

Analysing the use of open and closed questions philosophy essay



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Explain the difference between open and closed questions and give examples. Explain the benefits of both. Explain the difference between direct and indirect questions and their uses and benefits.

What possible disadvantages are there to asking clients “ why” questions?

At the initial interview and subsequent interviews with the client, it is important for the therapist to have a good interview technique. Having a good interview technique implies, among other things, asking the right questions at the right times. The reason why the therapist asks questions during the interview is to gather information from the client so that the therapist may make an accurate assessment of the presenting problem. Because most clients suffer from emotional problems and conflicts it is also important for the therapist to ask the questions in a suitable and tactful way. At the initial interview the therapist needs to build rapport with the client, therefore verbal interaction with the client should be fine-tuned in such a way that helps to establish the necessary rapport. We will now focus on the different ways questions can be constructed in order to get responses from the client that may assist the assessment of the presenting problem.

There are two kinds of question a therapist may ask. These are open questions and closed questions. A closed question may also be described as a question that requires a short answer, whereas an open question may be also be described as a question that requires a relatively long answer. Closed questions usually require a yes or no answer. An example of a closed question might be, ‘ Have you had the present difficulty a long time?’ To which the answer might be, ‘ Yes, I have,’ or, ‘ No, I haven’t.’ Of course, ‘ I’m

not sure,' is also possible. This is why closed questions are sometimes referred to as short answer questions. An example of an open question might be, ' How long have you had the present difficulty?' In this instance the client should tell the therapist exactly how long he or she has been having the presenting problem. So, perhaps in the previous two examples, the more beneficial question might be seen as the open question, because the therapist was able to gain more precise knowledge. However, sometimes it might be more beneficial to ask a closed question to the client. An example where this might be the case is if the client seems a little upset with what he or she should disclose to the therapist. In such a case the question might be, ' Do you mind if I continue to ask you more about the present difficulty?' Here the answer might be, ' No, I don't.' Then the therapist can continue with the questioning, obviously in a tactful manner. Sometimes, however, to gain important information it is necessary to ask a closed question. An example of this might be, ' Are you in

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a special relationship with someone now?' In this case it might be difficult to get such information by asking an open question.

To recap, closed questions are those that require a short answer. Some examples of the beginnings of closed questions are: Are you...?; Do you...?; Will you...? May I...?; Have you...?; and, Did you...? Open questions are those that usually require a relatively long answer. Open questions begin with any of the following words: what, who, when, where, how, and why. In general it <https://assignbuster.com/analysing-the-use-of-open-and-closed-questions-philosophy-essay/>

is not a good idea to ask a client a question with the word why. This is because the client comes to see the therapist with a problem that cannot be solved by the client. The client needs an explanation of the presenting problem from the therapist. In other words, the client needs an explanation of the whys of the present difficulty from the therapist, and not the other way round. So, for instance, it is probably not a good idea for the therapist to ask the client why she will not walk by herself across any park. This might evoke the response of, ' I don't know.' Or, it could bring a strong emotional response, as the client is suddenly confronted with the emotional power of the real reason why she is not able to walk across the park. Or, the question might belittle the client in so far as the client feels the therapist thinks she is inadequate as a human being, for she cannot even do a simple human activity such as walking across a park. In all but the most exceptional instances, it might be better for the therapist not to ask a why question to the client.

Sometimes during the initial interview, and in subsequent interviews, the therapist has to ask the client questions that are of a sensitive nature. While doing this it is perhaps better to use what are known as indirect questions. At other times during the interview or interviews it is perhaps better to use direct questions. An indirect question, as its name implies, asks a question in the manner of making as indirect (and polite) as possible. An example might be, ' I wonder if you would mind telling me if your parents are now separated?' On the other hand, as the name implies, a direct question asks something directly to someone. For example, ' Are your parents separated?' Now it might be wise for the therapist to gauge the emotional state of the

client before deciding whether to ask a direct or indirect question. For example, if the therapist thinks the client is in quite an emotional state, he or she should first decide whether or not to continue with a particular line of questioning, and if he or she decides it is all right to continue with the line of questioning, then he or she can use indirect questioning. The benefit of asking direct questions is that they are direct and thus less time-consuming than indirect questions. Direct questions may be used to get routine information quickly. In general, there is little use in asking the client, 'Would you mind at all if I asked for your address?' For this kind of information, the therapist can simply ask directly, 'What's your address?'

In conclusion, the therapist at the initial interview and subsequent interviews should use different questioning techniques. Sometimes the therapist should

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use closed questions and sometimes open questions, and sometimes direct questions and sometimes indirect questions. Usually a combination of all forms should be used, at various times during the initial interview and subsequent interviews. It is perhaps better to avoid asking the client a why question. However, of great importance is for the therapist to know when exactly he or she should use one of the question techniques or forms. By understanding the emotional state of the client, the therapist may fine-tune the type and way to ask any of the questions that need asking.