Basic Principles of Counseling

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Unconditional Positive Regard

Unconditional Positive Regard: It means that the client is viewed with dignity and valued as a worthwhile and positive human being. The unconditional prefix refers to the idea that such regard is offered without any preconditions. Often in relationship some sort of reciprocity is demanded. Counselor should hold the feelings that are undemanding and not require reciprocation.
Empathic Understanding

Empathic Understanding: Empathy is the ability to enter the perceptual world of the other person: to see the world as they see it. It also suggests an ability to convey this identification of the feelings to the other person. Sympathy suggests feeling sorry for the other person or, perhaps, identifying with how they feel. The process of developing empathic understanding is the process of exploring the client’s world with the client, neither judging nor suggesting.
Warmth and Genuineness

**Warmth and Genuineness:** Warmth in the counseling relationship refers to certain approachability and willingness to be open with the client. Warmth is a frame of mind rather than a skill and perhaps one developed through being honest with oneself and being prepared to be open with others.
Concreteness

**Concreteness** refers to the idea that the counselor should be clear and explicit in dealing with the client and should help the client to express himself clearly.

Concreteness involves helping the client to put into words those things that are only being hinted at in order that both client and counselor understand what the client is perceiving at any given time.
Example of Concreteness

Client: I don’t know, I feel sort of disinterested a lot of time…. as if no-one cared much about what was going on.

Counselor: You seem to be saying two things, you feel disinterested and you feel that no one cares for you.

Client: They are not interested in what I do.. It’s just that other people don’t want to know about me.

Counselor: When you say other people, who do you mean?

Client: You know … my family…. my wife especially.
Don’t in the Counseling Relationship

- Don’t ask ‘why’ question
  - The word ‘why’ suggests interrogation, probing and a sense of disapproval.
  - E.g. Why do you feel depressed?

- Don’t use ‘should’ and ‘ought’
  - E.g. You realize that what you should do is…
  - When the suggests what the other person should do, he forces his own frame of reference, her own value system on the client.
Don’t in the Counseling Relationship

- **Don’t blame**
  - In a sense, it doesn’t matter who is to blame in any particular situation. The point is that a situation has occurred and the client is trying to find ways of dealing with it.
  - E.g. I’m not surprised, you’ve been very stupid.

- **Don’t compare the client’s experience with your own experience**
  - E.g. I know exactly what you mean…I’m like that too...
Don’t in the Counseling Relationship

- Don’t invalidate the client’s feelings
  - It suggests a number of possibilities;
  - The client is not telling the truth
  - The client doesn’t use the words appropriately
  - The counselor is better able to judge the client’s feelings than the client himself.
  - E.g. Of course you are not angry/depressed… you just think you are..
Questions to Consider Prior to Counseling

- Am I the appropriate person to counsel?
- Have I the time to counsel?
- Have I the client’s permission to counsel?
- Where will the counseling take place?
Thank You!