Kathryn Hughes  
NUTR 510  
Counseling Self Evaluation  
Due: 3/25/2014

Counseling Self Evaluation

1. Which session did you feel more comfortable doing, the first interview session or the second counseling session? Explain your choice.

   On Tuesday, February 25, 2014 I participated in a mock interview session playing both the role of the Registered Dietitian, myself, and the patient, Nadia Whitehorse. During this session I was to have prepared for the role of asking question to a patient and also having the cultural knowledge of answering questions as a patient. I believe I felt the most comfortable during session one, the interviewing session. I believe I was more prepared and I felt it was easier for me to gather information about the patient rather than trying to provide the patient with information. The session one preparation work allowed me to really pull together the materials needed to ask the patient the proper questions about their condition. Also, the list of question helped guide me thought the interview and kept all my thoughts together. Where as during session two, the counseling session, I was much more nervous although, I had done the proper preparation needed to counsel the patient; this was much harder for me. I was concerned about getting the patient the proper information and I also had a hard time keeping the counseling session on a smooth tract. This is why I believe I felt more comfortable during the interviewing session and why I believe I struggled more with the counseling session.

2. Your personal take home message from playing the counselor is... What did you learn? What will you apply?

   The personal take home message I got from participating as a counselor, was you really need to know your patient and how to counsel someone properly. There is a lot more
that is relative when counseling a patient than just what they are telling you or what you are seeing on their three-day food record. Being a counselor entails that you are taking into consideration the patient home life, financial status, current health, prior medical and physiological history, stress level and their every day activates. I also learned that there is a lot that goes into each counseling session. It is not just providing a person with some healthier food options. You have to make sure that your patient is comfortable and ensure they understand what is being talk about. Also as a counselor you need to prompt open-ended questions and allow them to give you their own answers and not allow them to just agree or disagree with yours answers. All of these components can make counseling changeling. But with experience, you will become more comfortable with this.

3. Your Personal take home message from playing the client is... What did you learn? What will you apply?

While playing the role as the client I also obtained new knowledge. While participating as the client I got the understanding of how difficult it may be to write down every thing you eat. For most people this is not the everyday norm and it could be challenging to get the hang of having to keep track everything you consume. Another thing I learned from being the client was that if the dietitian is unloading a lot of information on the patient it could be overwhelming. This could cause the patient to have a hard time understanding everything the RD is explaining. It would be more beneficial to the client if the dietitian explained one or two things a session and let the client soak up all the new information. This would allow them to not feel overwhelmed and give them a chance to practice the new changes. These are only a few things I learn as the client.
4. **Discuss your strengths**

I did show some strength during the mock counseling/interviewing sessions. Some of my strengths were introducing myself, discussing likes/dislike of food, asking permission before questions, and asking open-ended questions. One of my strengths was introducing myself and making the patient feel comfortable. This is important because a patient will not want to open up to a stranger who is standoffish and rude. You need to gain your patients trust and by beginning the counseling session with a friendly hello and your name could allow you to gain your patients trust a little easier. Another way to gain you patient's trust is to ask permission before discussing something that is personal to them, such as their past health history or current eating patterns. Patients may feel unconformable or embarrassed talking about their eating habits and asking permission could allow you to also gain their trust. Also one other strength I possessed was asking open-ended question. Asking open ended questions gives the patient the chance to tell their story and not just agreeing with your. These are a few of the strengths I showed during the mock counseling session.

5. **Discuss your weaknesses. How do you intend to improve those?**

With the strengths I showed during these sessions I also possessed many weaknesses. Some of these weaknesses were asking too many questions at one time, not summarizing at the end of each session, needing to look at food diary before discussing food choices and needing to provide reassurance about patients concerns. One way I can work on improving some of these weaknesses are by practicing the corrective actions. I need to work on discussing one question at a time. By allowing the patient to go over one question at a time it will give them the chance to open up and not feel completely overwhelmed with the information being discussed. Another problem area I need to work on is summarizing the information at the end of each session. By summarizing at the end of each session it allow...
the patient to gain the understanding of what the session was really about. It will help them remember what they need to work on and what the important take home message was. These are a few ways I can work of some of the problems I had during the sessions.

6. What did you learn from observing your fellow group members?

One important thing I learned while observing my classmates during their counseling session was that body language is a large part of counseling. Sometimes while you are acting as the client and/or counselor you often times do not realize your own body language. It was interesting to watch the nervous habits people don’t realize they have such as looking down, playing with pen/paper, folded arms, ridged facial expressions and the use of um, like, or uh. Watching my classmates’ nervous habits was a great learning experience by showing me that unconscious habit could possibly affect my role as a counselor.

7. Suggestions for improvement of this segment for future classes

There is only one improvement I would suggest. I think it would be beneficial to the acting counselor if their current patient wrote a small paragraph about how they thought the session went. Have the client discuss what they liked and what the dislike about the way the session went including body language, questions asked, and pace of session. This would allow the counselor to hear first hand things they could work on. This would be my only suggestion for this project.