



## Five Basic Counseling Skills

### 1. Attending Behavior

Helps facilitate a feeling of caring and respect that translates into rapport and trust.

- Appropriate eye contact
- Open and relaxed posture
- Verbal following/counselor's responses follow clients story

### 2. Open ended questions

"encouragers to share", places focus of session on client

- Questions such as
  - "How would you describe..."
  - "What happened when..."
- Statements such as
  - "Explain more about..."
  - "Tell me what you mean by ..."

### 3. Minimal encouragers

As little use of talking as possible – compatible with open-ended questions. Used to encourage the client to continue what they're saying with more details or depth and without interrupting them.

- "Unh, huh"
- "I see"
- Non verbal gestures which says, "continue"

Underlining is a minimal encourager which also may move a client into the middle range or stage of counseling. Underlining brings a person's 'style' into consciousness. You are underlining when you repeat a short phrase or one word that the client has said. Focus on the feeling part of the statement as in:

- "...got under your skin?"
- "...complete failure?"
- "...totally squashed you?"

Self disclosure can also be used as a minimal encourager if it's being used to let the client know it's okay to have feelings.

- "If that happened to me, I'd be crushed"

### 4. Reflection of feeling

Get in touch with the client's feeling and rephrase what is happening on an affective level.

- "Your feeling pretty immobilized..."
- "It sounds like you feel extremely disappointed too"
- "...pretty smothering it seems,...not much room for you"

Reflection of thought and feeling is an important 'feedback loop'. You're helping the client to see what he/she is saying. It's also a perception check on your part to make sure you're 'with' the client. If the client says, "No, that's not what is going on..." you can often follow with something like, "what more can you tell me about what IS going on for you?" or "how ARE you experiencing it?"

## **5. Paraphrasing**

Take an entire paragraph or body of thought and make a concise translation. Again, this is a perception check. Often, a paraphrase can include the activation of a hypothesis the counselor was making while the client was telling their story.

- "Sounds like this has turned into a painful discovery about the reality of the way things are."
- "So perhaps all the dreams you had for this relationship going on and on have suddenly slipped away."