

Substance Institute



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Module 13 – Student's Manual The Counseling Process

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Ultimately, counseling is collaborative and requires a series of ongoing steps – some taken by the client, others by the counselor, and several jointly. For a successful outcome, appropriate resources, time, and focus must be given to each one, and every win must be recognized and used to support the next.

12 Valuable Skills for Each Phase

Good communication is vital to all stages of counseling. Skills should ideally include:

- 1) Active listening techniques
- 2) Clarification
- 3) Reflection
- 4) Effective questioning

Beyond that, to build rapport with the client, counselors must also:

- 5) Be able to experience and show empathy (rather than sympathy)
- 6) See things from the client's perspective
- 7) Have a genuine interest in others' wellbeing
- 8) Use self-reflection to observe themselves and empathize with others
- 9) Show accessibility and authenticity during counseling sessions
- 10) Be flexible in their views and thinking regarding differing values and multicultural issues
- 11) Be able to maintain a sense of humor

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12) Be resilient and able to bounce back from difficult situations

A mental health practitioner delivering positive outcomes in increasingly diverse populations benefits from developing theory, knowledge, and skills.

7 Techniques to Train *Your Active Listening Skills*

Technique	Purpose	To achieve it	Examples
Paraphrasing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convey interest • Encourage the speaker to keep talking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restate the information just received with your own words. 	“So, you showed up at the meeting on time.”
Verbalizing emotions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show that you understand • Help the speaker to evaluate their own feelings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflect the speaker’s basic feelings and emotions in words. 	“And this made you really angry.”
Asking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get more information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask questions. 	“And after that, John did not react?”
Summarizing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review progress • Pull together important ideas • Establish a basis for further discussion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restate major ideas expressed, including feelings. 	“These seem to be the key ideas you’ve expressed.”
Clarifying	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarify what is said • Help the speaker see other points of view 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask questions for vague statements. • Restate wrong interpretations to force further explanation. 	“You said that you reacted immediately. Was this still on the same day?”
Encouraging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convey interest • Encourage the speaker to keep talking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disagree. • Use varying intonations. • Offer ideas and suggestions. 	“Then your manager approached you. How did they behave?”
Balancing	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Get more information 2) Help the speaker evaluate their own feelings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask questions. 	“Did you perceive the inconvenience to be worse than not being taken seriously?”

The Stages of the Counseling Process

Counseling Process of each Hour Session - created by Professor Dr. Althea Winifred 9/10/2022			
Minutes	Stages & Steps	Description	Client
00 - 15 minutes	Relationship Building	(Initial disclosure)	<p>Willingness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - process is vital to forming - maintaining an effective counselor - client relationship <p>Commitment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - be willing and motivated, - change will not happen w/o continued patience & commitment - Through acceptance
15 - 20 minutes	Problem Assessment	(In-depth exploration)	<p>Faith</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - having faith in themselves, the counselor, - the process.
20 - 30 minutes	Goal Setting	(Commitment to action)	<p>Motivation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - willing to make changes - engage in them involves maintaining - sustaining motivation.
35 - 45 minutes	Counseling Intervention	Counseling in Perspective	<p>Viewpoint / Outlook</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - moving out of the comfort zone and engaging in new thinking patterns and behaviors
45 - 50 minutes	Evaluation	Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - is the process where the client evaluates your contribution of your services to them.
55 - 59 minutes	Termination & Referral	Termination / Referral	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to conducted with sensitivity with the Client knowing that it will have to end.

While counseling varies in both form and purpose, most counseling theories embody some form of the following three stages (Krishnan, n.d.): relationship building, problem assessment, and goal setting.

Counselors and clients must both be aware that the counseling process requires patience.

- There is rarely a quick fix, and things may need to get worse before they get better.
- The counselor does not fix the client; the work requires interaction and commitment from both parties (Krishnan, n.d.).
- The counseling process is a planned and structured dialogue between client and counselor.
- The counselor is a trained and qualified professional who helps the client identify the source of their concerns or difficulties; then, together, they find counseling approaches to help deal with the problems faced (Krishnan, n.d.).

Stage one: (Initial disclosure) Relationship building

- The counseling process begins with relationship building.
- This stage focuses on the counselor engaging with the client to explore the issues that directly affect them.
- The vital first interview can set the scene for what is to come, with the client reading the counselor's verbal and nonverbal signals to draw inferences about the counselor and the process.
- *The counselor focuses on using good **listening** skills and building a positive relationship.*
- When successful, it ensures a strong foundation for future dialogue and the continuing counseling process.

Stage two: (In-depth exploration) Problem assessment

- While the counselor and client continue to build a beneficial, collaborative relationship, another process is underway: problem assessment.
- *The counselor carefully **listens** and draws out information regarding the client's situation (life, work, home, education, etc.) and the reason they have engaged in counseling.*
- Information crucial to subsequent stages of counseling includes identifying triggers,

timing, environmental factors, stress levels, and other contributing factors.

Stage three: (Commitment to action) Goal setting

- Effective counseling relies on setting appropriate and realistic goals, building on the previous stages.
- The goals must be identified and developed collaboratively, with the client committing to a set of steps leading to a particular outcome.

Stage four: Counseling intervention

- This stage varies depending on the counselor and the theories they are familiar with, as well as the situation the client faces.
- For example, a behavioral approach may suggest engaging in activities designed to help the client alter their behavior.
- In comparison, a person-centered approach seeks to engage the client’s self-actualizing tendency.

SCENARIO - Real-Life Examples of the Counseling Phases

Each client's story is personal and unique.

While there are guiding theories and principles, the counselor must make the counseling process specific to the individual.

The following two real-life examples provide a brief insight into the counseling process and richness of the scenario's counselors face.

SCENARIO - 1 - Lost direction

'Jenny' arrived in counseling with little income, no sense of direction, and lacking a sense of control over her life (Fielding, 2014).

The counselor began by forming a picture of her situation and what had led her to that point.

Sessions then moved on to explore Jenny's beliefs about herself: where they came from, how they affected her, and their appropriateness for current and future circumstances.

A series of brainstorming sessions were used to understand Jenny's needs, family relationships, and past, and identify her irrational beliefs. Once Jenny uncovered her core beliefs, the counselor worked with her to replace them with more rational ones.

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