

Additional Approaches and Troubleshooting When Implementing the Interpersonal Inventory

APPENDIX



When implementing Interpersonal Inventory II (Exercise 2), clinicians can use a couple of approaches.

Approach 1

After the introduction of Exercise 1, "Presenting the Interpersonal Inventory," clinicians can ask the client some general questions about their experience of completing the inventory. Clinicians can also ask general questions about interpersonal dynamics with people in the Circle. Here are examples of some of the questions clinicians can ask the client:

1. How was this experience of completing the Interpersonal Inventory for you?
2. Did you have anyone in mind that you were going to place in one of the circles but ended up not writing down their name?
3. Did you end up placing someone in one of the circles and was surprised that they "made it in"?
4. What are the similarities and differences between people who are in the "intimate," "close," and "extended" support circles?
 - a. What does it take to be in your "intimate" support, and what does it take to move out from "intimate" to "close" to "extended" support?
 - i. Clinician can ask for examples that support the answers to these questions
5. Is everyone on the Circle exactly where you want them to be? Do you have someone who is too close, and you wish they were further away? Do you have someone who is too far away from you, and you wish they were closer to you?
 - a. Clinicians can ask the client to draw arrows from the person to the space in the Interpersonal Inventory where the client ultimately wants them to be.
6. Who on this inventory understands you the most?
 - a. What is it about them and you that allows for that understanding to occur?
7. Who in this inventory understands you the least?
 - a. What is it about them and you that allows for that lack of understanding to occur?
8. If you are working with interpersonal disputes as a problem area, you can ask: Who is the easiest to disagree with, and what is it about them and you that allows for that to occur?

9. After discussing the experience of completing the Interpersonal Inventory and following up with some general questions, we can start asking questions specific to different people on the Circle.

Approach 2

The clinician can start Part 2 by asking the client right away about specific people on their Interpersonal Inventory:

1. Tell me a story about one of the people on the Circle.
2. What kind of emotional support do you get from Chris?
3. What kinds of support would you like to get from Chris?
4. What is it like for you to ask for help from Chris?
5. How well do you feel understood by Chris?
6. What do you wish you could change in your relationship with Chris?
7. What happens between the two of you when you disagree?
8. What do you typically disagree about, and how do you usually resolve it?
9. Have you ever told Chris about your current situation—your struggles, your needs, and your feelings?
10. How often do you see Chris?
11. How have your current symptoms impacted your relationship with Chris?

Troubleshooting When Implementing the Interpersonal Inventory

Question 1

What if the client puts the clinician on the Interpersonal Inventory?

Answer

When the client indicates the clinician's importance and places them in their Circle, the clinician works to understand what allowed the client to place the clinician in their Circle. For example, the clinician can ask the following questions to gain additional understanding:

1. What is it about our relationship that works for you?
 - a. What aspect of our relationship resonates with you?
2. What is it about me or my way of relating with or to you that seems to work for you?
3. Who else in your life has or had similar characteristics?

The clinician can further highlight that the same qualities could be found in other people; the clinician can also inquire if the identified qualities and aspects of the relationship fall under the relational values for the client (e.g., honesty, directness). This knowledge could assist the client in further extending their social support with the intentionality of selecting people and relationships who match the client's values.

Question 2

What if the client does not have a lot of social support or puts in just two or three people?

Answer

If the client does not have a lot of social support in their Circle, the clinician can further explore how their current social support works and does not work for them. For example, the following questions could be asked:

1. In what way does your current social support work and not work for you?
2. Given your current social support, what type of support would you like to add to your Circle?

At the end of the discussion, if the client is interested in expanding their current social support, the clinician can inquire if this could be one of the aspects or goals to focus on in treatment.

Question 3

What if the client puts themselves into the Interpersonal Inventory?

Answer

If the client places themselves in the Circle, ask some questions about the relationship that the client has with themselves.

Question 4

What if the client has a lot of people to place, say 20 or 30?

Answer

When the client places a lot of people on a circle, the clinician can narrow down the discussion by asking the following questions:

1. Out of all the people in the circles, who do you feel might be helpful to discuss today?
2. Who occupies your mind the most at this time?

The clinician can direct the client to choose seven to nine people and indicate that as the sessions go by, they will discuss other people as they come up.

Question 5

Can clients place their pets or people who passed away in the Circle?

Answer

Yes, you can indicate to the client that they can place in the Circle someone who has passed away, their pets, and groups of people (e.g., a church or spiritual community, volleyball team).