

MODULE 4: SKILLS AND QUALITIES OF COUNSELLOR

4.1. Counselling skills- Attending skills, Responding skills, Skill of personalizing and Initiating skills.

1. Attentiveness (attending skills – listening and observing)
 - ✓ To understand the essence of the content and feeling expressed by the counsellee
 - ✓ Observe verbal and non-verbal behaviour such as facial expressions, postures, gestures, inflections in tone and periods of silence (should not limit verbal communication)
 - ✓ This helps him to establish rapport and gain insight into the psychological world of the client.
2. Initiating Skills/ Establish Rapport
 - ✓ These are the skills to establish rapport with the client, which are very essential
 - ✓ Rapport – warm, friendly and understanding condition, establish relationship
 - ✓ Rapport is mutual and grows out of a cooperative effort.
 - ✓ Soft skills – communication skills, rationality, curiosity to know
3. Responding skills
 - Empathetic responses (approach)
 - Empathy means to know and feel others' feeling as one's own feelings.
 - Empathy is an interrelationship between two people
 - E.g. how a mother feels when her child is sick.
 - Probing and reflecting questions
 - It refers to going deep into the clients responses by asking a series of subsequent questions
4. Skill of personalizing
 - Identifying the personal thoughts, responses, specify behaviour pattern, etc.
5. Skill to understand the behaviour of the people
 - Perception of another's attitude, meanings, feelings
 - Understanding of himself and situation
 - Understanding (by the counsellor) of the client's position or situation
 - Counsellor is able to follow the client's mode of thought
6. Skill to communicate effectively
 - i. Relaxed body position

- ii. Slight forward lean
 - iii. Good eye contact
 - iv. Appropriate facial expressions/gestures
 - v. Use of head nods
7. Skills to reach out - A good counsellor must encourage the counsellor to communicate openly and honestly with him.
 8. Skill to Reach in and Reach out - A good counsellor must have the skill and ability to think about his actions, feelings, etc.
 9. Skill to make himself as stress-free as possible.
 10. Expertise - A counsellor must be an expert in some specific area.
 11. The quality to be contemporary and the skill to take a world view of human events.
 10. Skill to distinguish between healthy and unhealthy behaviour patterns.

4.2. Qualities of a Counsellor

The success or failure of the counselling programme depends upon the personal qualities and competitiveness of the counsellor.

1. Magnetic Personality
 - A pleasing and well balanced personality that attract people
 - Highly cultured social interests, capacity for work, intelligence
 - Knowledgeable and interesting
 - Scholastic aptitude, respect for facts
 - Good judgement skills
 - Personal appearance, mental health, pleasing voice, viability and endurance, neatness, polished language, free from annoying mannerism
2. Sincere interest in others: Counsellor should be interested in
 - Various types of people
 - Children in their home and school life
 - Activities in which children are generally interested
 - Working with people
3. Personal adjustment
 - Counsellor should possess maturity, emotional stability, sense of worth, self-reliance, confidence, flexibility and adaptability
 - Aware of his strengths and weaknesses
4. Self understanding

- Counsellor should understand his own capacities and abilities also understand the client's position
- Understand the perception of another's attitude, meanings and feelings

5. Interpersonal relationship

- A warm relationship
- Should be sympathetic in understanding the youth
- Sensitive (perceptual sensitivity – having/showing intelligent awareness) to the attitudes of others
- Tolerance of viewpoints of others
- Respect individuals and their needs

6. Availability

A counsellor should be available all the time whenever help is needed.

7. Professional competence

- Should have wide knowledge of the world
- Must be well conversant with the techniques of counselling
- Must know the latest trends in his field.

8. Leadership Quality

- Should have the ability to stimulate and lead others
- Should possess dependability

9. Professional dedication

- Vocational interest, professional attitudes
- Loyalty and enthusiasm, dedication to service
- Must be interested in people and helping them
- Strong sense of professional ethics
- Willingness to work beyond duty (commitment)
- Easily approachable

10. Philosophy of life

- Wholesome philosophy of life
- Civic sense, acceptable value system
- Respect for the personal autonomy

11. Empathy

- ✓ Empathy means the ability to feel and describe the thought and feeling of others (Dymond, 1949).

- ✓ “The imaginative transposing of oneself into the thinking, feeling and acting of another so structuring the world as he does.”

12. Confidentiality

Confidentiality means keeping the secrecy of information disclosed by the client

- ✓ Absolute confidentiality (never discloses)
- ✓ Relative confidentiality: Information can be disclosed, when it is relevant to be disclosed. E.g. suicidal tendencies
- ✓ Confidentiality is necessary for successful counselling
- ✓ It safeguards the counsellee from the harmful effects of the disclosed information
- ✓ Prevents from misusing the information

A counsellor must be Understanding, Sympathetic, Friendly, Stable, Patient, Objective, Sincere, Tactful, Tolerate, Calm, Broad minded, Pleasant, Kind, with high Social Intelligence, sensitive Ethical and socially and morally committed.

4.3. Essential communication skills - Non-verbal communication, Active listening, Selective perception, Effective questioning, Reflecting feelings

Non-verbal communication skills are those related to body languages, such as eye contact, gestures, facial expressions and vocal tone. Conversely, in verbal communication, you use text, signs or conversation to express yourself. This kind of communication reveals a lot about how you transfer information, approach others and empathies.

Types Of Non-Verbal Communication

You can use different types of non-verbal communication to communicate different messages. The different types include:

- Body Language: People understand your message in part by the way you position your body. For example, if you are feeling nervous or angry, you might cross your arms.
- Gestures: These can be intentional or unintentional. For example, you might see Americans using a 'thumbs up' sign to express their positive feelings about something.
- Facial Expressions: This is the most common way of communicating in a non-verbal manner. When using facial expressions, people usually communicate through their

eyes, eyebrows, mouth and facial muscles. It is useful in communicating both information and emotion.

- **Touch:** Some people use touch to be expressive, for example, to give support or comfort. Make sure to use it sparingly and only when you know how the receiving party will feel about it.
- **Tone:** Tone emphasises your message. It can express delight, sadness, politeness or anger in a voice. People need to hear the appropriate tone to pay attention to your message, especially when you are addressing a large number of people. A lively and versatile tone sounds more expressive and will grab the interest of your audience to focus on your message. You can only make your point clear when you have your audience's attention.
- **Appearance:** Through appearance, you create a positive or negative first impression on others. The way you present yourself shows your interest, aesthetic taste and self-discipline habits. Therefore, you need to dress appropriately and look appealing when going for an interview. A well-groomed appearance can increase your chances of landing a job.
- **Space:** Maintaining space during conversations is polite, but the distance you stand at can show your level of comfort with someone.

Active listening: The active listening skills come from the humanistic client-centered counseling model of psychologist Carl Rogers. He was a great believer in empathy—putting yourself in the shoes of the other person so that you can see what he sees and feel what he feels. When a client feels the empathy of his therapist, he feels understood, rapport is quickly built, the client is more willing to reveal himself to the therapist, and the therapist is better able now to understand where the client is coming from and to help him. In the same way, if a patient feels the doctor's empathy, the patient will want to reveal more of his internal world to the doctor allowing the latter to see where the anxiety is coming from and to address it in a compassionate and timely way. Active listening is an essential skill counsellors can exploit to develop a positive and healthy interaction with a client. "Active listening intentionally focuses on who you are listening to, whether in a group or one-on-one, in order to understand what he or she is saying. As the listener, you should then be able to repeat back in your own words what they have said to their satisfaction. This does not mean you agree with, but rather understand, what they are saying".

Active empathic listening is-

- Being nonjudgmental.
- Giving the other person our undivided attention.
- Listening carefully to feelings and facts.
- Sitting comfortably with silence.
- Using nonverbal messages to show we are listening and understanding

The important active listening techniques are: Focus on the intent and purpose of the conversation, Pay attention to body language, Give encouraging verbal cues, Clarify and paraphrase information, Ask questions, Refrain from judgment, Summarize, share, and reflect.

Pay close attention, Use body language, Ask and give feedback, Don't interrupt, Paraphrase what has been said, Show interest with questions, Avoid distractions and Be comfortable with silence.

Selective perception: It is the tendency not to notice and more quickly forget stimuli that cause emotional discomfort and contradict our prior beliefs. Selective perception is a cognitive distortion which makes the person ignore information around him/herself and shifts the attention to things which mind tells the person to.

Effective questioning: Questions during the counselling session can help to open up new areas for discussion. They can assist to pinpoint an issue and they can assist to clarify information that at first may seem ambiguous to the counsellor. Questions that invite clients to think or recall information can aid in a client's journey of self-exploration. Counsellors should be knowledgeable about the different types of questioning techniques, including the appropriate use of them and likely results. It is also important to be aware and cautious of over-questioning. Asking too many questions sends a message to the client that the counsellor is in control and may even set up a situation in which the client feels the counsellor has all the answers. In determining effective questioning techniques it is important to consider the nature of the client, their ongoing relationship with the counsellor and the issue/s at hand.

There are two main types of questions used in counselling: Open and Closed.

Open Questions: Open questions are those that cannot be answered in a few words, they encourage the client to speak and offer an opportunity for the counsellor to gather information about the client and their concerns. Typically open questions begin with: what, why, how or could.

Closed Questions: Closed questions are questions that can be answered with a minimal response (often as little as “yes” or “no”). They can help the counsellor to focus the client or gain very specific information. Such questions begin with: is, are or do.

While questioning techniques can be used positively to draw out and clarify issues relevant to the counselling session, there is also the very real danger of over-using questions or using questioning techniques that can have a negative impact on the session. The wrong types of questioning techniques, at the wrong time, in the hands of an unskilled interviewer or counsellor, can cause unnecessary discomfort and confusion to the client.

Reflecting feelings: In counseling, the reflection of feelings is a technique used to describe a clinician's understanding of a client's words and have them confirm the therapist's interpretation. It begins with the therapist paraphrasing what they think their client said for them to double-check if it is correct or not so that the professional knows whether the client has understood them or not. A reflection can often be attempted in both individual and group settings, but it is more often used during individual one-on-one sessions. This is done because clients can give better feedback when not among other people. The whole point of reflection of feeling is to help the client express themselves better by making sure their therapist knows what they mean. This can help them find out more about what's going on with the person and better understand what might trigger their feelings. When clients feel that they've been understood, it can be easier for them to open up and share more about whatever is troubling them. This technique helps the therapist understand what's going on in the client's life and gives them a better idea of how to help them resolve whatever issues they might have. By going over the session with a client and reflecting on their feelings, counselors can be sure that they're not missing details that could end up being helpful in their sessions. Reflections of feeling are a way to help clients identify deeper meanings behind their feelings. It allows them to better understand themselves and other people by analyzing their feelings and reflecting on the meaning of these feelings. An appropriate way to use the reflection of feeling is to help clients understand that they can influence their own emotions and take responsibility for happiness and well-being. It also helps with self-growth and development. Reflecting on feelings also allows people to understand themselves, what they can do to improve their lives, and how to improve them.
