


SESSION SUMMARY

Session Number: 1

Date: (planned) [DATE] (actual) [DATE]

Start: [TIME] End: [TIME]

 Planned objectives for session:

Completed 

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-----|
| 1. Review contract/informed consent | Yes |
| 2. Develop goals and objectives | No |
| 3. Review program requirements | Yes |

 Planned method for session: Open discussion

 Preliminary Comments

Journey (pseudonym) arrived on time. She seemed happy and eager to begin the helping process. Several previous attempts had been made to begin the helping relationship, but Journey often neglected to return my phone calls. This session was originally scheduled for [DATE]; however, Journey was unavailable. She did not call to reschedule. I contacted Journey and made arrangements for us to meet today.

Data

We reviewed the contract for the helping arrangement. I informed Journey that I would be keeping session notes of our meetings and she wanted to know who would have access to the information. I assured her that I would only share the notes with my MHS professors. Journey read the contract and agreed to all of the terms. I explained the nature of the helping project, specifically what I hoped to gain from the relationship. When asked what she hoped to gain, Journey stated that she often gets in her own way and that she's hoping she will learn some strategies to prevent her from making excuses for not doing the things she wants to do. We agreed to meet weekly at [INSERT DATE, TIMES] for approximately [INSERT DURATION OF SESSIONS]. I asked Journey why she agreed to participate in this project; she responded by saying that she wanted to help me out but also to gain focus and direction toward obtaining a college degree. She also stated that she would like to explore possible reasons for delaying this action. She stated that she knew it was "mostly out of fear". She also stated that she could "really use my help" because otherwise she has no one to help her.

Assessm

Journey is very outgoing and pleasant. While she seemed eager to begin today's process, she put off beginning the process several times. This is congruent with her stated pattern of putting off tasks and projects. Throughout


the session, Journey used a lot of clichés, e.g. “what doesn’t kill you makes you stronger”. She seems determined to project an image of strength and control. I think she sees needing help as a sign of weakness; she seems to detest any sign of weakness. I will explore those feelings in future sessions.


Plan

1. Complete assessment process, specifically developing goals and objectives.
2. Prioritize goals.
3. Introduce concepts from reality therapy.
4. Next session scheduled for [INSERT DATE, TIME] at Journey’s home.



Integration Analysis of Session (#1)

Self/Others


I think the therapy that will work best with Journey is reality therapy. 

From the onset Journey expressed concern regarding the lack of persons to “help her”. In the past Journey has made comments regarding a lack of a significant other (boyfriend). This has led to feelings of sadness and loneliness. Reality therapy’s desired effect is that an increased connection to the important persons in an individual’s life will lead an individual to a greater change of experiencing happiness. 

Ethics

From an ethical standpoint, the informed consent/contract document  helped to allay Journey’s fears that everyone in the MHS program would “know her business.” I assured her that the information from our sessions would only be shared with the professors. As a helpee, Journey has a right to privacy.  I assured her that I would never reveal her true identity.

Skills

I was nervous and a bit apprehensive as I began this process. I have a tendency to downplay my level of counseling experience, and as a result I went into this project with my own feelings of inadequacy. Specifically, I was unsure  about which information to capture in my session notes. To combat these

feelings, my first act was to calm myself down. As Journey and I discussed the parameters of the helping project, I attempted to actively listen to her comments without jumping to any conclusions or asking unnecessary questions. By concentrating on Journey's verbal and non-verbal responses, I was able to make a solid assessment.

Systems

Journey limits input, including communication and supportive social interactions, to her family and individual system. Journey does not rely on or ask her family members for support in accomplishing any goals. Journey stated that she always has to be the strong one. She also does not share this concern with her family members or close friends. Journey prefers instead to talk herself out of any feelings of inadequacy. One possible reason for Journey's prohibition of input may be a desire to appear self-sufficient at all costs. Additionally, Journey's social system may have been influenced by the media's often negative portrayal of TANF recipients, single mothers, and generally weak individuals. Finally, from a cultural perspective, African-American women are often portrayed as, and adopt an image of strength, hence the stereotype "strong Black woman." These factors seem to play an integral part in Journey's pattern of avoiding assistance when needed.