

Counseling Skills Critique

After watching a video of myself doing a Nutrition Counseling Session with a client, I noticed many strengths and weaknesses that I could improve on. When the counseling session first started I feel that I did an ok job of introducing myself. I let the client know that I was a Dietician and I built some rapport with him by letting him know that he can discuss any issues he is having with me. Although I introduced myself and gave him information about me, I probably could have done a little more to get to know him. One of the things that I noticed I did not do so well on was informing the client of the appointment plan. I should have told him that I was first going to do an assessment and discuss his high cholesterol levels and we would then come up with some goals that he could work on to improve his cholesterol levels and lose weight. I probably should not have classified his BMI level. This may have come off a little harsh tot he client. Next time I will work more on discussing the appointment plan.

I felt that I did a good job of conducting the assessment. I was able to obtain his weight, medical, diet and physical activity history as well as look at his family life and how things at home could be affecting his diet. I did notice I had some leading questions while I was doing the diet recall, I can work on this more in my next appointment. While I was doing the assessment and was beginning to move into setting goals, I asked many open-ended questions, used reflective listening, and I demonstrated empathy. I also helped inform my client of his disease state. I explained to him what acceptable levels are

for cholesterol and triglycerides, as well as let him know of ways to lower his cholesterol. I probably should have asked what his understanding was between cholesterol and heart disease. We then discussed different ways that he could incorporate more vegetables into his diet as well as exercise more often.

When it came to motivational interviewing, I let him know that it was ok that he led a busy lifestyle and found it hard to fit in time to exercise. I expressed empathy when he told me that his wife and children do not want to help him with preparing meals. I also asked him how motivated he felt he was to make a behavior change. I used a scale between “1” and “10” with “10” being fully ready to commit to a behavior change and “1” being that it just isn’t for him. This was my way of making sure that he was ready to begin setting goals for himself.

Some of the things I noticed while I watched the video were that I told him that his BMI classified him as “overweight”, although, technically he should be classified as “obese” with a BMI of 31.6. I felt that hearing that you are “obese” may not be a positive message, so I decided to keep it to saying “overweight”. It may have even been a better idea not to mention his BMI at all because it could cause some psychological damage to the client. I also should have explained what BMI means. If you do not have a background in nutrition or the medical field, then you may be clueless as to what BMI stands for and what it tells you. Next time I will explain that, if it becomes necessary.

I also had no idea how to address his alcohol consumption. He asked me if it is bad that he drinks that much alcohol (4-5 drinks every other day) and I do think it is bad, but I was not sure how to tell him that this might be too much and that he might have a

drinking problem. I decided to just stick with saying that as long as it does not affect your cholesterol you will be fine. I then went home and researched the issue and found out that alcohol can increase your triglyceride levels and stress hormones, leading to heart disease. So again, that is something I would need to work on.

Some things that I forgot to discuss with the client were his physical activity barriers and barriers to eating fruits and vegetables. I could have come up with ways to increase his fruit and vegetable intake by figuring out his likes and dislikes, also by setting goals for him.

Overall, I enjoyed doing this project. I liked being able to help someone with their nutrition counseling needs. I now know what I can improve on.