

Situation Briefings: The Microcounseling Strategy in a Therapeutic Relationship

Margot Phaneuf, PhD.

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Psychological support interview: Surgery

(caregiver's briefing)

- **Background:** Ms. Francis, 35 years old, has two young children. Three days ago she had surgery for ovarian cancer.
- She is suffering and anxious, and is getting little sleep.
- **Therapeutic goals:** Provide some support, ease her worries.
- **Microcounseling objectives:** To begin a therapeutic interview with Ms. Francis.

Psychological support interview: Surgery

(care receiver's briefing)

- **Background:** Ms. Francis, you are 35 years old, you have two young children and, three days ago, you had surgery for ovarian cancer. You are suffering and anxious, and you're having a lot of trouble sleeping.
- **Behaviour during the interview:** You are discouraged. You tell the nurse that you're afraid of what lies ahead, particularly the chemotherapy.
- **Caregiver's objectives:** To begin a therapeutic interview with you.

Psychological support interview: Psychiatry

(caregiver's briefing)

- **Background:** Mr. Chung is 40 years old, divorced, and the father of three teenagers (his wife has custody of the children). He has a limited education.
Mr. Chung is depressed. He lacks energy and is sad, and he spends a lot of time thinking about the fact that he is unable to hold on to a job. He often mentions feelings of guilt over his divorce.
- **Therapeutic goals:** To get him talking, comfort him, and help him get a clearer understanding of his real situation and a better sense of his strengths.
- **Microcounseling objectives:** To show him respect and empathy. To get him to face some facts, but in a gentle way.

Psychological support interview: Psychiatry

(care receiver's briefing)

- **Background:** Mr. Chung, you are 40 years old, divorced and the father of three teenagers. Your wife has custody of the children. You left school at a young age.
You are depressed, you don't have much energy, and you often feel sad. You spend a lot of time thinking about how you have trouble holding on to a job, and you feel guilty about your divorce.
- **Behaviour during the interview:** You don't say much and are not very cooperative.
- **Microcounseling objectives:** To show you respect and empathy, and to get you to face some facts, but in a gentle way.

Psychological support interview: Psychiatry

(caregiver's briefing)

- **Background:** Costas is 17 years old. An only child, he quit college a few months ago and since then has been spending time with a group of drop-outs. He has been taking drugs and is currently recovering from an overdose. Costas is negative about himself and about his future.
- **Therapeutic goals:** To help Costas find a positive image of himself, acknowledge his problems and become more confident about the future.
- **Microcounseling objectives:** To show some empathy for Costas and gently get him to face some basic facts.

Psychological support interview: Psychiatry

(care receiver's briefing)

- **Background:** Costas, you are 17 years old and living with your parents. You are an only child.
You quit college a few months ago. Since then, you have been hanging out with a group of drop-outs. You regularly take drugs, and now you are recovering from an overdose. You are quite negative about yourself and about your future.
- **Behaviour during the interview:** You don't mind talking, but you are aloof and tend to change the subject.
- **Microcounseling objectives:** To show you some empathy and gently get you to face some basic facts and become more self-aware.

Behavioral modification interview: Internal Medicine (caregiver's briefing)

- **Background:** Pierre is 30 years old and has had ulcerative colitis for 5 years. He has a management position in a company, is married and has a young child.
Pierre's very demanding work creates a great deal of stress, making him nervous and interfering with his sleep. He doesn't take the time to eat properly, either.
- **Therapeutic goals:** To help Pierre relax, change some of his habits, develop a better attitude towards his work, and find ways to relax.
- **Microcounseling objectives:** To gently raise some questions about his lifestyle. To show empathy and give him a sense of hope.

Behavioral modification interview: Internal Medicine (care receiver's briefing)

- **Background:** Pierre, you are 30 years old and have had ulcerative colitis for the last 5 years. You have a management position in a company, are married and have a young child. Your work is very demanding and stressful, to the point that it makes you very nervous and you don't get much sleep. You don't take the time to eat properly, either.
- **Behaviour during the interview:** You are very anxious and pessimistic.
- **Microcounseling objectives:** To help you face some basic facts about how you are living your life and see how you might change your lifestyle. To show you empathy and help you see that there is hope.

Behavioral modification interview: Alcoholology (caregiver's briefing)

- **Background:** Rodrigo is 50 years old and has been an alcoholic for the last 10 years. He is married and has four children, 7 to 14 years of age. Rodrigo is in denial about his drinking and maintains that he is just a social drinker. He and his wife are having problems and he often misses work. He always finds excuses or scapegoats for his behaviour.
- **Therapeutic goals:** To help Rodrigo become aware of his problem and his defenses.
- **Microcounseling objectives:** To ask open questions, “miracle and exception” questions, and help him examine his perception of his alcoholism.

Behavioural modification interview:

Alcoholology

(care receiver's briefing)

- **Background:** Rodrigo, you are 50 years old and you have been an alcoholic for the last 10 years. You are married and have four children, aged 7 to 14 years. You deny being an alcoholic, and claim that you are only a social drinker. You and your wife are having problems, and you often miss work. You always find excuses or scapegoats for your behaviour.
- **Behaviour during the interview:** You don't like the nurse's questions, but you remain calm.
- **Microcounseling objectives:** To ask open questions, "miracle and exception" questions, and help you examine your perception of your alcoholism.

Validation interview: Geriatrics/Gerontology

(caregiver's briefing)

- **Background:** Mrs. Khalil is 70 years old and a widow. She has several children and grandchildren.
Mrs. Khalil is worried because her doctor has told her that she is in the early stages of Alzheimer's disease. She sadly paces up and down the corridor.
- **Therapeutic goals:** To comfort Mrs. Khalil and confirm her value as a human being.
- **Microcounseling objectives:** To show her respect and empathy.

Validation interview: Geriatrics/Gerontology

(care receiver's briefing)

- **Background:** Mrs. Khalil, you are 70 years old and a widow. You have several children and grandchildren.
You are worried because your doctor has told you that you are in the early stages of Alzheimer's disease. You try to ease your anxiety by walking up and down the corridor, but you are clearly very sad.
- **Microcounseling objectives:** To show you respect and empathy.

Conflict resolution interview: Obstetrics

(caregiver's briefing)

- **Background:** Melissa is 32 years old. She has just had her first child, a healthy baby boy. The family considers it important to have a male heir.

Melissa and her mother-in-law disagree on the baby's name. Melissa wants to call him Mark, but her mother-in-law insists that, according to the family tradition, he be called Tarig. It has become a big issue, and it bothers Melissa a great deal. She has asked you for help.

- **Therapeutic goals:** To comfort her and to help her decide if she wants to stand up for herself and see what her priorities are.
- **Microcounseling objectives:** To show her respect and empathy, to enter into a conflict resolution process with her.

Conflict resolution interview: Obstetrics

(care receiver's briefing)

- **Background:** Melissa, you are 32 years old. You have just had your first child, a healthy baby boy. It is very important in your family to have a male heir.
You and your mother-in-law disagree about the baby's name. You want to call him Mark, but your mother-in-law insists on him being called Tarig; it's a family tradition. It has become a big issue, and it bothers you a great deal. You have asked the nurse for help.
- **Behaviour during the interview:** You are ambivalent and indecisive; you don't know what matters to you most.
- **Microcounseling objectives:** To show you respect and empathy, and enter into a conflict resolution process with you.

Teaching interview: Pediatrics

(caregiver's briefing)

- **Background:** Mustafa is 9 years old. He has an inguinal hernia, and you have to prepare him for surgery. You need to explain what will happen before and after surgery without making him any more afraid. He's a bit nervous.
- **Therapeutic goals:** To listen to his fears, show him empathy, explain what is involved in preparing for the operation and going to the O.R., and talk about post-operative care.
- **Microcounseling objectives:** To show him empathy, use sensory information, and make it fun.

Teaching interview: Pediatrics

(care receiver's briefing)

- **Background:** Mustafa, you are 9 years old and you have an inguinal hernia. You are going to have an operation, and the nurse is getting you ready. She explains how it will work, before and after the operation. You are a bit nervous.
- **Behaviour during the interview:** You talk about your fears and have trouble paying attention to what she is saying.
- **Microcounseling objectives:** To show you some empathy, give you information about how it will feel and what needs to be done, and make it fun.