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FALL 2025 SOWK 486W
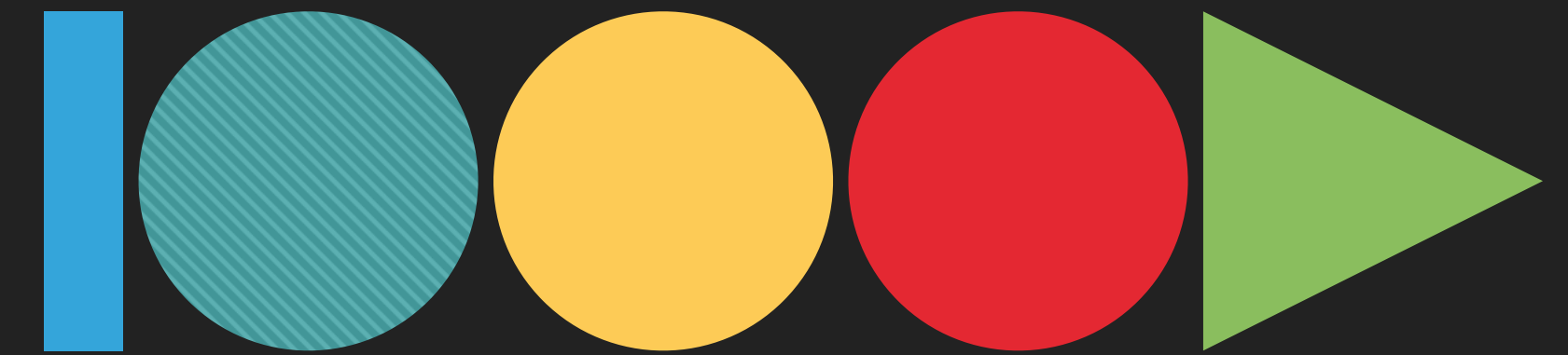
OVERVIEW OF THE HELPING PROCESS

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

AGENDA

▸ Overview of the three phases of the helping process

▸ Setting the environment

▸ Interviewing clients

▸ Practice with ethical dilemmas

- Describe the three phases of the helping process and identify key tasks associated with each phase.

- Demonstrate strategies for creating a supportive environment during client interviews, including setting, preparedness, and rapport-building.

- Practice and evaluate techniques for starting the interview, engaging clients, and initiating assessment.

- Identify behaviors and communication styles that enhance or inhibit client trust and motivation.

- Analyze ethical dilemmas using professional values and guidelines to inform decision-making in complex situations.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

▸ Who would

▸ you want to meet?

what would you do?

what would you wear?

how would you feel?

PHASES OF THE HELPING PROCESS

1 PHASE 1: EXPLORATION, ENGAGEMENT, ASSESSMENT, AND PLANNING

2 PHASE II: IMPLEMENTATION AND GOAL ATTAINMENT

3 PHASE III: EVALUATION AND TERMINATION

3

2

1

Exploration, Engagement, Assessment, and Planning

- Explaining the process, the services, and yourself

Exploring Clients' Problems

RAPPORT

Relationship description with strong rapport

Look and feel of a strong rapport

Developing strong rapport

Exploration, Engagement, Assessment, and Planning

Establishing rapport and enhancing motivation

STRATEGIES AND BEHAVIORS THAT IMPROVE CLIENT TRUST

MAINTAIN:

- Client comfort
- Confidentiality & trust
- Enthusiasm
- A collaborative relationship Interest in client concerns

- Objectivity
- Attentiveness
- Eye contact
- An open posture

AVOID:

- Passing judgement
- Jargon and technical language
- An authoritarian demeanor
- Interruptions

STRATEGIES AND BEHAVIORS THAT IMPROVE CLIENT TRUST

BE:

- Dependable

- Open minded

- Flexible

- Reassuring & supportive

- Confident

- Friendly

- Genuine

- Warm

- Sincere

- Honest

- Empowering

- Engaging and interactive

- Respectful of client wishes and needs

- Sensitive

- Empathetic

- Altruistic

USE:

- Open-ended questions

- Rationales for procedures, treatments and decisions

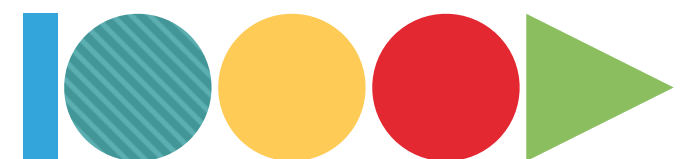WHAT ARE MICRO SKILLS? WHY ARE THEY IMPORTANT?

WHO'S GUIDING THE INTERVIEW

Jacob Campbell, Ph.D.
LICSW at Heritage University

Fall 2025 SOWK 486w

STARTING THE INTERVIEW

PURPOSE	SETTING
PREPAREDNESS	STARTING

STARTING THE INTERVIEW

PURPOSE

SETTING

PREPAREDNESS

STARTING

▶ The major goal of any interview is effective communication with the client.

▶ Interviews make use of communication with clients to solve problems, encourage positive change and promote clients well being.
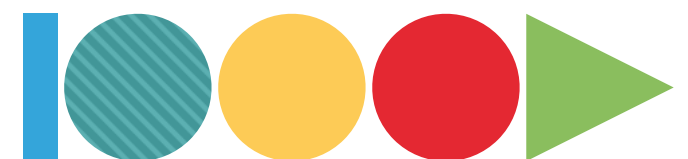
STARTING THE INTERVIEW

PURPOSE

SETTING

PREPAREDNESS

STARTING

▸ Variety of Setting

▸ How do we present ourselves?

▸ Timeliness

OFFICE SETUP

STARTING THE INTERVIEW

PURPOSE

SETTING

PREPAREDNESS

STARTING

▸ What information do you need to gather

▸ How long is the interview time frame
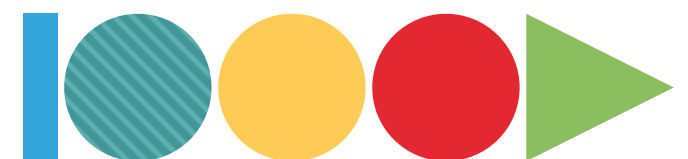
▸ Identify the purpose

STARTING THE INTERVIEW

PURPOSE

SETTING

PREPAREDNESS

STARTING

▸ Greetings

▸ Alleviate clients anxiety

THE INITIAL INTERVIEW

INTERVIEW STRUCTURE

▸ Rapport

▸ Starting with client motivation

▸ Use of an interpreter

DISCUSSING PROBLEMATIC SITUATIONS

▸ Determine clients' expectations

▸ Cultural differences

▸ Assesses the significance of information

FOCUSING IN DEPTH

▸ Outlines

▸ Moment-to-moment emotional reactions

▸ Clients' opinions and interpretations

▸ Substance abuse, violence, and sexual abuse

PROCESS OF GOAL NEGOTIATION

▸ Ending the interview process

▸ Continued use of interviewing skills

3

2

1

Exploration, Engagement, Assessment, and Planning

- Strengths-based approach

- Stages of change

Establishing rapport and enhancing motivation

3

2

1

Exploration, Engagement, Assessment, and Planning

Exploration begins by attending to the emotional states and immediate concerns manifested by the client. Gradually, the social worker broadens the exploration to encompass relevant systems (individual, interpersonal, and environmental) and explores the most critical aspects of the problem in depth.

— Hepworth et al. (2023) , p. 43

Formulating a multidimensional assessment

PHASES OF THE HELPING PROCESS

3

2

1

Exploration, Engagement, Assessment, and Planning

- Formulating a contact

- Solution-focused approach

Goals

3

2

1

Exploration, Engagement, Assessment, and Planning

Linking clients to other resource systems requires careful handling if clients are to follow through in seeking and obtaining essential resources.

Goals

PHASES OF THE HELPING PROCESS

3

2

1

Implementation and
Goal Attainment

A classmate has told you that they are Googling clients from their field agency as well as looking them up on Facebook. They state that the information is public, so there is no confidentiality involved, and the more they learn about them the better they can help them. In your own placement, workers send Snapchat messages to each other of the wacky ways clients dress and behave. They say it builds camaraderie in the team and is harmless since the photos and comments go away after only a few seconds.

- What conflicting principles and values are in play in the case?
- What are the pros and cons of the various courses of action?
- What guidelines are applicable in resolving this dilemma?
- What resources could you consult to help you decide on an ethical course of action?

ETHICS CASE 1

You are forming a youth group in a state correctional facility. From past experience, you know that members sometimes make references in the group to previous offenses that they have committed without being apprehended. You also know that they may talk about indiscretions or misdemeanors they (or others) may have committed or plan to commit within the institution, such as smoking marijuana, engaging in sexual encounters, receiving contraband from visitors, or stealing supplies or property from peers or staff. Are you required to share all the information you learn in the group? How can you encourage trust and sharing if there are limits to confidentiality?

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ETHICS CASE 2

In conducting an intake interview with a young woman in a family agency, you observe that both of her young children are withdrawn and listless. Throughout the interview, the client seems defensive, suspicious, and appears ambivalent about having come for the interview. At one point, she states that she feels overwhelmed with her parenting responsibilities and is having difficulty in coping with her children. She also alludes to her fear that she may hurt them but then abruptly changes the subject. As you encourage her to return to the discussion of her problems with the children, your client says that she has changed her mind about wanting help, takes her children in hand, and hastily leaves the office.

- What conflicting principles and values are in play in the case?
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- What resources could you consult to help you decide on an ethical course of action?

ETHICS CASE 3

You have been working in a mental health agency with a middle-aged male who has a history, when angered, of becoming violent and physically abusive. He has been under extreme psychological pressure lately because of increased expectations at work. In an interview today, he is extremely angry, clenching his fists as he tells you that his boss is giving him a hard time, singling him out for criticism, and threatening that he will lose his job. "If that happens," he says, "they'll be sorry."

- What conflicting principles and values are in play in the case?
- What are the pros and cons of the various courses of action?
- What guidelines are applicable in resolving this dilemma?
- What resources could you consult to help you decide on an ethical course of action?

ETHICS CASE 4