Introduction

Counseling is a process, as well as a relationship, between persons. Contrary to what some people believe, counseling is not concentrated advice-giving. The aim of the counselor is usually to assist the person or persons (client or clients) to realize a change in behavior or attitude, or to seek achievement of goals. Often there are varieties of problems for which the counselee may seek to find help.

Some forms of counseling include the teaching of social skills, effective communication, spiritual guidance, decision-making and career choices. Counseling may sometimes be needed to aid one in coping with a crisis. Other types of counseling include premarital and marital counseling; grief and loss (divorce, death or amputation); domestic violence and other types of abuse; special counseling situations like terminal illness (death and dying); as well as counseling of emotionally and mentally disturbed individuals. Counseling could be short-term (brief counseling) or long-term.

THE SETTING

- Extremely important to have privacy
- A feeling of emotional and physical safety is necessary
- Simplicity is acceptable but comfort is necessary
- Arrange chairs so client can choose their seat
- Present a calm, pleasant, and prepared appearance

BASIC COUNSELING APPROACHES

- ______________ Therapy
- __________ Therapy
- _________ Therapy
- ___________ Therapy
- __________ Therapy
- ___________ Analysis
- ______________ Therapy
- ______________ Therapy
- _____________ Therapy
- _____________ Therapy
Psychoanalytic Therapy

- Originated by Sigmund Freud
- Belief that behavior is influenced by unconscious motives and conflicts
- Stresses the importance of early development

Alderian Therapy

- Alfred Adler disagreed with Freud’s theories
- Like Freud, Adler believed that the first six years influenced one's life
- Human motivated by social urges

Existential Therapy

- This view leads us to reflect and decide
- This view focuses on the nature of the human condition
- Each person’s personality is seen as unique
- One’s sense of self develops from infancy

Person-centered Therapy

- Original founder was Carl Rogers
- Emphasized how people get, share, or surrender power and control over themselves and others
- Developed non-directive counseling
- Basic techniques – active listening, reflection of feelings, clarification, and “being there” for the counselee

Gestalt Therapy

- Frederick S. Perls originated this theory
- Stresses that people must find their own way in life and accept personal responsibility
- Much focus on dealing with unfinished business from the past
- Emphasis on doing and experiencing

Transactional Analysis (TA)

- Theory founded by Eric Berne
- Focuses on decisions and contracts made by client
- Basic philosophy is that the client has the potential for choice
- Key words - game, decision, life script, re-decision, stroke, discounting
Behavior Therapy

- Most studied and most familiar of all counseling approaches
- Frequently used terms – behavior modification, behavior therapy
- Therapist functions as teacher or trainer

Rational Emotive Therapy

- Albert Ellis is the founder
- Based on the assumptions that humans are born with potential for both rational and irrational thinking
- Emphasizes thinking, judging, deciding, and doing
- Belief that people have the ability to change their behavior

Reality Therapy

- Founded by William Glasser
- Focuses on the present and the person’s strengths
- Assumes that we choose our behavior and are responsible for our behavior, thoughts, and feelings
- Use of contracts to cause change in behavior

THE CLIENT

Strategies for dealing with the reluctant client:

- Refuse to consider yourself the target of the reluctance
- Show confidence and do not be intimidated
- Do not ignore the feelings of a client
- Try to interpret the reasons for the reluctance and use these as an opportunity for teaching the client greater self-understanding.
- Show the client that counseling helps one to deal with feelings even if they are uncomfortable.
- Patient exploration of the client’s behavior can help reduce the reluctance.
- Go straight to work on eliminating barriers.

Profile of a Counselor

- Have an identity
- Appreciate the worth God has placed on you
- Be open to change
Develop your own counseling style
Be open, sincere, and honest
Develop your sense of humor
Be sensitive to people’s culture
Be an optimist
Enjoy life
Have a caring spirit
Have a reputation for confidentiality
Be sensitive to human relationships
Have an objective attitude
Do not display a passion to reform everyone
Be natural
Show confidence in people and in their potential for growth
Be a listener
Observe boundaries
Keep God as your Guide

Types of Counseling

Supportive Counseling is most often used with people who have difficulty standing alone amid their problems. In supportive counseling, the goal is not to create a chronic dependency upon the counselor, but to give temporary support and help the person to gain strength and the resources to cope.

Confrontational Counseling seeks to point out to the client his or her actions. The counselor guides the counselee into seeing what misdeeds were committed and to realize the hurt that might have been caused to others. The idea is that hiding one’s immoral actions only creates guilt, frustration, and anxiety. As a Christian, the counselor must help the client to confess, forsake his/her sins and accept the forgiveness of a loving Savior.

Educative Counseling focuses on teaching the client. Undesirable learned behavior may have to be unlearned. The counselor in this case is a teacher. People may come to the counselor with questions on social issues, religious issues, or even career problems. Often some clients may need help in making certain critical decisions.

Preventive Counseling is used to stop problems before they start or to prevent things from getting worse. Areas like “How to Keep Healthy,” “How to Prepare for Retirement,” or sessions in premarital counseling are examples of preventive counseling.
Spiritual Counseling is a great necessity, and the Christian often seeks the opportunity to show persons the way to Christ. Sometimes there will be persons who want to find spiritual answers. People may be seeking for a purpose in life. This is a chance for the Christian counselor to lead them to the Bible and to pray with them. Sometimes, through spiritual counseling the counselor may discover that the client also has some psychological issues that need to be dealt with.

Depth Counseling is a long-term relationship in which deep-seated problems of the counselee are uncovered and dealt with in detail. The counseling process is extended and demands the skills of a counseling professional. This type of counseling is not for the layperson. Do not play around with depth counseling if you are not a professional therapist!

Informal Counseling takes place in a casual setting. Perhaps on a hospital visit, or during an informal home visit, the counselor may be drawn into a conversation where their help might be asked for. Or you may meet a friend on the street and ask, “How are you today?” Then you may be told of a problem that he or she is experiencing. Your time and concern could be of help at that time. Informal counseling may not seem very important, but it has helped many.

Counseling Plan of Action

1. Define the problem
   a. Respect for the client.
   b. Genuineness in our dealings.
   c. Empathy shows an understanding of our client’s feelings.
   d. Concreteness is the art of keeping the client on the problem.

2. Establish goals
   a. Advanced empathy helps the client to go deeper into their feelings
   b. Self-disclosure in which you let the client see you as a human being with problems and struggles.
   c. Confrontation is the skill of being able to challenge attitudes, behaviors, and the beliefs of the client.
   d. Immediacy is the ability to focus on the here and now.

3. Behavior Change
   a. Identify the circumstances in which the undesirable habits occur.
   b. Control those circumstances by avoiding or eliminating factors that reinforce the behavior.
   c. Substitute desirable behaviors in place of the undesirable ones.
ETHICAL ISSUES IN COUNSELING

- It is of utmost importance that a counselor pays strict attention to ethics in counseling.
- Ethics refer to good and bad practices in counseling.

The Rights of the Client

- Right of informed consent
- Rights of minors
- Right of referral
- Duty to warn and protect

SOCIAL AND PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS WITH CLIENTS

- How can a counselor balance a friendship with a therapeutic relationship?
- Referred to as “dual relationships”
- Beware of exploitation

TOUCHING A CLIENT

Here are some suggested guidelines for using touching:

- In cases of counseling socially and emotionally immature clients
- In counseling people in crisis e.g. grief or trauma
- In giving general emotional support
- In greeting or at the end of a session

WHAT ABOUT SUICIDAL CLIENTS?

Signs of Suicide

- Giving away prized possessions
- Making and discussing suicide plans
- Previous suicide attempts or gestures
- Expressions of hopelessness and helplessness
- Statements that family and friends would not miss them
- Sudden positive behavior change following a period of depression
What to do if a client threatens suicide:

- Disarm the client and remove all weapons or poisonous substances.
- Recommend a frequency of counseling sessions.
- Arrange a method for the client to call you frequently between sessions so that his or her emotional state can be monitored.
- Urge the client to seek medical help and hospitalization.
- Do not underestimate the power of prayer.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Circumstances for breaking confidentiality:

- When clients pose a danger to themselves
- When the therapist believes that a client under the age of 16 has been the victim of rape, incest, child abuse, or some other crime
- When the counselor determines that the client needs hospitalization
- When information is made an issue in a court case

COUNSELING STEP-BY-STEP

Now that we have outlined some technical information, let us review some of what we have studied:

1. Pray daily for the guidance of the Holy Spirit.
2. Secure a room that is neat and comfortable.
3. Pay attention to the furniture, lighting, and privacy.
4. Have a system to record information about the client (name, sex, address, telephone number, email address, date of birth, marital status, occupation etc.). This gives a bit of a background and makes it easy for you to contact the client if you need to.
5. At the beginning of the session, greet the counselee in a friendly manner. Do not be over friendly or bubbly. Be natural and professional. Keep your professional stance throughout the sessions.
6. Introduce the counseling session with a few general questions like, “How are you today?” “Did you have difficulty finding my place?” You may also say something like, “So, what brings you here today?” Master the art of asking open-ended questions during the sessions. (Instead of asking “Do you think that was a fair statement?” Ask, “What were your feelings about that statement your husband made?”)
7. Affirm the client and put him or her at ease by remarking, “I would like to congratulate you for deciding to come so that we could work on your situation.”
8. Share your confidentiality rules with the client. "I assure you that our counseling relationship would be very confidential. I will not share anything you tell me unless it involves hurting yourself or another, or if the information you give is required by law for me to reveal." (The information is listed in a previous section, explaining what cannot be kept confidential).

9. Inform the client of what he or she could expect from you (including the right to refer).

10. Do not be afraid to state that your approach is Bible-based.

11. Listen to the problem carefully before coming to any conclusions.

12. Be careful not to take sides. Instant blaming or endorsing clouds objectivity.

13. Show a deep interest in what the client is saying and ask questions for clarification.

14. Try to identify the problem. Three basic questions in counseling are the following: "What is going on?" "How do you feel about it?" "Do you want to change?"

15. Ask questions like "How does that make you feel?" "What would you like us to accomplish here?" It is a good idea to encourage the client to set some goals. Avoid advice giving. You are merely to help the clients arrive at the decisions regarding the actions they should take.

16. Avoid sounding judgmental in your approach.

17. Listen, listen, listen.

18. If the client is silent after you ask him or her a question, do not become impatient. Wait patiently until the client answers. Silence is okay.

19. Do not become uncomfortable if your client cries. It is okay. You need to try to control your emotions, however.

20. Observe ethical standards at all times. Inappropriate touching, sexual suggestions or anything that is suggestive is wrong. A hands-off policy, especially with clients of the opposite sex, is required. (Study once more the section on ethics and sexual contact).

21. Refer if you notice that you cannot handle the situation. Do not attempt to deal with problems that require depth counseling. (Study once more the section that explains this).

22. Always remember that you are not God. There are some problems that only God can fix. Teach the client to turn over the situation to God (James 1:5).

23. Keep the Bible handy for any texts you may need as resources. Point the client to Jesus, the Wonderful Counselor (Isa. 9:6). (See Appendix II for some Bible references).

24. Pray in your heart throughout the session.

26. Pray with the client at the end.

**Conclusion**

- Christian counseling is a ministry
- Christian counselors are unique
- Christian counselors see their client as a soul to be saved