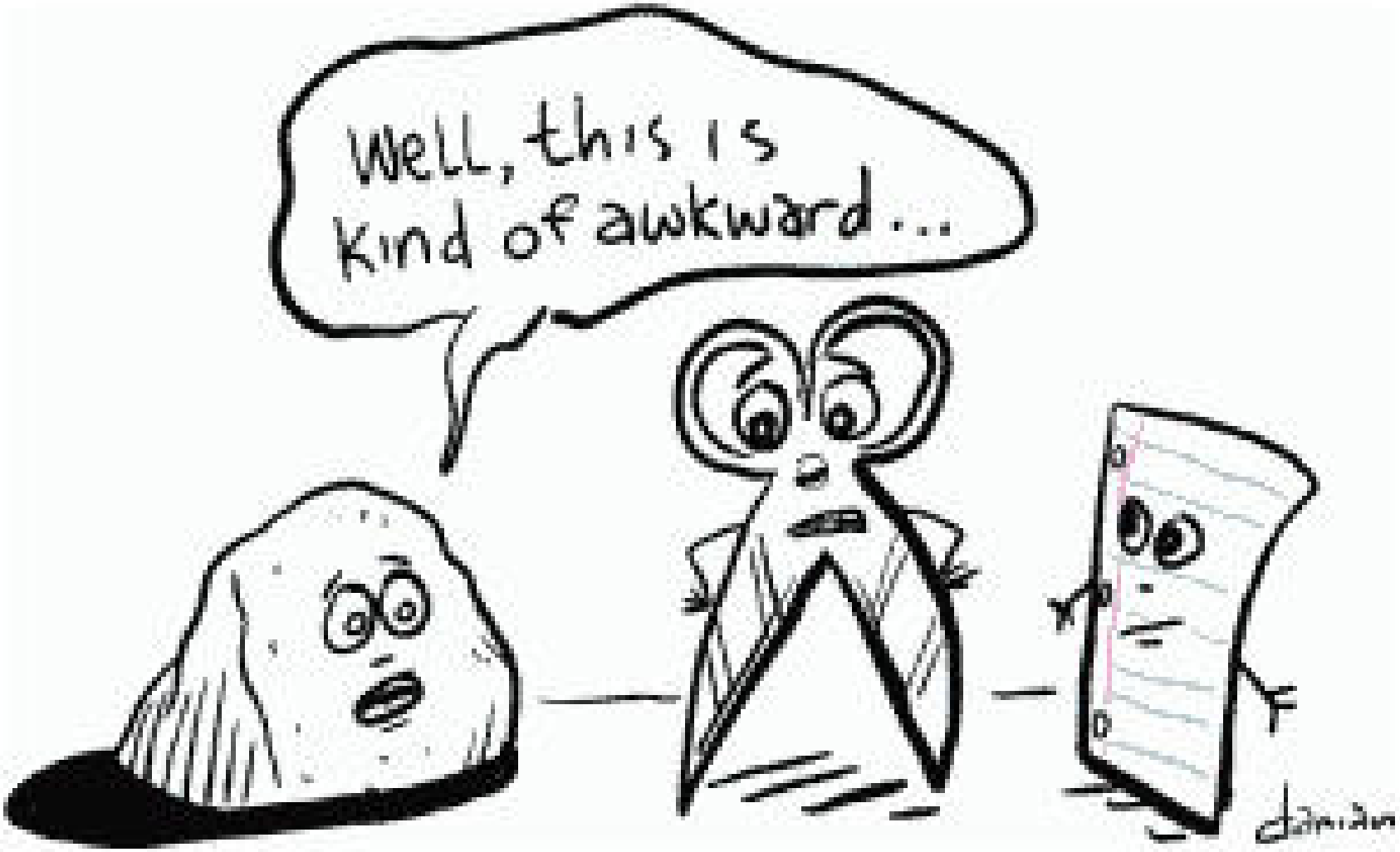
"The intellectual identification with or vicarious experiencing of the feelings, thoughts or attitudes of another"

Improving Empathy

- Use participant's language
  - "When you were 'freaking out,' what exactly was going on?
- Use non-verbal cues
  - Body language
  - Eye contact

Maintaining Boundaries

- Know your role
  - Interviewer vs. Clinician
- Listen empathically then redirect conversation
- Encourage participant to discuss clinical issues with counselor


Well, this is kind of awkward...

That's Awkward….

- "Do you have a boyfriend?"
- "Are you in recovery?"
- "How much longer is this going to take?"
- "Do you want to meet for coffee later?"

Participant Boundaries: Dealing With No

- Uncomfortable with question
- Feels overwhelmed
- Prefers not to answer
- Wants to discontinue participation in study

Strategies to Continue Participant Engagement

- Be understanding, respectful, empathic
- Normalize response
- Determine problem and provide possible solutions
- Get partial data if necessary
- Get permission to contact at a later date
  - Be specific

CONFIDENTIALITY

Protecting Confidentiality

- Separate names from research data
- Clear desk
- Store files in locked cabinets
- Good phone habits
- Protect confidentiality wherever you are
  - Elevator, hallways, open office door

Address Confidentiality Before Interview

- Remind participants that their answers are confidential
- Remind participants of the voluntary nature of the interview, and assure them that they can refuse to answer any question

Exceptions to Confidentiality

- Harm to self
- Harm to others
  - Homicidal ideation
  - Elder abuse
  - Child abuse

Know Your Local SOPs

Be prepared

INTERVIEWER AND PARTICIPANT SAFETY

Interviewer Safety: On Site

- Situate office so you sit nearest the door
- Make sure others are on-site and know you are conducting an interview
- Be aware of participant body language
- Be prepared to end an interview
- Listen to your instincts!!

Interviewer Safety: Off Site

- Do off-site interviews with another staff member when possible
- Meet in public place
- Make sure staff knows where you are
- Check in before and after interview
- Carry cell phone, identification, all necessary materials

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Participant Safety

- Participants can become emotionally distraught, agitated, angry
- Talk to participant's clinician
- Ensure the participant is safe and does not leave clinic until you have made a plan for follow-up or possible reporting
- Know your local SOPs

STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

Fully Structured Interviews

- Read questions as written
- Follow instructions
- Know intent of questions
- Use only neutral probes to elicit further information
- Designed to ensure consistent administration

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Asking the Questions

- Rule 1: Ask the questions exactly as they are written
  - Make grammatical changes as necessary
  - Long questions may be broken into a series of shorter questions to ensure respondent understanding

Asking the Questions

- Rule 2: Verify information volunteered by the respondent
  - Confirm information volunteered previously
  - “You told me before that…but I still need to ask the question as written”

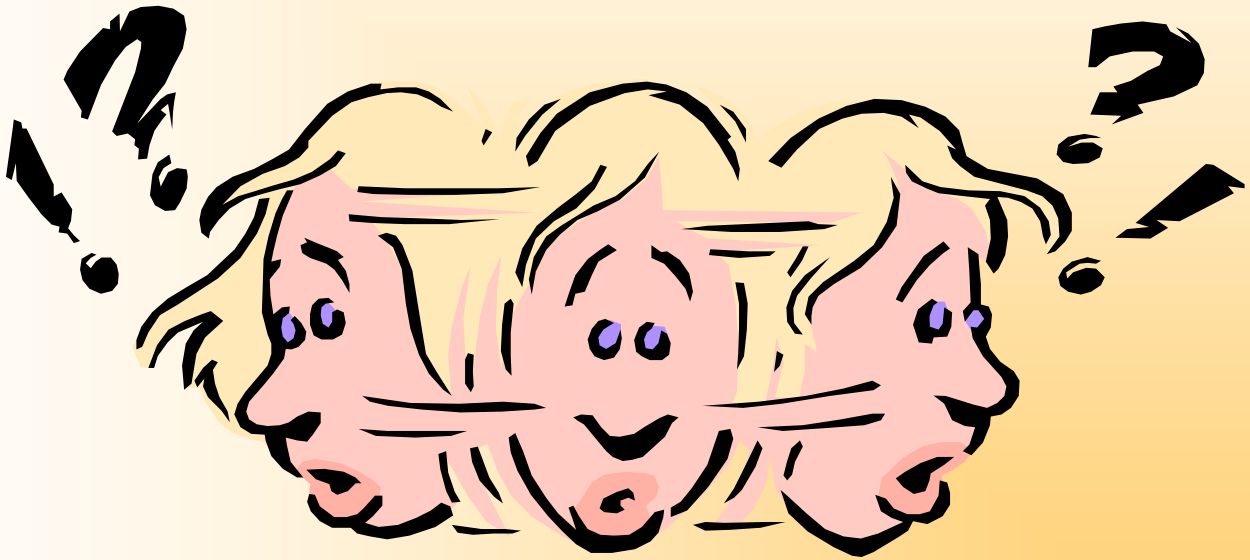
Asking the Questions

- Rule 3: Read the entire question
- Rule 4: Use the skip instructions
- Rule 5: Emphasize key words

Asking the Questions

- Rule 6: Use lead-in statements
- Rule 7: Use interview cards
- Rule 8: Read questions slowly

WHAT IF THEY DON'T UNDERSTAND THE QUESTION?



Clarification

- Repeat the question exactly as written
  - OK to only repeat a specific part
  - Emphasize any words that will help clarify
  - If repeating response options, repeat them *all*

- Do not rephrase question
  - Use neutral introductions to the repeat
  - Instruct respondent to use their own definitions

    "Whatever _____ means to you"

MAKE SURE YOU UNDERSTAND THEIR ANSWERS!

What If the Participant Has Already Answered the Question in an Earlier Response?

- Verify information volunteered by Participant
  - Confirm the response
    - "You told me before that ... Is that correct?"
  - Ask questions with a preface
    - "You told me before that ... but I still need to ask you this question as it is written."

Probing

- When to probe?
  - Don’t know
    - If a symptom question, code as “no”
  - Discrepancy
- Use only neutral probes

Neutral Probes on the CIDI

- [WM] "Can you tell me what you mean by that?"
- [TM] "Can you tell me more about that?"
- [WT] "What do you think?"
- [WC] "Which would be closer?"
- [BE] "What is your best estimate?"
- [AO] "Can you tell me any others?"
- [MS] "Can you be more specific?"

Feedback

- Used to reinforce attentive behavior
- Used to reinforce motivation for continuing interview
- Silence can be a form of feedback
- Can be long, short, or task-related

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

Semi-Structured Interviews Commonly Used in the CTN

- ASI
- TLFB
- DSM-IV Checklist
- RBS

"Structure" of Semi-Structured Interviews

- Initial, "base" questions
  - Read as written
- Suggested follow-up probes to clarify participant responses usually appear in parentheses
- Types of data
  - How troubled or bothered were you?
  - How many drinks?

From the ASI Manual….

The interviewer is responsible for the integrity of the information collected and must be willing to repeat, paraphrase and probe until…satisfied that the patient understands the question and that the answer reflects the best judgment of the patient, consistent with the intent of the question.

Question's Intent

- What is the criterion being assessed?
- What problem is being evaluated?
- What scale is being used?

The Follow-Up Probe

- Essential in ensuring all data are captured that reflect the intent of the question
- Can be non-verbal or verbal; long or short
- Use neutral probes as listed above and more specific probes to elicit information needed for reliable and valid coding

Common errors in probing

- Failure to recognize the need to probe
- Probing too much (interrupting the interviewee's train of thought)
- Asking leading questions
  - Nonverbally
  - Verbally

QUALITATIVE INTERVIEWS

Features of a Qualitative Interview

- Semi-structured
  - Includes initial probes for standardization
- Designed to collect more in depth, individualized attitudes and responses
- Helps to understand quantitative results

A Good Interview is Like a Conversation

- Be familiar and comfortable with the questions
- Allow for long responses
- Allow for pauses and reflections without rushing in with another question
- Refrain from giving advice or making judgments
- Refrain from ‘inserting yourself’ extensively into the interview, drawing attention away from the participant

Silence is Golden

- Allow for pauses and breaks in the interview
- Avoid interrupting the participant
- Let the interviewee reflect upon and think about the question
- Some people need more time to process

Examples of Follow-Up Probes for Qualitative Interviews

- Can you tell me more about that?
- What else would you change?
- Can you be more specific?
- Anything else?
- You said you didn't like it. Could you give me a specific example of what you didn't like?

Avoid Asking WHY

- Implies there is a reason or cause for everything and this it is ‘knowable’ for the interviewee
- Motives are complex and involve many factors
- Can communicate that the interviewer doesn't believe or is questioning the interviewee’s reasoning

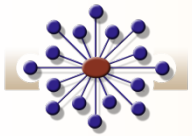
What's the Follow-up Probe?

- It was boring.
- I liked it.
- I don't know.

NEXT STEPS

What Are the Best Ways to Sharpen Your Skills?

- Practice!
- Role-play interviews and procedures
- Get supervision
- Do reliability checks
- Ask questions



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