

## Module 7 – Social and Behaviour Change- Child Protection

### Session 3: Elements of Counselling

Duration: 8:03 Minutes

Let us look at essential elements of counselling in detail.

**Trust:** Counsellors cannot help a child if there is no element of trust. Before moving into counselling, establish trust. A child feels free to express and share his/ her concerns when the child can trust somebody.

**Confidentiality:** Respect the privacy of the child. Assure him/her that everything will be kept in strict confidence. Confidentiality in the entire process of counselling is very important and enhances the dignity of the child.

**Self-Determination:** The child can make his/her own decisions about life, as much as is realistically possible. The role of the counsellor is to provide options and opportunity, or to help the child to explore alternatives best-suited to his/her capability and situation (coping strategies).

**Positive Approach:** Emphasise what the child does well and focus on approval, instead of disapproval. Reward the child when he/she does things well or when he/she makes an effort.

**Focus on Feelings:** It is often essential to discuss the child's feelings (both open and hidden ones) to help him/her understand himself/herself and his/her circumstances better and cope with life in a better manner.

**Showing Empathy:** It is important to understand the child and his/her problems from his/her point of view. This provides emotional support.

**The Lay-Counsellor must appear to be Genuine:** The counsellor should not only be but also appear to be completely involved in the interactive counselling process to demonstrate to the child his/her genuineness so that the child is able to draw benefit of such interaction and the lay-counsellor is also able to discharge his/her function effectively and with correct knowledge and perspective of the situation and the circumstances of the child, to arrive at a proper decision in the 'best interest of the child'. Yet it is essential that the lay-counsellor remains emotionally balanced and reasoned in his/her approach and action.

#### Tips for Maintaining a Healthy Counselling Relationship

It is very easy to develop unhealthy counselling relationships. It is the counsellor's responsibility to maintain professional boundaries with the child being counselled during interaction.

- At times the child may become more attached than is appropriate. The child may begin to see the lay-counsellor as a parent, friend or romantic partner. It is imperative that the child understands that the lay-counsellor cares for him/her, yet the child also knows that the lay-counsellor is not

- able to fulfill some of the unmet needs and the interaction is to look for how best to address the needs of the child within the juvenile justice system, so as to enable the child to become a productive member of the society.
- The lay-counsellor may develop feelings for the child and become overly involved in the child's well-being but needs to remind himself/herself, where his/her role ends.
- The child may feel uncomfortable and/or threatened by the lay-counsellor and may not cooperate during interaction. The lay-counsellor may take support of another stakeholder within the juvenile justice system or give some time to change his perception about the lay-counsellor through use of tact and an improved communication strategy, as no two children are similar in sensitivity, experience and background and each child is to be dealt with appropriately by arriving at the psycho-social plane of the child.

### **Session 3:3: Skills and Techniques of Counselling**

Let us look at the skills and techniques that a counsellor should possess.

#### **What are effective counselling skills?**

Since process of counselling is also part of communication, all the skills required for effective communication are also skills for effective counselling. You have seen these in previous session let us revisit these.

- Active listening
- Paying attention through eye-contact, nodding, etc.
- Hearing before evaluating
- Listening the whole message
- Probe for causes and feelings
- Reflection: Recognising child's feelings and letting him/her know that you have understood his/her feeling
- Questioning: Asking open-ended questions which allow for more explaining
- Help the child to go deeper into his/her problems and gain insight
- Paraphrasing: Repeating in one's own words what the child has said
- Interpretation: Giving back to the child the core issue that he/she is struggling with

#### **Skills and techniques of counselling**

In the earlier session you have seen that counsellors need to be adept in. We will discuss some more skills and techniques they should possess.

## Rapport Building

- Rapport is a relationship of mutual respect, responsiveness and influence.
- It is an on-going process.
- It is an honest attempt to understand a child from his/her perspective (i.e. a child's world).
- A willingness to be open.
- In order to build rapport, respect the child's beliefs and values. However, you do not have to agree with those.
- It is a willingness to see events from the child's perspective.

## Attending

### 1. Physical Attending

- Appropriate use of posture, eye contact, and general body position communicate that the counsellor is paying attention to the child.
- Ensure there are no physical object between you and the child.
- Maintain a comfortable distance between you and the child.
- Face the child directly
- Establish eye contact
- Maintain an open posture
- Lean towards the child

### 2. Psychological Attending

- The ability to pick up on the child's non-verbal as well as verbal messages/cues

## Exploration Skills

**Responding with Empathy:** Listening and understanding as if you were the child and then communicating as per your understanding.

## Self-Disclosure

### Sharing Personal Information with a Child

- It must be for the benefit of the child and not the counsellor
- It can be used as a model to help the child's self-disclosure
- It should not take the focus off the child

Used sparingly and appropriately, it can enhance the therapeutic relationship

## Advising

### A Form of Directive

- The advising should not be seen as a command or a demand
- Counsellors need to take responsibility for the advice they give
- Advise in such a way that it leaves the child/family with the ultimate choice

Click the link after the video, to see the handout on steps and phases of communication.

### Qualities of an Effective Counsellor

Besides possessing the right skills, counsellors should have qualities of an effective counsellor.

- Positive regard or respect for people
- Open, non-judgmental and high level of acceptance
- Caring and empathetic
- Self-aware and self-disciplined
- Knowledgeable/informed about subject and awareness of resources available within the community

**Points for reflection:** Counsellors should remember the following key points for effective result.

- Listen more than you talk
- Ask open-ended questions
- Act in a calm and poised manner
- Do not provide advice, and guide people to solutions.