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## PREFACE

My interest in training helpers started with my first course in helping skills in my first year of graduate training. The course changed the direction of my life, giving me confidence in helping others, and I have been teaching helping skills since that time.

When I first taught helping skills courses, I felt frustrated in trying to find the right textbook that embodied my philosophy of helping and addressed the needs of my students. Few, if any, helping skills texts integrate the importance of affect, cognition, and behavior in the process of change. Some texts concentrate on feelings while disregarding the role of challenge and action in facilitating critical life changes, whereas others highlight insight at the expense of affective exploration and behavior change. Several popular texts focus solely on a problem-solving approach, which neglects the critical role of affect in helping clients express and understand problems in their lives. Other books do not provide the crucial theoretical and empirical foundation for the helping skills. And yet other books do not stress self-awareness and clinical intuition and the need to conceptualize clients. To address these limitations, I used knowledge garnered from my experiences as a student, teacher, counselor, supervisor, and researcher to write a book about helping skills focused on exploring feelings and thoughts, gaining new insights about problems, and moving toward positive behavior changes, all within the context of theory, empathy, self-awareness, clinical intuition, and case conceptualization.

## **BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE THREE-STAGE MODEL**

This text introduces an integrated model that is grounded in practice, theory, and research. Grounding the model in practice and theory is important in order to take advantage of the work of accomplished clinicians and theoreticians who have articulated a rich theoretical knowledge base. Rogers, Freud, Bowlby, M. Erikson, Mahler, Skinner, Ellis, Beck, and others have provided brilliant insights into the nature of human beings, the mechanisms of change in counseling and therapy, and the techniques for assisting individuals to achieve their potential and accomplish their goals. The three-stage model is grounded in the contributions of these sage theorists, and readers are introduced to the salient aspects of their work.

The three stages of this model are exploration, insight, and action. The exploration stage is based on client-centered theory (e.g., Rogers, 1942, 1951, 1957, 1959). Psychoanalytic and interpersonal theories (e.g., Freud, 1940/1949; Teyber, 2006; Yalom, 1980) form the foundation for the insight stage. The action stage is based on behavioral theories (e.g., Goldfried & Davison, 1994; Kazdin, 2013; Watson & Tharp, 2006). I integrate these major theories into this three-stage model because all have proven to be effective in helping clients (see Wampold & Imel, 2015). To me, sequencing the theories is more important than choosing a single theory.

The helping process can be conceptualized as involving moment-by-moment interaction sequences (Hill, 1992). Helpers develop intentions for how they want to help clients. These intentions are based on what they know about clients and what they hope to accomplish with clients at a given time. With these intentions in mind, helpers select verbal and nonverbal skills with which to intervene. In turn, clients react to the interventions in ways that influence how they then choose to behave with helpers. Thus, helping involves not only the overt behaviors but also the cognitive processes of helpers (i.e., intentions) and clients (i.e., reactions). Awareness of intentions assists helpers in selecting effective interventions. In addition, attention to the clients' reactions to the interventions can aid helpers in planning future interventions.

## **GOALS FOR THIS BOOK**

I have several goals for this book. After reading it, students should be able to articulate the principles of the integrated three-stage model of helping as well as the theoretical and research foundations underlying this model. They should demonstrate an understanding of the interactional sequences of helping, including the intentions that helpers have for interventions with clients, the helping skills that are commensurate with these intentions, the possible reactions and behaviors demonstrated by clients, and the means through which helpers evaluate the interventions used. In addition, readers

should gain a better understanding of themselves in relation to becoming helpers, including their thoughts about helping as well as their strengths and areas for continued growth. Finally, I hope to instill enthusiasm for the process of helping others—an enterprise that can provide countless challenges and rewards.

### **TARGET AUDIENCE FOR THIS BOOK**

This book has been used extensively in both undergraduate- and graduate-level classes. The majority of students at the undergraduate level are in psychology or education classes, and most go on to careers in mental health professions (e.g., social work, psychology), medical professions (e.g., doctors, nurses, dentists), law, business, and clergy. At the doctoral level, most are in master's or doctoral programs in counseling or clinical psychology or social work. The book has also been used in training peer counselors and medical residents, and it has been translated and used widely around the world, so it can be adapted to many situations, cultures, and careers. Many of my students have said that everyone should learn the skills (especially the exploration skills) to have better interpersonal relationships, so they are not just skills used in helping settings. Because we know that most people seek help first from friends, family, and clergy, it seems important to teach these skills widely.

When using the book for master's, doctoral, or medical students, I recommend supplementing it with other primary readings. In this way, students can gain more in-depth knowledge about the theories and applications. I also strongly recommend that students get involved in their own personal therapy to learn more about themselves, which in turn can help them better help others.

### **WHAT THIS TEXT DOES NOT PROVIDE**

It seems necessary to clarify the focus of this book by also indicating what this text does not provide. It is beyond the scope of this book to provide information about counseling children, families, or clients who have serious emotional or psychological difficulties. Although the helping skills taught in this book are crucial and form the foundation for work with all these groups, helpers will need much more extensive and specialized training before they will be qualified to work in those contexts.

Furthermore, I do not address the diagnosis of psychological problems or identify characteristics of psychopathology, which are two important topics that require extensive additional training. I encourage helpers to pursue additional training in assessment and psychopathology after developing a working knowledge of basic helping skills. I believe that all helpers, even those working with healthy populations, should be able to recognize serious psychological disorders. This level of knowledge aids helpers in making



appropriate referrals and working only with clients whom they have been trained to assist.

## **CHANGES IN THE FIFTH EDITION**

I continue to modify the model as I teach and do research on helping skills. I have also obtained extensive feedback from students about what they find helpful. The model feels like a living thing because of how I continually find ways to improve it. The fifth edition of this book differs from the first four editions in several ways:

- I have included more information on case conceptualization in the integration chapters for the exploration, insight, and action stages to emphasize that helpers need to conceptualize client dynamics before deciding which interventions to use (Chapters 9, 14, and 17).
- I have updated examples to be more inclusive of a wider range of helpers and clients. Note that all examples in the book either are based on real people (with names changed to protect their identities) or are completely fictitious.
- I have provided more coverage of culture. Although there is not much research specifically related to culture and individual helping skills, we know a lot in general about culture and its influence on people, so I tried to incorporate more of this.
- I have rewritten the chapters on self-awareness and cultural awareness (Chapters 3 and 4).
- The section on ethics has been moved to Chapter 1 so that students learn about ethics as early in the course as possible.
- The Emotions Word Checklist in Chapter 8 has been completely reworked to make it more user-friendly and up-to-date.
- In each of the summary chapters about integrating the skills of the three stages (i.e., Chapters 9, 14, and 17), I have provided more coping strategies for managing specific difficulties.
- The chapter on attending (Chapter 6) has been changed to highlight more that these are skills for providing support.
- The chapter on skills for facilitating insight (Chapter 12) has been changed to highlight more that these are interpretive skills (because both challenges and immediacy are also used to facilitate insight gains).
- I have updated references throughout and added more current empirical evidence.
- I have tried to be responsive to student feedback.

## RESOURCES

As with the previous editions, this fifth edition of *Helping Skills* offers a web-based “Instructor and Student Resource Guide” (<http://pubs.apa.org/books/supp/hill5>), the student portion of which features more than a dozen web forms (in downloadable PDFs) that are referred to throughout this text to assist students in evaluating their helping skills and helper–client sessions. The website also includes an Emotion Words Checklist—a downloadable version of this edition’s Exhibit 8.2 (see Chapter 8)—that students have found helpful to have handy in a printed format for easy reference during the exploration stage of a helper–client relationship. In addition, the student resources section of the *Helping Skills* website includes downloadable versions of the labs for various chapters, as well as practice exercises for each of the skills chapters of the book.

In addition, three DVDs are available to demonstrate the model. *Helping Skills in Practice: A Three-Stage Model* was created to illustrate the three stages of working with a client struggling with concerns related to childhood, eating, and self-esteem. *Dream Work in Practice* was created to illustrate the three stages with a client who had a troubling recurrent dream. *Meaning in Life: A Case Study* was created to illustrate how to work with meaning in life from the perspective of the three-stage model. All three DVDs are available from the American Psychological Association (<https://www.apa.org/pubs/videos/index>).

Finally, I sought to write a book that both supports students’ development as helpers and provides challenges to facilitate the development of helping skills. Becoming an effective helper is an exciting and challenging process. For some, this undertaking can be life-changing. Many students are fascinated by the process of becoming helpers, and they pose thoughtful questions as they struggle to learn the skills, develop confidence in their ability to assist others, and learn about themselves. Because the focus of this book is on helpers (not clients), I pose many questions that relate to the helpers’ development and concomitant feelings and thoughts.