

Chapter 5: Basic Skills for Direct Practice

In the next clip, you will see the attending skill called **furthering** response demonstrated. Listen to the narration, which provides the context to understand how and why this attending behavior was used as a way to convey interest in the both Anthony and Maria's situation.

▶ **Furthering**

Facial Expressions, Eye Contact, and Head Movements

Social workers use **facial expressions** to mirror back to the client an awareness of his or her emotional state. If a client is talking about the great time she had at the high school dance and excitedly describes this new experience, it is appropriate for the social worker to smile with pleasure. Conversely, if a client is discussing how lonely and out of place she felt at the school dance, the social worker's face should mirror back a sense of sadness and disappointment. The social worker's facial expressions should reinforce verbal communication (e.g., by saying, "I'm interested in hearing your story" and looking and truly being interested in the client). This nonverbal display of interest serves as reinforcement for the client to continue.

In the next video, the instructor addresses the use of facial expressions. What is the importance of mirroring the client's facial expressions, eye contact, and head nodding to convey understanding?

▶ **Mirroring, Eye Contact, and Head Movements**

In this video, Marie is affirming Anna's feeling through her facial expression and words. How do Marie's facial expressions convey her understanding of Anna's relief now that she is home? Put yourself in Anna's place as you review this session and identify three ways in which Marie and Anna are mirroring each other's feelings as they move toward ending their relationship.

Maintaining intermittent eye contact with the client is a way of saying "I am here with you." This is not the same as staring or glaring at a client, who can cause extreme discomfort. Mutual eye contact on the part of the client and/or social worker can demonstrate a readiness to delve into the problem situation. However, cultural patterns differ regarding eye checking (looking to a loved one or person in authority before responding), which can be misinterpreted by the worker. It could be considered disrespectful to maintain eye contact with a person who

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Policy to Practice The Affordable Care Act, March 2010

The Affordable Care Act (ACA) puts Anna in control of her health care. It reduces her insurance premium costs and reduces her out-of-pocket expenses by capping her portion of medical expenses. The ACA stipulates that a patient with a preexisting condition or illness is covered by insurance and can't be penalized by charging the patient more for medical care. In Anna's case, she is receiving treatments for cancer. The ACA will protect Anna's family from losing all of their financial resources as the cost of her treatments continues to rise.

from Case Study #1

Social Worker: Do you know when you're actually leaving for Indianapolis?

Anna: In two weeks. My husband wants to come with me. I want him there, but at the same time we're not going to have any money if he takes off work.

Social Worker: So you're also worried about finances.

Anna: How are we gonna make house payments if he's not working?

Social Worker: But you want him there, which is understandable.

considered an authority figure (social worker) or of higher status. For example, with Native American culture, averting one's eyes is customary. As a worker, practice looking away intermittently so that the client can observe you too. In addition, it is imperative for the social worker to attend to the incongruence of the client's words and facial expressions (e.g., the client saying "I feel great" as her eyes fill with tears). Using this example, the social worker can respond to the tears versus the words by saying, "Although you say you feel great, your tears tell me something different. Can we talk about the sadness you're experiencing right now?" Being aware of cultural differences is important, as in the case of Mrs. Kita.

▶ In this video clip, watch Mrs. Kita's relatively still face. What emotions does she convey?

The social worker's head movements can also offer nonverbal feedback by encouraging or discouraging the client from further discussion. The head nodding

Anna: Uh-huh. I don't want to be alone.

Social Worker: But if he's with you and not working, finances will be tight.

Anna: Exactly.

Social Worker: So, you're really in a bind.

Anna: Plus I always stayed home with my kids, and so I don't think that I can get any type of disability. If he's off work for a long time, we'll have to make the payments to keep our insurance, and I can't do without it.

Social Worker: Not now. There are so many different areas to consider: your finances, your children, making sure that you're okay. There are health care options available to you through the Affordable Care Act. It is a program that offers insurance to you at a cost that you can afford, plus you qualify for coverage even though you will need additional medical care. Here is some information that may be helpful to you. I am happy to answer any questions you have about this program.

To learn more about The Affordable Care Act, visit the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services website.