

Practice Exercises

Chapter 13: Skills for Processing the Therapeutic Relationship

For each of the following examples, write an immediacy statement. Compare your responses to the possible helper responses provided at the end of this practice exercise.

Statements

1. Client: "You know, I thought about what you said last time, and I got really angry. I don't think you know what you're talking about when you suggest that I go to see my old boyfriend when I go into town to give a talk. He hasn't even tried to contact me for ten years, and I'm supposed to be focused on my work and giving a talk. I couldn't possibly concentrate if I knew I had to spend time going to see him and started worrying about what he would say."

Helper immediacy: _____

2. Client: "You sure haven't been very helpful today. You don't give me any good advice. I don't know why I bother coming here. It's a waste of time."

Helper immediacy: _____

3. Client: (silent for five minutes)

Helper immediacy: _____

4. (Client talks on and on without pausing for 15 minutes.)

Helper immediacy: _____

Possible Helper Responses

1. "I'm sorry I suggested that you contact your old boyfriend. It obviously was hurtful to you. Maybe we could spend some time talking about what was going on between us, given that I don't usually tell you what to do."

"I feel concerned that you are blaming me when my memory is that you were the one to suggest that you go to see him."

2. "I also am feeling frustrated that we don't seem to be getting anywhere."

"I feel upset right now because I put a lot of time and energy into our relationship and yet it doesn't seem to be enough for you."

3. "You seem angry with me. Can you talk about what's going on?"

"I am worried about you right now because you seem so distant."

4. "I'm feeling bored right now. I wonder if you're aware that you've been talking nonstop for 15 minutes? What do you suppose is going on inside you?"

"I'm feeling a little irritated that we're not getting anywhere. You seem like you're more interested in telling stories than working today. How do you feel?"