

# CGI Vision 2025 – Communication – Counseling Skills

Prov 12:15 The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but a wise man is he who listens to counsel.

## CSF #6 - Communication -- Gap Score = 4

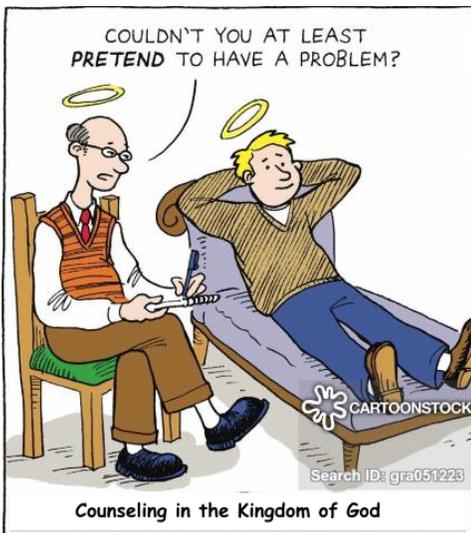
**Objective: To improve in teaching effectiveness and interpersonal communication**

**Thoughts influencing the Gap Score:**

- Ottawa may benefit from Burlington "family fellowship" spokesman's club training
- Ottawa members do well with "Listening" - a key part of communication
- French Translation & hard of hearing technology assists members and visitors
- Counselling skills might help communicate member problems

Task	Who	by When	Status

~~Upon baptism each member of CGI is imbued with the knowledge and counseling skills equal to 8 years of university studies in psychology & social work. Opps! ... I guess it doesn't work that way!~~



Most of us are **not** professional counselors!  
 ... but we are fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, parents, children, students, workers, husbands & wives, followers of Jesus, with a wealth of personal experience in our successes AND in our failures where we had to pull ourselves back up.

Sometimes a situation will require the skills obtained over a lifetime of:

- professional counselors or sometimes
- our church elders (especially in dealing with spiritual matters).

This message aims to help brethren ***counsel*** in areas we can.

In our congregation, I can see skills & life experience ***in each member*** to make us good candidates to help one another.

By definition ... **Counsel is...** advice, opinion or instruction given in directing the judgment or conduct of another. It includes wisdom, and the interchange of opinions as to future action, process, consulting, or deliberation.

Counsel is also a “gift of the Spirit”!

Isa 11:1-2 There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit. And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the **Spirit of counsel** and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.

The spiritual gift of **Counsel** functions as a “supernatural intuition”, to enable a person to judge promptly and rightly, especially in difficult situations. Counsel leads to “prudence” which involves:

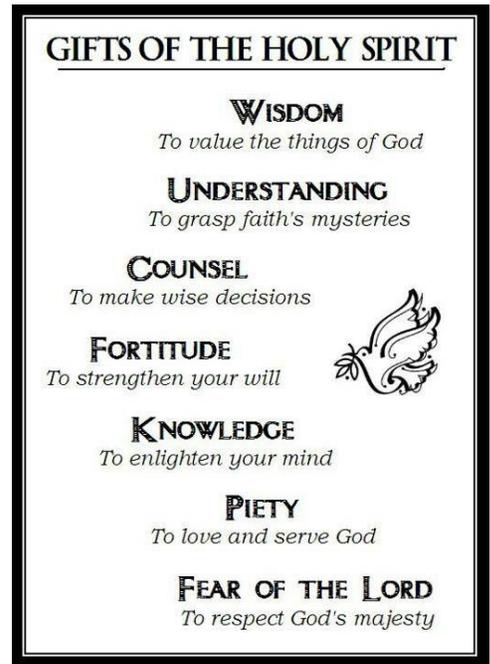
- operating in accord with reason
- as enlightened by faith,

The gift of counsel operates under the guidance of the Holy Spirit to illuminate the will of God

Prov 15:22 Without consultation, plans are frustrated, But with many counselors they succeed.

Ps 16:7 I will bless the Lord who has counseled me; Indeed, my mind instructs me in the night.

Ps 73:24 With Your counsel You will guide me, And afterward receive me to glory.



## The Top Ten Basic Counseling Skills

Research is increasingly finding that best outcomes are specific counselor behaviors such as

(1) Enthusiasm, (2) Confidence, (3) Belief in the person’s ability to change.

In essence the counselor’s interactions with the person is a powerful tool in the “helping” relationship.

### 1. Listening

- Attending** - orienting oneself physically, your full, undivided attention. Methods include eye contact; nods; not moving around, being distracted, encouraging talking, mirroring body postures and language, leaning forward, etc. Researchers estimate that about **80 percent** of communication takes place non-verbally.
- Listening/observing** - capturing & understanding the *verbal* and *nonverbal* information



Two primary sources of information:

- **CONTENT** - what is specifically said. Listen carefully for, not only what a person says, but also the words, expressions and patterns the person is using, which may give you a deeper insight-to clarify what was said or finding out what was not said.
- **PROCESS** - all nonverbal phenomena, including how content is conveyed, themes, body language, interactions, etc. Smiling

**Prov 18:13** He who gives an answer before he hears, It is folly and shame to him.

**James 1:19** This you know, my beloved brethren. But everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger

**Prov 20:5** A plan in the heart of a man is like deep water, But a man of understanding draws it out.

## 2. Empathy

The ability to perceive another's experience and then to communicate that perception back to the individual to clarify and amplify their own experiencing and meaning.

Primary skills associated with the communication of empathy include:

- a. nonverbal and verbal attending
  - b. paraphrasing content of communications
  - c. reflecting the persons feelings and implicit messages
- a. ATTENDING – involves our behaviors which reflect our paying full attention, in an accepting and supportive way

b. PARAPHRASING - Selective focusing on message – with the key words and ideas being communicated back in a rephrased, and shortened form.

There are four steps in effective paraphrasing:

- I. Listen and recall. The entire message to ensure you recalled it in its entirety and do not omit any significant parts.
- II. Identify the content part of the message by deciding what event, situation, idea, or person they are talking about.
- III. Rephrase, in as concise a manner as possible, the key words and ideas they used to communicate their concerns in a fresh or different perspective.
- IV. Perception check is usually in the form of a brief question, eg “It sounds like...,” “Let me see if I understand this,” which allows the person to agree or disagree with the accuracy of your paraphrasing.

c. REFLECTING FEELINGS- Reflection in an open-ended, respectful manner of what the person is communicating verbally and nonverbally, including reasonable inferences about what the person might be experiencing emotionally ... is important for the helper to think carefully about which words he/she chooses to communicate these feelings back to the person. The skill lies in choosing words which use different words that convey the same or similar. Poor summaries can be very discouraging.

**Rom 12:15** Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep.

**Psa 103:13-14** As a father shows compassion to his children, so the LORD shows compassion to those who fear him. For he knows our frame; he remembers that we are dust.

## 3. Genuiness

Ability of counselor to be freely themselves. Includes congruence between outer words/behaviors and inner feelings; nondefensiveness; non-role-playing; and being unpretentious. For example, if the helper claims that they are comfortable helping a person explore a drug or sexual issue, but their behavior (verbally and nonverbally) shows signs of discomfort with the topic... this will become an obstacle to progress and often lead to confusion and mistrust.



Rom 12:9 Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good.

## 4. Unconditional positive regard

An expression of caring and nurturance as well as acceptance.

- Includes conveying warmth through conveying acceptance by responding to the person's messages (verbal and nonverbal) with nonjudgmental or noncritical verbal & nonverbal reactions.
- Respect - communicating the sincere belief that every person has the strength & capacity to make it in life, & that each person has the right to choose his own alternatives & make his own decisions.



**Jer 31:3** ... I have loved you (*Israel*) with an everlasting love; therefore I have continued my faithfulness to you.



# CONCRETENESS

Communicating concretely means being specific, definite, and vivid rather than vague and general.

## 5. Concreteness

Keeping communications specific -- focused on facts and feelings of **relevant** concerns, while avoiding tangents, generalizations, abstract discussions.

Includes the following functions:

- a. Assisting person to identify and work on a specific problem from the various ones presented.
- b. Reminding the person of the task.
- c. Using questions and suggestions to help the person clarify facts, terms, feelings, and goals.
- d. Use a here-and-now focus to emphasize process and content occurring in current session, which may be of help to clarify the problem being worked on or improving the problem-solving process.

**6. Open Questions** -- A questioning process to assist the person in clarifying or exploring thoughts or feelings.

- a. Goal is to facilitate exploration – not needed if the person is already doing this.
- b. Have an intention or purpose for every question you ask.
- c. Avoid asking too many questions, or assuming an interrogatory role.
- d. Best approach is to follow a response to an open-ended question with a paraphrase or reflection which encourages the person to share more and avoids repetitive patterns of question/answer/question/answer, etc.



**Luk 10:26** He (*Jesus*) said to him, "What is written in the law? What is your reading of it?"

**7. Knowledgeable** – The benefits of knowledge are many including knowing pitfalls to avoid, & things to expect. Often the selection of the counselor is to seek this specialized knowledge.



**Pro 18:15** The heart of the prudent acquires knowledge, And the ear of the wise seeks knowledge.

## 8. Counselor Self-Disclosure

The counselor shares personal feelings, experiences, or reactions. We should include relevant content intended to help them. As a rule, it is better to not self-disclose unless there is a pressing need which cannot be met in any other way.

Remember empathy is not sharing similar experiences but conveying in a caring and understanding manner what the person is feeling and thinking... however, in the informal "Christian counseling", the testimony or experience of the counselor is part of why you might have been selected to help.

**Jas 5:16** Confess (*acknowledge*) your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed...

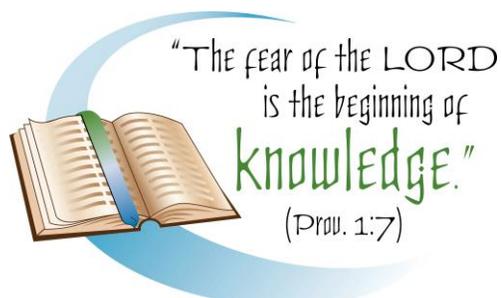
### The Art of Self-Disclosure

Knowing How and When to Share What With Whom

**Step 1** Assess the level of intimacy between you and the other person(s)

**Step 2** What is the risk level associated the What, Where, and Who

**Step 3** Why do you want to reveal the information?



## 9. Interpretation

Any statement to the person which goes beyond what they have said or are aware of. In interpretation the counselor is providing new meaning, reason, or explanation for behaviors, thoughts, or feelings so that they can see problems in a new way. Interpretations can help the person make connections between seemingly isolated statements of events, can point out themes or patterns, or can offer a new framework for understanding. An interpretation may be used to help a person focus on a specific aspect of their problem, or provide a goal.



- Keep interpretations short, concrete, and deliver them tentatively and with empathy.
- Use interpretations sparingly and do not assume a person's rejection of your insight means they are resistant or that *you* are right.

Pro 8:14 Counsel and sound judgment are mine; I have insight, I have power.

Dan 2:22 He (*God*) reveals deep and hidden things; He knows what lies in darkness, & light dwells with Him.



## 10. Information Giving and Removing Obstacles to Change

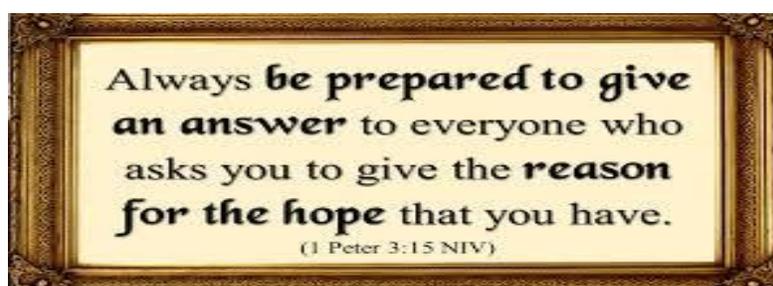
Supplying data, opinions, facts, resources or answers to questions. Explore with the person possible problems which may delay or prevent their change process. In collaboration with the person identify possible solutions and alternatives.

**Col 4:6** Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one.

**Pro 15:22** Without counsel, plans go awry, But in the multitude of counselors they are established.

Hopefully, in CgiOttawa...

- we continue to work on our communication
- we reach out to counsel with the ministry and with brethren who can help us
- we are personally ready to help those who might come to us for counsel – allowing us to share the experience that God has put in our lives



# Communicate ... Communicate ... Communicate

## 5 Fast Facts — Quick excellent points ... we might memorize!

- This is not about... replacing all our Booklets or Sermons ...
- ... we are providing “enough of an answer” to satisfy & encourage research

Examples:

- Hey friend, someone told me you were a big church supporter?!?
  - Do you really believe there is a God “out there”?
  - If God is real, why does He hide Himself?
  - Does being a Christian mean you don’t really think for yourself?
- I had a good friend die last week ... They were so young and it was so sudden ...
  - How could God allow that to happen?
  - What does it mean for someone to die? Where are they?
- I am afraid to turn on the news anymore...
  - What do you see happening with this world?
  - What keeps you so positive & peaceful when cities are on fire?

Format of a write-up:

### **5 Fast Facts—** *Is the Bible God’s word?*

**Subject:**

**Context:**

**So What Can You Do? (Turning information into action?)**

1. *Key point or proof #1*
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

**Source of some ideas:**

1. *Excellent source #1 eg Encyclopedia Britannica*
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.