

TEARS, FEARS, TROUBLED OR JUST PLAIN MAD – HOW TO MANAGE CONVERSATIONS WITH EMOTIONAL JOB SEEKERS

Description of Listening Skills

<u>Utterance type</u>	<u>Definition</u>	<u>Examples</u>
Facilitator	Non-suggestive prompt to continue with an ongoing response.	“Ok” “Yes” “Uh-huh” ¹
Invitation	An open-ended request that the client recall information about the incident. Can be formulated as a statement, question, or imperative.	“Tell me everything that happened.” “Please say more about that.”
Cued invitation	A type of invitation which refocuses the client’s attention on details s/he mentioned and uses them as cues to prompt further free-recall of information.	“You mentioned [event action, object]. Please say more about that.” ²

Active Listening Formula

You are feeling _____ (fill in the blank in light of the feeling state you suspect underlies the client’s statement) because of _____ (fill in the blank in light of the reasons the client has identified are responsible for the feeling state).

Description of Situational Analysis

Below please find a description of Situational Analysis (SA) and steps you can follow.

How It Works

The objective of SA is to analyze situations that may result or have resulted in disappointing, unexpected, or undesirable outcomes. It is designed to teach you to pay particular attention to:

The *situation* - learning to focus on a specific event, describing it accurately, without interjecting subjective feelings.

The *interpretations* - meanings, assumptions, and explanations you

¹ “So he shamed you” (immediately after client said “and then he shamed me.”)

² “You mentioned [action]; then what happened?”

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had while in the situation (What happened? What did it mean? Why did it turn out the way it did?). By examining these, you can learn to interpret situations accurately. You begin to replace negative, irrelevant, or inaccurate perceptions with a relevant, accurate problem-focused perception specific to the event.

The *behaviors* you engaged in while responding to the interpretations - learning to replace the maladaptive behaviors in this specific event with more adaptive, problem-focused coping behaviors. Particularly, please engage in behaviors that are congruent with your own values.

The *actual outcome (AO)* of the event - learning to define behaviorally what actually happened as a consequence of the interpretations and behaviors.

The *desired outcome (DO)* - learning to define behaviorally what you really wanted to happen, behaviors that are congruent with your own values, and

Explaining in writing *how these interpretations and behaviors contributed to the actual outcome* - Why did you *not* get what you wanted? What changes were required in order to get the desired outcome that would be congruent with your values?

Steps

Step 1: Situational Description

In your own words describe what happened. Describe the sequence of events as if you were telling about a play: the curtain goes up, there is action. What did people do? What did they say? And then the situation ends - the curtain goes down. Do not include feelings, explanations or interpretations (that will come later) - just describe what happened, and do it concisely.

The focus of the SA should be a behavioral description of the possibility of an unsuccessful interaction or an unsuccessful interaction. Later, as you achieve success in handling earlier problematic situations, you can reflect more quickly upon what has been learned.

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Step 2: Old Situational Interpretations

In one or two sentences, state what this situation meant to you. How do you interpret it? Why did it happen the way it did? In his Theory of Personal Constructs, George Kelly (1955) stated over four decades ago that our behavior is influenced by our cognitive “constructions” of events. We are working on your learning to examine your “constructions” or interpretations of each situation - and then holding these interpretations up to external validation, through applying two essential criteria:

Is the interpretation **RELEVANT** to the specific situation?
Is it **ACCURATE**?

Step 3: Old Situational Behavior

What was your behavior during this situation: What did you do? What did you say? How did you say it?

Please examine your behavior and begin to assess its probable impact on the situation. This training involves keeping focused on behavior as opposed to explanations, theories, feelings, etc. As Skinner (1953) demonstrated, behavior is influenced by its consequences. However, we are generally unaware of this influence, or even of the consequences of the behavior. Hence, changing your behavior is difficult unless you take a step back from the interpretations and really pay attention to the consequences. Begin to appreciate that you have a significant role in producing those consequences as well as changing your own behavior.

Step 4: Pinpointing the Actual Outcome (AO)

How did this situation turn out for you? - What was the actual outcome?

Here the goal is for you to specify exactly what happened, that is, to identify the consequence of your interpretations and actions.

Step 5: Pinpointing the Desired Outcome (DO)

How did you *want* the situation to turn out? What *is* your desired outcome? Which of your values could you activate through to obtain the DO?

Here, the goal is to identify behaviorally what you wanted to happen, and apply two criteria in determining your DO. Is the DO **REALISTIC** and is it **ATTAINABLE** while for you while acting congruently with your values?

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Please, list three or four of your values that can lead to a DO that would deploy behaviors congruent with those values.

Step 6: Contrasting the DO and the AO. What new interpretation should I apply to the situation?

“Did you get what you wanted?” The goal here is to compare the actual with the desired outcome. This is the first step in getting you to consider the consequences of your behaviors and cognitions and how you must change in order to achieve more desirable consequences, i.e., to avoid aversive consequences and obtain positive reinforcement.

In order to understand why you did not get what you desired let’s go through the situation and examine your old interpretations.

Let’s go back and look at your first interpretation. Is this interpretation RELEVANT? Is it ACCURATE? Does it help you get your desired outcome? Does it contribute in any way to your getting what you want?

How does the old interpretation need to be changed?

Discard old irrelevant or inaccurate interpretations and replace with relevant, accurate new interpretation that will contribute to your DO.

Step (7): Identifying the New Behaviors

What new behaviors should I apply to the situation in light of my values and the new interpretation(s)?

Now let’s look at your behavior. Did your behavior contribute to your getting your desired outcome? Please find the connection between the original interpretations and your subsequent behavior. You will see here how inaccurate and irrelevant interpretations can program consequent inappropriate behavior.

Given the revised interpretations, please revise the behaviors in favor of those that are more contributory to getting the desired outcome and which follow logically from accurate and relevant interpretations, and the values that seem best to activate through.

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So if your desired outcome (based on your values) is _____, and your new interpretation is _____, what can you do that will help you get what you want so that the behaviors will be congruent with your values? List four new behaviors that can occur before the end of the day so that you can act congruently with your values and the new interpretation.

Situational Analysis Practice Form

Here's a sheet for the different steps that you can fill in. Remember: in describing the situation, tell it as if you were telling about a play you saw, just what happened. If you need further definition, try reviewing the explanations above.

1. SITUATION:

2. OLD INTERPRETATION:

3. OLD BEHAVIOR:

4. ACTUAL RESULT:

5. DESIRED OUTCOME:

6. NEW INTERPRETATION:

7. NEW BEHAVIOR:

Andy Benjamin, J.D., Ph.D., ABPP
Clinical Professor of Psychology & Affiliate Professor of Law
Director, Parenting Evaluation/Training Program
University of Washington
gahb54@u.washington.edu