

Stages of Counseling

- **Relationship building:** The first step involves building a relationship and focuses on engaging clients to explore issue that directly affect them. The first interview is important because the client is reading the verbal and nonverbal messages and make inferences about the counselor and the counseling situation.
- **Problem assessment:** While the counselor and the client are in the process of establishing a relationship, a second process is taking place, i.e. problem assessment. This step involves the collection and clasification of information about the client's life situation and reasons for seeking counseling.
- **Goal setting:** Counseling must have a focus. Goals are the results or outcomes that client wants to achieve at the end of counselling. Sometimes, both counselor and client complain that the counseling session is going nowhere. This is where goals play an important role in giving direction.
- **Counseling intervention:** There are different points of view concerning what a good counselor should do with clients depending on the theoretical positions that the counselor subscribes to.
- **Evaluation, termination, or referral:** For the beginning counselor, it is difficult to think of terminating the counseling process, as they are more concerned with beginning the counseling process. Terminating the counseling process will have to be conducted with sensitivity with the client knowing that it will have to end. Counselor always mindful of avoiding fostering dependency and is aware of own needs. Preparation for termination begins long before. Termination considered not just at end of successful relationship, but also is considered when it seems counseling is not being helpful. Think of this as a means of empowering client.

Aspect	Counseling	Clinical Psychology	Psychotherapy	Guidance	Advising
Meaning	A process focused on enhancing personal and interpersonal functioning across the lifespan.	A branch of psychology that focuses on diagnosing and treating mental, emotional, and behavioral disorders.	A therapeutic treatment process that helps individuals deal with psychological issues and improve mental health.	Providing direction or advice to help someone with a specific problem or to make decisions.	Offering recommendations or suggestions based on expertise in a specific area.
Focus	Personal, educational, and career issues	Mental health disorders and psychopathology	Emotional and psychological issues	Educational and career planning	Providing specific information and recommendations
Scope	Broad, can include life skills and decision making	Broad, with emphasis on diagnosing and treating mental illnesses	Deep, addressing underlying psychological issues	Narrower, often related to academics or careers	Narrow, often situational or problem-specific
Approach	Client-centered, developmental, preventive	Diagnostic, therapeutic, often research-based	Therapeutic, often involving specific techniques like CBT, psychoanalysis	Developmental, preventive, educational	Informative, directive
Typical Settings	Schools, private practice, community centers	Hospitals, clinics, private practice	Private practice, hospitals, clinics	Schools, colleges, career centers	Schools, universities, workplaces
Duration	Short to medium-term.	Medium to long-term.	Varies from short-term to long-term.	Short to medium-term.	Typically short-term or situational.
Examples of Issues Addressed	Stress management, relationship issues, career decisions	Depression, anxiety disorders, schizophrenia	Trauma, phobias, relationship issues	Academic choices, career paths, educational goals	Course selection, career advice, workplace issues

Characteristics of Effective Counselor

- Curiosity and inquisitiveness—a natural interest in people
- Ability to listen—the ability to find listening stimulating
- Comfort with conversation—enjoyment of verbal exchanges
- Ability to laugh
- Realistic perspective and enjoy life
- Cultural-sensitivity
- Introspection—the ability to see or feel from within
- Tolerance of intimacy—the ability to sustain emotional closeness
- Empathy and understanding—the ability to put oneself in another's place, even if that person is totally different from you
- Emotional insightfulness—comfort dealing with a wide range of feelings, from anger to joy
- openness and courage to adapt to various situations.
- Capacity for self-denial—the ability to set aside personal needs to listen and take care of others' needs first
- Comfort with power—the acceptance of power with a certain degree of detachment
- Intellectual competence—the desire and ability to learn as well as think fast and creatively



- Energy—the ability to be active in sessions and sustain that activity even when one sees a number of clients in a row
- Flexibility—the ability to adapt what one does to meet clients' needs
- Support—the capacity to encourage clients in making their own decisions while helping to engender hope
- Goodwill—the desire to work on behalf of clients in a constructive way that ethically promotes independence
- Self-awareness—a knowledge of self, including attitudes, values, and feelings and the ability to recognize how and what factors affect oneself
- genuine, sincere, and honest
- live in the present moment
- able to balance their personal and professional life
- care, concern for the welfare of others

Dysfunctional motivators for becoming a counselor include the following:

- Emotional distress—individuals who have unresolved personal traumas
- Vicarious coping—persons who live their lives through others rather than have meaningful lives of their own
- Loneliness and isolation—individuals who do not have friends and seek them through counseling experiences
- A desire for power—people who feel frightened and impotent in their lives and seek to control others
- A need for love—individuals who are narcissistic and grandiose and believe that all problems are resolved through the expression of love and tenderness
- Vicarious rebellion

Techniques to apply to deal with fatigue and burnout are seen commonly among the counselors

- Being in contact with healthy people
- Identifying the stressors and relaxers for self
- Engaging in personal therapy
- Be clear about counselling roles and expectations
- Balancing commitment to personal and professional life
- Setting aside some 'me-time'
- Believing in optimism and hope Cultivating an attitude of detached concern

Goals of Counseling

❖ Immediate goals

It aims at addressing and resolving the immediate concerns and sufferings of the client.

❖ Long-term goals

It refers to the goals going beyond the immediate problems and anxieties of the client. It focuses on how the client needs to be ultimately, that is, utilizing all the potentials, being independent and capable.

- Self actualization
- Self realization
- Fully functioning
- Good mental health

❖ Process goals

It refers to achieving a conducive Counselling environment or therapeutic climate that will facilitate obtaining the immediate and long-term goals. It talks about dealing with clients' anxiety, inhibition, resistance during sessions.

Goals

- Improved self esteem
- Self resistance and autonomy
- Genuiness
- Resolution of Problems
- Spontaneity
- Improving Personal Effectiveness
- Self awareness and being
- Trust in own decision making
- Self and social responsibility
- Achieving mature, healthy personality with positive mental health
- To encourage people to be motivated by educational objectives.
- Assists in resolving issues (anxiety, fear, attitude etc)
- Enhancing one's own effectiveness to achieve the goals and objectives
- To promote the development of healthier attitudes, behaviours, strategies, etc
- To acquire abilities for greater behavioural adjustments for efficient learning.
- To focus on feelings, experiences or behavior, with a goal of facilitating positive change.
- To develop insight, self awareness, and self acceptance.

The goals include restructuring the personality, uncovering the unconscious, creating social interest, finding meaning in life, curing an emotional disturbance, examining old decisions and making new ones, developing trust in oneself, becoming more self-actualizing, reducing anxiety, reducing maladaptive behavior and learning adaptive patterns, becoming grounded in the present moment, managing intense emotions, gaining more effective control of one's life, and reauthoring the story of one's life.

Scope of Counseling

- **Work Areas:** The scope for counselors/ counseling psychologists are in schools, work places, mediating family problems, stress management, mental health units. The scopes for clinical psychologists are in private practice and hospitals. There is always the added scope of research and/or teaching in some college/university.
- **People of all sectors:** Counseling Psychologists serve persons of all ages and cultural backgrounds in individual, group (including couples and families), workplace, organizational, institutional, and community settings.
- They work with groups and communities to assist them in addressing or preventing problems, as well as to improve the personal and interpersonal functioning of individual members.
- **Behavior Modification:** The most important area of counseling is thought and behaviour modification. To identify and correct the behavior problem, with basic behavioral concepts such as conditioning, reinforcement, de-conditioning, de-sensitization, and transfer of learning.
- **Specific problem focus:** The scope of counseling in the child counseling, pre-marital counseling, marriage counseling, family counseling, Interpersonal relationship, adjustment problems, age related problems, group counseling, client–centered counseling, crisis intervention counseling.
- **Life span developmental focus:** the counselor can work for helping the developmental problems including psychological , emotional , cognitive and social..
- **Education Carrer counseling:** It is the area of counseling where it ensures helping and act as a guidance for students who face conflicts and confusions in these areas.
- **Life-Challenges counseling:** It mainly focused on differently-abled and their families, alcoholism, substance abuse, suicide-prone person, sexual harassment, and terminally-ill persons.

Expectations of Counseling

- Counsellors must have firm **faith in human potential for self-growth** in every counsellee. During counselling process counsellor himself try to discover and enhance this inner potential for self-growth in every counsellee.
- Every individual has basic usage for forward growth and move up toward **self-actualization**.
- Counsellees must be given '**freedom of choice**' for their own action plans for self growth.
- The 'freedom for own choice' also puts the ones for responsibility for outcome action on the counsellee, thus the counsellee learns to indulge in 'responsible actions'. Gradually, he becomes '**socially responsible**' person also. Every individual in this world is capable of taking responsibilities for themselves.
- Counsellor must have faith in possibility of '**behaviour modification**',
 - (a) in most rigid and/or resistant persons also,
 - (b) as well as in most rigid and long duration problems and habits also.
- Every person has the potential to learn a true sense of '**Existence as his Being**'.
- Every person has the capacity to grow more and more mature and have heal personality with good mental health, to '**Become a 'Fully Functioning Person**'.
- Every individual has a right to choose their own path, based on the principles of democracy.
- Objectivity & co-ordination between counsellor & the client during the counselling experience.
- The client is active & the counsellor remains passive in the beginning.
- The counsellor makes use of all the tools & methods in his armour.

Group counselling is based on certain assumptions

- Individuals possess the necessary talent capacity to **trust and to be trusted** by other group members. They should exhibit a basic concern for others in the group. This encourages group cohesion and provides an atmosphere of support and security for each members of the group to experience and share individual problems.
- Each individual has the potential to take **responsibility for self change**. On the other hand the individual feels that his life is controlled by others, he will not be left with any alternatives but take recourse to disruptive behaviour.
- Group members can learn and understand from the **objectives and methodology of group process**. The objective is to reform the members and not to make them conform.

Ethical issues in Counseling

- Ethics are a philosophical discipline that is concerned with human conduct and moral decision making. (Van Hoose & Kottler, 1985, p.2)
- Ethics are normative in nature.
- Ethics focus on principles and standards that govern relationships between individuals.
- The law dictates what is legal and not what is ethical.
- Sometimes what is legal is considered as immoral by the society.

- The American Counselling Association provides Code of Ethics in the following areas of professional practice,
 - The counselling relationship
 - Confidentiality and privacy
 - Professional responsibility
 - Relationships with other professionals
 - Evaluation, assessment and interpretation
 - Supervision, training and teaching
 - Research and publication
 - Distance counselling, technology and social media
 - Resolving ethical issues

The most common ethical issues pertaining to counselling include,

● **DUAL/MULTIPLE RELATIONSHIPS**

Counsellor, while being professionally associated with the client, participating in a nonprofessional relationship with a client or with someone close to the client is referred to as dual or multiple relationship. For example,

- When a business relationship also exists between the counselor and client
- When the counselor serves multiple roles in the client's life as supervisor, colleague or instructor
- When clients are seen outside the office
- When the counselor becomes friends with a client
- When there is non-erotic physical contact like hugs, stroking etc., that may be misinterpreted
- When there is romantic or sexual interaction between counselor and client

Multiple relationships have been considered unethical boundary violations especially when such relationships endangered the client's well-being

American Psychological Association states that multiple relationships should be avoided if they are exploitative of the client or impair the counselor's objectivity and judgement.

● **CLINICAL MISJUDGEMENTS AND FAILURES**

Mistakes are inevitable in counseling. Errors may happen in understanding symptoms, conclusions drawn about a case or in **the way chosen for working with the client.**

The important part of such ethical conflicts is,

- First, learning from mistakes to prevent repeating the same errors
- Second, minimizing or reversing any negative effects on the client, possibly by seeking counsel from a peer or supervisor or perhaps by admitting to the client the problem and solutions

An important distinction should be made between mistakes and small failures and professional negligence or malpractice that represent a serious failure of competent practice and puts clients at risk

A mistake that rises to the level of negligence is one in which the counselor did not meet the standard of care, defined as an adequate quality of professional treatment that would be expected of other competent counselors.

● DECEPTION AND INFORMED CONSENT

Counsellors stand for truth, honesty, sincerity and genuineness. But influence is also an important skill. However, this does not justify manipulation

The principle of '*informed consent*' is based on the notion that clients have a right to freely enter counseling, without any form of coercion or manipulation.

They have a right to be provided with clear, accurate and comprehensible information on such things as the limits of confidentiality, free policies, limitations and dangers of treatment approaches, alternative treatment models, access to records, counselor qualification and training, and the right to refuse treatment.

By describing clients, in writing, the relevant information they need to know before commencing counseling, the clinician ensures clients are making a fully informed choice when they consent to proceed.

Informed consent also does not stop once the counselling begins; if counsellors make adjustments in a treatment plan, or change the theoretical model being utilized, clients need to know, and terminate if they so desire

- **No Exploitation**

Counsellor's exploitation of physical/sexual abuse or emotional abuse is unpardonable. Seeing the counsellor during counselling process at some stage or another may become emotional dependent attached/entangled with process at some point), he/she may be in a vulnerable position, the counsellor must still maintain emotional detachment within and not abuse/misuse counsellor's vulnerability.

- **Equality Relationship**

The counsellor's human dignity must be respected and equality-relationship during counselling If counselor feels superior to counsellor by virtue of expertise, the counsellor may become dominating. If counsellor feels lesser than counsellor (due to status, power or health), the counsellor may lose confidence to counsel.

- **Legal Issue**

Sharing information, incidents and actions by counsellor during counselling is legally "privileged communication", and none of it, in full or in part should be ethically or legally shared, disclosed or made public. Such a revelation will be not only a personal-moral offence but also legal offence.

- **Credentiality and Licensure**

No one without proper education, training and credentiality must take on the most noble profession of being a 'Mental-Health Practitioner/counsellor or else it will mean deception of The counsellor must refer 'difficult' innocent, suffering people as counsellors. Licensing is cases to another expert, and not compulsory in some countries, but not in all countries. So pose as a 'know all' person. without licensing, it is a counsellor's own professionalism to be honest about his/her specialization, credentials and expertise. Despite credentiality and expertise, the counsellor must 'Refer' a counsellor, if counsellor feels inadequate experience for a specific problem.

- **Justice**

The principle of justice requires being just and fair to all clients and respecting their human rights and dignity. Justice does not mean treating all individuals the same. It directs attention to considering conscientiously any legal requirements and obligations, and remaining alert to potential conflicts between legal and ethical obligations. Practitioners have a duty to strive to ensure a fair provision of counselling and psychotherapy services, accessible and appropriate to the needs of potential clients. If an individual is to be treated differently, the counselor needs to be able to offer a rationale that explains the necessity and appropriateness of treating this individual differently.

- **Being trustworthy (fidelity)**

Being trustworthy is regarded as fundamental to understanding and resolving ethical issues. Practitioners who adopt this principle: act in accordance with the trust placed in them; strive to ensure that clients' expectations are ones that have reasonable prospects of being met; honor their agreements and promises; regard confidentiality as an obligation arising from the client's trust; restrict any disclosure of confidential information about clients to furthering the purposes for which it was originally disclosed.

- **Autonomy**

It emphasises the importance of developing a client's ability to be self-directing within therapy and all aspects of life. It addresses the responsibility of the counselor to encourage clients, when appropriate, to make their own decisions and to act on their own values. There are two important considerations in encouraging clients to be autonomous. First, helping the client to understand how their decisions and their values may or may not be received within the context of the society in which they live, and how they may impinge on the rights of others. The second consideration is related to the client's ability to make sound and rational decisions. The principle of autonomy opposes the manipulation of clients against their will, even for beneficial social ends.

- **Beneficence**

The principle of beneficence means acting in the best interests of the client based on professional assessment. Beneficence reflects the counselor's responsibility to contribute to the welfare of the client. It directs attention to working strictly within one's limits of competence and providing services on the basis of adequate training or experience. There is an obligation to use regular and on-going supervision to enhance the quality of the services provided and to commit to updating practice by continuing professional development. An obligation to act in the best interests of a client may become paramount when working with clients whose capacity for autonomy is diminished.

- **Non maleficence**

It is the concept of not causing harm to others. Often explained as "above all do no harm", this principle is considered by some to be the most critical of all the principles, even though theoretically they are all of equal weight. This principle reflects both the idea of not inflicting intentional harm, and not engaging in actions that risk harming others. Non-maleficence involves avoiding sexual, financial, and emotional or any other form of client exploitation; avoiding incompetence or malpractice; not providing services when unfit to do so due to illness, personal circumstances or intoxication. The practitioner has an ethical responsibility to strive to mitigate any harm caused to a client even when the harm is unavoidable or unintended.

Challenges faced by Counsellors

Low salary

Clients are reluctant to pay for sessions as they think that counselling involves only listening and talking. Many people don't think about investing in mental health as a priority.

Building Patience

Developing patience and tolerance gives rise to confidence for both clients and counsellors. This is a great skill for counsellors to master as they are also humans and have added frustrations of their own lives which they need to forget about while dealing with their clients.

Understand the body language and gestures of the client:

It's very challenging for the counsellor to understand the body language of the client and catch up the feeling of anxiety and fear. To look after the gestures of the clients to help them in their problems. Sometimes it's a bit challenging for the counsellor to understand all at once and give them instant solutions and treatments.

Boundaries

Counsellors have an uphill task of setting boundaries with their clients. The task may appear difficult as the counsellor may have the solution for the client's problems but cannot say them directly due to the code of conduct in their profession.

Inadequate Facilities

To ensure the proper functioning and efficiency of guidance and counselling services, proper facilities are needed. Facilities such as a guidance and counselling room, proper furniture, bookshelves, and the like are necessary.

Training of Professional Counselors

- **A professional counselor must attain and pursue professional academics and training**
- **Academic Preparation**

Counselor education refers to the academic training and broad-based knowledge and understanding concerning the nature of human development, motivation, learning, personality and the like. It also includes a thorough understanding and appreciation Of the philosophy and the principles of Counseling and other useful and essential information.

Counseling, like other scientific disciplines, comprises a body of tested knowledge, theories, postulates and assumptions.

- **Counselor Preparations and Professional issues**

- **Practical Skills**

Individuals who are engaged in professional activities have to face three basic issues concerning

- (1) the procedures of selection and the training of prospective entrants,
- (2) academic preparation to reach a level of professional standing with regard to the necessary knowledge and the understanding of the principles and dynamics of human growth, motivation, adjustment and coping mechanisms and
- (3) methods of analysis and synthesis and the appropriate application of the acquired skills.

The first and foremost of the professional considerations are, therefore, equipping prospective Counsellors with the necessary skills and adequate knowledge. With the progressive growth of knowledge and an increasing understanding of natural phenomena, what is known and acclaimed as the latest is likely to become obsolescent as soon as new knowledge and techniques are known. Professional training and skills by their very nature are in need of constant revision and updating. This brings home the related issue.

- **Ethical Standards**
- **Professional/ Counselor Responsibilities:**
 - Toward client
 - Toward society
 - Toward humanity as a whole
 - Toward welfare of community
 - Toward his profession
 - Toward himself

Legal issues

- The most common situations where the counsellor faces legal issues include, when
 - There is a charge of sexual misconduct
 - There is a breach of confidentiality
 - A client has committed suicide
 - There is a violation of civil rights
 - There are accusation of libel or slander
 - There has been a failure to diagnose properly
 - There is a breach of contract
 - Client abandonment is alleged
 - The counsellor has exerted undue influence
 - There has been an accident on the premises

- Apart from these issues that may arise during counselling, the counsellors in their career are also likely to have a brush with law when they
 - 1) Are served a subpoena to show up in court
 - 2) Are summoned to show records
 - 3) Function as a witness on behalf of or against an injured party
 - 4) Are threatened with legal action for some perceived injustice

- Thus it is very important that practicing counsellors are expected to familiarize themselves with three kinds of law that affect their work
 - 1) **Civil law** related to malpractice suits and disputes between parties
 - 2) **Criminal law** in which you may be expected to serve as an expert witness
 - 3) **Mental health law** which governs the way that various client groups must be treated

- Consult frequently with medical personnel and make appropriate referral when there is a possibility of some underlying organic problems
- Take steps to improve the level of competence by pursuing continuing education and advanced training
- Alert to signs of fatigue and burnout that may lead to miss important information and make needless mistakes
- Avoid high-risk situation that are most likely to result in litigation such as
 - Failure to treat a needy client
 - Sexual involvement with a client
 - Breach of confidentiality
 - Failure to warn someone of potential harm
 - Negligence leading to suicide
 - Inadequate record keeping
 - Collecting unpaid fees
 - Failure to diagnose or treat properly

The best way for counselors to avoid potential legal and/or ethical issues is to take proper heed to avoid these potential issues, by:

- **Study the ethical codes**, state laws and standards of care for your profession very carefully. Review some of the available case files that help to reason through professional decision making.
- **Carry a liability insurance** to protect oneself from malpractice claims
- **Do not attempt any treatments** without adequate supervision by qualified experts at the beginning of your career
- **being properly credentialed**, considering the work being performed as a counselor.
- **maintaining confidentiality**, aside from certain instances where it must be broken.
- **observing the duty to warn** if a client is suspected to consider causing bodily harm to another individual.
- **keeping privileged communication**, which is a legal term that protects client information.
- **knowing when to report child abuse.**
- **keeping and maintaining well-detailed client records.**