Clara 2.0

incorporating compassion, mindfulness and motivational interviewing into our communication with others

Assumptions

The CLARA 2.0 communication technique is based off of the traditional LARA/CLARA (Tinker, 1992) model of communication. The new CLARA model is intended to allow for more listening and compassion by the helper. It is based on the following assumptions:

1) Conversations with people of different (oppressive) viewpoints are important: Talking with people different from us is vital to building connections, changing minds and changing institutions. No matter the immediate outcome of the conversation, the act of truly communicating with someone of a different view point plants a seed that may develop down the road.

2) Conversations with people of different (oppressive) viewpoints are difficult: We can experience strong emotions and overwhelming thoughts when attempting to engage in these conversations. They can bring up past trauma and hurt, sometimes it is best to not engage.

3) We must be the first to model authentic listening and respect: Trained helpers' job is to practice skills and techniques to help others, we are in the best place to model these skills for others.

4) All humans want to be happy: We all want happiness and peace, but we have varying ideas of how to get there. Some of our ideas are harmful to others (knowingly or not knowing), but the main objective of happiness is shared by all people.

Terms

CLARA 2.0 incorporates a few new terms barrowed from Motivational Interviewing, Mindfulness, and Compassion Literature. Some of those terms and concepts are listed below:

Ambivalence: "The simultaneous presence of competing motivations for and against change" (Miller & Rollnick, 2013, p.1).

Change Talk: "Any… speech that favors movement toward a particular change goal" (Miller & Rollnick, 2013, p.2).

Compassion: "A sensitivity to suffering in self and others with a commitment to try to alleviate and prevent it" (Gilbert, 20014, p. 19).

Mindfulness: "Paying attention in a particular way, on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally," (Kabat-Zin, 1994, p.4).

Reflection: "An interviewer statement intended to mirror meaning (explicit or implicit) of preceding… speech" (Miller & Rollnick, 2013, p. 7)

Works Cited

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CLARA 2.0 Guide

Center self and develop intention

- Calm and center the mind
- Prepare to suspend ego and agenda
- Set intention to help the other

Listen

- Body: open body language and eye contact
- Mind: attitude of curiosity towards the other, allow agendas and ego to pass
- Speech: minimal, supportive and seeking to understand

Affirm

- Start with compassion: all humans want to be happy and at peace
- Deeper characteristics: values, principles, loves and wishes
- Authenticity: notice tone, intent and reaction to remark

Reflect

- Use simply or complex reflections
- Focus on compassion and "change talk."
- Use double sided reflection to highlight ambivalence

Ask for elaboration or ask for permission to provide information

- Seek to understand more about ambivalence, compassion or "change talk."
- Seek to gain deeper understanding of intention, motivation, and person.
- Ask "would it be OK if I shared my perspective?"