

Introduction to Psychological Counselling

Writing up Verbatim

Session Week 13

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Introduction

- The verbatim simply and briefly reports the conversation that occurred in the counselling/ care situation.
- This may be an actual counselling situation or talking to somebody at the hospital or nursing home or other ministry setting.

Verbatim Interview Guidelines

- Any previous information you have about the person in need. Include age, gender, culture, diagnosis, length of stay. Include also primary relationships (is s/he married, are their children or parents involved, etc.)
- Your purpose in visiting (*new admission? follow-up visit for support? referral? etc.*) and your pastoral preparations and intent.
- Your purpose in this verbatim (*Why did you choose to write about this visit? What issues does it raise for you? How does it inform your learning issues? etc.*). State **explicitly** what feedback about your ministry you would like from the group. It is **not** sufficient to say you want to know if you did well or not, or you want to know what you could do better. **Be specific.** *Does it relate to your learning goal(s)? Did it evoke emotions that were uncomfortable for you (anger, sadness, etc.) that you think might have affected your care? Did you experience an epiphany or particular growth through this interaction that you'd like to verify or explore?*
- Observations about the person in need and environment. Name any conditions or circumstances that might indicate something about the person in need or might have influenced your effectiveness in the visit. (*description of room-- bright? dark? were there flowers and cards? personal things? Were others present? Were they relaxed? tense? angry? How was the person in need positioned? lying flat? head raised? in chair? Etc.*)
- Observations about yourself, including any feelings you were having. (*Were you on call? tired? energized? afraid? Had your day [or night] been particularly difficult? particularly slow? etc.*)

Verbatim

- **Confidentiality - Do not use a person in need's name in a verbatim.** Designate by initial, and designate how you are identifying each speaker (C = Counsellor, P = Person in need, W = Wife, etc.)
- Number each "speech" consecutively (C-1, C-2, etc. Pattern will look something like: C-1; P-1; C-2; W-1; C-3; P-2; etc.)
- Single space continuous dialogue. Double space between speakers.
- Leave adequate marginal space for others to write comments or questions.
- Give as much descriptive material as possible along the way. *Indicate pauses, smiles, laughing, crying, turning away--anything that will help the readers sense the behaviors and feelings all participants are experiencing. **Indicate your own feelings as you are aware of them** (remember, the more aware the better!), and those you experience from the person in need or family. If, for example, at your third "speech" you are feeling a particular way, put that in parentheses before the entry. Do the same for the person in need, i.e.,*
- C-3 (*I'm feeling a bit awkward and hesitant to get into this*) Why would you expect that?
- P-3 (*Looking away and smiling*) Oh, I don't know. . . (*P looks back at me with tears in her eyes.*)
- C-4 (*I wonder about the smile and the tears. What do they mean? I also realize that P is about my age. I reach a hand to her, which she eagerly takes. I wait a moment, then say:*) Is this something we can talk about?
- (*There is silence while she blinks away the tears and regains her composure. I am wondering if I have pushed too far. I wonder, too, if I really want to hear what she might be about to tell me.*)

Verbatim

Sociological/Psychological/Cultural Observations:

- **Sociological Observations**

- ✓ What issues, if any, would you identify for this person in need and/or family/loved ones from your awareness of the behavioral sciences? *Is it a healthy family system? What is the person in need's role in the system? Has that role affected how the person in need responds to the illness or how the health care system delivers care?*
- ✓ How does this illness impact the system[s] in which this person functions? *(financial issues? Work/vocational issues? Will any life-changing circumstances affect the system long-term and significantly? Are there tensions or stressors in the system that will impact their ability to cope with the stress of illness? These MAY be about LACK of supportive system.)*

- **Psychological Observations**

- ✓ Describe the person in need's emotional state. *Summarize the emotions you observed or sensed throughout the conversation. Are the emotions at a reasonable level, or is the person in need unreasonably worried, angry, anxious, hopeful, etc.? How do you experience this person's coping capacity, style, etc.?*

- **Cultural Observations**

- ✓ To what race, ethnicity, and cultural heritage does the person in need belong? How is the person's cultural identity impacting her/his current life circumstances?
- ✓ How is your cultural identity similar and/or distinct from that of the person?
- ✓ How do the dynamics related to culture impact your relationship with the person?

- **Ethical Observations:** Identify questions the person in need and family may be facing for which there are no clear rights or wrongs, such as quality-of-life issues. *Might the choices they make alter the person's lifestyle? Are there now or there potentially questions about end-of-life care? Are there decisions that could be construed as choosing life or death? Are cultural assumptions, biases, or expectations at play in any way?*

Verbatim

Counsellor/Person in Need/Staff Relationships

- Personal/Professional Identity: Describe and evaluate your relationship with the person in need. *How did your personal history come to mind or affect your care? Did the person in need remind you of anyone? Did the event or circumstances recall anything from your previous experience? Did you identify with the person in need? If so, how? Maybe you found yourself particularly empathetic or sympathetic, but weren't sure why. Do you have similar or different or paradoxical feelings with the person in need? Did you like or dislike the person in need? Do you know why? How did you sense the person in need felt toward you? Do you know why? How were you changed by this encounter?*
- Personal/Professional Evaluation: Summarize your **actual psychological/spiritual intervention**. What do you see as your strengths in this encounter? What were your limitations? *Was there a time in the encounter when you were unsure what to say or do? Was there a time when you said or did something you wished, or wish in retrospect, you had not said/done? What about the visit would you like to do differently the next time?*
- Relationship with the counselling team: Describe and evaluate your relationship with the counselling team. *Did you consult with a nurse or other staff about the person in need? Why or why not? Who initiated the consultation? What were your feelings in that relationship? Was there an effect on the person in need's welfare?*

Learning Journal

Reflective Journal

- Complete your Learning Journal entry from today's class as well all weeks (Lesson 1 –13).
- Submit all Learning Journal by 18th March 2013.