

Practice Exercises

Chapter 8: Skills for Exploring Feelings

For each of the following client statements, write a reflection of feelings, a self-disclosure of feelings, or a probe for feelings. Compare your responses to the possible helper responses provided at the end of this practice exercise.

Statements

1. Client: "I'm really having difficulty with my schoolwork right now. I have a hard time concentrating because there are so many other things going on. My mother is in the hospital, and I wish I could be there to be with her because she may die soon. When I'm thinking about her, it's hard to get into my work. But I know that what would upset her most is if I got bad grades and didn't finish school."

Helper reflection of feelings: _____

Helper disclosure of feelings: _____

Helper open question about feelings: _____

2. Client: "When I'm trying to sleep, I keep hearing my parents arguing. I try to hide my head under the pillow, but I still hear them."

Helper reflection of feelings: _____

Helper disclosure of feelings: _____

Helper open question about feelings: _____

3. Client: "My roommate is really nice. I really like her. She is so much like the sister I wish I had when I was younger. It's really nice to have somebody to do things with. I was so lonely on campus last year, but having her as a roommate makes me feel like I belong. She's from a really poor family and she hardly has any money. Fortunately, my parents send me a lot of money, so I'm glad I can share some with her."

Helper reflection of feelings: _____

Helper disclosure of feelings: _____

Helper open question about feelings: _____

4. Client: "I just got into the worst fight ever with my mother. She was saying awful things to me, like I would never succeed in school because I'm lazy. I got so angry at her, I was shaking. I just don't know what to say to her when she does that. Why can't she be supportive like my friends' mothers?"

Helper reflection of feelings: _____

Helper disclosure of feelings: _____

Helper open question about feelings: _____

Possible Helper Responses

1. "You're really worried about your mother."

"When my little sister was sick and then died, I felt incredibly vulnerable. I wonder if you feel that way?"

"I wonder how you feel about your mother's illness?"

2. "You're upset that your parents are arguing so much."

"If I were you, I might feel angry at them. How does it make you feel?"

"How do you feel about your parents?"

3. "You feel relieved that you finally feel like you belong."

"I remember feeling embarrassed when I had more money than my friends."

"How do you feel about sharing your resources with her?"

4. "I can see how mad you are at your mother."

"I feel angry at your mother just hearing you talk."

"I wonder what you feel inside when you compare your mother to your friends' mothers?"