



Counselors Can Help Introverts by Championing their Gifts

How to Establish & Maintain Rapport with Innies of all Ages

“I yam what I yam”

...Popeye

It is important to understand introverts because they enter counseling more often and stay longer than extroverts if the therapist match is good. Since their temperament is in the minority, they are usually misunderstood. They often grow up feeling like they should be extroverts, unaware of their introvert gifts. If the counselor is aware of temperament differences it can greatly improve the therapist-client match.

How to Spot an Innie

- Better eye contact when listening, may look away when speaking
- Prefers to observe before joining in
- Reflects before speaking
- Only thinks of a few people as friends
- Good in one-on-one conversations, more difficulty in large crowds
- Energized by down time in peace and quiet
- Speaks slowly, with pauses, and may hunt for words
- Listens more than speaks when out in the world

How to Spot an Outie

- Better eye contact when speaking, may look away when listening
- Likes to be in the thick of things
- Speaks to think
- Knows lots of “friends”
- Good at party patter
- Energized by activity
- Speaks and acts quickly
- Speaks more than listens when out in the world

Introverted Advantages and Gifts

These are only a *few* on the hard-wired gifts introverts possess. They require interacting with another person in order to develop fully.

- Thinks creatively and solves problems with out-of-the-box solutions
- Notices details and absorbs lots of information
- Notices their own and others behaviors
- Aware of their internal world
- Often much smarter than they realize
- Concentrates deeply and persists on projects of interest

Developing Rapport with Innies of all Ages

- Match their pace: go slower, speak softer, sit further away, don't interrupt and tolerate silences
- Respect their natural reserve, explain to innies that their temperament is hard wired
- If they can't think of an answer remind them it will bubble up soon, or later
- Ask if they have thoughts or feelings about their last session
- Show interest in their internal world & comment on yours
- Don't pathologize being introverted, it's not the same as shyness or having a schizoid personality

Helping Introverts Thrive in an Extrovert World

- Explain why its wonderful to be an innie, why the world needs to hear from them
- Clarify their innate gifts and discuss their challenges
- Educate them about why all of their behaviors and qualities make sense
- Describe that they need to take breaks to renew their energy
- Explain that everything they do in the outside world depletes their energy
- Remind them that extroverts will listen better if innies learn to speak "outie"

About the Author

Marti Olsen Laney, MFT, Psy.D., an introvert herself, combined over twenty five years of clinical experience, interviews, the latest research from neuroscience and related disciplines to piece together the physiological reasons why introverts and extroverts behave differently and how each personality type can thrive by learning and appreciating their differences. She has written two books on this subject:

The Introvert Advantage: How to Thrive in an Extrovert World

***The Hidden Gifts of the Introverted Child:
Helping Your Child Thrive in an Extroverted World***

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