

Self-Reflection of Assignment 2

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This assignment was a very interesting experience. I know it was recommended not to choose family members but with my mom's mental health background I thought it would be a good starting point. Although the issue she talked about was whether or not to buy a paddle board, a few of the underlying issues and reasons why the paddle boards and what they really stood for came through.

The main underlying issue of whether or not to buy the paddle boards was really more about trying to find out what she wants from life, and who she is. Her focus on exercise and being healthy after bouncing back from cancer has really left her and my dad trying to figure out their next steps, where to go from here and what they want out of life. The paddleboards are an option for something to do together that tie into her need for exercise and the companionship she is building back with my dad after cancer ripped them apart.

There were so many more directions I could have pushed this interview in because I know her, her background and what is really going on, but for the sake of this interview I tried to stay on the topic of her problem "buying a paddleboard versus boat." If it was someone unknown to me I wouldn't be pushing right away for the underlying issues, it would be more getting a feel of the person and getting to know them and what's going on in their past, present and future.

10 minutes was definitely not enough time to dig deep especially in the first session, I can see how each phase of therapeutic relationship can take days even weeks to work through before being able to move onto the next. My interview ended up being 20 minutes but I chose the last 10 minutes and focused on the last 5 for my TR Grid. I knew going into this that she can talk a lot, and fast, and I was hoping to practice my skills while staying focused on her issue. A few times we went off course but I feel I managed to get back to the focus and dig a bit deeper than the paddle boards and more into her future plans, wants and needs.

I noticed I did a lot of open questioning more than anything and felt I was trying to listen and stay attentive but sometimes she would ramble on and I found my mind wandering, or just waiting for an opportunity to jump in and say something. If we hadn't been recording and both nervous about that factor I would have let her talk and see where she went with it, while sitting back and listening. I know we had to talk and show our skills in this short 10 minutes so I tried my best to jump in and get some responses, however I feel active listening would have been the best option. I don't know if it was because the problem didn't require it or because it was my mom but listening back to the recording I didn't find myself to be very empathetic. If we had talked about a more serious issue, her cancer, mental health, or relationship with my dad I know I would have shown more empathy and supportive intervention and less probing and questioning. However it was her issue and her topic of discussion and I didn't want to dive into something heavy for the first attempt at practicing counseling skills.

I know this was the first of many interviews and or counseling sessions we will be required to do for this course, as well as getting into the real world during clinical supervision. I think the more I practice my skills the more confident I will be at using them and being able to dig deeper into the issue. For a first attempt I believe I did fairly reasonable, wasn't the best I could have done but that will come with time. I managed to stay on the topic, ask open questions, summarize what she was saying and probe a bit deeper into other areas of why she really wanted the paddle boards. I think this was a really great exercise because it made me aware of what I said instead of what I thought I said, I could tell my confidence wasn't great and I was nervous from all the mmhms and umms so that's another thing I need to work on is thinking about what I'm going to say and trying to sound more professional and more confident.