SELECTED ASPECTS OF THE HELPING INTERVIEW

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SELECTED ASPECTS OF THE HELPFING INTERVIEW

Social workers, psychologists, and counselors participate in many types of activities in fulfilling their roles as helpers, but they spend more time in interviewing than in any other single activity (15:7). Therefore, the interview is one of the helping person's most important tools.

Interviewing has been likened to a "professional conversation" or a conversation with a purpose (12:8, 15:8). Unfortunately for the beginning interviewer there is no set of rules that can guide him through his first "professional conversation." Interviewing takes place between unique human beings, and therefore cannot be reduced to a formula. This is an important concept to remember while reading this paper.

Because of the importance of the interview to the helping professional, this paper is devoted to selected aspects of the interview which include: a) mutual concerns of the interviewer and interviewee, b) the physical environment, c) body language, and d) silence in the interview. The author attempts only to provide general guidelines on these topics because of the uniqueness of each interviewer and interviewee.

MUTUAL CONCERNS OF THE INTERVIEWER AND INTERVIEWEE

The counselor and counselee have separate and distinct roles in the interview, yet they share many of the same con-
cerns related to the counseling situation. For example, use of first names, how to dress, and length of the interview are issues of equal concern to the interviewer and interviewee. On the other hand, how to handle interruptions is more a concern of the interviewer, and privacy and confidentiality will be of utmost concern to the interviewee.

**Privacy and Confidentiality**

Many times the interviewee doesn't realize the interview is a confidential conference and that there are laws to protect his privacy. The counselee should be made aware of these facts. He will feel less threatened once he knows the interview is confidential, and this will facilitate communication. However, the counselor should honestly specify at the outset of the interview the limits of confidentiality that can be observed. Not everything said in a counseling situation can be kept confidential. For example, social workers, doctors, and many other helping people are required by law to report child abuse. By being honest with the client and giving him this information, he will be more inclined to be honest with the interviewer (15:54, 25:46).

Many agencies have their own rules with regard to privacy and confidentiality. For example, it is not uncommon to have a rule against removing records from the office. Once the records have left the office they could easily get lost, and confidentiality would be betrayed. It is the interviewer's responsibility to make sure his records are kept private and
not to misuse the confidences of his clients. It may seem harmless to tell coworkers incidents from an interview, but this should be avoided. This gives the impression that the confidence was not taken seriously, and it also suggests that the attitude toward the client is condescending (12:58). Without privacy and confidentiality clients would not seek out helping professionals to whom they could reveal their thoughts and feelings. Yet, knowing that the interview is private is only one factor that affects communication. The next section deals with an opposite factor, one that is not conducive to communication—interruptions.

Interruptions

A general rule to follow is to avoid as many interruptions and interferences as possible. One way to do this is to let others know you are interviewing and don't want to be disturbed. Telephone conversations should also be avoided. Messages can be taken and calls can be returned later. If it is an emergency, the interviewer should let the client know that the interruption could not be avoided (1:4).

The more interruptions there are, the more the flow of the interview will be disturbed. If the interruptions take precedence over the client, he will begin to think he is not important to the counselor. The degree to which disruptions will affect the interview will depend on the frequency and length of the disturbances, how the client views the interruptions, and how the interviewer handles them (25:94). Interruptions
can be awkward, but the skillful interviewer will be able to handle them gracefully with practice. Another disconcerting situation is the topic of the following section——salutations. Should the counselor and counselee greet each other informally with first names or formally with last names.

Salutations

The use of first names depends to a great extent on the type of setting one is in and on the relationship between the interviewer and the client. It is never acceptable to call the adult client by his first name and expect him to address the interviewer with his last name. This implies that the interviewer is in the superior position and the client is in the inferior position. It therefore creates a situation where the interviewer is looked upon as an adult and the client feels like a child. If first names are to be used, both the interviewer and the client should use each other's first name (28:14).

When the client greets the interviewer in a formal manner and the interviewee greets the client in an informal manner, this creates a psychological distance between the two. In the ensuing section on clothing, this same phenomena is discussed with regard to wearing apparel. Clothes and expensive jewelry which accentuate the difference between an upper-middle-class interviewer and a lower-class interviewee can increase the psychological distance between the two just as differences in salutation can.
**Dress**

Since most parts of our bodies are covered with clothes, our first impressions of a person are influenced more by the clothes he is wearing than any other single thing about him. Clothes can be studied from a greater distance than facial expression and can give information on age, sex, occupation, nationality, and social standing. Thus, this allows one to adjust his behavior toward a person before having ever spoken to him (9:15).

The only clear guideline with regard to clothes is that the interviewer's dress should not impose an obstacle to communication with the client. This means that the interviewer needs to take into consideration the expectations of the client. It is probably best to project as neutral an image as possible. One never knows how a political button will affect an interviewee. At the very least, one needs to be aware that such items do have their effects (15:281, 28:13).

Although the clothing of an interviewer may have an impact on the client, a study conducted by Stillman and Resnick showed that the impact may be very small and insignificant. Each of the fifty subjects that took part in this study participated in a twenty minute interview with either a professionally or casually attired counselor and then responded to the Disclosure Scale and the Counselor Attractiveness Rating Scale. No significant differences were found. Results indicated that counselor attire had little effect on a client's disclosure or his perception of the counselor (30:348). Just as there
is disagreement in the research literature on the affects of counselor attire, so there is also disagreement on the optimum length of an interview. The next section broaches this subject and presents several author's opinions on this topic.

**Length of the Interview**

It is usually best to inform the client of time limits and let him know he will have a specified amount of time that he may or may not use. This removes ambiguity, and the client doesn't feel that he is imposing on the interviewer. A knowledge of time limits makes for different use of time by both the client and the interviewer. It seems that the knowledge of time limits motivates the client and the interviewer to be more specific and concise in working on the problem situation (12:55, 28:40).

Since time limits are necessary in the Western world, considerations of age, ethnic background, and urgency of problems are the foundations for arranging time limits. Another element to consider when planning the interview is the degree of fatigue which may be noticeable in the client. The attention span of the interviewer should also be considered (25:145).

Alfred Benjamin suggests that thirty to forty-five minutes is long enough for an interview. He says, "What is not said during this period would probably remain unsaid even if the interview time was extended" (1:17). Annette Garrett, in her book *Interviewing: Its Principles and Methods*, states that
interviews should be no longer than an hour. Longer inter­
views exhaust both the client and the interviewer (12:56). 
Margaret Shubert takes a broader position and recommends
somewhere between forty-five minutes and an hour and a quarter
(28:39).

Even though these authors have different ideas on what
the optimum length of an interview is, most recommend a wrap­
up period. This is generally a ten minute period where no
new material is begun. They also recommend the interviewer
take a few minutes between each interview to think over the
interview and note any significant aspects of it. The inter­
val between interviews can and should be used to clear one's
mind and to prepare for the next person (12:56, 25:181).

The first section of this paper dealt with personal con­
cerns of the interviewer and interviewee and how this af­
fected the counseling atmosphere. Privacy and confidentiality,
interruptions, salutations, dress, and length of the inter­
view were the sub-topics discussed. The second portion takes
a less personal viewpoint and deals with the physical en­
vironment in which the interview is conducted.

THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

There is growing awareness in the architectural profes­
sion that buildings, both the interior and the exterior, need
to be designed and furnished with the group or individual who
will be using the building in mind. Similarly, psychologists
have become aware of how the physical environment affects
human behavior. This area of psychology whose focus is on the relationship between the physical environment and human behavior is called environmental psychology (14:9).

Architects and psychologists have joined forces in recent years in order to determine how buildings influence behavior. For a long time psychologists and architects have known that people's reactions to all environments fall into one of two categories, approach or avoidance. They also know that physical settings evoke such human responses as attitudes, values, desires, and expectancies. What they don't fully understand is what causes an approach or avoidance reaction, and why some rooms cause positive attitudes, values, desires, and expectancies, and others cause negative feelings (5:70, 19:3, 24:28).

This section is devoted to the physical environment in which the interview takes place and how an interviewer can enhance the counseling atmosphere by being aware of how his office affects the behavior and attitudes of his client. More specifically, this section is sub-divided into five sections which include: a) privacy, b) what office decor can convey, c) proximity and configuration, d) furniture and furniture arrangement, and 3) other mechanics.

Privacy

A private and relaxed atmosphere is the best type of setting in which to conduct an interview. Although Holahan found that counselees are as responsive verbally in private
and nonprivate settings, their conversation becomes less personal when their privacy is invaded. That is, the counselees begin to discuss the experiences of people in general or third parties rather than their own personal experiences. Holahan also found some evidence that suggests the negative effects of invasion of privacy may be decreased through the use of partitions. Partitions in an open concept office can increase psychological comfort if not actual privacy (12:55, 14:99,107).

Often clients have come a long distance to get to the interview, and many times they have their children with them. If clients are likely to be accompanied by children, a separate playroom and toys is the ideal solution. This protects the client's privacy and allows him to give his full attention to the interview since he doesn't have to take care of the child (15:116). Privacy is important in getting the interview off to a good start, but it is only one factor influencing the interview. The next section on office decor is another factor that can help or hinder an interview.

**What Office Decor Can Convey**

The way an office is designed and decorated will convey the values of the interviewer. Furthermore, the symbolism that a client may read into the way an office is decorated will influence the social contact that is made with him. For example, is the interviewer's office designed so that there is a barrier between the client and the interviewer? This can be a physical barrier, such as a desk, or a psychological one.
A psychological barrier can be built up if the interviewer decorates his office with very expensive art objects that serve to emphasize the gap in socioeconomic status between the interviewer and the client. This may make the client feel inferior and hinder communication (5:67, 4:90).

The goal is to provide an atmosphere that is conducive to communication. Thus, one's office should not be overwhelming, noisy, or distracting. However, a professional atmosphere need not impede the interview. The interviewer's professional equipment need not be hidden. What the client should not see, such as the files of another client, should be put away before the interview begins. The attitudes and values of the interviewer can be transmitted to the client through office decor. The spatial arrangement of the furniture can also reveal the same affects. This is referred to as proximity and configuration and is the theme of the next section.

Proximity and Configuration

Proximity and configuration are two factors that influence social encounters. "Proxemics refers to the way man regulates the spatial features of his environment and the impact of that environment on his behavior." Therefore, whether we meet or not is related to proximity. Configuration determines how well the meeting goes. Seating positions, angle of communicators, and head to head distance between conversationists are directly related to the configuration of a meeting.
place, and should be part of the criteria for designing places where people come together (5:51, 13:319).

Merrabian and Diamond found that interviewers and interviewees who sit closer together are more likely to communicate, and the more direct their orientation is to one another, the more likely they are to talk (22:288). Furthermore, the distance between the interviewer and the interviewee should not be so great that the interviewer cannot reach over and touch the interviewee if this should prove desirable. Increasing distance between the interviewer and client makes it more likely that the interviewer will miss the subtle changes of expression on the client's face (15:116). An interviewer with a knowledge of proximity and configuration and how this affects the interview process will think twice before haphazardly arranging his office furniture. Therefore, the next section on furniture and furniture arrangement is a natural complement to this section.

Furniture and Furniture Arrangement

Furnishings for offices should be of good quality and similar to those used in other offices. For example, material such as leather is appropriate yet not pretentious. Smaller items, such as knickknacks and pictures, should reflect the general tastes of the clients using the office. This gives a sense of familiarity and is therefore more relaxing to the client (4:95).

Osmond coined a term "sociopetal" which means bringing people together. A greater amount of conversation and more
intimate conversation will occur in a room in which the furniture is arranged in a "sociopetal" way. In other words, conversation is facilitated when chairs are drawn together in clusters (24:256).

The desk is usually the focus point of an office and is an important part of the office furnishings. A desk may prove to be a barrier for a feeling of intimacy, yet some interviewers are more comfortable behind a desk. The interviewer who chooses to sit behind a desk should realize that the desk can become an obstacle that blocks nonverbal communication. For example, a desk between the participants of an interview means that the lower part of the body is unobservable. Gestures of the counselee such as foot tapping, hands clenched tightly in the lap, and clasped knees are masked from view (25:94). Other options are to face each other without a desk or to place the chairs at a 90° angle with a small table near by. With this arrangement, the interviewee can face the interviewer or look away easily. The table fulfills normal functions or at least doesn't get in the way. The arrangement and kind of chairs used, straight-backed or upholstered, should be determined by concepts of comfort as well as the feelings and needs of the client and the interviewer (25:94).

Haase and DiMattia studied counselor and client preferences for interview seating arrangements by using four pictures of a male and female talking to each other. The most preferred position, as indicated by both counselor and client, was the
one in which the participants interact over the corner of the
desk. Talking over the corner of a desk is somewhat open yet
provides a partial barrier. Other choices were across a
desk, chairs directly facing each other, and chairs at a 45°
angle with no desk.

Counselors also preferred angled chairs with no desk
while clients preferred this the least. Inasmuch as this
seating arrangement is frequently found in counselor's offices,
this causes one to speculate about the client's reaction to
being maneuvered into a situation where the furniture is ar­
ranged for the comfort of the counselor and not for the client
(13:323). In any interviewing situation it is best to have
the client as comfortable and relaxed as possible. This may
mean that the office furniture should be arranged in a manner
not preferred by the interviewer. Other mechanics of the
office atmosphere such as lighting, temperature, music, and
pictures need to be pleasing to the client in order that the
interview gets off to a good start.

Other Mechanics

There are other mechanics involved in the physical ar­
rangements and furnishings of the office such as lighting,
temperature, pictures, and music. Is there too much light
or not enough light? Should one rely on sunlight or electric
light? And is the light shining in the interviewee's eyes?
These are a few of the questions that need to be considered
with regard to office illumination. There should be enough
light to allow nonverbal communication to be seen clearly, but there shouldn't be so much light that it hurts the eyes. Using sunlight or electric light is largely dependent on weather conditions and if the interviewer is fortunate enough to have an office with a window (15:116).

This writer could find no author who was brave enough to state what the ideal temperature of a room should be. Each person has his or her own room temperature preference, and it is unlikely to coincide with someone else's. A general rule is to keep the humidity around 50% and the temperature somewhere between 70° and 75° (24:476).

When decorating the office with pictures, one needs to consider the affect they may have on the client. Are they provoking, calming, or stimulating. Pictures in the room where the interview is to be conducted should be neutral (15:117).

Music can cause the same emotions as pictures. Loud, fast music has an arousing quality, whereas slow, simple, soft music tends to lower arousal levels and give a relaxed feeling. The more pleasant the music, the more likely one is to display approach behavior (19:49).

Mintz and Norbett conducted a study designed to see what, if any, effects a beautiful or ugly room would have on people. Ugly rooms caused such reactions as monotony, fatigue, headaches, sleep, discontent, irritability, hostility, and avoidance of the room. The beautiful room caused feelings of comfort, pleasure, enjoyment, importance, energy, and a desire to continue activity. Therefore, one can conclude that the ap-
pearance of a room can have significant effects upon persons exposed to them. This means that the beauty of a room, or lack thereof, can have grave implications for the outcome of an interview (23:465).

There is no doubt that the physical environment influences people's behavior. People adjust to the environment without being aware that they are doing so. Humans have become so adept at accommodating to their environment that the complex social adjustments involved require no conscious decision. Generally our physical surroundings don't enter into our awareness until problems are encountered with them. It is only when temperature, sound, light, space, colors, and other design and structural aspects of the physical environment deviate from what we are accustomed to that the environment intrudes upon our consciousness.

The second major portion of this paper dealt with the physical setting in which the interview takes place. Privacy, what office decor can convey, proximity and configuration, furniture and furniture arrangement, and other mechanics were the sub-topics discussed. In the third section, the fascinating area of nonverbal communication will be introduced.

NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION

Freud once commented that:

"He who has eyes to see and ears to hear may convince himself that no mortal can keep a secret. If his lips are silent he chatters with his finger-tips; betrayal oozes out of him at every pore." (10:94)
It is the consensus of those prominent in the field of nonverbal communication that one can infer feelings more accurately through body language than spoken communication. Although nonverbal behavior is limited in range, it usually is used to communicate feelings, likes, and preferences. It reinforces or contradicts the feelings that are communicated verbally. Even though body language is less subject to deception than other types of communication, it is possible for one nonverbal message to contradict another.

Although there have been rapid advances in recent years in the information on nonverbal communication, one cannot reliably predict its meaning. When ascribing meaning to nonverbal events, one must consider the context in which the events occur and the verbal accompaniments. It is the context that gives meaning to the nonverbal communication (15: 269, 278). This concept should be kept in mind when reading the following sub-sections on nonverbal communication which include: a) the importance of nonverbal communication, b) body orientation, c) relaxation, d) the face, e) the eyes, f) the voice, g) distance, and h) deceit.

The Importance of Nonverbal Communication

Nonverbal communication conveys much information if one knows what to look for. Touching, facial expression, tone of voice, spatial distance from addressee, relaxation of posture, rate of speech, number of errors in speech, changes in size of pupils, tensing of neck muscles, slight changes in
skin coloration, and changes in respiration are just a few examples of nonverbal communication that one should be conscious of.

Why should one be aware of nonverbal behavior? For the interviewer, nonverbal communication is a significant factor in the counseling situation. Nonverbal behavior is indicative of the state of the relationship. It may communicate what the interviewee cannot bring himself to say, and it can provide information about feelings that are unconscious to the interviewee.

So much interest has been generated in the area of nonverbal communication that a formula for predicting its contribution to the total impact of a message has been worked out. Albert Mehrabian, a prominent researcher in nonverbal communication, has developed this equation: Total Impact = .07 verbal + .38 vocal + .55 facial (17:53). According to this equation, one can see that 93% of a message's impact is nonverbal. Even allowing for a large margin of error, one cannot deny the importance of this type of communication. Now that the significance of nonlinguistic behavior has been demonstrated, it is time to look at some of the specifics of this behavior.

Body Orientation

Body orientation refers to the degree to which a communicator's shoulders and legs are turned in the direction of, rather than away from, his addressee. Body orientation can
serve as an indicator of communicator attitude or status. When addressing a higher status addressee, body orientation is more direct (21:366). Mehrabian found that the various indexes of orientation of a communicator toward his addressee can be summarized in terms of shoulder orientation alone. Shoulder orientation is most direct for neutral addressees, least direct for disliked addressees, and moderately direct for liked addressees (20:28).

How can this information be useful to an interviewer? First, the body orientation of his client will give the interviewer a clue as to how comfortable the client feels about the interview and what his attitude toward the interviewer is. The client's body orientation will probably change as the interview progresses. If the interview is going well, his body orientation should become more direct. Secondly, the interviewer can use his own body orientation to become aware of his feelings toward the client. If progress is not being made in the interview and the interviewer notes that he has a very indirect body orientation toward his client, the problem may be that the interviewer is not as accepting of his client as he should be. Once the interviewer is aware of this, he can try to change his attitude or refer the client to someone else who will be better able to help him. For the interviewer, body orientation is an important way of getting in touch with his own feelings as well as the feelings of his client. The same is true for body relaxation.
Relaxation

Several unpublished experiments conducted by Mehrabian suggest that the following body positions define relaxation: sideways lean while seated, reclining angle, leg-position and arm-position asymmetry, arm openness, a lot of gesturing and rocking, and lower rates of swivel while seated in a chair.

A number of recent findings indicate that a smaller reclining angle of a communicator while seated, and therefore a smaller degree of trunk relaxation, communicates a more positive attitude. For example, Mehrabian found that both male and female addressees inferred a more negative attitude when the communicator was leaning backward and away from them than when he was in a forward leaning position.

Body relaxation seems to exhibit a linear relationship with status as follows: there is a high degree of relaxation with a low-status addressee, a moderate degree of relaxation with a high-status addressee, and an intermediate degree of relaxation with peers. What this means for the interviewer is that although he may feel very relaxed in an interview situation, chances are that his client perceives him as being of higher status, and the client is therefore not relaxed. It is important that the interviewer be aware of the tense feeling of his client in order that he can do everything he can to make his client feel comfortable. The interview will not be productive until both are relaxed and comfortable (21:369-371). These first sections on nonverbal
communication have focused primarily on the body. Although the face is considered part of the human body, it generally receives and deserves special attention. Therefore, the next few sub-sections will focus on the face and the information conveyed by it.

The Face

There is disagreement in the scientific community about which is most important in judging nonverbal communication—facial expressions or body acts (7:25, 11:71). Kadushin believes that the part of the body that offers the greatest number of cues is the face. The face can't be covered up with clothes like the rest of the body and is therefore more open to observation (15:272). Even though facial expressions are more open to observation, they are very brief. One must attend closely to the facial expressions of another person in order not to miss them. Facial expressions that last only a fraction of a second are called micro-expressions, while the more usual macro-expression lasts only a few seconds.

A study in which college students were used as subjects supported the idea of facial cues being the most important. These subjects weighted them more heavily than vocal cues, and the latter more heavily than the content when inferring the attitude of one person toward another (29:412). Another study on facial and bodily cues of genuineness, empathy, and warmth suggested that therapeutic attitudes are communicated through nonlinguistic behavior. Masking parts of pictures showed that subjects are responsive to facial rather than bodily cues (26: 236, 27:234).
The face has been known to portray six major emotions—happiness, sadness, surprise, fear, anger, and disgust. Although other emotions are portrayed they have not yet been firmly established. No matter what the exact number of emotions, they are shown primarily in the face, not the body. The body only shows how people are coping with the emotion (8:7, 14, 22). Some general information about facial cues has been given in this section, and the importance of the face in nonverbal communication was demonstrated. The next section takes a closer look at the face.

The Eyes

Two major functions are served by eye contact, the regulating function such as regulating the initiation or the termination of verbal exchanges, and the expressive function, that is, attitudes that are communicated through varying degrees of eye contact. Since the theme of this section is nonverbal communication, the second function will be emphasized (21:3e3).

Just as body orientation and relaxation are related to status relationships, so is eye contact. Eye contact with an addressee is a function of the status of that person. Eye contact is moderate with a very high-status addressee, at a maximum with a moderately high-status person, and at a minimum with a very low status addressee.

Direct eye contact, along with leaning forward and a warm smile are indicative of interviewer warmth. On the other hand, looking away and leaning away are associated with interviewer
coldness. Although direct eye contact is usually a positive thing, constant eye contact can indicate disrespect for the other person's privacy. It is interesting to note that removing sunglasses signifies openness while the removal of corrective lenses may indicate withdrawal since less can be seen with the glasses off (15:271-273).

If the interviewer uses eye contact to his advantage, he can convey warmth, empathy and attentiveness to his client. The interviewer can also recognize some of the feelings of his client by being aware of his eye contact. Another way of recognizing emotion is by listening to the voice.

The Voice

The voice is very emotional. It can break, tremble, choke, or be full of sighs. It can be flat, neutral, unexpressive or controlled, and it can be energetic or apathetic. The way in which the voice can convey different emotions is as follows:

1. Anger is usually expressed nonverbally as loud, fast speech with short pauses.
2. Grief and contempt is shown by slow speech with a lot of pauses.
3. Fear is expressed in a high pitched voice.
4. Anxiety is shown by a quavery voice, repetition of words, unfinished sentences, and stuttering. The rate of speech increases and there are more nonpurposive body movements.
5. Depression is characterized by a low speech rate with lots of silences.
6. Resentment is characterized by the use of a lot of gestures. In fact, more gestures are used when expressing resentment than when expressing any other emotion (15:269).

Referring to Mehrabian's formula for the total impact of a message, \( TI = 0.07 \) verbal + 0.38 vocal + 0.55 facial, one can see that a substantial portion of the impact is vocal (17:53). Thus, the voice of the interviewer and the interviewee are very important to the communication process and shouldn't be overlooked. The voice can convey many emotions and is a good indicator of which emotion is being expressed. Something that isn't very often thought about, distance, can also convey one's attitude toward another person.

**Distance**

In the United States, 6"-18" is considered to be intimate, 30"-48" is casual, while 7-12 feet is social, and 30 feet or up is public distance. If a communicator exceeds the distance which is appropriate to a given social situation or tries to maintain a smaller distance, then a negative attitude can be inferred by his addressee. The distance between a communicator and an addressee is correlated with the degree of negative attitude communicated to and inferred by the addressee. Attitudes that are inferred by distance are complicated by the fact that different countries and nationalities have different intimate, casual, social, and public distances. It is important for the interviewer to be aware of this fact and not to infer a negative attitude toward nor be offended by a client who is use to different social distances.
This is a good example of how a person's body language is not indicative of his attitudes or feelings. One must be careful when making inferences from body language because, as was mentioned in the introduction to this section, it is possible for nonverbal behaviors to be deceitful (21:362).

Deceit

Although body language is less subject to deception than other types of communication, it is possible for one nonverbal message to contradict another. When this occurs, areas of the body that transmit the least information are more informative when it comes to deception. For example, when a person is deceitful his feet and legs should be the most informative about the emotion he is concealing, then his hands, and finally his face. Why should this be so? There is more awareness and control of body areas that transmit the most information. Therefore, facial cues are less likely to be useful when trying to detect deceit because there is greater awareness and control of the messages that the face transmits (15:285, 18:85, 99).

Yes, body language can be deceitful, but an experiment carried out by Paul Ekman showed that facial expression and body position spontaneously shown during an interview are not random activity, but have communicative value related to the verbal behavior (6:301). Another study done by Dogan Cucelova showed that a fairly well structured code exists when encoding or decoding a facial expression and this supports the idea of
nonverbal communication as a valid one (3:407). Silence can be considered another form on nonverbal communication, but this writer felt it deserved special attention. Therefore, the forth and final portion of this paper will deal with silence in the interview.

SILENCE IN THE INTERVIEW

Freud thought of the counseling interview as a "talking cure." Talk is the raw material for the work of the interview. Consequently, the absence of talk seems to thwart the purpose of the interview. However, one must remember that silence is a communicative gesture. Sometimes silence may be more effective for achieving the purposes of the interview than conversation.

Every interviewer will have to deal with silence. In time he or she will become comfortable with it, but only the skillful interviewer will be able to detect what different silences mean and then be able to utilize these times to make progress in the interview. Having knowledge of silence in the interview will make the interviewer better able to deal with it. Therefore, this section has been subdivided into: a) interviewer comfort with silence, b) resuming the conversation, and c) different kinds of silence, with the hope of giving the beginning interviewer some basic idea of what is known about silence in the interview.
Interviewer Comfort With Silence

Eastern cultures are use to the quiet of meditation. In Western cultures, however, silence is a mark of incompetence. It is no wonder then that interviewers feel uncomfortable with silence. Often they consider it destructive or indicative that the client is holding back, resistant, or unmotivated. There is no doubt that silence should be valued more than it is. With time, an interviewer will learn a measure of confidence that will allow him to listen to his client's silence and allow him to permit a productive silence to continue. There is a point, however, where the conversation will have to resume (25:164, 1:24, 15:193).

Resuming the Conversation

There are no rules to follow for determining how long is too long a period for silence. But as long as the silence is communicating something and is not frightening the client, it is not harmful. It was found that an interviewer can increase or decrease the duration of an utterance of a client by increasing or decreasing his own utterances. The average length of an utterance can be increased by head nodding and saying "Mm-Hmm." Bandura explained this phenomena in terms of modeling (16:64-66).

If the client initiated the silence, the interviewer should let him assume the responsibility for resuming the conversation. Tindall and Robinson found that if the counselor waited silently until the counselee resumed the burden of the
conversation, the counselee would respond with a statement of his problem or introduce new and pertinent information. However, if the counselor takes over the responsibility, he will most likely fill in with inconsequential talk (31:139).

Since the normal role relationship between the interviewer and the interviewee is listener-talker, silence on the part of the interviewer acts as a stimulus to encourage the interviewee to continue talking. Most interviewee's will recognize their role responsibilities and will begin to talk. However, if the interviewee needs some direction, a silence will only compound his uncertainty. It is important to remember that not only is it the job of the interviewer to help the interviewee resume the conversation, but also to help him understand what prompted the silence.

Wolberg has developed a list of graded responses to silence in psychotherapy that is equally applicable to any helping interview. To a silence of five seconds or longer Wolberg suggests the following:

1. Say "mmhmm" or "I see" and then wait for a moment.
2. Repeat and emphasize the last word or the last few words of the patient.
3. Repeat and emphasize the entire last sentence or recast it as a question.
4. If this is unsuccessful, summarize or rephrase the last thoughts of the patient.
5. Say "and" or "but" with a questioning emphasis, as if something else is to follow.
6. If the patient still remains silent, the therapist may say, "You find it difficult to talk," or
"It's hard to talk." This focuses the patient's attention on his block.

7. In the event of no reply, the following remark may be made: "I wonder why you are silent?"

8. This may be succeeded by, "There are reasons why you are silent."

9. Thereafter the therapist may remark, "Perhaps you do not know what to say?"

10. Then: "Maybe you're trying to figure out what to say?"

11. This may be followed by: "Perhaps you are upset?"

12. If still no response is forthcoming, a direct attack on the resistance may be made with "Perhaps you are afraid to say what is on your mind?"

13. The next comment might be: "Perhaps you are afraid of my reaction, if you say what is on your mind?"

14. Finally if silence continues, the therapist may remark, "I wonder if you are thinking about me?"

15. In the extremely rare instances where the patient continues to remain mute, the therapist should respect the patient's silence and sit it out with him. Under no circumstances should he evidence anger with the patient by scolding or rejecting him. (32:164).

**Different Kinds of Silences**

Silence is a communicative gesture, and it can convey many of the interviewee's feelings or mood. It is up to the interviewer to deduce what each silence is communicating so he will know how to react. Following is a short description of several kinds of silences.

**Resisting**

In a resisting silence the client may feel that the interviewer is probing. He may be showing his opposition to
the authority figure the interviewer represents, or he may not feel ready to talk about what is really on his mind. On the part of a client who is forced to come in for an interview, his silence may have the nature of an attack. He may withhold information needed to conduct the interview and in this way show his opposition to it (1:25, 15:196)

The interviewer may find the resisting silence the most difficult to handle because he can interpret this type of silence as a personal attack or a rejection. However, the interviewer should avoid a response that shows he is being personally attacked. He might respond with something like, "I don't mind the silence. I do feel you are resenting me in some way. Wish you could tell me about it so we can deal with it." (25:167)

Toeing-the-mark

In this type of silence it is not unusual to have a client who views the interviewer-interviewee relationship as a parent-child relationship. In this case the client is probably quiet because he feels he should speak only when spoken to. Under these circumstances the interviewer must try to make the client feel as comfortable and relaxed as possible and encourage him to express his feelings (25:165).

Sorting-out

Sorting-out silence permits the interviewee to sift through his thoughts and feelings. It is a thinking silence which is reflective in nature and is usually very productive.
It usually occurs after a client has finished talking about an emotional experience. This silence should be respected. Words will only hinder (1:24).

Organizing

This type of silence is also known as "head work silence." The interviewer or the client organizes his answer, puts his thoughts in logical sequence, or summarizes his thoughts. An organizing silence is usually followed by a restatement or a further elaboration of the point just made (31:137).

Searching

The searching silence is characterized by indecision. The interviewee's role is very complicated and demanding. He may be at a point where he doesn't know which direction he wants to take or which topic he wants to pursue first. His silence is an expression of his indecision, and it gives him time to resolve his uncertainty. A searching pause can also be caused by emotional involvement with the topic. The client may be getting too close to the real source of the conflict. It is best not to rush this type of silence because often the client is trying to decide what he thinks and feels before he continues. Interrupting will destroy his train of thought (31:136, 1:25).

Defensive

Silence can also be used as a defense. Not putting thoughts and feelings into words makes them easier to deny.
The client may be afraid of being rejected if he voices his feelings. A clue to this type of silence may lie with the material which was being discussed immediately preceding the silence (25:166).

Confusing

A general rule to follow when there is a lull in the conversation because of confusion is the shorter the silence the better. The interviewer should try to alleviate the confusion as soon as he can. A short statement such as "What I meant was . . ." should suffice (1:25).

Soliciting

In this type of silence the counselee wants a reaction from the counselor such as approval, advice, or information. The interviewee will use the silence to force the interviewer to answer his question or provoke some response from the interviewer (31:137).

Retreating

A common kind of silence is called retreating silence. This occurs when both interviewer and interviewee speak at the same time. Often just a smile and a nod from the interviewer will suffice to get the conversation started again. If not, a brief statement like, "Sorry I got in the way. Go ahead.", will remedy the situation (25:167).

Terminating

Rarely is there any degree of emotional involvement in this type of pause. This is a nothing-else-to-say kind of
silence. The topic is finished, and it is natural to be silent when ending one part of a conversation. After this type of silence one should move on to a new topic or review what has been said (31:137).

There is no doubt that silence is an important part of every interview. The lulls in conversation that most interviewers feel uncomfortable with are an intricate and valuable part of the interview. Silence permits the work of synthesis to occur. It reduces tension, allows sorting out of feelings, and allows one a chance to gain his composure. Cook demonstrated the importance of silence to the interview. He found that continuous speech (only 0-3% of the total time was spent in silence) was found to occur in interviews that were not very successful, while a lesser percentage of speech was characteristic of successful interviews (2:44).

CONCLUSION

Each of the selected aspects of the helping interview that has been dealt with in this paper has one thing in common. The focus is not on what is said in the interview, but rather on other mechanics of the counseling atmosphere. It is possible for the nonverbal components of an interview, such as the physical setting or the clothes of the interviewer to have more of an impact on the interview than the verbal components. At the very least, an interviewer needs to be aware of these nonverbal components and their possible ramifications on the outcome of the interview.
REFERENCES


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