Building Rapport with Children

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What we are going to learn..

- What is rapport?
- How to gain rapport with children.
- Different factors that can hinder or enhance gaining rapport.
- Things to avoid.
- Review.
What is Rapport?

- The dictionary definition of rapport is “connection, especially harmonious or sympathetic”.
- Rapport is based on mutual confidence, respect and acceptance.
What is Rapport?

- It is your responsibility to engage the child and bring him or her to see you as a trusting and helping person.
- In addition, being interested in the information provided, conveying the sense that you want to understand the world of the child.
Why is rapport important?

- Your job is important!
- Children have a lot to say.
- We are the ones to listen.
- Establishing a relationship in a small amount of time is crucial and sometimes very difficult.
Children and Rapport Building

- Children are usually scared or confused about why you want to talk to them.
- Misconceptions need to be cleared before any trust can be built.
- It is good to ask children why they think you want to talk to them.
What is important to gain rapport?

- Setting
- Issues
- Facilitation of Communication
- Non-threatening, empathic style
Setting

- Quiet and private
- Non-demanding atmosphere
- Minimal distractions
Issues

- Play
- Control
- Entering and leaving the room
- Limit setting
- Presence
- Physical contact
- Food and gifts
Facilitation of Communication

- Silence
- Body language
- Eye contact
- Encouragers/ Door openers
- Reflection/ Active listening
Non-threatening, empathic style

- “I wonder if it is hard to talk to someone you just meet?"

- Decrease the power differential
  - Body position
  - Verbal tone
  - Don’t touch
  - Easy words
Children and Rapport

- Communication
  - Language (verbal and non-verbal)

- Trust
Sensitivity to the developmental level is necessary to interview a child and interpret their statements accurately. Choose language that is appropriate to the developmental level of the child. Misunderstandings and avoidable errors can occur when children are questioned as if they are adults.
Language

- Broad, general questions can be asked at the beginning and the responses used to determine a child’s language level.
- Analyze a child’s speech to determine level of intelligibility, the average sentence length, average number of syllables in words, complexity of grammar, tense and pronoun usage, and sophistication of vocabulary.
Non-Verbal Language

- A child who slouches in his chair or refuses to make eye contact may be indicating resistance.
- Adjust your body language and approach in such a way so that the child will become engaged in the process.
- In addition, observation of the nonverbal behaviors of a child may also give insight to a child’s difficulty.
Adult vs. Child Language

- Adult/Child language is a part of socialization that teaches children what to do, what to think, and how to feel.

- It is characterized by:
  - Domination
  - Expanding their comments
  - Correcting them
  - Asking many specific questions
Adult vs. Child Language

- Children expect adults to have direct communication.
- Children assume adults know the answers due to socialization.
- Children learn that the goal of conversation is to figure out what adults want to hear.
- That’s why it is crucial that you adopt a different linguistic style to elicit information.
Building Trust

- Trust builds through small specific acts carried through consistently over time.
Building Trust

- Trust isn’t an emotion. It’s a learned behavior that we gain from past experiences. It is hope and dependability, and putting confidence in someone.
- Building a trusting relationship with children doesn’t happen overnight. It takes time.
- It must be earned and maintained with consistent actions.
Rapport Building Tips

- First impressions is a crucial stage.
- Present yourself as a neutral, non-intimidating, supportive adult.
- Assess the child’s level of functioning.
- Give the child a little time to become familiar with you and the environment.
Rapport Building Tips

- Allow child to explore the room/area
- Give the child simple choices
- Give the child a small idea of why you are there
- Begin with neutral non-threatening questions
Building Rapport Tips

- Pay Attention
- Language pattern and Body language
- Confidence/ Ability to answer questions
- Note any withdrawal or negative responses
Reflection

- You must listen to be able to do this
- Re-state what the child has said
- Acceptance
- Clarification
- Content/Emotion
- Allows the child to structure the conversation
Rapport Building Tips

- Avoid body positioning of power, place yourself at or below the child.
- Do not touch the child.
- Verbal tones should be matter of fact.
Best question ever

➢ So.....

What happened next?
Rapport with Different Ages of Children

- Each stage in a child’s development has its own challenges.
- The infant and toddler learn how to control their behavior and evolve a sense of self through exploring their relationship to the worlds of family and play.
Rapport with Different Ages of Children

- School-age children have the tasks of adjusting to the new environment of school, learning academics and socializing with peers.
- Adolescents are coming to grips with the self in terms of social development and choosing a path for work and career goals.
Rapport with Different Ages of Children

- Understanding developmental considerations can help the clinician to better understand the world of the client and to gain better rapport.
Rapport with Different Ages of Children

- Pre-Schooler
- Elementary
- Pre-teen
- Teen
Pre-Schooler

- Ages 2 to 5
- They should be able to tell you a who, what and where about a situation.
- This age wants to please you.
- Build rapport by asking about colors and animals.
- Let them show off with ABC’s and 123’s.
Elementary

- Ages 5-10
- They should be able to tell you who, what, where and 1 or more then one time.
- They still want to please you, but have learned how to manipulate the situation.
- Build rapport by talking about holidays, pets, school, and friends.
Pre-Teen

- Ages 10-13
- This age should know the who, what, where, and how many.
- This age is learning to test the system. They still want to impress, but will hold back information.
- Build rapport by letting them lead the conversation. Try noticing things that they look interested in and build from there.
Pre-Teen

- These children begin to develop meta-cognitive skills.
- Children of these ages often have jokes, secret codes, and secretive languages, such as Pig Latin.
- This development can open the door to different rapport-building techniques than might be used with this age group.
Teen

- Ages 13 to 17
- This age should know the who, what, where, how many and specific details of events.
- This age is attempting to be independent.
- They want to be treated as adults and will be more open if treated as adults.
- Again, look for things that interest them.
- Be aware that they will lie to you and are looking to startle you.
Managing Cross-Cultural Differences
An Example of Different Meanings of the Same Gesture

UK & USA = O.K.
JAPAN = MONEY
RUSSIA = ZERO
BRAZIL = INSULT
Cultural Considerations

What is Culture?

Culture in general is beliefs and values on the basis of which people interpret experiences and behave, individually and in groups.

Broadly and simply put, "culture" refers to a group or community with which you share common experiences that shape the way you understand the world.
There are many cultural considerations in the process of rapport-building. Such as age and sex-roles have special and unique meanings in different cultures. A task to build rapport is to create an environment and to ask questions that are sensitive to the culture of a child and his/her family.
Cultural Considerations

- The same person can belong to several different cultures depending on his or her birthplace; nationality; ethnicity; family status; gender; age; language; education; physical condition; sexual orientation; religion; profession; place of work and its corporate culture.

- Culture is the "lens" through which you view the world.
Cultural Considerations

- Rapport between people of different cultures can be hindered by reluctance on the part of the interviewer to share stories, thinking that their client may not understand the connection.
Cultural Considerations

- During the rapport building process in a relationship, most people seek out similarities. Becoming acquainted and building trust in this manner is an important and natural process.

- Often times, these similarities help to pull relationships through challenging times.
Cultural Considerations

- Culture is often at the root of communication challenges.
- Exploring historical experiences and the ways in which various cultural groups have related to each other is key to opening channels for cross-cultural communication.
Becoming more aware of cultural differences, as well as exploring cultural similarities, can help you communicate with others more effectively.

Next time you find yourself in a confusing situation, ask yourself how culture may be shaping your own reactions, and try to see the world from the other's point of view.
Things to Avoid

- Do not over talk.
- Do not explain.
- Limit evaluation statements.
- Do not fill the pauses.
- Do not comment on the child’s behaviors.
Things to avoid

- Whatever you do, DO NOT jump into the topic of concern without rapport. Then you might as well leave and let someone else approach the child.
- IF the child brings up the topic of concern then go for it and see where they will take you.
To build a rapport with children, young people and those caring for them, it is important to demonstrate understanding, respect and honesty.

Continuity in relationships promotes engagement.
Show an empathetic exterior to the child.

Be child friendly.

Eye contact and sincerity of the voice.

Never show negative emotions.
Any Questions?
Thank you for listening!