Interviewing Techniques

FOCUSING

As a worker, you should always strive to keep the focus of the interview with a clear understanding of the purpose and goal. Sometimes our families have so much going on in their lives, that they tend to unload their problems onto their worker, whether the problems are directly related to the task at hand. When this happens, acknowledge the families' feelings and statements by using empathy throughout the interview, but always make a conscious effort to redirect the subject when necessary.

Partialization

Families who are involved in the child welfare system often have many problems and feel overwhelmed with all that they are facing in their environment and through their feelings. You can assist them by:

Setting priorities based on the most urgent needs of the family and agency; Determining what can be realistically handled within the context of the agency; Separating out and dealing with one problem at a time

Universalization

This technique is used to point out that most people in their situation would be experiencing similar reactions. Be cautious when using this technique so that it does not appear as if you are minimizing their feelings, but instead are trying to make them feel less alone.

Recognition of Difference

It’s important to be authentic with your families by establishing that you acknowledge the cultural, socioeconomic, and ethnic differences between you; but stating that you will make every effort to try to understand them from their perspective.

Acceptance:

By making the family feel accepted, you demonstrate an attitude of receptivity. This is important so that they can feel comfortable with you so that they are able to face the problem that brought them to the agency to begin with.

Relating to Affect

This is a way to engage the family in the casework relationship through exploring apparent emotions. This is also a way to demonstrate empathy towards the family through the acknowledgement of their feelings.