



# Clinical Verbal Skills

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17 PROMPTS & PHRASES  
+  
TIPS FOR EMPATHETIC  
FACILITATION

MUSIC THERAPY ED

# CLINICAL VERBAL SKILLS

*"Developing a relationship with our client is in the definition & scope of practice for music therapists. This happens through the music, but also through verbal interaction." Dr. Tracy Richardson*

## Prompts & Phrases to Practice

- How does it feel to be in the room right now?
- What do you most want to get from this session?
- What are three things you want me to know about you?
- What would you like to do?
- I like it when you \_\_\_\_\_.
- I notice that \_\_\_\_\_.
- Would you willing to try this instrument to see how it works for you?
- Could you say what you are experiencing right now?
- How does this song relate to you?
- How are you affected by \_\_\_\_\_'s playing?
- How can you practice what you've learned here?
- What do you notice?
- Is there a certain sound or instrument that you are drawn to?
- If you had to put that feeling into sound, what would it sound like?
- I notice that you hesitated to play. Tell me what you were thinking.
- What does this remind you of?
- Take a moment to center yourself. If you had to pick just one thing, what would you want to work on?

*A few well-chosen and well-timed words can give clients the guidance that will enable them to explore in a significant way. This list is **not meant to be memorized**, but are **ideas** that you can modify to fit your style and the needs of your specific settings & clients.*

# 8 TIPS FOR EMPATHETIC FACILITATION

- Show you are interested & listening! While my client is talking... Do I cross my legs? Do I cross my arms? Do I check my phone? Do I check my calendar? Do I look at the clock?
- I can say to my friend "You haven't heard of Maroon 5? omg!" but usually not with clients. Try to avoid judgmental statements.
- "*Good job! Great job! Awesome!*" - How does the client hear that? If it's not specific, then it's sort of white noise.
- This is where we draw upon our training as music therapists and our empathy as human beings. Try saying: "*Can you put that in the music?*"
- If you haven't done your own work, then it's going to be hard to tap into authenticity during verbal processing with a client
- Be aware of yes/no questions, especially if you aren't prepared for "no." Depending on your client's needs, open-ended, this/that, or multiple choice questions may be perceived with greater clarity.
- Avoid infantilizing your teen or adult clients through intonation of your voice. For example instead of "I'm SO HAP-py to see you taking BIG steps wiTH your WALKER, Frank!" use the same intonation you would typically use with a friend who is open to receiving calm encouragement.
- Use your client's name in conversation as it might naturally come up.

## READY TO GO DEEPER?

# Verbal and Songwriting Skills

## 8 CMTE Course

Most of us want to improve our verbal skills when working with clients. This course is a good fit for you if you've ever wondered the following:

- How can we use words or verbal skills to better support our clients without moving outside our scope of practice?
- What are effective responses when a client discloses sensitive information?
- What if I'm at a loss for words, and uncertain how to use words to facilitate a therapeutic environment when tensions arise?
- How can I effectively use prompts to express that our sessions are a safe place for my clients?
- What kind of verbal responses can I use to demonstrate my true feelings of unconditional positive regard and nonjudgment towards my clients?

When we are able to weave all the above into a supportive songwriting process, and get out of the way as our clients move forward, deep support in the truest sense can take place

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[www.MusicTherapyEd.Com/Verbal](http://www.MusicTherapyEd.Com/Verbal)

with Dr. Tracy Richardson

