

**WAYS
A COUNSELLOR
CONNECTS
WITH
A COUNSELLE
BY
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Make Sure the Focus is on the Client

The beginning, middle and end of every session should be about the client's thoughts, feelings and actions. Keep the spotlight on the client. You accomplish this by honing your listening ear and being very careful about the few words you say. Be sure to clear your own head before a session to stay focused and give your client the attention they deserve.

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Walk the Line between Pushy and Coddling

Clients need to know you accept them and respect their right to make their own decisions. Neither coddling your client nor being too insensitive to their readiness to open up will be productive. You must find the median line that intersects these two extremes. Be sensitive to where your client is at, but know when to give the extra little encouragement to reveal more or to think deeper. Sometimes, it's that push that helps the client arrive at their ultimate goal.

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Stay Confidential

Trust is the most valuable facet of the counselor/client partnership. Without trust, the client won't be comfortable opening up to let you listen and begin the journey to health and healing. This includes keeping all information about the client and the sessions to yourself, and yourself only. Sometimes, making sure your client knows that you have the rule of confidentiality can help you manage resistant clients. Start your work with clients by explaining what confidentiality means and the ways you ensure their privacy. Also be sure to explain when you will have to breach that promise – if they threaten harm to themselves or to others and if they reveal child abuse. Some states have other rules about the exceptions to confidentiality. *Prof. Dr. Inshad Ahmed*

Ask for Clarification

Work hard to understand the client – start with the idea you cannot know the client's world without listening carefully. Ask what words mean; for example ask what family means and who is theirs. Do not assume your idea of anything matches theirs. It's your job to assess the situation carefully and correctly. If you develop a misconception about your client's situation, you could complicate things for the client and impede progress towards your client's goal.

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Practice Your Questions

A counselor should ask open-ended questions to assess more detail from the discussion. For example, if you ask “Are you happy about what happened,” You may receive a “yes” or “no” response. But, if you ask, “How do you feel about what happened,” the question is an open-ended tool for conversation and further understanding.

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Structure the Session

Sessions will vary depending on the theory of counseling you are using. Some counselors use protocols with clear guidelines for what comes first, second and so on. Others have less structure and the session unfolds more through the client's story. Whether mapped with pre-determined steps or more open-ended, counselors should be careful to create a beginning to settle into the deeper conversation, a middle in which the "work" is happening, and an end with a summary of the session and plans for what is next.

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Whether you're a student learning to become a counselor, or you're already in your profession, these six tips will help you connect with your clients and earn their trust to achieve your ultimate goal of helping people.

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