

Crisis Center Discrimination Index

From Crisis Center/Hotline – A Guide to Beginning and Operating. (1972)

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See the scoring guide for more information about the score. Facilitation refers to the level of empathy, warm and genuineness while action orientation refers to the response’s ability to further develop the conversation.

Instructions

You will read about sixteen persons who are seeking help with a problem. They may not be formal clients but simply people who have sought the help of another person in a time of need. Following each excerpt by a person seeking help, you will read four possible responses. These are initial responses which might be made early in the course of the helping relationship. Each of the four responses should be rated according to the continuum below. Rate each response independently of the other.

1.0	1.5	2.0	2.5	3.0	3.5	4.0	4.5	5.0
Is not helpful in recognizing the problem; may hinder communication		Partial recognition of problem and/or feelings towards it		Minimally helps the person in recognizing the problem and his feelings towards it		Significantly helps the person in recognizing the problem and dealing with it		Optimally aids the person in dealing with the problem

As you judge the responses, keep in mind that the most highly rated responses are those which the person can use most effectively in his present situation.

Excerpt 1

Helpee: What kind of goddamn school do you have here? Jesus, everywhere I go, if it's not a bunch of faggots and queers swishing around, it's the coons and spics reuniting. What the hell kind of place is this anyway—and I expect a decent answer!

Helper Responses:

1. Wow, it seems to me that you are really frustrated with your relationship to these different groups. And it really upsets you, knowing that you will have to relate to them or perhaps find a group that you can genuinely relate with.
2. It sounds like you were raised in a small town or rural area. "Once a country person, always a country person"
3. This is a place where there are a lot of different minorities and this upsets a lot of people. Maybe we can talk about exactly how these different groups have upset you and what we can do about it
4. Jesus, it seems that these different groups have you really turned you off, and it brings you to question the world school in general

Excerpt 2

Helpee: I would like your opinion, given this choice. I purchased a tab of acid from a friend of mine. He said it was very mild, a good one for those who have never tripped before. I have always wanted to try LSD once—I have heard all about the controversies and so I believe I know what I'm getting into. However, I would still like to hear what some other people have to say about it. I've made the transition to a freak almost, the acid is the last stage—so can you tell me what acid is all about?

Helper Responses:

1. Listen, I really think you should consider the physiological effects of acid. They can be detrimental to your psychological health as well.
2. Seems like a difficult choice to make. I can see how you might feel it's part of becoming a freak.
3. I hope that no one saw you purchase the tab.
4. Being a freak is pretty important to you. But I sense some hesitancy or conflict in making your decision.

Excerpt 3

Helpee: I have a problem. It's about this guy. You see, I'm gay and I'm having a love quarrel. John, that's the name of my lover, is more straight than gay. He has recently met this girl who is more exciting than me—so he says anyway. If he continues seeing this girl, it will only mean heartbreak for me. I've never thought about suicide before now, but every day just brings more and more confusion. People say I'm strange, and maybe everybody would be just as happy if I happened to disappear.

Helper Responses:

1. Things are pretty confused right now, but don't you think you could find somebody else? Are you perhaps taking this too seriously?
2. Sounds like you're pretty depressed and confused; you feel very alone and empty because you feel that your relationship with someone you love is very threatened, and possibly over. It seems to mean the whole world to you. But, are you only living because of John?
3. In any personal relationship there are problems. When these problems arise it's good to talk about them to the person who is involved. Have you talked to John about this?
4. Wow, things are really going bad for you—you're feeling pretty depressed and worthless. The loss or possible loss of someone you really care for can be shattering.

Excerpt 4

Helpee: (sobbing): I've got a terrible problem and I need some answers pretty quick. If your fiancé was away, like going to another school, and you got pregnant by what you thought as a good friend, how would you tell your fiancé the situation? I mean, I'm getting an abortion so that's all taken care of, he doesn't ever need to know about it, or anything like that, but I feel I've got a responsibility to tell him about the situation. I think he deserves to know about what went on and what a rat I am, but I don't know how to tell him. I just don't know!

Helper Responses:

1. Does your fiancé know the guy who got you pregnant?
2. If you really want it, go ahead and get the abortion and then tell him about everything. That way he won't have to worry about that aspect. Then you can proceed from there.
3. Wow, it sounds like you really are in a fix. If you feel like crying, go ahead. Then you can tell me a little more about the situation and we can see what to do from there. Maybe we can think of some alternatives together that would be suitable and make it a little easier for everyone involved.
4. Wow, you really have yourself in a situation that is so confusing that it's difficult to be rational and think up a solution

Excerpt 5

Helpee: Your ad said that you were interested in other people's problems, so I'm gonna lay a heavy one on you. I've been dating this black chick for about three months now. There wouldn't be a problem except that I'm white. I've been raised to see no difference between white and black and I believe that I exhibit this point of view myself now as an adult. The problem is with my chick who somehow believes that I should see a difference between us—she is always testing me to see if I have yet become a racial bigot. I'm getting tired of this but I feel something special for this chick. As though matters weren't hard enough, she is now pregnant; I believe it is probably my kid, but there always exists the chance that it could be one of her black brother's. So, here is the problem. Now what is the answer?

Helper's Responses:

1. That's a rough one alright. Sounds like you're really rushed to make up your mind about how you feel toward her.
2. Would it be a whole lot less of a hassle if shew ere white or you two were married?
3. You're right, it is a heavy one. I can see how you'd feel a conflict within your feelings toward her, and now her pregnancy makes some kind of decision mandatory. Maybe pregnancy is some kind of final test?
4. I can't answer it for you; all I can do is help you consider the alternatives

Excerpt 6

Helpee: I'm so happy I just don't know what to do. I went out with this guy that I've had my eye on since high school. It was so neat! He acts absolutely in love with me. He didn't say anything about calling again, but I'm sure he will.

Helper's Responses:

1. You sound as though you might be wondering if you're not reading too much into this one date
2. You sound like you had a really good time. It's a good feeling to know that one of your hopes might be realized. I'd like to hear more about how things went on the date.
3. Life can be exciting—full of unexpected happiness. How did this date come about?
4. You feel like a long hoped-for door has been opened, and that makes you very happy. It's really neat to feel that one of your dreams might be realized.

Excerpt 7

Helpee: I am flunking a class and I can't afford to flunk it. The teacher is really understanding, but I just can't grasp the material. She spends all kinds of time with me, but it doesn't seem to do any good. I need the credits now in order to graduate. I can't get them later because I'm taking maximum loads all the way until graduation. I've considered really going all out and cheating to get through the class but I can't really justify it. I've got to have the credits one way or another, but I don't know what to do. What would you do in my case?

Helper's Responses:

1. Well it sounds like you're stuck with the class, like it or not. You sound like you're basically against cheating; but the university has a free tutoring service, there are test files you could look into, or maybe even someone in the class could help you. This way, the material would be presented in a different way and maybe help you to grasp it.
2. Maybe if you talked to the prof again and told her you don't understand the material, she'd slow down more for you.
3. Wow, if I were in your shoes, I'd probably flunk the class
4. I really agree it's a tight situation to be in. I was in a class once where I had to face the choice of cheating.

Excerpt 8

Helpee: Yeah, um . . . I have this problem, and I don't know what anybody's going to do about it, because it's not the sort of thing that has an answer, but . . . oh, a couple of months ago, I met this guy at the Matterhorn, and—I don't know—we sort of hit it off and so I ended up going to his apartment . . . and . . . oh—we drank a little over there, and smoked a little, and I ended up getting really, really drunk and really stoned, and I ended up going to bed with him . . . and . . . well . . . that was okay, I mean I didn't even hear from him after that, and that didn't really bother me, because, well you know, I was kind of embarrassed about it—I mean, I don't usually do things like that, but—I walked into my discussion group for one of my upper division classes this quarter, and lo and behold, he's a grad student and he's teaching the discussion group. I just about died of embarrassment when I walked in, but—I mean there's nothing I can do. I haven't been back since . . . I can't drop the class, it's a 400-level class, and I need it to graduate, and it isn't offered any other time this year, and I can't change sections, but I just about . . . I mean I can't sit through a quarter of having this guy laughing at me up there in front of the class, and perhaps telling all of his friends and frat brothers everything else, and it's just—I mean, it really bothers me, I'm so embarrassed about it. And there seems like there's nothing I can do.

Helper Responses:

1. Seems to me you'd know by now that you can't hop in bed with anybody and have it come out okay.
2. If I were you, I'd go right into his office and talk to him about it. Who knows, maybe he feels the same way.
3. Boy, I bet this would be a tense situation. I can see that you are embarrassed about it
4. Wow, I can tell this really bothers you. Since you've already eliminated some of the possibilities, what do you think would happen if you talked to him in his office or over a cup of coffee?

Excerpt 9

Helpee: Well, you see, I got this girl pregnant and I'm not going to marry her. I want some information about abortions because I feel a certain responsibility. You see, I don't know if I love her or not, and I got to be sure before I start thinking about marrying her—I mean, about marrying anyone.

Helper's Responses:

1. I hear you saying that this pregnancy has put you in a trap in which you see abortion as the only way out. Perhaps, though, it has raised some basic questions of whether you really love this girl—and if you think you do, is it only because you feel responsible for her pregnancy?
2. It seems you're feeling like the walls are closing in fast. This girl's pregnancy has raised the question of responsibility and you want to do the right thing.
3. If the girl is definitely pregnant, then abortion is one of the alternatives. Have you and this girl talked about any of the other alternatives? I feel that you should at least look at all that is open to you before you make your final decision.
4. First, let me ask you, what is your definition of love? The way you look at this situation can be based on just that alone.

Excerpt 10

Helpee: What should I do? My son is taking drugs, I just know he has to be. He has been acting very odd ever since his father and I got the divorce last month. It must be his father's doing. He would do anything to take my boy away from me and that father of his always up to no good.

Helper Responses:

1. What indications do you have that your son is taking drugs, other than he has been acting strange? How can you be sure that his father has something to do with it? Could anything else, say your divorce and the separation of the family, be making your son act strange?
2. Sounds like you're pretty upset about two problems: first, your son and his recent behavior and second, your ex-husband's influence on your son. What specific examples indicate your son is taking drugs?
3. It's really a disturbing feeling when you think your son is doing something that might be harmful to him. It's doubly disturbing when you think your ex-husband might be involved.
4. Divorce in a family sometimes causes all sorts of hassles. How long has it been since you and your husband were divorced?

Excerpt 11

Helpee: I'm in sort of a bind—I don't know if you can help me, but, well I've gotten very interested in my roommate's old fiancé. Since he and I have started to become friends she has been treating me very coolly. We were good friends before she moved in, too. I asked her if it bothered her, but she says no. I don't think she has the right to tell me who to see, but I don't want to jeopardize our friendship.

Helper Responses:

1. So you want to continue seeing the guy but don't want your relationship with your roommate to suffer?
2. Have you really talked to your roommate in depth about this?
3. I can see the conflict. If you and your roommate are really being truthful with each other, maybe the problem isn't the fact that you are dating the guy, but how tactfully you handle the situation.
4. She sounds like she is really a sore loser.

Excerpt 12

Helpee: I guess you don't deal in this area, but I couldn't think of anybody else. I live in ----Hall and I have been here a quarter. My roommate and I have gone on a diet together. She is built like Racquel Welch but I've got about 50 pounds to go. She's always getting me dates with gorgeous boys, but they never call back. I want to meet a nice boy; I guess one who doesn't mind fat.

Helper's Responses:

1. It's good that you are working to look your best. But it sounds like you're hurt because guys don't take time to get to know *you*, to look beyond the surface.
2. Could you tell me how much you weigh and how tall you are?
3. Have you tried Weight Watchers? They have an excellent, healthy diet program that's practically foolproof.
4. It sounds like you realize it will take a while to get your weight down, but you want to have fun and date while you're doing it.

Excerpt 13

Helpee: I want to quit school; I'm tired of being broke and having a rundown car and a crappy apartment. I want some of the things that I feel I deserve. Even when I graduate I won't be able to get any better job than I can right now. I don't see why I should waste another year. I do enjoy studying and learning, but I can't stand the constant hassle with money. I'm here on financial aid, so if I quit I probably won't ever be able to come back. I'm also so tired of this place. I figure if I have to stay here one more year, I'll never make it.

Helper Responses:

1. Is there any reason why you should have to finish school at this particular university?
2. Have you looked into any alternatives to being a poverty-stricken college student in any detail?
3. I know what you mean. It's really a rotten situation to be in.
4. You've really got a lot on your mind. Could you tell me more about where you stand in school or what the money hassle involves?

Excerpt 14

Helpee: Hi! I'm going to have a baby! Don't get shook. I'm happily married, have been for four years and we have been trying so hard for so long. It finally worked! I'm pregnant!! Since I'm sure now, I'm going to tell Jerry tonight over a candlelight dinner, his favourite dish and the whole works. I'm so happy, isn't it fantastic?

Helper's Responses:

1. That's great! It *must* be fantastic feeling to know you're going to have a baby, something you've wanted so long come true.
2. Are you sure your husband wants a baby just now?
3. It sure does sound fantastic. This is a great day for you and your husband. You'll be making a lot of new plans now, I expect
4. Pregnancy can really be a great experience. Now you and your husband will have to make some decisions regarding how to have the baby and raise it.

Excerpt 15

Helpee: I'm having problems with my boyfriend. We've been getting pretty intimate lately, and all that is left is going all the way. I'm not sure it's what I want to do because I've always wanted to be a virgin when I got married, but it's awfully tempting. I've been brought up to believe that sex outside of marriage is wrong, but how can it be wrong when I love him so much? He doesn't understand this and is getting very impatient because I won't go all the way. I'm afraid I'll lose him if I don't, but I'm afraid I'll hate myself if I do.

Helper Responses:

1. Are you afraid of sex? Sometimes these things happen when people feel inhibited about their inner emotions
2. It sounds like you don't know which is more important, pleasing your boyfriend and possibly yourself, or possibly losing your boyfriend for the values that even *you* are questioning
3. That must really be a confusing situation to be in, not to know which way to go in such an important situation.
4. Why would you hate yourself for going all the way if you love him the way you say you do?

Excerpt 16

Helpee: I've been running into some people that are really messing me up. It seems like for the last few months I have been meeting nothing but Jesus freaks, the type that say "hi" and then ask if you have accepted Christ. The first few times it was interesting to rap with them, but now I'm getting tired of it, but I don't know how to politely tell them to shut up. They always end up with a rap about how stupid people are who don't accept Christ and how we were really missing out on something. At the same time, I am not sure I want to make the commitment, and I hate having it shoved down my throat.

Helper Responses:

1. Sounds like you're frustrated with two problems: one, how to deal with people you don't want to be involved with and two, how to deal with yourself, your own feelings. Let's discuss it and see if we can come up with some alternatives.
2. Why don't you tell them to be quiet and leave you alone? You don't have to let them lecture to you.
3. Do you believe in God?
4. Sounds like you're having some problems determining if you can deal with these people and with yourself as well.

Scoring Guide

Take the difference between the overall rating and the applicant's response for each helper response. Higher scores are worse.

Helpee Expression	Helper Response	Facilitation	Action Orientation	Overall Rating
1	1	High	High	3.5
	2	Low	Low	1.0
	3	Low	High	2.0
	4	High	Low	3.0
2	1	Low	High	1.5
	2	High	Low	3.0
	3	Low	Low	1.0
	4	High	High	4.0
3	1	Low	Low	1.0
	2	High	High	3.5
	3	Low	High	1.5
4	4	High	Low	2.5
	1	Low	Low	1.0
	2	Low	High	1.5
	3	High	High	3.0
	4	High	Low	2.5
5	1	High	Low	2.5
	2	Low	Low	1.0
	3	High	High	3.5
	4	Low	High	1.5
6	1	Low	High	1.5
	2	High	High	3.5
	3	Low	Low	1.5
	4	High	Low	2.0
7	1	High	High	3.0
	2	Low	High	1.5
	3	Low	Low	1.0
	4	High	Low	2.5
8	1	Low	Low	1.0
	2	Low	High	1.5
	3	High	Low	2.0
	4	High	High	3.0
9	1	High	High	3.5
	2	High	Low	3.0
	3	Low	High	2.0
	4	Low	Low	1.0
10	1	Low	High	1.5
	2	High	High	3.0
	3	High	Low	3.0
	4	Low	Low	1.0

11	1	High	Low	2.5
	2	Low	High	1.5
	3	High	High	3.5
	4	Low	Low	1.0
12	1	High	High	3.5
	2	Low	Low	1.0
	3	Low	High	1.5
	4	High	Low	3.0
13	1	Low	Low	1.0
	2	Low	High	1.5
	3	High	Low	2.0
	4	High	High	3.0
14	1	High	Low	3.0
	2	Low	Low	1.0
	3	High	High	3.5
	4	Low	High	2.0
15	1	Low	Low	1.0
	2	High	High	3.0
	3	High	Low	2.0
	4	Low	High	1.5
16	1	High	High	3.5
	2	Low	High	1.5
	3	Low	Low	1.0
	4	High	Low	3.0