



PRINCIPLES OF COUNSELLING

Principle 1: Establish and maintain a relationship with client

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Establishing and maintaining a collaborative relationship with a client is essential in order to achieve desired positive outcomes that are resolutions of the problems that bring the client for therapy.

This can begin by creating a welcoming environment and should continue through every stage of the counselling encounter which involves:

External preparation: Irrespective of where the counselling takes place , it is important to observe some basic **criteria(comfort, minimal distractions, privacy and physical/psychological security for both client and counsellor)**

Internal preparation: **Self-knowledge for counselors is non- negotiable. It involves knowing likes/ dislikes, values, vulnerabilities, fears, insecurities, pre-conceived ideas about certain people and blind spots. It also involves a commitment to continuously working on the self**

Principle 2: **Assess the Client's Needs and Personalize Discussions Accordingly**

Every visit that a client makes with the counsellor is tailored to the clients' circumstances and needs. Clients seek counselling with varying needs and issues which may include but not limited to:

- ☐ To gain insight into the origins and development of emotional difficulties
- ☐ Inability to form and maintain meaningful and satisfying relationships
- ☐ Family related issues
- ☐ Substance Use Disorders and other addictive behaviours(Process addictions)
- ☐ Depression and Anxiety related disorders
- ☐ Loss, trauma and life crisis
- ☐ Acquiring social and interpersonal skills, managing negative emotions, becoming assertive.
- ☐ Identity concerns-Self-acceptance and a positive sense of self.
- ☐ Work and career related issues/concerns

Principle 3: **Work with client interactively to establish a plan**

This involves:

- ❑ Setting goals collaboratively
- ❑ Discussing possible difficulties associated with achieving the goals and,
- ❑ Developing action plans to deal with potential difficulties.

The amount of time spent in establishing a plan will differ from one client to the next depending on the client's capacity to understand their particular problem situation and the factors that generate and maintain the problem

A clients plan that requires behavioral change, for example, should be made on the basis of the clients own goals, interests and readiness for change.

Principle 4: **Provide Client With Information**

Clients need information that is:

☐ relevant

☐ accurate

☐ balanced

☐ non-judgmental

The information provided to the client should help them make informed decisions and follow through on developed plans.

When speaking with clients, the counsellor must present information in a manner that can be readily understood and retained by the client.

Counsellors need to avoid information overload....recognize that most of them are overwhelmed by other concerns.

Principle 5: **Confirm Client Understanding**

- ❑ It's important to ensure that clients have processed the information provided and discussed.
- ❑ One technique for confirming understanding is to have the client restate the most important messages in their own words.
- ❑ This teach-back method can increase the likelihood of the client and counsellor reaching a mutual/shared understanding. This enhances the development of trust and confidence.
- ❑ Using the teach-back method early in the decision making process will help ensure that a client has the opportunity to understand their options and making informed choices.