

# Interactional Helping Skills in Child Welfare

- Tuning in to Self
  - Getting in touch with potential feelings/concerns/beliefs that child welfare professionals may bring to the helping encounter.
- Tuning in to Others
  - Getting in touch with actual and potential feelings and concerns that the client may bring to the helping encounter.
- Clarifying Purpose, Function, and Role
  - Stating the child welfare professional's role/function at the agency, as it relates to the identified problem or issue at hand, including a simple, non-jargonized statement about the general purpose of the meeting/session.
- Reaching for Feedback
  - Encouraging others to respond to the explanation as to why the meeting is occurring, (removal) the child welfare professional's role/function at the agency, etc. Confirming a client's understanding of, or thoughts/feelings about, anything that has been spoken or done.
- Dealing with Issues of Authority
  - Using communication that invites expressions of concerns and complaints about the child welfare professionals' power or the client's sense of vulnerability in the helping process.
- Questioning
  - Making requests for information as to the nature of the problem/situation to get a fuller picture of the concern expressed using: open and closed questions; probing questions; directiveness; and redirection.
- Reaching Inside of Silences
  - Exploring the meaning of silence by putting possible feelings into words.
- Communicating Information
  - Sharing important information or clarifying issues about the casework process, including mutual expectations, goals and services, legal issues, timelines, court processes, and next steps, while giving others the opportunity to ask questions and express feelings.
- Summarizing
  - Identifying the main theme of the discussion during a session/meeting as a way of closing that part of the work by recapping key points; identifying next steps; and/or closing the session or ending the client relationship.

*Source:* Shulman, Lawrence.(2006). *The Skills of Helping Individuals, Families, Groups, and Communities* (Fifth Edition), Belmont, CA: Thomson Brooks/Cole.