

Appendix F: Practical 2A

Role-play 1: Part A: Initial Session with Simon Leung

Participant's Briefing Instructions

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Simon Leung, Client:

You are Simon Leung, a 19-year-old man seeing a counsellor for the first time. You have always thought of yourself as an anxious person, but you have found this to be more and more problematic since you started university last year. Starting university meant that you had to move to Sydney and away from your parent's home [your parents live in Wagga Wagga].

You moved into university accommodation, sharing an apartment with three other first-year male students. Even though you were sharing with other first-year students, you felt a bit anxious around them and were concerned that you would say something stupid and that they would judge you. This meant that, initially, you were timid around them. This created a lot of awkwardness in the house.

While you eventually became more comfortable with them and are now all friends, you are unhappy that it takes so long to come out of your shell and feel comfortable around new people. You have noticed that this pattern re-occurs in your social interactions. You see how easy social interactions seem for others, and you want to be just like them.

You had gone to your doctor to see if she could prescribe you a pill to make you more confident. The doctor made an appointment to see the medical centre's psychologist, who confirmed that you did not have a clinical anxiety disorder. So the doctor has not prescribed any medication. Instead, the doctor has referred you for counselling, telling you that the counsellor can help you work through your anxiety-related issues and develop more effective social behaviour strategies.

You want the counsellor to "fix" you. You want to be "popular" and be more comfortable and confident around girls. This last part is essential. While you want to be more confident with girls in general, there is one particular girl you are currently interested in. Her name is Nina, and she is in your chemistry lab. You want to ask her out, but so far, you have been unable to pluck up the courage. You are scared that you are letting the opportunity slip away and that she will start seeing someone else if you don't ask her out soon, but you are also scared that she will say no if you do.

During the role-play:

- At the beginning of the role-play, the student will greet and welcome you – you should respond naturally to any small talk they make.
- If the student asks you any questions about your previous experience with counselling, you should reply that you have never been to counselling before and are unsure what to expect.
- When the student provides you with information about what counselling will involve and the details of the counselling service, you must say something along the lines of you expecting

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the counsellor to be able to “fix” your social anxiety and to make you “popular”. You should also indicate that you would like to be able to contact the counsellor by text any time you need some advice outside of sessions. You must listen to the student’s explanation of the limits of counselling and the limits of the counselling relationship. You should then ask any questions you might have [e.g. if you are unclear about something, ask the student to clarify it. However, if the student has explained everything so that you are comfortable and understand it, you do not need to ask any further questions]. You should ultimately agree to the counselling service/relationship that the student outlines.

- You should grant the student permission to take notes during the session. When the student starts asking you about the circumstances surrounding you coming for counselling, you should reply that you want to get over your social anxiety so that you can be popular, and so girls will want to date you. Use the information provided in the “background character information” to help flesh out the conversation. Respond in a way that comes to you naturally based on the questions asked while using the background information. Note: don’t simply read this information out – instead, respond in a manner that makes sense to the conversation you are having with the student.
- If the student asks you what you would like to focus on today in counselling, you should tell them that you want to focus on whether you should ask Nina out. Your goal is to decide on this one way or the other.
- When talking about Nina, you should say that you like her and want to ask her on a date but are scared that she will say no. You think that it’s possible that she likes you (because she always sits near you in the lab and during lectures, and she talks to you and laughs at your jokes), but you aren’t sure, and you’re scared that she will laugh at you and turn you down.
- You should respond naturally to any student’s questions/prompts using the background information when working through this issue. For example, if the student asks you about possible courses of action, you could suggest that you ask Nina out or you don’t. If the student asks you about the possible outcomes of each, you could suggest that if you don’t ask Nina out, she will never be your girlfriend, and you will always wonder, “What if”. Alternatively, if you do ask Nina out, she might say yes, and you might have a great time, and she could become your girlfriend, or she could say yes, and the date could be terrible, or she could say no, and things could be awkward between you for a while, or she could say no and laugh at you, etc. If the student asks you to evaluate the possibility of each course of action, you should discuss what comes naturally to you based on the counselling conversation. However, 29, you should try to be optimistic and decide to ask Nina out.
- Towards the end of the session, if the student asks you about other issues you would like to discuss during your future counselling sessions together, you should indicate that you would like help with managing your feelings of anxiety during social situations so that you can be more confident and that you want help in becoming popular. If the student suggests developing more specific goals, you should work with them.
- Respond to any other questions in a manner that seems natural based on the counselling conversation that you have had with the student.