

GATHER INFORMATION

1. Biblical Texts:
 - a. Proverbs 18:13 – “He who gives an answer before he hears, it is folly and shame to him.”
 - b. James 1:19a – “Be quick to hear, slow to speak...”
 - c. 1Thessalonians 5:14 – “We urge you, brethren, admonish the unruly, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with everyone.”
2. What kind of information?
 - a. **P** – Physical – sleep patterns, medications, diet, activity level, exercise, illnesses
 - b. **R** – Resources & Relationships – job, school, social, spiritual
 - c. **E** – Emotions – feelings, strong emotions
 - d. **A** – Actions – behavior, omission, commission
 - e. **C** – Conceptual – thinking, goals, values, desires, motives
 - f. **H** – Historical – background, past context, present context, failures, events, etc.
3. How to gather information
 - a. Formal ways:
 1. Personal Data Inventory (PDI)
 2. Basic Information Sheet
 3. Homework Assignments
 - b. Asking proper questions
 1. Extensive and Intensive
 2. Relevant questions
 3. Fact-producing questions
 4. Open-ended vs. closed questions
 5. Specific

4. How to gather information

c. Observe “halo” data (non-verbal)

i. Examples:

- Tone
- Demeanor
- Body language
- Facial expression

ii. Be careful!

5. How to gather information

a. Others:

1. Information from others
2. Observation from outside session
3. Listen to how they pray
4. Record home conversations
5. Written correspondence

b. Good listening is essential (Prov. 18:13, 17, 20:25, James 1:19)

c. Practice good listening skills:

1. Concentrate on and carefully consider what the other person is saying (don't let your mind wander)
2. Don't interrupt
3. Don't formulate what you are going to say while the other person is talking (Prov. 18:13, 15)
4. Don't do distracting things
5. Don't talk too much, but allow breaks in the conversation so that another person can have time to process what was said, formulate a response, and have a chance to speak
6. Repeat back in your own words what you think you heard. Ask clarifying questions if you are unsure what was said
7. Don't talk over someone in order to be heard. If you and another begin to speak at the same time, let the other person go first.

- d. Withhold judgment – Don't jump to conclusions, assign motives, etc.
- e. Listen for the right things:
 - 1. Blame shifting
 - 2. Phrases like "I can't," "unable," "too much"
 - 3. Victim mentality
 - 4. Calling sin an "illness"
 - 5. Rabbit trails
 - 6. What they don't say
 - 7. Hopelessness
 - 8. Evasiveness or defensiveness
 - 9. Exaggerations
 - 10. Judging another's motives
 - 11. Willingness to accept responsibility
 - 12. Emotional words
 - 13. Interpretive words
 - 14. Self talk
 - 15. God talk

DISCERN THE PROBLEM

- 6. Prayerfully compare data with the standard of God's Word
 - a. Behavior and responses
 - b. Thoughts, attitudes, interpretations
 - c. Desires, values, expectations, motivations
- 7. Look for themes and patterns
 - a. View of God?
 - b. View of themselves?
 - c. View of circumstances, suffering, and trials?
 - d. Who or what are they living for / seeking to please?
 - e. What seems to be their consistent motivation?
- 8. Label and describe the problem using biblical terminology and concepts

- a. Use biblical labels (Gal. 5:19-21, Mark 7:21-22, Eph. 5:3-5, Col. 3:4-11, 1 Cor. 6:9-11)
 - b. Avoid psychological labels and terms (1 Cor. 2:12-13)
9. What kind of person is he or she?
 - a. Believer or unbeliever? (1 Cor. 2:14-15)
 - b. Unruly, faint-hearted, or weak? (1 Thes. 5:14)
 - c. Mature or immature (Heb. 5:12-14)
 - d. Fool or wise man? (Proverbs)
10. Put the data on the witness stand
 - a. What does the person understand about biblical change?
 - b. Are there any complicating factors?
 - c. What is the reason the counselee has come for help?
 - d. What is the reason that the counselee has not solved his problem?
 - e. Are there any medical/organic problems?
11. Prayerfully diagnose heart issues
 - a. What are potential idols?
 - b. What are potential ruling desires (lusts)?
 - c. Remember, the Holy Spirit accomplishes this through the Word of God (Heb. 4:12)
 - d. Ask X-ray questions. Draw out the issues of the heart (Prov. 20:5)
 - e. Rather than make dogmatic assertions, ask questions to help the counselee discover his own heart issues
12. Test the validity of your conclusions
 - a. Review data
 - b. Pray more!
 - c. Seek more information
 - d. Seek input from another counselor
 - e. Explain your understand to the counselee and solicit feedback
13. Having come to a conclusion about the problem, begin to formulate a strategy to help the person

BUILD RELATIONSHIP

1. Relationship is the context of ministry
 - a. Ministry is person-oriented, not problem-oriented
 - b. Counseling is not about a “professional” who keeps himself at a distance from the “patient”
 - c. Biblical Examples:
 - i. Acts 20:31
 - ii. 2 Cor. 11:29
 - iii. Gal. 4:19, 6:1
 - iv. Phil. 2:19-21
 - v. 1 Thes. 2:1-11
2. Counsel is best received from a friend (Prov. 27:6, 9)
3. How to build a relationship:
 - a. Be available (Acts 20:31)
 - b. Develop genuine love and compassion (Matt. 9:35-38, Rom. 9:1-3, John 11:33-35)
 - c. Take people’s concerns seriously. Don’t minimize the problem, but maximize Christ’s sufficiency (Col. 3:11)
 - d. Be persuasive, but not manipulative (2 Cor. 1:24)
 - e. Express confidence in the person’s ability to change and obey the Scripture, by God’s grace (Phil. 1:6)
 - f. Receive the person’s disagreements without being defensive (Rom. 12:10, 1 Pet. 2:17)
 - g. Be confidential, according to biblical limits (Matt. 18:15-17, Rom. 13:1ff, etc.)
 - h. Be honest and sincere (Eph. 4:15)
 - i. Model the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23)
 - j. Communicate clearly (Eph. 4:25, 29)
 - k. Pray with and for the person (Gal. 6:2, 1 Thes. 5:17)
 - l. Be respectful and gracious (1 Pet. 2:17, Col. 4:6)

GIVE HOPE

1. People need hope
 - a. People in general (2 Cor. 4:8, 1 Pet. 1:3-7)
 - b. Specific people:
 - i. People who have had problems for a long time
 - ii. People with serious and difficult problems
 - iii. People with life-shattering experiences
 - iv. People who have failed
 - v. People who are spiritually weak
 - vi. People with marriage difficulties
 - vii. People who are depressed
 - viii. People who are suicidal
2. True hope vs. Empty hope
 - a. Empty hope is based on:
 - i. Wrong goals
 - ii. Denial of reality
 - iii. Mystical or wrong thinking
 - iv. Bad theology
 - b. True hope
 - i. Is the result of salvation (1 Pet. 1:3, Col. 1:4-5, 25-27, 1 Tim. 1:1)
 - ii. Is based upon Scripture (Ps. 119:49, 130:5)
 - iii. Is realistic (Rom. 8:28)
 - iv. Is a choice (1 Pet. 1:13)
 - v. Is based on what we know (Rom. 5:2-23, James 1:2-3)
3. How to inspire hope
 - a. Help the person grow in their relationship with Christ
 - b. Teach the person to think biblically:
 - i. About the situation

- ii. About God's character
 - iii. About the possibility for good
 - iv. About their divine resources in Christ
 - v. About the nature and cause of the problem
 - vi. About their language
- c. Be solution-oriented
 - d. Be an example to them

HOME WORK

- 4. Read chapters 10, 12, 13
- 5. Memorize Romans 12:1-2
- 6. Catch up with reading (if applicable)
- 7. If you have not already done so, identify and purchase your second book
- 8. Begin to apply what you're learning to yourself