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A counselor is a professional who is trained to help people tackle their emotional, social, and physical problems. When someone decides to consult a counselor it is because he/she feels that the counselor is the only person who can offer effective assistance.

In counseling there are various qualities that must be possessed by a counselor. Besides, the counselor should employ different techniques because a technique that worked for one client may not work in another client. This paper will shed some light into the above stated aspects of counseling. The main objective of a counselor is to help his/her clients solve their problems. Being a counselor is a calling hence if someone thinks it's all about making money, it is better for him/her to find another career where making money is the main objective. When a counselor is guiding someone he/she should know that by misleading the client he/she is not only answerable to that particular client but also to the creator of heavens and earth (Burnard, 2005).

A counselor should never jump into conclusions hence he/she should pay attention to what the client is saying because by being jumpy he/she might miss crucial information that could have made it easier to understand the client's problems. This implies that a counselor should not feel like he/she knows it all because no matter how similar the situations might sound there is always a difference. In fact by listening more the counselor will learn more about the personality of the client rather than when he/she is doing most of the talking (Gladding, 2008). A counselor needs to exercise a lot of patience and acceptance because rushing things can ruin the counseling process.

Tolan (2003) states that in counseling profession the clients are from all walks of life ranging from drug addicts to criminals and thus the counselor must accept them just the way they are because they come for his/her services. This is due to the fact that they are in need of help and if they are turned away they may not see the need of being reformed. Gladding (2008) suggests that patience in mental counseling is important because it helps a counselor to manage anger when irritated by a client's behavior or slow progress. A counselor should know that some procedures may take longer than usual to be completed and hence problems cannot be solved in a single day since they also took days to be established.

All the experiences encountered in counseling should be reflected in a counselor's job. This includes understanding of people's cultures and beliefs because these are some of the elements that foster or hinder counseling. A good counselor should learn to appreciate client's diversity and if possible learn the client's native language because at times he/she may have clients who do not understand national languages. Additionally, education is important in counseling but then the certificates do not mark the end of learning for a counselor because the field offers more learning opportunities to an open mind than what is taught in the classroom. This is because there are new challenges in counseling such as cultural differences, and when they are tackled they are the lessons that could not be learnt back in college (Burnard, 2005). In fact in most professions students learn more when working than in college. In this light, a counselor should be an outspoken person who is open to friendship. Being friendly and kind to the clients will

make them open up because it is easier to trust someone who is outspoken than someone who puts on a stone face all the time.

This implies that a counselor should not show any impressions of anger even when he/she is not happy. This is encouraged because it promotes the confidence of the clients in the counselor. However, there are clients who may be anti-social. The counselor should try to fit into their shoes by appreciating them for who they are. A counselor must have respect for his/her clients at all times regardless of whether the client is to blame for his/her problem. Respect entails not disclosing the information provided by clients with other people. If a client learns that the information he/she gave to a counselor has been shared with other people he/she may feel humiliated and may never seek help from such a counselor. For counseling to be effective, there are various techniques which must be employed by a counselor.

The first technique is being a good listener. Nelson-Jones (2009) argues that listening helps a counselor to gather information being conveyed by the client. Interruptions such as phone calls should be avoided during this time because the counselor is expected to pay full attention to the client. If a counselor interrupts his/her conversations with the client it might look like lack of concern and it may close the client not to reveal all the necessary information. During the conversations the counselor should look at the client in the eyes because this will build a sense of trust in the client. The counselor should consider taking some notes during the conversation because he/she will refer to the notes in later stages. Asking the client questions that were answered at the initial stages may indicate that the counselor is not serious

with his/her job. The counselor should be careful about his/her body language hence should sit in an upright posture and should use his/her body language such as nodding of the head to make the client speak more.

The counselor should never speak when the client is talking but should instead wait for his/her turn to speak (Tolan, 2003). Asking questions is also an efficient technique in counseling because it allows the counselor to extract information from the client. Questions are categorized into two, namely the ones that require short answers and the ones that require long answers. Short questions are aimed at getting particular information while long questions are aimed at making the client provide more information. When asking questions the counselor should use polite language and tone because being rude may imply that he/she is already judging the client. Some of the information conveyed by the client need to be reconstructed using polite words because some are expressed with lots of anger and the counselor should not utter the same words that sound rude. Reconstructing the points put across by the client implies that the counselor has nothing against the client.

This reconstructing includes the use of a softer tone if the client used a higher tone because this will make sure that the counselor's sympathy for the client is clearly expressed. Burnard (2005) explains that it is important to have a summary of every visit which should be read to the client after the counselor has finished obtaining information from the client. The summary should contain all the major issues that are arranged according to their relevance. Those that matter the most should be given the first priority.

Having a summary helps the counselor to understand which issues should be dealt with first as opposed to when the counselor is tackling problems at random. The counselor can also give clients an assignment to do on their own once at home because this will make them learn more about their problem. Moreover, the assignment makes them realize what they can do and what they cannot do. This is crucial because it helps the counselor to understand the strengths and weaknesses of the client. Likewise, effective counseling requires the knowledge of applying various counseling theories. In counseling there are various theories that explain the essential approaches applied, but this paper will only highlight two of them. These include Solution Focused Therapy and Client Centered (Rogerian) counseling.

In solution based therapy the counselor focuses on what the client wishes to acquire in the therapy. In this therapy the main concern is shifted from what really bothered the client in the first place. The things that were said or done in the past do not matter in this therapy because the main objective of this therapy is to correct the present and face the future.

When this therapy is being implemented solving the current problem is vital than what might have caused it because it assumes that the past is already gone hence it is important to focus on what is left (Nelson-Jones, 2009). In client centered (Rogerian) counseling the client is in full control of what he/she wants to have and become. This theory states that the client has all the potential to do anything as long as he/she is made to believe that he/she can. According to Tolan (2003) this therapy is aimed at building self esteem of the client because that is what makes someone believe in him/herself.

In this therapy the counselor assists the client by allowing him/her to express him/herself and by tolerating the views of the client. The counselor does not jump into any conclusions because this might look like stumbling blocks to the client. Furthermore, the counselor shows empathy to the client by asking questions in a very friendly manner and tone.

The major role of the counselor here is to provide favorable conditions for the client to realize what he/she wants to do. In conclusion, a good counselor must apply the above mentioned techniques where necessary and should the situation persist the counselor should consider customizing the techniques to be compatible with the needs of the client. Counseling skills include effective listening, patience, asking questions, and experience in therapy.

The skills of a counselor are very important because they help him/her to deliver the best results at the end of counseling. Academic certificates are crucial but they can be useless if they do not reflect the competence of a counselor in real life situations. The counselor should use the appropriate therapy for each individual client because what works in one client may fail in another client. Hence, understanding the theories of counseling might help in coming up with feasible solutions that are deemed to solve difficult problems.

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