Keys to a good first session

Inform: Shifting discipleship counseling to the local church.

Discipleship counseling is most effective in the local church.
ACCFS can equip the local church to disciple.
Chronic clinical counseling is served by ACCFS.

Equip: Keys to a good first session

Your counselee is hurting.
• Appreciate their pain.
• This generates compassion.

Vulnerability is not easy.
• Appreciate their openness.
• Support their courage.

I don’t know them or their story.
• This person is unique.
• I want to build trust.
• My counselee doesn’t know me.

I don’t need to have all the answers.
• Discipleship doesn’t require expertise in all matters of life.

Love.
• “Above all things, put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness.” Col 3:14

Equip: Keys to a good first session

Leave your counselee with hope.
• Having a first session in and of itself is hopeful.
• Look for ways to comment on hope throughout session.

Equip: Keys to a good first session

Sample first session structure:
1. Discuss preliminaries.
2. Counselee shares story.
3. Find out past counseling experiences.
4. Identify person’s goals.
5. Collaborate about where to begin second session.
6. Offer encouragement.
7. Allow for questions.

Listen:
• Make eye contact and affirm with facial cues.
• Summarize what you are hearing.
• Listen for possible goals the counselee may have.
• Listen for emotions – “I sense some fear – what are you afraid of?”
• Listen for the persons’ interpretations and implications of circumstances.

Questioning:
• Draw out their story.
• “Can you share with me why you desire mentoring?”
• Use open ended questions.

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Empathize:
• Put yourself in their shoes.
Motivate: Relationships work

Counselor:
• Be committed.
• Be proactive.
• Be consistent.
• Be real.

Helper:
• Be confidential.
• Expect growth.
• See progression.
• Offer hope.

Questions/Comments