PART ONE

Helping: The Role and Influence of the Helper
An Introduction to the Formal Process of Helping

Thus, with what appears to be a simple social introduction, begins a process of helping. A process which, while appearing so natural, so easy, is in truth, complex and filled with challenges for both the helper and the client. Helping another person cope with a problem or facilitating that person's movement toward a specific outcome is a very responsible process. It is a process involving at least two people. While various names and labels can be applied to the person providing the help (e.g., psychologist, counselor, advocate, social worker, etc.), we will refer to this person simply as the helper and the person receiving the help as the client.

Ms. Wicks, a social worker consulting at a local school district, is about to engage as a helper with Maria (the client) in a process that will require her to employ special knowledge and skills along with a unique sensitivity. She will be called upon to make numerous decisions as she guides Maria through this process. Helping for Ms. Wicks, or any helper, is a process for which there are no clear-cut formulas or recipes to follow.

The process of helping another, the direction it takes, and the outcomes will all be influenced by the person of the helper. It is not just the helper’s technical knowledge or skill that influence and give shape to the helping process, it is also his or her values, beliefs, and operating ethics. The unique role and influence of the helper within the developing ethical helping relationship is the focus of the current chapter.

Chapter Objectives

The chapter will present the role that the helper’s beliefs, values, and ethics play in shaping the decision making that occurs within the helping dynamic.

After reading this chapter you should be able to do the following:

1. Define helping as a dynamic process, reflecting both an artistry and a science.
2. Describe the unique ethical responsibilities and roles of the professional helper within a helping relationship.
3. Identify the salient characteristics of the effective helper and the degree to which you currently possess these characteristics.
4. Identify the reciprocal roles and responsibilities of both the client and the helper in an ethical helping relationship.
The Helping Process: A Blending of Art and Science

The effective helper understands and appreciates the fact that helping is not simply the sterile application of techniques or procedures. While a helper’s understanding of what to do may be grounded in theory and research, the “when” and “how” to do it require a sensitivity that extends well beyond theoretical knowledge and technical efficiency. Consider the many options and decision points afforded the helper working with Kim in the following case illustration (Case 1.1).

In reviewing Kim’s complaint did you feel that the roommate was the problem or was something else on Kim’s mind? Was there a problem? While Kim was verbally expressive, what did you notice about her behavior, her style of communicating? Should the RA have stopped Kim and asked a question at any point? Should the RA have confronted Kim? So many questions—with no simple, clear answers.

As previously suggested, helping is a process for which there is no one tried and true sequence of steps to be applied. Helping is not an automatic, cold, and distant process of problem solving. It is truly an awesome human encounter, one engaging clients’ and helpers’ feelings as well as their minds. The complexity and dynamic nature of the helping process is infused with subjectivity, intuition, and often confusion, rendering its facilitation as much of an art as a science. It is important to realize that as with any art—the product—reflects not only the subject, or in this case the client, but also the artist. Each participant mobilizes his or her values, beliefs, needs, and even dreams to make the very best of an increasingly intimate relationship.

As a contributor to this product and process, what might the RA, depicted in Case Illustration 1.1 have contributed to the dynamic with Kim? What did the RA feel? What

CASE ILLUSTRATION 1.1

Kim’s

Kim is a college freshman. During her first week of school she came to speak to her residence assistant (who is an upperclassman). On entering the RA’s room she stated that she had a “minor complaint” and before the RA could respond, Kim continued to speak, stating:

I know school has just started, and I am just a naïve, little, helpless freshman, but I (looks down on to the floor), well, I . . . (voice becomes quiet) have a kind of . . . well of a . . . I guess you could call it a small, but not real small problem, with my roommate. Look, I don’t want to seem like a complainer. I’m not, am I? But (fidgeting a little), gads, this is kinds of embarrassing to talk about, I mean you’re a guy (giggles), of course you know that, but . . . oh HELL I’m just gonna say it. I think my roommate . . . is . . . well, she—let’s say is nothing like me. No, what I mean to say is . . . I really like guys (smiles flirtatiously) even though I haven’t had a chance to meet anyone here, except the freshman boys, but anyway . . . I don’t think she does, if you know what I mean. Well anyway, you get the idea. Don’t you? I just need another room!
needs and concerns did the RA bring to this interaction? What feelings, thoughts, and behaviors were stimulated or elicited by Kim? The uniqueness of the helper tints the process and outcome of the helping relationship. Two different RAs working with Kim may have attended to different pieces of her story or her style and may have moved toward different outcomes or the same outcome through different paths. Exercise 1.1 provides an opportunity to identify the way the personal uniqueness of each helper can influence the very nature and outcome of the helping encounter.

The Helping Process: The Meeting of Client and Helper

Albeit a very unique and special relationship, the helping relationship is \textit{first and foremost} exactly that, a relationship. It is important to note that too often in our eagerness to be of assistance, we rush in with our answers, our directions, our solutions, trying desperately to do something to “solve the problem.” We must remember that helping is \textit{realized} in the context of a helping relationship (Parsons, 1995). The quality of the relationship is therefore the keystone to the helping process and thus needs to be of primary concern to all seeking to develop their helping skills.
Helping: A Special Kind of Interpersonal Process and Response

Social encounters and social relationships are not unfamiliar. The normal chit-chat nature of these encounters is more or less familiar and comfortable for all of us. What makes the helping process or the meeting of a client and helper so different?

Client’s Needs as Primary

Helping is a process by which one person, the helper, interacts with another in a way to facilitate this other’s (the client’s) movement toward some specific outcome. Unlike most social exchanges, primacy is given to one member, the client. It is the client’s needs, concerns, and goals that are the focus of the encounter. It is the client’s welfare that is the focus of the relationship and the driving force behind the ethical helper’s decision making.

As a result of this “focus on one,” the purpose and outcome of the interaction reflect the needs and goals of that “one” and these are specified and terminal. Unlike other social encounters that may be open-ended with both parties remaining engaged as long as their individual needs are being met, the helping relationship is designed to achieve some specific goal and terminate with the achievement of that goal. Once the goal is attained the need for the helping relationship no longer exists. This outcome-specific and terminal nature of helping cannot be forgotten. Nor can the helper forget that it is the needs, concerns, and goals of the client which are primary to the shaping and development of the helping relationship. Consider the helping exchange presented in Case Illustration 1.2. The interaction takes place between a crisis hotline worker and a woman whose child is choking. The exchange demonstrates the unique elements of a helping relationship when contrasted to other social elements.

CASE ILLUSTRATION 1.2

Telephone Crisis Worker

CRISIS INTERVENTION WORKER: Yes, ma’am. I can hear that you are very upset. I know it seems scary. Yes, ma’am, I am here, I am listening. Could you describe what is happening?

CLIENT (voice on the phone screaming): My baby is turning blue... oh, my God... my baby... my baby

HELPER: (interrupting) Ma’am! Ma’am!

CLIENT: Yes? (trying to catch her breath)

HELPER: It is important for you to try to focus on what I am telling you—can you hear me?

CLIENT: Yes... but my...

HELPER: (interrupting) I know its hard for you but keep listening to my voice—you must try. Roll your baby over on her stomach, place your left hand under her belly, and lift her stomach off the floor. Now with your right hand give her a gentle yet
Like other social encounters, this one is marked by verbal exchanges and sharing of information. While it is certainly an interaction, it differs from the more typical social exchange, not just in the content of the interaction, but in the fundamental nature of that content. In this and all helping exchanges the nature and substance is the matter of the client. As with other social encounters there is a goal implied—but this again reflects the need and current state of the client, not the helper, and emphasizes the utilization of the client’s resources and movement toward a specific outcome (Parsons, 1995). While the helper in this situation may have been about to take a coffee break or may have felt anxious and wished she could have simply handed the phone to another, it was not her needs that were central to this encounter.

When the needs, wants, and concerns of the helper take center stage at the expense of the client, we have the potential for unethical behavior and a less than helping exchange. Exercise 1.2 should help to clarify this important distinction between a helping encounter and other social interactions.

**EXERCISE 1.2**

**Helping as a Unique Social Encounter**

*Directions:* As with most of these exercises, it would be valuable to complete the exercise and then share your responses with a colleague or classmate to see how individual differences can impact the responses and the potential for the helping process. *Part I:* Below you will find three different types of social encounters in which you may be currently engaged or may be seeking to develop. Select one of these encounters and write your response to the questions that follow.

*Relationships:*
1. A relationship with a member of the opposite sex
2. A relationship with a person of authority who evaluates your performance (e.g., professor, supervisor, boss, etc.)
3. An encounter with a possible employer.

*Questions:*
1. What is your primary goal for this encounter? That is, what would you like to achieve or gain through this relationship.
The Role of the Client in the Process of Change

At a surface level, the roles and functions of the participants in this formal helping process are clear. The client brings concerns to a trained helper and expects the helper to help formulate appropriate goals and to employ cost/effective strategies that will realize those goals. What could be simpler? But helping is a relationship in which the unique roles and responsibilities of the participants are not always simple or clear.

Some helpers, in their eagerness to be of assistance, deprive the client of the opportunity to take an active role within the helping process. These helpers often relegate the clients to the role of a “victimized party” in need of the helper’s assistance and thus place the brunt of the responsibility of the process of change on the helper’s shoulders.

The perspective taken here is that helping is a collaborative process with both the helper and the client having responsibilities and roles to be played within the process. The ethical standards for helpers articulated by the various professional organizations (e.g., AAMFT, ACA, APA, NASW) (see Appendix A) define the reciprocal roles of helper and client—specifying the rights of the client and the responsibilities of the client. As noted by Hare-Mustin and colleagues (Hare-Mustin, Marecek, Kaplan, & Liss-Levinson, 1995), the helper responsibilities and clients’ rights converge on issues such as freedom of choice, disclosure of information, and protection of human dignity.

While there is a unique role to be played by the helper, the client also has both a role and responsibility within the relationship. Clients are expected to choose wisely, to make use of the information provided, and to assume control of their participation in the helping process (Arbuckle, 1977). However, it is the ethical responsibility of the helper to assist the client to assume this role, with the client’s welfare always being the point of focus (see Table 1.1).

Freedom and Responsibility to Choose Wisely

If we revisit the client-helper exchange that opened this chapter, we might question both the “freedom” and the “choice” afforded Maria, the client. It is clear, at least from her initial presentation, that her perspective was that she “had to come to talk with” Ms. Wicks.

While absolute freedom may not be afforded clients under certain conditions (such as those who are involuntarily committed), even these clients have the freedom and responsibility to choose wisely within the more narrowed range of choice provided (see Chapter 6). Through open communication with the helper, the client will develop a realistic expectation...
about treatment and treatment outcome. With this knowledge the client can decide if and to what degree he or she wants to be engaged in this helping relationship. Even Maria has the freedom to choose to come, to stay, or to even talk. The helper, Ms. Wicks, can assist Maria to understand these options along with the possible consequence for each. It is then Maria’s role, as client, to decide what she wants from the helping process and what she is willing to do to get what she wants.

**Assume Control of Their Participation in the Helping Process**

Helping is not something one does to another, it is a process that one does with another. Helping works best when clients enter it voluntarily and assume some control over the process. Even when a client is required, forced, or coerced to come for help, progress will
be facilitated by assisting the client to affirm the relevance of the helping and to develop a willingness to participate in the process. This is true even if the only control clients wish to exert is to terminate the relationship, which is their right (Bennett, Bryant, VandenBos, & Greenwood, 1990).

It is incumbent on the ethical helper to assist the client to see the potential benefit of this helping relationship while affirming his or her right to assume control over his or her participation. Case Illustration 1.3 reveals how a helper who “believes” that the client has the right and responsibility to assume control can facilitate the development of a helping relationship in which control and direction is shared.

Imagine the impact on this helping relationship and the possibility of providing Maria “help” if Ms. Wicks, the helper, took a rigid, authoritative stance: “Sit young lady—if Mr. Brady sent you here, you will stay here!”

The specific details over what falls within the realm of control of the client and what belongs to the helper is not predefined. Early in the development of each helping relationship roles and boundaries need to be established (see Chapter 8). The specifics will vary according to the nature of the problem at hand, the therapeutic approach employed, and the specific orientation and values of the participants.

Make Use of the Information Provided

It is hoped that the client will assume a role that shows both an interest in understanding the nature of the current situation and a desire to develop either a different coping style or a

**CASE ILLUSTRATION 1.3**

**Maria Assumes Control**

The following exchange occurred shortly after Ms. Wicks greeted Maria and invited her to take a seat.

MARIA: I don’t want to be here—I didn’t do anything.

MS. WICKS: You sound like you don’t want to be here, but you are. Would you like to return to class?

MARIA: No way! He’s a jerk!

MS. WICKS: Well, we have 20 minutes before the next change of class. If you would like, maybe you could tell me what happened? Maybe in talking about it we could come up with a plan to make it better.

MARIA: I don’t like talking.

MS. WICKS: Well, you don’t have to—if you would rather, you could spend the rest of the period in the career center or reviewing college brochures. But you do look and sound upset and I would like to help if I could.

MARIA: Let me just take a minute. Can I get a drink of water? I’ll be right back and I’ll tell you what happened.
different life position. It is, however, a role that they have a right not to embrace. A helper may make recommendations and suggestions that if accepted by the client may facilitate the achievement of his or her goal. The client, however, is under no obligation to follow the specific recommendations or suggestions of the helper. The client can and will decide how he or she will employ the information provided.

The fact that a client can decide to use or not use the advice, the information, or the insight gained by working with a helper may appear obvious. Yet, it is not unusual for a helper who has extended himself or herself to a client, to feel disappointed, perhaps even angry, at a client who appears to be less than compliant. This point may become a bit more clear after completing Exercise 1.3.

When a helper has invested time, energy, and part of the self into supporting a client, it may be hard for him or her to accept the client freedom to use or not use the help provided. This is more dramatically brought home in situations in which the client choice to

---

**EXERCISE 1.3**

**A Client Chooses to Reject Help**

*Directions:* The following is a brief exchange between Alice (the client) and Tim (social worker). Tim has been working with Alice in a program geared to help single mothers find employment. This is the sixth time they have met.

As you read the vignette, try to place yourself in the shoes of the helper. After reading the case illustration, respond to the following questions. As with previous exercises, it may prove beneficial for you to share your responses with a colleague.

**ALICE** (the client): Hi, sorry I’m late, but I got a phone call from an old friend just as I was going out the door.

**TIM** (the helper): Well, Alice, we have approximately 20 minutes left in your appointment. How about we use the remainder of the session to discuss how well you did with your telephone calls?

**ALICE:** I know I agreed to attempt to call at least three jobs for possible interviews but this was a busy week, plus I had a friend in town and we wanted to hang out a little. So I just kinda figured we could do it another time.

**TIM:** Okay, but in addition to making the calls, you also agreed to complete the interest inventory I gave you. Maybe we could review your profile. Do you have that?

**ALICE:** Gads, you know what, I remember you giving it to me but I think I must have misplaced it or something. Do you have another? I could try to complete it for next time.

**TIM:** Alice, I am a bit confused. We have been meeting for 6 weeks and even though you stated that you really want to work on identifying a possible career path and to get back to work you seem to have some difficulty following through on the things we discuss. Each time we have decided on a “homework,” like to clip ads from the paper, or to go speak with a nurse’s aide about her experiences in that career, or the telephoning and interest inventory—you have had difficulty completing the tasks.
ignore the helper’s recommendations and advice results in the client’s loss of life (see Case Illustration 1.4).

While it may be hard for any helper to accept a client’s refusal to accept and follow a recommendation designed to maintain life, the fact remains that the decision—even this life and death decision—rests with the client. It is the client who will ultimately decide if and how to use the information, and the assistance provided—even when not following such assistance, results in his or her death.

The Role of the Helper in the Process of Change

As noted throughout the previous section, the helping process is clearly a joint venture with significant roles to be played by both the client and helper. But even with the assumptions

CASE ILLUSTRATION 1.4
A Client Chooses Death

Roberto is a 67-year-old widower with two adult children. At the age of 60, Roberto was diagnosed with ALS. Over the course of the last year Roberto has experienced a rapid decline in his health and has become depressed. Dr. Sebring (a pastoral counselor) has been working with Roberto for his depression. Dr. Sebring has been employing a number of cognitive techniques to help Roberto reframe his life condition in such a way as to reestablish meaning even with his disease. Roberto has been very engaged in his counseling and employed the various techniques and strategies suggested by Dr. Sebring. As a result of his involvement in counseling, Roberto has found relief from his depression.

Roberto’s disease has been progressing and within the last week he has lost his ability to swallow. Roberto’s physician wants to insert a feeding tube but Roberto has refused this procedure. Dr. Sebring has continued to work with Roberto encouraging him to embrace life and to follow his physician’s recommendation. Roberto, however, is clear and determined that he does not want to be admitted into a hospital, nor does he want to have the feeding tubes inserted. Roberto refuses to accept the recommendations of either his physicians or Dr. Sebring knowing full well that his refusal will result in his starvation and death.
about client responsibilities, one cannot forget that the client comes to the helping relationship often confused, anxious, and most certainly vulnerable. Helping is a relationship of power: The helper is entrusted to use that power wisely and ethically, with the client’s welfare being central. This concern for client welfare serves as the organizing principle behind the various roles assumed by the helper within the helping relationship. Most standards (see Table 1.1) include statements such as that found in the ACA Statement of Ethical Standards (1995).

The member’s primary obligation is to respect the integrity and promote the welfare of the client(s) (Section A.1.A).

Although the specific way this obligation and role of the helper is manifested will be influenced by the theoretical approach, the nature of the problem, the unique characteristics of the client, and the context within which the help is provided, there are a number of responsibilities that universally fall to the helper in a helping relationship. Helpers are generally responsible for the following: (1) defining and maintaining a helping relationship; (2) facilitating a helping alliance; and (3) facilitating the client’s movement toward some specific outcome. Each of these responsibilities have as their primary purpose to “respect the integrity and promote the welfare of the client(s)” (ACA Code of Ethics, Section A.1.a).

Defining and Maintaining a Helping Relationship

The helping relationship is oftentimes very intense and almost always intimate. Clients are invited to disclose the very personal details of their lives and their situations. A helping relationship is characterized by a power differential that leaves the client vulnerable to the helper’s actions (Keith-Spiegel & Koocher, 1985; Pope & Vasquez, 1991). Therefore, it is the helper who is ethically responsible for the relationship (Adleman & Barrett, 1990). The helper is responsible for creating and maintaining the boundaries that keep the client safe during these vulnerable times (see Chapter 8).

Unlike other relationships, in which the goal is to respond to and care for each other’s needs, in helping it is the helper’s responsibility to address the client’s needs and NOT the other way around. Relationships in which the helper is using the interaction with the client to meet his or her own needs threaten this principle of professional contact. Consider the following case illustration (Illustration 1.5) as it elucidates this point.

Returning, for example, to the American Counseling Association Code of Ethics (ACA, 1995), we see the following mandate: “counselors are aware of the intimacy of the relationship . . . [and] maintain respect for the clients and avoid activities that seek to meet their personal needs at the expense of the client” (Section A.5.a). The helper is responsible for defining and maintaining some control over the types of information being discussed and the nature of the relationship as appropriate to the client. To successfully and ethically fulfill this role, this responsibility, helpers need to be aware of their unmet needs and the effect that these may have on their objectivity and helping relationships.

Self-Awareness of Helper’s Needs. Since the directive for the ethical helper is to avoid engaging in activities that seek to meet the helper’s personal needs at the expense of the
client, it is essential for helpers to be aware of their own unmet needs (e.g., power, approval, nurture, control, intimacy) so that they do not seek satisfaction via the helping relationship.

The power of the helping relationship, the vulnerability of the client, and the intensity of the helping encounter can exert subtle influences on the parties involved and can prove quite seductive to the unaware helper. Consider the following exercise (Exercise 1.4) as it raises your own awareness of the potential for such boundary violation.

Ability to Maintain a Degree of Emotional Objectivity. Recognizing the potential negative impact that one’s unmet needs and concerns may have on the helping relationship is an essential, yet not sufficient, step. In addition to recognizing these unmet needs, the ethical helper needs to be able to maintain emotional objectivity throughout the helping encounter. Such emotional objectivity is often difficult to maintain, a point which is highlighted in Chapter 8.

The Use of Contracts. One strategy employed by many helpers in establishing and maintaining the helping relationship is to formally define the nature and boundaries of the relationship in terms of a helping contract (Sills, 1997). Ethical helpers inform clients about the purpose and nature of the helping process (see Chapter 6).

This process of providing information not only facilitates the clients’ ability to willingly participate and choose wisely, but also sets the boundaries of the helping relationship. The use of a contract can serve as a means for clarifying the nature, limits, responsibilities, and rights of the helping relationship. In developing a contract the helper encourages the

CASE ILLUSTRATION 1.5
A Helper Who Needs to Be Needed

Aneesha is a guidance counselor in a public middle school. She has working for the past month with Leonard, a seventh-grade student. Leonard was referred to the school counselor by his homeroom teacher. The teacher expressed her concerned that Leonard was very shy and somewhat vulnerable to being manipulated by his peers. The teacher thought that Leonard could use some assertive training.

Aneesha has recently divorced. She has found herself feeling lonely and has tried to compensate by spending more time at work. Aneesha comes early to school and stays late. She has begun to contact students with whom she had previously worked, checking on their status, and asking if they would like to come into talk with her.

Aneesha worked with Leonard for the past five weeks and his home-room teacher has noted a change in Leonard. Leonard appears more verbally expressive, both in class and with peers. Further, Leonard has made it very clear to his teacher that he would like to discontinue counseling. Leonard explained to his teacher that he had asked Aneesha if he could stop coming for a while and she said that it wasn’t time yet. Leonard asked if the teacher would talk to the counselor.

The teacher shared her observations with the counselor along with Leonard’s request. However, the counselor responded in no uncertain tone that she was the professional and “knew when it was right to stop.”
Facilitating the Development of a Helping Alliance

A second responsibility of a helper is to facilitate the development of a working relationship with the client. It is important for the helper to attempt to reduce the client’s initial anxiety by providing the facilitative conditions for helping. Creating a warm and workable

client to specify goals and expectations, as well as to affirm the boundaries of the relationship. While there are no hard and fast rules about the elements of a helping contract, items that seem to be essential to the informing nature of contract have been identified by Bennett and colleagues (1990) and are presented in Table 1.2.

It should be noted that not all helpers endorse the value of a contract. Handelsman and Glavin (1995) cite research that questions the value of a contract for the client. These authors question the client’s capacity to give informed consent or to agree to a contract. Even with this as a possible caveat, clients have the right to have the helping process explained to them. The ethical helper will share information within the capacity of the client to understand that information and do so in language appropriate to the client’s level of comprehension (see Chapter 6).

EXERCISE 1.4
Recognizing a Helper’s Unmet Needs

Directions: Along with a classmate or colleague, review the following case description. Then read the description of the five helpers listed below. Next:

1. Identify each helper’s possible unmet needs.
2. Discuss the ways that the various helper characteristics and potential unmet needs may negatively impact the helping relationship.

The case situation and client description: The client is a 45-year-old mother of four. She came to a marriage counselor, complaining that her husband was insensitive to her needs as a woman and as a person. In her sessions she described her husband as traditional and somewhat chauvinistic. She stated that while he was a good provider, he was not willing to allow her to go back to school and develop a career of her own. When discussing their sexual relationship, the woman complained that her husband had a low sex drive while she was very sexual and would like to experiment with creative sexual activities.

Five potential therapists:
1. A female therapist who divorced her husband, returned to school, and just completed her degree.
2. A male therapist who comes from a traditional family and who himself has a stay-at-home-wife and three children.
3. A male therapist who is married and is currently having financial difficulties.
4. A therapist who came from a broken home in which the divorce process was very drawn out and painful.
5. A therapist who has been without an intimate partner for over two years.
relationship in an atmosphere of understanding and acceptance is primary to the helping process. Therefore, in addition to increasing our self-awareness of the limiting and potentially negative impact our biases may have on the helping process, it is also clear that we, as helpers, need to develop a number of values and attitudes that assist the client to begin to share his or her story.

The effective, ethical helper will demonstrate qualities of acceptance, warmth, and genuineness (Berenson & Carkhuff, 1967; Carkhuff & Berenson, 1977; Parsons, 1985; Truax & Carkhuff, 1965). While these conditions may not be sufficient for positive outcomes in every case, it does appear that they are key to the helping alliance and contribute in a facilitative way to the positive outcomes of helping (Ivey, Bradford-Ivey, & Simek-Morgan, 1993). So just as it may be assumed that ethical helpers are knowledgeable and skilled, they must also be people who can demonstrate these facilitative qualities of acceptance, warmth, and genuineness.

**Facilitating the Client’s Movement Toward Some Specific Outcome**

In addition to providing the structure and conditions of a helping relationship, the helper is expected to bring special knowledge and skill to the interaction, which, when applied within the helping process, will assist the client to more effectively cope with the issue at

---

**TABLE 1.2 Elements of a Written Contract**

While we are not suggesting the use of a contract as a risk management technique, one should consult local laws that govern contracting, especially in terms of consumer rights. If a contract is employed, the following are some of the elements to be considered for inclusion.

- Name of helper and client
- A preliminary schedule of sessions
- A date when sessions will begin
- A statement of goals
- A description of the model, techniques, and strategies to be used
- A description of potential negative effects of treatment
- A description of alternatives techniques that might be employed, along with a willingness to assist the client to find these alternatives
- Fee structure and payment schedule
- Statement regarding fee policy for missed appointments, telephone contacts, etc.
- A statement regarding the limits of confidentiality
- A statement of “no guarantee” of success and invitation regarding freedom to renegotiate the terms of the contract at any time.
- Signatures that identify client understanding and acceptance.

(Adapted from Bennett, Bryant, VandenBos, & Greenwood, 1990)
hand. A fundamental principle to which all professional groups subscribe and one that will be more fully discussed in Chapter 2 is that a helper must be aware of the limitations of his/her professional competencies and not exceed those limitations in the delivery of his or her services (see Chapter 9).

Helpers need to bring specialized knowledge and skills to the process of helping. Ethical helpers do not employ procedures or techniques for which they are not properly trained, nor do they extend their helping to those individuals whose problems are well beyond their scope of training and expertise.

When operating alone in our offices, with no faculty member or supervisor looking over our shoulder, our real desire to help the client before us may seduce us into trying new techniques or approaches or even attempting to help with problems that are beyond our training and our experience. Knowing the limits of our competence; being willing to seek ongoing training, supervision, consultation; or making a referral to another helper are all characteristic of an ethical helper (Parsons, 1995). This issue of competence will be discussed in greater detail in the next chapter (Chapter 2).

Case Illustration

We began the chapter with a brief introduction to Maria, a client seeking the assistance of the school social worker, Ms. Wicks. We will continue to follow the development of the helping encounter between Marie and Ms. Wicks throughout the upcoming chapters.

As you read the case illustration, try to identify the presence of the various concepts and important terms described within the chapter. Further, as you read the case, place yourself in the role of the helper and begin to identify the various concerns and areas of ethical consideration you might experience in that role.

Client: Hi. Are you Ms. Wicks? I'm Maria. Mr. Brady told me that I had to come talk with you.

Helper: Hi. Yes, I am Ms. Wicks (getting up to shake Marie’s hand). Why don’t you come in and have a seat? (Ms. Wicks makes a mental note about Maria’s appearance. Maria, while appearing annoyed, is a very attractive girl. She looks you in the eye as she speaks and appears self-confident. Maria’s manner of dress is somewhat seductive. Her skirt is very short and tight and her sweater has a very low neckline.)

MARIA: I don’t want to be here—I didn’t do anything.

MS. WICKS: You sound like you don’t want to be here, but you are here. Would you like to return to class?

MARIA: No way! He’s a jerk!

MS. WICKS: You certainly sound angry. Maria, I know you said you don’t want to be here, but since you are I would love to hear what happened and see if I could be of some help? We have 20 minutes before the next change of class. If you would like, maybe you could tell me what happened? Maybe in talking about it we could come up with a plan to make it better.

MARIA: I don’t like talking.
MS. WICKS: Well you don’t have to, it really is your choice. If you prefer you could spend the rest of the period in the career center or reviewing college brochures? But you do look and sound upset and I would like to help if I could.

MARIA: Let me just take a minute. Can I get a drink of water? I’ll be right back and I’ll tell you what happened.

MS. WICKS: (After Maria comes back). Well, how was that? Better? You know I really do understand it is a bit strange to talk to someone you don’t know. But, I’ve been able to meet and talk with a lot of the people here at school and it has been my experience that sometimes this has been very helpful. You may or may know but I am a social worker and I have been trained to help people problem solve. Do you have any questions about what I do here or what a social worker is?

MARIA: No, not really. You spoke with one of my friends who was having problems with his mom and dad. Did you see Jose Ramirez?

MS. WICKS: You know Maria one of the things I think is very important when I work with people is that I respect their privacy. In fact, when you and I talk about some things I will keep them in confidence. I mean, I won’t tell anyone about what we talk about without your permission. Now there are some exceptions to that—like if you tell me you are going to hurt yourself or try to hurt someone else then I can’t keep that secret. Your life is too important to me so I would want to get as many people as possible to help me keep you safe.

MARIA: Yeah, I know about confidentiality—I’ve gone to a shrink before.

MS. WICKS: Since we have a few more minutes maybe we could talk about getting together later today so that you could tell me what happened and maybe together we could decide if you and I could work on it? What do you think?

MARIA: Yeah, that’s cool. I have a report to give in my next class but then I have study hall after that. Could I come back then?

MS. WICKS: (Looking at her calendar). Yes, I’m free. That’s my lunch time. How about if we share a sandwich here in the office and get to know each other a bit better?

MARIA: Okay.

MS. WICKS: (Reaching in her desk). Here is a pass. So I’ll see you at 12:15. There’s the bell. Get back to your class—and give a great report! See you in a bit!

Reflections
1. Did you see any evidence of the creation of boundaries to this relationship?
2. Did Maria enact the role and responsibilities of a client, which were discussed within the chapter?
3. If you were the helper in this situation, how might have Maria’s appearance, style, or story impact your objectivity or ability to be an effective, ethical helper?
4. What do you think Ms. Wicks needs to consider as she prepares to continue to enact her role as an ethical helper, meeting with Maria at 12:15?
Cooperative Learning Exercise

The purpose of this chapter was not only to introduce you to the nature of the helping process, the roles to be played by both the client and the helper, and the unique ethical challenges to be confronted within this role of helper, but also to have you think about your own self in the role of helping. Being in touch with what you bring to the helping encounter is an essential first step to becoming an ethical and effective helper. Therefore, before proceeding to the next chapter, reflect on the following and discuss your reflections with a supervisor, colleague, or classmate.

1. Review your responses to this chapter’s exercises. Were you honest? Did you invest energy in responding? If not, why not? What might this suggest about your investment in becoming an effective, ethical helper?
2. What did you learn about yourself as a helper? What specific elements of helping—as presented within this chapter—excite you or concern you?
3. Which particular characteristics of the effective, ethical helper do you feel you possess most strongly, and which do you feel you need to focus on developing?
4. How might you approach the reading, the exercises, and the reflections in the next chapter to maximize your development as a more self-aware, ethical helper?

Summary

The Helping Process: A Blending of Art and Science
The complexity and dynamic nature of the helping process is infused with subjectivity, intuition, and confusion, rendering its facilitation as much of an art as a science. While a foundation of theory and research serves as the base for effective helping, the dynamic process is highly influenced by the personal application and artistry of the helper as he or she adapts technology and research findings to the unique characteristics of individual clients.

The Helping Process: The Meeting of Client and Helper
Like other social encounters, helping is marked by verbal exchanges and sharing of information. Unlike most social encounters, however, helping is one in which the focus is given to one member, the client.

Helping is a process by which one person, the helper, interacts with another in such a way so as to facilitate this other’s (i.e., the client’s) utilization of his or her resources as he or she moves toward some specific outcome.

The Role of the Client in the Process of Change
Ethics not only ensures clients’ rights but places corresponding responsibilities on them. Clients are expected to choose wisely, to make use of the information provided, and to assume control of their participation in the helping process. It is the client’s role to decide what he
The Role of the Helper in the Process of Change

The helper’s primary obligation is to respect the integrity and promote the welfare of the client. This is accomplished in part by (1) defining and maintaining a helping relationship (2) facilitating a helping alliance, and (3) facilitating the client’s movement toward some specific outcome.

IMPORTANT TERMS

- acceptance
- art
- assume control
- boundary violation
- client
- conditional valuing
- congruent
- contract
- competence
- defining and maintaining a helping relationship
- dynamic process
- emotional objectivity
- facilitative attitudes
- genuineness
- helper
- helping alliance
- helping relationship
- promote the welfare of the client
- science
- specific outcome
- use of the information
- warmth

SUGGESTED READINGS


