

Counseling Approaches

There are literally hundreds of counseling approaches - ranging from basic active listening and a solution focus - to the seemingly bizarre. In general, it is wise to seek a well-trained and qualified counselor whose approach is primarily determined not by *what they do* but by *what you need*. Here are some thoughts on healthy and productive counseling relationships as they relate to counselor style and approach.

A Consistently Worthy Goal in Counseling is to Empower You

- To take ownership of your counseling and goals,
- To reach your goals as promptly as is reasonably possible,
- To examine choices you are making, and
- To see yourself as the primary catalyst for change in your life, irrespective of what others may or may not do.

Consequently, an empowering therapist will not generally give advice, make decisions for you, tell you what to do, or foster gratuitous dependency upon themselves. To do so is to send an underlying message suggesting, "*You are not capable of making your own decisions, so do this.*" And that is not very empowering!

A Counselor Needs to be Non-judgmental Yet Willing to be Forthright

Most clients seek a counselor who is accepting, non-blaming, and non-judgmental. At the same time, they want someone to "shoot-straight" with them in a compassionate manner and give them honest, objective, and candid feedback when requested.

An Effective Counselor Consistently Monitors Expectations

"Therapeutic process" is a fancy way of saying, "*Are we (still) on the same page?*" An effective counselor does not take this for granted, but considers throughout the counseling process questions such as:

- Are you getting what you need from me?
- What is it that I do that helps you? Is not helpful?
- Do you feel you are being heard and understood?
- Are we headed in the right direction, or, have your goals changed? Have your expectations changed?

It is important for the counseling relationship to be monitored carefully for issues between counselor and client which can either hinder or enhance reaching your goals.

Our Approach

Our goal at IPPS is to use the most appropriate counseling approach based upon the presenting concern, the needs of the client, therapeutic opportunities and limitations, and what research has shown as most efficacious. Effective counseling is based upon ongoing clarity of expectations and shared responsibility.

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