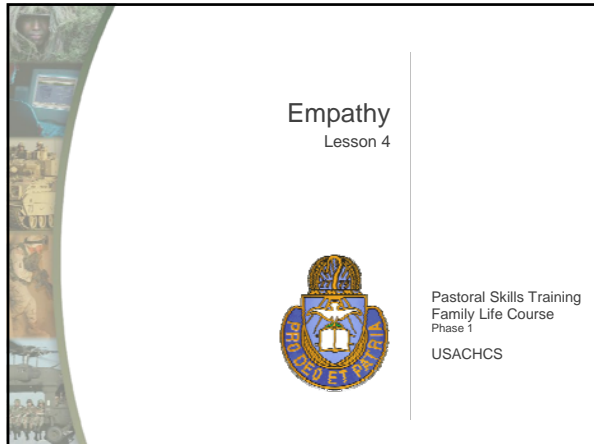


Pastoral Skills Training Family Life Course


Lesson 4: Empathy

Student Guide

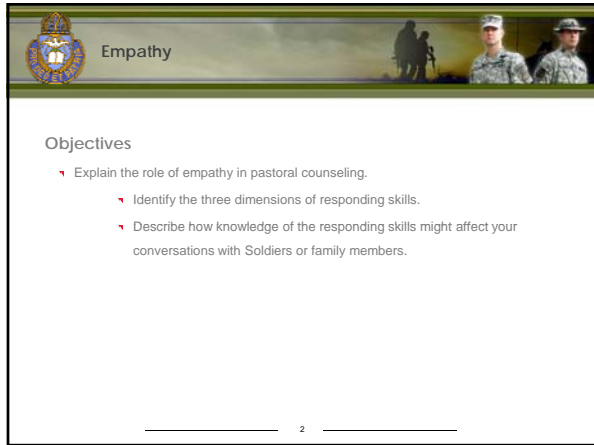
Lesson Objectives	
Explain the role of empathy in pastoral counseling. <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Identify the three dimensions of responding skills.○ Describe how knowledge of the responding skills might affect your conversations with Soldiers or family members.	
Session 1: Presentation Webinar	
Part 1	Basic Empathy
Part 2	The Dance of Empathy
Student Readings	
Basic Empathy (Egan)	04-basic-empathy.pdf
The Dance of Empathy (McCann and Colletti)	04-dance-of-empathy.pdf
Case Study	04-case-study.pdf
Session 2: Discussion Webinar	
A discussion of the assigned case study	



Empathy
Lesson 4



Pastoral Skills Training
Family Life Course
Phase 1
USACHCS

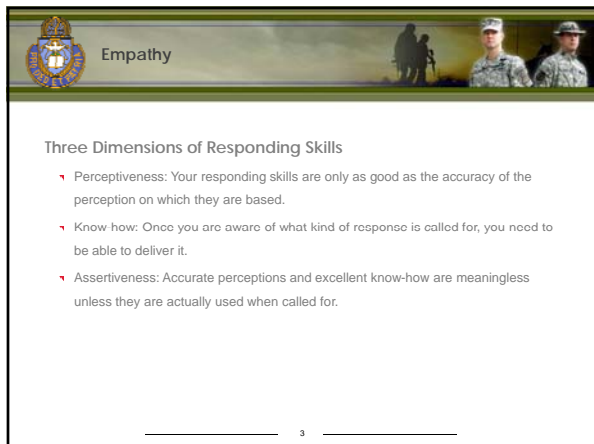


Empathy

Objectives

- Explain the role of empathy in pastoral counseling.
 - Identify the three dimensions of responding skills.
 - Describe how knowledge of the responding skills might affect your conversations with Soldiers or family members.

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Empathy

Three Dimensions of Responding Skills

- **Perceptiveness:** Your responding skills are only as good as the accuracy of the perception on which they are based.
- **Know how:** Once you are aware of what kind of response is called for, you need to be able to deliver it.
- **Assertiveness:** Accurate perceptions and excellent know-how are meaningless unless they are actually used when called for.



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 Empathy 

Communicating Understanding to Clients

- What is empathy?
- Basic empathy is the skill that enables counselors to communicate their understanding of the client's world.
- "Empathy, the accepting, confirming, and understanding human echo evoked by the self, is a psychological nutrient without which human life, as we know and cherish it, could not be sustained." (Kohut, 1978, p. 705).



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 Empathy 

Key Elements of Basic Empathy

- The Basic Empathy Formula: "You feel [name the correct emotion expressed by the client] because (or when) [indicate the correct experiences and behaviors that give rise to the feelings]."
- Ex: "You feel angry that your supervisor would say that in front of your peers."
- Experiences, behaviors, and feelings = elements of empathy



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 Empathy 

Respond to the Client's Feelings

- In the formula, "You feel ..." is to be followed by the correct family of emotions and the correct intensity.
- The statements "You feel hurt," "You feel relieved," and "You feel enthusiastic" specify different families of emotion.
- The statements "You feel annoyed," "You feel angry," and "You're furious" specify different degrees of intensity in the same family (anger).



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 Empathy 

Ways to Communicate Understanding of Feelings

- A single word: You're really happy.
- A phrase: You're on cloud nine.
- Experiential statement: You feel that you finally got what you deserve.
- Behavioral statement: You feel like going out and celebrating.



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 Empathy 

Principles to Guide the Use of Basic Empathy

- Use empathy at every stage and step of the helping process.
- Use empathy as a way of bridging diversity gaps.
- Use empathy to stimulate movement in the helping process.
- Target core messages of the individual.
- Respond to the context, not just the words. (For example, cue into nonverbal behavior.)
- Recover from inaccurate understanding.
- Don't pretend to understand.



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 Empathy 

Poor Substitutes for Empathy

- No response at all
- Distracting questions
- Clichés
- Interpretations
- Advice
- Parroting
- Sympathy and agreement



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 Empathy 

Tactics for Communicating Empathy

- Give yourself time to think.
- Use short responses.
- Gear your response to the client, but remain yourself.



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 Empathy 

Suggestions for the Use of Empathy

- Remember that empathy is, ideally, a way of being and not just a professional role or communication skill.
- Attend carefully, both physically and psychologically, and listen to the client's point of view.
- Try to set your judgments and biases aside for the moment and walk in the shoes of the client.
- As the client speaks, listen especially for core messages.
- Listen to both verbal and nonverbal messages and the context of the messages.



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 Empathy 

Suggestions for the Use of Empathy, cont'd

- Respond fairly frequently, but briefly, to the client's core messages.
- Be flexible and tentative enough that the client does not feel pinned down.
- Use empathy to keep the client focused on important issues.
- Move gradually toward the exploration of sensitive topics and feelings.
- After responding with empathy, attend carefully to cues that either confirm or deny the accuracy of your response.



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 Empathy 

Suggestions for the Use of Empathy, cont'd

- Determine whether your empathic responses are helping the client remain focused while developing and clarifying important issues.
- Note signs of client stress or resistance; try to judge whether these arise because you are inaccurate or you are too accurate.
- Keep in mind that the communication skill of empathy, however important, is a tool to help clients see themselves and their problem situations more clearly with a view toward managing them more effectively.



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 Empathy 

Discussion Questions

- Tell us of a time you simply listened well and it made a difference. What happened?
- What roadblocks have you experienced that get in the way of listening well to people?
- Given those suggestions for the use of empathy, which do you think you will not want to forget, based on your experiences so far?

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 Empathy 

Dance of Empathy

- The Dance of Empathy is a process where the counselor and the client respond to each other back and forth.
 - When it goes well, the counselor learns more and more about the client and what is happening; the client feels more and more understood.
 - When it goes poorly, it leads to an undesirable outcome for both counselor and client.
 - It is important for you to pay attention to the "dance" and recognize which direction it's going, so that you can take appropriate action.

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Empathy



Steps in the Dance of Empathy

- ▶ **Step 1:** The counselor invites the client to tell what's happening.
- ▶ **Step 2:** The client tells a little bit.
- ▶ **Step 3:** The counselor listens and then says something that enables the client to see he was heard and that there's hope.
- ▶ **Step 4:** The client tells a little bit more, or corrects a misconception.
- ▶ **Step 5:** The counselor listens and learns a little more, and then says something more to show he's hearing and hopeful.
- ▶ **Step 6-7:** Repeat steps 2-5 until out of time.



Empathy



Steps in the Dance of Empathy

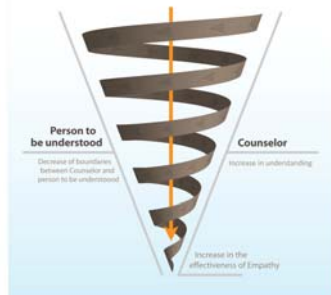
- ▶ **Step 8:** The counselor checks his own feelings. He identifies his own "hooks" and reminds himself (if necessary) that this isn't his fault, that he's just here to help and care.
- ▶ **Step 9:** When they are out of time, or senses they are done, the counselor summarizes his understanding of what is happening. He then either a) makes recommendations for the client, or b) simply expresses confidence that the client will handle this, or c) makes an appointment to meet again for another session.



Empathy



Dance of Empathy (Hermeneutic Spiral)





Practical Exercise
