

DEVELOPING PSYCHOLOGICAL SKILLS

● PSYCHOLOGIST

- ❖ Psychologists have interest in people, their abilities and temperaments. A psychologist from any field is required to have interest in other people and exhibits a willingness to provide help by using her/his knowledge of the discipline.
- ❖ Psychologists are actively involved in obtaining the client's history, her/his socio-cultural environment, assessment of her/his personality and also on other important dimensions.
- ❖ American Psychological Association (1973) in their task force constituted with the objective to identify skills essential for professional psychologists recommended at least three sets of skills. These are: assessment of individual differences, behaviour modification skills, and counselling and guidance skills.

● SKILL

- ❖ The Webster dictionary defines it as "possession of the qualities required to do something or get something done".
- ❖ The term 'skill' may be defined as proficiency, facility or dexterity that is acquired or developed through training and experience.

● PSEUDO-PSYCHOLOGISTS

- ❖ People talk about intelligence, inferiority complex, identity crisis, mental blocks, attitude, stress, communication barriers and many other terms. There are a lot of common sense notions about human behaviour that one develops in the course of their lives.
- ❖ Some regularity in human behaviour is frequently observed by us to warrant generalisation.
- ❖ This kind of everyday amateur psychology often misfires, sometimes even proves disastrous.

● HOW TO DIFFERENTIATE PSEUDO-PSYCHOLOGISTS FROM TRAINED PSYCHOLOGISTS

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| ❖ Professional training | ❖ Educational background |
| ❖ Institutional affiliation | ❖ Their experience in providing service |
| ❖ Training as a researcher | ❖ Internalization of certain professional values |

● BASIC SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES OF EFFECTIVE PSYCHOLOGISTS

- ❖ While it is difficult to develop, implement and measure competencies required in a subject like psychology, there are conditions and competencies for psychologists which have come to be recognised internationally.
- ❖ They cover a range of knowledge that practitioners, academicians, and researchers whose roles involve consulting with students, business, industry, and broader community should possess when entering the profession after completing their education and training.
- ❖ These basic skills or competencies fall into three broad sections, namely,

(i) General Skills,	(ii) Observational Skills, and	(iii) Specific Skills.
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❖ General Skills

- These skills are generic in nature and are needed by all psychologists whether they are working in the field of clinical and health psychology, industrial/organisational, social, educational, or in environmental settings, or are acting as consultants irrespective of their field of specialisation.
- It is expected that it will not be proper to provide any form of professional training to students who do not possess these skills. Once a student has these skills, subsequent training in her/his area of specialisation would only refine and further hone these skills required by a professional within her/his field of specialisation.
- These skills include personal as well as intellectual skills. Eg. Interpersonal, cognitive, affective, reflective, etc.

❖ **Observational Skills**

- A psychologist is like an instrument that absorbs all sources of information from the environment. A great deal of what psychologists as researchers and practitioners do in the field is to pay attention, watch and listen carefully.
- Small, subtle, and irrelevant looking signals influence human behaviour and thus, a psychologist engages in observing various facets of surroundings including people and varying events. For example, the physical setting in order to capture its “atmosphere,” the colour of the floor/ceiling, size of the window/doors, type of lighting, artefacts/paintings/sculptures, etc.
- A psychologist actively engages in observing people and their actions. For example, the demographic features (age, gender, stature, race, etc.), ways of dealing and relating with others, pattern of behaviours in the presence of others, etc.
- A psychologist records such details because something of significance may be revealed in the process of observation.

❖ **Major Approaches to Observation**

- **Naturalistic Observation** helps in learning about the way people behave in a given setting. For example, to learn how people behave in response to a heavy discount provided by a company while visiting a shopping mall, one could visit the shopping mall where the discounted items are showcased and systematically observe what people do and say before and after the purchases have been made.
- **Participant Observation** is the variation of the method of naturalistic observation where the observer is actively involved in the process of observing by becoming an active member of the setting where the observation takes place. This technique is widely used by anthropologists whose objective is to gain a firsthand perspective of a system from within which otherwise may not be readily available to an outsider. For example, an observer may take a part-time job in a shopping mall showroom to become an insider in order to observe variations in the behaviour of customers.

❖ **Advantages and Disadvantages of Observation**

- Its major advantage is that it allows behaviour to be seen and studied in its natural setting.
- People from outside, or those already working in a setting, can be trained to use it.
- One disadvantage of it is that events being observed are subject to bias due to the feelings of the people involved as well as of the observers.
- Generally day-to-day activities in a given setting are fairly routine, which can go unnoticed by the observer.
- Another potential pitfall is that the actual behaviour and responses of others may get influenced by the presence of the observer, thus, defeating the very purpose of observation.

❖ **Specific Skills**

- These skills are core/basic to the field of psychological service. While specific skills and competencies are required for a very specialised professional functioning, all skill sets do overlap quite a bit. They are not exclusive to an area.
- Psychologists working in clinical settings need to be trained in various techniques of therapeutic interventions, psychological assessment, and counselling.
- Organisational psychologists working in the organisational context need to have skills in assessment, facilitation and consultation, behavioural skills to bring about individual, group, team and organisational development besides research skills, etc.

❖ **Classification of Specific Skills**

- Communication skills
- Psychological Testing skills
- Interviewing skills
- Counselling skills

❖ **Communication Skills**

- (i) Communication is a conscious or unconscious, intentional or unintentional process in which feelings and ideas are expressed as verbal and/or non-verbal messages that are sent, received, and comprehended.

(ii) The process of communication can be:

- Accidental (having no intent),
- Expressive (resulting from the emotional state of the person)
- Rhetorical (resulting from the specific goal of the communicator)

(iii) Human communication occurs on the intra- personal, interpersonal, and public levels:

- **Intrapersonal communication** involves communicating with yourself. It encompasses such activities as thought processes, personal decision making, and focusing on self.
- **Interpersonal communication** refers to the communication that takes place between two or more persons who establish a communicative relationship. Forms of interpersonal communication include face- to-face or mediated conversations, interview and small group discussions.
- **Public communication** is characterised by a speaker sending a message to an audience. It may be direct, such as face-to-face messages delivered by the speaker to an audience, or indirect such as message relayed over radio or television.

● **Components of Human Communication**

- (i) **Selective:** When we communicate, we communicate selectively. That is, from the wide range of repertory of words, actions, etc. available to us, we choose that which we believe is best suited for the idea we wish to express.
- (ii) **Encoding:** When we communicate, we encode (i.e., take ideas, give them meaning and put them into message forms), and send the idea through a channel. It is composed of our primary signal system based on our senses (i.e., seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling, and touching).
- (iii) **Decoding:** The message is sent to someone who receives it using her or his primary signal system. S/he decodes (i.e., translates message into understandable forms). For example, telling someone one heard a bell ring is verbal, touching a hot stove and pulling away quickly is non verbally communicating.

I. Speaking

- To be effective, a communicator must know how to use language appropriately. Because language is symbolic, it is necessary to be as clear and precise as possible when using words. Slang expressions, words unique to a culture or region, and euphemism can sometimes become obstacles in good communication.
- Communication takes place within a context. One needs to consider the other's frame of reference, that is, the context used by the sender to say something and also whether they share one's interpretation.

II. Listening

- Hearing is a biological activity that involves reception of a message through sensory channels.
- Listening may appear as a passive behaviour, as it involves silence. But this image of passivity is far from true. It requires a person to be attentive. S/he should be patient, non-judgmental and yet have the capacity to analyse and respond.

III. Reception

- The hearing process is based on a complex set of physical interactions that take place involving the ear and the brain.

IV. Attention

- Once the stimulus, i.e. the word or visual, or both, is received, it reaches the attention stage of the human processing system.
- In this phase, the other stimuli recede so that we can concentrate on specific words or visual symbols.

V. Paraphrasing

- Stating a summary of the ideas just received and providing a restatement of what is understood is called 'paraphrasing'.
- It allows one to understand how much the other person understood of what was communicated.

VI. Assignment of Meaning

- We develop mental categories for interpreting the message we receive.
- The process of putting the stimulus we have received into some predetermined category develops as we acquire language.

VII. Role of Culture in Listening

- The culture in which we have been brought up also influences our listening and learning abilities.
- Asian cultures, such as India, emphasise on listening by being a silent communicator when receiving messages from seniors or elders.

VIII. Body Language

- Body language is composed of all those messages that people exchange besides words. Much of the use of body language occurs in conversing with others without conscious realisation.
- While reading body language, a single non-verbal signal does not carry complete meaning. Factors such as gestures, postures, eye contact, clothing style, and body movement — all of them have to be considered together, that is, in a cluster.
- A person's background and past patterns of behaviour are also considered when we analyse body language. The consistency between current and past patterns of behaviour, as well as harmony between verbal and non-verbal communication, is termed as congruency. For example, when you say to your friend, "you do not look well today", you are basing your statement on an evaluation of the person's appearance today and comparing it with how s/he looked in the past. In other words, something has changed, and you see that difference.

● Interviewing Skills

- (i) An interview is a purposeful conversation between two or more people that follows a basic question and answer format.
- (ii) Interviewing is more formal than most other conversations because it has a pre-set purpose and uses a focused structure.
- (iii) There are many kinds of interviews. For example, employment interview, information gathering interview, counselling interview, interrogatory interview, radio-television interview, research interview, etc.

I. Interview Format

- Once the objectives of the interview are established, the interviewer prepares an interview format.
- The basic format, regardless of the interview's purpose, is divided into three stages, namely, opening, the body, and the closing.

II. Opening of the Interview

- The opening of interview involves establishing rapport between two communicators. The purpose is to make the interviewee comfortable.
- Generally, the interviewer starts the conversation and does most of the talking at the outset. This serves two functions, i.e. it establishes the goal of interview, and gives the interviewee time to become comfortable with the situation and the interviewer.

III. Body of the Interview

- The body of the interview is the heart of the process.
- In this stage, the interviewer asks questions in an attempt to generate information and data that are required for the purpose.

IV. Closing the Interview

- While closing the interview, the interviewer should summarise what s/he has been able to gather.
- One should end with a discussion of the next step to be taken.
- The interviewer should give a chance to the interviewee to ask questions or offer Comments.

● Counselling Skills

- ❖ Counselling is such a domain where a person entering the field is required to engage in self-introspection in order to assess her/his inclination and basic skill set for being effective in her/his vocation.
- ❖ Counselling involves helping relationship, that includes someone seeking help, and someone willing to give help, who is capable of or trained to help in a setting that permits help to be given and received.

Characteristics of an Effective Helper

- (i) **Authenticity:** Authenticity, means that your behavioural expressions are consistent with what you value and the way you feel and relate to your inner self-image.

- (ii) **Unconditional Positive Regard:** A good counselling-counsellor relationship allows freedom of expression. It reflects acceptance of the idea that the feelings of both are important. Feelings of uncertainty and anxiety minimised when a counsellor extends a positive regard to the client by accepting that it is all right to feel the way the client is feeling.
- (iii) **Empathy:** It is the ability of a counsellor to understand the feelings of another person from her/his perspective. It is like stepping into someone else's shoes and trying to understand the pain and troubled feelings of the other person.
- (iv) **Paraphrasing:** This involves the ability of a counsellor to reflect on what the client says and feels using different words.

Ethics of Counselling

- The client-counsellor relationship is built on ethical practice. The practical knowledge of these ethical domains can guide the practice of counselling in achieving its desired purpose.
- A critical criterion for any professional group is the development and implementation of appropriate ethical standards. Social workers, marriage counsellors, family therapists, and psychologists — all have their ethical codes.
- Awareness of the ethical standards and codes is extremely important, because counselling is a part of the service sector. Not following the ethical standards may have legal implications.
- The American Psychological Association (APA) has developed a code of ethical conduct for behaviour and decision-making in actual clinical settings. Some of the APA practice guidelines are:
 - Knowledge of ethical/professional codes, standards, and guidelines; knowledge of statutes, rules, regulations, and case law relevant to the practice of psychology.
 - Recognise and analyse ethical and legal issues across the range of professional activities in the clinical setting.
 - Recognise and understand the ethical dimensions/features of her/his own attitudes and practice in the clinical setting.
 - Seek appropriate information and consultation when faced with ethical issues.
 - Practice appropriate professional assertiveness related to ethical issues.

QUESTION BANK

MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS

1. Proficiency, facility or dexterity that is acquired or developed through training and experience is called _____.
 (a) Skill (b) Guidance (c) Talent (d) None of these
2. A identified by American Psychological Association the three sets of skills are assessment of individual differences, behaviour modification skills:
 (a) Counselling and guidance skill (b) Training and assessment
 (c) Diagnosis and management (d) treatment
3. A pseudo-psychologist differ from a real psychologist:
 (a) On the basis of professional training, educational (b) On the basis of earnings
 (c) On the basis of clinic setting (d) They are the same
4. The basic skills or competencies which psychologists have identified for becoming an effective psychologist are
 General Skills _____ Specific Skills.
 (a) Interview (b) Observation (c) Case study (d) Questioning
5. Ability to solve problems, engage in critical thinking and organised reasoning, and having intellectual curiosity and flexibility is called:
 (a) Interpersonal skills (b) Cognitive Skills (c) Affective skills (d) Personal skills
6. A researcher wants to study aggression on the playground during adolescence. He visits the playground during games period. He is using _____ observation.
 (a) Controlled Observation (b) Naturalistic observation (c) Participant observation (d) None of these

7. In order to study the consumer behavior psychologist picks up the job of a salesman in a departmental store. He is using _____ observation.
- (a) Controlled (b) Participant (c) Non-participant (d) None of these
8. Communication Skills includes Speaking Active listening:
- (a) Body language or non-verbal skill (b) Empathy
(c) Positive regard (d) Authenticity
9. Communication resulting from the emotional state of the person is called:
- (a) Accidental (b) Expressive (c) Rhetorical (d) Public
10. Communication that involves personal thought process decision making is called:
- (a) Interpersonal (b) Intrapersonal (c) Public (d) None of these
11. You ask your friend, "Do you have an extra pen that you can spare for me?" Identify the component of communication.
- (a) Encoding (b) Decoding (c) Message (d) None of these
12. Hearing and listening are the same.
- (a) True (b) False (c) Incomplete (d) None of these
13. _____ involves making a summary and providing a restatement of what s/he understands.
- (a) Paraphrasing (b) Empathy (c) Observation (d) Speaking
14. Gestures, postures, eye contact, clothing style, and body movement — all of them have to be considered together in a _____.
- (a) Cluster (b) Expression (c) Observation (d) None of these
15. The process of making a summary of the ideas just received and provides you with a restatement is called:
- (a) Speaking (b) Paraphrasing (c) Hearing (d) Reception
16. The consistency between current and past patterns of behaviour, as well as harmony between verbal and non-verbal communication, is termed as:
- (a) Congruency (b) Cluster (c) Body language (d) None of these
17. A purposeful conversation between two or more people that follows a basic question and answer format is called:
- (a) Interview (b) Observation (c) Paraphrasing (d) Body language
18. _____ of the interview is the heart of the process.
- (a) Opening of the interview (b) Closing of the interview
(c) Body of the interview (d) None of these
19. "Where do you work?" is a _____ question.
- (a) Direct (b) Open ended (c) Leading question (d) Mirror question
20. "Would you like to work for the company?" is a _____ question.
- (a) Direct (b) Open ended (c) Leading question (d) Bi-polar
21. How happy were you with your job on the whole?
- (a) Direct (b) Open ended (c) Leading question (d) Mirror question
22. The degree to which you are aware of these perceptions of others as well as of your own perception of your self indicates that you are:
- (a) Self aware (b) Self conscious (c) Empathy (d) None of these
23. _____ means that your behavioural expressions are consistent with what you value and the way you feel and relate to your inner self-image.
- (a) Authenticity (b) Paraphrasing (c) Empathy (d) Positive regard
24. _____ indicates that it is all right to feel the way the client is feeling.
- (a) Authenticity (b) Paraphrasing (c) Empathy (d) Positive regard
25. Stepping into someone else's shoes and trying to understand the pain and troubled feelings of the other person reflects:
- (a) Authenticity (b) Paraphrasing (c) Empathy (d) Positive regard

26. Ability of a counsellor to reflect on what the client says and feels using different words indicates:
 (a) Authenticity (b) Paraphrasing (c) Empathy (d) Positive regard
27. _____ has developed a code of ethical conduct in a clinical setting.
 (a) American Psychological Association (APA) (b) American Psychiatrist Association (APA)
 (c) World Health Organization (WHO) (d) UNICEF
28. Practicing appropriate professional assertiveness is an important ethic of counselling.
 (a) True (b) False (c) Incomplete (d) None of these
29. Using "I" messages rather than "you" messages indicates:
 (a) Authenticity (b) Paraphrasing (c) Empathy (d) Positive regard
30. Counselling is giving advice.
 (a) True (b) False (c) Incomplete (d) None of these

Input-Text Based MCQs

Read the passage and answer the questions that follow (31 to 33).

All of your non-verbal behaviours—the gestures you make, your posture, your tone of voice, how much eye contact you make—send strong messages. They can put people at ease, build trust, and draw others towards you, or they can offend, confuse, and undermine what you're trying to convey. These messages don't stop when you stop speaking either. Even when you're silent, you're still communicating non-verbally.

31. Communication as discussed in the above passage is called _____.
 (a) Body language (b) Expressive (c) Rhetorical (d) Accidental
32. Factors such as gestures, postures, eye contact, clothing style, and body movement — all of them have to be considered together as _____.
 (a) Group (b) Category (c) Classes (d) Cluster
33. Tightened body muscles, a set clenched jaw, and narrowing of the eyes are likely to communicate _____.
 (a) Anger (b) Jealousy (c) Nervousness (d) Happy

Read the passage and answer the questions that follow (34 to 36).

To accomplish the purpose of an interview, the interviewer prepares a set of questions, also called a schedule, for different domains, or categories s/he wants to cover. To do this, the interviewer must first decide on the domains/categories under which information is to be generated. For example, in the questions used in job ,the interviewer selected several categories such as nature of the organisation last worked for, satisfaction with the past job, views on product, etc. These categories and the questions within them are framed ranging from easy-to-answer to difficult-to-answer. Questions are also formulated to assess facts as well as subjective assessment.

34. Do you think the voting age should be reduced in India is a _____ type of question?
 (a) Open ended (b) Close ended (c) Mirror based (d) None of these
35. Would you like to work for the company is a _____ question?
 (a) Open ended (b) Close ended (c) Mirror question (d) Bipolar question
36. Sequence of questions is a part of which stage of interview?
 (a) Opening (b) Body (c) Closing (d) All of these

ANSWERS

Multiple Choice Questions

1. (a) 2. (a) 3. (a) 4. (b) 5. (b) 6. (b) 7. (b) 8. (a) 9. (b) 10. (b)
 11. (b) 12. (b) 13. (a) 14. (a) 15. (b) 16. (a) 17. (a) 18. (c) 19. (a) 20. (d)
 21. (b) 22. (a) 23. (a) 24. (d) 25. (c) 26. (b) 27. (a) 28. (a) 29. (d) 30. (b)

Input-Text Based MCQs

31. (a) 32. (d) 33. (a) 34. (b) 35. (d) 36. (b)