

# What are the 20 qualities of a good counsellor?

The 20 qualities of a good counsellor are:

- Knowledgeable
- Skilful
- Observant
- Communication skills
- Ethics and Values
- Non judgemental
- Empathy
- Confidentiality
- Personal integrity
- Competence
- Therapeutic alliance
- Organized
- Flexible
- Open minded
- Patience
- Active Listening
- Active Responding
- Supervision
- Crisis intervention
- Unconditional Positive regard

## **Knowledgeable**

A good counsellor is knowledgeable. Being a counsellor calls for being equipped with all the necessary related information of counselling. Knowing well the different types of counselling, the pros and cons of counseling, the tactics of client dealing, the ethical code of conduct by mental health associations are all qualities of a good counselor.

## **Skillful**

A good counselor is skillful. A counselor is well equipped with training for all the necessary hard and soft skills. This includes training for client dealing, psychological assessment, various types of therapeutic interventions, interpersonal skills and intrapersonal skills. Further, a good counselor also has the skills for liaising with other health professionals for better management of the case.

## **Observant**

A good counselor is observant. Being a keen observer of the client's verbal and non verbal behavior is a necessary attribute of being a good counselor. The client's non verbal behavior including facial expressions, body language, tone of voice, gait, mood and affect often reflect a lot about the client's mental state.

A counselor observes the non verbal and verbal behavior of the client in detail to formulate the case and manage it along others.

## **Communication skills**

A good counselor has strong communication skills. Counselors are well equipped with skills necessary for interactive communication. These include communicating clearly without barriers and maintaining silence when the client goes silent in order to let the client contain the feeling.

A good counselor usually tries to bring about change in the client's perspective by developing insight and using motivational interviewing techniques.

## **Ethics and Values**

A good counselor always practices based on the knowledge of ethics and values. The counselor needs to know and practice the ethical code of conduct of the community they serve. Ethics call for description of rules and regulations related to dual relationships with the clients, setup of rooms where sessions are carried out, issues related to the transfer of the client, issues related to the legal matters and what the plan of action should be in such cases.

## **Non judgemental**

A good counselor is non judgemental. They never judge the client based on class, creed, race or ethnicity. They value all clients equally despite the differences in socio demographics.

For a good counselor, a case with the history of rape, a case with the history of homosexual practices and a case with depression are all of equal importance.

Good counselors do not judge clients based on their behavior patterns. They don't label the clients rapist client, homosexual client or depressed client.

## **Empathy**

A good counselor is empathetic towards the client. Instead of being sympathetic, a good counselor tries to understand the client's feelings related to the event and tries to understand the situation from the client's point of view. Thus counselors understand and share the feelings of the client.

Being empathetic never means that the counselor agrees to the perspective of the client. Rather it means that the counselor puts himself in the shoes of the client to learn about the scenario from the client's perspective.

## **Confidentiality**

A good counselor always practices confidentiality as the most sacred rule. The clients are informed before the start of counseling about their right to confidentiality. A counselor guides the client that whatever information is shared in the session will remain with the counselor and the client. The information will never be shared with any third person unless there is a risk to the life of the client or someone near.

Practicing confidentiality is at the core of counseling. Otherwise the counselor would never be able to build a therapeutic alliance with the client.

## **Personal integrity**

A good counselor maintains a high degree of personal integrity and credibility. Counselors are honest to themselves and to their clients. Counselors are not meant to take a case for counseling that they know they are not trained for. Similarly

they should not be misleading the client or engaging with the client in activities to get through any personal means.

### **Competence**

A good counselor is competent. A counselor confidently uses the knowledge and information that he has learned and the skills that he has achieved in order to facilitate the client with full confidence.

No matter if the counselor has been practicing for years or a few months. A good counselor would be confident about dealing with the client and thus maintain competence.

### **Therapeutic alliance**

A good counselor always maintains therapeutic alliance with the client. They establish a good professional rapport with the client. Establishing therapeutic alliance with the client is the key to break resistance of the client and get the counseling in flow. Without a strong therapeutic alliance, clients usually don't share information with the therapist and are hesitant.

Further, without therapeutic alliance, it is difficult for the counselor to achieve the short term and long term goals of the counseling.

### **Organized**

A good counselor is organized. He manages time well and is well equipped with skills required for an optimal executive functioning. An organized counsellor always takes notes during the start, middle and end of the counseling session.

Organization also calls for maintaining a record of the appointments for counseling sessions and keeping a focus on which client to get shifted to follow up sessions and which client has to go to termination.

### **Flexible**

A good counselor is flexible. A counselor is ready to accept any new challenging behaviors from the clients and moulds the session structure according to the needs of the client.

A good counselor does not rigidly assume the diagnosis in the first few sessions; rather he facilitates the client in unfolding the problem areas of life and goes along with them with the flow.

### **Open minded**

A good counselor is open minded. Counselors need to have acceptance for all types of clients in general. They acknowledge both the negative and positive feelings of the client and mindfully accept the matters in their own perspective.

### **Patience**

A good counselor is patient. They practice tolerance skills for the clients. They are there for the client to provide them with opportunities to overcome aggression feelings and frustrations.

Counselors are patient to whatever the client says. A client might tell the counselor that he is against a particular race and the counselor might belong to the same race, yet he will patiently listen to whatever is being said in the session without any negative reaction.

### **Active Listening**

A good counselor is an active listener. They are there to listen to whatever the client has to tell them. They provide a listening ear to the client and provide nonverbal cues to give them maximum attention. The counselor never interrupts whatever the client is saying and provides feedback only when the client has finished talking.

### **Active Responding**

A good counselor is an active respondent. They respond to the client by providing verbal reassurances that they are being heard, like saying “ahan”, “mmhhmm”, or nodding their head gently to tell them that they are being heard.

Counselors also respond by reflecting back on what the client has shared, summarizing their content or rephrasing their idea.

## **Supervision**

A good counselor seeks supervision whenever required. They don't hesitate in taking help from their seniors or peers for better case management. A good example of supervision in counseling is through case conferences.

## **Crisis intervention**

A good counselor is well equipped with knowledge and information for crisis intervention. They are well informed about dealing with any uncertain case that might happen during the counseling session.

For example a counselor would know which numbers to call in case of sudden cardiac arrest to a client.

## **Unconditional Positive regard**

A good counselor has unconditional positive regard for all the clients. Counselors accept all the clients based on the humanity grounds and are not biased towards any specific caste or religion.

Counselors are available to the clients equally during the therapy sessions and their positive regard for the clients is not conditioned to any terms.