

Review Questions

1. What competencies are required for becoming an effective psychologist?

Answer

The competencies which are required for becoming an effective psychologist fall into three broad sections:

- (i) General Skills: These skills are generic in nature and are needed by all psychologists irrespective of their field of specialisation. These skills are essential for all professional psychologists, whether they are working in the field of clinical and health psychology, industrial/organisational, social, educational, or in environmental settings, or are acting as consultants. These skills include personal as well as intellectual skills. It is expected that it will not be proper to provide any form of professional training (in clinical or organisational fields) to students who do not possess these skills.
- (ii) Observational Skills: A great deal of what psychologists as researchers and practitioners do in the field is to pay attention, watch and listen carefully. They use all the senses, noticing what is seen, heard, smelt, tasted, or touched. A psychologist, thus, is like an instrument that absorbs all sources of information from the environment.
- (iii) Specific Skills: These skills are core/basic to the field of psychological service. For example, psychologists working in clinical settings need to be trained in various techniques of therapeutic interventions, psychological assessment, and counselling. Similarly, organisational psychologists working in the organisational context need to have skills in assessment, facilitation and consultation, behavioural skills to bring about individual, group, team and organisational development besides research skills, etc. Though, specific skills and competencies are required for a very specialised professional functioning, nonetheless, all skill sets do overlap quite a bit.

2. What are the generic skills needed by all psychologists?

Answer

The list of generic skills needed by all psychologists are:

- (i) Interpersonal Skills: ability to listen and be empathic, to develop respect for/interest in others cultures, experiences, values, points of view, goals and desires, fears, openness to receive feedback, etc. These skills are expressed verbally and/or non-verbally.
- (ii) Cognitive Skills: ability to solve problems, engage in critical thinking and organised

reasoning, and having intellectual curiosity and flexibility.

(iii) Affective Skills: emotional control and balance, tolerance/understanding of interpersonal conflict, tolerance of ambiguity and uncertainty.

(iv) Personality/Attitude: desire to help others, openness to new ideas, honesty/integrity/value ethical behaviour, personal courage.

(v) Expressive Skills: ability to communicate one's ideas, feelings and information in verbal, non-verbal, and written forms.

(vi) Reflective Skills: ability to examine and consider one's own motives, attitudes, behaviours and ability to be sensitive to one's own behaviour or others.

(vii) Personal Skills: personal organisation, personal hygiene, time management, and appropriate dress

3. Define communication. Which component of the communication process is most important? Justify your answer with relevant examples.

Answer

Communication is a process that helps in transmitting meaning from one person to another. It is a conscious or unconscious, intentional or unintentional process in which feelings and ideas are expressed as verbal and/or non-verbal messages that are sent, received, and comprehended.

One important component of communication is speaking with the use of language. Language involves use of symbols which package meaning within them. To be effective, a communicator must know how to use language appropriately. Because language is symbolic, it is necessary to be as clear and precise as possible when using words. Communication takes place within a context. So one needs to consider the other's frame of reference, that is, the context used by the sender to say something. Also whether s/he shares your interpretation. If not, it is important to adjust your vocabulary level and choice of words to fit the level of the listener. Remember that slang expressions, words unique to a culture or region, and euphemism can sometimes become obstacles in good communication.

4. Describe the set of competencies that must be kept in mind while administering a psychological test.

Answer

The set of competencies that must be kept in mind while administering a psychological test are as follows:

(i) Ability to select and implement multiple methods and means of evaluation in ways that are responsive to, and respectful of diverse individuals, couples, families, and groups.

(ii) Ability to utilise systematic approaches to gather data required for taking decisions.

(iii) Knowledge of psychometric issues and bases of assessment methods.

(iv) Knowledge of issues related to integration of different data sources.

- (v) Ability to integrate assessment data from different sources for diagnostic purposes.
- (vi) Ability to formulate and apply diagnoses; to understand strengths and limitations of current diagnostic approaches.
- (vii) Capacity for effective use of supervision to implement and enhance skills

5. What is the typical format of a counselling interview?

Answer

The format of a counselling interview is as follows:

- (i) Opening of the Interview: The opening of interview involves establishing rapport between two communicators. The purpose is to make the interviewee comfortable. Generally, the interviewer starts the conversation and does most of the talking at the outset. This serves two functions, i.e. it establishes the goal of interview, and gives the interviewee time to become comfortable with the situation and the interviewer.
- (ii) Body of the Interview: The body of the interview is the heart of the process. In this stage, the interviewer asks questions in an attempt to generate information and data that are required for the purpose.
- (iii) Sequence of Questions: To accomplish the purpose of an interview, the interviewer prepares a set of questions, also called a schedule, for different domains, or categories s/he wants to cover. To do this, the interviewer must first decide on the domains/categories under which information is to be generated. For example, in the questions used in job interview, the interviewer selected several categories such as nature of the organisation last worked for, satisfaction with the past job, views on product, etc. These categories and the questions within them are framed ranging from easy-to-answer to difficult-to-answer. Questions are also formulated to assess facts as well as subjective assessment.

6. What do you understand by the term counselling? Explain the characteristics of an effective counsellor.

Answer

Counselling provides a system for planning the interview, analysing the counsellor's and client's behaviour, and determining the developmental impact on the client. In this section, we will discuss skills, concepts, and methods that are designed to help develop concrete competencies. A counsellor is most often interested in building an understanding of the clients problem by focusing on what understanding the client has of her/his problem and how s/he feels about it. The actual or objective facts of the problems are considered less important, and it is considered more important to work on the feelings and their acknowledgement by the clients. The focus is more on the person and how s/he defines the problem.

The following elements about counselling are common to the major theoretical approaches to counselling:

- (i) Counselling involves responding to the feelings, thoughts, and actions of the clients.
- (ii) Counselling involves a basic acceptance of the client's perceptions and feelings, without using any evaluative standards.
- (iii) Confidentiality and privacy constitute essential ingredients in the counselling setting. Physical facilities that preserve this quality are important.
- (iv) Counselling is voluntary. It takes place when a client approaches a counsellor. A counsellor never uses any kind of coercion for obtaining information.
- (v) Counsellors and clients both transmit and receive verbal and non-verbal messages during the process. Therefore, awareness and sensitivity to the nature of the message is an important prerequisite for a counsellor's effectiveness.