Advantages and Limitations of Unstructured Interview

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**Abstract**

During the course of this paper, it is going to be seen how the unstructured style of the interview is carried out and the examples of the interview are going to be given when it comes to the instances. The client that is being referred to here is Anna, and what has happened that all the information from the corresponding interviews was not being collected. The examples would be given of the questions that are going to be asked during the interview to ask the questions as well as the explanation of some of the challenges that are faced during the course of the interview. Specially the how answers for the uncomfortable questions are being asked.

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# Introduction

 The client interviews are an important part of the assessment of the social work. When the client interviews are carried out, the idea is to make sure that medical and mental history of the client is being evaluated. At the same time, how the family structure, income and some other particulars about the client are gathered at the given point of time. The other thing that it tends to do is that it provides insight about the style of the interview and how the corresponding adjustments are needed to be made. There are some clinical experts who argue that how unstructured interview are the part of the information gathering process that varies from one person to the another. The idea is to make sure that the collection and integration of data is made possible.

# Discussion

During the course of this paper, the case of Anna, who is a forty-seven years old women is going to be looked who is admitted at the Sheltering Heart Centre. Here, the assistance is going to be provided to Anna in terms of the provision of the healthcare program as well as making sure that the educational and job search assistance is provided. Anna has recently moved with her husband in this town and this was the second instance that Anna has visited the centre. What my responsibility was to make sure that the follow up interview was carried out. As I was meeting with her in the reception area, her appearance seems unruly to me. She was dressed in the slack and blouse and flat dress shows. Her appearance was clean, and her long hairs were pulled back into the ponytail. The guided her down to the hall in my office and offered her something to drink. She replied in the affirmative and later on I asked her to take a seat and explain about the services that are being provided at the Sheltering Heart. Later on, I told Anna that more information about her is needed to make sure that the appropriate treatment plan is there for her and the form was placed that had questions about her employment history as well as her earning. She was not willing to tell about her last job experience in a clear manner and this is where I determined that the structured interview format is not going to be much of a help to me this time around, so I switched to the unstructured interview. Here my focus was to make sure that some information is taken from her when it comes to her previous job experience. I deviated in between her likes and dislikes and her personal preferences about different sort of things. When she was a bit relaxed, she told about the clerical and retail roles that she had performed and her bilingual capacity in English and Spanish.

 This is where I told her that one of the services that we are offering at the moment t is that we work with the local junior colleges to refer the clients for the education. I further briefed her about the wide range of services that are available here such as financial aid and transportation vouchers as well as the child care plans that we have. A brochure was being provided to her about the college and it was pointed out that how the nurse side certification is one of the things that she can do. I also told her as she was fired from her last job, financial assistance can be provided to her.

 There was a sense of comfort in her when it comes to sharing the information and she was more open about sharing her work experience. As I listened to her, her postured was relaxed this time around and I was taking observations from her answers. I showed her certain level of empathy and acceptance and made sure that the illustration of good listening skills was being done on my part. It has to be noted that the good listening skill is an important part of the whole unstructured interview as there are mental notes to be taken during the whole process. The interviewer must also be sensitive and observant to make sure that they are providing appropriate feedback

 The limitation is that as compared to some of the other interview techniques, this is a skill that requires certain level of expertise to be learned in a proper manner. They need to have the required information regarding how the information is needed to be collected at the given point of time. The determination of the eligibility and the mental status can be made in a much more appropriate manner. Other limitation is that how the structured interviews might not allow it, but on the other hand, the unstructured interview is something that allows the interviewer to make sure that they are able to make the right call in terms of the direction the conversation is going to be taking at the given point of time. The usage of the unstructured interview is a skill that requires time and skill to be learned completely and experience and practice is required to make sure that the person is able to learn it. The unstructured interview allows the interviewer to tailor the questions asked to the client and allows the interviewer to observe a client’s affect, appearance, mood, posture, and cognitive and mental faculties to make a diagnosis or assessment of the appropriate treatment or services they require. Through using the unstructured interview the interviewer can evaluate the clients emotional and cognitive functioning. Jones states the Mental Status Examination (MSE) “is a screening evaluation of all the important areas of the client’s emotional and cognitive functioning.” (Jones, 2010, p. 225) The MSE includes observation of the client’s “appearance and behavior, speech and language, thought process and content, mood and affect, and cognitive functioning” according to Jones. (Jones, 2010, p. 225)

# Conclusion

. There are benefits and drawbacks of the unstructured interview. One of the key advantages that it has is that is that it allows the interviews to make sure that they are able to make the evaluation of the mental state of the client. It also eases out the process rough which the counsellor can make sure that they are determining the status of the DSM IV-TR. At the same time, it allows certain level of flexibility to make sure that the interviewer can be guided, and the client can be coaxed into giving information about the client. The interviewer can determine the direction of the conversation and the collection of the response is much more organized in such instances.

**References**

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