Wisconsin Public Psychiatry Network Teleconference (WPPNT)

• This teleconference is brought to you by the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS), Division of Care and Treatment Services, Bureau of Prevention Treatment and Recovery and the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Department of Psychiatry.

• Use of information contained in this presentation may require express authority from a third party.
WPPNNT Reminders

• Call 877-820-7831 before 11:00 a.m.
• Enter passcode 107633#, when prompted.
• Questions may be asked near the end, if time allows.
  o To ask a question, press *6 on your phone to un-mute yourself. Please *6 to re-mute your line.
  o Ask questions for the presenter, about their presentation.

• The link to the evaluation for today’s presentation is on the WPPNNT webpage, under today’s date: https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/wppnt/2020.htm. Complete the evaluation to receive the CEH.

• The teleconferencing phone system often reaches capacity. If you’re unable to join live or experience technical issues, an audio recording will be available on our website within two business days, often by late afternoon the day of the presentation. You can still receive CEH for listening to the audio recording and completing the evaluation within two weeks of the live teleconference.
Listening Well

Wisconsin Public Psychiatry Network Teleconference
September 3, 2020
Presentation outline

1. Listening well defined
2. Research base
3. Skillful practice
4. Demonstration, observation, debrief
5. Closing
Listening well defined

Listening well comprises a way of being and doing.

- **Accurate empathy** is a way of being with people that involves careful listening with genuine interest and curiosity to understand another’s experiences and perspectives.

- **Reflective listening** is what a listener does as an expression of accurate empathy.

(Miller, 2018)
Listening well is the most important skill in human service work.

Listening well can be taught, learned, measured, observed, assessed, and improved.

Self-assessed listening skill does not correlate with actual practice.

(Miller, 2018)
What listening well is not

- Giving advice, making suggestions
- Persuading with logic
- Questioning, probing, gathering info
- Agreeing, approving, praising
- Reassuring, sympathizing, consoling

Thomas Gordon’s listening roadblocks
(cited in Miller & Rollnick, 2013, p. 49)
The research base of listening well

2 studies, 2 meta-analyses, and a bottom line
Valle (1981): Reflective listening skill level and drinking outcomes

Client Relapse Rates

Follow-up Points

6 Months 12 Months 18 Months 24 Months

Low
Medium
High
Moyers et al. (2016): Therapist empathy and outcomes

“Therapist empathy was inversely associated with client drinking at the end of treatment. That is, when therapists expressed more empathy than they usually did, the client drank less at the end of treatment, and, conversely, when therapists expressed less empathy than they usually did, the client drank more at the end of treatment.” (p. 225)
“We know of no therapeutic approach where low empathy has been linked to better outcomes in any area of healthcare... Of ‘evidence-based practices’ currently being promoted, empathy seems to us to be one of the most promising to improve outcomes and prevent harm in addiction treatment.” (p. 882)

Moyers & Miller (2013): Is low therapist empathy toxic? meta-analysis
Elliot et al. (2018): Empathy meta-analysis

- 80 studies
- 6,000+ participants
- Therapist empathy was a moderately strong predictor of clinical outcomes
The research base of listening well:
Bottom line

- Decades of hard science consistently shows that listening well is not a soft skill, but is a robust predictor of positive outcomes.
- Not listening well runs the risk of client disengagement, drop out, and suboptimal outcomes.
4 steps to listening well

1. Hear what the person is saying.
2. Make an educated guess about the person’s underlying meaning.
3. Choose your reflection direction.
4. Share your guess as a concise reflective listening statement (not a question).
Listening well
Step 1

Hear what the person is saying.

- Avoid your listening roadblocks.
  (giving advice, making suggestions, persuading, questioning, probing, gathering information, agreeing, approving, praising, reassuring, sympathizing, consoling)
- Make the decision to listen.
- Use strategies to be in the present moment.
Listening well
Step 2

Make an educated guess about the person’s underlying meaning.

• It is not possible for a person to put into words a lifetime of experiences, therefore, listening well requires listening for underlying meaning.
• An educated guess is not an assumption because of Step 1.
# Listening well

## Step 3

Choose your reflection direction.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Reflection</th>
<th>Direction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Simple Reflection</td>
<td>Repeat or rephrase what was said for clarification or emphasis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling</td>
<td>Reflect implied emotion by naming the feeling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Double-Sided</td>
<td>Reflect both sides of ambivalence (cons/pros of change)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coming Alongside</td>
<td>Reflect in the direction of no change, side with the negative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuing the Paragraph</td>
<td>Reflect in the direction of change to encourage “change talk”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Listening well
Step 4

Share your guess as a concise reflective listening statement (not a question). Infect your voice down at the end:

• You’ve got a lot on your mind? (up for question)
• You’ve got a lot on your mind. (down for statement)

• You’re feeling anxious?
• You’re feeling anxious.
Listening well
Step 4

Share your guess as a concise reflective listening statement. Starters:

- Sounds like…
- You mean…
- It seems to you that…
- For you it’s a matter of…
- From your point of view…
- You’re feeling…

What I hear you saying is…
Listening well practice summary

✓ Make the decision to listen.
✓ Avoid your listening roadblocks.
✓ Take risks to offer educated guesses about underlying meaning.
✓ Be mindful of direction.
✓ Offer reflections as concise statements.
✓ Get the “I” out of it.
Demonstration

- **Practitioner** - make the decision to listen
- **Speaker** - real play (not role play)
- **Observers** - create observer sheet to count and categorize practitioner behavior
## Observer sheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Reflection</th>
<th>Count (hash mark)</th>
<th>Practitioner Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Simple reflection</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doubled-Sided</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coming Alongside</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuing the Paragraph</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening Roadblocks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Debrief

Listening well is readily observed, measured, and assessed.

Benchmarks of listening well:
• Absence of listening roadblocks
• Simple reflections are no more than 50% of all reflective listening statements
• At least 1:1 ratio of reflections to questions
Closing

• What are 1-2 things you learned or relearned about listening well?
• If you made 1-2 adjustments to your everyday listening, what might you try?
References

Reflective Listening Cheat Sheet

- **Simple Reflection.** Repeat or rephrase what the person said. Useful for clarifying or emphasizing what was said.

- **Paraphrase.** Restatement which brings in an educated guess about a person’s underlying meaning or inference to add meaning to what the person said.

- **Feeling.** Reflection of implied underlying feeling; name it.
  - Client: If I keep smoking marijuana my Probation Officer is going to lock me up.
  - Practitioner: You’re worried about the consequences.

- **Double-Sided.** Both sides of ambivalence (pros/cons) are contained in a single reflection; end with the positive or change side.
  - On one hand, the medication side effects are uncomfortable, and on the other hand, you’ve benefited from taking it.

- **Metaphor.** This is “picture language” or statements that evoke an image.
  - It’s like a dam finally broke this week and everything is flooding out.
  - It’s like climbing a ladder: you’re reaching for the next goal.
  - You hit a wall trying to figure this out.

- **Coming Alongside.** Take up and reflect the side of no change; side with the negative; empathy in action.
  - Client: I can’t give up drinking – it’s how I socialize. Practitioner: Drinking is very important to you.
  - Client: This program isn’t helpful. Practitioner: You’re having a bad experience here.

- **Continuing the Paragraph.** Anticipate the next statement that has yet to be said. Starts with conjunction (and… because…) to make a guess in the direction of change or future action toward change.
  - Client: I have to get my kids back. Practitioner: …and you’re ready to take a step toward change.

---

*Reflect back more than the person said, but not more than the person meant to say.*

**Reflection starters:**
- It sounds like you…
- It seems to you that…
- From your point of view…
- For you, it’s a matter of…
- You mean that…
- You’re wondering if…
- You’re feeling…
- You must be…
- So you…

**Best practices:**
- Make the decision to listen.
- Offer reflections as statements.
- Be mindful of direction.
- Keep it concise.
- Get the “I” out of it.
This practice profile operationalizes practitioner competencies (knowledge, attitudes, skills) for listening well with defined fidelity standards as expected use in practice. Assessment is based on direct observation of practice, such as a 15-20 minute audio recorded sample of practice.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core Component</th>
<th>Contribution to Outcome</th>
<th>Expected Use in Practice (Fidelity)</th>
<th>Developing Use in Practice</th>
<th>Unacceptable Use in Practice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge of listening well includes being able to identify 4 steps of listening, types of reflections, and general findings from research.</td>
<td>Knowledge of listening well underscores skillful listening practice.</td>
<td>Score of 90% or higher on written test of knowledge.</td>
<td>Score of at least 70% on written test of knowledge.</td>
<td>Score lower than 60% on written test of knowledge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitudes toward listening to people in the delivery of routine services.</td>
<td>Attitudes toward listening well underscores skillful listening practice.</td>
<td>Practitioner views listening well as central to professional development. Approaches people with openness and curiosity. Self-aware of biases, judgments, and listening roadblocks.</td>
<td>Practitioner views listening well as somewhat central to professional development. Approaches people with openness and curiosity. Somewhat self-aware of biases, judgments, and listening roadblocks.</td>
<td>Practitioner does not view listening well as central to professional development. Discounts peoples’ perspectives. Not aware of how biases, judgments, and listening roadblocks impact service delivery.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accurate empathy as a way of being.</td>
<td>Accurate empathy and skillful reflective listening are robust predictors of client engagement and of positive client outcomes.</td>
<td>Global measure of empathy is at least 4 on 1-5 scale.</td>
<td>Global measure of empathy is at least 3 on 1-5 scale.</td>
<td>Global measure of empathy is 2 or lower on 1-5 scale.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depth of reflective listening.</td>
<td>Percentage of complex reflection is at least 50% of total reflection.</td>
<td>Percentage of complex reflection is 30-40% of total reflection.</td>
<td>Percentage of complex reflection is less than 20% of total reflection.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of reflective listening (relative to questions).</td>
<td>Ratio of reflection to question is at least 2:1.</td>
<td>Ratio of reflection to question is at least 1:1.</td>
<td>Ratio of reflection to question is less than 0.5:1.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Absence of listening roadblocks such as confronting, directing, warning, and judging.</td>
<td>These behaviors tend to be associated with poor client engagement and negative outcomes of services.</td>
<td>Absence of listening roadblocks during a client encounter.</td>
<td>One occurrence of a listening roadblock during a client encounter.</td>
<td>Several occurrences of listening roadblocks during a client encounter.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Notes:
3. Direct observation of practice is critical for reliable assessment of listening skills because research consistently shows that practitioner self-report does not correlate with actual practice, for example, see Carroll, K. M., Martino, S. & Rounsaville, B. J. (2010). No train, no gain? Clinical Psychology: Science and Practice, 17, 36-40.
8. Global measure of empathy, reproduced with permission from Moyers, Manuel, and Ernst (2014):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1 (low)</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5 (high)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Practitioner gives little or no attention to the client's perspective.</td>
<td>Practitioner makes sporadic efforts to explore the client's perspective.</td>
<td>Practitioner is actively trying to understand the client's perspective with modest success.</td>
<td>Practitioner makes active and repeated efforts to understand the client's point of view. Shows evidence of accurate understanding of the client's worldview, although mostly limited to explicit content.</td>
<td>Practitioner shows evidence of deep understanding of client's point of view not just for what has been explicitly stated but what the client means but has not yet said.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>