THE DIFFERENCE GAME

NEEDS ASSESSMENT SCALE INSTRUCTIONS

Introduce the Difference Game this way:

A minimum of 30 minutes should be allowed for administration.

Bring out the cards and say:

“This is what we call the Difference Game. Each of the cards says, ‘It would make a difference in my life if I had:’ and contains something that might make a difference in your life, for example ‘More education’.” Show the client a sample card.

“I’d like you to divide the cards into two piles. Make one pile of things that would not make a difference in your life, which we’ll call the ‘no pile.’ These may be things that you already have or things you are not interested in having. The other pile is the ‘yes pile;’ things you need or want that would currently make a difference for you if you had them. Please base your choices on what’s important to you, not to someone else or because society values it. Also, don’t exclude things because they’re too expensive or hard to get.”

2. Allow the client to study, sort and resort the cards at her own pace. After the cards are in two piles, put the ‘no pile’ away. Then ask client to choose the five most important cards, those needs that would make the most difference in her life.

3. Once she has selected the top five, ask her to put these five in order of importance, with #1 being her first choice, and so on.

4. Have a conversation with the client. There is a story behind each card selected, and the cards can help elicit that story. Let the game be an interactive method of information gathering, eliciting spontaneous feedback from the client and permitting an understanding of how a client thinks and prioritizes. Use the top 5 cards as the basis for discussing the client’s present situation and needs, for identifying specific goals, and for planning a course of action that will “make a difference.”

5. Use the Data Entry Assessment Form to record card selections after each sorting stage. Information on the form can be used clinically on an individual basis, or information can be data-entered so group data can be evaluated using simple frequencies.

DIRECTIONS FOR CREATING DIFFERENCE GAME CARDS

USING THE ATTACHED TEMPLATE

Using colored paper, make two-sided copies of the cards using the template provided.

Have the cards cut out and laminated.