



# INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ACADEMIC RESEARCH IN PROGRESSIVE EDUCATION & DEVELOPMENT



[www.hrmars.com](http://www.hrmars.com)

ISSN: 2226-6348

## Exploration of Application Basic Counseling Skill in Family Counseling Session from Counselor Perspective Experience

Norhayati Mohd Noor, Akbariah Mohd Mahdzir, Aidah Abdul Karim, Zulkifle Malek

To Link this Article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARPED/v11-i2/12374>

DOI:10.6007/IJARPED/v11-i2/12374

**Received:** 09 March 2022, **Revised:** 07 April 2022, **Accepted:** 27 April 2022

**Published Online:** 11 May 2022

**In-Text Citation:** (Noor et al., 2022)

**To Cite this Article:** Noor, N. M., Mahdzir, A. M., Karim, A. A., & Malek, Z. (2022). Exploration of Application Basic Counseling Skill in Family Counseling Session from Counselor Perspective Experience. *International Journal of Academic Research in Progressive Education and Development*, 11(2), 590–599.

**Copyright:** © 2022 The Author(s)

**Published by** Human Resource Management Academic Research Society ([www.hrmars.com](http://www.hrmars.com))

This article is published under the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY 4.0) license. Anyone may reproduce, distribute, translate and create derivative works of this article (for both commercial and non-commercial purposes), subject to full attribution to the original publication and authors. The full terms of this license may be seen at: <http://creativecommons.org/licences/by/4.0/legalcode>

**Vol. 11(2) 2022, Pg. 590 - 599**

<http://hrmars.com/index.php/pages/detail/IJARPED>

**JOURNAL HOMEPAGE**

**Full Terms & Conditions of access and use can be found at**  
<http://hrmars.com/index.php/pages/detail/publication-ethics>



# INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ACADEMIC RESEARCH IN PROGRESSIVE EDUCATION & DEVELOPMENT



www.hrmars.com

ISSN: 2226-6348

## Exploration of Application Basic Counseling Skill in Family Counseling Session from Counselor Perspective Experience

Norhayati Mohd Noor<sup>1</sup>, Akbariah Mohd Mahdzir<sup>2</sup>, Aidah Abdul  
Karim<sup>1</sup>, Zulkifle Malek<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Faculty of Education, The National University of Malaysia, Selangor, <sup>2</sup>Malaysia-Japan  
International Institute of Technology, Kuala Lumpur, <sup>3</sup>Ministry of Education Malaysia

Email: norhayati@ukm.edu.my, akbariah.kl@utm.my, eda@ukm.edu.my,  
drzulgua@gmail.com

### Abstract

The more challenging family counseling process definitely requires more precise application of basic counseling skills. This article aims to discuss a study exploring the use of basic counseling skills or also known as helping skills in family counseling sessions conducted by counselors. The objective of the study was to explore the use of basic entertaining counseling skills among counselors in family counseling sessions. Qualitative study approach with case study design with 12 licensed counselors, experienced over 3 years and have conducted more than 500 hours conducting family counseling sessions from three government agencies offering family counseling services in Malaysia. Analysis of interview data in depth thematically and descriptively data. The results of the study have shown that eight basic skills of counseling that have been used by counselors, namely i. asking/questions, ii. validity, iii. ask for and give an explanation, iv. confrontation, v. focus, vii. paraphrase, viii. reflection of feelings and ix. eye contact. Factors of education, training and experience in conducted individual counseling have influenced the use of counseling skills among counselors in family counseling sessions.

**Keyword:** Family Counseling, Basic Counseling Skill, Counseling, Family

### Introduction

The necessity for counselling skills is the same for conducting family counselling as it is for conducting individual counselling. In reality, issues of family system interaction, conflict, and dysfunction (L'Abate, 2016) need counsellors to employ basic counselling skills more effectively (Kaplan, 2003). In reality, if one is to be compared to when a counsellor conducts individual counselling, the level of mastery of these skills must be more accurate (Watts, 2003; Fenell & Weinhold, 1997; Crane et al., 1986). The larger the number of clients present (family members), the more complex the issues become, and counsellors must be more adept in employing basic counselling skills in conducting counselling sessions (Noor, 2012).

Counseling specialists have highlighted several theories and perspectives on basic counselling skills. Basic counselling skills are essential requirements that can be assumed to be at the heart of the counselling process's effectiveness. Listening, attending, paraphrasing, reflecting sentiments, concreteness, open questioning, interpretation, information sharing and removing barriers to change, focusing, summarising, genuineness, unconditional positive regard, and counsellor self-disclosure are all basic counselling abilities (Ivey, 2014; Nelson-Jones, 2014). Iarussi, Tyler, Littlebear, and Hinkle (2013) discovered ten elements that contribute to a counsellor who is effective in the use of basic counselling skills in counselling sessions. i. Worked on Counseling Skills Using Motivational Interviewing ii. Learning experience that is valuable and applicable to skill development iii. Useful and important class instruction. iv. Acquired practical and effective skills v. Class training is beneficial and valuable. vi. Acquired practical and effective skills vii. Learning experience that is valuable and applicable to skill development. viii. Increased confidence in dealing with difficult clientele. ix. Uncertainty in technique application and x. Limitations in Using Motivational Interviewing.

Crane et al (1986) is an early researcher that conducted a study looking at how family counsellors' skills can influence families' perceptions of the outcomes of the family counselling process. According to the findings, the three abilities that have influenced the family's perception of the family counselling process are as follows: i. The skills of a counsellor who can provide appropriate treatment to the family. ii. The counselor's capacity to develop strong positive therapeutic relationships with family members; and iii. The counselor's knowledge of how to manage each problem brought by the family, as well as the proper treatment for the problem. He argued that counsellors require a high level of ability, particularly in dealing with family emotions, which are overly heavy with various challenges when assisting families.

According to Fanell and Weinhold (1997), while the underlying abilities of family counselling and counselling are the same, their implementation is significantly different. Both have explained the 12 skills that counsellors must master in the family counselling process, which include rapport building skills, information gathering, structuring skills, information giving, feeling reflection, content and feeling formulation, self-disclosure, confrontation, interpretation, behaviour change skills, and closing skills.

Watts (2003) concurs, stating that such experts Carson, Seprry, and Lewis; Fenell and Winhold; Sayger and Home have identified the basic skills required in family counselling such as i. rapport building skills, ii. information gathering / evaluation skills, iii. session structuring skills, reflecting on content and feelings, iv. formulation skills, questions for classification, v. open and closed question skills, vi. tracking patterns, themes, and sequences, providing self-disclosure information, vii. confrontation skills.

According to Doerries and Foster (2005), a critical skills study for novice counsellors who adopt a structural approach in family therapy sessions. The study was done qualitatively utilising the Delphi procedure approach, with seven experts participating. The study's findings revealed that new counsellors require five skills: conceptual skills, structural skills (implementation), structural and conceptual skills, relational skills, and relational/structural skills. As a result, an effective therapist must possess basic counselling abilities as well as proficiency in interventional procedures. Furthermore, therapists who are aware of their own

emotions, trust and respect themselves, understand their own limits, and have an empathic approach to others will have higher psychological counselling efficacy and productivity in life (Odaci et al., 2017).

As a result, counsellors should study and comprehend all of the abilities required in the process of assisting clients based on the appropriateness of time and place. If the skills used are ineffective, it has an impact on the entire counselling process, such as making it harder for clients to solve their problems owing to a lack of confidence and trust in the counsellor (Mustaffa et al., 2003). However, there is currently a scarcity of research on the application of counselling skills among counsellors who provide family therapy sessions, particularly in Malaysia. As a result, the purpose of this study is to investigate how counsellors apply basic skills in family counselling sessions.

### **Methodology**

The utilization of systemic approaches among counsellors in implementing the family counselling process is investigated in this qualitative approach study using a case study design. The research data for this study were gathered through an in-depth face-to-face interview method. The interviews were recorded in MP3 format and conducted in three rounds, each lasting 45 minutes to an hour. The interview data was transcribed to verbatim writing each time after the interview was completed, allowing the researcher to identify questions that remained unanswered by the study participants and would be re-questioned during the second round of interview sessions, and the researcher could determine the level of data saturation. In-depth interviews were done using a semi-structured question strategy developed by the researcher based on literature reviews such as journals and book releases. Three specialists in the field of family therapy and qualitative counselling experts were consulted to ensure the validity of the interview question procedure.

### **Participant**

This study's participants included 12 chancellors who were members of the Malaysian Board of Counselors. Four study participants were counsellors from the Chancellery Center of the Negeri Sembilan Islamic Religious Council, six from the Social Welfare Department, and two from the Population and Family Development Board. Participants in the study were chosen at random based on the following criteria: 3 years of working experience in handling family counselling (family cases), more than 50 sessions involving family cases per year, at least a bachelor's degree in counselling, registered with the Counseling Board (have a certificate of practise), and voluntary. The 50 counselling session criterion relates to a total meeting time of 100 hours per year, which indicates that if the counsellor has served for three years, the practitioner has done the family counselling process for 600 hours. Counselors who have completed a 600-hour counselling process are considered experienced (Khodayarifard et al., 2007; White et al., 1997). As a result, in this study, the selected counsellors were referred to as family counselling practitioners.

### **Data Analysis**

Thematic analysis is used to analyse the data in this study. To ensure the validity and reliability of the study data, the transcribed data in verbatim form is returned to all study subjects, examined by fellow researchers, and expert evaluation in the qualitative and field of study. The creation of themes and sub-themes is based on frequent reading of library books and

reading transcripts from line to line. Themes were retrieved using keywords derived from the data and themes were extracted using sentence descriptions of specific keywords. To manage the transcribed data, the researchers employed the NVivo 11 programme. The researcher read frequently to provide meaning to the sentences in verbatim to guarantee that the resulting themes are accurate. In the event of a deadlock or ambiguity, researchers will consult with their colleagues (peer checking).

### Finding

According to the findings of this study, there are eight core counselling skills that are frequently utilised throughout family therapy sessions that they conduct. The study's findings reveal eight basic skills that practitioners have adopted, including i. asking/questioning, ii. validity, iii. asking for and providing an explanation, iv. confrontation, v. attention, vii. paraphrasing, viii. reflection of feelings, and ix. eye contact. The greatest basic skill employed by counsellors during family counselling sessions is the ability to ask or ask inquiries. The pattern of use of basic counselling skills by 12 family counsellors during family counselling sessions is shown in Table 1. ambiguity.

Basic counseling skill	Participant													Total User
	FC 1	FC 2	FC 3	FC 4	FC 5	FC 6	FC 7	FC 8	FC 9	FC 0	FC1 1	FC1 2	FC1 3	
Question	√	√	√				√	√	√		√	√		19
Validity		√		√			√				√	√		7
Ask and give explanation	√			√		√	√	√	√					6
Confrontation		√			√			√						6
Focus	√								√					5
Paraphrasing	√		√			√		√						5
reflection of feelings		√	√			√		√				√		5
Eyes contact									√					1

### Question Skill

During family counselling sessions, it is the most basic technique employed by counsellors. Eight counsellors have claimed that they use these strategies to get information from families, particularly during the initial family counselling session. Each practitioner has an own technique when it comes to applying these inquiry abilities. According to FC1 and FC8, submit questions not only to gather information verbally, but also to children in families who find it difficult to share knowledge verbally, and as a medium to encourage them to communicate.

*"He is silent, sometimes smiles..we have to ask questions and usually we prepare questions that are written questions ... This child when he is with his parents he does not answer .... but without his parents .. when we ask there also answer it means if we leave the question he will answer as well ....."*

*Family Counselor 1*

*"I will ask ... if we don't want to be straight at the same time in this counseling session, there are questions that are open and closed .... because of this client, we have to ask a lot ... because we want to encourage him to talk, It's really hard .... we have to ask, ask and ask until he feels comfortable, he comes, he is the first to speak .... "*

*Family Counselor 8*

Five counsellors have acknowledged the importance of questioning skills in the family counselling process because they can provide insight, explore feelings, and probe the client's thoughts. According to FC2 and FC7, the questioning techniques they employed in family therapy sessions helped family members examine their feelings and, as a result, understand the feelings that family members are experiencing.

*"I said who chooses the job .. ..so when that's the case ... you choose yourself .... that means it's your choice ... that's your choice ... it's up to you to find a job equivalent to yours ... . "*

*Family Counselor 2*

*"Usually we will ... We try to ask him why he is angry because he doesn't understand his parents ... try to ask him how, try to ask him ... "*

*Family Counselor 7*

Counselors have used questioning skills to enable families to explore thinking in a more positive and rational manner, particularly in decision making. According to the experiences of FC9 and FC11, family members are aware of the proper decisions to be made but do not make them. As a result, they employ questioning techniques to persuade family members that the repercussions of not making the right decisions have caused them to continue to drift towards conflict and catastrophe.

*"Sometimes this client, he knows it's not good. Sometimes for example, if we ask, the mother prays no, she says no prayer. After that, we asked him, is it good or bad, good or bad, he knows it's not good .. But why come like that? Do we want to be the same .. "*

*Family Counselor 9*

*"We will ask what the goal is, he is a little happy to process, if we ask about the process and the goal, there will be no water. So, we ask when to make love first, the goal is marriage and what is the effort towards that? ... "*

*Family Counselor 11*

Not only are questioning skills important in the early phases of a counselling session. FC12, on the other hand, indicated that he did not utilise these abilities in the early phases, but that he did use them frequently when the counsellor intended to teach emotional awareness and mental literacy at the stage of structuring family transaction patterns and behaviour transformation.

*"There are questions too ... especially we want to go to the alternative ..we ask a lot of questions .. if it's the beginning we ask less .... "*

*Family Counselor 12*

### **Vadility**

According to the study's findings, five of the twelve counsellors used these methods in their family counselling sessions. When using this talent, all practitioners utilise it to coordinate the information they receive from all members so that the practitioner can create a full picture. Aside from that, this skill can assist FC12 in confirming anything or various information offered by family members.

*"Example of divorce problem right..until the 3rd session..meet them right..I will meet the two parties..I will call..Then we will come out..example of wife for what is the wife's perception actually what happened..wife said..even though the husband promised to go out..to work..but nothing has changed from the day he promised..husband pulak..why until now there is no consistent work what is the reason ..then the husband also answers..then the wife .... we call our husband to know the truth..he also can't shackle his wife with those symptoms right..sometimes this wife thinks a lot..sometimes -sometimes that thing doesn't even exist..we want confirmation that is the most important..we also have to share the wife's worries with her..."*

*Family Counselor 12*

### **Ask and Give Explanation**

Seven counsellors in this study employed ask and explain skills as skills in family counselling sessions. The use of these skills as a whole is described as nearly equivalent. Counselors use these abilities to gather more precise and detailed information. These counsellors have also been able to help family members better understand and be aware of whatever issues they are facing by using these abilities.

*"Sometimes the explanation of an issue is not given in a clear assessment .... one party has no explanation and does not understand an issue ... so we need to be clear ... we give the opportunity ...."*

*Family Counselor 1*

*"... then we will make predictions about their behavior .. yes ... okay sir why are you sitting there and not sitting next to his wife .. we really can't be close ... okay tak pe ... and I don't have to be close .. I just want to understand why it's not close ... why is this one sitting with mom ... not sitting with dad ... I'm closer to mom than dad .*

*Family Counselor 4*

### **Confrontation**

Only three of the counsellors in this study employed these confrontational skills. However, only FC5 emphasised that his aim in employing the technique was to provide intelligence to the family in re-evaluating the decision to be made, whilst the other two counsellors did not.

*"I .. confess he is ..now you want to ask your daughter to get married .. he also knows this man ... he also told the story back that this boy .. it's kind as far as I know he's not very concerned about him I know this boy used to take drugs, I also challenged him .... if it's like this, you see the future ... can you guarantee your future, right now to cover your shame ... is your future your son ..... ."*

### *Family Counselor 5*

#### **Focus**

In this study, only two counsellors acknowledged their usage of this attention skill. They use attention skills, according to FC1 and FC9, but for quite different reasons. FC1 employs these abilities in two ways: focusing on the more important things and focusing on the individuals in the family. Focus skills help practitioners pick the key difficulties of the family when the family has multiple problems, according to FC9.

*"Focus .... we can focus on the important ones..the first one first ... this one we can ignore first ... we can postpone first ... we can arrange him .... so it is very helpful .... if we want to calculate the many skills that our individuals have in the family ... only our individuals focus on one person ... and in this family we focus on all the existing members .... sometimes in a session there are two people who want to talk .. if the session This individual, we don't have to control ... there is no control ... he is comfortable in a comfortable state because we focus on one by one ... focus on that individual ... "*

### *Family Counselor 1*

*"When we focus on the client ... we show behavior, it means we really focus on his problem ... we both want to solve his problem ...."*

### *Family Counselor 9*

#### **Reflection fo Feeling**

Four counsellors in this study employed emotional reflection skills. However, only FC6 in this study goes into greater detail on how these abilities have been used to assist family members in expressing repressed sentiments. According to him, this ability has also enabled him to strengthen his bonds with his family.

*"When the person gives birth, the person gives birth, we see that he is very angry, he is angry ... we don't have to go far ... we dig up his anger, ma'am ... he will come out ... if we don't touch the reflection of his feelings. .that fact we don't repeat .. oh the meaning we understand he shows we understand him right .. "*

### *Family Counselor 6*

#### **Paraphrasing**

Three counsellors validated the use of paraphrase skills in family counselling sessions in this study. All three said that they used paraphrase skills in family counselling sessions without describing why or how they did so. CFC6, on the other hand, merely quickly mentioned why he utilised this skill since the paraphrase skill was employed by examining the information presented by the family so that the family realised he comprehended what the family had communicated.

*"We paraphrase je .... we touch on facts .... we review back we understand he is like this .."*

### *Family Counselor 6*

#### **Eyes Contact**

According to the study's findings, just one counsellor (FC9) said that he used eye contact skills



in family counselling sessions. Practitioners are likely to believe that these abilities are required for every counsellor to employ in counselling sessions, especially family therapy sessions.

*"These two eyes mean eyes contact ....."*

*Family Counselor 9*

### **Discussion**

Counselors report that they use basic skills in their practice. Basic counselling skills such as open-ended and closed-ended questions, eye contact, listening, reflection, and confrontation were most commonly employed by practitioners at all levels in this study. This is because all of the family counselling practitioners in this study had enough training at the undergraduate level (all practitioners had counselling training), and these skills were always applied in individual therapy (Kaplan, 2003).

The use of questioning skills is due to the fact that in family counseling, these skills are needed to obtain a lot of information, accurate and clear to enable family counselors to understand the issues that occur and cause conflicts and crises in the family. According to Fenell and Weinhold (1997); Watt (2003), 'rapport' skills, information gathering, structuring, giving information, content reflection, feeling reflection, content and feeling formulation, confrontation, interpretation, change behaviour, and closure are all required in family counselling (termination). Both both stated that these are the fundamental abilities that family counsellors must learn.

The use of focus, validity and confrontation skills are skills that have been used by counselors because these three skills are in line with the need for counselors to play the role of experts who have directing behavior in family counseling sessions. Counsellors must be active and have direct directing abilities in family counselling sessions in order for the session time to be completely utilised (Holtzworth-Munroe et al., 1989). Practitioners that employ direct directing abilities will be able to make the most of the session time. However, the observational data in this study revealed that only three practitioners employed this directing skill where the family was able to understand their concerns at the end of the session, and these findings confirmed the perspective of (Holtzworth-Munroe et al., 1989). This means that, when employed in family counselling, these directing abilities will make it simpler for therapists to assist families in achieving the goals of ongoing sessions.

### **Conclusion**

The family counselling process can be a service that helps to strengthen the integrity of the family institution in order to achieve the country's vision of a wealthy family. As a result, the practitioner's counselling process may be carried out properly, that is, it can truly untangle all of the difficulties or confusion that surround the family and break down all of the obstacles that impede the family from living a rich life.

### **Corresponding Author**

Norhayati Mohd Noor

Faculty of Education, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 43600 Bangi, Selangor, Malaysia

Email: norhayati@ukm.edu.my

## Reference

- David, S. A. (1991). Use of videotaped initial family interview in training beginning family therapists. *Counselor Education & Supervision*, 33(3), 201-209.
- Goldenderg, I., & Goldenberg, H. (2000). Family therapy- on overview (5<sup>th</sup> editon). Wadsworth Publishing Company,
- Goldenderg, I., & Goldenberg, H. (2002). Counseling today's families (4<sup>th</sup> edition). Australia: Brooks/Cole Thomson Learning.
- Fenell, L. D., & Weinhold, K. B. (1997). Counseling families an introduction to marriage and family therapy (2<sup>th</sup> edition). Denver; Love Publishing Company.
- Halstead, W. R., Wagner, L. D, Vivero, M., & Ferkol, W. (2002). Counselors' Conceptualization of caring in the counseling Relationship. *Counseling and Value. Oktober 2002*. Volume 47
- Hanna, M. S. (2007).The practice of family therapy- key elements across model (4<sup>th</sup> edition). Australia: Thomson Book/Cole.
- Holtzworth-Munroe, A., Jacobson, N. S., DeKlyen, M., & Whisman, M. A. (1989). Relationship between Marital Therapy outcome and process variables. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, Vol. 57, Issue 5.
- Iarussi, M. H., Tyler, J. M. , Littlebear, S., & Hinkle, M. S. (2013). Integrating Motivational Interviewing into a Basic Counseling Skills Course to Enhance Counseling Self- Efficacy. *The Professional Counselor*. Volume 3, Issue 3, Pages 161–174
- Ivey, A. E., Ivey, M. B., & Zalaquett, C. P. (2014). Intentional interviewing and counseling: Facilitating client development in a multicultural society. (8<sup>th</sup> edition) Independence, KY: Brooks/Cole, Cengage Learning,
- Kaplan, D. N. (2003). Family counseling for all counselor. Eric Clearinghouses on counseling and student services. CAPS Publication
- L'Abate, L. (2016). 60 Years of Practice, Research, and Teaching in Family Psychology and Family Therapy. *The American Journal Of Family Therapy*. Vol. 44, No. 4, 172-182
- Lea, S. J., Clarke, M. J., & Davis, H. (1998). Evaluation of a counselling skills course for Health Professionals. *British Journal of Guidance & Counselling*. Vol. 26 No. 2.
- Noor, M. N. (2012). Famiy Counseling Process among Malaysia Practices Families Counselor. Doctor of Philosophy Thesis Faculty of Education University Nationality of Malaysia
- Mustaffa, M. S., Ahmad, R., & Noor, M. S. S. (2003). Basic Skill of Counselor. Papers presented at the Singapore International Religious Teachers Conference (PERGAS) pada 14-15 Jun
- Odaci, H., Değerli, F. I., & Bolat, N. (2017). Emotional intelligence levels and counselling skills of prospective psychological counsellors. *British Journal Of Guidance & Counselling*, Vol. 45, No. 5, 622–631
- Nelson-Jones, R. (2014). Basic Counselling Skills: A Helper's Manual SAGE Publications, Robert, S. L., & Patricia, S.-S. (1992). Basic techniques in marriage and family counseling and therapy. *ERIC*.
- Sprenkle, H. D. (2009). Essential Skill in Family Therapy: From the First Interview. (2<sup>th</sup> edition). The Guilford Press. New York.