

General Techniques in Counseling

Introduction

By the end of this article, you should be able to explain the general techniques used in counselling. A technique is a method of doing or performing something. It should be noted that counselling techniques can hinder or promote the success of a counselling process. It is important for a counsellor to be well versed in good counselling techniques.

The following are some techniques that a good counsellor could use when conducting a counselling session.

Teaching

A client can be counseled through teaching. The counsellee can, for instance be taught, ways of appropriate behaviour, how to manage stress, how to cope with difficult situations and how to manage his or her own negative emotions, teaching involves the ability to coach the client in ways and means of solving his or her own problems.

Active listening

Listening is the most important skill of a good counsellor. Listening involves the capacity to hear and remember accurately what the client has said. This helps the counsellor to enter into a counselling relationship with the client. Active listening involves a listener verifying what is said whereas a passive listener does not verify or confirm what the speaker is saying. Although active listening is recommended, it is usually important to start with passive listening. The counsellor might begin the session with open questions such as 'Tell me what made you come?', 'How can I help you?', when the counsellee seems stuck. When the counsellor doesn't understand what the counsellee is saying, then he or she might ask the client if they would like to explain more about his or her problem.

The goals of listening are to:

- Understand what one is being asked to do or say.
- Clarify what the counsellee thinks the problem is.
- Help the counsellee have a deeper understanding of the problem.

When the client has finished speaking or explaining, the counsellor needs to make sure that the counsellee knows that he, the counsellor, has understood. This is called reflecting and is done by paraphrasing or restating what the client has just said. Sometimes a client says something that shows that an important emotion or a significant action is the cause of the problem. In that case, the counsellor may want to repeat what the client has said. This gives a chance to the client to give details of the problem and any clarification needed by the counsellor without making the client feel that the counsellor is not listening. At regular points in a session, it is helpful to summarize what has been said so far. Summarizing gives an opportunity for the counsellee to know the counsellor listened and to be sure of facts presented, and to move the session to another phase.

Evaluation.