

Dale Richardson

CD 702

Dr. Sanders and Prof. Park

1/29/2023

Participation in 8 counseling triads

As I participated in my eight counseling sessions during Dr. Sanders and Professor Park's "Working with People" course, the two other triad members were Phillip Kim and Charmaine Mendez. I was extremely fortunate to have shared ten hours with them, as both were wholly committed to the task. This paper will serve as a summary of our counseling times. Observations that I made during our sessions, a bit of self-reflection and feelings that I encountered, some critical takeaways for potential ministry endeavors, and grades for my two other triad members will all be covered.

I made the following observations during my counseling sessions with Phillip and Charmaine. Both parties did an excellent job at each assigned role. In the first session, Charmaine was our speaker, and Phillip was our listener. The second section saw Phillip as the speaker and me as the listener. Participants told their life stories very transparently, which would usually take till the end of the semester in undergrad. With the basics, such as name, birthday, etc., covered, I was surprised at how fast, and soon the group became open and vulnerable. In terms of practice (Attending Behaviors, Reflective Listening, Validating, etc.), both participants earned a 9.9/10, in my potentially professional opinion, and to be honest, I would even put that up to a 10/10. However, I did not want to "ignore things that can be improved upon, because I wanted to be polite, as this will not help the listener to grow and develop" (Dr. Sanders).

In terms of feelings, I quite possibly explored the entire gambit as I endeavored to be empathetic. I found myself triggered by anger at times, by how my peers were treated by those they found dear. Likewise, I found myself feeling awful at times for the way I have treated the ones who find me dear. Perhaps I should find a group where I am able to foster meaning and deep conversation more often. As I self-reflect firstly as a listener, I was able to gain perspectives previously unthought of. Growing up as an inner-city youth, reactions become a survival mechanism, and I initially found not reacting challenging. However, as I worked on not responding or offering a "quick fix," I was able to listen well. As a growth area, I would like to work on asking open questions. As a listener, this helps to capture more of the story and add context. Secondly, as I self-reflect as an observer, I can not recall much going on around me, as I did my best to give my peers my undivided attention. Likewise, my peers were also intentional throughout the duration of our time together. Nothing felt challenging other than wanting to offer a quick fix. However, I was able to restrain my words. As a growth area, I would like to limit the thoughts that were racing through my mind. At times, I found myself offering advice, even when I was not verbalizing it. That was a bit distracting, but I was able to grow past it for the moment. Nevertheless, it will require more work on my behalf. Finally, as I reflect as a speaker, I became aware of how loving people can still be, even after they hear some of the mess you have been a part of throughout your life. I expected judgment and condemnation. However, I encountered seemingly unconditional love. I felt connected to the listener, understood, and validated. The one thing I did find challenging was my time confines. As for triggers during this moment, I was face to face with sadness as I thought of those who loved me.

When it comes to takeaways for potential ministry endeavors, I see many aspects of this course as a tool that can assist the church greatly. Too often, the modern western church I am familiar with only

tackles surface-level sin. I look forward to implementing deep relationships that can be a breeding ground for life transformation. I sincerely appreciated the sections on "less speaking and more listening" and "asking better questions." Although the two go hand in hand, they are two completely different gifts. "Asking open-ended questions" is another of my favorite takeaways for potential ministry endeavors. Immediately following class on the first day, I attended a funeral, and by implementing the above three tools, I was able to relate to guests on a sincere and profound level. Furthermore, I have also implemented these gifts at my job and even received a thank you card from a co-worker. Thank you, Professor Park and Dr. Sanders.

	Phillip Kim	Charmaine Mendez
1. Attending Behaviors – i.e. “tuning in.”	10	10
2. Reflective Listening of content & feelings.	10	10
3. Verbal Encouragements – i.e. “Tell me more...” “Uh-huh...” “Help me to understand...”	10	10
4. Non-verbal Encouragement – nodding, smiling, etc.	10	10
5. Asking open ended questions – Examples.	9	10
6. Summarizing	10	10
7. Empathy	10	10
8. Being non-judgmental – Be curious.	10	10
9. Validating	10	10
10. Listen more, talk less	10	9
	*Scale: 1 lowest. 10 highest.	