

## Moving from General to Specific

### *Script 1*

**Worker:** I'd like to discuss the problem of defensiveness.

**Supervisor:** What do you mean?

**Worker:** I need help in how to get clients to admit they have problems and not just blame the problems on their wives or kids.

**Supervisor:** Defensiveness is normal if people feel threatened. Don't be discouraged by it. After clients get to know you better, they might let down their defenses.

**Worker:** (Looks doubtful).

**Supervisor:** Do you disagree with me?

**Worker:** Some people don't want to change. No matter what I do they would not own up to having problems.

**Supervisor:** I agree that there are some unmotivated clients. It's tough to give up on them, but sometimes it's necessary.

**Worker:** That's easy to say, but hard to do, especially if there are kids involved.

**Supervisor:** Workers often feel guilty if they can't bring about changes. But, clients have responsibilities as well.

**Worker:** I agree.

Adapted from Shulman L., 2010. *Interactional Supervision*, pp. 103-104.

### *Script 2*

**Worker:** You know, some people are just impossible to work with. They don't want to change.

**Supervisor:** Did you have a tough interview?

**Worker:** It's the Gruber family. I don't think they will ever admit they have any problems. As far as Mr. Gruber is concerned, I should just straighten out their teenage daughter, make her listen to them, and everything will be okay.

## Moving from General to Specific (continued)

**Supervisor:** Sounds like you hit a bit of a stone wall. Give me some details of the interview, and maybe we can discuss the whole business of defensiveness. At what point did you sense the wall go up?

**Worker:** He seemed a little distant right from the beginning--the first session--but he really closed up this time. I wanted to get at his parenting skills, but he kept saying that kids have no respect for their parents any more.

**Supervisor:** How had you tried to get at his parenting skills? What did you actually say?

**Worker:** Well, he described how his daughter was a tramp, didn't listen to him, stayed out late at night, the whole business. He was coming down heavy on her, and I could see that she was close to tears.

**Supervisor:** Were you feeling upset for her and angry at him for not understanding her feelings?

**Worker:** Exactly! I was thinking that if he handles her that way all the time, no wonder she doesn't listen to him.

**Supervisor:** It's easy to understand how you would feel that way. Probably at that moment you identified strongly with his daughter. I wonder, if you were with his daughter, who was with him?

**Worker:** (after a brief silence): I guess he was alone.

**Supervisor:** You know, he probably already feels pretty guilty and defensive about his part of the problem. He may figure that everyone else, you included, is against him and is siding with his daughter. If he is going to let his barriers down, he needs to know that you understand his feelings and that you don't judge him too harshly. After all, if he could handle his daughter differently, he wouldn't need your help. What did you say to him?

**Worker:** I'm embarrassed to say that I told him that things are different here and that kids have more freedom than they did in the old country. Wow! I guess he really knew then whose side I was on.

**Supervisor:** Exactly! The interesting part is that if you want him to have more understanding for his daughter, you are probably going to have to model what you mean by having more understanding for him. You can't ask him to be empathic with her while at the same time you won't empathize with him.

Adapted from Shulman, L. (2010). *Interactional Supervision*.