

Reflexive Questioning as a Means to Enable Intimacy with Couples

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Clinical Interviewing

- Assessment vs Therapy
- Questions vs Statements
 - Statements set forth the interviewer's views
 - Questions bring forth the client's views
- Complexities of linguistic communication
 - Questions can embed statements
 - Statements can embed questions

Dimensions in Questioning

- Open vs closed questions
- Who, what, where & how questions vs “why” questions
- Effects of questions & their answers
 - information conveyed to interviewer
 - altered experience of interviewee

Dimensions in Questioning (cont'd)

- The interviewer's "power" in the interviews
 - In formulating a question
 - The question defines the domain of a legitimate response
 - In the process of asking the question
 - Contextual expectations
 - Impositional vs invitational manner
 - Conveyed by context, tone, cadence, non-verbal expressions, etc

4 Major Types of Questions

1. Lineal questions

- Clarify sequences over time
- Intent is to develop a sequential understanding for interviewer

2. Circular questions

- Clarify here and now situation and relationships
- Intent is to develop a contextural understanding for interviewer

4 Major Types of Questions (cont'd)

- 3. Reflexive questions
 - Intent to influence client therapeutically
 - Open space for alternative meanings that are healing or enhanced understanding that supports wellness
 - Selectively mobilize own knowledge and competencies
 - Invitational (less impositional)

4 Major Types of Questions (cont'd)

- 4. Strategic Questions
 - Intent to influence client correctively
 - Close space to accept the interviewer's views as preferred
 - Impositional (less invitational)

Effects of Different Types of Questions

- Lineal questions
 - Conservative effect on interviewer
 - Judgmental effect on both
- Circular questions
 - Liberating effect on interviewee
 - Accepting effect on both

Effects of Different Types of Questions (cont'd)

- Reflexive questions
 - Generative effect on client
 - Creative effect on clinician
- Strategic questions
 - Constraining effect on client
 - Oppositional effect on both

Types of Reflexive Questions

- Future Oriented Questions
- Observer Perspective Questions
- Unexpected Context Change Questions
- Embedded Suggestion Questions
- Normative Comparison Questions
- Distinction Clarifying Questions
- Questions Introducing Hypotheses
- Process Interruption Questions

Sequences of Reflexive Questions

- Co-constructing hope
- Co-constructing responsibility
- Creating conditions for child acceptance of a step parent
- Deconstructing shame and guilt
- Opening space for apology, forgiveness and reconciliation

Co-constructing Hope

- A Working Definition of Hope
 - Living a preferred future in the present
- Sequence of Questions
 - Bringing forth preferences (interests, desires and/or passions)
 - Opening space for future possibilities
- Possible Complication
 - Fostering unrealistic hopes

Co-constructing Responsibility

- A Working Definition of Responsibility
 - Living consistently with an awareness of whether one likes or dislikes the consequences of one's own actions

Co-constructing Responsibility (cont'd)

- Sequence of Questions
 - Search for positive intentions in taking action
 - Open space for awareness of a difference between intended effects and actual effects of actions taken
 - Bring forth an awareness of one's own feelings about the actual effects
 - Invite reflection on alternative actions

Child Acceptance of a Step-Parent

- Bring forth an awareness of the effects of the quality and strength of the step relationship on the partnership
- Open space for an acknowledgment of differential attachments between the child and step-parent vs natural parent
- Co-construct a means to promote growth in the step relationship and diminish the parental imbalance in attachment

Bifurcation Questioning

- Example of reflexive questions that empower
- A means to co-construct awareness of alternatives and self as agent in making choices
- A branching structure in the question
 - Past choices
 - Present options
 - Future possibilities

Internalized Other Interviewing

- Reflexive questions that deepen understanding of and empathy for the other
- Based on a view of the self as constituted by an internalized community
- A means to selectively disclose and affirm another's understanding and feelings about the relationship and the self

Additional Reflexive Questions

- Grounding Questions
- Externalizing Questions
- Internalizing Questions
- Agency Questions
- Re-construction Questions
- Audience Questions
- Interpersonal Pattern Questions

Additional Reflexive Questions (cont'd)

- Motivating Questions
- Responsibility Questions
- Re-emotioning Questions
- De-construction Questions
- Endurance Questions
- Self Reflexive Questions



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