

*COUNSELING
SKILLS
FOR
EDUCATORS*

INDEPENDENT STUDY
A FIVE CREDIT CLASS
#ED409r /#ED509r

INSTRUCTOR:

DR. MICHAEL SEDLER

Email: mike@communicationplus.net

(509) 443-1605

THE HERITAGE INSTITUTE

Please use the checklist/syllabus in the manual.

Thank you for signing up for my independent study classes. You may take up to six months to complete this course, and may obtain an additional 3 month extension. DO NOT send in any completed papers unless you have registered for the class! There should be at least one week between registration and course completion. If working in a group, put all names on each paper, except the integration paper which must be individually authored. See ** at bottom of page. **The Group Leader should send in ALL work.**

PLEASE SEND ASSIGNMENTS ELECTRONICALLY (AS AN ATTACHMENT). It is best to send in no more than 2 to 3 assignments at a time and I will send you back comments. Send them in numerical order (#1, #2, #3...). You may send work in Microsoft Word, in a Google Doc (but give permission for review), zip folder, a converted Pages file, etc.

The checklist in the manual is to help you plan your schedule to successfully complete this course. The last page of the manual includes a General Bibliography with phone numbers of publishing companies. If you prefer, you may choose an alternate book not on the suggested list.

On the following page, I have given you a brief biography/resume of my background. You will see that I have a Master's Degree in Social Work; my K-8 Teaching Certification and am a Licensed Social Worker with the State of Washington. My current primary role is as a consultant and trainer for schools, businesses and agencies. I also worked in education for 15 years as a Director of Special Education, a Behavior Intervention Specialist, School Social Worker, and Teacher.

I teach classes and seminars throughout the United States and in Canada. I am adjunct professor through two Universities in Washington. I am available for on-site training, classes, and in-services for agencies and schools. I anticipate this class will be enjoyable and full of learning. Please contact me if you would like me to be involved directly with your school or business.

Thank you; once again, for signing up for it and I look forward to working with you over the next weeks/months. If you would like individual feedback on assignments, please indicate this when turning in your work.

Sincerely,

Michael Sedler (509) 443-1605 E-mail: mike@communicationplus.net

Website: www.michaelsedler.com P.O. BOX 30310 - Spokane, WA. - 99223

** For those working in groups (400/500 level only!)- be sure to go to The Heritage Institute website at www.hol.edu and click on the "group collaboration" icon.

1. Each group member must pick a book to read (you may all choose the same book).
2. Each group member must read the entire manual.
3. Final evaluation/integration paper must be individually authored.

Please share about my classes with others; it is my main form of advertising.

MICHAEL SEDLER

(509) 443-1605 (w); (509) 939-6302 (c)

email: mike@communicationplus.net or michael@michaelsedler.com

website: www.michaelsedler.com

Education

B.A., Political Science

Master Degree, Social Work

Master Degree, Divinity

Doctorate Degree, Ministry

Teaching Certificate

Work Experience

Consultant/Trainer/Counselor

Director of Special Education

Developmental Disabilities Administration-State of WA. behavior consultant

Supervisor, Educational Services

School Social Worker (K-12)

Behavior Intervention Specialist (K -12)

Classroom Teacher (elementary and middle school)

Assistant Pastor

Other Experiences

State Correctional Facility for Juveniles, Counselor and Supervisor

Community Mental Health Therapist

State Trainer in Autism (State of Washington)

Adjunct Professor for several Universities

Student Teacher Supervisor

Consultant for schools, business, churches throughout United States

Provide weekend marriage retreats

Interview and Speech Coach/Trainer for Miss Arizona, 3rd runner-up Miss America 2012

Author

When to Speak Up and When To Shut Up. (Jan., 2006 Revell Books, \$5.99). Book from faith-based perspective.

Communication book discussing conflict, power struggles, listening strategies, asking questions.

(Over 300,000 copies sold).

What To Do When Words Get Ugly. (October, 2016 Revell Books, \$5.99).

(updated/edited version of "Stop The Runaway Conversation.") Two new chapters in addition to edits. Book from faith-based perspective.

Importance of not listening to negative discussions and how they impact a person's attitude.

Books are available through all bookstores, at www.bakerbooks.com, by calling 800 877 2665, or by checking with various online book companies. Revell is a division of Baker Publishing Group.

Both books are also available in CD format as audio books.

INDEPENDENT STUDY COLLEGE COURSES

THE HERITAGE INSTITUTE (credits through Antioch University, Seattle, WA)

MICHAEL SEDLER, INSTRUCTOR

Register for courses anytime. (6-month period for completion from the date you register). **Collaborate with fellow educators-only one set of assignments turned into instructor.** (Check out "Group Collaboration Guidelines" at www.hol.edu). **Clock hours available for partial course completion.

The following are **3 CREDIT CLASSES** (3 quarter credits = 2 semester credits)

1. Increasing Motivation and Self-Esteem in Students (SS401p/SS501p)

Strategies to help students feel confident and help educators find more successful approaches with them.

2. Parents: Adversary or Ally--A Cooperative Approach (SS401q/SS501q)

Specific ideas on connecting with parents and helping better communication between school and home.

3. Social Skills: A Foundation For Learning (SS401v/SS501v)

Activities and ideas to encourage students to improve their peer and social relations.

4. Understanding & Connecting With Aggressive Students (ED404d/ED504d)

Each person will increase their understanding of ways to de-escalate aggression and its' causes.

3 CREDIT COST: \$280-400/500 level; \$195-clock hours (3 quarter = 2 semester)

The following are **5 CREDIT CLASSES**: (5 quarter credits -3.3 semester credits)

1. Bullying Behaviors: Enough is Enough (ED437q/ED537q)

Identification and interventions to reduce bullying behaviors and victim mentality within schools and community.

2. Counseling Skills For Educators (ED409r/ED509r)

Helpful ideas on listening skills, asking questions, and communicating with students.

3. Gang Attitudes And Actions (SS406k/SS506k)

This class will help each person to identify gangs and intervention strategies for your community/school.

4. High Maintenance Behaviors & Interactions (SS409f/SS509f)

This course investigates the many aspects of high needs people, behaviors and effective interactions.

5. Mental Health Issues and Students (HE402n/HE502n)

Understand various disorders (oppositional defiant, obsessive compulsive, bi-polar) and interventions.

6. Nurturing Compassion Within Our Schools (ED434y/ED534y)

Ideas to help adults and children learn to be more sensitive, kind, and compassionate toward one another.

7. Organizational Teaching Skills (ED429w/ED529w)

Increase your own organizational and time management skills as well as helping students in these areas.

8. School Violence (SS406m/SS506m)

Each person will learn indicators and interventions for potential violent situations.

9. Stress Reduction in Staff and Students (HE401m/HE501m)

Strategies to reduce stress, become more effective in life, and teach these skills to students.

10. Student, Classroom and Whole-School Discipline (ED419g/ED519g)

Focus is on negative talk, gossip and rumors within schools. Behavioral strategies for each above area.

11. Youth Suicide (SS404u/SS504u)

Specific discussions on signs and interventions for suicide prevention.

5- CREDIT COST: \$415-400/500 LEVEL; \$315-clock hours (5 quarter = 3.3 semester)

NEXT PAGE FOR MORE CLASSES AND REGISTRATION INFORMATION

INDEPENDENT STUDY COLLEGE COURSES

THE HERITAGE INSTITUTE (credits through Antioch University, Seattle, WA)

MICHAEL SEDLER, INSTRUCTOR

The following are **6 CREDIT CLASSES**: (6 quarter credits - 4 semester credits)

1. Autism: Questions and Answers (ED445y/ED545y)

Understanding the general areas of autism, diagnosis, and overall strategies for interventions for children with special needs.

2. Establishing Rules and Boundaries (ED445x/ED545x)

Ideas to assist educators in setting up a successful work environment for children (rules, procedures, teaching tools).

3. Inspirational Education (ED452f/ED552f)

This course will re-charge the batteries and create a new excitement about teaching in each person.

4. The Impact Of Trauma and Loss in Students (ED464z/ED564z)

Strategies to support children who have experienced traumatic situations in life.

5. Why Children Act Out (ED458t/ED558t)

Recognize the underlying function of behaviors and interventions approaches.

6- CREDIT COST: \$495--400/500 LEVEL; \$380-clock hours (6 quarter = 4 semester)

REGISTRATION: Call The Heritage Institute--1 (800) 445-1305; 1 (360) 341-3020

Or register on line at www.hol.edu

QUESTIONS: Please call Michael Sedler at (509) 443-1605. Leave message when necessary.

Email address: mike@communicationplus.net **Website:** www.michaelsedler.com

**For clock hours, only complete the first section of the course. Remember, clock hours may not transfer to other districts or states. You cannot go back and acquire credit once clock hours have been earned for a class.

COURSE TITLE: COUNSELING SKILLS FOR EDUCATORS (ED409R/509R)
NO. OF CREDITS: 5 QUARTER CREDITS
[Semester Cr Equivalent: 3.3] **CLOCK HRS: 50**
PDU'S: 50
CEU'S: 5.0 (50)
INSTRUCTOR: MICHAEL SEDLER, D. MIN., M.S.W.
Box 30310
Spokane, WA 99223
(509) 443-1605
E-MAIL: mike@communicationplus.net

ASSIGNMENT CHECKLIST

The assignment checklist will help you plan your schedule of work for this course. Check off items completed so that you can better monitor your progress. While you have six-months to complete your work, many will find a shorter time period convenient. **Please email no more than 2 to 3 assignments at a time for comments. Do NOT send further work until you receive comments from the instructor. Grades will be submitted once all assignments and the integration paper have been sent to instructor.** If involved in a group, all work should be sent through the Group Leader.

For Washington Clock Hours, Oregon Professional Development Units, or Continuing Education Credits, please complete the first 8 assignments.

__ Assignment #1:

Read book from bibliography or one of your choice. If working in a group, each person must choose a book to read.

__ Assignment #2:

Read all enclosed material in the packet and **send designated ones to the instructor.**

__ Assignment #3:

Review literature (minimum of four magazines, journals) on general topic of counseling. Create an annotated bibliography. The annotation should include Title, Author, Publisher (or URL), length of article and a paragraph review of information contained. Add your opinion of the value of the contents of each article. **(send to Instructor)**

__ Assignment #4:

Read enclosed case study in manual, answer questions. **(send to Instructor)**

__ Assignment #5:

Observe another classroom, noting the types of questions asked by instructor.

__ Assignment #6:

Fill out "listening responses" and "question responses" forms in manual.

__ Assignment #7:

Keep a 2-week journal of your listening and question responses in the classroom or with other educators. A minimum of 3 entries per week. Sample page in the manual. **(send to instructor).**

__ Assignment #8:

Complete "self-rating checklist." Write 1-page analysis of your assessment. **(send to instructor).**

This completes the assignments required for Washington Clock Hours, Oregon PDUs, or CEUs.

Continue to the next section for additional assignments required for University Quarter Credit

ADDITIONAL ASSIGNMENTS REQUIRED for 400 or 500 LEVEL UNIVERSITY QUARTER CREDIT

In this section you will have an opportunity to apply your learning to your professional situation. This course assumes that most participants are classroom teachers who have access to students. If you are not teaching in a classroom, please contact the instructor for course modifications. If you start or need to complete this course during the summer, please try to apply your ideas when possible with youth from your neighborhood, at a local public library or parks department facility, (they will often be glad to sponsor community-based learning), with students in another teacher's summer classroom in session, students from past years, or use one of your own children or a relative.

__ Assignment #9: (Required for 400 and 500 Level)

Run a class meeting (guideline given in the manual).

Assignment #10: You must choose either "A" or "B" (Required for 400 and 500 Level)

Assignment #A: (SEND commentary to Instructor)

- Develop a lesson to reflect what you've learned in this course.
- Implement your lesson with students in your classroom.
- Write a 2 page commentary on what worked well and what could be improved.
- Include any student feedback on your lesson.

(The following is encouraged but not required):

- Share what you've learned with other teachers taking our courses by also contributing your Lesson to The Heritage Institute Lesson Library located at <http://www.hol.edu/lesson-plan-library>

OR

Assignment #B: (SEND lesson and summary to Instructor)

Use this option if you do not have a classroom available.

- Develop a lesson to reflect what you've learned in this course. (Do not implement it.)
- Write a 2 page summary concerning any noteworthy success you've had as a teacher with one or more students.

(The following is encouraged but not required):

- Please refer to the guidelines on our blog <http://www.hol.edu/blog> prior to writing your article.
- Please email a copy to [Rebecca Blankinship \(rebecca@hol.edu\)](mailto:rebecca@hol.edu) THI blog curator and media specialist.
- Indicate whether or not you are OK with having your article considered for publishing on our website.
- Subject line to read: (Course Name, Blog)

Send to instructor: mike@communicationplus.net

Assignment #11: (500 Level only)

In addition to the 400 level assignments, complete **one (1)** of the following assignment options:

Option A) Read two additional articles on line about counseling techniques or strategies. Write a 2-3 page summary paper.

OR

Option B) Write a summary of chosen book read for class. (3 pages).

OR

Option C) Choose an assignment of your own (with approval)

Send to instructor: mike@communicationplus.net,

400 & 500 LEVEL ASSIGNMENT

__ Assignment #12: (Required for 400 and 500 Level Credit)

Write a 2-3 page Integration Paper answering these specific questions:

1. What did you learn vs. what you expected to learn from this course?
2. What aspects of the course were most helpful and why?
3. What further knowledge and skills in this general area do you feel you need?
4. How, when and where will you use what you have learned?
5. How and with what other school or community members might you share what you learned? **(send to instructor)**

Must be individually authored (name and course title) for those taking in a group.

QUALIFICATIONS FOR TEACHING THIS COURSE:

Mike Sedler, M.S.W., brings over 30 year of educational experience as an administrator, social worker, behavior specialist and teacher to each of his classes. He provides consultation and seminars throughout the United States and Canada for schools, agencies and businesses. He has a graduate degree in Social Work, a Doctoral degree in Ministry, a Counseling license, as well as his teaching certification. All of Mike's classes are practical and "field tested" in schools and classrooms. Educators have found success in implementing Mike's clear and concise approaches. All of his course material may be immediately implemented into a school or a home.

NOTES: You may work collaboratively and submit joint assignments on all but the Integration Paper portion (and other designated assignments) which must be individually authored and submitted. Alternatives to written assignments such as a video, audio tape, photo collage, etc. are permissible with prior approval of instructor. **If you do not receive a confirmation email back after sending your paperwork via email, please re-send or contact the instructor to confirm it has been received. It seems that occasionally things get lost in cyber-space. Thank you.**

Full credit will be given to each student as long as all work is turned in. If something is missing, I will be in contact with you. Failure is not an option. 😊

INTRODUCTION

The idea of counseling may be intimidating to some people. This class is not intended to develop "therapists" or "graduate level counselors." Perhaps, it would be better titled as a communication class. In my 30+ years' of counseling in the schools, private practice, agencies and within the church world, I have found that listening and asking the right questions are two of the most significant areas of counseling.

There are several important concepts that I keep in mind when involved in counseling and communication.

1. The person may need help in identifying areas of confusion.

When caught in an emotional whirlpool, life looks very overwhelming. Their "false allusions" or perspectives may need a broader understanding. I may need to help them re-frame their "world": by asking questions, clarifying their ideas, and by pointing out discrepancies in their thought process.

- 2. People need someone they can trust.** They-don't want judgments, corrections, or lectures. However, they also don't want a "mirror" or someone that simply repeats what they say. Most people want support and aid in clarifying their feelings and situations. I don't make promises except that I will listen and give them the best guidance that is available from my perspective. I make it very clear that I may be wrong in my evaluation or understanding of a situation, but it is my perspective, and therefore valid (just as their perspective is valid.)

- 3. Healthy relationships are the key to mental, emotional and spiritual wholeness.** During discussions with people, are we attempting to encourage a connection or to break the connection? The number of people who feel frustrated and scared with life due to social isolation is staggering. Help each person know that you

care about him or her and his or her well-being. This, by itself, is significant.

4. **My goal is not to solve their problem,** but to facilitate their understanding of what their problem is, evaluate solutions, and explore how they can get to their solutions. Yes, we may be able to aid them in finding answers. We may even be the one to give them an array of possible solutions. On the other hand, we may not make one suggestion and feel very successful in our counseling endeavors.
5. **There are times that no immediate solutions or answers are available.** That is okay. I make sure the person knows that I will stand with them as they continue to investigate their situation. And, as we know, not every problem has an immediate answer. Too many problems depend upon other people and their involvement in our lives.

This course will discuss how we relate to students, family and friends. Please expand your thinking beyond the classroom. You may find this class helps you more within the context of your own family and personal life.

For those with a counseling background, I know that some of the ideas may be foundational for you. That is okay, isn't it? Don't we all need to be reminded of the building blocks of communication and counseling? And, this class may benefit you when teaching others to communicate more effectively.

Feel free to teach the ideas within this manual to students and family. I trust you will enjoy this course and find benefit from the following pages.

It is my hope that each person, regardless of skill level and counseling background, will either learn new skills or be reminded of what is important in the area of communication. Thank you for taking the class.

**GENERAL
COMMUNICATION
STRATEGIES:
LISTENING
AND
ASKING QUESTIONS
AND
STUDYING THE
ENVIRONMENT**

Basic Approaches to Counseling

Counseling Method	Causes For Problems	Treatment Method	Counselor's Approach
Psycho-analysis (psychological)	Regression of natural desires with sexual & social maladjustment	Psychotherapy with emphasis on childhood experiences	Expert Knowledge
Non-directive Counseling (self-discovery)	Lack of self-understanding	Affirmation of self and self-directed growth	Common Knowledge
Existential Counseling (meaning)	Unfulfilled needs & potential	Redirecting of priorities to fulfill personal needs with self-fulfillment	Humanistic Knowledge
Transactional Analysis (cognitive)	Playing out of inappropriate roles from learned past experiences	Re-education of mechanics of roles (parent, adult, child)	Educative Knowledge
Behavioral Counseling (behavior)	Wrong learned behavior	Relearning based primarily upon a reward system omitting punishment	Experimental Knowledge
Reality Therapy (facing issues)	Refusal to accept current reality resulting in blame and escapism	Confrontation with facts	Authoritative Knowledge

PRINCIPLES OF COMMUNICATION

- RELATIONSHIPS ARE CREATED BY COMMUNICATION
 1. *Do you relate to others?*
 2. *Are you one who stays in your room?*
 3. *Do you share about yourself?*

- RELATIONSHIPS ARE DEFINED BY BOTH PERSONS
 1. *Are you willing to extend yourself to others?*

- EACH PERSON IS 100% RESPONSIBLE FOR THE NATURE OF THE RELATIONSHIP
 1. *Accept responsibility for your part of the relationship*
 2. *Change what you can change (YOU)*

- RELATIONSHIPS CHANGE WHEN COMMUNICATION CHANGES
 1. *What are you doing each time?*
 2. *What are you doing differently?*

- TO CHANGE A RELATIONSHIP REQUIRES PERSISTENCE
 1. *How important is working together?*
 2. *Is "teamwork" necessary for a functioning school?*

- WHOEVER HAS THE MOST OPTIONS HAS THE BEST ODDS OF GETTING WHAT HE OR SHE WANTS

We are going to be teaching basic "supportive counseling." It may use primary approaches from some of the above areas, but is not intended to be technical or therapeutic, per se. My desire is to have each student taking this course become more aware of their listening techniques as well as learn positive strategies to encourage people and assist them in processing their problems in everyday life.

1. *Expand your choices.*

CUES AND INDICATORS OF
WARMTH/COLDNESS IN COUNSELING

<u>CUES</u>	<u>WARMTH</u>	<u>COLDNESS</u>
TONE OF VOICE	SOFT	HARD
FACIAL EXPRESSION	SMILING, INTERESTED	POKER FACED, DISINTERESTED
POSTURE	LEAN FOWARD TO OTHERS, RELAXED	LEAN AWAY FROM OTHERS, TENSE
EYE CONTACT	LOOK INTO OTHERS EYES	AVOID LOOKING INTO OTHER'S EYES
TOUCHING	TOUCH OTHERS GENTLY AND CAREFULLY	AVOID TOUCHING
GESTURES	OPEN, WELCOMING	CLOSED, GUARDING ONESELF
SPATIAL DISTANCE	CLOSE	DISTANT

LISTENING RESPONSES

RESPONSE

DEFINITION

PURPOSE

CLARIFICATION

A question beginning with "Do you mean that.." or "are you saying ... " plus a rephrasing of the person's message

to encourage the person to elaborate

REFLECTION

A rephrasing of the "feeling" or "affective" part of the message

to encourage more feeling from the person and to help them become more aware of feelings

SUMMARIZATION

A condensing of the person's message by paraphrasing or using reflective statements

to tie together multiple thoughts and identify common themes

EXAMPLES

A student says he isn't going out to recess because it isn't fun.

1. Clarification- "Are you saying that being with the other students is not fun?" OR "Do you mean that when you are at recess you don't enjoy yourself?"
2. Reflection- "It sounds like you are saying that being outside with your classmates doesn't make you happy." OR "Being at recess seems to make you ___ (sad, angry, upset, lonely ...)."
3. Summarization- (use after a few minutes in a conversation). "So what you are saying is that when you go out to recess, the other kids pick on you and you feel like you have no friends."



LISTENING RESPONSE FORM

Example: An elementary school student says: That teacher doesn't like me. She always picks on me. She won't change. I just think she is dumb. I get mad whenever she picks on me.

Write out two sentences you would use for the student by using:

CLARIFICATION:

1.

2.

REFLECTION:

1.

2.

SUMMARIZATION:

1.

2.

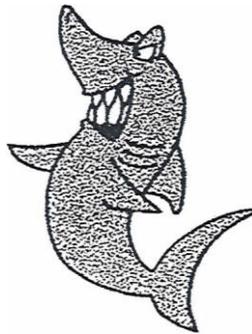
QUESTIONING RESPONSES

<u>RESPONSE</u>	<u>DEFINITION</u>	<u>PURPOSE</u>
PROBE	open-ended question beginning with what, how, when, where, who ...	to encourage elaboration by student; to gain specific examples or situations.
ENCOURAGEMENT	statement which points out student's potential to do something	to encourage student who lacks initiative; to expand student's awareness of personal/potential strength
CONFRONTATION	discrepancy between what student says and your perceived reality	to identify mixed emotions or feelings; to explore additional perceptions.

EXAMPLES

A student says he isn't going out to recess because it isn't fun.

1. PROBE- "What do you mean by it isn't fun?" OR "When you say recess isn't fun, what do you mean by that?"
2. ENCOURAGEMENT- "You seem to have a lot of friends in the classroom." OR "I have always seen you as someone who has fun whatever you are doing."
3. CONFRONTATION- "Yesterday it looked like you were having lots of fun playing soccer." OR "You have always seemed to have fun at recess in the past, how is today different?"



1.



QUESTIONING RESPONSE FORM

Example: An elementary school student says: That teacher doesn't like me. She always picks on me. She won't change. I just think she is dumb. I get mad whenever she picks on me.

Write out two sentences you would use for the student by using:

PROBE:

1.

2.

ENCOURAGEMENT:

1.

2.

CONFRONTATION:

1.

2.

Counseling Techniques

Although you may not be a fully trained counselor, many aspects of your work involve counseling approaches. Some basic techniques will prove important for you, regardless of the type of problem or situation.

Some Points to Remember:

A. Make the setting as comfortable as possible. Quiet and privacy are essential. If you do not have the time to immediately address a student, or have too many distractions of your own, schedule a time in the near future when you can talk with the student.

B. Be primarily a listener. Give definite indications when you understand what is being said, or ask for clarification where needed. This can be difficult, and requires that you listen for clues that might not be spoken. Without presuming to interpret, you can help a person say what he/she is trying to say. Do as little talking as possible.

C. Avoid judgmental reactions such as surprise, shock, or amusement unless you are genuinely sharing the student's feelings of deep concern or appropriate humor. You must show appropriate responses, but let the student make his/her own judgments.

D. Don't make decisions for the student; instead help the student explore all the alternatives. This means you must remain objective; know your own feelings, and what they are doing to your view of the person's problem, so that you can avoid biased interference.

E. Help the student focus on real problems, one at a time. The person will often talk around his/her real concerns. Try to solve these smaller problems, and then focus on larger issues.

F. Do not take notes unless it is to assure the student that you intend to follow up on a specific request. In an informal counseling situation, note taking may appear pretentious and damage the relationship.

G. Offer to see the student again; setting a more or less definite time, if possible. Make it very easy for the student to approach you again, but do not push. If you feel that the situation is over your head, refer it to the counselor. Remember, you are not a confidant. In the case of a serious issue such as suicide or intent to hurt another person you are obliged to inform someone else.

H. Remember that the key to the entire relationship is your ability to demonstrate warmth, concern, and understanding. No amount of technique can replace simply liking the student and showing it.

I. Always try to be aware of the feeling behind what the student is saying. This is more significant than the actual content of the student's statements, and is the most important aspect to be recognized.

J. Never promise confidentiality.

EFFECTIVE
STRATEGIES
FOR
LISTENING
AND WORKING
WITH
CHILDREN

TIPS FOR HELPING CHILDREN THROUGH EMOTIONAL TRAUMA

1. Shame and guilt- provide a safe time to discuss the events and feelings. Emphasize that the feelings may be common, but are still unique to them. Avoid correcting their guilt based feelings ("you don't really feel that way") and instead use supportive comments ("It is hard to feel that way about yourself. What can we do to help you move through those feelings?").
2. Self-consciousness- help them see that childhood/adolescence is a time of changes and feeling awkward. The time does pass, but one can help it pass more quickly with a certain perspective and attitude. Evaluate the positive areas of the person's life. Encourage relationships with people who they trust and care about in their life.
3. Fears- allow them to share their fears without evaluation from the adult. It is important for them to explain their concerns without feeling judged. Avoid minimizing the issues (everyone feels like that) and just listen. Evaluate whether their fears are reality based and accurate. For example, are they concerned about walking home late at night in a troubled neighborhood? Are they worried about the house catching on fire because a neighbor's house burned down? Making a list of ways to change the situation, prevent the problem, or how to minimize it occurring may be positive.
4. Acting out behaviors- what are they hoping to gain from their behaviors? Find a way to evaluate their motivation and purpose behind the behaviors. Is there another way to accomplish the goal without the behaviors? A person who is acting out is used to rejection. Be the one person who will listen to them and be positive about them as a person. Trust is a huge issue for this person.
5. Loss of a relationship- this may be breaking up with a boy/girlfriend, someone moving away, grief from a death, etc. Emphasize that the feeling of loss is okay. Allow them to grieve. Explain to them the concept of grief, helping them understand the various stages of grief, and how to work through these areas. If the loss is due to a death, use of positive memories, stories, and re-telling of times spent with that person may help them. If the loss is a break up of a relationship, help the person to focus on other friends and family. Encourage activity involvement and connecting with others.

PERSONAL STRENGTH CHECKLIST

The following words describe personal qualities that are important in working and life situations. Check all the words that describe you. Trust your first response to each word. There is no limit to how many words you can check. Add some words of your own if you like. Then, select up to 10 words that best describe you and list them at the bottom of the page.

- | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|--|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agreeable | <input type="checkbox"/> Athletic | <input type="checkbox"/> Self-directed | <input type="checkbox"/> Helpful |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Orderly | <input type="checkbox"/> Scholarly | <input type="checkbox"/> Sensitive | <input type="checkbox"/> Persuasive |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Flexible | <input type="checkbox"/> Impulsive | <input type="checkbox"/> Critical | <input type="checkbox"/> Creative |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Responsible | <input type="checkbox"/> Optimistic | <input type="checkbox"/> Materialistic | <input type="checkbox"/> Punctual |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Risk-taking | <input type="checkbox"/> Adventurous | <input type="checkbox"/> Involved | <input type="checkbox"/> Assertive |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Stable | <input type="checkbox"/> Out-going | <input type="checkbox"/> Verbal | <input type="checkbox"/> Strong |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Generous | <input type="checkbox"/> Active | <input type="checkbox"/> Logical | <input type="checkbox"/> Honest |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Analytical | <input type="checkbox"/> Understanding | <input type="checkbox"/> Accurate | <input type="checkbox"/> Ambitious |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mechanical | <input type="checkbox"/> Quiet | <input type="checkbox"/> Competitive | <input type="checkbox"/> Curious |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Passive | <input type="checkbox"/> Cautious | <input type="checkbox"/> Imaginative | <input type="checkbox"/> Kind |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cooperative | <input type="checkbox"/> Realistic | <input type="checkbox"/> Practical | <input type="checkbox"/> Decisive |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Organized | <input type="checkbox"/> Friendly | <input type="checkbox"/> Forceful | <input type="checkbox"/> Tactful |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Controlling | <input type="checkbox"/> Persistent | <input type="checkbox"/> Tolerant | <input type="checkbox"/> Artistic |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sociable | <input type="checkbox"/> Dependable | <input type="checkbox"/> Attentive | <input type="checkbox"/> Patient |

Top 10 Strengths

- | | |
|----------|-----------|
| 1. _____ | 6. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 7. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 8. _____ |
| 4. _____ | 9. _____ |
| 5. _____ | 10. _____ |

TRAPS TO EFFECTIVE LISTENING

1. Being able to set aside your own conflicts, biases and preoccupation so you can concentrate on what is being said. You may have your own problems and had a rough day, but the person in front of you needs your attention.
2. Avoiding subtle verbal or nonverbal signals that indicate you disagree, are having problems with their words or simply disapprove of their statements. The content may be offensive to you, but if you want to facilitate and broaden their attitude and perspective, avoid showing disapproval while they talk.
3. Using both your eyes and ears to detect messages. Notice their body language, their eyes, their tone of voice, and their gestures. Many times, what they "don't" say is as important as what they "do" say.
4. Waiting patiently during times of thinking silence. A quiet moment may be your best friend. It gives you time to think, to plan and to evaluate. It also can place a bit of pressure on the counselee to continue to share. Don't be so quick to jump in and rescue them.
5. Realizing that you can accept the person even if they are explaining an area contrary to your values, beliefs or understanding. Remember, no matter what we believe now or what we understand at this time of life, it wasn't always that way. People need time for life experiences and personal relationships to grow in their life. This may be one of those significant times for the person you are talking to at that moment.

LISTENING SKILLS FOR DEFUSING ANGER

THE "CALM" TECHNIQUE

C = Calm yourself first; don't get defensive

- Suspend all judgment
- Commit yourself to calming the other person
- Be relaxed
- Display an open body language style

A = Acknowledge the importance of what the other person is saying

- Make eye contact
- Ask the other person to tell you more about the situation
- Show your concern for the other person's need

L = Listen, actively

- Let the other person voice his/her feelings
- Listen for information the other person is sharing
- Do not interrupt

M = Make sure you understand

- Clarify and summarize the other person's concerns
- Use feeling words that demonstrate your desire to understand the angered person
- After summarizing, ask the other person if you have understood his/her position

The angered person wants to be understood. By demonstrating your intention to suspend judgment and understand the angered person, without being angered yourself, you can help defuse his or her anger. The CALM technique requires a conscious effort on the part of the listener to momentarily set aside his or her needs and to attend to the angered person's needs.

Resource: The Mediation Center. Web Site: <http://www.main.nc.us/tmc>

BARRIERS TO SUCCESSFUL COMMUNICATION

- **LECTURES**- if you are talking more than the other person, watch the lecture approach. Communication is a dialogue, not a monologue.
- **EMOTIONS**- check your emotions. If you are too charged, you may want to wait to discuss the situation.
- **"I TOLD YOU SO"**- this puts the person on the defensive and closes doors. Don't you hate this type of comment?
- **NONVERBALS**- watch your body language, tone of voice, and subtle cues. Remember, over 90% of communication is nonverbal. What are you saying without using words?
- **DISTRACTIONS**- cell phones, television, newspapers, multi-tasking ... shall I go on? Stop, Look, and Listen to the person.
- **LACK OF FOLLOW THROUGH**- say what you mean and mean what you say. Be sure to follow through with anything you say you will do for the person.
- **NOT ASKING QUESTIONS (OR SHOWING INTEREST)**- when we ask questions, it gives the impression of interest and caring. Too many people spend time talking about themselves. This is about the other person ... find out what you need by asking questions.
- **UNCOMFORTABLE ATMOSPHERE**- if you feel a barrier in the atmosphere, mention it. "It seems that you are upset (frustrated, angry, etc.)." Remember, we are opening up the lines of communication by being available.

2.



CLASS MEETING GUIDELINES

(This is also a sample of the intervention worksheet/checklist)

There is not one way to run a class meeting. The most important feature is to be sure you as the "adult" feel a sense of control in the meeting. This doesn't mean you have to "run the meeting" or do most of the talking. In fact, the most successful meetings are when the students do the talking and you simply facilitate. Listed below are some general do's and don'ts in a class meeting.

DO

- ** let the students voice their concerns
- ** set ground rules (no put downs, no problems without solutions, keep things within the class, no talking when others are speaking, etc.) These are just examples of some rules you might use.
- ** set a time limit on the meeting
- ** lay the foundation of the meeting (what is the topic, such as "playground behavior", "no homework being turned in", "arguments in class").
- ** be a facilitator not a participant (unless you are asked)
- ** be real and honest if asked questions
- ** stop the meeting if people are being hurtful, not following the rules, need further guidance.
- ** have fun and learn

DON'T

- ** lecture
- ** share too many personal details, let them do their own thinking
- ** be too task oriented, let them have fun
- ** be too serious or too flippant
- ** worry about getting a point across (making them understand a specific point or situation. Let them learn at their own pace)
- ** Be afraid to share your feelings about situations
- ** feel a need to solve a problem each time. Part of the learning is in the process and not always in the outcome.

HELPFUL PHRASES OR STATEMENTS IN THE CLASSROOM

- Tell me more...
- I'm unclear as to what you mean...
- Help me understand...
- I'm not sure I agree...
- Does anyone else agree/disagree with...
- I have never looked at it that way...
- Is that your opinion or the facts?...

OPENING UP THE COMMUNICATION LINES

1. DON'T TALK, LISTEN

- Children are used to being "told" what to do. This is an important time to hear what their issues are ... we don't have to agree, but listen.

2. TIMING IS EVERYTHING

- What we say may be correct, but is it the right time? When people are upset, emotional, or frustrated, our listening skills are very low. Are you willing to wait for a better time?

3. CHOOSE YOUR BATTLES

- Is the issue so important that you are willing to make it a "relationship breaker?" Some issues we need to let go for now ... pick it up later. Others, they are critical and guidelines clearly set.

4. CONVERSE ABOUT NEUTRAL OR POSITIVE TOPICS

- Do we only talk to children/ adolescents when there is a problem? When we are pumping them for information? Discuss neutral topics, areas they find of interest.

5. BE WILLING TO CONFRONT DIFFICULT TOPICS

- It is important to address the tough topics. Don't avoid them for the sake of "peace." But, set the tone, choose the right time, and be sure your son/ daughter knows of your personal commitment to them.

6. BE WILLING TO NEGOTIATE

- Do we always have to be right? Children think adults feel that way. Be open to new ideas, compromise, negotiation, and mediation. But, be clear about what is non-negotiable. There may be areas you won't compromise.

7. BE HONEST

- Don't try to "pull one over" on the child. Be up front and honest with your feelings and thoughts.

TECHNIQUES TO COMMUNICATING WITH YOUTH

(YOU ARE AS YOUNG AS YOU FEEL)

- **ATTENDING**: it is important to give your undivided attention to the person you are communicating with, whether you are talking or they are talking. This may be done through (a) eye contact, looking without staring as a way to elicit concern, compassion and interest; (b) body posture, relaxed yet showing interest by leaning forward (avoid snoring); (c) gestures that are natural such as head nods, smiles and other nonverbal affirmations.
- **LISTENING**: this involves more than simply being quiet while another person talks. There is an active process and tools that may be used to emphasize the listening process. This will be presented in this class.
- **RESPONDING**: avoid the fallacy of “silence means I am a good counselor.” You must respond by asking questions, directing, clarifying, etc. Again, we will examine these areas in this class.
- **LEADING**: this skill must be used by the effective communicator. Brief, but clear statements may help guide the discussion. Such as “What happened next?” or “Tell me what you mean by...” These statements may lead the person to further discussion.
- **SILENCE**: this may be a useful tool at the right time. The person may need time to think, to gather their thoughts, or to formulate their opinion. It is okay to let time pass if you feel it is being useful.
- **TEACHING**: due to confusion, lack of understanding, or emotional pain, the counselee may need you to give ideas or suggestions. Be clear that these are only your ideas, but they may free the person to begin examining the situation.
- **FILTERING**: this does not mean we are skeptical, but we must be wise. Be careful to remember that you are hearing one perspective. The person's image of the situation may be distorted by pain, time, or motives. This doesn't mean we “doubt” their words, but it may mean we don't jump to conclusions.

TIPS FOR TALKING WITH ADOLESCENTS

1. *Engage Adolescents With Nonthreatening Questions.* Choose one or two questions at a given time and ask questions that help define their identities, viewpoint, or perspective. For example, "What do you like to do in your free time?" "What do you want to be the outcome of this conversation?" Listen nonjudgmentally and listen more than you speak. This enables the adolescent to realize that you value his/her opinions and thus to trust you more. Be careful to not bombard them with questions.

2. *Avoid "why" questions as they tend to put people on the defensive.* Attempt to rephrase your questions to get at what the adolescent is thinking rather than the reason for something the adolescent has said or done. Instead of "Why did you say (or do) that?" rephrase to "You seemed to be wanting to get a point across. Can you tell me again what you mean?"

3. *Match the adolescent's emotional state, unless it is hostile.* If the person is enthusiastic, excited, sad, or some other emotion, let your response reflect his/her mood. Reflecting helps a person feel understood. Using open ended questions will help with this as well.

4. *Casually model rational decision-making strategies.* Discuss how you once arrived at a decision. Explain, for example, how you defined a problem, generated options, anticipated positive and negative consequences, made the decision, and evaluated the outcome. Your example does not have to show you in a good light. But remember, adolescents have a relatively short "adult" attention span, so be brief and choose a relevant topic to adolescents.

OPEN AND CLOSED QUESTIONS

AN OPEN QUESTION is one that:

1. can't be answered by a short one or two word answer.
2. usually starts with "how" or "what" or other discussion encouraging question.
3. encourages the person to talk.

A CLOSED QUESTION is one that:

1. can be answered by "yes" or "no" or by one word.
2. starts with "is", "do", "have", etc.
3. discourages the person from talking and slows the flow of two way conversation.

USES OF OPEN QUESTIONS:

1. Beginning a conversation
 - "What would you like to talk about?"
 - "What is going on with you?"
2. Clarifying and elaborating
 - "How is this a problem for you?"
 - "What do you mean by _____?"
 - "What is it about the situation which bothers you?"
3. Working with Feelings
 - "How do you feel about that?" (be sure to get a feeling answer)
 - "What is (put in a feeling) like for you?"
 - "How do feel right now?"(helps them bring feelings into here and now)
 - "What would you like to say to him/her?" (help people get in touch with feelings about other people)
4. Problem Solving
 - "What options do you have?"
 - "What have you thought of doing?"
 - "How do you feel about each of these options?"
 - "What's the best thing that could happen?"
 - "What's the worst thing that could happen?"
 - "What do think will actually happen?"

DON'T

- ask questions to satisfy your own curiosity (be sure all questions will help lead you to a better understanding of the situation.)
- use the word "why...?" very often (this can put people on the defensive and make them attempt to justify situations instead of explaining them)
- ask long complicated questions
- give unsolicited advice

COMMUNICATION STOPPERS

DIRECTING, ORDERING- to tell someone to do something in a way that the other person has little or no choice.

Example: "Get your work done by 2:30 p.m."

WARNING, THREATENING- to tell the other person that if the behavior continues, then certain consequences will happen.

Example: "If you are not in your seat when the bell rings, then you come in at lunch."

MORALIZING, PREACHING- to tell someone things they ought to do.

Example: "If you want to make the team, you need to practice every day."

PERSUADING, ARGUING- to try to influence another person with facts, information, and logic.

Example: "Staying up late will make it difficult to get up the next morning."

ADVISING, RECOMMENDING- to provide answers for a problem.

Example: "If I were you, I wouldn't spend time with Joe. He is bad news."

EVALUATING, CRITICIZING- to make a negative interpretation of another person's behavior.

Example: "Since you didn't say hello today, I thought you didn't like me anymore."

PRAISING- to make a positive evaluation of another person's behavior.

Example: "You're a smart person. You can figure this out."

SUPPORTING, SYMPATHIZING- to try to talk the other person out of his or her feelings or to deny another's feelings.

Example: "Don't worry, you will get better grades on the next test"

"You are not the only one who feels like this."

DIAGNOSIS- to analyze the other person's behavior and communicate that you have their behavior figured out.

Example: "You are just too thin-skinned. Any negative comment hurts your feelings."

DIVERTING, BYPASSING- to change the subject to not talk about the problem presented by the other person.

Example: "I know things are tough at home, but do you still want to go to the movie?"

KIDDING, TEASING- to try to avoid talking about the problem by laughing or distracting the other person.

Example: "Wipe your tears. You're going to wrinkle like a prune."

GUIDELINES FOR LISTENERS

1. FOCUS ON THE PERSON WHO IS TALKING.
2. LISTEN FOR THE FEELINGS OF THE TALKER AND THE CONTENT.
3. SHOW THAT YOU UNDERSTAND WHAT IS BEING SAID, CONTENT, AND THE FEELINGS.
4. SUMMARIZE THE MAIN POINTS.
5. AVOID ROADBLOCKS ESPECIALLY LABELING, JUDGING, OR GIVING ADVICE.

THERAPEUTIC RESPONSES AND STRATEGIES

- **Remain proactive-** set the tone for the "treatment" process.
- **Neutral emotional response-** don't let your emotions get "triggered" by the child's behavior or attitude.
- **Avoid control battles-** resistance has no power when it falls on deaf ears.
- **Acknowledge choices and consequences-** clearly explain that the child's choices have consequences and they are in control of their choice.
- **Convey commitment and perseverance-** these children are used to "outlasting" the adult. Stick with the child ... don't give up. They need to hear that message.
- **Do not resist the resistance-** allow them to express resistance. Stay calm, but be direct and clear.
- **Identify underlying emotions-** resistance is generally fueled by fear and anxiety. Switch the focus from meaningless manipulation to genuine emotions.
- **Provide empathy-** help the child see that you understand their pain, their situation, their background. You don't need to agree with them, just empathize.
- **Positive frame-** change the discussion and focus to one of success instead of one of failure.
- **"Firing" the child-** it is okay to let the child know that they are not ready to move forward. Let them convince you they are ready.

*IDEAS
FOR
WORKING
WITH
PROBLEM
PEOPLE
AND
RESISTANT
INDIVIDUALS*

PROBLEM AREAS IN ASKING QUESTIONS

Listening lays a foundation for appropriate responses. There are two main factors which create barriers to listening.

1. Not seeing the importance of listening.
2. Being distracted or pre-occupied.

The average person has a listening capacity of approximately 25%. We **do** talk more than we listen. (Hard to believe? ask others if you dare).

Poor use of questions, a failure to develop a "communication strategy" and being inattentive to responses will all lead to poor communication patterns.

The following are a few problem areas when asking questions:

- **Answering your own question**- Be sure your question is one which allows the person to answer his/her own way. "You did well on the test, didn't you?" This type of question sets the person up to be defensive and to have to admit a failure, without giving them a chance to formulate their own ideas.
- **Double questions**- This is a common problem. Ask one question at a time so the person can be specific in their answers. "Do you not like the work in the class or is it the teacher?" Here we see the person is asked to choose one or the other. It may be neither one or it could be a combination. Give them the opportunity to tell you what they are thinking.
- **Bombarding**- We often times asks a series of questions which can be very confusing. "What do you think of this color?" "Would another one be better?" "Or maybe I should get a different pattern, what do you think?" An answer like "I don't, yes, perhaps" would only cause more confusion. One question, one answer---it makes life much easier.
- **Need to hear yourself talk**- Don't be afraid of silence. We have a tendency to want to fill in the gaps with idle chatter and questions. Many times the silence may be the person thinking. Also, silence can create a healthy discomfort for the other person and they will respond. " ". See how easy it is to be quiet. This will allow a student to answer a question in class when in the past we may have gone on prior to them answering the question.



PROBLEM PEOPLE

COMPULSIVE TALKER- Use lots of closed questions. If you ask them "what do you think?" You will find out for the next hour. Be direct in your questions using clarifying and summarization every few minutes, if necessary. This will help keep them focused. These people will challenge your listening ability. Too often we begin to think of things to say, how to stop them, where we want to go on vacation, etc. While you listen, plan a strong follow up question to their response. Keep re-directing and keep a time limit on them.

NON-TALKERS-As the opposite of the compulsive talker, you would want to use many open questions. Stay away from, "Did you like the movie?", "Is her class fun?". This will get you a short quick response and the "ball is back in your court". Use silence to your advantage. Remember, if you aren't uncomfortable with the silence, it gives both of you a chance to think and formulate answers. By using short, crisp sentences as a probe, you will encourage the person to talk. "Tell me more...", "And then what happened...", "Really..." are all examples of these encouraging short statements. Often the non-talker is nervous, so build a rapport around something they find of interest

ANGRY/HOSTILE PERSON- Allow venting if possible, keep a calm neutrality by using lots of reflection (feeling) and clarification. Stay away from confrontation unless you are confident in your ability to reframe it into something positive. If the person is stating inaccurate information, find a way to clarify and probe. "Would you go over that last part again, the way I remember it was a little different?" "You said he didn't give you the book, but I thought you had the book when you came to class. Let me think about it for a moment... what do you remember?"

A. If anger directed at others- stay calm, probe for clarity and understanding. Avoid aligning with one side or the other. Clarify, focus, clarify, focus ... Help the person to hear what they are saying by using reflecting, summarizing and encouragement. "You sound very hurt about... , it sure sounds as if you are trying to understand the situation. I appreciate your approach to this incident"

B. If anger is directed at you- RUN (just kidding). If possible, allow venting. The person will feel heard without you justifying. Mirror statements back to be sure you understood their concerns. Separate yourself from behavior. Share this with the person. "It seems that my response to you felt abrupt and uncaring. That was not my intention and if my poor communication caused this, I'm sorry. But my real intention was to not be late for an appointment and I was in a hurry." If necessary, give an alternative approach for next time. Don't square off psychologically. This is not the time to prove them wrong or to "logically" show them the error of their way. When emotions are softer, then you can problem solve.

SELF-RATING CHECKLIST

CHECK THE ITEMS WHICH ARE MOST DESCRIPTIVE OF YOU **and SEND TO INSTRUCTOR**

COMPETENCY ASSESSMENT

- 1. Constructive feedback doesn't cause me insecurity or uncertainty (like on evaluations).
- 2. I tend to put myself down and not think I am capable of doing things.
- 3. I feel fairly competent about myself as a helper
- 4. When I am involved in conflict, I try to avoid it
- 5. When I get positive feedback about myself, I tend to not believe it.
- 6. I often find myself apologizing for myself or my behavior.
- 7. I often times set goals for myself which are too tough to attain.

POWER ASSESSMENT

- 1. If I am honest, I think I am superior to others in many areas.
- 2. A lot of times I try to get people to do what I want.
- 3. If people don't agree with me, I tend to get angry.
- 4. I like to hear what others have to say.
- 5. I find myself "lecturing" to others to get my point across.
- 6. Power struggles seem to follow me in my relationship with others.



INTIMACY ASSESSMENT

- 1. It is hard to express my feelings to others.
- 2. I go out of my way to avoid hurting others, including not saying "the truth".
- 3. I am more comfortable when I am a little aloof.
- 4. Being close to people is an area I work toward in a relationship.
- 5. I am very sensitive to how people feel.

RECOGNIZING CUES FOR TROUBLED STUDENTS

Mildly troubled students may exhibit behaviors which do not disrupt others but may indicate something is wrong and that assistance is needed. Behaviors may include:

- Grade problems or a change from consistently passing grade to an unaccountable poor performance.
- Excessive absences, especially if a change in previous attendance patterns.
- Unusual or markedly changed patterns of interactions (avoidance, anxiety).
- Other characteristics that indicate a trouble managing emotions such as depression, lethargy, sudden mood swings, hygiene changes, etc.

For this student, it is helpful to take a low key supportive approach. Avoid confronting them with these changes as they will become defensive. Instead, be available for conversation and gently probe using effective communication strategies.

Moderately troubled students may exhibit behaviors that indicate significant emotional distress. They may also be reluctant to acknowledge a need for personal help. Behaviors may include:

- Repeated requests for special consideration such as deadline extensions, special favors (use of pleading, guilt, then anger are common methods).
- New or repeated behavior which pushes the limit of the immediate environment.
- Unusual or exaggerated emotional responses that appear inappropriate for the situation.

This student is at a critical juncture as they need to make better decisions before heading further into difficulties. Utilizing trusted adults in their life may help them to open up. Challenging their belief system is okay. Let them know the behavior is not acceptable and changes need to occur. At the same time, find a way to be a resource for these changes.

Severely troubled/disruptive students exhibit behaviors that signify an obvious crisis and necessitate immediate interventions. Behaviors may include:

- Highly disruptive behaviors (hostility, aggression, violence).
- Loss of contact with emotional reality (blaming, justifying, manipulation).
- Inappropriate communication (strong profanity, harassment, isolation).
- Threat of harm to self or others (use of emails, text, letters, phone calls)

It is imperative to connect with a counselor or professional to help in this area. This individual needs boundaries and guidelines. Involvement of medical, legal, or law enforcement professionals may occur. Be sure to talk with other adults for ideas and strategies. Don't do this alone.

Responding to a Student in Crisis

Active listening during a crisis situation happens in three stages:

- A. *Build a connection with the person ...*
- B. *Boil down the problem ...*
- C. *Take action to resolve the issue ...*

A. Build a connection

1. Communicate genuine caring for the person and their problem.
2. Deal openly with the relationship; indicate your own limits; be honest, never claim you understand when you do not.
3. Practice active listening by paying attention; eye contact, alert posture.
4. Encourage the person to ventilate all of their feelings. Affirm that all feelings are true, because they are there. Provide a chance for catharsis by allowing the person to share their pain.
5. Some precautions:
 - a) Don't rush to fill a silence. Sometimes quiet can bring about discussion,
 - b) Don't interrupt to tell your experiences.
 - c) Don't be too quick to give advice. Remember that you may not have all the answers.

B. Boil down the problem

1. Ask about time limits - is there an urgency to find a solution?
2. Identify various parts of the problem. Separate out those things which are manageable by the person and those which are not.
3. Search for alternatives. People in trouble often get locked into an "either/or" position in which they feel helpless. Help point out other possibilities.
4. Search for resources to aid the person. Be aware of how far you want to go in "helping". Investigate the resources the student might have (i.e. family, friends, clergy, etc.). Introduce the idea of the counseling center, and tell the person what to expect and how to get an appointment.

C. Take action to resolve the issue

1. Help the person decide what is feasible.
2. Focus on the first action step to begin what is feasible.
3. Trust your own intuition and act on it.
4. Be supportive - reinforce taking one step, then another.
5. Don't be afraid to challenge the person to rely on his/her own decision-making ability. Both supportive statements and challenging statements can communicate caring. If in doubt, ask the person how you are coming across.

The following "DO" and "DON'T" approaches to several types of students will assist you in communication counseling in crisis situations. We will address the "anxious student," "depressed student," "suicidal student," "violent student," "suspicious student," and "verbally aggressive student."

THE ANXIOUS STUDENT

Anxiety is a normal response to a perceived danger or threat to one's well-being. These students are highly anxious about the unknown and may perceive danger is everywhere. Uncertainty about expectations and interpersonal conflicts are primary causes of anxiety. High and unreasonable self-expectations increase anxiety also. A panic attack is an overwhelming sense of dread and fear and is the extreme result of feeling anxious. Regardless of the cause, symptoms may include rapid heart palpitations, chest pain or discomfort, dizziness, sweating, trembling or shaking, or cold, clammy hands. The student may also complain of difficulty concentrating, always being "on the edge," having difficulty making decisions, or being too fearful to take action. The following guidelines remain appropriate in most cases.

DO:

- Let the student discuss his/her feelings and thoughts. Often this alone relieves a great deal of pressure.
- Provide reassurance.
- Be clear and explicit about what you are willing to do. It may be helpful to have the student repeat what you have said to ensure that he/she understands.
- Provide a safe and quiet environment until the symptoms subside.
- Remain calm.

DON'T:

- Minimize the perceived threat to which the student is reacting
- Overwhelm the student with information or ideas to "fix" his/her condition
- Take responsibility for the student's emotional state

THE DEPRESSED STUDENT

Depression, and the variety of ways it manifests itself, is part of a natural emotional and physical response to life's ups and downs. With the busy and demanding life of a student, it is safe to assume that most students will experience some periods of reactive depression in their school careers. It is when the symptoms become so extreme, or are so enduring, that they begin to interfere with the student's ability to function in school, work, or social environments, that the student will come to your attention and be in need of assistance.

Typically, a depressed student may feel guilty or angry at her/himself, have trouble concentrating or remembering, lose interest in schoolwork or usual activities, or feel worthless or inadequate. Physical symptoms include changes in appetite (usually a loss of appetite), difficulty sleeping (usually trouble falling asleep or early morning wakening), and low energy level.

DO:

- Let the student know you've noticed that she/he appears to be feeling down and you would like to help.
- Reach out and encourage the student to express how she/he is feeling
- Tell the student of your concerns
- Offer options to further investigate and manage the symptoms of the depression, including counseling if it seems appropriate

DON'T:

- Minimize the student's feelings, e.g., "Don't worry," "Crying won't help," or "Everything will be better tomorrow"
- Be afraid to ask whether the student is suicidal if you think she/he may be.

THE SUICIDAL STUDENT

Suicide is the second leading cause of death among college students. It is important to view all suicidal comments as serious and make appropriate referrals. The suicidal person is intensely ambivalent about killing himself/herself and typically responds to help. High risk indicators include feelings of hopelessness and futility, a severe loss or threat of loss, a detailed suicide plan, a history of previous attempts, history of alcohol or drug abuse, feelings of alienation and isolation, preoccupation with death.

DO:

- Take the student seriously-80 percent of suicides give warning of their intent.
- Acknowledge that a threat of or attempt at suicide is a plea for help.
- Be available to listen, to talk, to be concerned, but obtain help from school and community counselors and mental health programs. Attempt to make sure the student actually gets some help.
- Take care of yourself. Suicide intervention is demanding and draining work.

DON'T:

- Minimize the situation or depth of feeling.
- Be afraid to ask the person if they are so depressed or sad that they want to hurt themselves (e.g., "You seem so upset and discouraged that I'm wondering if you are considering suicide. ")
- Ignore your limitations.

THE VIOLENT STUDENT

Violence related to emotional distress is very rare and typically occurs only when the student is completely frustrated, feels powerless, and is unable to exert sufficient self-control. The adage, "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure," best applies here. This behavior is often associated with the use of alcohol and other drugs.

DO:

- Prevent total frustration and helplessness by quickly and calmly acknowledging the intensity of the situation, e.g., "I can see you're really upset and may be tempted to lash out."
- Explain clearly and directly what behaviors are acceptable, e.g., "You certainly have the right to be angry, but breaking things is not OK."
- Get necessary help (other staff, community resources, etc.)
- Stay safe: have easy access to a door; keep furniture between you and the student. Do not see the person alone if you fear for your safety.

DON'T:

- Ignore warning signs that the person is about to explode, e.g., yelling, screaming, clenched fists, threats
- Threaten, dare, taunt, or corner student
- Touch the student.

THE SUSPICIOUS STUDENT

Usually these students complain about something other than their psychological difficulties. They are tense, cautious, mistrustful, isolated, and have few friends. They tend to interpret minor oversights as significant personal rejection and often overreact to insignificant occurrences. They see themselves as the focal point of everyone's behavior and everything that happens has special meaning to them. They are overly concerned with fairness and being treated equally. Feelings of worthlessness and inadequacy underlie most of their behavior, even though they may seem capable and bright. This type of student is often mistrusting of psychological counseling and reticent to engage in it. But you may wish to call and consult with us on how to proceed.

DO:

- Express compassion/concern without intimate friendship. Remember, suspicious students have trouble with closeness and warmth.
- Be firm, steady, punctual, and consistent.
- Be specific and clear regarding the standards of behavior you expect.
- Be aware that humor may be interpreted as rejection.

DON'T:

- Assure the student that you are her/his friend
- Be overly warm and nurturing
- Flatter or participate in their games; you don't know the rules
- Be cute or humorous
- Challenge or agree with any mistaken or illogical beliefs
- Be ambiguous.

THE VERBALLY AGGRESSIVE STUDENT

Students may become verbally abusive when confronted with frustrating situations that they perceive as beyond their control. They can displace anger and frustration from those situations onto the nearest target. Explosive outbursts or ongoing belligerent, hostile behavior become this student's way of gaining power and control in an otherwise out-of-control experience. It is important to remember that the student is generally not angry with you personally, but is angry at his/her world and you are the handy target of pent-up frustrations.

DO:

- Acknowledge the student's anger and frustration, e.g., "I hear how angry you are."
- Rephrase what the student is saying and identify his/her emotion, e.g., "I can see how upset you are because you feel your rights are being violated and nobody will listen. "
- Reduce stimulation; invite the student to your office or other quiet place, if this is comfortable for you. But don't if you do not feel safe in doing so
- Allow the student to tell you what is upsetting her/him
- Tell the student you are not willing to accept their verbally abusive behavior, e.g., "When you yell and scream at me that way, I find it hard (impossible) to listen"
- Tell them they are violating your personal space and to please move back (if they are getting physically too close), e.g., "Please stand back; you're too close"
- Help the student problem solve and deal with the real issues when she/he becomes calmer, e.g., "I'm sorry you are so upset; I'd like to help if I can."
- Be honest and genuine, do not placate aggression.

DON'T:

- Get into an argument or shouting match
- Become hostile or punitive yourself, e.g., "You can't talk to me that way!"
- Press for explanations or reasons for their behavior
- Ignore the situation
- Touch the student, as this may be perceived as aggression or otherwise unwanted attention
- Give away your own rights as a person.

4.

PITFALLS TO EFFECTIVE COUNSELING

1. **Dear Abby-** giving advice can be a problem when meeting with people. "you should" or "you ought to" can be seen as pushy unless the person clearly asks for your advice or direction.

2. **Cocktail Party Chitchat-** idle talking and conversation can be helpful to initially develop a relationship or to start off a conversation. However, if the bulk of your time is always discussing "How about those Mariners?" or "Do you think it is too early to plant my garden?", you probably are avoiding things.

3. **Threatening or Argumentative-** "you'd better do this" is probably not going to lead to a very open conversation. Avoid threats, but be willing to open up the person's eyes to possible consequences for their actions.

4. **Analyzing Like a Computer-** important for the people to know you have feelings. Being Mr. Spock (for you trekkies) is great for the Starship Enterprise, but may not be helpful to someone who needs a caring, sensitive response.

5. **Judgment, Blame or Criticism-** "it's your own fault", "you asked for it" are possibly true statements, but they won't encourage continued conversation (unless you desire to try the techniques for working with a hostile person).

6. **Intolerance/Rigidity-** it is one thing to share a perspective that is different, but another to say "this is the way to do it, if you want to be right". If you feel strongly about an issue, let them know that it is your perspective and they will need to arrive at their own conclusions.



INCORPORATING LISTENING IN EVERYDAY LIFE

- TEACHING NONVERBALS- *help each student to notice the nonverbal cues from one another. Watch a video and have them write about actions. Allow them to observe hallway, playground or lunch behavior and write about the nonverbal activities.*
- TEACHING SUMMARIZATION- *explain to the students that summarization takes the important points and re-iterates them. Use examples from a book, newspaper article or magazine. Tell a story and have them summarize. This is an important communication skill with one another. (See listening response worksheet)*
- TEACHING CLARIFICATION- *teach key phrases such as "What do you mean by...?", "I don't understand. Would you explain that again?", "Can you give me another example?" (See listening response worksheet)*
- OPEN AND CLOSED QUESTIONS- See "open and closed question" worksheet.

1. INCORPORATE LISTENING GOALS INTO ACADEMIC SETTING

2. REFER QUESTIONS BACK TO THEM

3. CONDUCT INTERVIEWS

4. EXPLAIN HOW SOMETHING FUNCTIONS OR OPERATES

COMMUNICATION IDEAS FOR RESISTANT STUDENTS

1. SILENCE

- To allow the student to think
- To allow the adult to think 😊
- To allow the discussion to sink in emotionally
- To allow the "silence" to become uncomfortable

2. QUESTIONS

- To lead the student toward discussions
- To probe for deeper meanings
- To show your interest

3. HUMOR

- To "lighten" the atmosphere (help person relax)
- To connect with the person

4. ENCOURAGEMENT

- To help create a positive sense within the person
- To encourage communication (sense of safety)
- To connect with the person emotionally
- To help them see a "truth" about themselves or situation

5. SELF-DISCLOSURE

- To help them broaden their individual perspective
- To help them relate to you
- To emotionally support them (not all alone)

6. EMPATHY

- To emotionally connect with them
- To allow them to step back and see their own position

SAMPLE FOR 3- WEEK JOURNAL

Listening and questioning responses

This may be done as a narrative, a summary or perceptions based on your conversations. You may integrate all three styles in the log.

Narrative style:

Student: I hate math.

Teacher: What do you mean by hate?

S: I don't like it because I always do bad in it.

T: I think you are smart and can do well in math.

S: I'm dumb. I get tired of bad grades.

T: That would be frustrating.

S: Yeah, it's always been like that.

T: Could I make a suggestion?

S: What?

T: If you would like, we can work slowly on a few problems and see if I can be of help. If not, you have lost nothing.

S: Sure, why not?

Summary style:

In a discussion with one of my 5th graders, she shared of her frustration with math. I was able to glean that her "hatred" of math was due to her lack of success. When I tried to encourage her, she pulled back and retreated with words of negativism about herself. I offered to help her on a few problems, just to test the waters. She agreed and we were able to finish the worksheet.

Perception style:

I found that during my conversation with a student regarding math my tendency was to rush to fix the problem. I had to be very careful not to push too fast or hard. Once I was able to hear her concerns, I learned the importance of offering suggestions without making it a demand. One thing I learned about myself is how easy it is to want to finish the conversation quickly without really listening.

Dealing with Suicide

Suicide Signs and Signals

- A. Prevailing sadness, lack of energy, difficult in concentration, loss of interest or pleasure in usual activities, mood swings or atypical acting-out behavior (anger, belligerence to authority figures, alcohol/drug abuse, sexual promiscuity).
- B. Academic failure often accompanied by feelings of disinterest or helplessness.
- C. Social isolation, lack of close friends or confidants even though they may have superficial contact with a group of peers.
- D. Disharmony or disruption in the family (divorce, separation, alcoholism, abuse).
- E. Recent death or suicide attempt by a loved one or family member, or breakup with boy/girlfriend.
- F. Atypical eating or sleeping patterns - either excessive increase or decrease.
- G. Verbal remarks about sense of failure, worthlessness, isolation, absence or death, also written stories, essays, or art projects depicting the same theme.
- H. Collecting pills, razor blades, knives, ropes or firearms.
- I. Giving away personal items and writing suicide notes.
- J. Previous suicide attempts.
- K. Suicide threats or other statements indicating a desire to die.
- L. Unusual calmness after an emotional upheaval or deep depressions.

How to Help the Suicidal Student

- A. Believe it when someone talks of suicide, he/she should be taken seriously.
- B. Listen carefully, talk freely, open lines of communication, ask concerned questions, talk calmly, don't be judgmental, sympathize and show that you take the person's feelings seriously and that you wish to help.
- C. Get help. Call a counselor or another suicide prevention agency.
- D. Be there. Stay close, be supportive and show the person that you care. Do not leave the person during the crisis. Follow up by staying in touch and encouraging the person to continue to get assistance.
- E. Encourage positive action. Suggest to the person that he/she:

1. Improve the home environment - if home life is a problem, suggest a strategy for improving it - for example, family counseling.
2. Keep busy and active - depressed people often become apathetic, inactive and as a result grow more depressed and withdrawn. A balanced schedule of work and recreation can help.
3. Get away for a while - even a temporary change of scenery can make a big difference. It's a chance to gain a new perspective on the situation.
4. Get some exercise - vigorous physical exercise helps a person relax, sleep better, look better, and have a more positive outlook on life.
5. Try to change the situation - choose-a course of action that seems most likely to resolve the stressful situation.
6. Talk things over - discuss the problem with those involved instead of holding feelings back.
7. Learn to relax - hobbies, sports, and relaxation techniques (such as deep breathing) can help the person learn to live with normal stresses.

Important questions to ask a person contemplating suicide (to assess lethality)

- A. Have you thought of suicide?
- B. What did you think you might do?
- C. Do you have the means?
- D. Have you ever attempted suicide before?
- E. Has anyone in your family attempted suicide?
- F. What details of suicide have you thought about?
- G. What is the possibility that you will commit suicide?
- H. Do you have someone you can talk to?
- I. What types of problems are causing you to feel this way?
- J. How else could you deal with these problems?
- K. How do you see yourself in the future?

HOW TO DEFUSE DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS

Kathy Pierce and Lynette Fields

Here is a refresher course on communicating effectively under stressful conditions.

A lack of support, personal putdowns, and conflict are everyday events for many educators. Resolving conflict throughout the day can leave one demoralized, intimidated, exhausted, and with a sense of impending doom. In fact, it is not uncommon for educators to view parental interaction as one of the most challenging and potentially unnerving tasks that we deal with on a regular basis.

While parental-educator conflict has many causes, there are multiple strategies to be used to defuse these situations. Likewise, a strategy for student-educator conflict has many approaches as well.

PARENTAL COMMUNICATION

Dealing with parents often proves to be the most difficult interaction as we often have little time to prepare for it. A parents' primary interest is to protect their children and they sometimes put on armor and hold on to perceptions about their children that are idealistic and even irrational. To further complicate matters, by the time a parental communication reaches a teacher or administrator, a series of hostile interactions may have already taken place with another staff member, a secretary, counselor or other school personnel.

Some parents are determined to shelter their children for a variety of reasons and may defend their children whether they are right or wrong. Why are parents backing their children rather than working collaboratively with schools? The media has certainly played a big part in parent's disgruntled attitudes toward the system. Since the report "A Nation at Risk" was published in 1983, the media has had a field day putting the public education system in a negative light. Although the report was flawed in many ways, it nonetheless led to a negative perception about our educational system ... one we have yet to turn around. Today, the press still implicates schools as the reason for social and academic regression in students. It is no wonder, then, that parents question, argue, and exhibit anger toward schools.

STRATEGIES FOR BETTER COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS

** Be prepared whenever possible. Access background information from the student's files and talk to other teacher's to get a better understanding of the problem.

** Try to determine if anyone else has similar problems with the student. Find out what they are doing to help minimize the issues. This will give you as many strategies as possible.

** Let the parent vent and talk as much as needed. Avoid being defensive and trying to prove to the parent that their child is a problem. They already know this ... thus there is a meeting going on. Speak after they are finished.

** Be empathetic. Being a parent is not easy and it can be very scary when your child is not doing well. It can even more difficult and intimidating when a "professional" tells you that your child has a problem.

** Take notes during the meeting; this makes it more official and provides documentation. It will also have a tendency to help "cooler heads" to prevail.

** Ask the parent "What can I do to help this situation?" or "What can we do together to work on this problem?"

** Speak calmly and firmly. Your reflections should be honest and informational, if you don't know the answer, admit it and promise to get back with them. Focus on the behaviors, not the student. Redirect attention back to the original problem and paraphrase what you have heard, as needed. It is important to remain non-defensive, focused, and firm as you lead parents toward a collaborative resolution that is suitable for all.

** Accept responsibility for any process that is not followed or for lack of process that may have caused a problem. Remember, we should attempt to emphasize that we are all on the same team.

** Return phone calls and messages as soon as possible. Be sure to not keep a parent "hanging" as they will resent it and it will create further problems in meetings.

STUDENT COMMUNICATION

Depending on the grade level, age of the child, and their comfort level in communication, students typically are hesitant to share too much with educators. As they grow older, their hesitation will increase. They are unsure as to how you will respond and whether their perspective will be received. Whether it is a question about homework or a concern about the way other students are treating them, communication with children is an integral part of their education packet. Whereas math, english, and science may not be everyday needs, communication will be a constant theme in the life of a person.

STRATEGIES FOR BETTER COMMUNICATION WITH STUDENTS

** Be sure the students know that you are open to discussions with them. Set office hours, be available before/after school, during lunch or whenever your best times are for them.

** Don't expect them to always initiate. If you have a concern about a student, encourage them to come and speak with you.

** When a student is sharing, don't interrupt. It may be a "miracle" they are even sharing with you so don't cut them off. Once they finish, ask if there is anything else they want to talk about. This may be a one-time meeting so milk it for all you can.

** Don't always try to problem solve for them. Our tendencies are to come up with the "right" answer for them. It may be more important for them to walk through the process of discovery than for you to force an option on them.

** If other people are involved, encourage them to speak with those people. Be willing to be a part of these discussions if necessary. If you are uncomfortable with this, find another adult willing to be a support system for the student.

** The goal is not to do everything perfect, but to encourage communication. You may have a student that just likes to talk, without much of a problem focus. Help each child to find a place of comfort when it comes to communication with another person, especially an adult or person in authority.

LONG TERM SOLUTION

Effective listening is a skill that is essential for all leadership. The greatest gift you can give anyone is to listen to him or her; truly listen. Listening fulfills a psychological need inherent in all of us. Without listening, no knowledgeable reflections can be made.

Because listening is done so often by all of us, we think it is easy. The reality is that many of us need to learn the skill of listening. True listening involves temporary, total acquiescence to the speaker's viewpoints. An occasional nod, an understanding facial expression, open body language, an effective question, or a timely "I understand," can defuse a tense situation. At the same time, the listener gains insight regarding the parents' position and background, which will enable familiar communication once they have been heard.

Those who engage in active listening, careful reflection, and diligent expression can leave at the end of the day feeling confident that they have done their best to promote the welfare of the schools, teachers, parents, and students. Rather than "just leaving it at work," they feel good about themselves and the events of the day.

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The following two books are written by your instructor and contain a faith based perspective and biblical references. These are available on line or through bookstores. Both books also available as an Audio Book.

What To Do When Words Get Ugly. Michael Sedler. Revell Books, 2016 (edited/revised edition). Examines the topic of gossip and how it impacts people. (Adult) www.bakerbooks.com 1-800-877-2665

When to Speak Up and When to Shut Up. Michael Sedler. Revell Books, 2006. Communication book discussing conflict and encouragement. (Adult) www.bakerbooks.com 1-800-877-2665 **(over 300,000 copies sold).**