

INTEGRATING A "CLIENT VOICE" IN CLINICAL DISCUSSIONS

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In the following exercise, you'll be asked to divide up into small groups. In each group, there will be a presenter, several reflectors, and a "client voice." The presenter will describe a clinical situation with which he or she would like some help from the reflectors. The person serving as the "client voice" will not participate in the discussion, but rather listen to it (as if behind a one-way mirror) in the role of a particular family member being described. One of the reflectors will also serve as a time-keeper to help the group continue moving along.

OUTLINE OF EXERCISE

After introducing yourselves and deciding who is going to play which roles, please follow the outline below:

Organizing Question (1 min)

The presenter will frame an organizing question that he or she would like the reflectors to hold in their heads as they listen to the description of the situation.

Description of the Situation (5 min)

The presenter will tell the reflectors what would be important for them to know about the situation to be helpful. The person in the role of the "client voice" will listen to that description from the position of the client.

Questions of Clarification (5 min)

The reflectors will ask questions to clarify anything they didn't understand in the presenter's description of the situation. The person in the role of the "client voice" will continue to listen from the position of the client.

Reflections (10 min)

The reflectors will have a conversation with each other and share any reflections in response to the organizing question. The person in the role of the "client voice" will continue to listen from the position of the client.

Presenter's Response (3 min)

The presenter will reflect on what she or he has just heard from the reflectors while the reflectors and "client voice" listen.

Interview of the "Client Voice" (10 min)

The presenter and reflectors will interview the person listening as the "client voice" about their experience of listening in on this conversation.

Debriefing (5 min)

Participants will briefly reflect on their experience of this discussion from each position (presenter, reflectors, client voice).

SOME QUESTIONS TO HELP ORGANIZE THE DESCRIPTION OF THE SITUATION

- Help us get to know this family. Who is in the family? What are they like? What do you respect and appreciate about them?
- In 25 words or less, what would the family say they're working towards with you?
- How would they say that work has been going? (on a scale of 1-10) What is their contribution to things going well? What would the family say is getting in the way of things going better?
- How would you say your work together has been going? (on a scale of 1-10) What has particularly worked well in your work together? What would you say is getting in the way of things going even better?
- What is it like for you working with this family? What do you like most about working with this family? What is the hardest thing about working with this family? What are you learning from working with this family?

GUIDELINES FOR THE REFLECTIONS

1. Please organize your comments in a way that recognizes the privilege of having the presenter share this information with you.
2. Please organize your comments in a way that acknowledges the presenter's experience of the situation they're describing and honors their efforts to deal with it.
3. Please remember that your role is not to give advice to the presenter or instruct them, but to discuss with each other the thoughts and questions that arose for you in listening to the interview.
4. Please direct your comments to the members of the reflecting team rather than to the presenter.
5. Please restrict your comments to things you heard from the presenter.
6. Please attempt to highlight the more neglected aspects of the presenter's constructive attempts to address the situation.
7. Please present your thoughts and questions tentatively with qualifiers such as "I was wondering," "perhaps," "possibly," or "it's just an idea . . ."
8. Feel free to present a "smorgasbord of ideas" versus "correct" interpretations. The goal is to offer multiple perspectives from which the presenter is free to choose which best fits.

**SAMPLE QUESTIONS FOR THE INTERVIEW WITH THE PERSON
IN THE ROLE OF THE “CLIENT VOICE”**

- What was this process like for you?
- What reactions did you have to it?
- What about the process felt respectful and empowering?
- Were there new things you learned about yourself in the process?
- Were there parts of our discussion that did not feel helpful?
- What could we have done differently?
- How could we have had the discussion in a way that raised difficult issues, and yet felt respectful?