

Elements of a Successful Therapeutic Relationship

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Establishing a strong therapeutic relationship is a powerful indicator of successful treatment outcomes (Deangelis, 2019). For this reason, counselors should ensure that they do everything possible to strengthen this relationship. In this paper, I will discuss my role as a clinical mental health counselor at an agency, how to instill leadership and advocacy within my professional identity, counseling dispositions and skills that were displayed in my mock sessions, my personal approach to counseling, as well as how I will use supervision in my internships and practicum.

My Role as a Clinical Mental Health Counselor

I anticipate working as a counselor in a behavioral health agency. My role as a counselor in this setting would be to conduct assessments with clients and use practices that are supported by research while applying the counseling theories that I resonate with most to deliver the most effective form of therapy for my clients. It is important to tailor the research to the needs of each client (Egan & Reese, 2019). I would also work with other care providers such as case managers, rehabilitation specialists, psychiatrists, and potentially other medical providers of my client.

When collaborating with other care professionals, it is imperative to respect the knowledge and skills each provider brings to the team because all of our skillsets are equally as valuable and can enhance the quality of life for our clients in different ways. Honoring the different perspectives that each member of the team provides can be shown through clear communication and thorough documentation. I aspire to be a trauma counselor, so obtaining licensure in clinical mental health counseling with an emphasis in trauma shows that I have the adequate skills and knowledge to provide counseling to clients who want to cope with their traumatic experiences. Some aspects of my professional identity are to act with empathy while advocating for justice for my clients. By

obtaining licensure, it shows that I have worked hard to learn how to provide evidence-based treatment that is unique to each client.

Strategies to Foster Leadership and Advocacy in the Counselor Identity

There are several ways to foster advocacy and leadership within the identity of a counselor. One way is to get involved in an advocacy group for the population I want to work with. Another way for a counselor to advocate for the needs of their clients is to provide treatment that is proven to enhance their mental health. Some additional ways for a counselor to show leadership is to stay up-to-date on current research and practices within counseling and continuing their education in the field. Lastly, I would show leadership by ensuring that the way I am behaving is congruent with the lessons that I teach my client.

Counseling Dispositions Demonstrated in Mock Sessions

The counseling dispositions that were displayed in my mock sessions were empathy, amiability, and acceptance. Empathy is the ability to evoke understanding of the feelings of another. I demonstrated this by frequently telling my client that I understand why they would feel a certain way, such as frustration or overwhelmed, while simultaneously validating this feeling. I showed verbal empathy in my statements by letting the client know that I was there for them and that I cared about how they felt. I also demonstrated nonverbal empathy in my facial expressions, eye-contact, and open body language. Acceptance is the ability to unconditionally accept another person while providing a safe, nonjudgmental environment (Grand Canyon University, 2022). I demonstrated acceptance of my client by creating an environment where they could speak freely, openly, and honestly. Amiability is the disposition in which counselors are kind and compassionate towards their clients although they may have different perspectives (Grand

Canyon University, 2022). When my client had the perspective that her husband was micromanaging her, I validated this feeling while kindly offering a different view.

Counseling Skills Demonstrated in Mock Sessions

I demonstrated several skills in my mock sessions, including SOLER skills, summarizing, reflecting meaning, content, and emotion, open-ended questioning, re-framing, and empathy. I effectively showed SOLER skills through my open body language, frequent eye-contact, leaning in, and facing my client squarely in every session. This skill is how one can show their client that they are engaged and actively listening, which came very naturally to me because I do this in my personal life while I am listening to someone else. One skill that I still have room to improve on is asking open-ended questions. While I did ask many open-ended questions, I often bundled two questions together. I also have to find a balance between asking closed and open-ended questions as I asked too many closed-ended questions.

How I will Apply Theory in my Personal Approach to Counseling

When providing therapy to clients, it is so important for counselors to take an approach that they resonate with. I am determined to deliver a form of therapy that I am connected to that can also be meaningful for my clients. One theory that I value very highly is person-centered therapy. This theory centers around the idea that clients have the ability and the motivation to change within themselves—counselors just need to help them discover it through an unconditionally understanding and supportive environment (Yao & Kabir, 2023). I will utilize this theory to establish a trusting relationship with my client and by encouraging them to reflect on their own capabilities.

How Supervision will be Utilized in Practicum and Internships

Practicum and internship give counselors in training the opportunity to get hands-on experience working with clients in the population as well as the environment they plan to work with when they are licensed. I will utilize my supervisor in my practicum, internships, and post-graduate work by frequently meeting with them to discuss clients, what I do well, and what I can continue to improve on.

References

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