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## THE HELPING RELATIONSHIP

Although theoreticians, researchers, and practitioners alike—not to mention clients—agree that the relationship between client and helper is important, there are significant differences as to how this relationship should be characterized and played out in the helping process (Gaston, et al., 1995; Hill, 1994; Sexton & Whiston, 1994; Weinberger, 1995). Some stress the *relationship* itself (see Bailey, Wood, & Nava, 1992; Kahn, 1990; Kelly, 1994, 1997; Patterson, 1985); others highlight the *work* that is done through the relationship (see Reandean & Wampold, 1991); still others focus on the *outcomes* to be achieved through the relationship (see Horvath & Symonds, 1991).

**The relationship itself.** Patterson (1985) makes the relationship itself central to helping. He claimed that counseling or psychotherapy does not merely involve an interpersonal relationship; rather, it is an interpersonal relationship. Kelly (1994, 1997), in offering a humanistic model of counseling integration, argues that all counseling is distinctively human and fundamentally relational. Some traditional schools of psychotherapy indirectly emphasize the centrality of the helping relationship. For instance, in psychoanalytic or psychodynamic approaches, *transference*—the complex and often unconscious interpersonal dynamics between helper and client that are rooted in the client's and even the helper's past—is central (Gelso, Hill, Mohr, Rochlen, & Zack, 1999; Gelso, Kivlighan, Wise, Jones, & Friedman, 1997; Hill & Williams, 2000). Resolving these often murky dynamics is seen as intrinsic to successful therapeutic outcomes. Schneider (1999), in discussing the treatment manuals mentioned in Chapter 1, claims that clients deserve the kind of relationship with their helpers through which human meaning, purpose, and values can be explored.

In a different mode, Carl Rogers (1951, 1957), one of the great pioneers in the field of counseling, emphasizes the quality of the relationship in representing the humanistic-experiential approach to helping (see Kelly, 1994, 1997). Rogers claims that the unconditional positive regard, accurate empathy, and genuineness offered by the helper and perceived by the client are both necessary and often sufficient for therapeutic progress. Through this highly empathic relationship, counselors help clients understand themselves, liberate their resources, and manage their lives more effectively. Rogers's work spawned the widely discussed client-centered approach to helping (Rogers, 1965). Unlike psychodynamic approaches, however, the empathic helping relationship is considered a facilitative condition, not a "problem" in itself to be explored and resolved.

**The relationship as a means to an end.** Others see the helping relationship as very important but still a means to an end. In this view, a good relationship is practical because it enables client and counselor to do the work called for by whatever helping process is used. The relationship is instrumental in achieving the goals of the helping process. Practitioners using cognitive and behavioral approaches to helping, although sensitive to relationship issues (Arnkoff, 1995), tend toward the means-to-an-end view. Overstressing the relationship is a mistake because it obscures the ultimate goal of helping a client manage a particular problem better. This goal cannot be achieved if the relationship is poor; but if too much emphasis

is placed on the relationship itself, both client and helper can be distracted from the real work to be done.

**The relationship and outcomes.** Finally, some emphasize outcomes over both means and relationship. Practitioners from solution-focused approaches to helping (see de Shazer, 1985, 1994; Manthei, 1998; O'Hanlon & Weiner-Davis, 1989; Rowan, O'Hanlon, & O'Hanlon, 1999) tend to focus not on relationships as ends or means—though, if pushed, they would categorize relationships as means—but on what clients need to do right away to begin to remedy the problem situations they face. In their eyes, spending a great deal of time exploring the exact character of the problem and its roots is a waste of time. Helping tends to be time limited. Therefore, "Let's get working on this right away" is part of the pragmatics of solution-focused helping.

## THE RELATIONSHIP AS A WORKING ALLIANCE

The term *working alliance*, first coined by Greenson (1967) and now used by advocates of different schools of helping, can be used to bring together the best of the relationship-in-itself, relationship-as-means, and solution-focused approaches. Bordin (1979) defines the working alliance as the collaboration between the client and the helper based on their agreement on the goals and tasks of counseling. Although there is, predictably, considerable disagreement among practitioners as to what the critical dimensions of the working alliance are, how it operates, and what results it produces (see Hill & Williams, 2000; Horvath, 2000; Weinberger, 1995), it is relatively simple to outline what it means in the context of the problem-management and opportunity-development process.

**The collaborative nature of helping.** In the working alliance, helpers and clients are collaborators. Helping is not something that helpers do to clients; rather, it is a process that helpers and clients work through together. Helpers do not "cure" their patients. Both have work to do in the problem-management and opportunity-development stages and steps, and both have responsibilities related to outcomes. Outcomes depend on the competence and motivation of the helper, on the competence and motivation of the client, and on the quality of their interactions. Helping is a two-person team effort in which helpers need to do their part and clients theirs. If either party refuses to play or plays incompetently, the entire enterprise can fail.

**The relationship as a forum for relearning.** Even though helpers don't cure their clients, the relationship itself can be therapeutic. In the working alliance, the relationship itself is often a forum or vehicle for social-emotional relearning (Mallinckrodt, 1996). Effective helpers model attitudes and behavior that help clients challenge and change their own attitudes and behavior. It is as if a client were to say to himself (though not in so many words), "She [the helper] obviously cares for and trusts me, so perhaps it is all right for me to care for and trust myself." Or, "He takes the risk of challenging me, so what's so bad about challenge when it's done well?" Or, "I came here frightened to death by relationships, and now I'm experiencing a nonexploitative relationship that I cherish." Furthermore, protected by the

safety of the helping relationship, clients can experiment with different behaviors during the sessions themselves. The shy person can speak up, the reclusive person can open up, the aggressive person can back off, the overly sensitive person can ask to be challenged, and so forth.

These learnings can then be transferred to other social settings. It is as if a client might say to himself, "He [the helper] listens to me so carefully and makes sure that he understands my point of view even when he thinks I should reconsider it. My relationships outside would be a lot different if I were to do the same." Or, "I do a lot of stuff in the sessions that would make anyone angry. But she doesn't let herself become a victim of emotions, either her own or mine. And her self-control doesn't diminish her humanity at all. That would make a big difference in my life." The relearning dynamic, however subtle or covert, is often powerful. In sum, needed changes in both attitudes and behavior often take place within the sessions themselves through the relationship.

**Relationship flexibility.** The idea that one kind of perfect relationship or alliance fits all clients is a myth. Different clients have different needs, and those needs are best met through different kinds of relationships and different modulations within the same relationship. One client might work best with a helper who expresses a great deal of warmth, whereas another might work best with a helper who is more objective and businesslike. Some clients come to counseling with a fear of intimacy and can be put off if helpers, right from the beginning, communicate a great deal of empathy and warmth. Once these clients learn to trust their helpers, stronger interventions can be used. Effective helpers use a mix of styles, skills, and techniques tailored to the kind of relationship that is right for each client (Lazarus, 1993; Mahrer, 1993). And they remain themselves while they do so.

We should neither underestimate nor overestimate the importance of the helping relationship. Helpers would do well to stay in touch with what the relationship means to each client, no matter what the literature says. It certainly does contribute to outcomes, but in the end it is one among a number of key variables (Albano, 2000).

## VALUES IN ACTION

One of the best ways to characterize a helping relationship is through the values that should permeate and drive it. The relationship is the vehicle through which values come alive. Values, expressed concretely through working-alliance behaviors, play a critical role in the helping process (Bergin, 1991; Beutler & Bergan, 1991; Kerr & Erb, 1991; Norcross & Wogan, 1987; Vachon & Agresti, 1992). Since it has become increasingly clear that helpers' values influence clients' values over the course of the helping process, it is essential to build a value orientation into the process itself.

### Putting Values into the Broader Context of Personal Culture

Values are central to culture, but culture is a wider reality. The bigger picture—the one that applies to societies and various subgroupings such as associations and organizations—is, briefly, this: Shared beliefs and assumptions interact with shared

values and produce shared norms that drive shared patterns of behavior. However, counselors don't deal with societies as such but with individuals. So let's apply this basic culture framework to an individual. It goes something like this:

- Over the course of life, individuals develop *assumptions* and *beliefs* about themselves, other people, and the world around them. For instance, Isaiah, a client suffering from posttraumatic stress disorder stemming from being brutally attacked and witnessing gang activity in his neighborhood, has come to believe that the world is a heartless place.
- *Values*, what people prize, are picked up or inculcated along the path of life. Isaiah, because of a number of ups and downs in his life, has come to value or prize personal security.
- Assumptions and beliefs, interacting with values, generate *norms*—the "dos and don'ts" we carry around inside ourselves. For Isaiah, one of these is, "Don't trust people. You'll get hurt."
- These norms drive *patterns of behavior*, and these patterns of behavior constitute, as it were, the *bottom line* of personal or individual culture—"the way I live my life." For Isaiah, this means not taking chances with people. He's a loner.

Effective helpers come to understand the personal cultures of clients and the impact these individual cultures have both in everyday life and in helping sessions. Of course, since no individual is an island, personal cultures do not develop in a vacuum. The beliefs, values, and norms people develop are greatly influenced by their environments.

Culture is usually not applied to individuals but rather to societies, institutions, companies, professions, groups, and families. *Shared* assumptions and beliefs and interaction with *shared* values produce *shared* norms that drive *shared* patterns of behavior. That said, individuals within any given culture can and often do differ widely in their personal cultures. Even though individuals are deeply influenced by both biological and cultural inheritance, over the life span, influenced by both their social environments and their inner lives, they pick and choose their interests, values, and activities, thus creating their own personal cultures (Massimini & Delle Fave, 2000). For instance, Sally has many of the cultural characteristics of the Smith family, but she is still quite different from her parents, brothers, and sisters and from those in the subculture to which she belongs.

Since patterns of behavior constitute the "bottom line" of culture, a popular definition of societal and institutional culture is "the way we do things here." This definition applied to the helper is "the way I do helping." Inevitably, the helper's personal culture interacts with the client's, for better or for worse. The way helpers together with their clients "do" helping constitutes the culture of helping. The focus in this chapter, directly, is on the values of helping and the norms they generate. Indirectly, this entire book is about the culture of helping—that is, the beliefs, values, and norms that can and should drive the helping process.

### The Pragmatics of Values

Values are not just ideals. They are also a set of practical criteria for making decisions. As such, they are drivers of behavior. For instance, a helper might say to himself or herself during a session with a difficult client something like this:

The arrogant, I'm-always-right attitude of this client needs to be challenged. How I challenge her is important, since I don't want to damage our relationship. I value genuineness and openness. Therefore, I can challenge her by describing her behavior and the impact it has on me and might have on others, and I can do so respectfully, that is, without belittling her.

Working values enable the helper to make decisions on how to proceed. Helpers without a set of working values are adrift. Helpers who don't have an explicit set of values have an implicit or "default" set that may or may not serve the helping process.

Helping-related values, like your other values, cannot be handed to you on a platter. Much less can they be shoved down your throat. Therefore, this chapter is meant to stimulate your thinking about the values that should drive helping. In the final analysis, as you sit with your clients, only those beliefs, values, and norms that you have made your own will make a difference in your helping behavior. Therefore, you need to be proactive in your search for the beliefs, values, and norms that will govern your interactions with your clients.

This does not mean that you will invent a set of values different from everyone else's. Tradition is an important part of value formation, and we all learn from the rich tradition of the helping professions. In this chapter, four major values from the tradition of the helping professions—respect, empathy, genuineness, and client empowerment—are translated into a set of norms. Respect is the *foundation* value; empathy is the value that *orients* helpers in their interactions with clients; genuineness is the "what you see is what you get" *professional* value; client empowerment is the value that drives *outcomes*. They serve as a starting point for your reflection on the values that should drive the helping process. Don't just swallow them. Analyze, reflect on, and debate them.

### RESPECT AS THE FOUNDATION VALUE

Respect for clients is the foundation on which all helping interventions are built. Respect is such a fundamental concept that, like most such concepts, it eludes definition. The word comes from a Latin root that includes the idea of seeing or viewing. Indeed, respect is a particular way of viewing oneself and others. Respect, if it is to make a difference, cannot remain just an attitude or a way of viewing others. Here are some norms that flow from the interaction between a belief in the dignity of the person and the value of respect.

**Do no harm.** This is the first rule of the physician and the first rule of the helper. Yet some helpers do harm either because they are unprincipled or because they are incompetent. Helping is not a neutral process—it is for better or worse. In a world in which such things as child abuse, wife battering, and exploitation of workers is much more common than we care to think, it is important to emphasize a nonmanipulative and nonexploitative approach to clients. Studies show that some instructors exploit trainees both sexually and in other ways and that some helpers do the same with their clients. Such behavior obviously breaches the code of ethics espoused by all the helping professions.

**Be competent and committed.** Become good at whatever model of helping you use. Learn the basic problem-management and opportunity-development framework outlined in this book and fine-tune the skills that make it work. There is no

place for the "caring incompetent" in the helping professions. It would be great to say that everyone who graduates from some kind of helping training program is not only competent but also increases his or her competence over his or her career. But that is not the case.

**Make it clear that you are "for" the client.** The way you act with clients will tell them a great deal about your attitude toward them. Your manner should indicate that you are "for" each of your clients, that you care for each in a down-to-earth, nonsentimental way. It is as if you are saying to the client attitudinally and behaviorally, "Working with you is worth my time and energy." Respect is both gracious and tough minded. Being for the client is not the same as taking the client's side or acting as the client's advocate. *Being for* means taking the client's point of view seriously even when it needs to be challenged. Respect often involves helping clients place demands on themselves. "Tough love" in no way excludes appropriate warmth toward clients.

**Assume the client's goodwill.** Work on the assumption that clients want to work at living more effectively, at least until that assumption is proved false. The reluctance and resistance of some clients, particularly involuntary clients, is not necessarily evidence of ill will. When you respect your clients, you are willing to enter their world to understand their reluctance and to help them work through it.

**Do not rush to judgment.** You are not there to judge clients or to shove your values down their throats. You are there to help them identify, explore, and review and challenge the consequences of the values they have adopted. Suppose a client, during the first session, says somewhat arrogantly, "When I'm dealing with other people, I say whatever I want, when I want. If others don't like it, well, that's their problem. My first obligation is to myself, being the person I am." A helper, irked by the client's attitude, might respond judgmentally by saying, "You've just put your finger on the core of your problem! How can you expect to get along with people with this kind of self-centered philosophy?" However, another counselor, taking a different approach, might respond, "So being yourself is one of your top priorities and being totally frank is, for you, part of that picture." The first counselor rushes to judgment. The second neither judges nor condones; at this point, she tries to understand the client's point of view and lets him know that she understands—even if she realizes that his point of view needs to be reviewed and challenged later.

**Keep the client's agenda in focus.** Helpers should pursue their clients' agendas, not their own. Here are three examples of helpers who lost clients because of lack of appreciation of the clients' agendas: One helper recalled, painfully, that he lost a client because he had become too preoccupied with his theories of depression rather than the client's painful depressive episodes. Another helper, who dismissed as trivial a client's grief over her pet's death, was dumbfounded and crushed when the client made an attempt on her own life. Later, the client related her "gesture," in part, to the loss of her pet. A third helper, a white male who prided himself on his multicultural focus in counseling, went for counseling himself when a Hispanic client quit therapy, saying, perhaps somewhat unfairly, as he was leaving, "I don't think you're interested in me. You're more interested in Anglo-Hispanic politics."

## EMPATHY AS A PRIMARY ORIENTATION VALUE

Empathy, though a rich concept in the helping professions, has been a confusing one (see Bohart & Greenberg, 1997, and Duan & Hill, 1996, for overviews). Different theoreticians and researchers have defined it different ways. Some have seen it as a *personality trait*, a disposition to feel what other people feel or to understand others "from the inside," as it were. In this view, some people are by nature more empathic than others. Others have seen empathy, not as a personality trait, but as a *situation-specific state of feeling for and understanding of another person's experiences*. The implication is that helpers can learn how to bring about this state in themselves because it is so useful in the counseling process. Still others, building on the state approach, have focused on empathy as a *process with stages*. For instance, Barrett-Lennard (1981) identifies three phases: empathic resonance, expressed empathy, and received empathy; and Carl Rogers (1975) talks about sensing a client's inner world and communicating that sensing. Finally, Egan (1998) focuses on empathy as an *interpersonal communication skill*. Skilled helpers work hard at understanding their clients and then communicate this understanding to help clients understand themselves, their problem situations, their unused resources and opportunities, and their feelings more fully so they can then manage them more effectively.

### The Nature of Empathy

This edition of *The Skilled Helper* clarifies and simplifies the approach to empathy. In this chapter, empathy is seen as a basic *value* that informs and drives *all* helping behavior. Empathy as a communication skill is renamed, discussed, and illustrated in Chapter 6.

**A rich term.** A number of authors look at empathy from a value point of view and talk about the behaviors that flow from it. Sometimes their language is almost lyrical. For instance, Kohut (1978) states, "Empathy, the accepting, confirming, and understanding human echo evoked by the self, is a psychological nutrient without which human life, as we know and cherish it, could not be sustained" (p. 705). To Kohut, empathy is a value, a philosophy, or a cause with almost religious overtones. With empathy apparently in rather short supply, it might be safer to say that life is fuller because of mutual empathy. Covey (1989), naming empathic communication one of the "seven habits of highly effective people," says that empathy provides those with whom we are interacting with "psychological air" that helps them breathe more freely in their relationships. Goleman (1995, 1998) puts empathy at the heart of emotional intelligence; it is the individual's "social radar" through which he or she senses others' feelings and perspectives and takes an active interest in their concerns.

Rogers (1980) talks passionately about basic empathic listening—being with and understanding the other—calling it "an unappreciated way of being" (p. 137). He uses the word *unappreciated* because, in his view, few people in the general population have developed this "deep listening" ability, and even so-called expert helpers do not give it the attention it deserves. Here is his description of basic empathic listening:

It means entering the private perceptual world of the other and becoming thoroughly at home in it. It involves being sensitive, moment by moment, to the changing felt meanings which flow in this other person, to the fear or rage or tenderness or confusion or whatever that he or she is experiencing. It means temporarily living in the other's life, moving about in it delicately without making judgments. (p. 142)

Such empathic listening is selfless because helpers must put aside their own concerns to be fully with their clients.

**A key helping value.** Empathy as a value is a radical commitment on the part of helpers to understand clients as fully as possible in three different ways. First, empathy is a commitment to work at understanding each client from *his or her point of view* together with the feelings surrounding this point of view and to communicate this understanding whenever it is deemed helpful. Second, empathy is a commitment to understand individuals in and through the *context* of their lives. The social settings, both large and small, in which they have developed and currently "live and move and have their being" provide routes to understanding. Third, empathy is a commitment to understand the *dissonance* between the client's point of view and reality. But, as Goleman (1995, 1998) notes, there is nothing passive about empathy. Empathic helpers respectfully communicate these three kinds of understanding to their clients and generally take an active interest in their concerns.

### Empathy—Understanding Clients as They Are: Diversity and Multiculturalism

Although dealing knowledgeably and sensitively with diversity—and that particular form of diversity called multiculturalism—is part of both respect and empathy, it is given special attention here because of the current emphasis on diversity in both the workplace and the helping professions. There has been an explosion of literature on diversity and multiculturalism over the past few years (see Axelson, 1999; Bernstein, 1994; Cuellar & Paniagua, 2000; Das, 1995; Herman & Kempen, 1998; Hogan-Garcia, 1999; Ivey & Ivey, 1999; Ivey, Ivey, & Simek-Morgan, 1997; Lee, 1997; Okun, Fried & Okun, 1999; Patterson, 1996; Pedersen, 1994, 1997; Ponterotto, Fuertes, & Chen, 2000; Richards & Bergin, 2000; Sue, Carter, Casas, & Fouad, 1998; Sue, Ivey, and Pedersen, 1996; Sue & Sue, 1999; Weinrach & Thomas, 1996; to name but a very few). There is both an upside and a downside to this avalanche. One upside is that helpers are forced to take another look at the blind spots they may have about diversity and culture and to take another look at the world in which we live. One downside is that multiculturalism has become in many ways a fad, if not an industry.

Let's start with an example. Sue, a midwestern American, is married to Lee, an immigrant from Singapore. They are having problems. Many clients come to helpers because they are having difficulties in their relationships with others or because relationship difficulties are part of a larger problem situation. Therefore, understanding clients' different approaches to developing and sustaining relationships is important. Guisinger and Blatt (1994) put this in a broader multicultural perspective.

Western psychologies have traditionally given greater importance to self-development than to interpersonal relatedness, stressing the development of autonomy, independence, and identity as central factors in the mature personality. In contrast, women, many minority groups, and non-Western societies have generally placed greater emphasis on issues of relatedness. (p. 104)

Sue is deep into the development of autonomy, independence, and her identity as a successful working woman. Lee runs a small, successful Web site development business. Guisinger and Blatt go on to point out that both interpersonal relatedness and self-definition are essential for maturity. Helping Sue and Lee, individuals from different cultures, achieve balance depends on understanding what the "right balance" means in any given culture.

As with the "Does helping help?" debate, it is important to come to grips with the debate surrounding diversity and multiculturalism. Some of the literature on diversity and multiculturalism is informative and challenging; some is ridiculous and infuriating. Many professionals have pointed out that both the differences among and the needs of minority groups—whether race, ethnicity, disability, or some other kind of difference is at issue—and the contributions such groups make to society have been systematically ignored or misunderstood. This is an important social problem that has implications for the helping professions. However, the relationship of counseling to social movements is confusing and difficult.

**Understand diversity.** While clients have in common their humanity, they differ from one another in a whole host of ways: accent, age, attractiveness, color, developmental stage, abilities, disabilities, economic status, education, ethnicity, fitness, gender, group culture, health, national origin, occupation, personal culture, personality variables, politics, problem type, religion, sexual orientation, social status, to name some of the major categories. We differ from one another in hundreds of ways. And who is to say which differences are key? This presents several challenges for helpers. For one, it is essential that helpers understand clients and their problem situations contextually. For instance, a life-threatening illness might be one kind of reality for a 20-year-old and quite a different reality for an 80-year-old. We know that homelessness is a complex phenomenon. A homeless client with a history of drug abuse who has dropped out of graduate school is far different from a drifter who hates shelters for the homeless and resists every effort to get him to go to them.

It is true that helpers can, over time, come to understand a great deal about the characteristics of the populations with whom they work; for instance, they can and should understand the different developmental tasks and challenges that take place over the life span, and if they work with the elderly, they should grow in their understanding of the challenges, needs, problems, and opportunities of the aged. Still, it is impossible to know everything about every population. This impossibility becomes even more dramatic if the combinations and permutations of characteristics are taken into consideration. How could an African American, middle-class, highly educated, younger, urban, Episcopalian, female psychologist possibly understand a poor, unemployed, homeless, middle-aged, uneducated, lapsed-Catholic male, born of migrant workers: a Mexican father and a Polish mother? Indeed, how

can anybody fully understand anybody else? If the legitimate principles relating to diversity were to be pushed too far, no one would be able to understand and help anybody else.

**Challenge whatever blind spots you may have.** Since helpers often differ from their clients in many ways, they need to challenge themselves to avoid diversity-related blind spots that can lead to inept interactions and interventions during the helping process. For instance, a physically attractive and extroverted helper might have blind spots with regard to the social flexibility and self-esteem of a physically unattractive and introverted client. Much of the literature on diversity and multiculturalism targets such blind spots. Counselors would do well to become aware of their own cultural values and biases. They should also make every effort to understand the world views of their clients. Helpers with diversity blind spots are handicapped. Helpers should, as a matter of course, become aware of the key ways in which they differ from their clients and take special care to be sensitive to those differences.

**Tailor your interventions in a diversity-sensitive way.** Both this self-knowledge and this practical understanding of diversity need to be translated into appropriate interventions. The way a Hispanic helper challenges a Hispanic client may be inappropriate for a white client and vice versa. The way a younger helper shares his own experience with a younger client might be inappropriate for a client who is older and vice versa. Client self-disclosure, especially more intimate disclosure, might be relatively easy for a person from one culture, say North American culture, but very difficult for a client from another culture, say Asian or British. In this case, interventions that call for intimate self-disclosure may be seen as inappropriate by such a client. Even though a client may be from a culture that is more open to self-disclosure, he or she may be frightened to death by self-disclosure. Therefore, with clients who come from a culture that has a different perception of self-disclosure or with any client who finds self-disclosure difficult, it might make more sense, after an initial discussion of the problem situation in broad terms, to move to what the client wants that he or she currently does not have (that is, Stage II) rather than to the more intimate details of the problem situation. Once the helping relationship is on firmer ground, the client can move to the work he or she sees as more intimate or demanding. Although the helping model outlined here is a "human universal," helpers need to apply its stages and steps with sensitivity.

**Work with individuals.** The diversity principle is clear: The more helpers understand the broad characteristics, needs, and behaviors of the populations with whom they work—African Americans, Caucasian Americans, diabetics, the elderly, drug addicts, the homeless, you name it—the better positioned they are to adapt these broad parameters and the counseling process itself to the individuals with whom they work. But, whereas diversity focuses on differences both between and within groups—cultures and subcultures, if you will—helpers interact with clients as individuals. Your clients are individuals, not cultures, subcultures, or groups. Remember that category traits can destroy understanding as well as facilitate it.

Of course, individuals often have group characteristics, but they do not come as members of a homogeneous group, because there are no homogeneous groups. One of the principal learnings of social psychology is this: There are as many differences, and sometimes more, within groups as between groups (see Weinrach & Thomas, 1996, pp. 473–474). This middle-class black male is this individual. This poor Asian woman is this person. In a very real sense, a conversation between identical twins is a cross-cultural event because they are different individuals with differences in personal assumptions, beliefs, values, norms, and patterns of behavior. Genetics and group culture account for commonalities among individuals, but personhood and personal cultures emphasize each person's uniqueness. Focusing excessively on what makes this client different can be just as injurious as ignoring differences.

Finally, valuing diversity is not the same as espousing a splintered, antagonistic society in which one's group membership is more important than one's humanity. On the other hand, valuing individuality is not the same as espousing a "society of one"—radical individualism being the ultimate form of diversity. Moving to a "society of one" makes counseling and other forms of human interaction impossible. Take Sean, a client you are seeing for the second time. He is very bright, well spoken, gay, Hispanic, poorly educated, lower-middle-class, slight of build, indifferent to his Catholic heritage, a churchgoer, underemployed, good-looking, honest, and at sea because he feels "defeated." At his age, 26, life should be opening up, but he feels that it is closing down. He feels trapped. Understand this individual in any way you can, but work with Sean.

### Guidelines for Integrating Diversity and Multiculturalism into Counseling

Since it is impossible to lay down rules for every possible case in which diversity is an issue, some broad guidelines are called for. The norms just outlined can serve as guidelines, but ultimately, you have to come to grips with diversity and pull together your own set of guidelines. Here is one set, drawn from an article by Weinrach and Thomas (1996, pp. 475–476) but reworded and reworked a bit:

- Place the needs of the client above all other considerations.
- Identify and focus on whatever frame of reference, self-definition, or belief system is central to any given client, with consideration for, but not limited to, issues of diversity.
- Select counseling interventions on the basis of the client's agenda. Do not impose a social or political agenda on the counseling relationship.
- Make sure that your own values do not adversely affect a client's best interests.
- Avoid cultural stereotyping. Do not overgeneralize. Recognize that within-group differences are often more extensive than between-group differences.
- Do not define diversity narrowly. This client's concern about being unattractive deserves the helper's engagement just as much as that client's concern about racial intolerance.
- Provide opportunities for practitioners to be trained in the working knowledge and skills associated with diversity-sensitive counseling.

- Subject the assumptions, models, and techniques of diversity-sensitive counseling to the same scrutiny as other aspects of the counseling profession.
- Create an environment that supports professional tolerance.

The fact that not all practitioners would agree with this package highlights the importance of your coming to grips not only with diversity but with the whole range of value questions that permeate helping.

In one way, the diversity and multiculturalism debate does a disservice to the helping professions (see Weinrach & Thomas, 1998 for a fine, balanced critique). Many helpers feel scolded—often by their peers who have taken it on themselves to speak for others, on the assumption, perhaps, that others cannot speak for themselves. When it comes to clients, the very best helpers have always been learners. They instinctively know that they are different in many ways from their clients and they know that these differences can get in the way. They instinctively know that they cannot know everything about everyone but don't find that fact self-defeating. They strive to understand the world from each client's perspective. But they don't apologize for who they are. Why should they? Cultural understanding—or understanding of any form of diversity—is a two-way street. The principles of cultural understanding apply to everyone. I must understand you in context, but it's your job to understand me in context. If helping is to be a collaborative event, mutual understanding must be part of the game.

### GENUINENESS AS A PROFESSIONAL VALUE

Like respect, helper genuineness refers to both a set of attitudes and a set of counselor behaviors. Some writers call genuineness "congruence." Genuine people are at home with themselves and therefore can comfortably be themselves in all their interactions. Being genuine has both positive and negative implications; it means doing some things and not doing others.

Do not overemphasize the helping role. Genuine helpers do not take refuge in the role of counselor. Ideally, relating at deeper levels to others and helping are part of their lifestyles, not roles they put on or take off at will. This keeps them far away from being patronizing and condescending. Years ago, Gibb (1968, 1978) suggested ways of being "role free." He said that helpers should learn how to

- express directly to another whatever they are presently experiencing;
- communicate without distorting their own messages;
- listen to others without distorting the messages they hear;
- reveal their true motivation in the process of communicating their messages;
- be spontaneous and free in their communications with others, rather than using habitual and planned strategies;
- respond immediately to another's need or state instead of waiting for the "right" time or giving themselves enough time to come up with the "right" response;
- manifest their vulnerabilities and, in general, the "stuff" of their inner lives;

- live in and communicate about the here and now;
- strive for interdependence rather than dependence or counterdependence in their relationships with their clients;
- learn how to enjoy psychological closeness;
- be concrete in their communications;
- be willing to commit themselves to others.

By this, Gibb did not mean that helpers should be "free spirits," inflicting themselves on others. Indeed, free-spirit helpers can even be dangerous. Being role free is not license. Freedom from role means that counselors should not use the role or facade of counselor to protect themselves, to substitute for competence, or to fool clients in other ways.

**Be spontaneous.** Many of the behaviors suggested by Gibb are ways of being spontaneous. Effective helpers, while being tactful as part of their respect for others, do not constantly weigh what they say to clients. They do not put a number of filters between their inner lives and what they express to others. On the other hand, being genuine does not mean verbalizing every thought to clients.

**Avoid defensiveness.** Genuine helpers are nondefensive. They know their own strengths and deficits and are presumably trying to live mature, meaningful lives. When clients express negative attitudes toward them, they examine the behavior that might cause clients to think negatively, try to understand the clients' points of view, and continue to work with them. Consider the following example:

CLIENT: I don't think I'm really getting anything out of these sessions at all. I still feel drained all the time. Why should I waste my time coming here?

HELPER A: If you were honest with yourself, you'd see that you are the one wasting time. Change is hard, and you keep putting it off.

....

HELPER B: Well, that's your decision.

Helpers A and B are both defensive, though in different ways. The client is more likely to react to their defensiveness than move forward.

HELPER C: So from where you're sitting, there's no payoff for being here. Just a lot of dreary work and nothing to show for it.

Helper C centers on the experience of the client, with a view to "resetting the system" and helping her explore her responsibility for making the helping process work. Since genuine helpers are at home with themselves, they can allow themselves to examine negative criticism honestly. Helper C, for instance, would be the most likely of the three to ask himself or herself whether he or she is contributing to the apparent stalemate.

**Be open.** Genuine helpers are capable of deeper levels of self-disclosure even within the helping relationship. They do not see self-disclosure as an end in itself, but they feel free to reveal themselves, even in deeper ways, when and if it is appropriate. Being open also means that the helper has no hidden agendas: "What you see is what you get."

## CLIENT EMPOWERMENT AS AN OUTCOME VALUE

The second goal of helping, outlined in Chapter 1, deals with empowerment—that is, helping clients identify, develop, and use resources that will make them more effective agents of change both within the helping sessions themselves and in their everyday lives (Strong, Yoder, & Corcoran, 1995). The opposite of empowerment is dependency (Abramson, Cloud, Keese, & Keese, 1994; Bornstein & Bowen, 1995), deference (Rennie, 1994), and oppression (McWhirter, 1996). Because clients often experience helpers as relatively powerful people, and because even the most egalitarian and client-centered of helpers do influence clients, it is necessary to come to terms with social influence in the helping process.

### Helping as a Social-Influence Process

People influence one another every day in every social setting of life. Smith and Mackie (2000) consider it one of eight basic principles needed to understand human behavior. William Crano (2000) suggests that "social influence research has been, and remains, the defining hallmark of social psychology" (p. 68). Parents influence each other and their kids. In turn, they are influenced by their kids. Teachers influence students, and students influence teachers. Bosses influence subordinates and vice versa. Team leaders influence team members, and members influence both one another and the leader. The world is a buzz with social influence. It could not be otherwise. However, social influence is a form of power, and power too often leads to manipulation and oppression.

It is not surprising, then, that helping as a social-influence process has received a fair amount of attention in the helping literature (see Dorn, 1986; Heppner & Claiborn, 1989; Heppner & Frazier, 1992; Houser, Feldman, Williams, & Fierstien, 1998; Hoyt, 1996; McCarthy & Frieze, 1999; McNeill & Stolenberg, 1989; Strong, 1968, 1991; Tracey, 1991). Helpers can influence clients without robbing them of self-responsibility. Even better, they can exercise their trade in such a way that clients are, to use a bit of current business jargon, "empowered" rather than oppressed, both in the helping sessions themselves and in the social settings of everyday life. With empowerment, of course, comes increased self-responsibility.

Imagine a continuum. At one end lies "directing clients' lives" and at the other "leaving clients completely to their own devices." Somewhere along that continuum is "helping clients make their own decisions and act on them." Most forms of helper influence will fall somewhere in between the extremes. Preventing a client from jumping off a bridge moves, understandably, to the controlling end of the continuum. On the other hand, simply accepting and in no way challenging a client's decision to put off dealing with a troubled relationship because he or she is "not ready" moves toward the other end. As Hare-Mustin and Marecek (1986) note, there is a tension between the right of clients to determine their own way of managing their lives and the therapist's obligation to help them live more effectively.

### Norms for Empowerment and Self-Responsibility

Helpers don't self-righteously "empower" clients. That would be patronizing and condescending. In a classic work, Freire (1970) warns helpers against making helping itself



just one more form of oppression for those who are already oppressed. Effective counselors help clients discover, develop, and use the untapped power within themselves. Here, then, is a range of empowerment-based norms, some adapted from the work of Farrelly and Brandsma (1974).

**Start with the premise that clients can change if they choose.** Clients have more resources for managing problems in living and developing opportunities than they—or sometimes their helpers—assume. The helper's basic attitude should be that clients have the resources both to participate collaboratively in the helping process and to manage their lives more effectively. These resources may be blocked in a variety of ways or simply unused. The counselor's job is to help clients identify, free, and cultivate these resources. The counselor also helps clients assess their resources realistically so that their aspirations do not outstrip their resources.

**Do not see clients as victims.** Even when clients have been victimized by institutions or individuals, don't see them as helpless victims. The cult of victimhood is already growing too fast in society. Even if victimizing circumstances have diminished a client's degree of freedom—the abused spouse's inability to leave a deadly relationship—work with the freedom that is left.

Don't be fooled by appearances. One counselor trainer in a meeting with his colleagues dismissed a reserved, self-deprecating trainee with the words, "She'll never make it. She's more like a client than a trainee." Fortunately, his colleagues did not work from the same assumption. The woman went on to become one of the program's best students. She was accepted as an intern at a prestigious mental-health center and was hired by the center after graduation.

**Share the helping process with clients.** Clients, like helpers, can benefit from maps of the helping process. Clients should not have to buy "a pig in a poke." Helping should not be a "black box" for them. Clients have a right to know what they are getting into (Heinssen, 1994; Heinssen, Levendusky, & Hunter, 1995; Hunter, 1995; Manthei & Miller, 2000). How to clue clients into the helping process is another matter. Helpers can simply explain what helping is all about. A simple pamphlet outlining the stages and steps of the helping process can be of great help, provided that it is in language that clients can readily understand. Just what kind of detail will help will differ from client to client. Obviously, clients should not be overwhelmed by distracting detail from the beginning. Nor should highly distressed clients be told to contain their anxiety until helpers teach them the helping model. Rather, the details of the model can be shared over a number of sessions. There is no one right way. In my opinion, however, clients should be told as much about the model as they can assimilate.

**Help clients see counseling sessions as work sessions.** Helping is about client-enhancing change. Therefore, counseling sessions deal with exploring the need for change, the kind of change needed, creating programs of constructive change, engaging in change "pilot projects," and finding ways of dealing with obstacles to change. This is work, pure and simple. The search for and implementation of solutions can be arduous, even agonizing, but it can also be deeply satisfying, even exhilarating. Helping clients develop the "work ethic" that makes them partners in

the helping process can be one of the helper's most formidable challenges. Some helpers go so far as to cancel counseling sessions until clients are "ready to work." Helping clients discover incentives to work is, of course, less dramatic and hard work in itself.

**Become a consultant to clients.** Helpers can see themselves as consultants hired by clients to help them face problems in living more effectively. Consultants in the business world adopt a variety of roles. They listen, observe, collect data, report observations, teach, train, coach, provide support, challenge, advise, offer suggestions, and even become advocates for certain positions. But the responsibility for running businesses remains with those who hire consultants. Therefore, even though some of the activities of consultants can be seen as quite challenging, the decisions are still made by managers. Consulting, then, is a social-influence process, but it is a collaborative one that does not rob managers of the responsibilities that belong to them. In this respect, it is a useful analogy to helping. The best clients, like the best managers, learn how to use their consultants to add value in managing problems and developing opportunities.

**Accept helping as a natural, two-way influence process.** Tyler, Pargament, and Gatz (1983) move a step beyond the consultant role to what they called the "resource collaborator role." Seeing both helper and client as people with defects, these researchers focus on the give-and-take that should characterize the helping process. In their view, either client or helper can approach the other to originate the helping process. The two have equal status in defining the terms of the relationship, in originating actions within it, and in evaluating both outcomes and the relationship itself. In the best case, positive change occurs in both parties.

Helping is a two-way street. Clients and therapists change one another in the helping process. Even a cursory glance at helping reveals that clients can affect helpers in many ways. For instance, Wei-Lian has to correct Timothy, his counselor, a number of times when Timothy tries to share his understanding of what Wei-Lian has said. For instance, at one point, when Timothy says, "So you don't like the way your father forces his opinions on you," Wei-Lian replies, "No, my father is my father and I must always respect him. I need to listen to his wisdom." The problem is that Timothy has been inadvertently basing some of his responses on his own cultural assumptions rather than on Wei-Lian's. When Timothy finally realizes what he is doing, he says to Wei-Lian, "When I talk with you, I need to be more of a learner. I'm coming to realize that Chinese culture is quite different from mine. I need your help."

**Focus on learning instead of helping.** Although many see helping as an education process, it is probably better characterized as a learning process. Effective counseling helps clients get on a learning track. Both the helping sessions themselves and the time between sessions involve learning, unlearning, and relearning. Howell (1982) gives us a good description of learning when he says that "learning is incorporated into living to the extent that viable options are increased" (p. 14). In the helping process, learning takes place when options that add value to life are opened up, seized, and acted on. If the collaboration between helpers and clients is successful, clients learn in very practical ways. They have more "degrees of freedom" in

their lives as they open up options and take advantage of them. This is precisely what counseling helped Carlos do (see Chapter 2). He unlearned, learned, relearned, and acted on his learnings.

Do not see clients as overly fragile. Neither pampering nor brutalizing clients serves their best interests. However, many clients are less fragile than helpers make them out to be. Helpers who constantly see clients as fragile may well be acting in a self-protective way. Driscoll (1984) notes that too many helpers shy away from doing much more than listening early in the helping process. The natural deference many clients display early in the helping process (Rennie, 1994)—including their fear of criticizing the therapist, understanding the therapist's frame of reference, meeting the perceived expectations of the therapist, and showing indebtedness to the therapist—can send the wrong message to helpers. Clients early on may be fearful of making some kind of irretrievable error. This does not mean that they are fragile. Reasonable caution from helpers is appropriate, but it is easy to become overly cautious. Driscoll suggests that helpers intervene more right from the beginning—for instance, by reasonably challenging the way clients think and act and by getting them to begin to outline what they want and are willing to work for.

### A WORKING CHARTER: A CLIENT-HELPER CONTRACT

Both implicit and explicit contracts govern the transactions that take place between people in a wide variety of situations, including marriage (where some but by no means all of the provisions of the contract are explicit) and friendship (where the provisions are usually implicit). For helping to be a collaborative venture, both parties must understand their responsibilities. Perhaps the term *working charter* is better than *contract*. It avoids the legal implications of the latter term and connotes a cooperative venture.

To achieve these objectives, the working charter should include, generically, the issues that are covered in Chapters 1 through 3: (a) the nature and goals of the helping process, (b) an overview of the helping model together with the techniques to be used and a sense of the flexibility built into the process, (c) how this process will help the client achieve her or his goals, (d) relevant information about yourself and your background, (e) how the relationship is to be structured and the kinds of responsibilities both you and the client will have, (f) the values that will drive the helping process, and (g) procedural issues. Procedural issues are the nuts and bolts of the helping process, such things as where sessions will be held and how long they will last. Procedural limitations should also be discussed—for instance, how free the client is to contact the helper between sessions: "Ordinarily we won't contact each other between sessions, unless we prearrange it for a particular purpose." However, key ground rules should not come as a surprise to clients. Manthei and Miller (2000) have written a practical book for clients on the elements of a working charter. Charters also work with the seriously mentally ill (Heinssen, Levendusky, & Hunter, 1995).

The working charter need not be too detailed, nor should it be rigid. The question is, How much structure will help this client at this time? The helper needs to

provide structure for the relationship and the work to be done without frightening or overwhelming the client. Ideally, the working charter is an instrument that makes the client more informed about the process, more collaborative with the helper, and more proactive in managing his or her problems. At its best, a working charter can help the client and the helper develop realistic mutual expectations, give the client a flavor of the mechanics of the helping process, diminish initial client anxiety and reluctance, provide a sense of direction, and enhance the client's freedom of choice.

### SHADOW-SIDE REALITIES IN THE HELPING RELATIONSHIP

There are common flaws in the working alliance that remain in the shadows, either because they are not dealt with effectively by the helping professions themselves or because individual helpers are inept at addressing them with clients.

**Ethical flaws.** Little has been said about ethics in the helping process so far, not because it is not important but because it is so important. There is a vast amount of literature on ethical responsibilities in the helping professions (see Bersoff, 1995; Canter, Bennett, Jones, & Nagy, 1994; Claiborn, Berberoglu, Nerison, & Somberg, 1994; Corey, Corey, & Callanan, 1997; Cottone & Claus, 2000; Fisher & Younggren, 1997; Keith-Spiegel, 1994; Loman, 1998). There is also a growing literature on ways in which helpers violate their ethical responsibilities. Since this area is too vast and too important to be given summary treatment here, helpers-to-be are urged to make this part of their professional development program.

**Human tendencies in both helpers and clients.** Neither helpers nor clients are usually heroic figures. They are human beings with all-too-human tendencies. For instance, helpers find clients attractive or unattractive; there is nothing wrong with this. However, they must be able to manage closeness in therapy in a way that furthers the helping process (Schwartz, 1993). They must deal with both positive and negative feelings toward clients lest they end up doing silly things. They may have to fight the tendency to be less challenging with attractive clients or not to listen carefully to unattractive clients. Clients, too, have their tendencies. Some have unrealistic expectations of counseling (Tinsley, Bowman, & Barich, 1993), while others trip over their own distorted views of their helpers. In such cases, helpers have to manage both expectations and the relationship. Very often these human tendencies on the part of both client and helper are not center stage in awareness. Rather they constitute a subtext within the relationship. Unskilled helpers can get caught up in both their own and their clients' games, causing the working alliance to break down. Skilled helpers, on the other hand, understand the shadow sides of both themselves and their clients and manage them. Tools that helpers need to challenge themselves and their clients—for instance, the skill of immediacy—are discussed in Chapters 10, 11, and 12.

**Trouble in the relationship itself.** The helping relationship might be flawed from the beginning. That is, the fit or chemistry between helper and client might not be right. But, for a variety of reasons, it is not easy for a helper to say, "I don't think I'm the one for you." On the other hand, high-level helpers can work with a wide variety of clients. They create their own chemistry. They make the relationship work.

One coach/counselor in a work setting was asked to work with a very bright manager whose interpersonal style left much to be desired. But the relationship was troubled from the start. Early on it became clear to the coach that his client expected him to "say good things" about him to senior managers. The client also had a tendency to play "mind games" with the coach, saying things like, "I wonder what's going on in your mind right now. I bet you're thinking things about me that you're not telling me." Managing expectations and managing the relationship proved to be hard work. However, the coach knew enough about the company to realize that "style" was an issue for the senior team. Because the client was bright and innovative, promotion was a distinct possibility, but because of his style, promotion was probably "his to lose." The coach remained respectful and empathetic but challenged "the crap." This shocked the client because he had always been able to "win" in his encounters with subordinates and peers. He stopped playing games and eventually realized that becoming better at interpersonal relations had only an upside.

Even if the relationship starts off on the right foot, it can deteriorate (Arnkoff, 2000; Omer, 2000). In fact, some deterioration is normal. Kivlighan and Shaughnessy (2000) talk about the "tear-and-repair" phenomenon. Many therapeutic relationships start well, get into trouble, and then recover. Experienced helpers are not surprised by this. However, some helping relationships get caught up in what Binder and Strupp (1997) call "negative process." They suggest that the ability of therapists to establish and maintain a good alliance has been overestimated. Hostile interchanges between helpers and clients are common in all treatment models. When impasses and ruptures in the relationship take place, ineffective helpers get bogged down. Many helpers and clients lack both the skill and the will for repair (Watson & Greenberg, 2000). Factors associated with relationship breakdowns include "a client history of interpersonal problems, a lack of agreement between therapists and clients about the tasks and goals of therapy, interference in the therapy by others, transference, possible therapist mistakes, and therapist personal issues" (Hill, Nutt-Williams, Heaton, Thompson, & Rhodes, 1996, p. 207). If impasses and ruptures are not addressed, premature termination often takes place. When this happens, helpers predictably blame clients: "She wasn't ready," "He didn't want to work," "She was impossible," and so forth. Such helpers fail to create the right chemistry.

**Vague and violated values.** Helpers do not always have a clear idea of what their values are, or the values they say they hold—that is, their espoused values—do not always coincide with their actions. Values too often remain "good ideas" and are not translated into specific norms that drive helping behavior. For instance, even though helpers value self-responsibility in their clients, they see them as helpless, make decisions for them, and direct rather than guide. Often they do so out of frustration. Expediency leads them to compromise their values and then rationalize their compromises. "I blew up at a client today, but he really deserved it. It probably did more good than my unappreciated patience." I bet.

**Failure to share the helping process.** When it comes to sharing the helping process itself, some counselors are reluctant to let clients know what the process is all about. Of course, helpers who "fly by the seat of their pants" can't tell clients what it's all about because they don't know what it's all about themselves. Still others seem to think that knowledge of helping processes is secret or sacred or danger-

ous and should not be communicated to clients, even though there is no evidence to support such beliefs (Dauser, Hedstrom, & Croteau, 1995; Somberg, Stone, & Claiborn, 1993; Sullivan, Martin, & Handelsman, 1993; Winborn, 1977).

**Flawed contracts.** There is an extensive shadow side to both explicit and implicit contracts. Even when a contract is written, the contracting parties interpret some of its provisions differently. Over time they forget what they contracted to and differences become more pronounced. These differences are seldom discussed. In counseling, the client-helper contract has traditionally been implicit, even though the need for more explicit structure has been discussed for years (Proctor & Rosen, 1983). Because of this, the expectations of clients may differ from the expectations of their helpers (Benbenishty & Schul, 1987). Implicit contracts are not enough, but they still abound (Handelsman & Galvin, 1988; Weinrach, 1989; Woody, 1991).

**Warring professionals.** There are not just debates but also conflicts close to internecine wars in the helping professions. For instance, the debate on the "correct" approach to diversity and multiculturalism brings out some of the best and some of the worst in the helping community. Accusations, however subtle or blatant, of cultural imperialism on the one side and "political correctness" on the other fly back and forth. The debate on whether or how the helping professions should take political stands or engage in social engineering generates, as has been noted, more heat than light. No significant article is published about any significant dimension of counseling without a barrage of often testy replies. What happened to learning from one another and integration? The search for the truth gives way at times to the need to be right. It is not always clear how all of this serves the needs of clients. Indeed, clients are often enough left out of the debate. Just as many businesses today are reinventing themselves by starting with their customers and markets, so the helping professions should continually reinvent themselves by looking at helping through the eyes of clients.

## THE THERAPEUTIC DIALOGUE



In Part Two, the basic communication skills needed to be an effective helper are reviewed and illustrated. These skills are integrated under the rubric of the therapeutic dialogue. There are less high sounding names than therapeutic dialogue—the helping dialogue, the problem-management dialogue, the opportunity-development dialogue. But dialogue is at the heart of the communication between helper and client.

Chapter 4 includes an overview of both interpersonal communication and dialogue together with the basic skill often called “attending” but now called, more pragmatically, “visibly tuning in” to clients. This skill focuses on the helper’s empathic presence to the client. Chapter 5 outlines the skill of active listening. Helpers visibly tune in, not only to demonstrate their solidarity with their clients but also to understand what their clients are saying both directly and indirectly. Finally, Chapter 6 deals with the skill helpers need both to check out and to share their understanding with clients. This skill, called “basic empathy” in previous editions, has been renamed “sharing empathic highlights” to distinguish it from empathy as a value that should permeate all helping skills.