Activity 5: Role Playing of real life situations

Activity type: Role playing

Learning goals:

The activity will help the trainees to understand and empathize with someone who disagrees with them and generalize conflict resolution instruction to real life, through sufficient practice in a safe environment.

Specificities: Group activity
Duration: 1-1,5 hour
Materials needed: 2 scenarios

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Instructions:

Work in pairs (2-3 persons)

Study your given role and act accordingly.

Client: describe your opinion and express your anger (where this anger comes from)

Practitioner: focus on what is being said with genuine interest and encourage "client" talking to calm down

Observer: keep notes on the reactions of both practitioner and client

2 Scenarios

Scenario A: Louis Is Attacked Personally

Louis, a career practitioner, regularly organizes forums where employers present their professional field. Louis first interviews the employers. Later, participants can ask questions. At the start of a forum with 20 participants, Louis has just started interviewing the managing director of a large company from the region. The guest likes to talk and starts to digress from the topic, so that Louis interrupts him after a minute with a question that leads back to employment opportunities. At this moment, one of the participants of the forum suddenly shouts at Louis, telling him to "shut up" and let the guest speak.

Scenario B: Maria the Quarrelsome Mother

Helen, a student, attends a career counselling program together with her mother, Maria. Maria is a financial analyst who owns her own company. She wants Helen to study economics so that Helen will be able to take over the company in the future. When Robert, the practitioner, announces that Helen expressed her interest in becoming a teacher in a career interest questionnaire, Maria gets upset and starts yelling at Robert. She claims that the career questionnaire is invalid because she knows her daughter better than anyone else and she knows best what suits her daughter.

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Reflection questions:

- What was your overall experience on this activity?
- How easy/difficult was it to try to avoid conflict and calm down the client?
- What techniques proved to be more effective/ineffective?
- How does this activity help you move forward in the counselling process in terms of cooperation and conflict management?

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Useful information for the trainer:

Inform participants that they are going to role- play 2 different scenarios, in order to practice conflict resolution in a safe environment. Get participants in small groups of 3 persons (3 roles: client – practitioner – observer). Assign to each participant one of the two scenarios. Invite them to study carefully their scenario and role-play according to the following instructions:

- Participants who role-play "client" describe their opinion and their anger, where this anger comes from;
- Participants who role-play practitioner focus on what is being said with genuine interest and encourage "client" talking to calm down.
- the observer keeps notes on the reactions of practitioner and client

All participants shall get in all 3 roles.

Each role-play should last for about 5-10 minutes. At the end of each, the participants summarize how well the practitioner managed the incident and how well he/she demonstrated active cooperative behaviours or if there was something else he/she could do. There should be noted the strategies, methods, words that proved effective towards conflict resolution and those that may be proved ineffective. Participants who role-play "client" express how they felt and what could be different, what helped them calm down and what not. Observers focus on the reactions of both participants and on what seemed working well and what not.

The trainer can supervise the process of role-playing and in case needed s/he can intervene to help participants. At the end of this process, all participants come together to reflect upon their experience.

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