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## Innovative Techniques of Counseling

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**Innovative**

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**echniques**  
**of**  
**Counseling**

MILTON R. CUDNEY  
Ph.D.

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INNOVATIVE  
TECHNIQUES  
OF  
COUNSELING

by

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## Introduction

In an attempt to help my clients obtain the results they have been after when they sought counseling with me, I have had to do a lot of creating. I have created an all-encompassing philosophy of life, a theory of personality, a theory of counseling, and numerous counseling techniques which implement the theories and philosophy. Without techniques the counselor is like a car mechanic without tools. The mechanic might have knowledge of what to do, but would lack the tools to do it. Techniques are the methods the counselor employs to do the job of counseling.

Even though techniques are very important, they need to be kept in perspective. They become important if they implement life-giving theories and philosophies. Without life-giving theories and philosophies to guide their use, techniques can be seen as ends in and of themselves. The use of techniques in this case can be gimmicky and at best result in little client progress and at worst be harmful to clients.

In this pamphlet I will share techniques I have personally created and have tested for their usefulness. Such techniques as listening, confronting clients, the hot-seat, hypnosis, role-playing, and the like, will not be covered because they are available in the counseling literature. To my knowledge the techniques shared in this publication (with one exception) are not available in counselor education programs nor the counseling literature; thus it gives me great pleasure to be able to share them.

It is my belief that for techniques to be most useful they have to be an integrated part of the user. When integrated, these methods, without much conscious effort, are naturally retrieved in a fitting way in counseling sessions. When techniques are integrated their use will fit situations and their timing is more likely to be correct. Probably the best techniques are those which spontaneously come from somewhere inside the counselor as an answer to a live counseling dilemma. Do not hesitate to listen to and trust these creations of your own. Aside from trusting your own spontaneous creations, it helps to study techniques and practice them in order to develop an inner arsenal of methods which can be creatively employed as needed. To study and practice these present methods should help counselors in that regard. In addition, these methods can serve as seeds planted in the professional's mind which might grow and help to create additional methods.

## Index of Techniques

Technique # 1.	Counselor-Made Drawings	1-10
Technique # 2.	Taking the Flip Side Of The Argument	10-11
Technique # 3.	The Use of Owning Language By The Counselor	11-12
Technique # 4.	Let The Client In On What You Are Trying To Do	12-13
Technique # 5.	Interrupt Clients	13-15
Technique # 6.	Polaroid Technique	15-17
Technique # 7.	Holding A Pretend Gun To The Client's Head	17-18
Technique # 8.	A Technique To Make Replacement Behaviors Not Seem So Strange And Unknown	19
Technique # 9.	Counselor Prepared To Give The Client Examples Of What The Counselor Is Seeking	20-21
Technique #10.	Wastebasket Technique	21-22
Technique #11.	The Use of Office Paraphernalia	23-24
Technique #12.	Try A Behavior On For Size	24-25
Technique #13.	Focus On How Instead Of Why	25
Technique #14.	Seeing A Specific Behavior From A Larger Framework	25-26
Technique #15.	Focus On The Creation Of Behaviors	27

Technique #16.	Non-Judging Technique	27-28
Technique #17.	Use Of Analogies	29-30
Technique #18.	Include Them In The Human Race	30-31
Technique #19.	Emphasis On Catching Oneself	31
Technique #20.	Learning From Mistakes	31
Technique #21.	Advice You Have For Others	31-32
Technique #22.	Humor	32-34
Technique #23.	The Use of Immediacy	34-35



## Technique #1. Counselor-Made Drawings

This first technique illustrates how to use simple counselor-made drawings in the counseling process. These visuals compliment counseling and serve to help clients understand themselves better, open them to growth, and cut down on resistance.

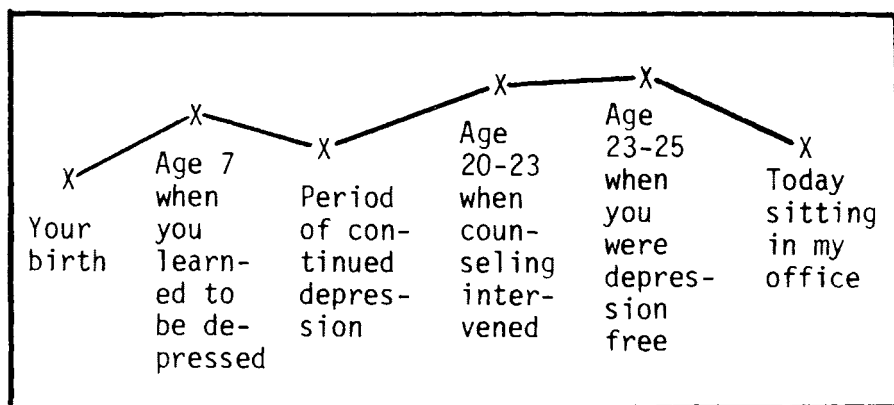
The importance of this technique became apparent to me a few years ago when I was asked to see a woman in crisis.

### Drawing #1. A drawing used with a person in crisis

I was sitting in my university counseling office during the second week of a new school year and the in-take receptionist gave me an appointment with a woman in crisis. By interacting with this client I learned she had been depressed most of her life until three years of counseling had intervened. Since the counseling she had been depression-free for over two years.

I also learned that she was new to our school, having transferred in a week earlier. Since arriving on our campus she had acquired a roommate instead of the single room she requested, was unable to enroll in one of the classes she needed for her curriculum, and there was a slight mix-up in one of her classes. In addition, she was lonely. Her reaction to these incidents led to her crisis.

As I talked with this woman a picture came into my mind. I took a piece of paper and drew the picture (or illustration if you prefer). I have recreated it below.



Once I had this visual out in front of us, I asked her if it was an accurate representation of what she had told me. I was assured by her that it was. As we sat and looked at the drawing, we talked about how she first learned to be depressed, her maintenance of the behavior for so many years, and what she learned in her previous counseling which helped her to drop the behavior. As we counseled she became aware that when she ran into obstacles in her first week at our university, she abandoned what she had learned in her previous counseling which had worked for her, and had retreated back to the things she previously did which caused her to be depressed.

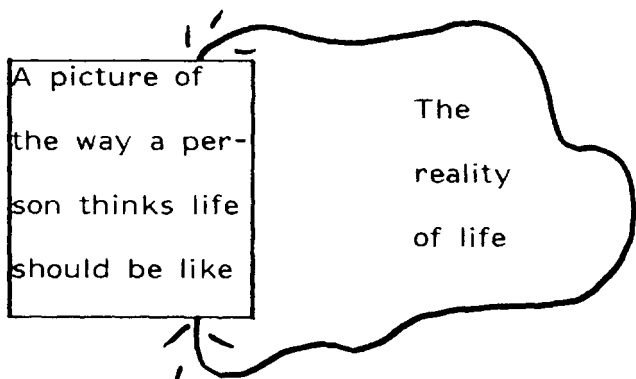
Because this woman had earlier received quality counseling, she was quickly able to know what she needed to do now. She had to quit responding to our university with her old depression behavior and go back to what had been working for her for the past two years. By the time she left my office, in less than an hour's time, she was depression-free and confident she

would be able to cope. A month later she was still depression-free and coping very well.

How did the drawing help? First of all, it helped her to know I understood what she had shared with me. Secondly, it served to help us get a perspective on her life which was useful to her "now" situation. Thirdly, it helped us to objectively look at her situation so we could treat it as a problem to solve. It also pointed us in the direction of where we needed to do this problem solving. In addition, the picture helped her to make some mental connections which led to insights allowing her to solve her present situation. She could see, for instance, the contrast between when she was doing a depression and when she was depression-free and she knew the difference.

## Drawing #2. Imposing Shoulds and Oughts Onto Life

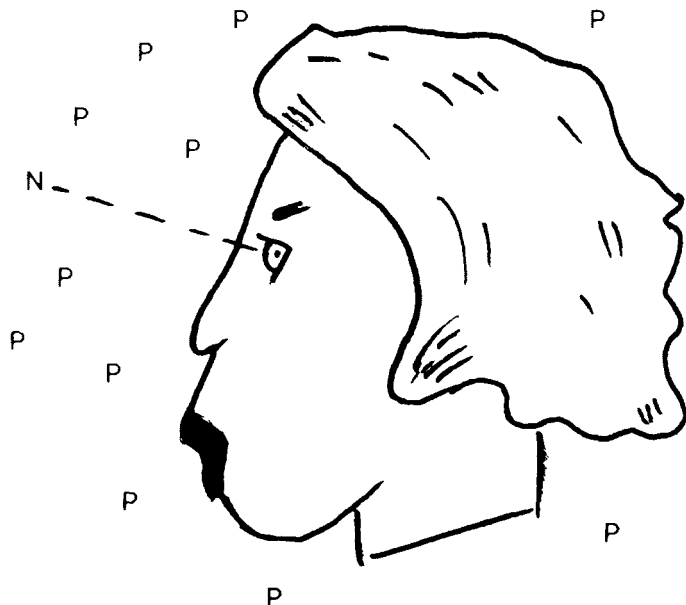
Sometimes a counselor will be interacting with a client and begin to see that a person's difficulty comes from imposing things onto her/himself, others, or the entire world which do not fit. The following drawing could be useful to help someone see what he/she is doing.



This picture opens up a multitude of things to look at. For instance, the client could look at the difference between the reality of life and the impositions. Another aspect which could be discussed is the difficulty which comes out of this imposition: the hurt, the resistance from people, the anger, the friction, and so forth. Not only can the counselor discuss how the person imposes on self and others, but can look for the reason why this is being done and, once in the open, can change this irrational reason.

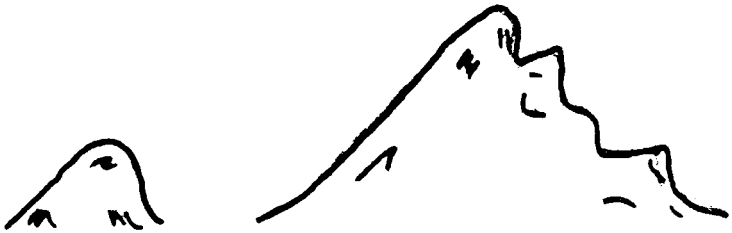
### Drawing #3. Concentrating On The Negative

Sometimes a client focuses on something negative and ignores all the positive things going on in her/his life. This leads to difficulty for the person. A fitting picture which might help the client see what he/she is doing is the following:



Drawing #4. Making a Mountain Out Of A Mole-hill

Another thing people often do to get themselves into trouble is to make something much bigger in their minds than is actually true. The following simple picture can help them to own what they are doing.

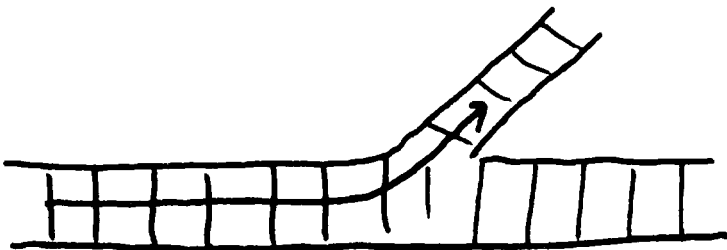


The actual  
size of the  
situation

You have made it seem  
this big

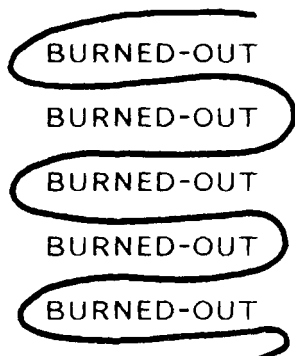
Drawing #5. Getting Off-Track

A student once came to me and expressed the idea that since she had come to our university she had abandoned some of her own values and beliefs and had taken on some behaviors which were hurtful to her. I made the following diagram and we discussed what she had done to get off-track, how she stayed there, and what she needed to do to return to her true self.



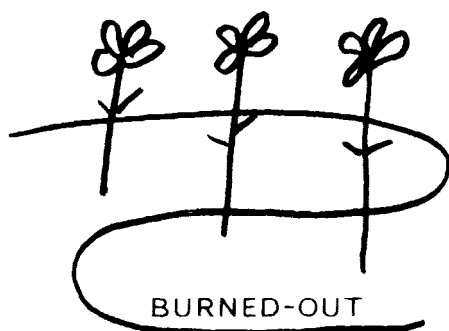
Drawing #6. Life Springs Up From Burned-Out Areas

In the beginning of a counseling session with a new client, he made reference to being burned-out. As he talked about being burned-out he made reference to burn-out being heaped on top of burn-out. As he talked, a picture came to my mind which I thought might help. As you can see, it was a simple drawing.



As a counselor, I was inquisitive as to why he did not learn from the initial burn-out and how he managed to pile burnt-out rubble on top of rubble. As we explored this idea, we found out that when he first felt the burn-out he got discouraged, he followed that with feeling bad, followed by putting himself down, and this led to more burn-out. It became a vicious cycle.

Knowing human nature to be what it is, I knew that out of a sense of burned-outness would come life sprouts. Thus, another picture came to my mind and I drew it for him.

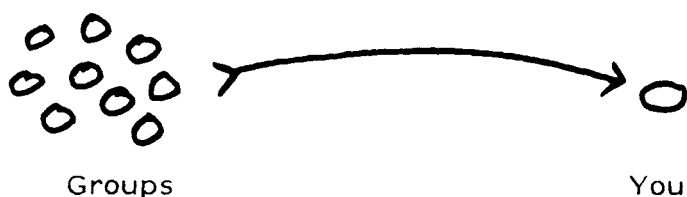


The drawing originally had two flowers coming from the burned-out area. He thought for a few moments and as he looked at the drawing he said, "One flower represents my need to let go of some past learnings which have been getting in my way. I impose too many shoulds and rights and wrongs onto myself." "A second flower" he went on to say, "is my need to develop a clearer goal in life." We counseled for awhile and he said, "There is another flower coming out of the burned-over area. I need some retraining so I can branch out into a new vocational area."

The pictures served as a focal point for counseling for this hour and greatly served to clarify issues and pointed directions for counseling and for him to go.

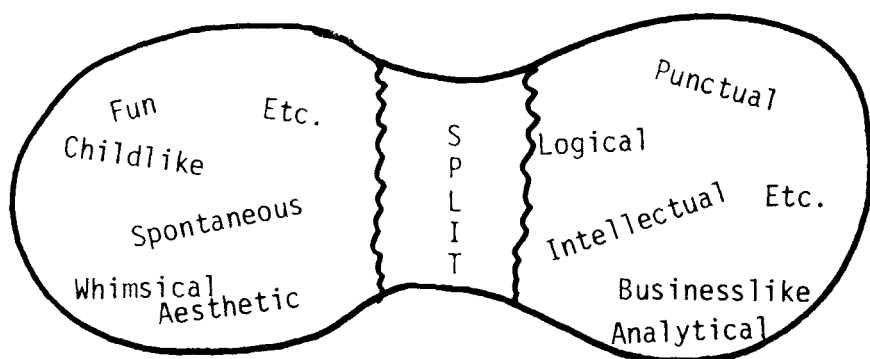
#### Drawing #7. Social Alienation

With a person who is proficient in alienating her/himself from groups, I might use this drawing and follow it up with an interchange about how he/she sets her/himself off from groups, the results of this, and what could be done to change.



Drawing #8. Denying Real Parts of the Self

In our success-oriented culture it's not unusual to counsel people who greatly over-emphasize the logical and analytical parts of themselves, but have no place in their approach to life for the real spontaneous and childlike elements. These people can run into psychological difficulty because of this overemphasis. A picture which can be used to assist a person with this is:



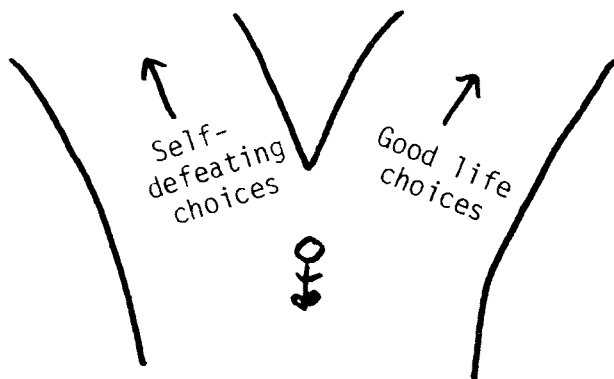
This part of yourself is not okay to you. Thus, you deny it.

This part you judge positive and you trust it.



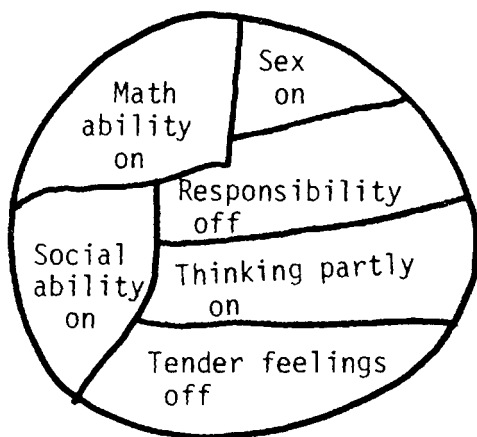
### Drawing #9. A Fork In The Road

In my work, I focus a great deal on client choices. A drawing I use more than any other is the fork in the road. I use the drawing to get helpful and hurtful choices out in the open where they can be more readily discussed.



### Drawing #10. Some Human Parts Turned On and Some Parts Off

As you might begin to realize, literally hundreds of pictures could be used in various counseling situations. The last one I will share comes out of what I think is a typical counseling situation. A counselor will sometimes sit with a client and get the impression that the person has parts of her/himself turned on and other parts turned off. This phenomenon, of some parts on and others off, leads to difficulty. With one such person I used the picture below.



This particular person, by having sexual needs on, but feelings and responsibilities off, was able to do some selfish and hurtful things to others of the opposite sex. Yet, he did not understand why he was so isolated. The picture helped him to understand.

These are but a few of the many pictures which I have used. Use them if they fit for you, but let them trigger your mind to develop pictures of your own which you can use in your work.

#### Technique #2. Taking The Flip Side Of The Argument\*

Sometimes a client will defend a behavior which is very hurtful to her/his life. Counselors, in trying to help a client, will try to convince the client to let go of the behavior. But, in some instances the client holds tightly onto the behavior and defends it even more.

\*This technique is very similar to Victor E. Frankl's "Paradoxical Intent."

To help a client see what he/she is doing, instead of trying to wrench the behavior free from the client, I have facetiously focused on helping the client to keep the behavior.

As an example, let's say a client defends the behavior of alienation of others because he/she believes that keeping distance from people is good to do. I might do the following:

"Okay, I am going to quit trying to get you to give up on this behavior because you are defending it so much and believe it is a good thing to keep. If I am a friend of yours and trying to assist you, I should help you to keep the behavior and help you do a better job of it than you are doing now."

I sometimes give suggestions on how to alienate better, how to learn alienation methods from others, and so on. I have even gone so far as to say, "If this is a good behavior for you, it ought to be good for me and I ought to use it in counseling with you. Let's see how it would work and how you would like it if I did use it. You're an expert on it! How would I use it?"

What I have found as I have used this technique is that people can see the behavior from a different light and quit the defending. They open up to change and we can get on with the counseling process.

### Technique #3. The Use of Owning Language By The Counselor

Clients, like most people in America, sometimes talk in disowning ways. They say such things as, "I have this inferiority complex", "I'm

just an insecure person", "The situation depressed me", "My temper flared up again" and so forth.

I have learned that it helps if as a counselor I talk in owning ways. I don't make any big deal out of it, merely making it a natural part of my thinking and speech.

For instance, as contrasted to clients, I will say these sorts of things. "Okay, so you did this inferiority, I'd be interested to learn how you did it." "When she made that derogatory remark, you reacted with a depression. How'd you manage to pull it off?" "How often do you do this insecurity behavior?" As you did that depression, how'd it affect others?"

I find that my talking in owning ways facilitates clients' thinking more in owning ways themselves.

#### Technique #4.      Let The Client In On What You Are Trying To Do

Letting clients in on what the counselor is doing and why it is being done reduces resistance and opens the door for movement. Here are typical examples of ways to do it.

"What I am trying to figure out here is how much of the difficulty is coming from your teacher and how much is coming from you. So, let me ask you . . ."

"The reason I am focusing on what you did in the situation and not so much on what he did is because you can do something about your contribution. That's where we can make progress."

"I want to ask you about what happened to you as a child as a way of seeing some of the behaviors you developed which are probably still being used by you today."

"I'm pushing you on this because I think you know more than you are revealing to yourself and to me."

"Let's see if we can identify other places you might be doing the same thing. By seeing a behavior in other contexts, it often becomes clearer why you do it and/or how you do it."

"I want to let you know how that affects me because I am wondering if that isn't the way a lot of people react to your attitude. If so, you can learn something valuable here."

#### Technique #5. Interrupt Clients

It is common for clients to be discussing something important and for one reason or another veer off from the subject or away from the feeling. Counselors often sense it would be better if the client stayed with the subject or feelings. I suggest cutting in on her/his conversation, as a good technique. Examples are:

Client: "I was in this restaurant and was treated very badly."

Counselor: "What did you do? How'd you react or over-react to the situation?"

Client: "I didn't react well as I could have. It was similar to what I did in school which we talked about last time. But you should have seen some of the reactions of other people."

In fact . . ."

Counselor: "Just a second on that. You started to talk about your reaction and didn't finish up on that. You started to say . . .?"

---

Client: "I have been having a difficult time taking tests. In fact, I have had trouble with tests all my life."

Counselor: "I wonder if it might not be wise to take a look at what you do which makes test taking so difficult."

Client: "What do you mean?"

Counselor: "If you have trouble taking tests it is likely that you are doing some things which are getting in the way. For instance, I wonder if you might not compare yourself to other students as a way of putting pressure on yourself in a testing situation. Or maybe you get the test, grab a most difficult test question, and then panic by thinking that the entire test will be that difficult."

Client: "Yes, I do both of those things, plus I put myself under pressure by watching the clock."

Counselor: "How do you do that? What are the specifics you do? If we can see exactly how you do it, we can make plans for you to catch yourself at it."

Client: "Well, first I notice the clock and I observe that other students are already busy doing the test, and then I . . . you know though,

I'm not the only one who does this. The other day I was talking with . . ."

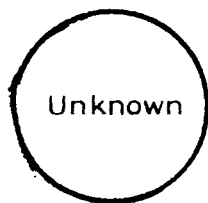
Counselor: "Wait a minute. We could get off onto this other person, but I'm more interested in what you do to put time pressure on yourself. You were saying other students are already doing the test and . . ."

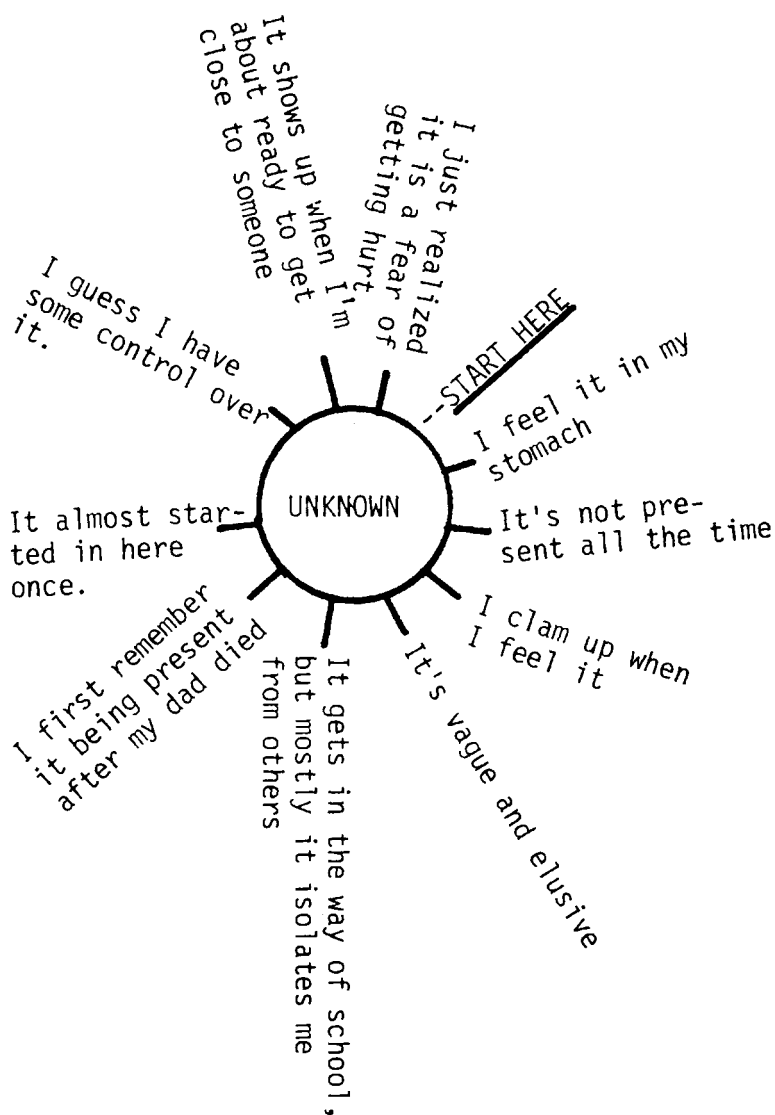
#### Technique #6. Polaroid Technique

The situation in which I use this technique is when I have a client who has a vague sense of something wrong inside, a vague sense of fear or is uncertain about naming a behavior which is getting her/him into trouble. This unknown (feeling, behavior, attitude, etc.) is usually felt deep inside, but seems unavailable to the conscious mind. Without obtaining some clarity on this 'unknown', little progress can be made.

What I do is take a piece of 8½ by 11 paper and put a circle in the middle with a question mark in the center of the circle. With the client's help, we attach anything to this circle which somehow seems connected to this unknown. Both the counselor and client can make contributions but the client has to validate the counselor's suggestions.

On the following page is a finished example. It starts out like the one below, however.







In using this technique, the unknown does not always click into full focus in the counseling session, but a person can take the paper home, add other thoughts to it, or put thinking effort into it. It is not unusual for this unknown to pop into focus when the person is relaxed or about to go to sleep. Sometimes it becomes clear in dreams.

#### Technique #7. Holding A Pretend Gun To A Client's Head

Over the years, I have had clients who have insisted there were no choices involved when they did certain behaviors. Try as I might, I could not get them to see there was a choice to do or not to do a behavior. One day I thought of the gun to the head technique (or knife to the throat). Here is how I have used it:

I explain to the client the situation. It would go something like this:

Counselor: "Okay, you really believe there is no choice available when you lose your temper. Right?"

Client: "Right."

Counselor: "To help you see that there is a choice option available, but which you are not seeing, would you cooperate with me on something? It won't hurt or anything like that, but it can help."

Client: "I'll try. What do you want me to do?"

Counselor: "I'm going to pretend I have a

45 mm pistol touching your skull (I touch their skull with my pointing finger), and I'm going to ask you to visualize you are in a situation in which you normally respond with a temper. It is important you get the mindset that if you use the temper, I will blow your brains out. You need to really feel that here. But be aware that you want to live, badly. You know, however, that if you lose your temper, I'll pull the trigger and splatter your brains all over the place. Do you have yourself in the situation and in the mindset I am asking you to be in?"

Client: "Yes, I'm in the situation and can sense that you will shoot if I do the temper."

Counselor: "Do you see that you might have second thoughts and at least not use the temper some of the time?"

Almost all of the clients I have used this with have said they could see they would make another choice. I follow this up with a conversation about choices being available, but they are not seeing them nor taking advantage of them.

One time I was counseling a small, fiesty guy who got in lots of fights. He fought little guys, medium guys, and big guys. His fighting seemed out of control to him. One day in talking with him, I set it up that he was in a bar and he was about to fight, but he suddenly realized that the other person was an NFL, 280 pound, mean, tough, lineman who would literally wipe him out if he went ahead with the temper. In a moment of honesty, he said he would be smarter than to go ahead and get killed. He realized there was a choice.

#### Technique #8. A Technique To Make Replacement Behaviors Not Seem So Strange And Unknown

Many clients refuse to drop a behavior which is detrimental to them because they feel it would put them into an unknown which is perceived by them as precarious, dangerous, and unpredictable. I have found, however, that for most people the replacement behavior they need to use is not something totally unfamiliar to them.

Thus, a technique I use is to ask people to look for a time (if only once) in which they normally would have used the hurtful behavior but they didn't. When the situation is cited, which most people can do if given a little help, I help the client understand what replacement behavior was used at that moment. Once this behavior is out in the open, the person relaxes, realizing that he/she is familiar with a replacement behavior, having used it at least once.

A second thing I have found is that some people can remember back to a time when they did not use the behavior which is now getting them into trouble. Helping them to remember what behaviors they used at a previous time gives them direction on what replacements they can now use.

A third thing I have found helpful to loosen people up to the point where they will try out replacement behaviors is to have them notice other people using the behavior(s) which the client should use as replacement. By watching what others do, the client realizes that her/his fears of replacement are unfounded. These others survive and, in fact, get along very well.

### Technique #9. Counselor Prepared To Give The Client Examples Of What The Counselor Is Seeking

Clients have much useful data inside themselves which, if tapped, will greatly contribute to successful counseling. A technique I have learned to use to tap this information is to give clients examples of what I'm after as a means of triggering their thoughts on the issue. For instance, I may have a client in my office who is good at doing depressions, and I might ask the question, "How did you manage to do a depression at that party when you and everyone else were having such a good time?"

In my experience, clients most often answer with, "I don't know."

I will come back with something like, "Let me give you some examples of what you might have done just to trigger your thoughts on the subject. For instance, did an incident occur such as your boyfriend paying attention to another woman and you grabbed that and started a depression? Or did you take something personally that someone said and fix on it? Or . . ."

Sometimes my examples are things the client has done and he/she will admit that. I will ask her/him to explain further how he/she did what I cited. Oft-times the examples are not ones the client used, but they do elicit knowledge of what they did. A client might say something like, "I didn't do either of those, but what became evident to me was something I did. I had on an old dress. I guess you know I have been struggling to make it through school, and at this party there were a lot of rich kids with all kinds of money. Well, I compared myself to them, began

to feel my old "sorry-for-myself" feelings, and I was on my way to the depression."

If, as a counselor, you ask questions such as, "What fears do you use?" "How did you make the results of that seem unimportant?" "How have you kept dragging the past with you?" it helps if you have examples of each of these in order to get the client looking in the right area inside of her/himself. Once the client is in the correct psychic ballpark, chances of finding the correct data are greatly enhanced.

#### Technique #10.      Wastebasket Technique

Let me explain my counseling room arrangement as a way of explaining this technique. My desk faces a wall and between my desk and the client's chair is a wastebasket. One day a client



My  
desk



Waste  
basket



Client's  
chair

was telling me that someone said something nasty about him and it hurt him very much. I tried to help the client see that things from the outside can hurt, but sometimes we humans have control over what we let in and what we let bounce off from us. He didn't seem to understand.

In an attempt to help him, I grabbed a piece of paper and wrote on it what the other person had said.

You are  
no good.

You are  
stupid.

Then, I emphatically thrust the paper towards him and said, "Take it!" He grabbed the paper and I said, "Now that is exactly what you did with this other person. You grabbed what he sent your way. Now that you have the negative feedback, what will you do with it to hurt yourself? What did you do the other day?"

We talked for a bit, and I took the paper back. As I thrust the same paper at him a second time I said, "This time don't take it."

I jabbed the paper at him four or five times, and I even added a few curse words on the paper because he wouldn't take it. On one of the thrusts, when he would not grab the paper, I let it drop and it went dead center into the wastebasket. I had not planned for it to drop into the wastebasket, but nothing planned could have worked more perfectly. Simultaneously, we both looked into the wastebasket and he said, "I can see what happens to stuff people give you if you don't take it on."

I have used this technique since, with equal success, only I am a bit more deliberate about it than originally. I make sure the wastebasket catches the paper.

Technique #11.      The Use Of Office Paraphernalia

As I counsel, I sometimes see it advantageous to use some prop to facilitate counseling. Inasmuch as the only thing available are things in my office, I sometimes utilize office furniture, books, paper, etc., to assist me. For example:

One person talked about using a positive behavior but not turning it on as much as possible. I reached for my three-way lamp switch and said, "Do you mean that you only turn it on this much?" I turned the lamp on low. Then I switched it to medium and then high and said, "But, you could have the behavior on this high?" A profitable discussion followed.

Clients often refer to shields or barriers they put between themselves and others. To have a representation of the shield or barrier, I will sometimes grab a book, Kleenex box, or some such thing, use it as a shield, and talk with the person about how it is utilized.

People frequently reject praise or pick out negative things to maintain negative views of themselves. I have often grabbed something to represent praise, pushed it at the person, and had them try to explain how they reject praise.

With one person, who described her self-defeating behavior as a burden, I asked her to put an office chair on her back to 'feel' the burden; then to set it down to 'feel' what it was like to be burden-free. By 'feeling' the difference, the person was more motivated to drop the behaviors.

In a session I was having with a man, it

became clear he was giving up on life. He was discouraged, tired, and saw little ahead which was positive. In my mind, I saw the giving up as a choice and took a coin out of my pocket and said, "Let this side of the coin represent your choice of giving up."

He responded, "Okay."

I came back with, "If that side represents giving up, what is available on the other side?"

This interchange opened our minds to an alternative choice and counseling followed that line of thought.

If the counselor is alert, there are times office paraphernalia can be utilized advantageously to enhance counseling.

#### Technique #12.      Try A Behavior On For Size

Sometimes I will have a client who does not admit to her/himself that a particular behavior is being used. Resistance at looking further is evident. A technique I have successfully used, at selected times, is to say to someone, "Okay, let's not say you do this for sure. Let's leave it more open than that. Let's look at it as a possibility you might be doing. After we look at it, you can make the judgement of whether you really do or don't use this behavior."

Then I ask the question, "If you did do this behavior, what would you be doing?"

After the client lays out what he/she would do if they did the behavior, I ask them to make a judgement about it. Is it true he/she does the



behavior or not?

This technique allows a client to look at something without feeling trapped or stuck with owning the behavior ahead of time.

Technique #13.      Focus On How Instead Of  
                         Why

I believe there is a legitimate time to look for why a client does something, but most of the time when counselors ask, "Why did you do that?" it is a mistake. People, for the most part, don't know why and feel as if they have to come up with an explanation. Or they will say, "I don't know. That's why I came in here to see you." Asking why seldom gets anywhere and, in fact, serves to throw counselor and client off-track.

A better question to ask is how. By focusing on how a client does something, progress can be made because if the client sees how he/she did something it lays out direction for changing. Looking for how also leads clients to own their behaviors, one big step in getting them to make progress.

Technique #14.      Seeing A Specific Behavior  
                         From A Larger Framework

People sometimes have difficulty owning their behaviors. They see a particular situation or another person as the cause of the behavior. For instance, a person might lose her/his temper too often with the boss and blame the boss for their losing their temper. A technique which can work is to say to the person, "As a way of help-

ing us to see this better, let's find out if this temper behavior crops up in other avenues of your life. For instance, do you see it on the golf course, when someone makes a nasty remark to you, at church, when you are intimate with someone, etc.?"

What I have found is that these sorts of behaviors are used in various situations, and as the person sees this, he/she can begin to see that it isn't the specific situation, but her/his reaction to many situations which is the problem.

A divorced man was having problems with his former wife over visitations with his children. He complained to the Friend of the Court that his ex-wife was unfair. But his former wife, in a conversation with the Friend of the Court, reported that she wanted him to have visitations with the children, but he would drop over unexpectedly and wonder why the kids weren't ready or couldn't go, would make plans and then not follow through on them, and scared the children by carrying a revolver. When confronted with these, the man couldn't see his side in all of this. He blamed his ex-wife. The Friend of the Court asked him to look at his behaviors outside of this domestic situation. Did some of these behaviors (not following through on plans, being unreasonable about dropping over and expecting things always to go his way, scaring people) crop up in other situations such as with his own brothers and sisters, at work, at church, and so on? He could see they did and it opened up his ability to own his behaviors.

Technique #15.      Focus On The Creation Of Behaviors

Many counselors focus on helping clients deal with the outcome of behaviors, i.e., stress, loneliness, anger, hurt, boredom, passivity, depression, and the like. But I have realized that it is better to focus on how someone creates a hurtful behavior in a new moment (which leads to stress, loneliness, anger, etc.) rather than cope with the results. If people do not continue to create hurtful behaviors, the results disappear and they do not have to be dealt with.

This single technique, more than anything else, will lead to counselor potency. At first it may not seem like such an important thing, but mull it over in your mind. Try it out and see if you don't come to the same conclusion as I have on this point.

Technique #16.      A Non-Judging Technique

I have watched myself and other counselors make a judgement about a person or jump to a conclusion about something and see it contribute to client closure. I have learned that instead of jumping to conclusions (even when you really believe you are right) and imposing beliefs and/or confrontations onto clients, it is better to offer observations, beliefs, and confrontations to people and let them decide if they are valid for them or not. Here are examples of how not to do it followed by suggestions of how to do the same thing in an open way.

Closure Example #1: Counselor says, "I see what you did. You projected onto your boss some things which weren't true."

Openness Example #1: "You know what it looks like to me. It looks like you projected on-to your boss some things which weren't true. What do you think? Did you?"

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Closure Example #2: Counselor says, "You are lying about it."

Openness Example #2: "Are you sure you're not lying to yourself about that? It sure looked and felt like that to me. What do you think?"

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Closure Example #3: Counselor observes, "You're not working to succeed, you're working to fail."

Openness Example #3: "From the data we have collected, it seems clear to me you believe you are working hard to succeed, but it looks like you are doing the opposite. Can you see it the same way I see it? How do you interpret these data?"

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Closure Example #4: Counselor says, "There you go defending yourself again."

Openness Example #4: "Did you just get defensive? Is that what I saw and felt?"

## Technique #17.

## Use of Analogies

Analogies can be helpful in aiding clients to see themselves and what they are doing. Below are some I use.

Analogy #1: It is like you are running a race but you are carrying a 100 pound backpack at the same time. And you aren't running a bad race. But, you could run an even better race and a lot easier without carrying all these behaviors with you.

Analogy #2: What you are doing reminds me of an analogy. It is like pushing a freight train up hill, giving it a big push over, and once it starts gaining momentum you stand in the middle of the track and say stop. It's too hard that way. Come, I will show you a better way.

Analogy #3: Self-defeating behaviors are like a spider web inside. Individual defeating behaviors are like the strands in the web and when you move one strand the whole web shakes. Thus, dropping one SDB does jeopardize the whole web.

Analogy #4: Your behavior is similar to an industrial assembly line. On an assembly line there are various stations performing certain functions which result in a definite product. In the continual creation of your behavior there are definite things you do to bring about your behavioral product. Let's look at what they are.

Analogy #5: Human potential is similar to vegetable seeds. The potential is inherent in the seed, but it needs to be nurtured for it to be fully realized.

Analogy #6: Part of your problem is, I believe, that you let anything come into your system from the outside. People put screens on windows and doors to keep the bugs out. You need to develop some psychic screens to achieve the same purpose.

Technique #18.      Include Them In The Human Race

As people begin to explore themselves in counseling, they sometimes feel strangely different and because of this feeling won't push on. People don't want to feel too different or find out they are weird. Helping them to realize they are very much a part of the human race helps them to relax and move ahead in counseling. Here are examples of what I might say:

"I see what you mean. But, you know, we humans often react that way in those sorts of situations."

"Don't be too hard on yourself. We humans aren't perfect you know. We make mistakes. But let's see if we can learn from your mistakes here."

"I know you think there is something terrible about your reaction. But, you know, that is fairly typical of a lot of us humans. The thing to do is to get a little smarter so you don't keep reacting that way."

"I agree with your feeling that what you did is very antisocial. But, given the same circumstances, a lot of people would react the same way. Let's you and I work to change things so you don't keep putting yourself in these kinds

of situations which almost demand antisocial responses.

Technique #19.      Emphasis On Catching One-self

In my counseling, I try to help clients see and learn what they do to get themselves into trouble and what they do which leads to success and happiness. Thus, I emphasize that between sessions they consciously try and catch themselves doing both things. If they catch themselves using life behaviors, they become smarter at doing them. If they catch themselves using defeating behaviors, they can replace them with something better.

Technique #20.      Learning From Mistakes

When my clients come back for another counseling session, I most often discuss their attempts at application of what was learned in the previous session. I emphasize that success at application is great and we try to learn from that, but we humans aren't always successful when we try something. I try to pick up on mistakes clients make and learn from them. This takes the pressure off from them about trying to be perfect, and it gives them the opportunity to learn from both their successes and failures.

Technique #21.      Advice You Have For Others

I find clients often have lots of good data or advice inside themselves which they are not utilizing. This is especially true of professional people. Knowing this, I ask, "What advice would

you give to someone else who is in this same situation?" Or, "If someone came to you with this problem, what advice would you be giving them?"

This technique can facilitate people's using knowledge they already possess to cope with situations facing them.

## Technique #22. Humor

Of all the techniques I have listed, perhaps none require better timing and sensitivity of use than humor. But, if coupled with kindness and a felt desire to be helpful, it can serve a useful counseling function.

A colleague of mine was counseling a woman who talked of her parents only in glowing terms, yet he felt that to help his client he had to get her to see her parents in a more realistic way. After listening to this client protest too much regarding how great her parents were, he interrupted her and said, "I have just figured out what your parents' names are."

She asked him what and he answered, "Mary and Joseph."

This use of humor did not cause her to become defensive about what he was trying to say to her, and she could see what she was doing.

Sometimes I have used humor to assist people to see something from another perspective. Thus, I would say, "I know the situation wasn't funny to you, but if you were to see it from a humorous angle, what would it look like?"



Moving to another subject in regards to humor, I don't know if you have noticed it or not, but people who do depressions never see humor in a situation. In counseling, these people can be helped to see the humor in a situation in which they did a depression and encouraged to take advantage of the humor next time to prevent the depression.

A man came to see me a few years back who had made an awful scene with his girlfriend's parents. He had gone over to their house like a knight in shining armor, to rescue her from these tyrants. As he described his rantings and ravings, I visualized him in this scene and it struck me funny. I burst out laughing in the middle of our serious conversation. He looked at me in a hostile manner and said, "What's so funny?"

I responded, "I'm sorry to laugh inappropriately, but I pictured this grown man (which was you) going over to their house, doing some of the things you described. I know it was serious, but you can look at it from other angles too, and it just struck me funny."

He then proceeded to make observations similar to mine, and he could see how ridiculous he was in this situation. When we finished laughing, he said, "You know, I can see what I need to do. I made an ass of myself over there and I have to go correct it."

As he left my office, I was thankful for the humor because it had opened him up to the truth of his own behavior which moments earlier he had been closed to.

One day I was working very hard in counseling and my client began to snicker. I asked, "What's so funny?"

She said, "All of the sudden I realized you were working harder than I was and it seemed funny."

We discussed this situation and laughed at it. The humor helped us both to assume more realistic roles in our counseling relationship.

If properly used, humor can facilitate understanding, serve to open people, put things into perspective, and contribute to client movement. An important aspect is that each counselor use humor in a way which fits her/his own personality and style. Humor (as well as the other techniques mentioned in this pamphlet) is something which can be developed. Thus, if you don't use humor, you can start on a project of development in this regard and find yourself adept at it in a few years.

#### Technique #23.      The Use Of Immediacy

Using the live interactions of the client with the counselor can be a great aid in helping clients see how they approach life, their behaviors, areas of difficulty, and areas of progress. Focusing on the immediate behavior in the counseling session can serve as a microscope to illuminate things which can be applied to the world outside the counseling office. Let me share an example with you.

Counselor: "I have noticed in here, live with me, that you get awfully stubborn. It's as if you make up your mind about something, lock

yourself in, and nothing can get you to budge. When in that position even the truth doesn't affect you. Is that true?"

Client: "I have been told that I do that."

Counselor: "Do you do it in here? Can you see that you have?"

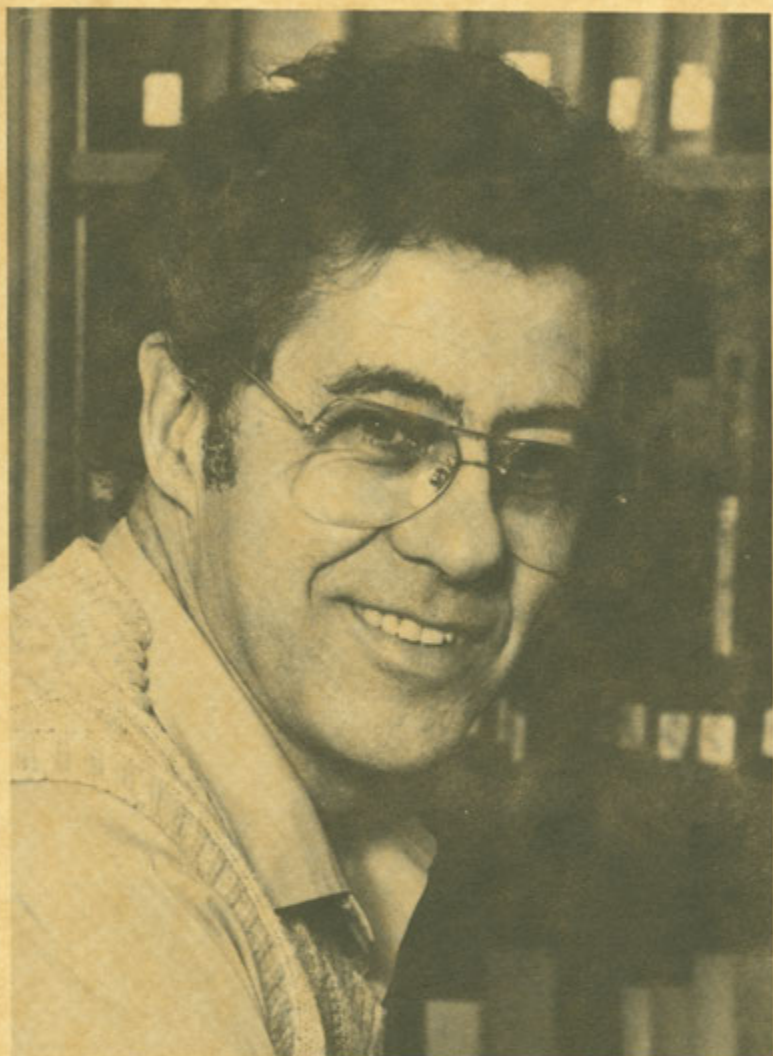
Client: "Yes, I have seen and felt it a few times."

Counselor: "Let's first take a look at what that behavior does to our counseling and then let's look outside of this room to see how it affects your life out there. Okay?"

Client: "Okay."

Counselor: "First let me share the effect it has on me and then . . ."

Clients manifest many behaviors in the counseling office which they use on the outside. Focusing on them provides a great deal of data which is right before the client's eyes. It is like a live data bank and to miss the opportunity to use it, is to miss an opportunity to move counseling ahead.



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