

# Intentional Interviewing and Counseling

Facilitating Client Development  
in a Multicultural Society

Allen E. Ivey | Mary Bradford Ivey | Carlos P. Zalaquett



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# Intentional Interviewing and Counseling

Facilitating Client Development  
in a Multicultural Society

Tenth Edition

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***Intentional Interviewing and  
Counseling: Facilitating Client  
Development in a Multicultural Society,  
10th Edition***

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Carlos P. Zalaquett**

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Love is listening.

*Paul Tillich, Ph.D., Licentiate of Theology  
University Professor, Harvard University  
Most influential theologian of the last century*

To the multicultural scholars who have changed the nature and practice of counseling and psychotherapy.

---



Courtesy of Patricia Arredondo

**Patricia Arredondo, Ed.D.**, NCC has dedicated her career to social justice advocacy. She is president of the Arredondo Advisory Group, designed to Accelerate Culture-Centered Knowledge and Practices. She is a past president of the American Counseling Association, National Latinxs Psychological Association, and Division 45 of the APA. She is a lead author for the ACA Multicultural Competencies and the APA Multicultural Guidelines.

*The multidimensionality of Latinxs and the complex context that surrounds individuals, families, ethnic-specific groups, and growing communities throughout the U.S. is an opportunity for counselors and therapists to become more knowledgeable about the diversity of intersecting identities and life experiences of Latinxs people. Over the decades, the resilience and optimism of immigrants and their families has led to many contributions to this country through a sense of collectivism.*



Courtesy of Joseph E. Trimble

**Joseph E. Trimble, Ph.D.**, has a life-long commitment to promote psychological and sociocultural research with Indigenous populations, especially American Indians and Alaska Natives. He is the recipient of the APA's Peace and Social Justice Award and also the APA's Gold Medal Award for Lifetime Achievement in Psychology in the Public Interest. Also, Visiting Professor at Harvard's Radcliffe Institute and Visiting Scholar in Psychology and Neuroscience at Scotland's University of St. Andrews. He is a consultant for many national and international government agencies.

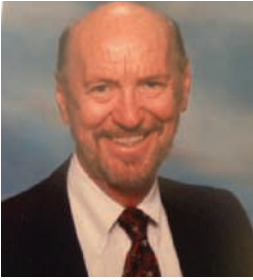
*Culture matters in the lives of all people, so much so they don't even think about it. We can come to appreciate these differences and learn from them. And maybe even embrace them.*



Courtesy of Thomas Parham

**Thomas Parham, Ph.D.**, President, California State University Dominguez Hills, is a past President and Distinguished Psychologist of the National Association of Black Psychologists (ABPsi), and has received the 100 Black Men-Wimberly Award.

*Are we a country of true diversity and inclusion? Only time will tell if we as a nation, have the temerity to push past this moment in history when sensibilities have been disrupted, and find new and enhanced measures of equality that more authentically represent a thrust towards becoming a more perfect union. Each of us, representing every domain of society, will need to stand up and ante up as well in this high-stakes game of political posturing. For a nation divided needs its scholars, academic disciplines, and institutions of higher learning to reframe the discourse on how best to affirm the dignity and humanity of all of this nation's citizens.*



Courtesy of Paul Pedersen

**Paul Pedersen, Ph.D.**, Professor emeritus at Syracuse University, was the first White scholar to introduce multicultural issues to the helping field, and is the author of many books which have deeply influenced the field. He has received many awards, among them APA Award for Distinguished Contributions to the International Advancement of Psychology.

*Every client comes to the interview with multiple voices.*



Courtesy of Derald Wing Sue

**Derald Wing Sue** is a professor of psychology and education at Teachers College, Columbia University. He is a past president and co-founder of the Asian American Psychological Association, and Past Presidents of the Society for Counseling Psychology, and the Society for the Study of Culture, Race and Ethnicity. He was awarded the American Psychological Association's Award for Outstanding Lifetime Contributions to Psychology. Dr. Sue was among the first to develop the Multicultural Competences and is nationally and internationally known for his research on microaggressions and microinterventions.

*To understand the dilemma faced by people of color in race talk we must first become aware of (a) the situational context of oppression that they live under, (b) the ensuing psychological costs associated with racism, and (c) the negative personal and group consequences for breaking their silence.*



## About the Authors

---



Courtesy of Allen E. Ivey

**Allen E. Ivey** is Distinguished University Professor (Emeritus) at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. He is the founder of Microtraining Associates, an educational publishing firm, and now serves as consultant with Microtraining/ProQuest. Allen is a past president, Diplomat, and Fellow of APA's Society for Counseling Psychology. He is also a Fellow of the American Counseling Association, the Society for the Psychological Study of Culture, Ethnicity, and Race, and the Asian American Psychological Association. But he is most proud of being named Distinguished Multicultural Elder at the National Multicultural Conference and Summit. He and Mary have consulted and conducted workshops in over 25 countries. He is author or coauthor of over 200 articles and more than 50 books, which are internationally translated into many languages. He is the originator of the video-based microskills approach, which is fundamental to this book and used in multiple settings throughout the world.



Courtesy of Mary Bradford Ivey

**Mary Bradford Ivey** is a former school counselor and the vice-president of Microtraining Associates, and is now serving as a consultant for Microtraining ProQuest. She is a Nationally Certified Counselor (NCC) and holds a certificate in school counseling. She is one of the first 15 Fellows of the American Counseling Association, and also received ACA's O'hanna Award for her work in social justice and multicultural issues. Her elementary counseling program was named one of the 10 best in the nation at the Christa McAuliffe Conference. She has served as stress counselor at Amherst College, and a visiting professor at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst; Keene State College; University of Hawai'i, Manoa; and Flinders University, Australia. Mary is the author or coauthor of 21 books translated into multiple languages. With Allen, she has presented workshops and keynotes throughout the world. Her video demonstrations of counseling skills, particularly with children, are an important part of the several Micro-counseling videos to be found on ProQuest's website.



Courtesy of Carlos Zalaquett

**Carlos P. Zalaquett** is a professor in the Department of Educational Psychology, Counseling, and Special Education at the Pennsylvania State University. He is the past president of the Society of Interamerican Psychology/Sociedad Interamericana de Psicología (SIP), the Florida Mental Health Counseling Association, and the Suncoast Mental Health Counselors Association (SMHCA), current president of the Pennsylvania Mental Health Counselors Association, and member of the Global Psychology Alliance (GPA). Carlos is the author or coauthor of more than 60 scholarly publications and eight books, including the Spanish version of *Basic Attending Skills*. He has received many awards, including the University of South Florida's Latinos Association's Faculty of the Year, the Tampa Hispanic Heritage's Man of Education Award, and the SMHCA Emeritus Award. His current brain-based research integrates mind, brain, and body in the exploration of human behavior central to counseling and psychotherapy. He is an internationally recognized expert on mental health, counseling, psychotherapy, diversity, social justice, and education and has conducted workshops and lectures in 12 countries.



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Welcome to the 10th edition of *Intentional Interviewing and Counseling: Facilitating Client Development in a Multicultural Society*!

**Love is listening. (Paul Tillich)** We wrote this book for students to discover and become proficient in counseling and psychotherapy skills in a warm and successful way. Following are some of our main purposes.

---

## Emphasizing Active Listening and Empathy

Listening and reflecting back to the client what you hear is fundamental. Carl Rogers was founder of person-centered counseling and the first to audio record live counseling sessions. As early as 1938, he discovered that what therapists said they did in the session was not necessarily what actually happened. More important was his discovery that an empathic relationship based on [active listening](#) between counselor and client is fundamental to success.

---

## Describing Behaviors That Facilitate Change

In spite of progress, the key **behaviors** facilitating client growth and change remained a mystery. Questions such as “What is listening?” “Is nonverbal behavior an important aspect of successful therapy?” and “How best can we structure an effective session and treatment plan?” remained as unknowns.

Working with colleagues at Colorado State University (CSU), Allen analyzed observable behaviors using videorecorded sessions. The group identified active listening’s observable specifics, which included culturally appropriate eye contact, comfortable body language and facial expression, a pleasant and smooth vocal tone, and verbal following—staying with the client’s central topics and concerns. They also confirmed empathy as a main component.

These findings led to the microskills approach, which has become the standard for interviewing, counseling, and psychotherapy skills training throughout the world. The multiculturally sensitive microskills model is now available in many translations and used in well over 1,000 universities and training programs throughout the world. The emphasis is on clarity and providing the critical background for competence in virtually all counseling and psychotherapy theories.

---

## Teaching the Microskills

Once Allen became aware of the importance of the microskills, he created a model for teaching the fundamentals of counseling and psychotherapy. He was the first to offer a practical way to teach interviewing to professionals, educators, and students-in-training. The microskills framework has influenced many fields, nationally and internationally, such as counseling, psychology, rehabilitation, medicine, law, and social work, and even police and the CIA. You will find it unexpectedly in such areas as training migrant peer counselors in Africa and even advising, library work and

agricultural extension. In turn, professionals may be found using the framework in family therapy with children, management trainees, psychiatric patients, refugees, and many others.

The backbone of this book is becoming competent in active listening and empathic skills. Both serve as the foundation to the skills shown in the Microskills Hierarchy on the inside cover. Learning includes a step-by-step movement through the microskills hierarchy, showing the major aspects of a successful session.

Almost anywhere you turn, you will find the basic listening sequence in other books, in multiple training programs around the world, even in the [Wall Street Journal](#). Look for: attending/listening, questions, paraphrasing (reflection of content/cognitions), reflection of feeling, and summary, often presented in that order.

---

## Teaching Active Listening to Clients

You will find teaching active listening skills to clients or patients is valuable. At a Veterans Hospital, Allen did therapy using and teaching microskills to inpatients with video feedback. This approach enabled them to be released, even from locked wards. Mary taught listening skills to sixth graders both as therapy and teaching them how to be peer counselors. Carlos taught many of his clients listening skills to improve their communication with others.

---

## Achieving Success

Students who work toward competency and transfer the skills taught here to counseling and clinical practice will be able to:

- **Engage in the basic skills of the counseling or psychotherapy session:** listening, influencing, and structuring an effective session with individual and multicultural sensitivity.
- **Conduct a full session** using only listening skills by the time they are halfway through this book.
- **Become competent in a basic structure of the session—Empathic Relationship, Story, Goals, Restory, and Action**—that can be applied to many different theories:
  1. Develop an **empathic relationship** with the client.
  2. Draw out the client's **story**, giving special attention to strengths and resources.
  3. Set clear **goals** with the client.
  4. Enable the client to **restory** and think differently about concerns, issues, and challenges.
  5. Help the client move to **action** outside the session.

---

## Learning by Example

**Transcripts** of real counseling sessions are given increased attention and emphasis in most chapters, showing how the skills are used in the interview and their impact on client conversation, leading to personal growth. We see how empathy is demonstrated and rated in the session. The Client Change Scale illustrates how the client is learning and progressing in the session. At times, reading key transcripts aloud will bring the interview even more to the here and now.

---

## Reviewing Your Competencies

Students who develop a solid portfolio of competencies become clear about how much they have learned. The **Portfolio of Competencies** is emphasized in each chapter. Students have found that a well-organized portfolio is helpful in obtaining good practicum and internship sites and, at times, professional positions as well. The portfolio concept and video practice increase course satisfaction and ratings.

---

## Sharpening Your Skills

In addition to structuring a meaningful interview you will also:

1. **Analyze with considerable precision your own natural style of helping** and, equally or perhaps more important, how your counseling style is received by clients.
2. **Increase your understanding of diversity** and the need to adjust your interviewing to many types of individuals as you become more multiculturally competent.
3. **Understand the meaning of social justice** and the need to become an advocate for individuals and groups. Develop a client-centric approach, full of genuine desire to help others and advance our communities and societies.
4. **Become able to integrate basic aspects of neuroscience** into the session. Each microskill in some way affects the functioning of the brain through neuroplasticity.

---

## New and Updated Competency Features in This Tenth Edition

- **Trauma informed counseling, crisis counseling, suicide assessment and prevention,** and a transcript of **cognitive behavioral therapy** are given increased attention. In addition, the importance of adverse child events (ACEs) is presented. Adverse experiences from childhood can reappear as symptoms in the teenage years and adulthood. Students can take learning from earlier chapters to develop beginning competence in critical aspects of practice.
- **Integrated mental and physical health services** will enable us to move to new, more sophisticated, and complete systems to help clients and patients. With an increase in mental health disorders, we face deeper and more complex issues. Innovations in team practice are bringing counselors and psychotherapists together more closely with physicians, nurses, and human service workers. Furthermore, neuroscience, neurobiology, and brain research are leading to an awareness that body and mind are one. Actions in the counseling session affect not only thoughts, feelings, and behaviors, but also what occurs in the brain and body. Many exciting new opportunities await both students and instructors.
- **Listening lights up the brain.** The power and importance of attending behavior and empathy are now further validated by neuroscience research showing that specific parts of the brain are activated during empathic listening. Special attention is paid to portions of the brain (with new illustrations) that are affected in the helping process. Details and implications for practice will be found in Appendix IV.

- **The NIH's new Research Domain Criteria** (RDOC) integrates cutting-edge neuroscience with counseling and therapy. Counseling and psychotherapy change the mind and brain, even the body, and build new neural networks in both client and counselor through neural plasticity and neurogenesis. Neuroscience/neurobiology research stresses a positive wellness orientation to facilitate neural development, along with positive mental health. You will find that virtually all of what we do in the helping fields is supported by neuroscience, as illustrated in Appendix IV.
- **The action influencing skills** (Chapter 12) of self-disclosure, feedback, logical consequences, directives/instruction, and psychoeducation are presented together through data and transcripts of a four-interview case study with a single client, who makes progress and becomes able to free herself with the counselor to discuss deeper, more critical relationship issues. A Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) transcript shows the specifics of work with automatic thoughts and demonstrates clearly how students can use this strategy.
- **Multicultural, social justice, and advocacy** have once again been enlarged. The introduction is Eduardo Duran's concept of the Soul Wound and the historical and intergenerational issue of cultural and individual trauma. We have included specific session recommendations to help clients who have encountered racism, sexism, bullying, and the many forms of harassment and oppression. The American Psychological Association recently released a statement that apologizes to People of Color for their role promoting, perpetuating, and failing to challenge racism, discrimination, and human hierarchy. This may be a new and enriched beginning for us all to ensure we can better work with these challenges of today.
- **Stress and stress management** have always been central in this book, but now with awareness of brain/body connections, we see stress is there in virtually all clients. Regardless of concerns or diagnosis, from everyday challenges, to ADD, to anxiety, to depression, to panic disorder, we need to take management of stress much more seriously. The critical issue of recognizing stress and its dangerous impact on the brain and body is emphasized throughout, while also noting that appropriate levels of stress can be positive and necessary for learning, change, and building resilience to deal with more serious and challenging stress. Research in wellness and neuroscience has revealed the importance of positive psychology and therapeutic lifestyle changes (TLCs) as a supplement to stress management and all theoretical approaches.
- **The fifth stage of the interview—Action**—has been given increased attention with the **action plan**. The action plan is a systematic, comprehensive approach to homework and generalization from the interview to the “real world.” Albert Ellis gave us the term **homework**, which for some clients feels like school. The action plan is more systematic, with an emphasis on collaboration and client decision as to how to take the interview into daily life.
- **Self-actualization, intentionality, and resilience** are clarified and given increased emphasis as goals for the interview. Resilience, especially, has become more central as an action goal to enable clients to adapt and grow as they experience stress. A new section focuses on what we would like to see for our clients as a result of the counseling session. Of course, we want to facilitate their reaching their own desired goals, but we also seek to encourage the development of resilience skills to better cope with future stresses and challenges.

- **Transcendence** goes beyond your own self-development as a person. Your self-realization is wonderful, but helping others, their families, and your community to grow is even better. You gain by applying your newly developed skills to help others as both you and your clients advocate and contribute to the improvement of our communities and society.

---

## Our field is constantly evolving...

As we work on this diverse and evolving world, our attention is drawn to new areas where we can contribute. Eco- and climate change anxiety are now impacting mental health around the globe, as reported during the 2021 United Nations climate change conference (COP26). Current research to be published in *Lancet Planetary Health* shows that seventy-five percent of young people find the future frightening and thirty-nine percent are hesitant to have their own children. Mental health professionals can facilitate ways of coping, transform, and advocate for actions to save the planet, and help your clients deal with the new future.

Our work would never end, but you have our commitment to continue bringing these issues to your attention.

As we always say to our students, colleagues and professionals, [to be continued...](#)

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- **Transition Guide.** Highlights all of the changes in the text and in the digital offerings from the previous edition to this edition.

# Acknowledgments

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Again, we ask you to send us reactions, suggestions, and ideas. Feel free to contact us also by email. We appreciate the time that you as a reader are willing to spend with us.

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# The Foundations of Counseling and Psychotherapy

Justice for the individual  
Is part of justice for the community;  
And exists for one, only when  
both are satisfied.  
So it is that personal freedom  
Must be limited by security  
for others.  
And the mature person is a servant to  
the people.

Yakima Nation Proverb

**I**ntentional Interviewing and Counseling presents sound knowledge and practical skills and strategies for effective counseling and therapy in our diverse and changing society. The world enters the third decade of the 21st Century immersed in multiple changes and challenges. Life, due to the COVID-19 and racism pandemics, financial instability, political polarization, climate change, violence, wars, suicide, stress, and personal and relational difficulties, is no longer the same. The events affecting the world, our countries, and ourselves are creating a new normal and are bringing stress and mental issues to new highs, leading the World Health Organization to invest in mental health across the world (World Health Organization [WHO], 2020).

The mental health demands call for mental health professionals to use their expertise to alleviate the widespread suffering. Counselors, psychologists, social workers, and other mental health professionals are needed more than ever. Much of their expertise and interventions are built on the therapeutic skills presented in this book (Ivey & Ivey, 2020; Zalaquett, 2020).

Now more than ever, listening skills help address social challenges, improve relationships, advance wellness, better mental health, promote advocacy, and create a more multiculturally humble, equitable, and just society.

The universal power of intentional listening is observed across all theories in counseling and psychotherapy and across every dimension of human interaction, including the COVID-19 and racism pandemics (Ivey & Ivey, 2020). Building on this foundation, the first half of the book focuses on empathy and listening skills and the building of the therapeutic relationship and structuring of an effective session. Later chapters will discuss influencing skills and strategies, designed to provide you with many possibilities for empowering your clients to take charge, find meaningful goals, change their lives, and contribute to their communities and societies. The book concludes with integrative applications and illustrates how these skills can be applied to multiple theories of counseling and therapy and how you can integrate this learning with your own way of being to advance your own personal style of helping.

**Chapter 1. Intentional Interviewing, Counseling, and Psychotherapy** offers an overview and a road map of what this book can do for you. We begin by defining interviewing, counseling, and psychotherapy. Counseling is best considered both a science and an art. We present the central skills of counseling, but it is you who will make this knowledge live in the interview and therapy session.

Culturally specific microskills are building blocks of effective counseling and psychotherapy and keys to relationship building. The chapter provides information about the importance of multiculturalism, social justice, and advocacy. Counseling changes the brain, and you will find skills supported by a basic neuroscience that will build what is called brain plasticity. The brain has the ability to rewire itself and you can make a difference in how your clients grow.

You are not taking this course by chance: something has led you here, with unique abilities oriented to helping others. We ask you to video record an interview as you start to identify your natural helping skills. This can serve as a baseline on which you can build your own approach to the helping fields. You will be asked to reflect on what brings you to the helping field. What do you want to do to help others grow and develop?

**Chapter 2. Ethics and Multicultural Competence: Stress and Trauma, Building Resilience** Ethics are the professional standards that all major helping professions observe and practice. There are guidelines on issues such as competence, informed consent, confidentiality, power, and social justice. Multicultural competence and multicultural humility focus on awareness, knowledge, skills, and action to meet the highly diverse clients we are likely to meet. You will be asked to examine yourself as a multicultural individual. Positive psychology, wellness, and therapeutic lifestyle changes (TLCs) enable clients to identify their strengths and resources to build resilience. This approach significantly facilitates resolving client life issues, focusing on what they “can do” rather than what they “can’t do.”

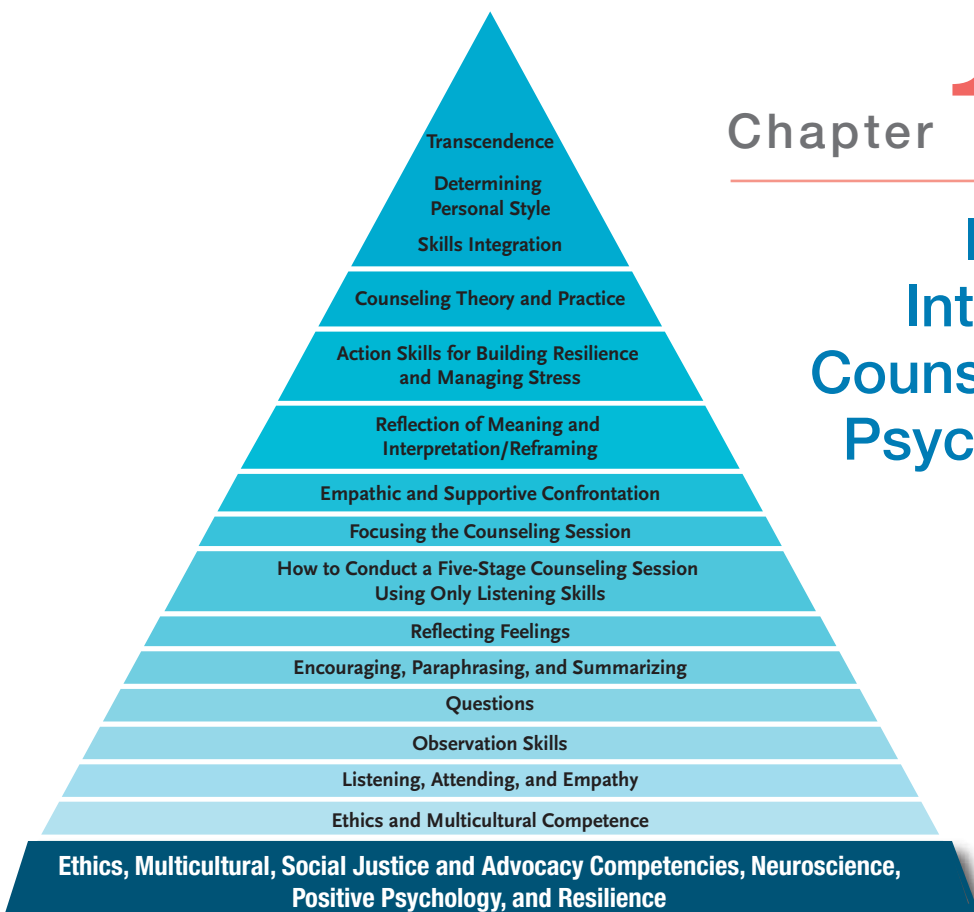
**Chapter 3. Listening, Attending, and Empathy: Essential for Relationship Building** presents the most basic skills of counseling and psychotherapy. Without the listening and attending skills, an empathic relationship cannot occur. Many beginning helpers inappropriately strive to solve the client’s issues and challenges in the first five minutes of the session by giving premature advice and suggestions. Please set one early goal for yourself: **Allow your clients to talk.** Observe closely how they are behaving, verbally and nonverbally. Your clients may have spent several years developing their concerns, issues, and life challenges before consulting you. Listen first, last, and always.

**Chapter 4. Observation Skills** builds on attending behavior and gives you the further opportunity to practice observing your clients’ verbal and nonverbal behavior. You are also asked to observe your own nonverbal reactions in the session. Clients often come in with a “hangdog” and “down” body posture. Between your observation and listening skills, you can anticipate that they will later have more positive body language, as well as a new story and a better view of self. You can help their bodies to stand up straight and their eyes to shine.

Begin this book with a commitment to yourself and your own natural communication expertise. Through the microskills approach, you can enhance your natural style with new skills and strategies that will expand your alternatives for facilitating client growth and development.

# Chapter 1

## Intentional Interviewing, Counseling, and Psychotherapy



We humans are social beings. We come into the world as the result of others' actions. We survive here in dependence on others. Whether we like it or not, there is hardly a moment of our lives when we do not benefit from others' activities. For this reason, it is hardly surprising that most of our happiness arises in the context of our relationships with others.

—The Dalai Lama

### Chapter Goals and Competency Objectives

Each chapter of this book is organized around the counseling framework of awareness, knowledge, skills, and action. Awareness and knowledge of counseling and therapy are

obviously essential, but they are not really meaningful until skills are built and taken into action beyond the textbook to the real world.

#### Awareness and Knowledge

- Define and discuss similarities and differences among interviewing, counseling, and psychotherapy, and review who actually conducts most of the helping sessions. Explore counseling and psychotherapy as both science and art. This may be surprising and rewarding.
- Identify intentionality and cultural intentionality as bases for increasing your flexibility to reach a wide variety of clients with humility as you face an endless array of concerns, issues, and challenges—and these include advocacy—to self, family, and community.
- Examine key goals of counseling and psychotherapy: self-actualization, resilience, and advocacy and resolution of client issues and challenges, such as trauma and mental disorders.
- Consider the value and place of cutting-edge neuroscience in your own approach to counseling and psychotherapy.
- Identify the locations where counseling and psychotherapy are practiced, including remote telemental health or telepsychology.

## Skills and Action

- Ability to assess and evaluate your own helping style. As your first practical exercise, video record a counseling session with a volunteer demonstrating your natural style of communicating and helping. This provides a baseline so that later you can examine how your counseling style may have changed and grown during your time with this book. Practicing and developing a Portfolio of Competencies provide a summary and journal of your experience.
- Ability to reflect on yourself as a potential helper. Whereas science undergirds what is said here, you as an independent artist will find your own integration of knowledge and skills.
- Ability to conceptualize and plan to use the Microskills Hierarchy, which provides a foundation for interview action. The skills hierarchy can be used to examine your early behavior as a counselor/therapist. It also will be useful in becoming skilled in multiple theories and approaches to counseling and therapy, including person-centered therapy, cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), and crisis and trauma counseling, as well as in coping with many types of discrimination, including that based on race, gender, sexual orientation, and disability.

## Interviewing, Counseling, and Psychotherapy

Sienna, sixteen years old, is eight months pregnant with her first child. She says, “I wonder when I’ll be able to see Freddy [baby’s father] again. Mom works hard to keep him away from me. I mean, I want him involved; he wants to be with me, and the baby. But my mom wants me home. His mom said she’s looking for a two-bedroom apartment so we could possibly live there, but I know my mom will never go for it. She wants me to stay with her until I graduate from high school and, well, to be honest, so that this never happens again [she points to her belly].”

I listen carefully to her story and later respond, “I’m glad to hear that Freddy wants to be involved in the care of the child and maintain a relationship with you. What are your goals with him? What happens when you talk with your mom about him?”

“I don’t know. We don’t really talk much anymore,” she says as she slumps down in her chair and picks away at her purple nail polish. I reflect her sad feelings, but as I do so, she brightens up just a bit as she recalls that most of the time she gets along with her mother fairly well.

She then describes her life before Freddy, focusing mainly on the crowd she hung around, a group of girls whom she says were wild, mean, and tough. Her mood returns to melancholy, and she seems anxious and discouraged. At the same time, the session has gone smoothly, and we seem to have a good relationship. I say, “I sense that you have a good picture of what you are facing. Well, it seems that there’s a lot to talk about. How do you feel about continuing our conversation before sitting down with your mom?”

Surprisingly, she says, “No. Let’s talk next week with her. I think she might come. The baby is coming soon and, well, it’ll be harder then.” As we close the session, I ask her, “As you look back on our talk together, what comes to mind?” Sienna responds, “Well, I feel a bit more hopeful, and I guess you’re going to help me talk about some important issues with my mom, and I didn’t think I could do that.”

This was the first step in a series of five sessions. As the story evolved, we invited Freddy for a session. He turned out to be employed and was anxious to meet his responsibilities, although finances remained a considerable challenge. A meeting with both mothers followed, and a workable action plan for all families was generated. I helped Sienna find a school with a special program for pregnant teens.



## Reflective Exercise

### Love is listening

Famed theologian Paul Tillich says, “Love is listening.” [Listening](#), [love](#), [caring](#), and [relationship](#) are all closely related. These four words could be said to be the center of the helping process.

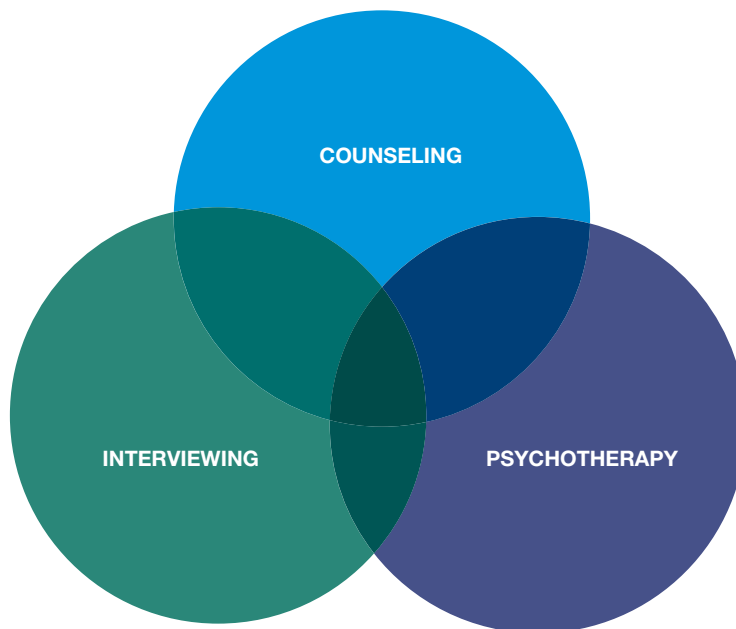
- What relevance do these words have in the meeting with Sienna?
- What are your reactions and thoughts about the centrality of these words?
- How might the science and art of counseling and psychotherapy speak to this issue?

This case exemplifies the reality of helping. We often face complex issues with no clear positive ending. If we can develop a relationship and listen to the story carefully, clearer goals develop, and solutions usually follow.

### Defining Interviewing, Counseling, and Psychotherapy

The terms [interviewing](#), [counseling](#), and [psychotherapy](#) are used interchangeably in this text. The overlap is considerable (see Figure 1.1), and at times interviewing will touch briefly on counseling and psychotherapy. Both counselors and psychotherapists typically draw on the interview in the early phases of their work.

**Interviewing** is the basic process used for gathering data, providing information and suggestions to clients, and offering workable alternatives for resolving concerns. Interviewers can be found in many settings, including employment offices, schools, and hospitals. Professionals in many areas also use these skills—for example, in medicine, business, law, community development, library work, and many government offices.



**Figure 1.1** The interrelationship of interviewing, counseling, and psychotherapy.

Closely related to interviewing, **coaching** is a short to medium term professional, collaborative relationship between a client and coach, aimed at the “identification, utilization, and development of personal/psychological strengths and resources in order to enhance positive states, traits and behavior” (van Zyl et al., 2020). Many aspects of the coaching movement are closely related to counseling and psychology’s history, but coaching is now recognized as a separate profession.

**Counseling** is a more intensive and personal process. Counseling’s focus is on listening to and understanding a client’s life challenges and then developing strategies for change and growth. Counseling is most often associated with the professional fields of counseling, human relations, clinical and counseling psychology, pastoral counseling, and social work and is also part of the role of medical personnel and psychiatrists.

**Psychotherapy** focuses on more deep-seated difficulties, which often require more time for resolution. Historically, psychotherapy was the province of psychiatrists, but they are limited in number, and today they mostly offer short sessions and treat with medications. Professionals other than psychiatrists conduct primarily talking therapy. Table 1.1 shows a total of 25,530 psychiatrists along with more than one million other helping professionals. Thus, it is only logical that other specialists, such as clinical and counseling psychologists, clinical mental health counselors, clinical rehabilitation counselors, and clinical social workers now provide most psychotherapy. All these professionals interview clients to obtain basic facts and information as they begin therapy, and they often provide counseling as part of the therapeutic process. The skills and concepts of intentional interviewing and counseling are equally necessary for the successful conduct of longer-term psychotherapy.

### Importance of Attending Sessions

For counseling and therapy to work, clients need to attend their sessions. Do they?

Studies indicate that the mean number of sessions attended per client of outpatient therapists is about six sessions, a number very similar to the 5.65 observed for student therapists (Meier, 2021). Studies also show differential rates of dropouts by population treated, type of treatment, and accommodations to client preferences. Henshaw, Wall, and Lourie (2020) indicate dropout rates in college counseling centers range from 16% to as high as 67%. In addition, Sue and Sue (2019) have noted that close to 50% of clients from minority groups may drop out after the first session. Dropouts represent opportunities missed for both client and counselor.

**Table 1.1** Numbers of Helping Professionals

|   |         |  |         |
|---|---------|--|---------|
| School & Career Counselors                                | 333,500 | Marriage and Family Counselors   | 62,200  |
| College Counselors  | 72,050  | Clinical, Counseling, and School Psychologists                           | 192,300 |
| Mental Health Counselors                                  | 139,820 | Child, Family and School Social Workers                                  | 320,170 |
| Rehabilitation Counselors                                 | 120,200 | Health Care Social Workers   | 174,890 |
| Substance Abuse and Behavioral Disorder Counselors        | 91,040  | Psychiatrists  | 25,530  |
| Human Service Workers—Social and Human Service Assistants | 425,600 | Professional Coaches identified by the International Coaching Federation | 41,500  |

U.S. Department of Labor. (2020). *Occupational Outlook Handbook*. [www.bls.gov/ooh/home.htm](http://www.bls.gov/ooh/home.htm). The Labor Department updates these data regularly.

The Center for Collegiate Mental Health (CCMH, 2021) reported clients attend an average of 4.35 individual sessions, including initial clinical evaluations and individual counseling. Clients attending counseling improve on their issues and beyond. A survey of 562 counseling center directors reported anxiety (60.7%), depression (48.6%), stress (47.0%), family concerns (29.0%), specific relationship problems (27.0%), and academic performance difficulties as frequent client concerns. The services of counselors not only helped the students overcome their issues but also helped them remain engaged in their institutions (62.3%) and improve their academic performance (66.2%) (AUCCCD, 2020; The Center for Collegiate Mental Health [CCMH], 2021).

There is also the possibility of harming clients and a common estimate is that 5% of clients feel that harm has been done (Crawford et al., 2016).

The failure to establish a relationship is a major cause, though some therapists have used inappropriate techniques. If the culture of the client is different and the therapist has had insufficient training and skill, or fails to follow ethical principles, errors may occur.

## The Science and Art of Counseling and Therapy

Is therapy effective? Yes! Many psychotherapies have been found to be effective interventions for a range of psychological concerns (Lambert & Kleinstäuber, 2019; Wampold, cited in No, 2019; Zalaquett, Ivey, & Ivey, 2019). Prochaska, Norcross, and Saul (2020) reviewed the results of thousands of randomized clinical trials (RCTs) and hundreds of meta-analyses and found research confirmed that psychotherapies work. “The typical client receiving psychotherapy is better off than 80% to 85% of untreated people within a dozen sessions. The average effect size of 0.85 compared with no treatment is a large, robust effect. Those numbers concretely translate into healthier and happier people” (p. 996).

Counseling and psychotherapy now have a solid research and evidence base that identify the many qualities and skills that lead to effectiveness. This research focuses on the factors that contribute to establishing an effective working relationship with the client (empirically supported relationships), as well as the effects of specific interventions (empirically supported treatments) (Norcross & Lambert, 2018).

But an evidence-based approach by itself is not enough. Counseling is both a science and an art. You as counselor are similar to an artist whose skills and knowledge produce beautiful paintings out of color, canvas, and personal experience. You are the listener who will

### Reflective Exercise

#### Where is your place in the helping field?

- Do you see yourself emphasizing interviewing, counseling, or psychotherapy?
- Given the many possibilities for service, which of the professions listed in Table 1.1 appeals to you most at this time?
- Would you rather work in a school, a community mental health clinic, a hospital, rehabilitation clinic, a business, private practice, telemental health practice, or community work preventing and treating alcohol and drug issues?
- What are your thoughts as to your responsibility in meeting the overall mental health needs of all clients, regardless of cultural background or those who may be in poverty or harassed because of race, social status, or LGBTQIA+ identity?
- Would you like to work to improve the overall mental health and well-being of your society?

provide color and meaning to the interpersonal relationship we call helping. And, like art, each interview and each client is unique.

Like the artist or the skilled athlete, you bring a natural talent to share with others and the flexibility to respond to surprises and change direction when necessary. Theories, skills, and strategies remain essential, but you are the one who puts them together and can uniquely facilitate the development and growth of others.

Please take a moment first to review the *Voices from the Field*, which explores how traditional counseling too often focuses only on problems. James Lanier suggests positive ways to draw out clients' stories and focus more on strengths.

## Voices from the Field

### National and International Perspectives on Counseling Skills

#### Problems, Concerns, Issues, and Challenges—How Shall We Talk About Client Stories?

James Lanier, University of Illinois, Springfield

There are different ways of listening to client stories. Counseling and therapy historically have tended to focus on client problems. The word **problem** implies difficulty and the necessity of eliminating or solving the problem. **Problem** may imply deficit. Traditional diagnosis such as that found in the *The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (5th ed. [DSM-5]; American Psychiatric Association, 2013) carries the idea of **problem** a bit further, using the word **disorder** with such terms as **panic disorder**, **conduct disorder**, **obsessive-compulsive disorder**, and many other highly specific disorders. The way we use these words often defines how clients see themselves.

I'm not fond of problem-oriented language, particularly that word **disorder**. I often work with African American youth. If I asked them, "What's your problem?" they likely would reply, "I don't have a problem, but I do have a concern." The word **concern** suggests something we all have all the time. The word also suggests that we can deal with it—often from a more positive standpoint. Defining **concerns** as **problems** or **disorders** leads to placing the blame and responsibility for resolution almost solely on the individual.

Recently, there has been increasing and particular concern about that word **disorder**. More and more, professionals are realizing that the way people respond to their experiences is very often a **logical response to extremely challenging situations**. Thus, the concept of posttraumatic stress *disorder* (PTSD) is now often referred to as a *stress reaction*. Posttraumatic stress reaction (PTSR) has

become an alternative name, thus normalizing the client's response. Still others prefer to **avoid naming** at all and seek to work with the thoughts, emotions, and behaviors of the stressed clients.

Finding a more positive way to discuss client concerns and stories is relevant to all your clients, regardless of their backgrounds. *Issue* is another term that can be used instead of **problem**. This further removes the pathology from the person and tends to put the person in a situational context. It may be a more empowering word for some clients. Carrying this idea further, **challenge** may be defined as a call to our strengths. All of these terms represent an **opportunity for change**.

Remember, if you listen carefully to most stories, what at first seems "abnormal" often will gradually become more understandable as you discover that the client has presented a "normal" response to an insane situation.

As you work with clients, please consider that change, restorying, and action are more possible if we help clients maintain awareness of already existing personal strengths and external resources. Supporting positive stories helps clients realize the positive assets they already have, thus enabling them to resolve their issues more smoothly and effectively, and with more pride—specifically, they become more actualized. Then you can help them restory with a **can-do** resilient self-image. Out of this will come action, generalizing new ideas and new behaviors to the real world.

## Cultural Humility and Intentionality: The Flexible, Aware, and Skilled Counselor

All interviewing and counseling are multicultural.

Each client comes to the session embodying multiple voices from the past.

—Paul Pedersen

The culturally intentional counselor acts with a sense of purpose (intention), skill, and respect for the diversity of clients. **Cultural intentionality** is a central goal of this text. We ask you not only to be yourself but also to realize that to reach a wide variety of clients, you need to be flexible, constantly changing behavior and learning new ways of being with the uniqueness of each client. There are many ways to facilitate client development.

Furthermore, practice cultural humility, an orientation to care for clients that is based on self-reflexivity and self-awareness, valuing clients' expertise on the social and cultural context of their lives, openness to establishing power-balanced relationships, and a lifelong dedication to learning. The counselor is willing to learn from clients about their experiences without forgetting their own cultural context and exploring their own beliefs, values, and biases through introspection (Lekas, Pahl, & Fuller, 2020). Humility is becoming a central part of multicultural competence and opens an intrapersonal and interpersonal approach toward person-centered care.

The word **intentionality** speaks to the importance of being in the moment and responding flexibly to the ever-changing situations and needs of clients. Beginning students are often eager to find the “right” answer for the client. In fact, they are so eager that they often give quick patch-up advice that is inappropriate. Even experienced counselors can become encapsulated into one way of thinking, and may focus on potential client's shortcomings, forgetting the impactful influence of societal or contextual factors such as racism, inequalities, and access barriers to needed services, including mental health and counseling services.

In short, flexibility—the ability to move in the moment and change style—is basic to the art form of helping. But this needs to be based on solid knowledge, awareness, and skills that are then turned into culturally intentional action. For example, your own personal issues or cultural factors such as ethnicity, race, gender, lifestyle, socioeconomic background, or religious orientation may have biased your response and session plan for Sienna.

The words **cultural intentionality** speak to the fact that the interview occurs in a cultural context, and we need to be aware of diversity and difference. Culturally intentional counseling and psychotherapy are concerned not with which single response is correct but with an awareness that different people from varying backgrounds respond uniquely. We can define **cultural intentionality** as follows:

Cultural intentionality is acting with a sense of capability and flexibly deciding from among a range of alternative actions. The culturally intentional individual has more than one action, thought, or behavior to choose from in responding to changing life situations and diverse clients. The culturally intentional counselor or therapist remembers a basic rule of helping: **If a helping lead or skill doesn't work—try another approach!**

**Multiculturalism**, also referred to as diversity or cross-cultural issues, is now defined quite broadly. Once it referred only to the major racial groups, but now the definition has expanded in multiple ways. The story is that we are all multicultural. If you are White, male, heterosexual, from Alabama, a Methodist, able-bodied, a veteran, and raised in a rural area, you have a distinct cultural background. Just change Alabama to Connecticut or California, and you are different