The Skilled Helper Model

Gerard Egan, 1998
Stage One

• Exploration of the Status Quo/current state of affairs
• Help the client tell their stories
• Help client challenge their blind spots
• Develop new perspectives
counselor skills needed: stage 1

- Counselors help by listening and giving full attention. The Counselors genuineness, acceptance and empathy are communicated through the use of the ACTIVE LISTENING:
  - Paraphrasing
  - Reflecting feelings
  - Using Open Questions
  - Focusing; helping the client to be specific: concreteness
  - Summarizing
- Attending skills (SOLER)
Give the client the message: I’m with you and I’m hearing you.

• For some people, the chance to explore their situation in an accepting atmosphere will be sufficient to enable them to move on by themselves.

• Others will need further help to enable them to fully understand the factors involved and find the resources to take effective action.
Stage Two

• The preferred scenario: Helping clients determine what they want and need

• What do you want? (dreams)
• What do you really want? (goals)
• What are you willing to do to make it happen? (commitment)
Stage Two Skills: Deeper Empathy

• Stage 1 empathy reflects surface meanings and feelings while deeper empathy of Stage 2 gets at feelings and meanings, which are buried, hidden and somehow not normally obvious to the client.
Some ways of communicating these are:

- Expressing what the client implies but does not state. (The music behind the words.)
- Summarizing core material
- Identifying themes or patterns in what the client says
- Connecting separate islands of thoughts or feelings
- Recognizing possible inconsistencies

Suggesting alternative frames of reference—new ways of looking at things
• Other stage 2 skills are:
  • Looking at options open to the client, including referral
  • The best and worst possibilities arising from the options
  • Sharing the Counselor's own experiences, where appropriate
  • Sharing information
Stage 3: ACTION

• In stages 1 and 2 of the model clients are helped to explore and understand themselves, their feelings and their world better, and in a different light. In stage 3 clients are helped to take effective action—to achieve constructive change.
• For some clients, stages 1 and 2 are sufficient to enable them to mobilize their own problems-solving resources, others will need positive help with their decision making.
Stage 3 skills

- Goal and strategy setting
- Providing support and resources
- Coaching and training
- Problem solving
- Decision-making
- Evaluating