Counseling Techniques

“Process produces outcome. The process of counseling—what the counselor and client do in session— influences the outcome, the success of counseling. To master process, beginning counselors must develop a repertoire of helping skills as well as a theory of counseling that directs their application.”

1. Speak briefly.
2. When you don’t know what to say, say nothing.
3. When in doubt, focus on feelings.
4. Avoid advice.
5. Avoid premature problem solving.
6. Listen closely to what clients say.
7. Pay attention to non-verbal cues.
8. Focus on the client.

Some issues about counseling to consider:

1. Agreement does not equal empathy. Counselors need to focus on empathy. Family and friends can provide agreement and sympathy.
2. Do not assume change is simple.
3. Make psychological assessments, not moral judgments.
4. Do not assume that you know clients’ feelings, thoughts, and behaviors.
5. Do not assume that you know how clients react to their feelings, thoughts, and behaviors.

Some issues about being a counselor to consider:

Become aware of your personal issues.
   a. How did you decide to become a counselor?
   b. With what emotions are you uncomfortable?
   c. What amount of progress is acceptable?
   d. How will you deal with your clients’ feelings for you?
   e. How will you handle your feelings for your clients?
   f. Can you be flexible, accepting, and gentle?

~ taken from The Elements of Counseling by Scott T. Meier and Susan R. Davis