

Listening and Responding: Skills and a Framework for Helping People Change

J. Scott Yaruss, Ph.D., CCC-SLP

Assistant Professor, University of Pittsburgh

Clinical Research Consultant,

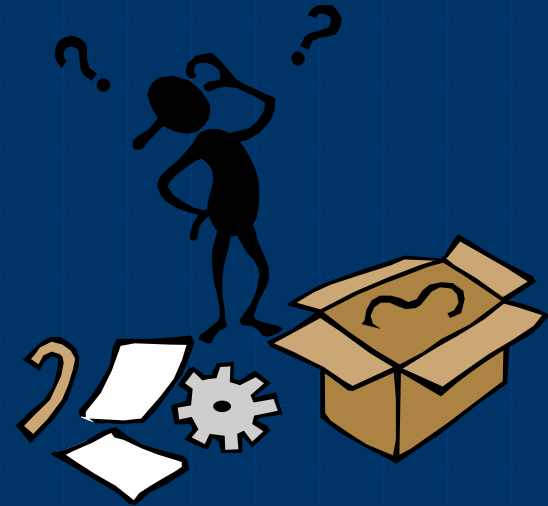
Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh

Co-Director, Stuttering Center of Western PA



My "philosophy" of teaching

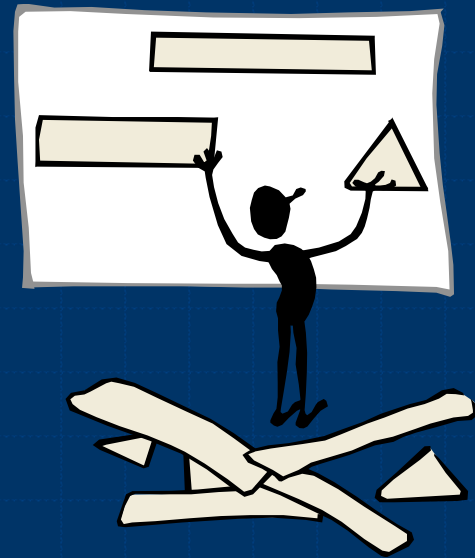
Do I have a *philosophy*?



My "philosophy" of teaching

Do I have a *philosophy*?

Yes! I guess I do...



My Teaching Goal

- ◆ Students will develop the skills they need to help clients achieve their goals in treatment
 - Counseling is an integral part of the therapeutic process in communication disorders, regardless of the specific nature of the disorder
 - All speech-language pathologists need to develop counseling skills

My Teaching Goal

◆ Students will develop the skills they need to help clients achieve their goals in treatment

- Understand basic theories of counseling



Humanistic
Person-centered
Gestalt
Existentialist
Behaviorist
Rational Emotive
Cognitive Restructuring

My Teaching Goal

◆ Students will develop the skills they need to help clients achieve their goals in treatment

- Understand basic principles of counseling

Attending

Listening

Valuing



Probing

Challenging

Summarizing

My Teaching Goal

- ◆ Students will develop the skills they need to help clients achieve their goals in treatment
 - Understand how counseling relates to the scope of practice in communication disorders
 - ◆ What is the boundary between speech-language pathology and counseling psychology?



Accomplishing the Goal



◆ Students will develop the **skills** they need to help clients achieve their goals in treatment

- Students need time to PRACTICE their counseling skills if they are going to be able to use them in clinical settings
- Many students are uncomfortable (at first) talking about the issues that may come up in treatment for communication disorders

Step One:

◆ Learning to talk about “stuff”

- Feelings our clients have
- Challenges our clients face
- Unpleasant things that happen to people
- Situations we wouldn't want to face ourselves



◆ *Clinicians need their counseling skills to help their clients with the issues that the clients couldn't handle on their own*

How my teaching has evolved...

◆ Well, it *still* hasn't had time yet...

◆ I have moved more and more toward giving students the opportunity to DEVELOP their microskills for counseling rather than just being taught them



Organizing principles
for my class *AND*
my own clinical interactions

Learning Counseling Microskills

*Understanding the
Importance of Change*

Counseling Microskills I

◆ What does it take to be an effective “counselor” ?!?



◆ How does a student develop good listening skills ?!?

◆ LISTENING

...the ability to...

- Attend to what the client is saying
- Convey through verbal and nonverbal means that you understood the client's **experiences, behaviors, and feelings**

◆ PRACTICE

Learning to Listen

◆ Some people are born listeners...

...most of us have to develop the skill

◆ Students develop attending and listening skills by practicing with each other

- Role-playing interview scenarios
- Observing each other while listening and providing feedback about their classmates
- Practicing common listening mistakes then attempting to correct them

Counseling Microskills II

◆ What does it take to be an effective “counselor” ?!?



◆ How does a student develop good responding skills ?!?

◆ **RESPONDING**

...the ability to...

- Let the client know you can understand his perspective
- Provide feedback that helps clients make changes in their lives

◆ **PRACTICE**

Learning to Respond

- ◆ It is not enough to understand what a client is saying, we also have to let him **know** that we understand...
 - **Empathetic responses** let clients know we have heard and respected their message
 - **Probes** help clients consider their situation more deeply and lead to new insights
 - **Challenges** encourage clients to examine their assumptions and consider new perspectives
 - **Summaries** help clients integrate experiences

Learning to Respond

- ◆ It is not enough to understand what a client is saying, we also have to let him **know** that we understand...
 - **Students may be uncomfortable, at first, with these types responses, so they need lots of time to practice**



Learning to Respond

◆ It is not enough to understand what a client is saying, we also have to let him **know** that we understand...

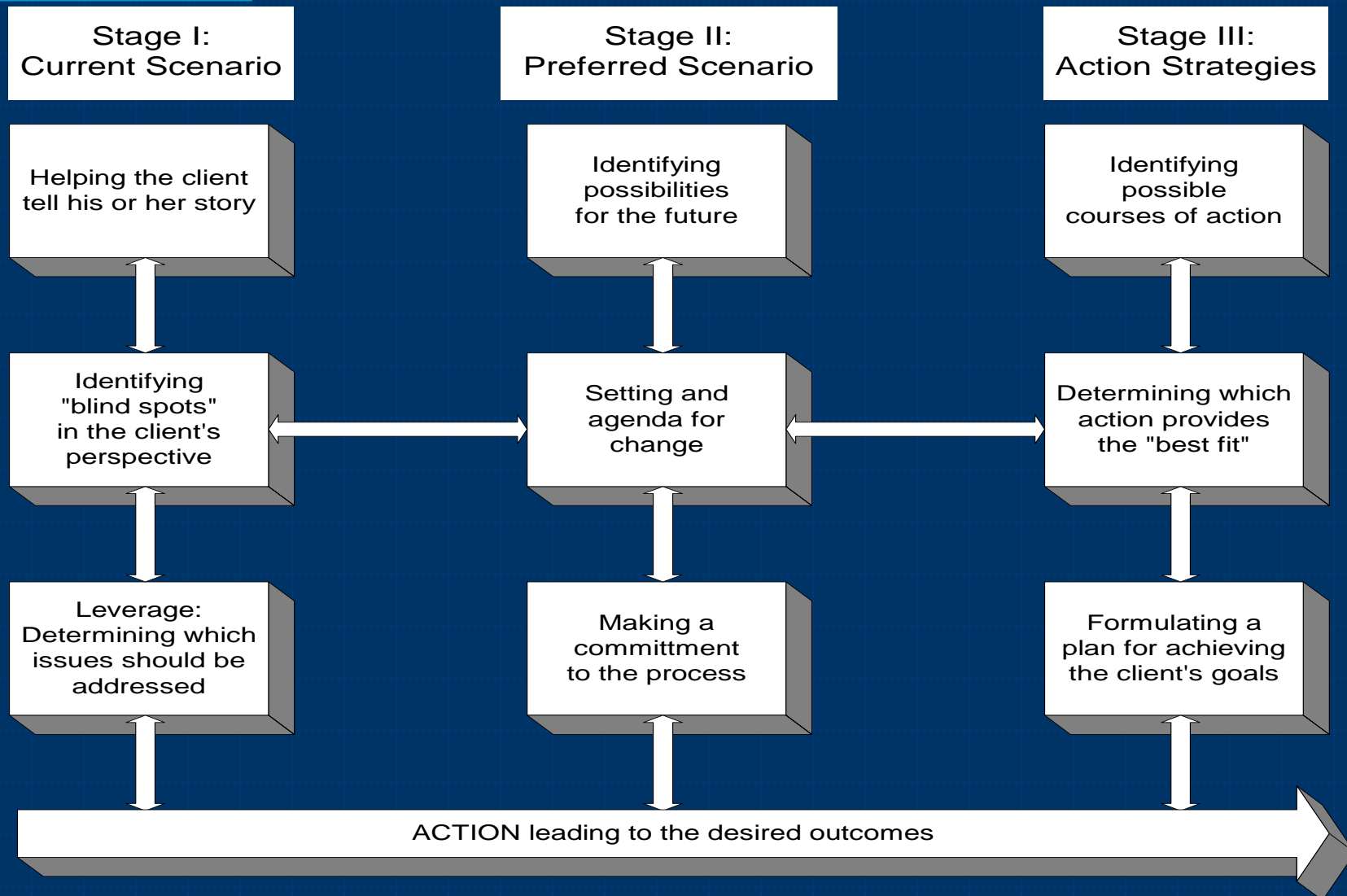
- Students may be uncomfortable, at first, with these types responses, so they need lots of time to practice
- We spend **a lot** of time in role-plays practicing different responses to scenarios and evaluating which response is better

The Importance of Change

- ◆ Any counseling interaction should be focused on the goal of treatment...
 - ...to help the client *make changes* that move them to their desired outcome
 - ...to help the client *solve problems* that stand in the way of these changes
- ◆ It is not enough to “have a good talk”
 - Clinicians must have a plan in mind that will help the clients achieve change

A Blueprint for Change (Egan, 2002)

(The "Skilled Helper" model)



A Blueprint for Change (Egan, 2002)

(The "Skilled Helper" model)

- ◆ Stage I: Understanding the current scenario – *where are you now?*
- ◆ Stage II: Identifying the preferred scenario – *where do you want to go?*
- ◆ Stage III: Developing action strategies – *how are you going to get there?*
- ◆ Action Arrow: The whole point is to help the client achieve goals in therapy

A Blueprint for Change (Egan, 2002)

(The "Skilled Helper" model)

- ◆ Using this model, students learn...
 - that the point of counseling is to help the client move in a specific direction
 - that counseling involves more than just "talking to the client" and "active listening"
 - how to identify roadblocks to change that affect the client's success in therapy
- ◆ And they can develop the confidence they need to develop an effective partnership with their clients

Summary

- ◆ Counseling is an integral part of the therapeutic process for all communication disorders
- ◆ Students not only need to understand the goals and processes of counseling; they must also *practice* the microskills necessary for helping clients make the changes to achieve their treatment goals

