

Consider the following exchange between counsellor and client.

*Client:* When I went to pick up my kid from school the other day, I walked up to a group of moms who were waiting outside the school, and none of them acknowledged me. I tried to enter the conversation, but it was clear that I was not welcome.

*Counsellor thoughts:* I really feel for this guy who is now working as a stay-at-home dad. It must be really hard to find ways to connect with other people for whom this is a new experience as well. What would he talk about with these moms?

*Counsellor verbalization:* What happened when you tried to engage with them that gave you the impression they didn't want to talk with you?

The counsellor's question may be appropriate if the purpose is to gather information; however, the counsellor's empathic response remains invisible to the client.

*Client:* It wasn't so much what they said as their body language. You can just tell when you aren't welcome. I love spending more time with my kids, but I really miss hanging with the guys at work and shooting the breeze with them.

*Counsellor verbalization:* You are longing for some adult connection, and it is disappointing and hurtful when you are excluded.

*Client:* Yes, I feel more alone in this new journey, because I can't seem to find my way into the world of other adults who are caring for kids full time.