PRACTICAL GUIDE

to

EMPLOYMENT COUNSELLING

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Contents

1. THE PURPOSE OF EMPLOYMENT COUNSELLING

The purpose of employment counselling is to help individuals (the Clients') come to terms with their feelings, to explore and clarify their options and to empower them to actually help themselves. It involves the counsellor in efforts to see things from the clients' position / point of view, by listening carefully, not only to what is said, but also how it is said. In Bosnia and Herzegovina Public Employment Service (PES) this means individual, customer focussed, work orientated, practical interviewing

When faced with job loss an individual places a whole range of demands on the counsellor. At a basic level it is a question of straightforward help in terms of information about the job market, or assistance in finding suitable vacancies and arranging interviews. Some coaching may be required in order to produce a CV or to prepare for interviews. Coaching, advising, and informing are all helping strategies. They become counselling skills when the Counsellor uses them with the primary intention of enabling the client to recognise their situation and do something about it, thus leaving the client in control and responsible for their own choices and actions.

Counselling is also a mechanism for building self-reliance in an individual by assisting them to make decisions and fulfil commitments.

Although counselling tends to require more skill, care and time than purely advising or telling, it can save the Counsellor time in the longer term, because having made their own decisions, the motivation and commitment of the client should be greater – in other words they take control of their own destiny

2. UNDERSTANDING THE EFFECTS OF JOB LOSS

Prolonged unemployment is for most people a profoundly corrosive experience undermining personality and destroying the capacity to work. It is also an experience to which some of the worst disadvantaged groups in society - the over fifties, the unskilled, disabled people, the mentally ill and in particular areas those from ethnic backgrounds are particularly vulnerable, and all are more vulnerable in high areas of unemployment.

Many others are also at risk. Employment is like a tide - when full it draws in almost all adult males and a high proportion of adult females. As it recedes those least attractive to employers tend to get stranded first.

If a recession deepens, others, many of whom will never have been unemployed before become stranded also. But unemployment is uneven, if in one area a man will find a job within a week or two of his old one, in another he will hunt fruitlessly for months with growing desperation.

Yet studies of unemployment both today and during the days of the Depression point overwhelmingly in the opposite direction. Unemployment has such inbuilt pressures that for all its faults and frustrations work is for most people vastly preferable. Unemployment has been shown to follow a distinct sequence.

SHOCK.............OPTIMISM.............PESSIMISM...........FATALISM

Unemployment has four main pressure areas:-

- **FINANCIAL**
- **RE-ORGANISATION OF DAILY LIFE**
- **DECLINING SELF RESPECT**
- **GETTING ANOTHER JOB**

FINANCIAL "The average person that is faced with unemployment is cushioned for six months. If the person obtains work during that period s/he leaves the unemployed queue with the impression that it's not so bad after all. But once you have been on the dole for a year the only financial support is the unemployment benefit entitlement and the harsh reality of unemployment hits hard. Clothes are beginning to wear out; things need replacing in the house...."

RE-ORGANISATION OF DAILY LIFE. Work provides for most people the pattern within which their lives are lived. When this pattern is lost the responsibility for organising their daily existence is thrown upon the individual. The problem is small one initially but becomes progressively more difficult.

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"At first it feels marvellous, it's as though you've left the rat race, you're not in it anymore and you can look at it and wonder why people bother. You look at them setting off in the morning at 7.30 and coming back at night at 5.30 and you think `why bother'. The first few days you sit at home and relax and it's like a holiday".

Once this phase passes the process of looking for work - writing letters, waiting for interviews, chasing possibilities and rumours takes time and the routine of signing on and drawing dole once a week becomes an important occasion. Jobs that have been waiting for years - things we always meant to do, eventually all get done but there comes a time when there's nothing more to do unless you make the absurd decision to undo what you've just done. Besides even `do it yourself' decorating and gardening costs money for materials.

Financially things have become harder but boredom is the greater evil and you have to make a conscious effort to stop yourself going downhill, marriages start to crack and there begins the next stage.

DECLINING SELF RESPECT The fact that work is still regarded as a social and moral duty and prolonged unemployment can bring social disapproval on all the family sometimes even the children. The mounting rejections sap self esteem even from those fortunate to enjoy unwavering support from their families. Cumulative rejection and social disapproval can be a demoralising combination.

GETTING ANOTHER JOB The final pressure comes from the fact that the longer unemployment is prolonged the less attractive one is to a potential employer. These continued failures in the world of work will influence their own assessments of themselves and further undermine their morale.

The end of the process is a true change in the personality. A man becomes institutionalised in unemployment as do other men in hospitals or prisons. Consciously he wants to get out, at a deeper level he doesn't. He has received too many rejections, has come to accept he's a failure and at this deeper level he prefers not to be disturbed. This is the stage of final defeat; it is the ruin of man[1].

[1] Adapted from "The Effects of Prolonged Unemployment" by Richard Harrison, Dept. of Employment 1976

Motivation

It is inevitable that a clients' motivation suffers and varies when unemployed. A client will not be able to fulfil their needs. Human needs can be organised in a progressive hierarchy, physiological needs being the most basic and a need for self-realisation the highest.[2] Each level of need is dominant until satisfied. A need which has been satisfied no longer motivates a person.

SELF ACTUALISATION. The need to become everything one is capable of becoming. Fulfilment of personal potential

ESTEEM. Need for self-respect and the respect of others; for competence, independence, self-confidence and prestige.

BELONGING. Need to relate meaningfully to others; friendship, affection, belonging to a group.

SAFETY Need for physical and psychological safety and security; shelter and freedom from attack either physical or on the personality.

PHYSIOLOGICAL Need for food, water, air etc; necessary to keep body in a state of equilibrium; survival.

Only when a lower need has been satisfied can the next highest become dominant and the individual's interest turned towards satisfying it. For example the starving person will, ignoring safety needs, take great risks to satisfy their hunger. Once this is achieved, the need to protect themselves from danger takes priority. At the highest level as soon as one challenge is met, the self-actualising individual must set out in pursuit or a new goal.

It is suggested that only an unsatisfied need can motivate human behaviour; the dominant need being the prime motivator. There is not necessarily a straightforward progression from lower to higher needs. Circumstances may force someone to direct their energies towards fulfilling lower level needs which have for some time been satisfied; they forget the higher dominant needs.

In the work situation, the principle derived from this theory is that:-

- All needs must be considered to motivate people to work or work harder
- Any attempt to motivate by means of incentives relevant to needs of a level higher or lower than that which is dominant is likely to fail.
- Individuals vary so attempts to motivate should be directed at dominant needs of individuals not groups.

[2] "Hierarchy of Needs" Abraham Maslow Humanistic psychologist

3. BOUNDARIES OF EMPLOYMENT COUNSELLING

All people in a counselling role need to recognise how far they can progress in a counselling relationship. The practice of recognising professional limitations takes place all the time. Just as a Doctor will refer a patient to the appropriate medical specialist so the counsellor may need to refer the client to another source of help at a certain stage in the counselling relationship.

Counsellors owe it to themselves and their clients to recognise and accept the limitations of their role as a counsellor. It is also essential that clients have a clear understanding as to what they may or may not expect from the counsellor. Ultimately, the counsellor, by knowing his / her responsibilities and limits and being able to communicate these in a positive way to clients will enhance the relationship.

One of the most crucial issues is to refrain from feeling responsible for a clients' life, well-being or future. Whilst it is helpful to care about each person, it is not possible to take responsibility for everything. It is vital to know how much responsibility a counsellor should take, and be able to control their involvement appropriately. Counsellors need to use informed discretion, and consulting with counsellor colleagues often helps keep matters in perspective.

In summary it is essential that counsellors are:

- Clear about their roles and responsibilities
- Accept the limits of their role and capabilities
- Let clients know what they can expect from the counselling process
- Let clients make their own decisions

Each Interview should be unique and focussed on the reality of the Clients needs

However the Employment Counsellor is not

- A Social Workers
- A Teachers
- A psychiatrists
- A psychologists
- A Debt Advisors
- A substance abuse Counsellors
- "A shoulder to cry on"
- Wanting the client to create a dependence on counsellor to find a job

4. ESSENTIAL VALUES IN EMPLOYMENT COUNSELLING

Employment counsellors are more effective using a “person centred” approach to counselling and there are three essential qualities necessary in using this approach:

EMPATHETIC UNDERSTANDING

To show “empathy” means to understand somebody from their point of view, to see the world as they see it. Because each individual is unique they are therefore likely to have unique views of their own world. To be “empathetic” (to show “empathy”) involves counsellors putting aside their view of the world and trying to experience how other clients’ see theirs.

It can of course be very difficult to show empathy particularly when clients are very different from the counsellor, perhaps in terms of sex, age, or background. But it can also be difficult when clients are very similar to the counsellor. In such circumstances, there is a danger of thinking they will hold the same views and values and this can trap the counsellor into “muddling” their lives with the lives of the client.

Before counsellors can communicate empathy they first need to try to understand what the other person is experiencing and feeling, and then put their understanding into words. It is important for the counsellor to clarify their own perceptions, beliefs and values so that these do not become “muddled” with those of the client. Counsellors then need the ability to communicate their understanding, either in their body language or using the skills of active listening. By subtly ‘mirroring’ the other person’s posture or tone of voice they can begin to communicate empathy. By paraphrasing and reflecting feelings they show they are listening and understanding the client. If they are slightly wrong in their understanding, active listening gives the client the opportunity to correct the situation, and possibly in doing so clarify for themselves what they are feeling.

In summary Empathy is:

- **sending a message of respect** – the counsellor is hearing what the client is saying; it is worth listening to; they are paying attention; they are understanding

- **helping to build rapport** – the counsellor is making an effort to understand what the client is saying and feeling

- **Stimulating exploration** – by understanding the client’s experience, the counsellor encourages the client to move on.

- **Checking understanding –**this ensures that the counsellor indeed understands what the client is saying

ACCEPTANCE

Acceptance can be best described as "an attitude or a moral quality, and is communicated by the way the counsellor gives the client complete attention; strives to understand them and believes in their potential for self-responsibility.

It means being able to make a caring response, without feeling the need to criticise, make judgements or dispute what the other person is saying.

Acceptance is extremely important because clients need to explore themselves and their situations openly. This can be a frightening and even painful experience, and clients can do this only if they experience the counsellor as being "warm" towards them, and non-judgmental

Counsellors may be more experienced in giving "non-accepting" responses, which they do for a variety of reasons, sometimes because they want to help the other person feel "better" about the situation. Alternatively, counsellors may see themselves as teacher or adviser, and fall into the trap of giving opinions, telling the client how they should or should not feel or behave.

EXAMPLE

Client: "I don't think I really want to attend any training courses as they are a complete waste of time and certainly won't help me get a job."

3 Non-accepting Responses:

Counsellor – not accepting the client's point of view
"You'll enjoy it when you get there and it will do you good".

Counsellor ignores feelings expressed by the client and is starting to challenge
"Why do you think it's a waste of time?

Counsellor suggesting a solution before understanding the problem
"If you're worried about it I can arrange a visit for you first".

Other ways in which non-acceptance can be shown are:

Impatience	- "Surely you can understand that….."
Cynicism	- "I wish I had your choice……"
Reassuring	- "You don't want to think like that."
Interpreting	- "You're not really angry, you're actually very hurt…"
Preaching	- "Don't you think you should…?"
Also….	- "Yes, but…" "If I were you…." "Why?"

Accepting Response:

"So you're not keen on attending the training course because you feel it won't get you anywhere?

Demonstrates that the Counsellor has heard and understood and encourages the client to go on talking

The above example shows that an accepting response is very similar to an empathetic response in that it uses the same skills of paraphrasing and reflecting feelings.

Accepting responses are neutral in that they do not take sides; they accept the client's right to their feelings without necessarily agreeing with them. However, accepting does not mean agreeing with everything the client is saying. This is a mistake some individuals make - thinking that to be a counsellor they should be value-free.

Being able to accept each person as an individual, and communicating this to the client, will start to build a relationship in which the client feels safe to explore their situation. Having built a relationship, the counsellor may need to challenge behaviour, but only when they have earned the right to do so by first establishing rapport, credibility and trust. If clients feel sufficiently safe and accepted they may well make that challenge themselves.

In summary Acceptance is:

- Being non-judgemental – the counsellors role is not to judge the client or the clients action. Of course, the counsellor may well feel that some of the clients actions are damaging, or that certain patterns of attitude and behaviour are hindering the client, but it is the client that needs to arrive at their own understanding of this and in their own way

- Being "for" the client – this does not mean that the counsellor agrees with the client. It means that the counsellor shows that they take the client seriously and care about the client in a non-sentimental way. It also means that the counsellor is prepared to challenge the words or actions of the client, or explore issues that the client may be uncomfortable or distressed by.

- Being friendly – Clients quite rightly expect professional conduct from a counsellor at all times, but they do not want a distant or cold counsellor. The counsellor has to find the right balance with the client and should express an appropriate and genuine level of warmth.

- Being understanding – a key part of the counsellors role is to understand what the client is saying and experiencing and just as importantly, to communicate that understanding. The skills of active listening are vital in conveying the message of acceptance.

- Assuming the goodwill of the client – clients may initially be reluctant to see a counsellor or may put up obstacles at various stages of the counselling process. The counsellor should however assume that the client has a genuine desire to improve their situation and should be prepared to try to work through any resistance.

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PROFFESIONALISM

Professionalism is very difficult to define and measure. To show empathy and acceptance requires a professional approach. If the counsellor is to demonstrate empathy, listening, open-mindedness and respect for the client, then it must be genuine – otherwise it is not really happening.
Building a relationship within the counselling setting is a 2-way process, and as the counsellor is trying to understand the client they at the same time have to try to understand the counsellor. This is going to be easier for them if the counsellor clearly appears to be sincere and genuine

Professionalism is communicated when Counsellors: avoid stereotyped role behaviours -this does not mean disclosing every thought in their head, but being aware of what is going on in their inner self and sharing it with the client if it is appropriate. For example, if a counsellor doesn't really understand what the client is saying but pretends to do so, they are being insincere and the client will at some stage realise it. As we experience life, we learn appropriate behaviour for different roles and situations. We may have learned what is appropriate behaviour for our "job role" which may not be appropriate in our role as a parent. We also learn to put on a "front" in some situations, either to impress others or to enable us to cope with difficult situations. Being genuine does not mean always being the same, but it does mean avoiding stereotyping our roles.

Counsellors must

- Remain open and non-defensive
- Are consistent and avoid discrepancies – between values and behaviour, and between thoughts and words – while remaining accepting
- Are willing to share themselves with clients if it seems helpful

In summary professionalism is:
Not being defensive – the counsellor when faced for example with criticism from a client will want to understand the reasons for the criticism and work through it, rather than retreat into the professional role. For example:

Client "I don't think we are really getting anywhere here. I keep telling you about my concerns for my future and you just put forward ideas which are not workable"

Counsellor 1 "Fair enough – perhaps you would rather see one of the other counsellors"

Counsellor 2 "Well, I don't just throw out ideas. The things I say are based on what you tell me. It's just that you are not doing anything about it. Things won't change until you take action "

Counsellor 3 "So you don't feel that coming here has helped. You have told me some difficult and distressing things and there has been no benefit"

Counsellors 1 and 2 have responded defensively. Counsellor 1 has just completely backed away from the client and Counsellor 2 has gone on the attack.

However, Counsellor 3 has focused on the stated feelings of the client and has indicated a willingness to explore the issues. It could be that something has gone wrong in the counselling sessions and Counsellor 3 is willing to look at that. Alternatively, it could be that the client has not accepted responsibility for actually making changes happen. Counsellor 3's response is also appropriate in that case.

USEFULNESS

It is essential that counselling is useful to clients. This may sound an obvious statement to make but the value of being useful requires a high degree of focus and concentration from the counsellor. It is the responsibility of the counsellor to ensure that the time with the client is well spent. To do this it is necessary for the counsellor to:

- be client focused – concentrate on what matters to the client
- be responsive and flexible – each client will respond differently to their counsellor and the counsellor will need to modify their approach and use their skills accordingly. There is no correct formula only a framework.
- be practical – the counsellors focus should be to help the client to plan and act for themselves
- be realistic – remember that the counsellor may not always be able to help. Whatever the reasons for this it is essential that counsellors are aware of the boundaries and their limitations

CLIENT RESPONSIBILITY

It is important to remember that the idea and value that lies at the core of the employment counselling process is that the client has both the responsibility and ability to make choices. It is a process of empowerment. What this means in terms of the counsellors attitude is best seen by pointing out that the clients are just that - clients not "patients" or "subjects". In the vast majority of cases clients will be as robust as most counsellors and have as much potential control over their lives as the rest of us. It is very rarely in the client's best interest for the counsellor to assume responsibility for doing things that in fact could, should and normally would be done by the client.

5. COUNSELLING ETHICS

Counselling is, of course governed by ethics. Nothing bound up with such personal and sensitive concerns and having such potential significance for individuals could afford not to be.

Such ethics must encompass:

Confidentiality – all aspects of the counselling relationship should be held in the strictest confidence. This includes the identity of the clients and also includes any notes that the counsellor may have made- which should be held securely and privately. Confidentiality continues to apply when counselling has ceased.

Basic Values – the basic values of counselling are respect, impartiality and integrity

Safety – Counsellors should take all reasonable steps to ensure that the client comes to no emotional, psychological or physical harm during counselling

Competence – Counsellors should take all reasonable steps to both monitor and develop their competences. This includes participating in available training and development activities.

Knowing personal limitations – Counsellors must be aware of and only work within their limitations and should be prepared to refer a client to an appropriate support.

Appropriateness – Counsellors should ensure that relationships with clients are maintained on an appropriate basis at all times

6. PREPARATION BEFORE THE COUNSELLING INTERVIEW

The setting / physical environment

Counsellors must ensure that the interviewing environment is right. There are many 'environmental' factors which could adversely affect the interview or add to any anxiety the client may be feeling, for example:

- interruptions by colleagues;
- telephone calls;
- background noise;
- poor layout of the room / furniture;
- uncomfortable temperature;
- poor lighting.

Counsellors should also ensure:

- there are clear signs inside and outside the building to let the client know where to go;
- there is an obvious reception point;
- clients are dealt with promptly - do not keep them waiting unnecessarily;
- clients have somewhere comfortable to sit if they have to wait - make sure they do not feel 'in the way' or exposed;
- ensure there are facilities available to meet the needs of clients' with disabilities, for example, appropriate versions of leaflets for clients' with visual impairment;
- there is something for clients to do while waiting, for example, have job advertisements available;
- writing materials are available if clients' need to fill in any forms before their interview.

Take particular account of the needs of clients with disabilities. For example, do they have access to the office? Do they need a private room? Will someone with a hearing impairment need an interpreter?

Privacy

Interviews will normally take place in an office shared with other counsellors. They may cover matters of a personal nature or subjects which clients may find upsetting or uncomfortable. Wherever possible, make a private interview room available for clients who ask for one or for sensitive interviews.

Information and equipment

It is important to have everything to hand that might be required at an interview

- Knowledge about services
- Labour Market Information
- Forms

- Informational documents
- Pens and Paper

Preparing properly for your interviews will help make sure you cover relevant issues and make best use of the time that you have available with clients.
Before each interview familiarise yourself with the client and try to determine what the starting point is. For example, find out about:

- their work goals;
- what they have done previously to find work;
- any previously identified barriers to employment;
- any health problems or disability;
- any additional requirements needed to aid communication, for example, someone with hearing impairment may need a private room or an interpreter;
- any action that they previously agreed to take; and
- any specifics that need to be covered/followed up.

Benefits of preparation

- Saves time during the interview, when time is important
- Provides ideas that can be raised during the interview
- Looks professional
- Can make client feel more comfortable
- Can identify potential problem areas and prepare appropriate strategies.

Don’t forget – to prepare yourself mentally and physically for each interview – your tenth client of the day will require the same level of expertise and commitment from you as the first client of the day

Make all your interviews efficient and effective, focused and concise. Take the minimum time needed to get the desired outcome. Structure your interviews to allow discussion of relevant issues. This means interviews with different client at different stages, will cover different issues. An interview structure which encourages automatic probing of a standard list of topics is wasteful and inefficient

Although discussions will vary depending upon the clients’ circumstances and the type of interview, the process is similar in most interviews. Good quality interviews are organised and purposeful and go through distinct stages.
The following guidance tells you more.

7. STAGES INVOLVED IN INTERVIEWING

THE INTERVIEW

OBJECTIVE

By the end of the interview with the help of the interviewer, the client will have diagnosed their strengths and weaknesses with respect to job search. They will have agreed the major barriers to their employment. They will understand which options available best meet their pattern of needs. Action will be confirmed including who does what and by when.

WHAT IS THE STRUCTURE?

Stage 1 **Introduction**

Stage 2 **Information Collection**

Stage 3 **Identification of Needs and Propositions to meet them**

Stage 4 **Consolidation and Action Planning**

WHY THIS STRUCTURE?

- It provides a framework which has evolved from a well established professional approach used extensively by many organisations.
- It is sufficiently flexible to incorporate different styles and approaches.
- It contains and builds on many existing skills.
- Needs based interviewing is relevant for much of our work. If however, the client does not agree a need, it is difficult to get commitment or handle objections. This structure can help in that situation.

AIMS OF EACH STAGE

Introduction - the process of gaining the acceptance of the client.
- To agree the purpose and agenda of the interview.
- To dispel any misunderstanding about the interview.
- To encourage an optimistic approach to the interview.
- To deal with any immediate fears/concerns.
- To help the client feel safe.

Information Collection - the process of finding out about the client and their current situation
- To find out more about what the client has been doing since becoming unemployed.
- To help clients diagnose and recognise their assets and liabilities with respect to employment opportunities or getting work.
- To find out more about what the client has been doing since becoming unemployed.
- To find out more about the client and their situation

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Identification of Needs and propositions to meet them - the process of developing appropriate strategies that will gain the clients commitment

- To agree with the client priority areas for action to improve their marketability
- To use relevant strategies to influence the client to choose from the menu
- To sell the benefits of any propositions
- To handle objections/queries
- To provide support and encouragement to clients during the decision making process.
- To encourage the view that clients can solve their own problems

Consolidation and Action Planning - the process of agreeing future action

- To confirm the decision which has been reached
- To agree who will do what by when.
- To commit to the action plan

8. STAGE 1- INTRODUCTION TO THE INTERVIEW

A good introduction is one that:

- builds rapport, credibility and trust
- develops common ground
- establishes a working relationship
- clarifies respective roles and agenda

BREAKING THE ICE

The first few minutes of most meetings are about Breaking the Ice. It is during this period that you start the process of building rapport, gaining credibility and adjusting to the client mood, personality and language.

BUILDING RAPPORT

This is all about getting the wavelength right. Clients may (and often do) feel anxious about you and worry about coming to our offices. Different personalities express their anxiety in different ways.

Reducing anxiety clears the way for both of you to function effectively and prevents assumptions clouding the meeting. However confident or trustworthy we know ourselves to be, we need to:-

- OBSERVE the client to see if they can give you any clue as to how they are feeling and therefore how you should react. Show interest and listen carefully to what is being said, communicate your desire to have a helpful interview.
- BE OPEN with the client. If you are being cagey or guarded, client will question your motives, so try to be as open and sincere as you are asking (and expecting) them to be.
- AVOID BEING JUDGEMENTAL. First impressions can be powerful but there could be valid reasons why the client is aggressive, withdrawn, unkempt etc. Your concern should be to find out why that is, so you can best help that individual through the many options open to you.

COMMON GROUND

Think of when you first meet a stranger, say at a friend's party. Initially you instinctively attempt to discover something that is common between you to develop and continue a discussion. If during the first few minutes you fail to discover some form of common ground the conversation often ends with any excuse like "well I must go and see ...." or you use some other form of disentangling mechanism. It is during the ice-breaking part of an interview that common ground may be discovered, particularly personal and environmental common ground. You may for example, discover that you travel the same route - it could be anything. Establishing common ground motivates individuals to develop discussions. During these first few minutes you and the client will be looking for hooks on which to hang the interview. Later on in the interview the common ground that has been established may be crucial in helping overcome disagreements.

ESTABLISHING A WORKING RELATIONSHIP

Whatever you do at the introductory stage it is important that both you and the client can see the benefits in having a working relationship. These benefits will rely on mutual respect and a level of trust between you. Clients need to feel that you are competent and look to you to display credibility. This is a two way process. A good introduction will allow the client to display their confidence and credibility to you. The ice-breaking period will end with either you or the client getting on with the interview. Do not worry if the client pre-empts you - some people prefer to lead - in fact some people only feel safe when they can feel in control.

RESPECTIVE ROLES AND THE AGENDA

Having a clear agenda and setting it out early on in the meeting is a sign of professionalism and confidence. It allows the client to be certain about your role, what you want and how the interview will run. This builds credibility and trust, reducing ambiguity and anxiety. Checking out whether the client wants to add to, or change, the agenda will ensure their attention and will deal with any issues which might be causing unspoken frustration.

One method of doing this is by a process known as the 3 point agenda. It has often been referred to as the "me, you and us process". For example in an interview with a client the 3 point agenda could be:-

First Point	**Me**	“I would like to introduce myself and explain my role”
Second Point	**You**	“If you would tell me about yourself and what you would like from this interview”
Third Point	**Us**	“Together we could work towards finding a solution to present situation”

Example

Hello my name is Peter Woods, please take a seat. I see this is the first time at the office did you have any problems it?.....My role is to help you get back to work. To do this you will need to answer questions about yourself and your employment history. This will take about 15 minutes. To make sure I don’t miss anything important I would like to write down the main points, all information will be confidential. Is that ok?....I would like you to be as open and honest as possible. Together we will then work on a plan to get you back to work. How do you feel about that?

9. STAGE 2 - INFORMATION COLLECTION

Stage 2 of the interview involves gathering enough information of the RIGHT KIND about the client and the situation in order to arrive at an informed judgement about the barriers to finding work for that individual and how he/she can best overcome them.

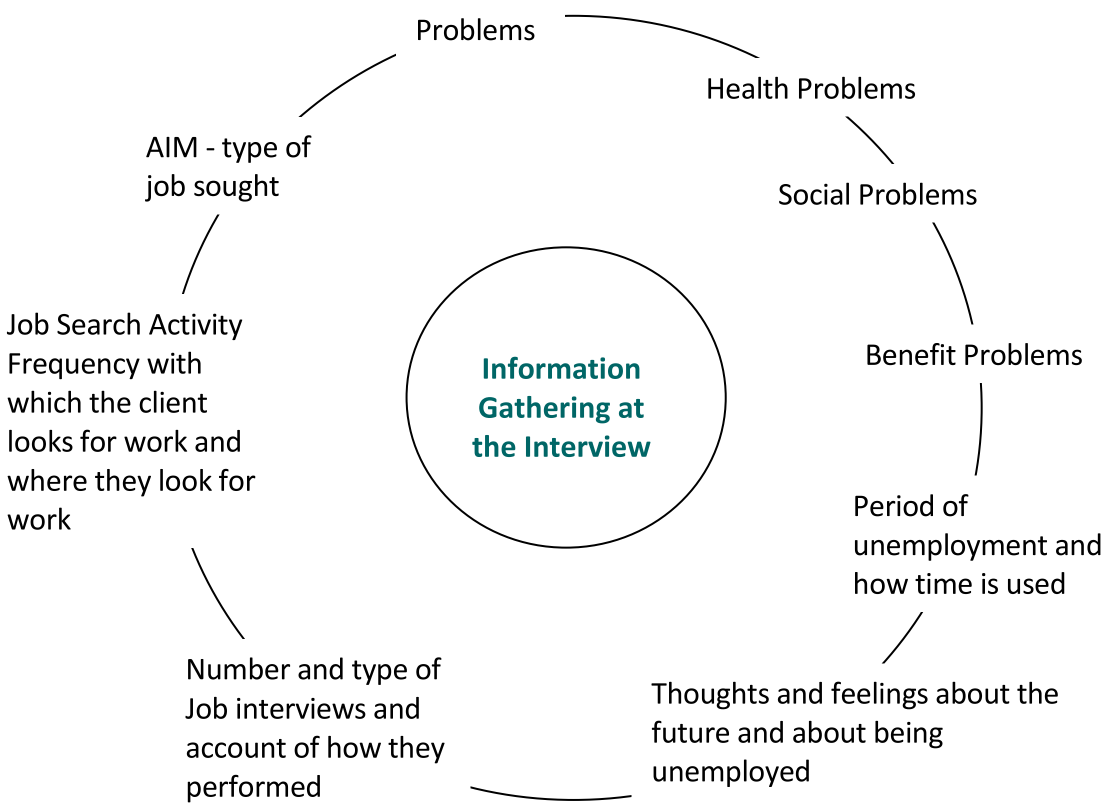
This part of the interview is concerned with helping clients to look at their current job search problems so that later you can guide them towards the menu provision which best meets their needs. The main danger to avoid is the temptation to offer advice too soon before the problem has been adequately explored by both parties. This is important because if you offer an item too soon, you may miss an alternative which would help the client more effectively. Take as an example, a client identified to have problems selling him/herself at interview. Job Search training might be suggested, but if the problem is complicated by benefit/social problems unidentified at the interview, the client will not turn up for the training.

THE TOPICS TO EXPLORE

The key period to explore in diagnosing the relevant menu item will be the period since becoming unemployed but you will also need to look at the period before employment.

SINCE UNEMPLYMENT:

The areas below are likely to be fruitful in examining the problems. Take your lead from the client. Talk about what he/she wants to talk about first. Briefly check any areas not mentioned - just be sure these are clear of problems.



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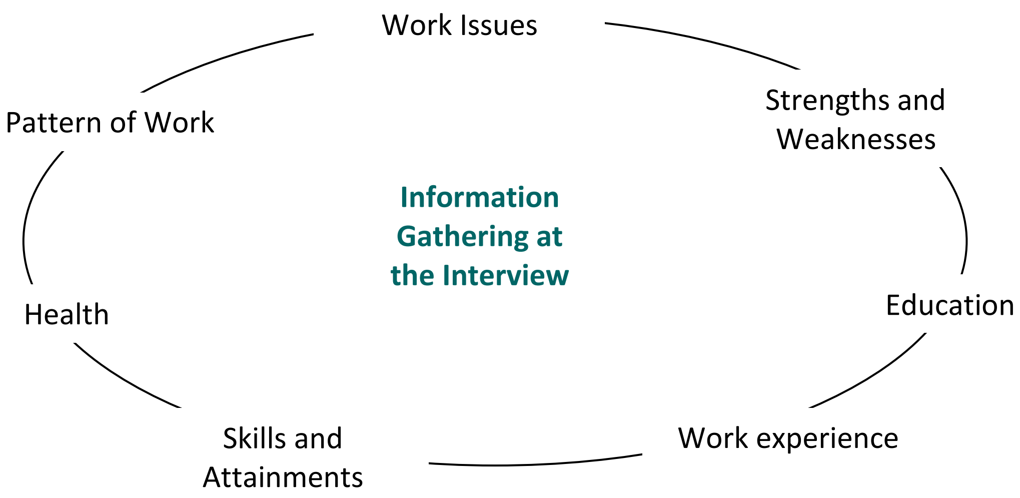
BEFORE UNEMPLOYMENT:

The work history, (the attainments, the experience and skills) which the client has to offer will not always need to be explored in depth. Sometimes it may be clear that the information collected indicates an immediate referral and the interview need not look in depth at the period before unemployment.

In other cases you may want to briefly get an outline of the pattern of the work record to see whether Employment Training could help a client's particular employment problems by, for example, providing current reference or up to date training in new skills. If you are considering the possibility of making a speculative submission, it is a good idea for you and the client to have a clear understanding of the client's selling points and strengths to help you to interest an employer and to help the client do well at the interview.



Summarise and agree with the client what constitutes the main barriers to successful job search which needs to be overcome.

Remember that detailed discussion could be wasted breath if the client's needs are not, fully explored, agreed and summarised before attempting to influence.

POSSIBLE AREAS TO EXPLORE

PAST work history, qualifications/training, skills

PRESENT Job search activity, how long unemployed, use of time (e.g. hobbies), health, benefits, feelings about unemployment, domestic circumstances

FUTURE Aims and Expectations, Level of wage required, Areas willing to travel to and Type of job/Vocation looking for.

AREAS TO ASSESS - SKILLS

When assessing a client's suitability for a job/training course etc. it is worth considering skills they achieved in the past which may be transferable to their next occupation/workplace.

You should try to establish at what level the client's skill is, and if there is potential to go further. Normally you will be looking for extremes - the highest achievement in each skill, and always you should be comparing the client's skill to the norm for each task.

Start with the facts, then probe, using comparisons with others and, if possible, get them to come up with examples or anecdotes.

- What did that job involve?
- What tolerances were you working to?
- Who was responsible for checking your work?
- What happened if anything went wrong?
- Did this happen often?
- Can you give an example?
- How did others cope?
- What did your boss/supervisor say about your work?
- How quickly did you do/learn that? (Bonus/piece work earned?)
- How does that compare?
- How difficult did you find that?
- How difficult did others find it?

NB. YOUR CLIENT SHOULD ALWAYS BE AWARE OF THE REASON FOR YOUR LINE OF QUESTIONING AND YOU SHOULD BE FEEDING BACK THE ASSESSMENTS YOU ARE MAKING.

AREAS TO ASSESS - MOTIVATION

Not only what does the client want to do, but why, what have they done towards reaching their aim and is this realistic. It is also worth considering if the aim is long term or short term and how will this affect the agreed action to take. You may want to know:-

- What they have done for themselves about the job/prospects/training courses etc.
- What they have done in the way of self improvement.

You will also get information from their flexibility in areas such as - lowest wage; hours available; willingness to move etc.

Throughout the interview look for signs (verbal and behavioural) of the clients intent and determination to find a job or work towards one. If you feel there is a lack of motivation, do some gentle exploration. For example, a client may say: 'I'm hoping to get a job as a secretary because that's what I really like doing and I can't see any point in looking for any other job.'

At this point the goal might seem fine. However, if there are plenty of secretarial jobs available, but the client has been unemployed for nine months, you may doubt that they actually intend getting this (or any) type of work. Your response might be:

'That seems like an appropriate goal for you and there are plenty of jobs to apply for. Perhaps the thing we need to get to grips with is what might be getting in the way of finding a secretarial job'

This may show that the client is in fact motivated, but there are other problems. Alternatively, it may result in a number of excuses which suggest he or she does not want to make the necessary effort. If you feel motivation is a problem say something like 'I may be wrong, but I'm getting the impression that you are not really convinced that you do want secretarial work'. This should open up the opportunity to discuss what the client does want and, if necessary, remind the client of the actively seeking work condition.

Another example might be a client who is unenthusiastic about everything you suggest and who gives you the impression that they do not really mean what they say. Your response might be:

'We've talked quite a lot about re-training to become a kitchen-fitter, but I get the impression you feel this may not be right for you. It would help me, and perhaps you too, if we can talk about any doubts that you have'. Sometimes discussing doubts can lead to better options.

It may be, of course, that the clients' lack of success has nothing to do with a lack of motivation. They may, for example, be:

- actively chasing jobs and well motivated, but lack the basic job search skills, for example, interviewing skills and telephone techniques. If so suggest ways of improving these.
- being beaten to jobs by better candidates. If so, encourage the client to maintain their efforts. Help keep them motivated or suggest that they may wish to consider different goals which are easier to achieve;

- applying for interviews, but not getting them after disclosing a health problem or disability. If so, you may wish to consider referring the client to a counsellor with specific experience of working with clients with health related problems or disabilities.

To help overcome problems:

- never assume clients do not want a job. Find out why they appear to be de-motivated and help them overcome the problem;
- help clients see how they would be better off in work - help them see the benefits and rewards; .
- help build confidence and identify achievable work goals;
- explore options - give the client choices to make;
- help clients see that progress is being made;
- discuss problems in a rational way
- keep things in perspective
- help clients replace irrational and de-motivating thoughts with more positive and rational ones;

10. INTERVIEWING SKILLS

Listening is one of the most important skills in interviewing. Apart from listening to what is said, you should also listen to the way in which it's said and for what is **NOT** being said.

Attending is associated with listening. It means showing that you are listening and care about what individuals are saying. It acts as an encouragement for them to say more. Attending skills include responses such as nodding, eye contact, saying "I understand", and so on.

Recognising feelings is also allied to listening. It's important that you are aware of how individuals feel about their situation and their abilities and any problems they have. These feelings have a powerful influence on behaviour. It's also important that you recognise your own feelings and the effect they may be having on the situation.

The use of silence is a simple concept, but not always easy to apply. We often feel uncomfortable with silence and have an urge to fill any gaps in a conversation. As an interviewer, you must maintain these gaps, by not speaking too early, so that individuals don't feel rushed into saying the first thing that comes to mind. It's important that they're given a chance to think about what's been said, put it in perspective, and develop their thoughts before continuing.

Good questioning technique is a basic skill in interviewing. It involves using different types of question to prompt an appropriate response from the individual, and is used in combination with many of the other skills. It helps to focus the individual's thoughts and think more clearly about important issues.

Clarifying is also associated with listening. It means being absolutely sure that you understand what the other person is saying. It includes asking questions, repeating statements, and asking the other person to give more details or to repeat something in a different way. This can also improve the individual's understanding of the situation.

Reflecting is linked with clarifying and consists of repeating back to individuals, in your own words, what you think they have said and what you think they feel. It's a means of showing them that you have understood them, of clarifying your understanding of how they feel, and letting them know that you understand how they feel. It also helps them to clarify their thoughts.

Drawing out refers to the process of encouraging people to give you information. Sometimes they may not be very talkative, or simply 'dry up'. At other times you may want specific information, or to focus their thoughts on particular issues. This is achieved mainly by questioning, supported by other skills.

Suspended judgement is an important skill, and sometimes one of the most difficult to apply. It's very easy when listening to other people's thoughts and ideas, to make value judgements even before they've finished talking. We jump to conclusions, comment and make decisions before hearing the true message. It is essential to keep an open mind, by suspending judgement, until you fully understand a situation.

Summarising brings together the key points of what has been done or said and places them in context in order to clarify the situation. A good interviewer summarises regularly during, as well as at the end of discussions to help people focus on important issues and to guide their thinking in the appropriate direction.

QUESTIONING

General guidelines for effective questioning

To gather information to make informed interventions with clients we need to be asking the rights types of questions to ensure we acquire the right information In general open questions reveal more data than closed ones and they allow the client to do the talking. Questions need to be kept short and succinct, don't ramble or end up giving optional answers to your own questions. Questions should also be simple and an counsellor needs to be prepared for a moment or two of awkward silence. Usually it would be expected that the client should do 70%-80% of the talking as we are getting the client to think through their own position by asking questions about implications, consequences and causes of certain actions.

TYPES OF QUESTIONS

OPEN QUESTIONS - Designed to elicit as much information as possible and encourage people to talk:

- What type of work have you done before?
- How would you describe your experience of.....?
- What do you hope to gain from this training event?

PROBING QUESTIONS - Designed to go deeper into the issue, in order to obtain quality information or to get reasoning and proof:

- In what way?
- How did you feel when you were in that situation?
- What makes that part of the job more interesting?
- What’s so important about receiving praise from your line manager?
- In what way is it helpful to ask questions?
- Will you expand on that a little?
- Why is that important?

FACTUAL QUESTIONS - These questions can be useful to gather, open up discussion or check information.

- Where do you live?

- How many conditions are there for the receipt of benefit?
- Have you worked with computers before?

These closed questions lead to specific information or the reply “yes” or “no”. They may need to be followed up with more open questions.

- Have you worked with computers before? (closed)
- What type of computer experience have you had? (open)
- How did you find using the equipment? (open)

REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS - Questions which check out understanding and reflect information back to the learner in order to help them develop the issue further:

- So you are saying that....?
- Are you telling me that....?

MULTIPLE QUESTIONS - These are two or more questions asked at the same time, and are best avoided if you don’t want to confuse the learner:

- How long have you been working in engineering, do you enjoy it or do you find it very challenging?
- How long did you work there, had others been there longer and why did you leave?

LEADING QUESTIONS - Probably useful if you are trying to influence your clients or introduce a new idea, leading questions are likely to frustrate them if used too often of inappropriately:

- Should we consider this as a possible solution?"
- Would this be feasible as an alternative?"
- You can all see the value of using these, can’t you?

You are likely to get a positive response to these questions whether people agree or not, particularly at the beginning of an event when the learners may not feel comfortable about challenging or disagreeing with you.

VALUE LOADED QUESTIONS - To be avoided, unless you are deliberately trying to provoke discussion on a sensitive issue. Otherwise they imply your values not necessarily shared with the learners and may even upset them.

- Do you only work part-time?
- Tell me about your manager - does she check your work?

Employment Counselling

During stage 2 “Gathering Information” it is vital to bear in mind the idea that you are interacting with a unique individual who may have totally different values to your own, and a very different perspective. Everyone, throughout life, develops a system of values and attitudes that structures their experience and gives rise to their individuality. This is what we call a person's hilltop; the point from which that person sees the world, their point of view. A person's hilltop dictates what's important to that person, what motivates them and what they are committed to. The information you gather during the diagnosis should give you insight into the jobseeker's hilltop. These insights can be gained by eliciting and spotting data that reveals the attitudes, values, pre-disposition and commitments of the client. A technique for doing this is outlined below:

THE THREE LEVEL QUESTIONING TECHNIQUE

This is based on the idea that when someone is talking there are different qualities of information given out. Sometimes the content is largely factual, sometimes it is about the meaning of these facts or about personal feelings and sometimes it is about that individual’s values or attitudes.

In diagnosis it is important to be aware of the different levels of information if you are to get a full picture of what kind of person you are dealing with and how they see the situation. This leads to the idea that we can elicit such information by asking different levels of questions. The three levels revolve around some very basic questions:

Level 1 "What do you do?" (gives facts of what, where, when etc)

Level 2 "What do you get out of it?" (tells why it is of interest to the client)

Level 3 "Why is that important?" (tells why the client values it)

It is important to note that all levels are important when gathering information. Without level 1 questions you could not gather the facts about the present situation. However, if you do not get into some of the deeper questions you will find out little about what your clients' attitudes are and what they feel committed to. As a rule of thumb about 60% of questions will be level 1. 30% will be level 2 and probably less than 10% level 3. This technique helps you to ask the right kind of questions at the right time. If you listen closely to the client you will begin to spot opportunities to ask deeper questions. When you become attuned to hearing these opportunities, asking level 2 and 3 questions will feel very natural.

In other words, your objective is to obtain the right quality and quantity of information about both the situation and the person in order to arrive at a considered judgement. The judgement should in essence be able to say:

- what factors in the clients' environment are impacting on or are relevant to the present situation
- what factors are important to the client
- what factors have been identified as influencing levers.

QUESTIONING LEVELS

Level 3	VALUE - ATTITUDES	Why do you feel that? Why is that important to you?
Level 2	MEANING - ATTRACTION/INTEREST	What do you feel about ......? What does it mean to you? What do you get out of it?
Level 1	INFORMATION - DATA COLLECTION	What, who, where, when, how etc.?

LISTENING

We probably all feel quite competence at listening to other people. However, most "listening" is not really the reception of ideas but the bounding of sound waves off the eardrums. All too often, the "noise" made does not penetrate properly in a way that results in accurate meaning and intention. Listening is much more intricate and complex than the physical process of hearing. When we hear, we merely observe someone else's thinking; when we listen, we think along with the speaker.

Levels of listening

Not all listening occurs at the same level or requires the same skill. We can listen at four different levels:

1. The first level involves making sense out of sound and distinguishing words. it is more an "awareness" - e.g. driving with the radio on.

2. At the second level, understanding begins. The listener concentrates on what is being said - and differences in words and their means become significant.

3. The third level involves distinguishing fact from fantasy and so requires some analysis on the part of the listener.

4. The highest level, which requires the greatest amount of skill and concentration, involves the added dimension of empathy, enabling the listener to understand what is being said from the speaker's point of view.

HEARING IS PASSIVE; LISTENING IS ACTIVE

- be active and interested; nod, smile, stay awake and let the client do the talking
- look for clues; non-verbals, grimaces, slight reactions etc.
- learn to recognise the different qualities of data that come out paraphrase, by listening carefully and putting back tentatively what you think the client said using different words
- recognise the opportunities that invite a deeper question to be asked
- try to listen to the person rather than just their words

- don't make assumptions, check it out with questions
- don't let your own hilltop get in the way! If you make some early judgements it may well filter the information you look for and collect which will in all likelihood confirm your initial judgement.

NON-VERBAL BEHAVIOUR

The way we use our bodies often contradicts our verbal message - or it can reinforce it.
As much as 70% of a message can be read through body language. A client is unlikely to tell an adviser anything important if they feel that they are not being listened to. Therefor a counsellor has to do something to make the client believe they are being listened to. We believe what we see in preference to what we hear: if I lean back, slouch, frown, fold my arms and look over your head then it doesn't much matter how many times I say "Go on - I'm listening".

There are many ways of showing that you're listening, but some of them can be misinterpreted and so should be avoided. Fortunately there are some fairly simple physical signs which will generally be read as "s/he's listening to me with interest".

Face the other person **SQUARELY.** Turning away clearly means "I'm not listening I'm thinking about something else".

And **SMILE:** no, not a constant Cheshire cat grin, just a pleasant and encouraging expression.

Be physically **OPEN.** Closing up your body - that is, crossing arms or legs tightly, hugging yourself, crouching, gripping something hard - these all tend to mean that you're defending yourself against something. In other words, you're resisting what you hear.

LEAN towards the other person slightly. If you lean away, then the other person may get the feeling that you're trying physically to get away from them. Sitting bolt upright often looks tense and rather disapproving, so learning slightly forward is least ambiguous.

Maintain lots of **EYE** contact. people who are communicating look at one another a lot: if you can't meet their eyes then they'll think you are shifty or devious. don't try to stare the other person down, thought - it isn't a contest of wills.

And put in a lot of **ENCOURAGERS** - head nods (though not as much as those dogs in people's cars), and murmurs of "Mmm", "Go on", "Uhuh", "Yes", "I see", and so on. It's factually true that you'll get at least 50% more information by encouraging the speaker.

RELAX. This may sound like a counsel of perfection, but if you're tense then you'll probably infect the other person - and one can't talk (or listen) very well when nervous. If you're genuinely interested in understanding what the other person is saying, and not just faking it, then you won't have any time to feel nervous. Don't be so relaxed that you slouch, though - that tells them that they're putting you to sleep, which isn't a very helpful message.

Consider:

POSTURE AND DISTANCE:	Do you stand upright or slouched? Are you too near or too far from the other person? Are you higher or lower?

MOUTH:	Do you hold your jaw tightly? Is your smile appropriate or misleading?
VOICE :	Watch the tone, inflection and volume. Notice if you whine or bellow; whether you convey sarcasm through the tone of your voice.
GESTURES:	Watch for hands over your mouth or hands playing with your hair or held behind your back. Are your feet shifting from one to the other? Are your arms folded?
CONTENT:	Are you mumbling or speaking audibly? do you swallow your words or come across loud and clear?
APPEARANCE:	What does your appearance say about the impression you wish to convey to other people?
BREATHING:	Deepen your breathing and calm yourself prior to an assertive confrontation. Noticing your breathing and learning how to relax your body to reduce anxiety and help you feel posed and centred, even in a difficult situation.
EYES:	Is your gaze relaxed and friendly? Do you maintain eye contact or avert your eyes?

11. STAGE 3 - IDENTIFICATION OF NEEDS AND PROPOSALS TO MEET THEM

From "Information Collecting" to "Identification of needs and proposals to meet them"
Usually the client will require influencing towards an agreed action, although influencing may not always be necessary if the information gathering is good enough and the Adviser has encouraged a powerful, positive approach. It is however, sometimes difficult to be sure when information gathering is complete and when it is time to begin influencing. Bridging between the two can sometimes be aided by the following process.

1. **SUMMARISE THE IMPORTANT POINTS THAT THE CLIENT HAS MADE.** This will confirm understanding and give the jobseeker an opportunity to reflect on what has been said.

2. **GIVE THE CLIENTS VIEW CREDIBILITY AND VALUE.** This will aid rapport.

3. **STATE YOUR POSITION.** This helps the client by pointing towards what is going to happen next

4. **FLOAT YOUR PROPOSAL(S).** Having clarified, begin to propose possible solutions. At this stage build into your proposals any relevant incentives possibly linked point by point with aspects of your proposal.

5. **REINFORCE THE PROPOSAL BY SELLING THE BENEFITS AND USING RELEVANT INFLUENCING STRATEGIES**. Whatever one you choose should:
   - Be specific to that client's situation and THE INFORMATION GATHERED
   - Contain an incentive
   - Be appropriate
   - Be timely, i.e. the same approach applied too soon might meet with resistance

USEFUL APPROACHES AT STAGE 3

- **LINKING TO WHAT THE CLIENT HAS STATED -** link what you want the client to what they are already committed to E.g. "Yes, I agree with you it would be a pity not to use those skills you already have so I'd like to suggest......"

- **SUMMARISING.** This important technique can be used at this stage to bring together bits of information which it suits you to highlight. This will help make sure there is a common understanding of the situation and it will help you make appropriate suggestions. It will also clarify what has been done so far and what the client needs to do next. For example:

Summarising: 'Let's recap on what we've discussed. You feel it's going to be hard for you to get a job because the work you have normally done is no longer available. Is that right?'
Course of action: 'So you may wish to consider re-training in the future, but right now you want to explore alternative jobs you could do now.

- **REFLECTING -** sometimes incorporated in summarising. Reflecting issues can remind the client of earlier comments/actions, or make them more aware of what they are saying now. Reflecting feelings involves repeating to the client the idea or feeling of what they have said. To do this, look 'behind' what the client has said and take into account their non-verbal behaviour. Doing this will help you expand the discussion and draw out the meaning of what the client has said. For example:
  Client I do not know how I'll ever find a job. I'm too old and just cannot see what I can do (said with a sense of hopelessness).
  Counsellor So you cannot see any way back into work?
  This encourages more information from the client and allows you to emphasise positive Aspects. If the client is being negative about their situation, wait for a natural break in what they are saying and get them to look at their situation in a fresh light. For example, "I can see your difficulties, but let's look at the qualities you have as an older client, for example, experience, good work record, drive, flexibility, innovation and reliability. These are things that employers look for".

- **CONFRONTING CONFLICTING INFORMATION -** very often things which the client says will be at odds with things previously said without them being aware of it. If they are brought together one will probably be changed.

- **CONFRONTING ISSUES -** (as opposed to confronting the person) this involves presenting ideas as if they belong to a third person. This means bringing issues into the open for discussion. Do this when important issues appear to be hidden or being avoided. Do it clearly, but carefully, particularly if the issue is about actively seeking employment. For example:
  'From the things you have said, I get the impression that you have other concerns about finding work. I'm wondering if your health is causing problems which may affect the work you could do.'
  'From some of the things you are saying, I get the impression that you might not really be looking for work.'
  - Be calm and maintain a positive, helpful attitude.
  - Say what your concern is.
  - Show concern by explaining the consequences of the client's actions, or lack of them.
  - Pay attention to what the client is saying.

- **ARGUE YOUR CASE -** give the client full details of your position when you judge it to be necessary.

- **HIGHLIGHT** the relevant features and **BENEFITS** of any proposal. Present proposals by:
  - demonstrating how they will help the client address their problems.
  - only presenting features relevant and beneficial to the client based on the information gathered;

– describing in what way they can help

- **EDUCATE/INFORM -** provide the client with the necessary concepts and information that might encourage him/her to change his/her position.

- **JOINT PROBLEM SOLVING -** work with the client and tackle the problem or different aspects of the problem jointly.

- **TRACKING POSITIVE -** the interviewer can help the client become more motivated by encouraging a positive, optimistic outlook.

- **PARAPHRASING -** This involves repeating back to the client what they have just said, but in a slightly different way. This shows that you have been listening and that you understand what the client has said. It also gives clients the chance to correct any misunderstanding you have about what they have said. For example:
  Client: I do not know how I'll ever find a job. I'm too old.
  Counsellor: So you think your age is making it difficult for you to get a job.

Some of the client's attitudes may change as a result of the work you do at the interview with them, but we would not advocate that you set out to change them. It is very difficult, if not impossible to change anyone's attitudes, it is however important to discover what significant and relevant attitudes they have, this can enable us to work with those attitudes rather than against them.

OBJECTION HANDLING

An objection can occur at any time during an interview or communication. With a good introduction, followed by thorough information collection and accurate identification of need, effective influencing can help you to overcome difficulties. But, objections can come at the most unexpected times and in the most unexpected ways - even before you have opened your mouth you might be greeted with "I don't see the point of this interview. You'll never find me a job".

What is an objection? It is an expression, gesture or statement that indicates disapproval or opposition, which can develop into reasons why your client does not agree some action.

Some of the many forms objections take include:-

- Disinterest in what you are saying
- Reluctance to give information
- Aggression
- Refusal to accept you, or your role as interviewer
- Giving a definite `no' to an offer

- Agreeing to suggestions from the interviewer with no commitment, in order to end the interview.

Tips for handling objections

DON'T	DO
• Get excited/upset/emotional • Take it personally • Interrupt • Argue • Rush to reply • Attempt to answer 2-3 objections with one generalisation	• Listen to the objection in full • Welcome it and re-assure your client, for example: "I'm glad you brought that up..............." "A lot of people are under that impression............" • Clarify the objections - (What are they really objecting to?)

TYPES OF OBJECTIONS

The 4 types of objections

Stall/Smokescreen
- this is just an excuse which hides the real objection
- try to find out the real objection
- answer each objection separately

Misinformation
- check out facts
- apologise
- provide correct information
- try to ensure it doesn't re-occur

Misunderstanding
- be tactful
- protect their ego - (I'm sorry you've been given that impression)
- explain the facts simply and clearly
- check for understanding

Genuine
- don't be frightened
- agree but outweigh with benefits
- get them used to the idea
- seek alternatives if necessary

The objections raised may be very real to your client. Avoid dismissing or belittling the objection, or coming out with an `instant solution'. If they are of concern to your client, they deserve your full consideration. Look for covert objections. By handling objections effectively, you will clear many of the barriers to reaching agreement.

DIFFICULT CLIENTS

Few clients' are actually unpleasant or unmanageable. There will, however, always be some clients who are more difficult than others. This can be for a number of reasons, for example, some clients may:

- have personal problems, be anxious, defensive, depressed or stressed;
- be sensitive or ill and less able to cope with daily events;
- appear not to be seeking work and react aggressively when approached about this;
- have an appearance which is not suited to their job goal and they may take exception to being challenged about this;
- may not be prepared to take the steps necessary to achieve their work goal.

When difficult situations arise, it is likely to be the client's reaction to the situation they are in. In the main this will relate to discussions about unrealistic job goals or an apparent failure to satisfy the actively seeking work or availability conditions. However, it may also be a reaction to your behaviour or that of others in the office.

Report to your manager:

- actual physical assaults;
- any other instances where you feel threatened by a member of the public, either inside or outside the office, and it is in connection with your work. This includes threatening behaviour and verbal abuse

Preventing incidents

Try and avoid difficult situations by:

- treating all clients impartially and with respect;
- showing empathy (understanding) rather than sympathy (showing concern and sharing the problem in some way);
- being helpful, friendly, polite and considerate;
- being sensitive to the client's feelings. Show empathy and that you understand their viewpoint;
- listening carefully to what clients say to you;
- explaining things carefully and in plain Serbian
- preparing properly for your interviews;
- being honest, open and frank;
- being positive, not patronising;
- making sure what you tell clients is right, accurate and up to date;
- referring to your line manager if a client refuses to accept your explanation;
- not getting involved personally in the client's feelings or situation.

Understand it, but do not get entangled in it;
- keeping calm and unruffled, but responding rather than seeming to ignore;
- not being judgmental. When giving feedback do not be aggressive or too insistent;
- explaining things clearly and indicating why a problem exists;
- calling for help if a client becomes aggressive; and
- telling your manager if you have reason to believe a client is potentially violent.

If none of this works:
- make clear to the client the conclusion you are reaching. Use evidence to explain and describe the consequences that could result;
- encourage the client to take responsibility for themselves;
- you may need to be more directive and start making suggestions or giving advice based on what you have heard;
- make sure the client understands the problem that they have and the consequences of failing to resolve the issue or problem.
- tell clients what you are obliged to do if the issue or problem cannot be resolved; and
- give the client every opportunity, at all stages of the process to resolve the issue or problem

12. STAGE 4 - CONSOLIDATION & ACTION PLANNING

The final stage of the interview is action planning. At this stage of the interview you must:
- agree how the work goal is to be achieved;
- be specific;
- clarify, review and summarise to check understanding and agreement.

Make sure the client leaves the interview with a clear understanding of what they need to do if they are to find work in their chosen field. The way that planning is done will depend upon the individual. The more competent and able the client, the more straightforward this will be. With others you may need to spend more time, keep the plan simple and short, and explain anything about which the client is unclear.

Testing understanding is checking the clients understanding of what's been said, for example "what do you expect will happen when you first attend Employment Training". The effect of this behaviour is to clarify what has been said, thus reducing misunderstanding. It also displays positive commitment.

Summarising also clarifies understanding. Each summary is in fact a mini agreement and can happen at any stage in the interview. Summarising is a powerful behaviour and has a controlling effect on a discussion.

The client's commitment is often difficult to achieve. It will have been affected by the way you have carried out the interview. Hence the client's commitment will be enhanced if problems have been viewed from their point of view, if they have been helped to make their own decisions and if you have valued the client's opinions and been open in your dealings with them.

The interviewer and the client must both feel confident that the plan of action will help to meet the jointly identified needs. Signs that your client is feeling confident are contained in statements such as; "that sounds interesting because...........". "I can see how that will help me." etc.

These signs are supported in the non-verbal behaviour of both client and interviewer e.g. leaning forward, showing interest, nodding agreement etc. Both verbal and non-verbal indicators show motivation, interest and a willingness to put agreement into action. They can occur throughout the interview enabling the interviewer to proceed comfortably with the factual details.

Commitment is irrevocably intertwined with the skills the interviewer will use in all the stages of the interview, much of the information and feelings gained from these areas will be used when finalising and reaching agreements.

The building of commitment throughout the interview increases the likelihood of a thorough and professional service leading to a positive outcome.

Having agreed the most appropriate work goal and discussed how this is to be achieved, make sure it is meaningful and appropriate. This involves deciding:

- what needs to be done (including who to contact);
- where it needs to be done;
- how it should be done; and
- when it should be done.

ACTION PLAN

OBJECTIVES	TASKS/STEPS INVOLVED	PEOPLE	DATE	FURTHER ACTION
What is to be achieved ?	How will it be achieved ?	Who will be involved ?	Action by when?	Counsellor / Client

Summary

Gaining commitment is crucial if clients are to see their interviews with counsellors as a useful aid to job search. There are three key principles to apply when trying to gain commitment:

A. Understanding the client's view. If the client feels you are trying hard to understand their situation, concerns and problems in getting back to work, the more likely they are to have confidence that the options you are suggesting will meet their needs. Agreeing the purpose of the interview is an important part of this. It helps the client to understand that you are there to help.

B. Being a positive influence. Make clients feel that you are interested in and positive about them and their situation. For example:

- focus on their strengths;
- praise any indications of effort or success;
- use positive language, such as, 'Tell me what you are doing to find work.' rather than 'Are you doing anything to find a job ? '
- find positive aspects in what the client says to you. For example, if they say they are too old to find another job, highlight the qualities older workers can often offer - experience, loyalty, flexibility, drive, innovation and good work record;

C. Leaving control with the client. Things to consider:

- The more control clients have over their job goals, the more likely they are to be committed to it, and the more confident they are likely to be about their abilities and themselves.
- Do not make lots of suggestions too quickly. Clients' will often readily agree, but be less committed to following through what is 'agreed'.
- Do not confuse control with structure (and control of this). You control the structure by outlining the purpose of the interview and by influencing as necessary to keep the discussion relevant. The client should be in control when discussing interests and work goals. Let them make their own choices.

Follow-up

Make sure the client is clear about what will happen next. Be open and honest and let the client know what to expect. What you do will depend upon the sort of interview you have undertaken and what you have agreed with the client.

Safety at the workplace.

Do not:

- share confidences with clients regarding your personal life or other members of staff;
- give the impression that you are available for lengthy casual conversation, or attempt to give advice where referral to another organisation would be more appropriate;
- put yourself at risk by reacting aggressively or by being judgmental. If a client is rude or uncooperative they may just be nervous.
- take an agitated client into a private room unless you have a colleague with you and have made other colleagues aware of it;
- continue to deal with a client if they make you feel uncomfortable or upset - refer on to your manager or supervisor
- discuss client details openly in the public area or with family or friends, etc;
- enter into 'deals' outside work with clients, for example, lend money, buy things off them, sell things to them; accept personal gifts from clients as this could compromise your professional rapport with them;
- raise false hopes. Be realistic. Do not make promises you cannot keep;
- give lifts to clients;
- leave loose objects around your office which could be used as a missile or a weapon;
- interview alone a person who is known to be potentially violent or who appears to be under the influence of drink or drugs;
- keep clients' waiting longer than necessary;
- try to arrest or detain an assailant;
- retaliate by word or action.

Attachment 1 - LABOUR MARKET INFORMATION (LMI)

- EDUCATION, TRAINING, QUALIFICATIONS
- SKILL SHORTAGES
- NATURE OF WORK
- DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION - Population changes
    - Ages
    - Structure of industry

- LOCAL EMPLOYERS
    - Who they are
    - Where they are
    - How big are they
    - How big will they be in the future
    - Industrial Classifications
    - Recruitment practises
    - Types of jobs
    - Turnover
    - Wages paid
    - What they produce

- CHANGES IN BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT
- TRAVEL TO WORK AREAS
- PUBLIC TRANSPORT COSTS
- PUBLIC TRANSPORT STRUCTURE
- JOBS AVAILABLE
- SKILLS OF THE UNEMPLOYED
- SUPPLY AND DEMAND
- UNEMPLOYMENT FIGURES
- OTHER ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED IN MAKING CHOICES ABOUT PEOPLES CAREERS
- BIG REDUNDANCIES/BIG RECRUITMENT'S
- SEASONAL FACTORS
- NEW EMPLOYERS

Attachment 2 - SOURCES OF L.M.I.

- LOCALLY PREPARED STATISTICS
- CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
- CHAMBERS OF TRADE
- LOCAL AUTHORITIES
- EMPLOYER ORGANISATIONS
- MARKETING VISITS
- REPORTS OF VISITS
- ALL CONTACTS WITH EMPLOYERS
- SCHOOLS
- UNIVERSITIES
- OTHER GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS
- OTHER NON GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS
- REGIONAL OFFICES
- OTHER LOCAL OFFICES
- DIRECTORIES, TRADE , TELEPHONE
- NEWSPAPERS/TRADE JOURNALS
- KEEPING EYES AND EARS OPEN IN THE STREET
- TALKING TO CLIENTS
- CONTACTS WITH SELF EMPLOYED
- WHERE YOUR UNEMPLOYED CLIENTS ARE COMING FROM
- COLLEAGUES WITH MORE EXPERIENCE
- STATISTICS
- TV, RADIO
- INTERNET
- VACANCIES
- LIBRARIES
- GRAPEVINE
- TRADE UNIONS
- COMMUNITY GROUPS/YOUTH CENTRES