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# 1A Follow the client's story and stay with their perspective to assist them to feel comfortable and express their concerns freely

In order to support and assist a person to identify their concerns, a relationship of trust needs to be fostered whereby the person feels they can speak freely and be listened to without judgment. An environment must be created that encourages the person to tell their story, enabling the identification of underlying and primary issues that must be addressed. It takes time to build a trusting relationship and it is important that the person understands the legal and ethical guidelines that will be upheld and how they underpin their own rights and the rights and responsibilities of the counsellor during the counselling process.

The five stages of a counselling session are as follows.

## The stages of counselling sessions

1. Introduction and establishment of relationship when encouraging the person to share their story
2. Hearing the person's story and exploring presenting issues
3. Identifying issues that require immediate action
4. Prioritising primary concerns and exploring options and plans for change
5. Closing the session with appropriate referrals for the person's issues, if required

## Introduction and establishment of a relationship

The introduction and establishment of a relationship is the first stage of the counselling session and may be referred to as the initial disclosure and relationship building. This is when a trusting relationship is created. Creating an environment that is comfortable and safe for the person to share their story is critical. It is also very important that the counsellor stays with the perspective of the person to foster the trusting relationship.

Techniques for managing this stage of the session include:

- ▶ informing the person of legal and ethical considerations
- ▶ using communication techniques to build trust and rapport with the person.



### Discrimination

'Discriminate' means to treat someone unfairly or favour others. Discrimination is never acceptable behaviour and is against the law. It is unlawful to discriminate against people on the basis of age, gender, ethnicity, disability or impairment, marital status, sexual preference, political or religious beliefs. When a person is being encouraged to tell their story, it is important they understand that they will not be discriminated against in any way and that it is your legal responsibility to ensure that non-discriminatory practice is upheld.

### Mandatory reporting

When encouraging the person to share their story, it is very important that they are informed of instances when you are mandated to file a report. Discussing your obligation to make the report may impact the person's level of trust, but explain to them that you must prioritise their safety and the safety of others if it is at risk.

## Rights and responsibilities of workers, employers and clients

In every service, the employer or service provider is responsible for the successful operation of the organisation and the employees, or support workers must complete their work tasks to ensure the service runs efficiently.

Your primary responsibility when providing counselling within a service is to ensure the person's safety. The rights and responsibilities of a worker are outlined below.

Workers' rights	Workers' responsibilities
▶ A safe workplace	▶ Follow policies and procedures to work in a safe manner at all times.
▶ A workplace free from harassment and discrimination	▶ Comply with a duty of care and follow instructions carefully.
▶ Access to a grievance (complaint) process	▶ Be competent and work within their level of training.
▶ Wages in accordance with the award rates	▶ Be willing to learn and train in new skills.
▶ Clear direction of their duties	▶ Be punctual, courteous and respect cultural and social diversity.

## Communication techniques to build trust and rapport

To ensure that the person feels comfortable sharing their story, it is critical to create a safe psychological space so that trust and rapport can be established. Relating to the person in an open and positive way, and demonstrating compassion and understanding will help develop a positive counselling relationship. It is also important that the physical environment enhances communication by providing comfortable seating whilst allowing the person to choose where they sit.

Here are additional qualities of a counsellor that must be demonstrated in order to build trust and rapport.

### Empathy

To demonstrate empathy you must be able to see things from the other person's point of view and understand the feelings of another person. When counselling it is important to comprehend the challenges, thoughts and experiences of the person. This creates an empathetic environment whereby the person is encouraged to share their story.

### Positive regard

Positive regard means demonstrating value and respect towards a person no matter what their circumstances or behaviour or appearance. In order to encourage the person to share their story, there must be a foundation of warmth and understanding.

### Respect

Demonstrating respect means treating the person with dignity, consideration and courtesy. Respect for a person sharing their story may be demonstrated by listening without judgment, without bias and allowing the person to freely express their thoughts and feeling without interruption.

## Stay with the person's perspective

It is vital at this stage when listening to a person's story to stay with the person's perspective and context. The perspective and context are the conditions, circumstances and/or the setting, which provide the perspective or viewpoint from which the story is told. The perspective and context of the person may include aspects such as abuse, homelessness, isolation, disempowerment and/or disconnection from family members. It is critical to consider the perspective and context of the person because it is within this contextual environment that counselling will take place to address issues and encourage changes. If the whole picture is not considered, the focus of the counselling may be too narrow and all aspects of the person may not be addressed in the assessment and intervention.



Example

**Explore the client's presenting issues and establish their nature and depth**



Beth comes to Patricia for counselling regarding stress and anxiety. Beth tells Patricia her story, describing her feelings of chronic anxiety, which she feels powerless to control. Patricia encourages her to talk about the current circumstances of her life and learns that Beth lost both parents in the last two years and is caring for a younger brother. Beth tells her that she feels unprepared for being a carer and that she and her brother are struggling financially. Patricia notices that Beth uses negative words when referring to her caregiver skills and says she

feels like she is failing her parents, because she is struggling to provide care for her brother.

Patricia listens to Beth's story and considers the link between Beth's current life situation and the presenting issue of chronic anxiety. Patricia also notes the various stressors that Beth is experiencing and considers the possibility that grief, guilt and low self-esteem are contributing factors in her chronic stress and anxiety.



## Practice task 2

1. Provide two aspects of the information that can help you to identify the possibility of underlying issues.

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2. Provide two techniques you could use to help determine the depth and nature of underlying issues.

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# 1C Identify and promptly deal with situations requiring immediate action

The third stage in the counselling session process is identification of issues that require immediate action. Issues that require immediate action are of the highest priority and urgency. Issues requiring immediate action may indicate that crisis intervention is needed. Immediate action may be required to ensure the person's safety and/or ensure the safety of others. It is critical to identify and prioritise these situations and your ability to recognise signs of distress can enable you to manage the situation and take action quickly.



## Identify issues and situations

The person's safety is the primary concern and, as a counsellor, it is critical that you recognise when a person's issue or situation is one that requires immediate action. Indicators that a person is in a situation requiring immediate attention may include:

- ▶ neglect
- ▶ abuse
- ▶ risk of harm
- ▶ risk of self-harm.

## Neglect

A counsellor must be able to identify physical, emotional and behavioural signs of neglect. This is when the person is neglected either through intentional or unintentional acts that result in them not being provided with basic necessities.

Here is further information about neglect.

### Examples of neglect

- ▶ Not providing enough food or drinks
- ▶ Not spending time with the person – leaving them alone for prolonged periods
- ▶ Inadequate provision of clothing or personal items
- ▶ Unwillingness to allow for adequate medical, dental or personal care
- ▶ Inappropriate use of medication; for example, overdosing a person so they sleep for longer periods of the day
- ▶ Leaving the person in the same continence aid for the whole day



### Psychological/emotional abuse

This form of abuse is an ongoing intimidating behaviour that is designed to disempower a person. Psychological and emotional abuse can be both verbal and nonverbal. It can include belittling, threats and withdrawal of affection. Some indicators of this form of abuse are sense of hopelessness, fearfulness, helplessness, withdrawal and reluctance to make decisions.

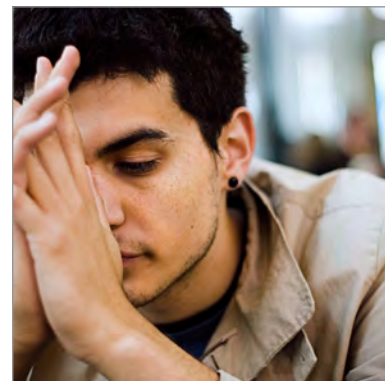
### Social abuse

This occurs when another person behaves in ways to reduce or restrict a person's social contact with others. It can include stopping a person from being involved in activities with others and/or preventing contact with friends and family, resulting in social isolation. Some indicators of this form of abuse are displays of grieving, low self-esteem, passive behaviour and sadness.

## Risk of harm

Identifying and responding to individuals at risk of harm can be challenging and stressful. There may be a risk of suicide or self-harm, or violence from another source. In addition, assessing the risk can be made more difficult because the person concerned is reluctant to reveal the true extent of their circumstances.

People who are experiencing disadvantage such as those living in poverty, those with a mental illness, Indigenous people and refugees are at a higher risk of harm either from other people or from self-harm. In addition, some groups are at higher risk of suicide. These include males, Indigenous Australians and people living in rural communities. Some studies also include same-sex attracted people and those with chronic or painful illness in high-risk categories.



## Risk of self-harm

Self-harm is the act of deliberately causing damage or injury to oneself; for example, by cutting, head banging, skin picking or other behaviours. Sometimes self-harm can be associated with emotional or social turmoil or personal challenges and sometimes it is associated with particular disabilities or conditions. The most serious manifestation of self-harm is suicide.

## Techniques for managing this stage

In this stage, the counsellor works closely with the person, encouraging them to participate in the identification and exploration of their issues and discusses the goals of the counselling session with them. In order to identify their issues and determine their needs, some techniques may be used.

# 1D Support clients to identify their primary concerns in relation to the presenting issues and to prioritise concerns

The fourth stage of the counselling session is when there is a prioritisation of primary concerns, goals are set and a plan for change is developed. Once situations requiring immediate attention have been addressed, the counsellor can support the person to identify their primary concerns in relation to their presenting issues. Primary concerns may be abuse, homelessness, drugs and alcohol misuse, family relationships or grief.



## Identify primary concerns

A person may seek counselling for issues of anger management, self-harm behaviours or grief. As a counsellor, you need to be able to look for underpinning concerns that contribute to the issue. For example, a person presenting with an issue of self-harming behaviour may be linked to a primary concern of child abuse, bullying or neglect.

To identify the primary concern, you need to reflect on the person's story. Make sure you have understood the context of their story and, if not, clarify it with the person. The context of the story will give insight into the issues that contribute to the primary concern.

When supporting a person to identify the primary concerns you may need to use a variety of techniques to draw out information – two of which are outlined below.

### Wish lists

A wish list can help identify what the person would like changed or improved in their life, therefore highlighting a concern. For example, a person may express that they wish they were in a respectful relationship. This may indicate a primary concern of domestic violence.

### Advanced empathy

Using advanced empathy means to read between the lines. Using advanced empathy can be used to:

- ▶ identify concerns that may be only hinted at
- ▶ Identify key words or sentences in the person's story that may indicate a concern.



# 1E Recognise indicators of client issues requiring referral and report or refer appropriately

The fifth stage of the counselling session is when the session is closed. At this time, the counsellor makes the decision to refer the person for more-appropriate support, or identifies a date for another session, in collaboration with the person receiving counselling. In any case, there are legal, ethical and organisational requirements and obligations that must be upheld.

The processes and protocols of all service organisations must be in line with relevant legislation and meet basic ethical requirements. Counsellors should be familiar with legislation that relates to their work and be guided by these in their work.

Workers should also be familiar with ethical guidelines and codes of practice and how they impact areas of work such as communication, confidentiality and work role boundaries.



## Legal responsibilities

There are various legal and ethical responsibilities that must be upheld in a counselling service and it is important that you are aware of these. These responsibilities are described in detail throughout this section.

### Legal responsibilities and obligations include:

- ▶ codes of conduct
- ▶ discrimination
- ▶ duty of care
- ▶ human rights
- ▶ mandatory reporting
- ▶ practitioner–client boundaries
- ▶ privacy, confidentiality and disclosure
- ▶ records management
- ▶ rights and responsibilities of workers, employers and clients
- ▶ work role responsibilities and limitations
- ▶ workplace health and safety.

## Human rights

At the beginning of the session, as a counsellor you explained the person's human rights to the person. To strengthen the counselling relationship and assure the person that their story and information shared will be treated fairly, at the end of the session, remind them that you are bound to uphold the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the *Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986* (Cth) and you will do so.



## Mandatory reporting

At the beginning of the counselling session, the person was informed of instances when you as the counsellor are mandated to file a report. If there are concerns that must be reported, you should inform the person at the end of the session what concerns must be reported, why they must be reported and who they need to be reported to.



## Practitioner-client boundaries

As a counsellor, when closing the session, it is important to explain boundaries that need to be upheld. It is important that the distinction between being a professional and a friend is not blurred. For example, the person may ask you to do something that is outside of your role or suggest social contact. Breaching boundaries is also a breach of trust. It can damage the counselling relationship and undermine the effectiveness of the counselling service.



## Privacy, confidentiality and disclosure

At the beginning of the counselling session, the person was informed of the privacy, confidentiality and information disclosure obligations that applied to them. At the end of the session, to reinforce the counselling relationship, the person may be reassured that all information and details included in their story are protected by law.

However, if at the end of the session you as the counsellor deem that a portion of information must be disclosed, you must explain your legal obligations for disclosure. If there is information you would like to share, but does not fall under legal obligations to share, you must at this time obtain consent from the person for disclosure.



## Records management

As a counsellor, you have a responsibility to document information gathered in the session. It must be collated in an accurate and secure manner to ensure all records are managed according to organisational procedures and guidelines. Policies and procedures for maintaining accurate and up-to-date counselling notes are based on legislative requirements of privacy and confidentiality. Session notes should be written as soon as possible after the end of the session to ensure accuracy.

## Work role responsibilities and limitations

Working within the legal responsibilities and limitations of your role as a counsellor is essential. If you step outside these boundaries you may cause harm to people who receive services and you may also risk legal action for damages against you and your employer. Understanding legal responsibilities and limitations protects the people you provide support services to, yourself, your employer and your colleagues.

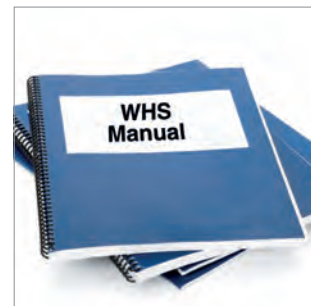


The key source of information setting out your role and responsibilities is your job description or duty statement. When a job description or duty statement is developed for a particular role or position in community services, the employing organisation will check relevant legislation and service standards as well as organisational policies to make sure that the role description meets these requirements. Your employer has a responsibility to ensure that you have all the skills, knowledge, training and qualifications required to carry out your role competently.

Organisational policies and procedures are also sources of information about the responsibilities and limitations of your role, which must be followed.

## Workplace health and safety

Work health and safety (WHS) laws are based on duty-of-care principles applied specifically to places of work. When counselling, depending on where the service is delivered, WHS obligations may apply to the service where you work, the home of the person receiving counselling, offices, residential facilities and other buildings owned or rented by your service. As a counsellor, you have legal responsibilities to workplace health and safety and obligations to promptly deal with situations requiring immediate action. When closing a counselling session, it is important to consider the physical, emotional and psychological safety of the person



According to the Explanatory Memorandum – Model Work Health and Safety Bill (Safe Work Australia, 2010), the harmonisation of WHS laws through a model framework is to:

- ▶ protect the health and safety of workers
- ▶ improve safety outcomes in workplaces
- ▶ reduce compliance costs for business
- ▶ improve efficiency for regulatory agencies.



## Topic 2

In this topic you will learn how to:

- 2A Identify and work with uncertainty and ambivalence of clients**
- 2B Support clients to experience and process difficulties and discuss parallels and links in the client's experience**
- 2C Identify and implement interventions that have meaning for the client's immediate situation**
- 2D Support the client to identify and use known and previously unknown strengths**
- 2E Explore perceptions of the client's feelings by reflecting back, clarification and review**
- 2F Assist clients to become aware of underlying issues, where appropriate, and begin to identify ways of dealing with them**
- 2G Acknowledge and work with changes in the client's life as appropriate**

## Support clients to work through concerns

Supporting a person to work through their concerns can be complex and requires identification of a person's main concern, and the issues that contribute to the concern. People may be unsure of their capability to change and need support to identify how their concern is linked to underlying issues in their lives. A counsellor requires the skills to determine the appropriate intervention for the person and to support the person to use their strengths to find a way to work through their issues and concerns. Advanced communication skills need to be used by the counsellor to empower the person to make changes in their lives.



### Amplify ambivalence

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This principle relates to the counsellor recognising when a person becomes 'stuck' in behaviour and help them to work through it. By verbalising ambivalence, the uncertainty is brought out into the open and the two sides that the person is dealing with can be discussed and explored.

### Roll with resistance

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Resistance is a normal behaviour when a person is considering change. This principle relates to the counsellor encouraging the person to come up with their own solutions and enabling the person to have control over issues contributing to ambivalence.

### Support self-efficacy

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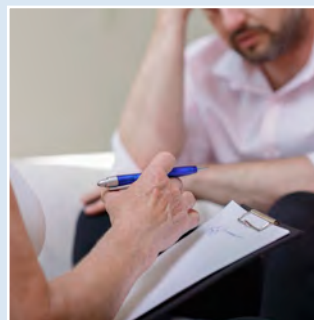
This principle relates to increasing the confidence of the person, which will enhance their belief that they can achieve their goal. When the person takes responsibility for their own decisions, they are more likely to believe the change is possible and make the change.

## Example

### Identify and work with uncertainty and ambivalence of clients

Laura is counselling Jonah regarding a gambling issue. Jonah has expressed a desire to change his behaviour but displays lack of confidence about his ability to change. Laura observes that Jonah is in a state of uncertainty and ambivalence and appears unable to move forward. Laura asks Jonah what his life was like before he started having problems with gambling and they discuss what factors are contributing to his uncertainty about achieving his goals. Laura engages Jonah in an honest discussion about the consequences of not changing as well as changing and the steps that need to be taken to bridge the gap between where Jonah is now and where he wants to be.

Laura tells Jonah that even though he is struggling to meet his goals, he has had some success at making some small changes and that, even though the changes are small, they are significant. Jonah feels more confident and motivated to move forward because Laura has helped him identify that he really wants to make changes, and now feels motivated to do so.



### Competence and responsibility

Working within the limitations and competence of your role is essential. If you step outside these boundaries, you may cause harm to people who receive services and you may also risk legal action for damages against you and your employer. The key source of information setting out the competence required and the responsibilities of your work role is a duty statement.

### Strengths and limitations

Every counsellor has their own set of strengths and limitations. Limitations may be that the counsellor does not have the expertise that is needed, the counsellor does not have a rapport with the person or that the counsellor is approaching burnout.

Some counsellors have strengths and experience in an area that another's may not. Strengths may be inherent personal qualities, or personal experience and knowledge.

### Support and supervision

It is important for a counsellor to demonstrate self-awareness regarding when there is a need to receive support and supervision. Support may be required if a person has concerns that is outside the expertise of the counsellor. It may also be required to avoid burnout or undo stress. Supervision is a valuable tool in identifying beliefs, bias and attitudes that may impact the counselling process.

### Beliefs and values

It is important that the counsellor is aware of their own beliefs and values. If a counsellor's internal beliefs and values are imposed on a person they are counselling, it is a demonstration of judgment and disrespect. No matter what the person's beliefs or values are, a counsellor must accept the person as they are and provide guidance.

## Identify parallels and links in person's experience

Assisting the person to understand and identify parallels and links between their experience and the concern can give them deeper understanding and clarification of contributors to the issue. When the history and experiences of the person are examined, indicators may appear which will shed light on the issue of concern.

### Past experience and anxiety

A person may seek counselling regarding anxiety attacks whereby feelings of dread, restlessness and apprehension present. The counsellor will attempt to determine an event or events in the person's past history that contributed to these feelings, thereby establishing a link from the past experience to the present condition.

### Past experience and substance misuse

A person may seek counselling regarding substance misuse when their personal lives and relationships are being impacted. The counsellor may explore the person's history and experiences to determine contributing factors, which link to the present concern.



### Sense of appropriateness

A counsellor must develop a sense of knowing when something is appropriate and when it isn't. This sense may be demonstrated by being aware of appropriate use of language, allowing the person to finish their own sentences and by upholding professional boundaries. It also includes knowing when the person needs a break and knowing when to 'back off' in the discussion.

### Authenticity and humility

Demonstrating authenticity and humility is being able to genuinely relate to the person. The person needs to know that counsellors make mistakes and may not have all the answers. It is critical that demonstrating humility is not confused with demonstrating condescension.

### Example

#### Support clients to experience and process difficulties and discuss parallels and links in the client's experience

Annette has been undergoing counselling for substance misuse. She is struggling to come to terms with her dependence on a substance and finds it overwhelming that the causal use has grown into something she can no longer control. Annette's counsellor, John, encourages her to reflect on factors and circumstances that may have contributed to the first use of the substance. Annette tells John about a painful event that led to her first using the substance. John supports Annette to understand the event and why it impacted on her life in such a strong way. They discuss Annette's coping mechanism for dealing with the trauma and realise that Annette uses the abusive substance as a defence mechanism whenever something triggers her memory of the event. They work together to explore and process the cause and effect of the difficulty and how it has become a concern.



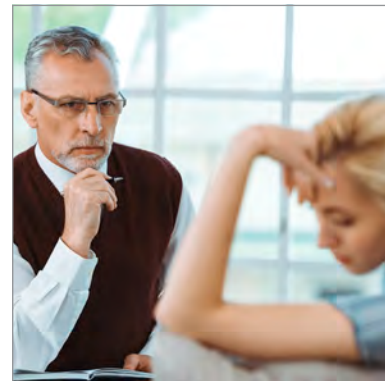
## Practice task 7

1. Provide two ways that a counsellor can support the person to process the cause, effect and impact of their difficulty.  
.....
2. Provide two aspects that a counsellor should consider when discussing parallels and links within a person's life.  
.....
3. List two abilities that a counsellor must have that underpin communication skills.  
.....

<b>Acceptance and commitment therapy</b>	The acceptance and commitment model of therapy is based on six principles that work together to manage painful thoughts and experiences and thereby create a meaningful life. This model of therapy may be used by an agency assisting people with anxiety, low self-esteem or grief.
<b>Solution-focused therapy</b>	Solution-focused therapy centres on the person identifying their goals and working towards a solution to their issue or concern. This therapy may be used by a domestic violence agency whereby the person seeking assistance is empowered to use their resourcefulness to achieve their goals and construct solution patterns.
<b>Narrative therapy</b>	Narrative therapy is used to help the person to understand the story of their life and adopt a new perspective thereby writing a new story for the future. Narrative therapy explores the strengths and positive aspects of the person, consequently reducing the influence of problems in their lives. This therapy may be used by an agency providing assistance to people requiring couple or family counselling.
<b>Emotion-focused therapy</b>	Emotion-focused therapy or emotionally focused therapy (EFT) is used to assist people to identify their experience more effectively and explore their emotions that are prompted by the experience. This therapy may be used by an agency that provides relationship counselling.

## Identify and implement appropriate intervention

Before an intervention strategy can be implemented, the appropriate therapeutic method must be identified. A counsellor may use one method, a combination of approaches or a tailored approach depending on the person's immediate situation. No matter which approach the counsellor chooses, the aim is to facilitate the person's understanding of their concern and clarify actions to be taken. The counselling approach must have meaning for the person. For example, a CBT approach will have meaning for a person who is trying to change thoughts and behaviours. The approach should resonate with the person. If the person can connect with the approach, it is more likely that they will be motivated to achieve their goals.



## 2F Assist clients to become aware of underlying issues, where appropriate, and begin to identify ways of dealing with them

When supporting a person to work through their concerns, a counsellor requires skills to assist the person to become aware of underlying issues that contribute to the concerns. Once the underlying issues are identified, the counsellor can assist the person to deal with them and prioritise issues, provide support and develop strategies to assist the person to go forward.



Often concerns are not easily defined by a single issue. Combinations of life experiences, relationship issues or family background factors can impact and contribute to a concern. By increasing awareness of the underlying issues, it can help clarify and define the counselling method and focus. It may be necessary to examine behavioural patterns, triggering events, lifestyle choices, family dynamics, or destabilisers in the person's life. Other aspects such as the person's social, medical and emotional history may be looked at in an attempt to identify factors that may be contributing to the person's concern.

### Deal with underlying issues

When the underlying issues are identified, the counsellor can assist the person to begin to deal with them. This may involve:

- ▶ planning the appropriate counselling approach
- ▶ prioritising support
- ▶ referring the person to a different agency.

## Summary

1. Supporting a person to work through their concerns can be complex and requires identification of a person's main concern, and issues that contribute to the concern.
2. People may be unsure of their capability to change and so they need support to identify the area of uncertainty and to clarify factors contributing to their uncertainty and ambivalence.
3. Once the difficulty has been identified, the counsellor must support the person to experience, explore and process the difficulty.
4. Past experiences can influence the grief process; how relationships are formed and maintained; how children are parented; and a person's predisposition to substance misuse.
5. The intervention must be meaningful and facilitate the person's understanding of the concern and provide a way forward.
6. A strengths-based approach to counselling concentrates on the skills, capacity and potential of a person to enhance their wellbeing. Strengths-based counselling shifts the focus from the challenges of the concern to the strengths the person has.
7. A counsellor can use reflection, clarification and review to ensure the person's feelings are not being misinterpreted.
8. Once the underlying issues are identified, the counsellor can assist the person to deal with them and prioritise issues, provide support and develop strategies to assist the person to go forward.
9. When supporting a person who is working towards making changes, it is critical that the person's concerns are acknowledged and validated. Demonstration of validation and acknowledgment towards a person is a powerful part of counselling and intervention.

# 3A Monitor and review the counselling process with clients to ensure it remains of value and work on threats and disruptions

Monitoring is a continuous process of gathering information. Reviewing involves analysing the information and drawing conclusions from it. Continuous monitoring and review is needed over the full course of the intervention. This is to ensure the changing needs of the person receiving counselling are met and to make sure the approach remains of value to them. The counsellor must listen for indications of how the person perceives their goals and their capacity to achieve the goals. This will enable the counsellor to proactively identify obstacles and barriers to achievement and will highlight areas that need revision. By identifying threats to the counselling process proactively, the counsellor can create a contingency plan and provide options for addressing the threats. By working proactively, it minimises threats, obstacles or barriers to the counselling process.



The counselling process will need to be adjusted over time in relation to goals, achievements and the person's needs and preferences. Monitoring and reviewing provides an opportunity for the counsellor and the person to share what is working and what is not working. By discussing and reviewing the counselling process with the person, you can modify or remove goals, add or alter time frames and refine the process to ensure the approach remains of value and benefit to the person.

## Obstacles to the counselling process

When monitoring and reviewing the counselling process with the person, the counsellor may discover barriers and obstacles, which are threats, and can cause disruptions to the person's progress. Some obstacles that may be a threat and disruption to the counselling process are discussed below.

### Psychological

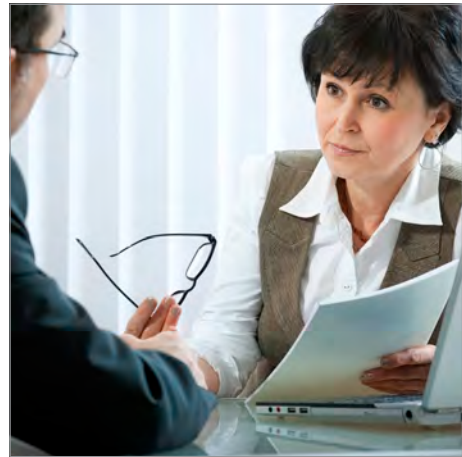
Trust is one of the most valuable aspects of the counselling relationship. The trusting relationship may take a long time to develop, but is easily destroyed. It is vital that the counsellor acts proactively to ensure the person fully understands when disclosure of information is mandatory and situations that mandate personal information to be shared.

Shame is one of the most crippling obstacles to counselling because it adds to the issue or concern. The counsellor must ensure that the person's concern is acknowledged and validated.

Fear may disrupt the counselling process if the person is afraid of repercussions relating to information that has been disclosed or the outcome of deciding to change behaviours.

# 3B Review and compare your own and the client's perceptions of the process and address tension between the client's hopes, expectations and reality

It is important that the counsellor and the person receiving support share their perceptions and understanding of the counselling process as part of the monitoring process. Perception refers to the person's understanding of the concern and how it is being addressed. By sharing and comparing their views, goals and objectives can be examined to confirm that the perceptions of the counsellor and person are aligned.



If there are discrepancies between the counsellor and the person's understanding of the counselling process, these inconsistencies must be addressed to avoid tension and discord between the counsellor and the person receiving counselling. Expectations of the person refer to what they anticipate will happen or what they expect the outcome of the counselling process to be. If the counsellor and the person are not in agreement, tension or strain may occur in the counselling relationship.

## Compare perceptions

Discrepancies between the perceptions of the person and the counsellor regarding the counselling process must be clarified and addressed. The counsellor's approach to a person's concern may not be understood by the person, leading to misconceptions of the counselling process. Everyone that receives counselling is unique so it is important that the counsellor understands the perceptions that the person may have about their concern.

Misperceptions that may occur during the counselling process include:

- ▶ the counsellor's role in addressing the concern
- ▶ the person's commitment in working towards a favourable outcome
- ▶ how realistic the goals are
- ▶ time frames regarding meeting goals.