Training Manual on Counselling for Training the Trainers (Core Resource Team)
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Introduction to Counselling

Life has its ups and downs. Dr. Scott Peck in ‘The road less traveled” says “Life is difficult.... Life is a series of problems”. None of us is spared from discouragement, problems, and distresses in life. When we are confused, when we encounter problems, when we face difficulties in making decisions, it is often helpful to talk it over with someone wiser or more mature. In doing so, we may feel relieved, gain a clearer view of our situation and a new perspective to our problem.

Many people shun counselling, thinking that when we see a counsellor, it means there is something wrong with us. It can’t be farther from the truth. Counselling has to do with coping with stresses in life. There are many transitions and challenges in life. As human beings, it is only natural that we sometimes feel beset by life’s demands. It is better to address our problems at the earliest than to let them become severe and complicated. It may weigh us down and hinder our normal functioning.

Notes:
What is counselling?
Counsellors provide important assistance to people in distress. They bring their empathy, a listening ear and natural helping abilities to their role. They often meet people in need of help at important moments of their lives. Counselling is a relationship between two or more persons in which one person (the counsellor) seeks to encourage or assist another person (counselee) to deal more effectively with the problems of life. They can help in:

- Offering support in times of need
- Active listening
- Changing behaviour, attitudes or values
- Preventing more serious problems from developing
- Encouraging expression of emotions
- Instilling insight
- Helping people make informed decisions
- Teaching responsibility
- Stimulating spiritual growth
- Helping one mobilize his inner resources in times of crisis
- Relief from inhibiting emotions or habits
- Finding answers to troublesome questions.
- Making referrals to other services or professional support.

Notes:
The most common misconception regarding counselling is that it is advice giving. Counselling is not about how to give good advice or make decisions for others or make others listen to you. Rather a counsellor listens without judgment, provides comfort, supports and empowers a person who is troubled to make their own informed decisions. From the counselee’s perspective, it is simply talking through to a solution with a trusted individual. Here is one helpful definition of counselling:

“Counselling is an activity which seeks to help people in distress, towards *constructive change and growth* in any or every aspect of their lives through *a caring relationship* and within *agreed relational boundaries*.” There are three key elements in this definition:

1. Constructive change and growth
2. Caring relationship
3. Relational boundaries

1. **Constructive Change and growth.**

Where counselling is concerned, it often involves a counselee being troubled by a problem or difficulty in everyday life. The aim of counselling is to bring about an understanding of the underlying factors and to facilitate change in the situation. The change may involve a change in counselee’s perspective, thinking or behavior. It is desirable that the

**Notes:**
positive change takes place. Often the situation in life may remain the same, but as a result of counselling, the counselee feels better or is given better coping skills to deal with the problem at hand. Coupled with this, a growth in understanding and maturity may result. The goal of Christian counselling is not necessarily happiness but holiness, enabling the counselee to live in conformity to the biblical truth. For example, a counselee may seek help to be happy in his marriage but if it involves unbiblical principles, it ought to be dissuaded. Many times, following the truth may not be easy in the beginning as it calls for self-denial. Yet in the end it yields sweet fruit of obedience.

2. Caring Relationship

Research has confirmed that the counsellor and counselee relationship plays a very important part in counselling. A loving counsellor who shows genuine concern can significantly improve a counselee’s condition even before a solution is arrived at. It is true that “nobody cares about how much you know until they know how much you care.” While skills and knowledge makes us better counsellors, the way the counsellor relates to the counselee is far more crucial. A good counsellor will first make the

Notes:
people coming to him feel valued and important. Often people who are hurting are not so much looking for answers than for someone who cares. Genuine interest in the counselees and a real concern for them is the key.

3. **Relational Boundaries:**
Boundaries are there to safeguard the relationship. Since the counsellor – counselee relationship is central, we need to know what are the do’s and don’ts in order not to jeopardize the counselling relationship.

a. **Confidentiality:** Counselling involves sharing of personal problems and feelings which are private. As such, confidentiality must be maintained. It is essential that the counsellor does not disclose to others what the counselee has shared. One temptation that Christians must watch out is, to share it as a prayer point in prayer meetings. Except with the counselee’s permission to do so, this is to be strongly discouraged. The breach of trust and the leak of personal information can often be very hurtful to the counselee and harmful to the counselling process. Once this happens, trust is broken. Trust takes a long time to build and yet it can be quickly broken. The only exception to this confidentiality rule is when the life of the counselee or some other person is in danger. For example, if the

**Notes:**
information reveals that the counselee may take his own life or another’s life, then the counsellor needs to inform the appropriate authority. If some underage counselees are involved, it may be appropriate to inform the parents or guardians.

**b. Gender Sensitivity:** Since counselling involves in depth sharing of personal emotions and life details, in our Indian context, it is advisable to adhere to same sex counselling. This means that a female counselee will be counseled by a female counsellor and a male counselee should be assigned to a male counsellor. There may be only two exceptions to this rule. One being when there is a wide age gap between the counsellor and the counselee. The other is when the counselling is done in a professional setting. Even then, it is always advisable in cross sex counselling to have another co-counsellor being the same sex as the counselee present. This caution is wise and helps to prevent any dishonoring and undesirable eventuality. It is a step to avoid not just evil but also all appearances of evil. By saying “This will never happen to me” is already walking on dangerous ground 1Cor 10:12. Be aware of danger signals like growing dependence of the counselee on you, receiving gifts etc

**Notes:**
c. **Referral:** Counsellors should recognize their limitations. No one has all the answers to every problem. When counselling has to do with areas which are unfamiliar to the counsellors, they must admit their inability to help and refer the counselees to those who can. At all times, counselling is to aim at *doing no harm* to the counselee. Referral may be done gently and explained clearly to the counselees so as to prevent them from thinking that the counsellor is deserting them.

**Who needs counselling?**

Often, there is a misconception that people who seek counselling are those who are mentally sick. This is not true. In fact, it is normal people who need counselling. Because life isn’t always a bed of roses, problems are inevitable. At different stages of our life-cycle, there are adjustment issues that trouble us and difficulties that challenge us.

Young children who have special disabilities need to be counseled to cope with their disabilities. Children of divorced parents need to be helped to work out their special adjustments. It is not unusual for young people to struggle with peer pressures, acceptance, search for identity etc. Young adults need someone to consult with regarding their mate selection.

**Notes:**
premarital preparation, and work problems. Mid-life crisis, family, marriage and parenting are all challenges along the highway and by way of life. Even old people have their own set of concerns, for example: loneliness, coping with grief when one spouse passes away, depression, retirement etc. Normal people need help in dealing with their day-to-day problems from time to time.

Not only is counselling applicable to all ages, it is also across cultures, genders and educational or religious background. The educated need someone to talk to, so do the illiterates, when they are hurting. Children, adolescents, adults and elderly, boys and girls, men and women, all are candidates for counselling. As long as we are human, we have problems at some point of time. To admit problem is not equivalent to admitting failure, but rather, admitting that we are human.

**Why do people need counselling?**

*To experience acceptance and support*

People are hurting. “Why am I afraid to tell you who I am?” is the title of a book which points out that people have problems but are reluctant to

**Notes:**
share them with others. Fear of being misunderstood, being vulnerable, and fear of rejection are all very real. These fears tend to make people wear masks to hide their true feelings. When these feelings are swept under the carpet and not dealt with, they can become serious and threaten our well being. *Counselling is a process to provide a conducive, non threatening environment for counselees to come face to face with their true selves, to unload and have a cathartic experience.* In doing so, they experience acceptance and support, have an opportunity to verbalize their feelings. They are enabled to explore their concerns, to gain a better understanding in order to better face their own challenges.

*To be listened to*

Someone said that man’s real need, his most terrible need, is for someone to listen to him, not as a ‘patient’ but as a human soul. When we are beset by doubts, when we encounter inner anxiety and conflict, how we need some non judgmental, attentive listeners to hear what we cannot put into words!

For when we can put into words and express, we feel our load lightened and we obtain clarity of thought. As it was well put: “How can I know what I think until I have heard what I have to say.”

**Notes:**

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1 From catharsis: process by which strong feelings are allowed to be experienced so that they lose their power.
To lighten one’s burden
Galatians 6: 2 “Carry each other’s burdens and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.” Sorrow when shared, is halved. The heavy load in one’s head when it is shared with an understanding friend is lightened. Difficulties weigh us down but having one who can share our burden, gives us relief and strengthens us.

To obtain clarity to move forward
Troubled people want reassurance, require new perspectives. Counselling can be likened to disentangling a mess of rope. When in distress, people are often confused, indecisive and bewildered. Talking the situation over with a trusted friend is like having someone help us disentangle the knots in our head.

While teaching and preaching are important ministries in a local church, so also is counselling. Jesus preached often to crowds of people, but he also spent hours talking privately with his disciples and others, answering their questions. Preaching is public and general. Counselling is private and personal. Jesus trained his disciples to be interested not just in ideas but

Notes:
also in people. He exemplified for us, many occasions of intimate conversations with individuals that brought about wonderful changes in their lives.

**Obstacles to counselling:**

**Social stigma:** One of the most significant barriers to people seeking help is the fear that others would judge them negatively or consider them ‘crazy’. People tend to regard those who experience mental illness negatively. It is not unusual to be labeled ‘mental hospital patient’. People who seek the help of counsellors are considered weak or incompetent to handle life’s struggles.

**Fear:** The counselee may have various fears about counselling. Their Christian beliefs (misbeliefs) may make them feel guilty and afraid of being judged as bad or poor Christians. There may be concern about what the counsellor would think of him. He may also be apprehensive of being coerced by the counsellor. Counselling involves strong emotions and sometimes people are reluctant to discuss painful emotions.

**Notes:**
Lack of Christian counsellors: There are many hurting people who are struggling with life. They need help but often find it impossible to open up and share their burden for they may not find someone available to listen and care. Christians with problems do not know where or to whom to turn for the church is more often a museum for saints rather than a hospital for sinners and therefore tends to miss the opportunity to manifest itself as a caring community. Many Christians are either not sensitive enough or even if they are they do know how to minister to those in need.

Who can counsel?
Many of us do not know that we can minister to others in need for we believe that only psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, pastors & other professionals have special expertise in this area. But in one way or another all of us can help or counsel effectively. – Teachers, Doctors, Parents etc. We can offer a word of comfort to a bereaved neighbour or a troubled colleague.

As Christians we are to love one another as deeply as Christ loves us and to reach out to each other, to bear one another’s burdens and to be instruments of God’s grace and healing as we help one another. We should

Notes:
get involved in counselling primarily because the Lord has called us to be engaged in such a ministry. Romans 15:14, Col 3:16. However counselling is a special gift for some. Some Christians may be specially gifted with appropriate spiritual gifts like exhortation Rom 12:8 (may include wisdom, knowledge, mercy, healing, discernment of spirits.) and are therefore called to spend much of their time and service in counselling. All Christians are called to be counsellors in one form or the other. Some are trained as specialist counsellors, others to become listeners and encouragers.

Wrong motives for counselling:
There is nothing wrong with wanting to make a difference in the lives of other people, as long as it is not done to feel better about yourself. Counselling cannot be effective if the helping relationship is used to satisfy the helper’s own needs like:

Need for control. The authoritarian counsellor likes to ‘straighten out’ others, give advice and play the problem solver role. Some dependant counselees may want this, but eventually most people resist controller type counsellors.

Notes:
Need to be the champion. The counsellor may have a sincere desire to help but takes responsibility away from the counselee conveying the message ‘you cannot handle this, let me do it for you’. This rarely helps permanently and the counsellor is then left feeling inadequate and frustrated.

Need for information (curiosity). Counselees often share information they might not have shared otherwise. When a counsellor is curious and pushes for information, he is also unable to keep confidences.

Need for personal healing: Most of us have insecurities and needs that could interfere with our counselling. Counselling sessions will not be effective if the counsellor has to please some authority figure, express hostility or prove that he is capable. Avoid attempting to help others till you have received counsel.

Uniqueness of counselling

Focus on need of individual: We carry out conversation with different people every day. Even though counselling is a kind of conversation, it is unique. Social conversations meet the needs of all who are involved in those conversations. Counselling focuses on the needs of the counselee. Therefore, it needs to be counselee-friendly. Since we deal with individuals

Notes:

in counselling, the counselling approach for one counselee may differ from another even though the problem may be similar. What works for one person may not work for another.

Jesus related differently with different people. With Nicodemus it was intellectual, with the Pharisees it was confrontational, with Mary and
Martha it was more relaxed and with the little children it was warm and loving. He recognized individual differences in personality, needs and level of understanding and he treated people accordingly. He taught, encouraged, supported, confronted and even challenged? When we make the mistake of thinking and hence treating all counselees alike we fail to build a good rapport.

**In-depth communication:** While social conversation is most often superficial and consists of courteous enquiry, counselling is an in-depth interaction. Counselling touches upon areas of one’s past, present, and future. It involves sharing one’s thoughts, emotions, wishes and dreams. It literally means baring one’s soul to another. For this reason, trust on the part of the counselee needs to be matched by confidentiality on the part of the counsellor. Since the problems or information disclosed in counselling is usually personal and private, it requires a high level of confidentiality. One of the common fears of sharing one’s personal problem is that it gets out. The counsellor needs to maintain confidentiality by not sharing with another person. It is a good rule of the thumb that if the counselee does not indicate that certain information can be shared, it should not be shared. Imagine if a friend makes your secret, public, how would you feel?

**Notes:**
Basis for counselling

It is a logical question to ask: what do we use to counsel? What do we base our counselling on?

Firstly, we can use our human experience. As 2 Corinthians 1:3, 4, says “Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God.” We learn through our experiences in life. Only a person who has lost a job knows the pain of such an experience and will be able to relate with one who is in similar situation. Counselees tend to feel more understood while talking to counsellors who have had similar experiences. Even so, a word of caution is required here. The counsellors can certainly use their experiences to build bridges but it is generally wise not to share one’s experiences too quickly and too soon.

Timing is important.

Besides the counsellors’ personal life experiences that may relate to the counselees, their ministry experiences can also give them an edge. The experiences accumulated while counselling many and varied people will enable counsellors to have a better grasp on problems and how they develop. They are more likely to know what approaches will work and what won’t.

Notes:
Secondly, we may look to research and studies for verified data and theories. For example: Studies show that women after giving birth, tend to go through a period of feeling low. This knowledge of post-natal depression can certainly throw light on counselling new mothers. Psychology is a subject dealing with human behavior, thinking and emotions. Many of the researches in this field are useful in counselling. A word of caution is appropriate here. While there are theories which are helpful, there are those which are absurd and contrary to Scriptures. We need to be discerning.

Thirdly and most importantly in biblical counselling, we rely on the wisdom of the WORD of God. The Bible is God’s revelation to men. It is His blueprint to show men how to live. God being our creator knows what is best for us and how we should live to experience fulfillment. John 10:10 tell us that Jesus came that we may have life and have it more abundantly. Just as we need to read the operating manual for our microwave oven to realize its maximum benefits, we need to read the Creator’s manual for our best functioning.

In Biblical Counselling, the central conviction is that “All scriptures is God breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.” - 2 Timothy 3:16. Scriptures provide us with biblical principles to live by. God’s word is our guide in what we do and how we counsel.

Notes:
Biblical Basis For Counselling

Christian counselling is the ministry of the Christians, seeking to come alongside another person to help cope with the problems of life, in accordance with the Word of God and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The goal of all ministry is to help people to maturity in Christ and release them for valid and constructive ministry. All of us are involved in different counselling situations in our lives.

For Christians who counsel, counselling can be a means of fulfilling the divine calling. In Romans 12:8 and in 1 Corinthians 12:28, Paul mentions the gift of encouraging. For some, this can become an important ministry if they are so gifted by God.

The word “counsellor” occurs in both the Old and New Testaments concerning the ministry of the Messiah long before the recognition of the value of counselling in today’s world. Isaiah 11:2, John 14:16

Notes:
The Old Testament is full of examples of counselling:

**Genesis 3:8-12**  
God counsels with Adam

**Genesis 41**  
Joseph the slave boy counsels Pharaoh.

**Exodus 18**  
Jethro counsels Moses.

**II Samuel 12**  
Nathan the prophet confronts David the king.

**II Samuel 15:12**  
Ahitophel was David’s counsellor.

**II Samuel 16:15-17**  
Absalom follows Hushai’s counsel and rejects Ahitophel’s advice.

**II Samuel 20:16-20**  
A wise woman’s counsel brings peace.

**I Kings 1:11-31**  
Nathan counsels Bathsheba

**I Kings 12**  
King Rehoboam consults elders and the young.

**I Kings 19**  
God counsels Elijah

**Hosea 11:1-9**  
God counsels the people of Israel.

**Job** has his friends who come together to counsel him. The book of Proverbs is full of wise counsel. God’s creative work is Wisdom in live graphics.

The wisdom that God gives is available to those who realise their unworthiness but acknowledge the greatness and goodness of God.

**Notes:**
The passages which anticipate Christ, talk of Him as ‘The Wonderful Counsellor”. Isaiah 9:6 talks of Jesus on whom rests ‘The Spirit of Wisdom and Understanding, the Spirit of Counsel and of Power’. Isaiah 11:2. He possesses such treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge that good counsel can he found for every need and situation.

**Jesus** is our example and model. His ministry as an agent of healing and reconciliation brought God “out of the temple” and put Him on the streets. It was the ministry of Jesus that united the divine heart with the human hand that shed tears of compassion.

Prior to Jesus, the word ‘Comforter’ had a hollow ring, human “paracletes” like Job’s ‘comforters’ meant well, but in the end they preferred to side with divine perfection rather than human predicament.

Jesus is the first Paraclete (Counsellor), the one who invested His own person and life in the reconciliation of humanity. Jesus testified to a continuity between His ministry and that of the Father. (John 5:17)

**Notes:**
Jesus who was seen as a great teacher and miracle worker always had time for individuals. In His life, He fulfilled the complementary function of Prophet, Priest, Wise One and Shepherd.

**On the road to Emmaus:** He met confused, dejected disciples. He came alongside, walked with them, and showed His willingness to meet them at their need. He asked questions that made them talk and listened to their frustrations. He confronted gently and firmly and began the process of stimulating the change in their thinking and behaviour. He explained, taught and got close to them emotionally and psychologically. He left them on their own and spurred them on to action and moved them to a point of independence. (Luke 24: 13-27)

**Nicodemus** a Pharisee, came to Him alone at night. He respected his need for privacy. With him, He had a late night rational discussion on theology. (John 3: 1-15)

**The Samaritan Woman:** He met at a well, crossing boundaries of race and gender. He took time to build up a relationship, debating with her, offering the hope of better things. After getting her attentive ear, He took time to offer her satisfying life. He then challenged and confronted her all the while continuing to affirm her. (John 4: 1-26)

**Notes:**
**One Woman:** Touched Him in the crowd. Jesus stopped to encourage and support this timid woman. (Mark 5: 24-34)

**Zacchaeus the Tax Collector:** Jesus seeks out this short man up on a tree in the midst of a rushing crowd. He went to his home and discussed his needs and left him a transformed man. (Luke 19: 1-10)

He totally identifies with suffering people that He feels their pain and takes their place (Mt.25: 35-40). Jesus, the Good Shepherd left the ninety-nine to help one poor wandering sheep. (Luke 15:3-7) He is our example and model. Can we do less than give people our personal attention? It is Gods’ way and the only way to help people with their individual needs.

Jesus promised and sent another Paraclete, the Holy Spirit who would continue His presence and ministry. The Holy Spirit is the real Counsellor.

**The Holy Spirit – The Counsellor:**

His work in the counselling processes is manifold:

- He leads the counsellor- John 14:16
- He reveals the root problem- Psalms 139:1,7,23,24.
- He convicts sinners- John 16:8,9
- He restores broken hearts- Isaiah 61:1

**Notes:**
He comforts the disturbed – John 14:16-18
He strengthens and enables - 2Tim 1:7
He illuminates the mind - 1Cor 2:12,13
He reveals the things of God - 1Corinthians 2:10,13
He encourages - 1Thessalonians 2:3,
He exhorts - 1Corinthians 14:3
He appeals - 2 Corinthians 8:4
He consoles – Romans 15:4, 5

The Holy Spirit gifts and empowers us for work in this ministry. He gives continuity between Christ’s ministry and that of His followers.

True Biblical Counselling is a creative spiritual process involving a person who needs help and another person who will come alongside as God’s channel of mercy and truth. It is a spiritual activity that combines the Word of God and the Work of the Holy Spirit through one who is called to counsel and the one who will receive it.

God places the Holy Spirit in us. 2 Cor. 1:22. He alone gives us the power to change. As Christian Counsellors, we are co-workers with the Counsellor- the Holy Spirit. He uses people as co-workers, perhaps we should be called, ”Assistant Counsellors” (Mike Sheldon & Dave Ames).

God expects all of us, as Christians, to come alongside and help people spiritually. Some of us have the gifting and the call to develop the counselling ministry.

**Notes:**
Christian Basis and Approaches to Counselling

Biblical Basis For Counselling
Is there a mandate in the Bible to counsel? Are we called to be counsellors? The answer is a resounding yes because counsellors are also:

1. Disciples
John 13:34 ‘A new commandment I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so You must love one another. All men will know that you are my disciples if you have love one for another.’
Rom 5:8 God demonstrates his love: while we are yet sinners, Christ died for us.
John 3:16,17 No condemnation

2. Priests
1 Peter 2:9 ‘...you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood ...a people belonging to God’
Heb 4:14-16 Jesus is our great high Priest who can sympathize with our weaknesses.
James 5:16 ‘confess your sins to each other and pray for each other’

Notes:
3. Encouragers

1 Thess 5:14  warn the idle, encourage the timid, help the weak, be patient with everyone.  
‘Different strokes for different folks at different times.’

Gal 6:1,2  if someone is caught in sin, restore him gently; carry each other’s burden

Rom 12:8  ...if it is encouraging, let him encourage...

4. Comforters

2 Corinthians 1:3,4  God comforts us so that we may comfort others
John 14:16,26  Holy Spirit as the Counsellor, Comforter, the Spirit of truth.

5. Instructors

Rom 15:14  ‘... that you yourselves are full of goodness, complete in knowledge and competent to instruct one another.’

The need is to ground ourselves in God’s truth

Notes:
We are not all evangelists but we are all called to the evangelistic ministry. We are not all counsellors, but we are all called to the counselling ministry.

The Five Fold Ministry of a Counsellor

Christianity and Psychology: Enemies or Allies?

In considering integrating these two disciplines, we need to look at two concepts of General and Specific Revelation. Depending on how much credence one gives to each, it determines one’s approach of integration. We must also acquaint ourselves with the central beliefs of the Christian faith and psychological theories, in order to appreciate the intricacy of integration.

Notes:
**General Revelation**
God’s revelation of Himself and His truth through the creation, human research and so on. It is available to both His children and those who still do not know Him or acknowledge Him.

**Specific Revelation**
This usually refers to God’s Word, the Bible.

**Christianity**
It is about being reconciled to God through Christ, living to worship God, and being transformed into the likeness of Christ. It is about Christ-centeredness and maturing in Him.

**Psychology**
Psychology refers to the study of the soul, mind, and behavior of human kind. There is no one accepted psychology—there are hundreds of psychologies with different ideas and techniques that often contradict each other as well as the Bible. Most psychological theories are man-centered and founded on humanism—the belief that man is the highest being and occupies the central stage in human history.

**Notes:**
Four distinct approaches to integration:

Separate but Equal
This approach considers mental and emotional problems as legitimate concerns but considers the Bible silent about such matters. These problems are to be referred to qualified psychology professionals.

Such position fails to understand that the underlying causes of much psychological distress are guilt, anxiety, resentment, inability to forgive, lack of self-acceptance and so on, all of which the Bible addresses.

Notes:
**Tossed Salad**

This approach is like a tossed salad—mixing different ingredients together to achieve a new blend. It sees Scriptures and psychology as equal and attempts to mix the two. While recognizing the value of biblical doctrines such as forgiveness, faith, hope, and love, it seeks to combine them with the wisdom of psychology. When subject matters overlap, it blends insights from both.

Due to the insufficient scrutiny of the presuppositions of psychology, there is a danger of humanism seeping in. The careless acceptance of secular ideas compromises biblical doctrines.

A pictorial representation is as below:

![Diagram]

**Notes:**
**Nothing Buttery**

Those who embrace this position consider psychology irrelevant and unnecessary. Nothing but Christ, nothing but faith, nothing but grace, nothing but the Scriptures can solve human problems. This approach disregards the knowledge and findings gained through secular sources.

The flat assertion that every problem is due to sin and need to be confronted is overly simplistic. For example, victims of abuse who have damaged emotions and personalities need not be condemned further but affirmed, comforted, and encouraged.

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**Notes:**
“Spoiling the Egyptians”
When Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt, the LORD caused such fear to fall upon the Egyptians that they gave their gold, jewelry and what the Israelites asked of them (Exodus 12:35,36). They took whatever was useful for their sustenance in the wilderness.

Similarly, we can also extract from secular psychology whatever is compatible with Scripture for our use. One caution, however is that the plunder was later misused to build a golden calf. As such, we must use caution to screen the ideas so as not to compromise biblical doctrines.

While recognizing that psychology and human research are part of God’s gift and have valuable insights, it subjects them to the supremacy of the revealed Word of God. Thus, with careful scrutiny of psychological presuppositions, it only employs ideas that are not contrary to Scripture. It recognizes that Scripture has relevance and power in our thinking, emotions, behavior, and relationships. It can be represented diagrammatically as below:

![Diagram](image)

Notes:
Different Christian Counselling Approaches

Christian counsellors have created and advocated for various approaches to Christian counselling. Together, they provide a useful reminder of the complexity of human problems and solutions and the need for wisdom and sensitivity to help others effectively.

“Nouthetic Counselling”—Turning from Sin

This approach holds that most problems are due to sin, pure and simple. The counsellor uses Scripture to point out sins in the counselee’s life and challenge the counselee to repent. The counsellor’s style is confrontational, authoritative, directive and disciplining. Jay Adams is a proponent of this approach.

“Biblical Counselling”—Finding Fulfillment in Christ

This approach looks at our deepest human needs and desires and shows us how they are to be fulfilled in Christ. It holds that our needs for self-esteem, security, significance, and perfect love find perfect fulfillment in Christ. Most of our painful emotions and problem behaviors can be traced to our attempts to meet these needs outside of Christ. Our wrong thinking leads to wrong behavior and feelings. Resolving these problems involves changing our thoughts so they line up with biblical truth; if we change our

Notes:
thoughts our emotions and behaviors should fall in line as well. Proceeds from *parakaleo* to *noutheteo*—telling people with deep compassion and genuine love, what God requires of them. Christian counsellors who write about this approach include Larry Crabb, Robert McGee, and John Eldredge.

**Interpersonal Counselling—Rebuilding Relationships**
This approach insists that God created us to be part of an interdependent community. Much of our problems stem from our failures to connect with others in healthy, genuine ways. Counsellors who use this approach point out how counselees’ relationships are out of balance: lack of forgiveness, lack of boundaries, unhealthy dependency, attempts to control others, inability to trust, and so on. Christian counsellors who write about this approach include John Townsend, Henry Cloud, and Larry Crabb.

**Healing and Deliverance—Encountering the Holy Spirit**
This approach seeks to bring healing through an experiential encounter with the power of the Holy Spirit. One kind is inner healing prayer, where the counsellor uses prayer and imagination to bring Christ into past hurts.

**Notes:**
Another kind is deliverance ministry, where certain problems are viewed as caused by demonic oppression and the pastor or counsellor seeks to bring spiritual freedom. Caution, discernment, and sensitivity are needed as these approaches can be harmful if misused. Christians writing about this approach include Dr. Kenneth McAll, Neil Anderson, and David Seamands.

Notes:
Characteristics of a Good Counsellor

Knowledge of theories of personalities and therapies and counselling skills are essential, but by themselves they are not sufficient to establish and maintain an effective therapeutic relationship. When two people come together at a counselling session they bring their personalities, experiences, values, attitudes, insecurities and perceptions with them. To the extent that the counsellor and counselee are able to relate the more likely it is to get positive results. This relationship depends on certain attributes of the counsellor such as

- Personal Characteristics
- Personal attitudes

**Personal characteristics:** In counselling, we enable an individual to cope with the difficult situations in his/her day to day life. Counselling is a relationship with a purpose and setting where trust is a pre-requisite. For this certain characteristics are desired in a counsellor such as:

**Notes:**
**Close Communion with God:** Counselling is not first and foremost problem-solving. It is to do with offering acceptance through respect for the individual. It is being genuinely interested in the counselee and showing care. As such, the qualities of a counsellor play an important part. A godly and effective counsellor is one who has *close communion with God*. Unless one is acquainted with God’s counsel, it will be impossible to help others to do so. Not only so, many times, even trained lay counsellors may feel helpless. They are driven to depend on the wisdom of God and the leading of the Holy Spirit. A biblical counsellor is one who maintains a close walk with the LORD, who is the source of all wisdom.

**Comfortable to talk to:** Counsellors should be people –oriented rather than problem oriented. Besides being godly, effective biblical counsellors are those who relate to people well. They are people with whom others feel *comfortable to talk to*. They are friendly and warm. They can put people at ease and are good listeners to whom counselees feel easy to open up to.

Counsellors must be **compassionate** and mindful of the feelings of the counselee. Instead of making light of others’ sufferings, they are able to

Notes:
appreciate the difficulties the counselees are going through without being judgmental. Counsellors must be able to develop a facilitative relationship that will assure the counselee of their concern. The impact and influence of counselling in people’s lives is usually related to their perception of the counsellor.

**Commands respect:** Another characteristic of good counsellors is the ability to *command respect*. Respected counsellors are effective counsellors for their words are taken into consideration by the counselees. Respect flourishes in a scenario of good character, integrity, consistency and genuineness. People who command respect are those who respect themselves and others. They respect and appreciate themselves. They can give help and love out of their own sense of self-worth and strength. Frequently, the people who come for counselling are those who have experienced rejection, who have problems and are not popular with others. How then can we respect people like that? It is important to keep in mind that people are made in the image of God with intrinsic value. Their deeds and lifestyle may not be respectable but they have value as people. Our respect for them is thus not behavior based but image-based.

**Notes:**
As counsellors, we work towards restoration of the lost image of God due to sin.

**Competent:** With regard to the knowledge and skill of counselling, effective biblical counsellors are those acquainted with the Scriptures and are competent in what they do. This competency comes from teach-ability, constant desire to learn and regular training. Counsellors’ *competence* is not mere self assessment. When a counsellor feels that he is good at his job, it may or may not be actually so. It needs to be verified by his counselees and co-counsellors. One’s effectiveness is also evident from the results of counselling.

**Personal attitude**
An attitude is a positive or negative evaluation of people and things. Our attitude towards people, our way of thinking and feeling towards others influences our behavior toward them. Therefore, in order to be effective, counsellors have to develop right attitudes towards people in general and counselees in particular. The counsellor can create a supportive environment by conveying certain key attitudes that encourage the counselee to feel comfortable in sharing his experiences. These attitudes are

**Notes:**
1. **Unconditional positive regard:**

   This implies that the counsellor accepts the client unconditionally and non-judgmentally regardless of the content of any disclosure they may have made. Many times people share dark secrets of their life that they have never shared before. Sometimes they are struggling with a sinful habit that they are not able to come out of. As counsellors we may not have gone through such problem behaviours ourselves. At such times, we run the danger of becoming judgmental. We tend to feel superior and smug. Avoid a holier-than-thou-art attitude. Don’t be judgmental. Counselling cannot be effective in a non-accepting relationship for when counsellors communicate their judgments or rejection they reinforce the rejection the client may have experienced from others in their lives.

Components of positive regard are:

- Valuing a person and accepting them as a unique individual.
- Being non-judgmental and impartial
- Acceptance of another person, and their views, opinions and beliefs.
- Nurturing and caring for another person, and being conscious of their needs.
- Being compassionate, and understanding a person’s personal struggle with issues and problems.

**Notes:**
2.  **Respect**

In every human being there is ‘dignity’ and there is ‘depravity’. Respect for a person flows out when you see this ‘dignity’ in man. It is the reflection of God in man. It is looking at a person as worthy since he is created in the image of God. Avoid seeing the ‘depravity’ and start looking at the ‘dignity’. This enables a person to see the potential for change and personal growth in a person. It is the ability to communicate to the client the counsellor's sincere belief that every person possesses the inherent strength and capacity to make it in life, and that each person has the right to choose his own alternatives and make his own decisions. They appreciate the influence of culture. They are aware of the ways in which their own culture affects them, and they respect the diversity of values of other cultures. They are also sensitive to the unique differences arising out of social class, race, and gender.

It also creates a bonding that is so essential for counselling. An attitude of respect towards a counsellee, helps the counsellee to freely think and make decisions; own them and feel responsible. Respect the counselee and the counselee respects himself and others connected with the problem.

**Notes:**
Communicating respect involves:

- Speaking in a warm tone
- Not criticising, lecturing, giving orders or using bad language
- Communicating your faith in the counselee’s ability to solve his problem
- Crediting the counselee for progress

3. Genuineness

Genuineness is at the heart of every relationship more so a counselling relationship. Counsellors who are genuine are open, honest, sincere and connected. Most problems arise due to artificiality in relationships. Genuineness is shown by the people who are comfortable with who they are and what they feel and hence wear no masks. This in turn makes counselees comfortable and allows them to be open and honest with the counsellor and with themselves.

Willingness to face the experiences in life will help a person better deal with the problems. It’s about being real pearls and not cultured pearls. A genuine counsellor is at ease to admit to his own limitations in helping a counselee.

Being genuine involves:

- Being authentic in what you say
- Being as open and spontaneous as possible within the helping relationship.

Notes:
4. **Concreteness**

It is an attitude that helps the counsellor to understand the counsellee in specific terms and also express himself in concrete terms. It helps a counsellor to avoid vague generalisations and zoom in on specific problems. One of the best ways to be concrete is to seek responses to ‘what’, ‘when’, and ‘where’ and ‘how’ of the problem. It involves skillful questioning, probing, summary statements and spiritual discernment.

**Includes the following functions:**

- Keep communication specific. Ask for specific details and specific facts.
- Avoid tangents, generalizations, abstract discussions, or talking about counsellor rather than the counselee.
- Use questions and suggestions to help the client clarify facts, terms, feelings, and goals.
- Help counselee to identify and work on a specific problem from the various ones presented.

5. **Empathy**

We are all familiar with what sympathy means: Feeling sorry for someone. Empathy on the other hand is to share the pain. Feel the pain. It is to put oneself in their shoes and feeling with them not for them. To develop

**Notes:**
empathy, a counsellor must be able to understand the feeling and the reason why a counsellee is feeling that way. When this understanding is conveyed to the counsellee accurately, the counsellee feels empathized.

**Empathy involves:**
Observing the counselee’s expressions both verbal and non verbal
Taking time to think, time to listen and understand the counsellee’s perspective
Avoiding clichés or making interpretation or judgments

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**Notes:**
Ethics of a Christian Counsellor

The primary responsibility of counsellors is to respect the dignity and to promote the welfare of clients.

Ethics Concerning Counselee:

No Exploitation: Counsellors should not exploit counselee, past or present. Care must be taken not to exploit people who come for help as they are vulnerable and may not be able to resist pressure. Even after obtaining agreement of the client; we should check to ensure they understand and agree with the actions we are taking.

a) Financially: Counsellors should not engage in any financial transaction apart from the counselling fee.

b) Emotionally: Counsellors should avoid exploiting or manipulating counselees to satisfy his own needs. Counsellors respect the counselees' freedom of choice.

c) Sexually: Counsellors do not have any type of sexual intimacies with counselees. Christian counsellors should uphold the sanctity of marriage.

   It is good to avoid any physical contact other than shaking hands.

Notes:
**Confidentiality:**
The most important element in counselling ethics is the confidential treatment of all personal information. Violating the counselee’s trust, either intentionally or through carelessness leads to severe repercussions. Confidentiality must not be broken when using case material for illustration or in the context of prayer.
Records of counselling sessions should be filed securely. For administrative purposes, let only the person who needs to know, know and only as much as he needs to know to do his job. Confidentiality is not above law or life.

**Client Welfare:**
The primary responsibility of counsellors is to respect the dignity and to promote the welfare of counselees. Counsellor should respect people with their cultural differences, levels of faith, belief systems and attitudes. As counsellors, do not impose your views on counsellees. Counselees must be respected and their beliefs recognised. Co – dependency should be avoided and the counsellor should not act on behalf of the counselee, but if they do it should be only at the expressed request of counselee in writing.

**Notes:**
Referral: A counsellor should recognize his limitations and refer the counselee to other specialists (Lawyer, doctor) if required. They should refrain from counselling family member, colleagues etc to avoid conflicts of interest. Referral should be done compassionately, clearly and completely.

Counselling contracts: During the initial stage of setting a contract between the counsellor and the counselee, the boundaries of the counselling relationship should be set. Counsellor should supply accurate information about the service they provide.

Ethics Concerning Self:

a. Should live and counsel in accordance with scriptural principles. Christian counsellors should affirm the central truths of the Christian faith as expressed in the Bible and historic creeds. They should recognise the Lordship of Christ and the authority of Scripture in all areas of belief and practice. Counsellors should be spiritually mature which influences the way they live.

b. Ongoing training: Counsellors should strive to be the best in their field. They should pursue periodic training for professional development.

Notes:
They must keep up to date with the latest professional knowledge, debates and techniques at a level appropriate to their work. They must be able to respond to changing thinking and ideas.

c. Regular supervision. Supervision is “an intensive, interpersonally focused one to one relationship in which one person is designated to facilitate the development of therapeutic competence in the other person.” - Loganbill, Hardy, Delworth. Supervision is essential for ethical reasons, legal reasons and counsellor’s development. Counsellors improve most when they receive regular face-to-face supervision. Mere counselling experience does not help counsellors improve their ability or competence. Supervision focuses on three main aspects:

- Normative – holding the counsellor accountable to legal and ethical standards, monitoring to ensure minimum standards are met.
- Formative – assisting the counsellor through teaching, training, and personal development
- Restorative – providing a safe place where the counsellor can unburden himself or herself and get support

Notes:
What is shared by the counsellor in supervision are:

- Practical aspects of counselling
- Feelings / anxieties about the counselling that you provide
- The sort of problems you generally face
- How effective you are
- Not necessary to divulge confidential information

d. **Do not counsel if pre-determined.** Counsellors must respect everyone and show compassion to all and should avoid acting with discrimination. They should not allow any personal views they may hold about lifestyle, gender, age, disability, race, sexual orientation, beliefs or culture to prejudice their professional relationships with counselees.

e. **Do not counsel if pre occupied:** Counsellors must provide an effective professional service. If, for any reason [health, personal or professional circumstances], they are not able to fully concentrate on the session, they should seek the advice of their supervisor or withdraw from practice until they are once again fit to practice.

**Notes:**
Ethics Concerning Community:

Abide by law. Counsellors should respect authority and live according to the law of the land. They need to know any legal requirements that affect their work and must comply with them.

 Maintain inter professional relationship. This helps when you need to make a referral. Avoid talking to counselees about other counsellors.

Accreditation:

Most counsellors are members of a professional counselling body. This demonstrates commitment to client safety. It also ensures means of resolving disputes that may arise.

Case Studies

1. Sunita made every effort to get into the Pastoral Care Team of her Church. Unable to resist her enthusiasm the team leaders take her on as a Pastoral counsellor. One day Rita comes to Sunita for prayer and counsel. Rita shares how, her husband Rajiv comes home drunk and beats her almost every day. Sunita is emotionally moved and becomes very angry. She says, “You leave the matter to me, Rita. I know how to handle such men. I will teach him such a lesson that he will not forget all his life. Wait till I talk to him.”

Notes:
2 Sundar is a counsellor at a Christian counselling centre. The counselling team prays for their counselees every Saturdays. Shubhan is being counselled by one of the team members for his marital problems. Sundar meets Shubhan in his Church and in his usual enthusiasm enquires about Shubhan’s welfare and how the counselling process was going on. He enquired if he was able to reconcile with his wife. Shuban is taken aback and no sooner he reaches home, he calls his counsellor and terminates the relationship.

3 A progressive church in a cosmopolitan city hired Rev Kumar as their new pastor. He is married and they have a six-year-old daughter. Pastor Kumar introduces many new programmes in the church. He feels that several families are going through difficult circumstances. In order to reach out to them he starts personal counselling on Tuesdays and Friday afternoons. Several members of the church visit the pastor and find a lot of comfort in his counsel and prayer. Pastor Kumar spends more and more time in church activities and visiting families and his family life takes a back seat. Soon his marriage is facing difficulties.

Notes:
One Tuesday afternoon Mrs Prakash visits the pastor for counsel. Her marriage of five years is in trouble and she feels her husband is having an affair with another woman in the office. The pastor in a very caring manner counsels her and prays with her. Finding emotional comfort, her weekly visits increase to twice a week. The pastor too begins to share his marital problems with her. Soon they are sexually involved. He is asked to leave the Church.

4 Sam meets counsellor Sandeep at a youth counselling centre and tells him about his depression and thoughts of suicide. Sandeep counsels him and prays with him. He also advises him to fast and pray and tells him he’ll be O.K. soon. Two months later Sam is hospitalised for attempted suicide.

**Notes:**
Ruth is a counsellor in the city. The counsellors meet with their supervisor once a month. During the supervision the counsellors begin to discuss their cases in detail even mentioning names of counselees. They joke about some of the counselees there are seeing. Ruth is disturbed, what should she do?

Identify the problem.
What does the ACC code of practice say, if anything?
What is your possible course of action?
What are the potential consequences you would consider?
What lessons would you draw from this case?

Notes:
Counselee Record

Personal Data:

Name: Mr./Miss/Mrs./Rev./Dr. ____________________________

Address: __________________________________________

Telephone 1: ___________________ Telephone 2: ____________

Email address: __________________________ Age: ___________

Religion: __________________________ Occupation: __________

Highest Education Qualification: __________________________

Marital Status:    Single    Married    Divorced    Widowed

Children M/F Age

Medical history Details
Head injury
Surgery
Medication

Areas I want to seek help/counsel (tick the appropriate box/es)

Premarital Marital
Children Relationship
Study Self improvement

Family Work Mental Health

Referral: Self Friend Relative Pastor PtP website

Previous counselling done? YES/NO If yes please give details:____________________

Memorandum of understanding:

1. Counseling done at PtP is voluntary and free of cost. We believe that God has asked us to help others in their difficulties. Therefore, counseling is offered with God’s help with due care and responsibility.
2. PtP counselors are trained and serve under experts’ supervision. However, PtP or our counselors are not to be held legally liable for the free services offered.
3. PtP counselors will assist you in decision making. You are responsible for the decisions you take.
4. I am committed to several counseling sessions where necessary and I will co-operate.
5. PtP will keep all matters of counselling confidential except when the safety of the counselee or others is at risk.
6. When unable to keep an appointment, I will call up the office, a day before and inform.
7. Please ensure mobile phones are on silent mode during the counseling session.

Signature of Counselee: ____________________________
Signature of Counsellor: _______________ Date: ___________

Marital Status: Single Married Divorced Widowed

Referral: Self Friend Relative Pastor PtP website

PtP website
## Monthly Counselling Log

**Month __________________________**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Counselee Name</th>
<th>Session No.</th>
<th>Duration</th>
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Totals ( ) ( ) ( )

Counsellor Signature ___________________________ Date __________

Counsellor Name ____________________________________________

Supervisor Signature ___________________________ Date __________

Supervisor Name ____________________________________________
Care of a Counsellor

The Maxim ‘Understand thyself Or Know thyself’ is admirable. Christian counselling is a complex profession. In counselling where we seek to be people helpers, we first need to help ourselves. To do that effectively, we need to know ourselves.

**Know Yourself:** Begin with your uniqueness. Apart from God’s work the counsellor is the most important factor in the therapeutic process. Therefore it is critical to know who we are. John 13:3-5 – Jesus knew who He was. That knowledge equipped Him to humble Himself and serve His friends. There is security in understanding our origin and destination.

“*Unless the psychiatrist is widely aware of His own interpersonal process so that he can handle them for the benefit of the patient in their interpersonal therapeutic dealings with each other, no successful psychotherapy can take place.*” Dr. Fromm-Reichmann.

**Notes:**
We can be free to be truly involved with another only as we come to know that everything we have has come to us from God. We have to accept our self, love our self, before we can love others or help them love themselves.

Otherwise:-

- Our insecurities will drive us to use our counsellees to boost our own ego.
- Our needs will cause us to depend on our counsellees for self-gratification.
- Our unresolved conflicts will be transferred to our clients or projected on to them.
- Only a mature counsellor can honestly
- Say I do not understand the problem.
- Say I do not have the answer to a question.
- Use facilitative self-disclosure effectively knowing the truth about oneself.

Notes:
Importance of Self Assessment:

1. **You are precious to God.** He cares about you as much as he cares about your counselees!

   *Those who take care of souls are worthy of all care.*—Luther.

   *In restoring others to health, by healing their wounds, he must not disregard his own health. Let him not while helping his neighbors, neglect himself, let him not, while lifting up others, fall himself.*—Gregory the Great.

2. **You need to own something before you can give it away.** With any truth, whether it’s from the Bible, psychology, or common sense, you need to know it, apply it to yourself, and wrestle with any tensions it brings up in your life, before you own it and can use it to help others.

   *You can only lead others as far as you have gone yourself*—Myles Monroe

   *Jesus told them this story: “Can a blind person lead another blind person? No! Both of them will fall into a ditch. A student is not better than his teacher, but the student who has been fully trained will be like the teacher.*

**Notes:**
"Why do you notice the little piece of dust in your friend’s eye, but you don’t notice the big piece of wood in your own eye? How can you say to your friend, “Friend, let me take that little piece of dust out of your eye’ when you cannot see that big piece of wood in your own eye! You hypocrite! First, take the wood out of your own eye. Then you will see clearly to take the dust out of your friend’s eye.”—Luke 6:39-42.


3. The nature of our work puts us at risk for stress and burnout.
Burnout is a frequent occurrence among people helpers. It is the single most common personal consequence of practicing counselling.—Kottler.

- Counsellors are called to care. It is not always easy to care “just enough”—not too much and not too little, not for everyone or no one but for some.
- Counselees are not always likable or appreciative of our help. Some need counselling precisely because they are difficult to be around.
- Be aware of “secondary trauma.” People who help others can be deeply affected by the traumas they see or hear about. Counsellors, crisis responders, emergency medical staff, and social workers are especially vulnerable.

Notes:
4. As counsellors we have extra accountability to God and others.

*We who teach will be judged more strictly.*—James 3:1

*If you are convinced that you are a guide for the blind, a light for those who are in the dark, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of infants, because you have in the law the embodiment of knowledge and truth—you then, who teach others, do you not teach yourself?*—Romans 2:19-21

If you are talking to someone about the power of prayer, how is your prayer life?

If you are talking to someone about marriage issues, how is your marriage?

If you are talking to someone about self-esteem, how is your self-esteem?

If you are talking to someone about forgiving others, is there anyone you need to forgive?

If you are talking to someone about priorities and balance, how are you doing with those?

**Notes:**
Methods of Self Assessment:

1. Consider doing a personality indicator test

2. Questions you can ask yourself
   a. What are three personal qualities that you think will help you as a counsellor?
   b. List three of your weaknesses, or areas that you need to examine, that might limit your effectiveness as a counsellor.
   c. Think of some specific struggles you have had with issues in your own life.
   d. How would you feel if you suggested a solution or exercise and your counselee refused to try? How could you handle it?
   e. How would you feel if a counselee is extremely needy, calling your mobile frequently and always wanting to talk to you? How could you handle it?
   f. If a counselling case is past your limits, what options do you have? Whom can you consult with or refer to?
   g. Do you notice any signs of stress or burnout in your own life?

Notes:
Analysis of a typical counsellor

A typical counsellor is hardworking, conscientious, does not relax, does not have many vocational interests, throws self entirely into work, works at a tension and finds it difficult to take holidays without feeling guilty. He/she carries responsibility well, is careful of details, has a dread of failure even for minor unimportant things. They have a strong ambition – an exaggerated feeling of importance of their job, take themselves too seriously – have a ‘Messiah complex’ – a conviction of one’s indispensability and the feeling that one’s particular work is indispensable to humanity and the universe.

If this describes you, then it is vital for you to

- Understand the pattern of your own personality
- Develop what Adler calls ‘Courage of imperfection’- the ability to fail.
- Enjoy the process as well as the goals
- Derive enjoyment on the wing
- Be sure that you are in the ministry and that you are interested in helping people for their sake not yours.

Notes:
The Cost of Ministry on the Counsellor

To make a choice to be a Christian counsellor excludes certain lifestyle possibilities. The Bible gives us helpful advice: Luke 14:25-33 - cautions us to estimate the cost first.

a) Nature of Ministry
   - Cost of being an example
   - Need of ordered lifestyle, routine
   - Faithful to preparation, Bible reading
   - Regular pattern, which can lead to boredom
   - Resisting temptation
   - Perhaps stressful public speaking
   - Perhaps unpopular or uncompromising stands we take

b) Family life
   - Counsellee’s expectations from the counsellor’s family
   - Counsellees feel right to invade home with phone calls, visits for counselling
   - Emotional cost to family when ministry precedes family.

c) Personal finances
   - Not as well paid as other professions
   - Cost of sacrifice for self, family

Notes:
d) **Dynamics of Kingdom of God in this world**

- Lifestyle of interlocking and competing demands - being in contact with society and yet separate from society, being beneficial to society and sometimes critical of stands of society
- Standing firm against pornography, exploitation, drug taking, etc.

**Difficulties Counsellors Face**

1. Knowledge and Skills - not adequately equipped with knowledge, skills, exposure, systematic working.
2. Rigid view of helping – restricted to one model.
3. Age and experience – trained workers may leave for more interactive jobs and workers may be inexperienced. Counsellor may be single and young without personal experience of life stages. May not be able to handle all transitional issues of counsellees.
4. Culture, Language, religion – Most counselling theories are generated from a western background. In Asia, we need to contextualize and integrate western theories and approaches to our own Multiracial, Multilingual, Multi-religious situation.
5. Personal trait – Own prejudices, emotional difficulties, not adequate realization of how client’s problems affect their own shortcomings, vulnerability

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**Notes:**
How to Care for Yourself

Once you know yourself you can care for yourself. Caregivers need special care. Care of souls is a demanding task, which needs the caregiver to be physically, emotionally, mentally and spiritually fit in order to offer care to others.

1. **Know God personally.** Ground yourself constantly in God’s heart and grace. Don’t wander far from the central message of the gospel: John 3:16.

   *Not understanding the very core of God's heart and living in the light of that understanding is the main cause of spiritual burnout.*—Kim Wenzel of Smoldering Wick Ministries

2. **Know your priorities:** relationship with God and family must come before ministry. I recommend keeping at least one day a week, not necessarily Sunday, just to rest and spend time with God and family. In other words, recognize God’s intent in giving us the Sabbath. Honor it as a life-giving principle without making it a point of legalism.

Notes:
I also recommend keeping weekly date and/or family nights. I’ve heard of Christian leaders who refused to go out for ministry on those nights, saying “Sorry, I have another commitment.” That commitment is your family.

3. **Know yourself**: your strengths, your weaknesses, your emotions, your personality, your spiritual gifts. You will function much better and burn out less quickly if you are operating with, not against, the flow.

4. **Know your limits**: time, emotions, skills and experience, and so on.

5. **Know where to go for help**: Develop a support system. Identify counsellors you can refer counselling cases to when they are beyond your limits, people you can consult with when you are unsure, people you can talk to or go to for your own counselling, and so on.

6. **Know ways to reduce and release your stress**: prayer, Christian meditation, exercise, nature, keeping a schedule, pets, children, music, and so on. Know and use the ones that work best for you.

**Notes:**
7. Know how to deal with specifically stressful situations

**Feelings to Counsellee:** Not all counsellees are likable, acknowledge you are no angel, deal with feelings, talk with colleague/supervisor and try to resolve, if not refer.

**Sexual Attraction:** Lack of openness in dealing with it: As counselling is an emotionally charged situation it can easily happen. Be aware, be practical, share with someone and refer counsellee to a more mature counsellor.

**Challenge by Counsellee:** Due to resistance to counselling, counsellee may challenge your credentials, experience, status or benefits of counselling, or due to not seeing results after long counselling. Be assertive in telling what you can offer and emphasize team work in ministry

8. Know how to avoid burnout

“Burnout is a frequent occurrence among people helpers. It is the single most common personal consequence of practicing counselling”. Kottler.

Notes:
Stress touches counsellors everyday – for counsellors who work with people with problems, there is emotional involvement, which leaves one drained.

- Realize that counsellors are limited – accept limitations
- Realize that no one can succeed all the time – success is not ‘more’ but ‘better’ - in terms of continuous involvement.

**Signs that you are under stress and/or burnout at work**

- Decision making major or minor becomes difficult.
- Excessive daydreaming about “getting away from it all”.
- Increased use of medication – for headaches etc.
- Thoughts trail while speaking, writing
- Sudden outbursts of temper, hostility
- Forgetfulness regarding appointments, deadlines, dates
- Frequent spells of brooding and feeling of inadequacy
- Reversal of usual behavior

**Specific Burnout Symptoms Peculiar to the counsellor**

- **Detachment:** - Treating counsellees as cases non-involvement – lack of concern, spend more time with administration rather than counselling. Feel relieved when counsellee does not show up.

**Notes:**
• Feeling burdened: become too responsible for the counsellee, lack of detachment altogether – dream, think, worry about counsellee – ownership over counsellee – “my case”

• Become impatient and angry: irritable with counsellees, express anger with colleagues, feel you have to tolerate them.

• Constantly giving advice: only listen to tell what has to be done, less time in relationship building only dish out advice – get upset if counsellee does not do what you tell him to do.

• Being emotionally attached: become emotionally upset by counsellee’s problem and feel depressed.

• Doing more of the same: feeling of being stuck with cases, lacking innovation, tendency to do the same thing.

Factors leading to Burnout

Counsellor’s own case management

  1. Case Related Factors

• Heavy caseload – as there are few staff

• Counsellee management - expect to be specialists in general work with all kinds of counselees; no matching of counsellor and counsellee.

• Inadequate knowledge and skills

• Transient counsellees – no follow up

Notes:
2. Setting and Organizational Factors:
   - Ineffective case management: - No adequate discussion, diagnosis or skills.
   - Lack of support from supervisors: - Supervisors or heads of institutions may not be trained in counselling or may be out of touch with current trends and lack intervention strategies.
   - Inadequate staff development programmes and staff welfare policies: Difficult situations where there is service to community but not welfare of own staff.

**Managing Burn-out:** The tool of the trade is You. Therefore it is imperative to take good care of yourself and manage stress successfully. Remind self that counselling is an emotionally stressful profession due to the intensity of involvement with people and their problems.

Recommendations from Ellis
   - Do not continue to do the same thing if there is no progress. Be flexible.
   - When different techniques do not work, consider consulting with other counsellors
   - Closely monitor own feelings
   - Acknowledge failure with counsellees and refer

**Notes:**
• Take leave from work- it’s a disservice to self and people you serve, if you don’t during a burnout.

Preventive measures to avoid burn-out

1. **Take Stock:** Assess self periodically.

2. **Clarify expectations:** with your self, your supervisors.

3. **Manage your cases:** do not let cases manage you. Apply screening procedures, tailor strategies appropriately.

4. **Develop a team approach:** Collaborate with a colleague, adopting a unified approach.

5. **Time Management:** Devote time for self, family, recreation, vacation, learn to say “No.”

6. **Separate work from Personal life:** Do not carry work to your home. Make time for family.

7. **Strengthen Relationships** with friends, fellow professionals, family, support groups

8. **Develop Yourself** By further training, reading, consulting, supervision.

9. **Review your job description** do not permit increase in responsibility beyond what you can handle. Be realistic.

10. **Be Flexible** to life as rigidity adds to stress. Flexibility helps you absorb different situations. Be open to use other techniques.

**Notes:**
Communication Skills

Communication is a process by which information is exchanged between individuals through a common system of symbols, signs or behaviour. Good communication is the most fundamental support skill for lay counsellors.

Importance of communication
1. To convey information – Pass on information as accurately as possible.
2. To assure understanding – Make sure the information is understood properly.
3. To get action – Ensure movement in the desired direction.
4. To persuade – Help think in a new way to ensure long term change.
5. Brings emotional healing as you share hurts.
6. Being listened to and talked to makes you feel valued.
7. Vital to address problems and issues

Notes:
Elements of Personal communication:

- Non-Verbal: 55%
- Tone of Voice: 38%
- Spoken Word: 7%
Verbal communication: involves the content of our message, the choice and arrangement of our words. However the same words can be interpreted differently by different people. To avoid confusion be concise and clear with simple words.

Non Verbal communication: refers to the message we send through our body language. As they say Actions speak louder than words. This accounts for 55% of what is perceived and understood by others. This key aspect of communication emphasizes or contradicts the verbal message. It includes touch, eye contact, gestures, dress, posture, facial expression, sounds etc. Counsellors should be mindful that their body language sends a message about themselves. It shows their attitude toward the person (facing or looking elsewhere) and their emotional state (fidgety, tapping fingers or legs).

Para Verbal messages: accounts for approximately 38% of what is communicated to someone. It refers to the messages that we send through the tone, pitch, and pacing of our voices. It is how we say something not what we say. Tone of voice can convey information ranging from enthusiasm to disinterest to anger. Your voice being an essential element in communication should be bold, firm and enthusiastic. On the telephone, the voice should be clear.

Notes:
A sentence can convey entirely different meanings depending on the emphasis on words and the tone of voice. For example, the statement, "I am waiting for you to appreciate my work" has different meanings, depending on which word is emphasized.

I am waiting for you to appreciate my work
I am waiting for you to appreciate my work
I am waiting for you to appreciate my work
I am waiting for you to appreciate my work
In order to communicate effectively, we must use all three components to
1. Send clear, concise messages.
2. Hear and correctly understand messages someone is sending to us.

Communication process [Source: http://www.worldtrans.org]

Notes:
In the diagram above A is the sender, B is the receiver. A and B have different personal realities. They each have their own world formed by their experiences, their perceptions, their ideas, etc. They will perceive, experience, and interpret things differently. The same event will always be perceived a little different by each of the two people.

The sender will convey to the receiver some kind of idea, perception, feeling, or information. It will be a part of her reality that she wishes to communicate.

Between humans there will be several layers of the message being sent. There will often be a verbal portion, something that is being expressed in language, spoken or written. And there is also a non-verbal portion, most notably body language. Sometimes the verbal and non-verbal messages don't agree with each other, they are incongruent. If they do agree we say that they are congruent.

When B hears the word or sentence she will interpret it based on her experiences, perceptions, and opinions. She might supplement the verbal information with non-verbal information such as body language. It might or might not be what was intended by the sender.

**Notes:**
One of the greatest challenges in relationships is that of communication. To have effective communication one needs to take all these factors into consideration. The different realities, the space the communication takes place in, verbal as well as non-verbal messages, the intended meaning versus the perceived meaning.

**Key Communication Skills:** As seen above talking, listening and understanding are vital to the counselling process.

**Talking:** Talking is not just the opposite of silence and talking for the sake of talking is not good communication either. What is essential is talking with a purpose. Learning how to talk to each other is the key communication skill that often needs to be developed. *Prov 18:21 – Death and life are in the power of the tongue.*

Effective talking should be:

- Respectful. *Proverbs - Chapter 15:1* A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.

Disrespectful communication includes sarcasm, ridicule, judgmental statements and accusations, and put downs. Eliminate blaming in your conversation. Replace ‘You’ with ‘I’ when speaking. Frame your sentence in “I feel … when this happens” rather than “You did…” manner. Blaming often makes the person defensive.

**Notes:**
• Complemented by Non verbal communication:

We use two types of communication: verbal and non-verbal. Much of our communication is non-verbal. For effective communication words should be complemented by the right paralinguistic skills or they can lose their meaning.

The volume of your voice is a good indicator of your mood and temperament. The choice of words we use convey our message may have specific meaning to you and may be quite different for your receiver.

**Barriers while speaking:**

• Use of ambiguous word

• Lack of clarity

• Jumping from topic to topic

• Incomplete sentences

• Not seeking clarifications while communicating

**Notes:**
**Listening**: James 1:19 “...Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry.”

Learning how to listen and pay attention to the help-seeker is crucial. In contrast to everyday conversation, which is usually an active dialogue for both parties, lay counsellors spend most of their time as active listeners rather than talkers. It is the help-seeker who sets the frame for the dialogue and therefore is in focus. Learning to be a good listener is a skill that almost anyone can acquire through practice and training. Central to good listening is a set of attitudes that is conveyed when interacting with the help-seeker. Listening requires more than hearing words. It requires a desire to understand another human being, an attitude of respect and acceptance, and a willingness to open one's mind to try and see things from another's point of view.

Listening requires a high level of concentration and energy. It demands that we set aside our own thoughts and agendas, put ourselves in another’s shoes and try to see the world through that person's eyes. True listening requires that we suspend judgment, evaluation, and approval in an attempt to understand another’s frame of reference, emotions, and attitudes.

**Notes:**
When we listen effectively we gain information that is valuable to understanding the problem as the other person sees it. We gain a greater understanding of the other person's perception. After all, the truth is subjective and a matter of perception. When we have a deeper understanding of another's perception, whether we agree with it or not, we hold the key to understanding that person's motivation, attitude, and behavior. We have a deeper understanding of the problem.

**Effective listening includes:**

1. Being aware of the speaker’s non verbal messages.
2. Listening to a person’s words and feelings beneath those words. Our tendency is to try and ignore the emotional aspect of the message and move directly to the content of the issue.
3. Making an effort to concentrate on what a person is saying and not busy formulating your response. Proverbs 18:13
4. Completely accepting what is being said, without judging what the person is saying or how he or she is saying it.
5. Being able to repeat what has been said and express what you think he or she was feeling while speaking to you. By reflecting back to the speaker what we believe we understand, we validate that person by

**Notes:**
giving them the experience of being heard and acknowledged. We also provide an opportunity for the speaker to give us feedback about the accuracy of our perceptions, thereby increasing the effectiveness of our overall communication.

**Barriers to listening include:**
- Lack of motivation
- Lack of eye contact
- Negative facial gestures or tone of speaker
- Thinking about what you are going to say once the other person has stopped talking
- Interrupting a conversation
- Defensiveness
- Self centeredness
- Physical or mental fatigue

**Understanding:** *Prov 20:5 “The purposes of a man’s heart are deep waters, but a man of understanding draws them out.”*  
Goal of effective communication is correct understanding of what is being said. It is not enough to be passive listeners. Good communication necessitate that you aspire to be understanding. It is important to not only hear but to understand what the other person means.

**Notes:**
There is a lot of difference between seeing and perceiving. Two people can interpret the same message in two different ways. Communication between sender and receiver is often distorted. It is easy for the receiver to misinterpret what the other person has said. The verbal and non verbal message may be incongruent. Therefore it is vital to check the interpretation. Reflecting, clarifying or paraphrasing what you have heard gives the sender the opportunity to confirm or deny the accuracy of the message.

Good communication probes for more insight. Most listeners fail to grasp the full meaning of the speaker. The only way to overcome the unnecessary miscues in conversation is to ask questions respectfully and courteously. When more information is required encourage the conversation using simple door openers, along with attitudes of acceptance and interest.

Notes:
Obstacles to listening and understanding:
Effective listening is not easy as it sounds. Obstacles and distortions abound. The following are some kinds of ineffective listening.
1. Inadequate listening:
2. Evaluative listening:
3. Selective listening:
4. Fact-centered rather than person centered listening:
5. Rehearsing:
6. Sympathetic listening:

John Powell lists five levels of communication
(1) Clichés - Typical, routine, comments, questions and answers given out of habit and with no real forethought or genuine intent. "How are you?" "Fine." "How was your day?" "Great."
(2) Sharing Facts - Information/Statistics about the weather, the office, friends, the news, personal activities, etc. This requires no indepth thinking or feeling.
(3) Sharing Opinions - Includes concerns, expectations, and personal goals, dreams, and desires. Due to differences of opinion that naturally arise between two people, this is typically the level at which we run into the "wall of conflict."

Notes:
(4) Sharing FEELINGS - Having gone through the "wall of conflict" you both feel safe to share your deepest emotions.

(5) Peak communication - The deepest level of communication and intimacy where you feel completely safe to reveal your unique needs with each other. Unless needs are known and met, two people will remain "strangers." This involves openness and honesty. It involves being totally transparent – sharing the real you.

Real communication begins at level three – sharing ideas and judgments. The person takes a risk by telling a personal idea or thought to the other. Level three leads to and develops into level four and five. Sharing feelings and needs makes one "vulnerable" and can/will only be done where there is a feeling of mutual trust, and understanding.

**Communication barriers:**

**Attitudinal Barriers:** Selfishness, Pride, Lack of trust, lack of motivation, anger, pre-conceived notions lead to assumption like:

- I am always right; there no need to discuss it.
- Why should I say it; They should know.
- It’s better to have peace and not talk about problem issues.
- Let him speak first I will not initiate the conversation.

**Notes:**
These beliefs become a barrier to effective communication.

Individual barriers: This may be a result of an individual's perceptual and personal discomfort arising from

- Physical or mental fatigue.
- Conflicts - Past experience of failure to resolve conflicts, Reluctance to acknowledge mistakes, Lack of forgiveness
- Bad role models of communication or lack of them in childhood
- Lack of privacy, noise and other distractions.

**Environmental Barriers:** Noise, lack of privacy, fear of being overheard and other distractions affects the level of communication. Lack of time and preoccupation with other issues interfere with ability to listen.


**Notes:**
Counselling Skills

Communication is an essential part of human activity. The communication skills we use are numerous and most of these we are unaware of using. A counsellor needs to sharpen these skills in order to become an effective counsellor. There are several instances where Jesus exemplifies this fine art of communicating in a counselling situation. His interaction with the woman of Samaria is outstanding.

Basic counselling skills can be studied under three main headings:
1. Relational Skills
2. Attending skills
3. Empathy

Relational Skills
Objective: To facilitate interpersonal interaction and give a chance to explore each other and the goals of the relationship. Consider Jesus at Zaccheus’ home.

How to establish a good relationship with your counsellee?
1. Relate naturally and spontaneously and ensure mutual trust and respect.

Notes:
2. Accept the counsellee in a non-judgmental way with love and compassion.
3. Demonstrate a balance between over intrusiveness and indifference.
4. Discourage over-dependence but convey ready access.
5. Relate to the whole person including spirit, mind, will, emotions and body.
6. Encourage the counsellee to verbalise what he/she is feeling.
7. Develop maturity and integrity to be able to deal with counsellees of either sex.
8. Build relationships in a group counselling setting.
9. Be able to converse with counsellees of all ages, classes and cultures.

**Attending Skills**

Attending skills use non-verbal messages to convey and demonstrate our physical and psychological presence in response to the counsellee’s problem. Attending shows that the client has your full, undivided attention and that you care.

**Notes:**
Why should we attend?
To give attention to the counsellee and make him/her feel that he/she is listened to, being understood and available.
Helping people with their problems demands a certain intensity of presence. This presence or being with the counsellee is important for at least two reasons.

1. It encourages the counsellee to feel comfortable in our presence and to trust us.
2. It influences how well we are able to perceive.

How to ‘attend’ to another person?
Attending skills are ways in which we physically orient ourselves toward the counsellee and include the following:

1. Being prepared mentally to listen– a prayer by way of preparation will be helpful. Avoid moving around or being distracted
2. The place of meeting can be made conducive to offer undivided attention.
3. Dress appropriately. Do not be a distraction.

Notes:
4. Be aware of the values and attitude we have towards the counsellee.
5. Gestures, encourage verbalizations
6. Touch

The basics of attending: An acronym: SOLER

S: (Sit Squarely) Clients know you are interested if you face them squarely and lean slightly forward, have an expressive face, and use facilitative, encouraging gestures. A natural, relaxed body style that is your own is more likely to be effective, but be prepared to adapt and flex according to the individual with who you are talking to.

O: (Open Posture). While we may face our clients, we must avoid the closed body posture. Uncrossed or open arms and legs is body language for being open to what the client has to say; crossed indicates a lessened involvement.

L: (Lean Forward). Leaning forward indicates an interest in what the client is saying. Lying back or to the side suggests disinterest.

E: (Eye contact). If you are going to talk to people, look at them. However, there may be some cultural differences about making eye contact. Important: don’t stare at the client.

R: (Relax). The more relaxed you are, the client will feel more comfortable. Make an effort to be relatively relaxed while listening. Set the client at ease.

Notes:
Empathy
This is the ability to perceive another's experience and then to communicate that perception back to the person to clarify and amplify their own experiencing and meaning. It is about spontaneously and naturally tuning into the other person’s thoughts and feelings. In other word it is putting yourself into another’s shoes
• Empathizing leads you to search a client’s tone of voice and to scan people’s faces, especially their eyes, to pick up on how they might be feeling or what they might be thinking.
• Empathy also makes real communication possible. Talking at a person is not real communication. It is a monologue. Real conversation is sensitive to this listener at this time.

Empathy is a form of communication, which involves listening, understanding and communicating the understanding to the counselee. Primary skills associated with the communication of empathy include:
  a. nonverbal and verbal attending
  b. paraphrasing content of client communications
  c. reflecting patient feelings and implicit messages

a. Attending – involves our behaviors which reflect our paying full attention, in an accepting and supportive way, to the client.

Notes:
b. **Paraphrasing** - Selective focusing on the cognitive part of the message – with the client’s key words and ideas being communicated back to the patient in a rephrased, and shortened form. There are four steps in effective paraphrasing:

I. Listen and recall. Listen to the entire message to ensure you recalled it in its entirety and do not omit any significant parts.

II. Identify the content part of the message by deciding what event, situation, idea, or person the client is talking about.

III. Rephrase, in as concise a manner as possible, the key words and ideas the client has used to communicate their concerns in a fresh or different perspective.

IV. Perception check is usually in the form of a brief question, e., “It sounds like...,” “Let me see if I understand this,” which allows the client to agree or disagree with the accuracy of your paraphrasing.

c. **Reflecting feelings** - Affective reflection in an open-ended, respectful manner of what the client is communicating verbally and nonverbally, both directly through words and nonverbal behaviors as well as reasonable inferences about what the client might be experiencing emotionally. It is important for the counsellor to think carefully about which words he/she chooses to communicate these feelings back to the...

**Notes:**
client. The skill lies in choosing words which use different words that convey the same or similar. For example, if a poorly skilled helper reflected to the client that he/she was “very angry and depressed,” when the client had only said they were irritated by a certain event, and had felt very sad over the death of a family pet, the result could be counterproductive to the process of change.

**Five Ways of Responding:**

Five different types of responses are possible from a counsellor. They are:

1. Advising and Evaluating response.
   
   Result: Barriers to the relationship.

2. Analysis and Interpretation.
   
   Result: defensive behavior of the counsellee.

3. Reassuring and Supporting.
   
   Result: Reduces the intensity of the counsellee.

4. Questioning and Probing.
   

5. Paraphrasing and Understanding.
   
   An empathic response. It results in encouraging the counselee to develop a trusting relationship.

**Notes:**
**Some Guidelines:**

- Empathy is not a ‘hat’ you wear. It is also a way of living.
- It involves giving careful physical and psychological listening to the counsellee’s point of view.
- Set aside your value judgements and biases for a while and wear the counsellee’s shoes.
- Listen to the core messages both verbal and nonverbal.
- Respond frequently but briefly.
- Be flexible so that the counsellee feels reassured.
- Empathetically help the counsellee to keep his focus on the vital issues.
- Move gradually towards sensitive areas.
- Respond to the counsellee and pick up clues to confirm or deny the accuracy of your response.

**References:** Biblical counselling: A Practical Workshop

http://www.eclea.net/books/bibl_cslg.pdf

**Notes:**
Counselling the Traumatized

The Chinese word for “crisis” involves two characters – one means danger and the other means opportunity. Crisis is filled with danger because it disrupts life and threatens the people who are in the crisis. There will be a loss in crisis. Crisis situation is known as stimulus, and when it happens, the person would become tense, sad and anxious. The crisis situation may be expected or unexpected, real or imaginary, actual (death of a loved one) or a potential one. (prospect of a loved one dying soon). Crisis is an occasion in which the usual problem solving capacity is ineffective. The core experience in crisis is a loss or a threat of loss. Usually, a loss of equilibrium takes place.

Kinds of Crises

1. **Situation Crisis:** Death of loved one, discovery of serious illness, natural disaster, rape, divorce, accident...

2. **Developmental Crisis:** Adjusting to a new phase in life
Starting (or even finishing) college, adjusting to marriage, adjusting to parenthood, retiring from job...

3. **Existential Crisis:** Facing disturbing truths about ourselves
I’m a failure, I won’t get a promotion, my husband doesn’t love me, my illness is incurable, I have nothing to believe in, we can’t have children...

**Notes:**
**Stages of Response to a Crisis**

1. Shock, disbelief, denial

   
   A. For some, this means talking in circles, tears, telling the story over and over.
   
   B. For others, this can mean shutting down, withdrawal
   
   C. For others, this can mean irritability and acting out

3. Regaining balance, equilibrium (you don’t go back to where you were before, but must develop a new sense of balance)

**Process of Regaining Balance**

In an immediate sense, this means calming down, relaxing, taking needed action.

What helps: being around calm and loving people, prayer, worship, relaxation exercises, exercise, nature, pets, etc.

In a deeper sense, this is a HUGE task. Before the crisis, person may feel life “makes sense,” life is more good than bad, God and important others can be trusted.

**Notes:**
Then the crisis brings terrible new information and a flood of feelings! It challenges and confuses the person’s view of God, others, and the future. They may feel that life doesn’t make sense, is unpredictable and confusing, and is more bad than good. They may feel that God and others can’t be trusted. *(If they sense the loving support of God and others, these effects will be softened.)*

The task is to accept and integrate disturbing new information, yet still believe life is worth living and God and important others can be trusted. *(People can never return to “the way things were.” Instead, they find a new balance, new equilibrium.)*

**Goals for helping a person in crisis:**

1. To help person respond effectively to urgent needs and opportunities
2. To decrease anxiety, fears, and insecurities during and after crisis
3. To help person process and grow from disturbing new information and experience

**Notes:**
How to help a person in crisis

Here is a method which crisis counsellors have found effective: it is a useful tool for helping yourself, a friend, or anyone else who has asked for your help. The method (adapted from Warren Jones’ “ABC Method of crisis Intervention”) consists of doing four things:

A. Achieving a Relationship – (make contact)
   - Listen with care to what the person, is feeling and experiencing (‘listening love’)
   - Check out what you understand him to be saying to see if you’re on his wavelength.
   - Let him experience your warmth and concern
   - Ask him to tell you about the crisis – when it started, how it developed, how he feels about it.
   - Let him know you’d like to work together in finding something that can be done to help – preferably to help him help himself.

B. Boil down the problem – (reduce anxiety – focus on issues)
   - Help him sort out the pieces of the problem he is facing.

Notes:
• Help him to separate those parts about which he can do something from those about which he can do nothing.( No use wasting energy on the latter)
• Encourage him to describe what he has tried (No use repeating those things that haven’t worked.)
• Encourage him to describe or discover other possible solutions.
• Help him examine each of these in terms of their probable consequences ‘What will probably happen if you…?’
• Help him to decide on which of the various alternatives he wants to try now.

C. **Encourage him to act** – (evaluate resources - plan)

*It is easier to act your way into a new way of feeling than to feel your way into a new way of acting.*

• Encourage him to plan just how he will begin doing what he has decided to do; plan should be realistic, with achievable goals.
• Encourage him to commit himself to doing this, beginning soon and at an agreed upon time.
• If he has resistance to beginning to act on his problem, help him discuss and resolve these feelings.

**Notes:**
• Assure him that you will continue to be available to him as he tries to act in some constructive way. Support him with realistic hope.
• Don’t agree to do anything for him that he can do for himself.
• Point out that as he begins to do something, however small. About his situation, he’ll probably start to feel better – less depressed more hopeful.
• Have him phone you before you see him again to let you know how his action plan worked, make a date to see him again soon.
• Help find the resources to cope – spiritual, interpersonal, inner.

D. Instill hope and follow up
In subsequent meetings, have him describe what happened, affirm him for his successes in implementing his action plan (however small these successes). Help him rethink his action goals (What’s the next step?), repeat those parts of B and C which are necessary to help him continue coping.

Skills to help a person in crisis
1. All the normal counselling skills and principles apply in a crisis—warmth, acceptance, understanding the counselee’s point of view, letting them suggest possibilities before offering advice. ...
2. Joining, “We’ll get you through this, let’s figure out a plan together.” Healthy dependence is temporary and leads to increasing independence.

3. Listen, listen, listen! If it becomes too much, however, you may need to redirect. “You’ve really been through a lot. I’d really like to hear the whole story. Maybe we can do that another time. Right now it’s important to think through some steps that might help you.”

4. Someone with a complete loss of functioning may need help to prioritize, identify supportive people, delegate tasks to others.

5. Some people may benefit from “resourcing”—focusing temporarily on something positive (imagining being in a beautiful place, praising God for who He is, taking a break to do something fun or relaxing).

6. Spiritually, people also need to see where God is in the midst of their crisis. Sometimes people in crisis sense God’s presence in a real way (Elijah and the still small voice). Sometimes they don’t (Job, Jesus on the cross). That’s OK too. Even then, a crisis is an opportunity to experience God in a new and deeper way. As a counsellor, gently affirm that God is present and working. Be careful not to preach, give simplistic answers, or quote Romans 8:28!

**Notes:**
**Crisis Counselling in Scripture**

The Bible deals mainly with crisis counselling! Consider:

- Adam, Eve, Cain, Noah, Abraham, Joseph, Moses, Samson, Elijah
- Jesus faced many crises ...So did his disciples and Paul

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**Normal mental state Vs mental state in a crisis**

**Everyday Stability**

![Diagram of everyday stability]

Dysfunction to Growth

But when crisis occurs, the triangle is tipped on its point, becoming very unstable:

**Crisis**

![Diagram of crisis]

Dysfunction to Growth

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**Notes:**
Within a matter of weeks the triangle will fall back onto its base again, but it will not land at the same place on the plane as it was before. It will move in one or the other direction – towards growth and better functioning or towards dysfunction. The task and challenge of the counsellor with God’s help is to help move towards growth and better functioning.

**Group Exercise**

This requires a group of three - person A, person B, and person C. The briefing for the role play is as follows:

i. **Briefing for Person A**

You and B are church friends. "One evening you ring B up at 8:00pm in a state of obvious distress and you share that:

a) Your spouse has just been back to see the consultant in the hospital who has said she/he has a serious but treatable cancer.

b) You both have an important business meeting 30 miles away tomorrow morning at 9:00am, but the car is broken down and is unusable until repaired.

c) Your teenage son has recently got into bad company. He left the house at 7.30pm that evening and said “I do not where I am going. Don’t look for me”.

**Notes:**
You begin your role play with all the above in place.

ii. Briefing for Person B: You are a member of the church Pastoral Care team with some training in ministry. When A rings you, you immediately invite him/her over for a cup of coffee and you offer to listen.

iii. The Role play: B is asked to undertake crisis counselling of A

A is asked to use his/her briefing imaginatively, providing as much detail as may be necessary as the process unfolds.

iv. Person C: C is to be observer, and may facilitate if things get stuck! C is to give feedback on the counselling process when the role play is over.

**Case Studies**

1. Sam is a third year student from Sri Lanka studying in Bangalore. The previous day there was a report that a tsunami had hit the coast of Sri Lanka near his hometown. Sam had been terribly upset and worried. But he had received a telephone call from his parents that they were fine. However they said that they had a lucky escape since they had been visiting friends who were living in another town.

**Notes:**
They have told Sam that their house had been totally devastated. The water had entered their house. Some of their possessions had been washed away and some things have been soaked in water and unfit for use. Sam’s parents are now in their own town. They are afraid to leave their things because of vandals. The situation in their town is devastating as many of their friends and acquaintances are missing. They are not sure of their plans, as there are no facilities for food or housing.

They have asked Sam to stay in Bangalore and concentrate on his studies. However Sam is very restless. He keeps watching the news reports. He has not been able to sleep the previous nights and he keeps saying, ‘I wonder what my parents are doing?’ ‘I hope my friends are safe.’ He wants to go back home. There are two months more to his exams. His friends have tried reassuring him, but they have not been successful. They have brought Sam to talk to you, as you are his teacher.

**Notes:**
2. Satish is a second year student. He is a very extroverted person who has a lot of friends. His performance in studies has been average. As you feel that he could do better, you have spoken to him a few times about this.

One day Satish comes asking to talk to you after a few days absence. He says, 'I think I may be in trouble with the police and I want to talk to you about it. Two days back, my friends and I had gone to a beach resort. We were just fooling around and had some beers. Near us there were some other guys who were also having a few drinks, but they were the real rowdy type of fellows. They got drunk and started trashing the shops near by and it quickly turned into a fight.

Before we realized it, there were police on the scene. The police thought that we were part of this gang and took us to the police station. We were there most of the night trying to tell them that we were just college students and not part of that gang. They let us go after a few hours but they are threatening us that they will do a full investigation.

I am so worried whether they will go to my house. I told my parents that I was with friends that night. They’ll be really upset with me if they know what really happened. Will I be suspended from college if there is police inquiry? I really wish I had not gone to that place. What should I do?

How will you help Satish?
3. You are a volunteer counsellor at your church. John a 53-year-old man comes to you for counselling. He appears extremely upset and his voice is breaking as he talks to you.

‘I have been diagnosed as having cancer. I met the doctors last week because I was having pain in my stomach. They did some tests and yesterday they told me that I have cancer of the stomach. They have just prescribed tablets for a week and they have said that there is nothing more that they could do’. He has tears running down his face as he is speaking with you.

You ask him about his faith and he says ‘I was a Hindu till 5 years back. Five years ago I had some stomach problems. At that time also the doctors diagnosed me with cancer of the colon. They started me on some treatment. One of my colleagues told me about this church and told me to come and pray here. He also told me to pray at the prayer tower. God healed me, and my family and I became Christians. Now we are attending this Church.

I know God can heal me now also. But I am still worried. I have two sons. One is still studying and one is working. Both of them have to be settled in life. I am working as a clerk. We don’t have much money. Who will help my family if anything happens to me? Also this medicine the doctors gave is not decreasing the pain in my stomach. Can you please pray for me?’
4. Shanthi is a good friend of yours. She and her family attend the same church. It is a few weeks since you have seen them and you meet her in the supermarket. She seems very distracted. You greet her and ask her whether there is any problem. Her eyes immediately fill up and she says, ‘We are in a real mess. We don’t know how we are going to manage.’ You take her to the coffee shop nearby and ask her to explain what is going on.

She says, ‘My husband’s business has totally flopped. We are virtually bankrupt. Actually the business has not been doing well for the last two years and we have borrowed a lot of money. Now my husband says that even if we sell everything the deficit will run into lakhs. Everyday I have to face creditors who come and abuse me and harass me. Even my two little children know that something is wrong. My husband is so depressed and I am so afraid to face the creditors. I think I will end it all. We will take some rat poison and give it first to the children and then take it ourselves. There is nothing else to do.

How will you respond?
The Process of Counselling

The counselling process is a structured interaction between a counsellor and a client. The trained counsellor helps the client to identify sources of difficulties or concerns that he experiences. Together they develop ways to deal with and overcome these problems so that the person has new skills and increased understanding of themselves and others. The counselling process includes the following:

I. Preparing for counselling

Successful counselling requires preparation. To prepare for counselling:

a. Select a Suitable Place: Making the counsellee physically comfortable contributes to decreasing their initial anxiety. Though counselling can be carried out in any place, it is good to ensure that the counsellee is comfortable. Having a place set apart for counselling would be helpful. The counselling room should be a place where privacy can be ensured in terms of outsiders overhearing or looking in or intruding. Choose an environment that minimizes interruptions and is free from distracting sights and sounds.

Notes:
Furnish the room in a relaxed, informal way helps the counsellee feel at ease. Some counsellors prefer to sit with counsellee across a table. This is useful if written work will be part of the counselling session. It is helpful if the counsellee is seated so that he is not directly facing the light. Depending on the situation sit next to the counsellee at his side or facing him.

If counselling is predominantly with children, child-sized furniture should be provided. Play material like paints, crayons, moulding clay, dolls, dollhouses etc. are very useful.

b. **Schedule the Time:** When possible, counsel during office hours. The length of time required for counselling depends on the complexity of the issue. Generally a counselling session should last about an hour. If you need more time, schedule a second session. Select a time when you are free from other activities and consider what has been planned after the counselling session. Important events can distract a person from concentrating on the counselling.

c. **Notify the counselee about the session:** the counselee must have time to prepare for the session. He should know why, where, and when the counselling will take place. Give clear direction to the counselling office.

**Notes:**
d. **Prepare yourself:** Preparation is essential for effective counselling. If you are aware of the specific problem of the counselee, review all relevant information. The counsellor should be unrushed, calm ready and prepared to be there for the client. He should be able to put his own issues and problems out of the way, for the duration of the session.

**II. Starting the counselling: Developing a therapeutic relationship with the counselee**

The success of any counselling irrespective of the counselling model followed depends on developing a meaningful therapeutic relationship with the counselee. Take time to build a rapport with the counselee. Being able to empathise with the counselee and perceive his situation from his perspective without being judgemental is important. For most counsellees one of the most difficult decisions they had to make is to seek help from a counsellor. As they come into the unfamiliar counselling situation, they are unsure of what to expect and may be shy, embarrassed or fearful. The initial response of the counsellor is very important and sets the tone for what follows. A warm, friendly counsellor helps the counselee feel at ease. To establish a relaxed atmosphere, you may offer the counselee a glass of water or a cup of coffee.

**Notes:**
The counsellor must address the counsellee’s fear and restraint, which is natural in a new setting by making the counsellee comfortable. One way of doing this is to have some general topics of conversation that may be used as an ‘ice-breaker’. Introduce yourself and explain your work. The counselee can be encouraged to express his concerns. The counsellor needs to address the counselees’ fears or apprehension and highlight the importance of the counselees’ motivation and involvement for an effective session. Ask the counselee for his expectations and this would help clarify goals for the session.

The counselee initially sizes up the counsellor to see if he could open up his life to the counsellor without being judged by the counsellor. By being a good listener and by offering appropriate support the counsellor is gradually accepted by the counselee as a non judgmental yet caring person.

Counselling can be challenging and may be a long process. It is unrealistic to think that problems can be handled in a few minutes when they may have taken years to develop. While there are different approaches to counselling as a general guideline, the counselling process may be considered to comprise the following steps.

Notes:
III. The counselling process: The Egan's skilled helper model is used often in counselling. The model aims to empower people to manage their own problems more effectively and develop unused opportunities more fully. The model has three stages namely:

a. Exploration of the problem
This stage is about exploration of the client’s situation. It looks at the current scenario of the client. It is to build a non threatening counselling relationship and help the client explore their situation and then focus on chosen issues. In this stage the counsellor helps the client to understand the situation/problem, and opportunities and assess their resources. Clients are often reluctant or resistant at this stage, therefore the counsellor helps them to explore new perspectives, challenges negative modes of thinking and constructively challenges the client's excuses, evasiveness, distortions and negative self-statements. There is mutual awareness of the problem and they make decision together to start the process of addressing issues. This stage is based around helping the client in establishing priorities and developing action plans that put into practice productive strategies.

Notes:
Exploring skills include

Open-ended questions
Silence
Focusing
Empathy
Paraphrasing & Reflecting Meaning
Paraphrasing & Reflecting Feeling
Structuring
Summarising

b. Diagnosis or Understanding Skills:
This stage looks at the preferred scenario. It is about helping the counselee identify what they want and see what options are open to them. They specify and explore these goals. The purpose is to help the client in developing a more in-depth and objective understanding of their situation. The counsellor assists the client in exploring options and possible goals. They decide the relevance of the goals together and prioritise which goal to start with. The client is encouraged to consider new possibilities and perspectives, choosing ones that are realistic, consistent with their values

Notes:
and for which there are adequate incentives. The counsellor facilitates the client in developing rational decision-making based upon data collection, analysis and action planning. In this state brain-storming, divergent thinking and a balance-sheet approach may be used with the client in order to facilitate choices between different ways of dealing with situations and achieving goals. These techniques help the client to explore various options and strategies as well understand and work around blocking factors with facilitating factors.

**Understanding skills include**

- Recognising Patterns & Themes
- Alternate Frames of Reference
- Self-disclosure
- Immediacy
- Challenging
- Timing & Pacing
- Advanced empathy

**Notes:**
c. **Intervention: Help the Client to Develop Strategies**

This is about supporting the counselee to look at how they might help themselves. Counsellors look at underlying causes of the problem and encourage solutions or strategies for change. They discuss advantages and disadvantages of these and formulate and implement a plan of action. It involves assisting clients to take appropriate action by defining goals, changing ways of relating and working through issues using problem solving or decision making methods, while providing support and encouragement. Counsellor helps the client to cope with current problems and assist in the learning of new skills that will enable them to live more effectively in the future. Action is based on exploration and understanding gained by using above skills. Here the counsellor facilitates the client in finding ways of achieving their goals. After helping the client to come up with as many strategies as they can the Skilled Helper then helps them to focus upon those that are viable in terms of client situation, needs, aspiration and resources. This process is designed to help the client move from the current situation to one that they would prefer. Transitions experiences may make the client feel vulnerable therefore the process may often be built upon the taking of small comfortable steps as the client

**Notes:**
grows in confidence. Realistic achievable planning and time-tabling are key to success and the counsellor is warm and supportive - helping the client look out and overcome obstacles, turning challenges into opportunities and inspiring the client to mobilize their personal, social and material resources particularly helpful family members, friends and self-help.

**Skills include:**

- Divergent Thinking
- Goal Setting
- Decision Making
- Problem Solving
- Programme Choice
- Evaluate Knowledge of Resources
- Using Knowledge of How Behaviour is Changed
- Using Knowledge of How Useful Behaviour is Maintained
- Teaching skills & Promoting Learning skills

**Notes:**
IV) Ending the counselling process:

To close the session, summarize its key points and ask if the client understands the plan of action. Provide feedback and focus on positive elements. Also discuss reasons for termination. During the evaluation, review the plan of action with the client to determine if the desired results were achieved. This provides useful information for future follow-up counselling sessions.

The ending phase of counselling can be planned together beforehand, which will enable the client to give a feedback about the whole process. He might talk about personal insights that have been gained and a greater self-confidence should now be present.

Document the counselling session is a good ethical practice. Documentation serves as a reference to the agreed upon plan of action and the client’s accomplishments, improvements, personal preferences, or problems.

Notes:
Bereavement Management

Death is the only certainty about our lives however death is a deep concern to all of us. Grief is natural. Grieving is a healthy way of dealing with the pain of ‘loss’ in life. The ‘loss’ could be life or something precious. How do people cope with the loss of life? For that matter even loss of a limb or a natural ability?

The intensity of pain can be different for different people. Their expression of grief will also vary. Some people are given to public expression and some are comfortable dealing with pain privately. Time taken to process their grief could also be different. Such variations are compounded when we look at different events causing grief. The pain may be different when one loses a young son as compared to an elderly relative. The time provided to prepare for the loss can significantly reduce the pain. Sudden losses are numbing.

Despite the large variety of situations and emotional responses, research done by Kubler-Ross is a landmark study in the field of processing pain due to death.

Notes:
Stages in Grief Counselling: Elisabeth Kubler-Ross, a Swiss psychiatrist found that people who are dying (terminally ill patients) or have lost their loved ones go through five stages. These ‘stages’ are basically coping devices. The time over which these stages last will vary. They might displace each other or may exist side by side. They need not be in an order.

The family goes through these same stages and may be at the same or different stages. Care-givers may also go through some of these stages. These stages of dying can also be seen as stages of grief for someone who is losing, or has lost someone or something important to them. The process can apply to any loss.

Notes:
**Stage 1: Denial:** when someone cannot or will not admit what they are really feeling or the reality of what they are experiencing. Denial comes in several forms.

 чаще The ‘tape’ being played is **No, not me, it cannot be true**

**Notes:**
Description

- Initially “shock”, “numb feeling”
- A patient can reject the diagnosis, simply refusing to believe the news.
- Patient shops around for other doctors, insists on new tests, retests, questions validity of diagnostic procedures.
- Do not deny that they are ill, just how ill.
- Denial, or at least partial denial, is used by almost all patients, not only during the first stage of illness or following confrontation, but also later on from time to time.
- Denial regarded as healthy way of dealing with the uncomfortable and painful situation with which some patients have to live for a long time.
- Patients can be selective in choosing different people among family members or staff with whom they discuss their illness or impending death while pretending to be well with those who cannot tolerate the thought of their demise.

Implications for care

- Denial functions as a buffer after unexpected, shocking news, allowing the patient to collect himself and with time, mobilize other, less radical defenses.
- to understand why the patient is grasping at straws

Notes:
• to be aware of contradictions in patient, one time may talk about the reality of the situation and a few minutes later may be talking about getting well
• patience and willingness to talk are important. But must be sensitive to patient’s denial, readiness to talk.

Stage 2: Anger: A dying person may be angry at everyone or God. They may wonder out loud why they are dying and not someone else. Those who are left behind may be angry at the person who dies for leaving them behind.

 водоизмещение

The ‘tape’ being played is: “Yes, but why me?”

Description
• Loss of control – can’t change it. Reaction to helplessness.
• Feelings of anger, rage, envy, and resentment (this anger is very often directed toward God!)
• Patient may bitterly envy those who are well.
• Patient may complain incessantly about almost everything.
• “In contrast to the stage of denial, this stage of anger is very difficult to cope with from the point of view of family and staff”. The reason for this is the fact that this anger is displaced in all directions and projected onto the environment at times almost at random.

Notes:
- Also anger may be repressed and come out as sarcasm, bitterness, or withdrawal
- Anger is a way of making sure he has not yet been forgotten.
- Anger is a way of trying to maintain some control.

**Implications for care**
- Understand the patient’s position; i.e., where is the anger coming from
  - Is it over the coming loss of everything.
- Patient needs respect and understanding, attention and a little time.
- Do not return anger
- Do not take anger personally
- Do not desert the person.

**Stage 3: Bargaining**: In this stage dying people try to negotiate their way out of death. In some ways this stage can help a dying person have a goal of attending a particular event or living until a certain time.

- Tape being played is: “**Yes me, but........!**”
  “May be I can bargain with God and get a time extension”.

**Notes:**
Description
- patient tries to enter some sort of agreement which may postpone the inevitable from happening
- It has to include a prize offered “for good behavior”, it also sets a “self-imposed deadline”
- It includes an implicit promise that the patient will not ask for more if this one postponement is granted. Promises are usually not kept.
- Most bargains are made with God and are usually kept a secret or mentioned between the lines (negotiate with God- “I’ll give my life in service to the church”).

Implications for care
- If revealed, “bargain” should be listened to
- It should not be brushed off; it may actually be quiet guilt
- This stage passes in a short time
- It has to do with expressing & dealing with shattered hopes & goals
- It is not to be mistaken for having a goal

Notes:
**Stage 4: Depression:** Realizing that they cannot bargain their way out of death, people are overwhelmed with a deep sense of loss.

Tape being played is: **“Woe is me!”**

**Description**

- Depression is due to a sense of great loss, and to a degree, hopelessness.
- Two types:
  
  I. **Reactive Depression** – feelings of sadness based on past events such as loss of job, failure in relationships, (e.g. woman with breast or uterine cancer – figure gone, not a woman any longer; e.g. loss of dignity; e.g. loss of job, money, a sense of helplessness about the welfare of others.

  II. **Preparatory Grief** – feelings of sadness over future losses such as not seeing their children grow up and have children of their own. Depression – a tool to prepare for his final separation from this world – the impending loss of all things. It is necessary to facilitate this state of separation. The patient feels the full impact when it hits home.

**Notes:**
Implications for care

- Reactive Depression: understanding, encouragement and reassurances are helpful.
- Preparatory depression: is a state of silent grief: touching of hands, stroking of hair, just sitting together. Prayer is helpful.
- Not too many visitors. Their trying to cheer him up hinders his emotional preparation. Patient needs to express sorrow fully and without hindrance.

Stage 5: Acceptance: In this stage the person has made peace with themselves; they have accepted that they are dying. The person/s left behind at this stage accept that their loved one is gone and learn to live without them in their lives.

- Tape being played is: “Yes, me”

Description

- a quiet expectation
- patient is tired and weak, usually
- is not resigned to hopeless “giving up”, nor a sense of “what’s the use”.
- death is seen as a great relief
- most productive stage, put life in order
- should not be mistaken for happy stage, it is almost void of feelings
- patient not interested in news of outside world

Notes:
Implications for care
- few visitors are required and are often not desired
- little talk, time for silence
- it is time merely for the presence of the close family
- the family needs more help, understanding and support than the patient himself
- family gives patient ‘permission’ to die

A person experiencing loss need not necessarily go through all the stages and in the order given. Moreover a grieving person might go through the grieving cycle more than once before a recovery is made. Later in life, Kübler-Ross suggested another phase called hope, which usually persists through all the stages. A counsellor must be compassionate and know that those who are experiencing ‘loss’ live ‘in the presence of grief’ and therefore counsellors must offer therapeutic presence.

In concluding the five stages of death and dying, remember:
- Be sensitive to the patient’s needs, where the patient is emotionally disturbed
- Work at understanding what the patient is experiencing

Notes:
• Every patient and/or family is different. Different patients react differently to death and dying. How they react depends on their personality make up and the style and manner in which they have dealt with other life crises

• These stages are neither good nor bad in and of themselves. They are what people experience.

**Four tasks of mourning**
Grief is an adaption to loss. It is essential that the grieving person accomplish these tasks before mourning can be completed. Worden’s concept of Tasks of Mourning a useful for dealing with grief. The grieving process or the tasks of mourning can be thought of by the acronym **TEAR**

**T** = To accept the reality of the loss

**E** = Experience the pain of the loss

**A** = Adjust to the new environment without the lost/dead person

**R** = Reinvest in the new reality

**Notes:**
1. To accept the reality of the loss
Accepting the reality of the loss involves the acceptance that the person has really died (or the relationship has irretrievably broken down) and that reunion (in this life at least) is impossible.

The opposite of accepting is not believing through some kind of denial. Spiritualists may sometimes prey on parents who had lost a child to offer them ‘contact’ with their dead child. One of the results was that parents would continue to deny that their child was really dead. An example is of people hoping the person would rise from the dead within a few days.

2. To work through the pain of grief
The pain of grief is physical, emotional and spiritual. It should not be minimised; it cannot be avoided (except to reappear later in some other form). We cannot take away another’s grief, nor can we truly understand another’s grief. (One of the most unhelpful, yet common responses to a grieving person is to say: I know how you feel.) Sometimes people attempt to escape their pain by moving geographically from the place of loss. Unfortunately the pain goes with them. Sometimes Christians deny the pain of others’ grief by such statements as: He’s gone to a better place or You can always have another baby. Sometimes people try very hard not to feel.

Notes:
3. **To adjust to an environment in which the deceased is missing**

The adjustment may not just be an emotional one; it may call for the development of new skills to deal with life. A number of older men and women make difficult but successful adjustments in very practical matters after the death of a spouse, where role expectations had formerly been very clearly defined and separated. Sometimes spouses retreat into a sort of helplessness, or loss of identity, which may require some outside assistance.

4. **To withdraw emotional energy and move on with life**

This can be the most difficult of the tasks to accomplish because of (among other things) the notion that if I move on with life I will forget the dead person, and by my forgetting the dead person will somehow cease to exist even as a memory. Some people find loss so painful that they decide never to love again. Worden (1991) summarises this task thus: *The counsellor’s task then becomes not to help the bereaved give up their relationship with the deceased, but to help them find an appropriate place for the deceased in their emotional lives – a place that will allow them to go on living effectively in the world.* One of the marks of the successful resolution of mourning is the freedom to love again, to be there to serve others and to comfort others with the comfort, which we ourselves have received. (2 Corinthians 1:4-6) In a wonderful way this loving is both the end of our healing and the means.

**Notes:**
Practical Suggestions For Care Givers And Counsellors

- Go immediately to the Family when notified of death.
- Be sensitive to different types of death: Miscarriage, Stillbirth, Sudden Infant Death, Suicide, Murder, Illness, Etc.
- Be in touch with your own feelings.
- Listen
- Provide a caring presence
- Give attention to the whole family, e.g. children and youth
- Accept the Suffering and Painful Grief
- Normalize grief reactions
- Allow silence
- Help with practical needs
- Give comfort
- Remain open to long-term care
- Encourage talking about the deceased
- Refer, if necessary

Notes:
Anger Management

Anger is an unpleasant emotional state. It is a feeling of displeasure as a result of a real or imagined threat, grievance or injustice. Irritation, bitterness, displeasure, distaste, annoyance, resentment, wrath, fury etc are various states of anger.

Anger can be constructive if it can help mobilize us toward healthy action. Anger about injustice leads many individuals to work to correct that injustice. But if mishandled, anger is just as likely to bring about the end of relationships, jobs, and even lives.

Facts about anger

- **Anger is an emotion common to all:**
  Anger is both normal and inevitable. God created us with the ability to get angry. Our feelings, including anger, are a gift from God. They will serve us well if we are aware of them and act on them appropriately.

- **Anger takes various forms:**
  Anger ranges from mild irritation to rage. Frustration, annoyance, bitterness, displeasure, distaste, resentment, malice, wrath, and fury are different forms of anger.

Notes:
• **Anger has many causes:**
There are as many causes to anger as there are situations and actions that make people angry. Anger could be due to blocked or unattainable goals, injustice, and threat of harm, physical or verbal attack, hurt, humiliation, pain, criticism, unfair treatment, manipulation, biological disorders, or failure. Identifying the source is a good beginning to dealing with anger effectively.

• **Anger affects health:**
Anger is a major cause of physical, psychological, interpersonal, and spiritual problems. Researchers have found a correlation between poorly handled anger—whether aggression or suppression—and health. Research indicates that anger weakens the immune system. Anger clearly contributes to hypertension and coronary artery disease, which lead to heart attacks and strokes. It also plays a role in depression, cancer, eating disorders, fatigue, sleep disorders, digestive problems, asthma, and psychosomatic illnesses.¹

**Bible and anger:**
"Be angry, and yet do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger” (Ephesians 4:26). We are not commanded to ‘never’ be angry. The emotion of anger is a part of our human experience and is not sinful;

**Notes:**
however the motivations and expressions of our angry emotions may be sinful. We can be angry, but over the right issues, at the right times and in the right way. God gets angry about some things, and Christians should, too.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Righteous anger</th>
<th>Erroneous anger</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Is</strong> unselfish, expressed on behalf of another who is oppressed or abused.</td>
<td><strong>Is</strong> selfish: a reaction to offenses against oneself: offenses against our desires, ambitions, expectations, well-being or self-esteem. E.g. The older brother in Luke 15:27-30 whose anger stemmed from jealousy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Is</strong> against sinful acts or injustice. Sin, abuse, racism, and child sex trafficking should infuriate us. E.g.-Nehemiah’s anger at exploitation of the poor-Nehemiah 5:6.</td>
<td><strong>Lashes out against people.</strong> Hate sin but love the sinner. This means treating the sinner in kind and caring ways.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Is always controlled.</strong> We are not justified to sin in our responses to injustice. A righteous anger in excess may pass into sin.</td>
<td><strong>Is</strong> Uncontrolled. This includes harsh words, harsh tone and often violence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Has no malice or resentment, and seeks no revenge.</strong> The purpose of righteous anger is to correct destructive behaviour or heal disagreements not break relationships.</td>
<td>Is characterized by hatred and is intended to hurt others. E.g. sarcastic remarks, silent treatment, malicious gossip or alienating people.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sinful anger is a manifestation of self-motivated desires. Our hearts are filled with “I want,” “I need,” and “I deserve”. We react in anger when our desires become something we believe we are entitled to and those desires are in some way withheld from us. The desire itself is not necessarily wrong. The problem is the importance that we give to our desire. Our feelings and our wants become the prime issue. We want life on our own terms, without inconveniences, disappointments, or suffering of any kind. We are not willing to see God in every situation of life, nor are we willing to wait patiently for Him to work on our behalf.

Man’s sinful anger has destroyed relationships and families, caused children to rebel, and has discouraged many. Jesus connected anger with hatred and murder. Anger does kill and destroy.

**Responding to Anger**

People express their anger in many different ways. Some expressions of anger can lead to stronger relationships and better life situations. Other ways of expressing anger can lead to damaged or destroyed relationships, personal health problems, and other negative consequences. Our reaction to anger is based on our temperament, personality, perception, culture, and maturity. We are also influenced by our families, friends, authority figures, and television personalities.

**Notes:**
We respond to an anger-producing situation by directing our response toward others (anger out) or toward self (anger in). Both these responses are not helpful. Like other emotions anger should be handled constructively.

1. Open Aggression:
This is an immediate ventilation of anger. Anger is often expressed in explosiveness, rage, intimidation and blame. It could be directed toward the person or situation that makes us angry or redirected, toward someone or something weak and helpless. Open aggression often leads to increased anger and more problems.

2. Passive Aggressive:
People with this style choose to show their anger in indirect ways, instead of confronting the problem head on. It is expressed in subtle ways such as sulking, refusing to talk, slamming a door, stomping their feet etc. They also try to get back at the person by talking about them behind their back, “belittling” them, or using sarcasm. Similar to open aggression, this style of anger also causes problems in relationships

Notes:
3. Suppressed Anger:
People feel uncomfortable expressing anger. They pretend that they are not angry. They ignore their angry feelings and hope that they will go away. Anger that is ignored does not go away on its own. People who have this style of anger management may develop headaches, ulcers, stomachaches, or other physical illnesses because their anger is simmering below the surface. It also does not get rid of the problem that is causing the anger.

4. Assertive Problem Solving
People with this style of anger management choose to pay attention to their anger signs and deal with problems in an assertive manner. They express their anger in polite and honest ways. They are able to confront other people without attacking them personally and don’t become defensive when talking about differences. They seek to resolve problems in mutually acceptable ways. People with this anger management style are able to release their angry emotions and forgive other people, even when problems are not likely to be resolved. They do not carry grudges or bitterness. This anger management style promotes good personal health and strong relationships.

Notes:
**Anger Management:** Anger is a thermometer that indicates a hurt that needs to be attended. Aggressive response or suppression is ultimately harmful. Uncontrolled anger has long-term emotional and physical effects on our body.

*Physical effects:* Anger causes injury, increased adrenalin surges, high blood pressure, and increased heart rate; possibly producing stroke, and heart attacks.

*Emotional effects:* Anger creates intense guilt, feelings of failure, depression, constant agitation, violent rage, and possibly suicide. Anger expressed inappropriately leaves behind a trail of damaged relationships and emotions and physical illness. We can't get rid of, or avoid, the things or the people that enrage us. Neither can we change them. We can, however, learn address the root cause of anger, to control our reactions and manage our anger constructively. The following steps may be helpful.

The Assertive Problem Solving style of anger management can be summed up using the acronym ANGER

- **A** = Aware of your anger signals
- **N** = Not acting in haste
- **G** = Grace
- **E** = Explore your anger
- **R** = Remedial action

**Notes:**
**Awareness:** Be aware of your feelings. Identify the presence of hurt or angry feelings. Acknowledge any feelings of irritation, frustration, bitterness, wrath, and malice. E.g.: rising voice, hand shaking, jaw tightening, shorter breaths, tense muscles, flushed, red face, etc.

**Not acting in haste:** Do not act in haste. When overwhelmed with negative emotions, the ability to think and speak is hampered. Wait till you think through the situation calmly. Think carefully about what you want to say. Act only when you can be in control of your words and action. Breathing deeply or counting to 10 or more may help. As Proverbs 29:11 says, “A fool gives full vent to his anger, but a wise man keeps himself under control.” Ecclesiastes 3:7 says there is “a time to be silent and a time to speak.”

“Speak when you are angry—and you will make the best speech you’ll ever regret.”—Laurence J. Peter

**Grace:** Pour out your heart to God. Many of the Psalms of David express the fear, hurt, and anger he was feeling. Ask God for comfort, understanding, and guidance to handle the conflict in the best possible way. Self-control is a fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23). As we walk in his steps we will be able to display patient restraint.

**Notes:**
Explore your anger: Reflect on your anger. Ask questions to get to the heart of the problem: What did I feel angry about? Am I jumping to conclusions about the situation? Why did I feel so threatened that anger seemed a justifiable defense? Did my anger arise out of an unrealistic expectation? Is there another way to look at the situation? Is my anger for the benefit of another or is it directed against another? God asked Jonah, “Do you have good reason to be angry?” (Jonah 4:4, NASB). These questions will help you to discern if you have an adequate reason for your anger and if your anger is justified.

Like all other emotions, anger is a product of thought. Anger is a natural response to how your mind interprets data that is picked up by your five senses. The only way you can change your feelings is by changing your thoughts. Similarly, your behavior is a result of your thinking. Once your thinking is clarified, your behavior or response to anger changes. By the grace of God we can be transformed by the renewing of our minds.

Remedial action:

Choices: You can choose how to respond to anger in a particular situation. Decide if the issue is worth taking a stand on or if it would be

Notes:
better to let it go. Ask yourself if you have the right or ability to do anything about it. The world is filled with injustices and irritants, and it is not always appropriate to express angry feelings. Choose your battles.

**Communication:** Talk about the situation in a calm and polite manner, Express your feelings. Talk about your needs, desires, and wishes without getting aggressive. Try using phrases like "I feel angry with you because...." rather than “you make me angry because....” Listen carefully to the other person, remembering that everyone is entitled to his or her own opinion (James 1:19).

**Compromise:** We are not usually completely right. Very often we are “I-sighted”—we are focused on ourselves. Try to see the situation from the other person’s eyes and understand his or her feelings. Your perception may change and compromise may be the best solution.

**Counselling:** If you find it difficult to handle anger on your own, seek a professional counsellor who can help clarify issues.

**Notes:**
Closure: The pain that we feel initially from the offense is only made worse by holding onto anger. Our efforts to get back at our offender by remaining angry actually hurt us more. Choosing to forgive is the most important step in handling anger. Just as our forgiveness from God is an undeserved gift, our offer of forgiveness should not depend upon the actions, merits, or demerits of the one who stands in need of forgiveness. Forgiving means that we choose to give up our grudge despite the injustice done to us. Forgiving brings healing to us as well as to others.

How do I Prevent anger?
Dealing with anger in the quiet periods when you are not angry will help decrease the frequency, intensity and inappropriateness of your anger.

Do
- Maintain a purposeful life: Make meaningful and achievable goals for your personal and professional life.
- Stay Healthy: Eat healthy, get rest and maintain a disciplined life. Have regular medical checkups
- Exercise: A regular exercise not only keeps you healthy but also prevents the accumulation of tension. It can also give you regular time away from everyday stressors

Notes:
• Have a Proper relationship with God: Regular time with God can help clarify areas in our lives that need working. Self-control is a fruit of the Spirit.

• Evaluate your expectations. Are your expectations realistic and fair? If not, you may want to let go of your expectations.

• Think good thoughts: If your mind thinks good or positive thoughts you will have good feelings and vice versa. “Whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable –if anything is excellent or praiseworthy –think about such things.” Phil4:8

• Share your burden with a friend

• Stop comparing with others. The grass is always green on the other side, but remember it also has its weeds.

• Socialize: Have a good social network.

• Pursue a hobby: Focus your energy on doing something you like, music, sport, creative art etc

• Find humor in situation

Notes:
Don’t

- Excuse yourself: “That’s just the way I am.” Anger is not beyond our control; it is our responsibility to master it. Dealing with anger wisely eliminates bitter consequences.
- Deny or ignore problems. Some people avoid facing problems, hoping they will go away on their own. Ignoring problems can lead to deep anger that bursts out with unpleasant consequences.
- Nurse your anger by repeatedly dwelling on negative thoughts. The ancient sage Epictetus, who lived from 55 to 135 A.D., taught: “If you do not wish to be prone to anger, do not feed the habit; give it nothing which may tend to its increase.”
- Watch violent movies or television shows.
- Indulge in alcohol or drugs. Substances decrease our control over emotions.


Notes: