

## Assignment 1

### 1. Briefly describe in your own words what the term 'counseling' means

When a Counselor sees a Client on their own free will. The setting is private and Confidential ensuring there are no distractions, the Counselor must be focused solely on the speaker. The Client could be seeking help for a difficulty they may be having or generally feel distressed or dissatisfied with life. The Counselor does not take control of the conversations during the sessions, doing this may stop the Client gaining control of their life. Instead the Counselor is there to be supportive and listen to the clients needs. This will help the Client come to terms with their problems and identify what is troubling them and how they can understand and resolve the issues.

### 2. What Factors may make it difficult for a client to commit to counseling? What could you do to help overcome these barriers?

People seek counseling in times of difficulty or self-improvement. When speaking of such private situations or changes people often build up a negative feeling of what they believe counseling is and if they even need it at all. Clients may also find that seeking help through counseling is embarrassing and may shy away from giving too much information to the counselor. This can be through their own judgment or how partners or family members negative views are shown. These views are barriers towards seeking support from a counselor as people feel that they are being judged as "weak" and believe counseling is "a waste of time". A relationship between a counselor and client must be essential in order for the client to express their thoughts and feelings openly which otherwise they would find impossible with family or friends. Communication must be effective to help the counselor understand the clients experience from their prospective. For this CORE conditions are used.

3. What are 'core counseling skills'? Briefly describe each one.

Core counseling skills are three qualities or conditions all counselors should have in order to make a relationship between client and counselor more significant. These qualities are Genuineness, Acceptance and Empathy.

Ashley Heslop (2006:89)" Genuineness refers to a set of counselor attitudes and behaviors essential to high level counseling process" the counselor is himself/herself and is comfortable when interacting with the client, still showing the upmost respect. This means the Counselor does not have to change or adapt in order to be accepted by the client as they feel they are being heard and understood.

Acceptance is the reality of a situation, which is sometimes negative or uncomfortable without attempting to change it. During counseling sessions the counselor may speak to the client who has many different beliefs, cultures and perspectives on life, which the counselor may not agree with. Acceptance is putting your own thoughts to one side and listening to what others have to say, accepting they have a different opinion to you.

Empathy is to understand and share the feelings of others. Empathy is more a sense that a counselor can truly imagine the depth of the client's feelings. This would imply feeling with a client rather than feeling sorry for the client. In order for the counselor to understand the feelings of others they must form a closeness rather than distance, this way there is little distinction between the client suffering and the counselor attempting to understand the suffering. The counselor must be aware not to get caught up into the emotional state of the client so distance still needs to be maintained.

4. In your opinion, what are the most important skills required for effective counselling? Justify your answer.

In my opinion effective counselors show the ability to appreciate a client and build a positive therapeutic alliance of which confident relationships are formed and the client is aware that the counselor is listening to them. The counselor listens to the client and is focused solely on him or her maintaining that focus for a given length of time. Body language and position are also key for full concentration on the client's issues. The counselor will show a nurturing behavior towards the client but also has to be self aware whilst identifying issues or topics that may be difficult to them, this could lead them to being inattentive.

5. Think about a time when you helped someone. Write a transcript of what happened and identify any particular counseling skills you employed. You should also make reference to SOLER within your answer.

My friend had been separated from her husband for about two years when she fell for a fellow colleague at work. They seemed to get on and have a lot in common as he had also had a separation from his wife. As time went on their relationship developed and they would go out on day trips and long weekends away together. At this time my friend seemed on top of the world, very much falling for this man who seemed to treat her with the love and respect she deserved. I received a call one day from her in tears and I asked what was wrong. It seemed this man who was thoughtful, caring and a gentleman had been continuing to have a relationship with his wife. He had said they were going to give it another go. At this point my friend was beside herself, having had little confidence, as it was it had now all been crushed. I called round to see her, sat her down and told her to relax. I sat opposite her and made sure I had my arms unfolded and was making eye contact. I asked her to tell me how she was feeling; I wanted her to open up to me and for me just to listen to what she had to say. I noticed a lot of anger as well as sadness in her voice. Our conversation lasted roughly an hour and towards the end I had noticed that she had relaxed more. It was going to be a while for her to get her confidence back completely but me having been there to talk through it and listen made her realize that she

doesn't have to deal with this sadness on her own. We still continue to meet each week and every time I see her I notice how much more her confidence has grown.