

¹Triage Training Introduction

In battlefield, medicine the principle of triage involves dividing patients into three groups:

1. Those who will die anyway whether they receive medical attention or not,
2. Those who will survive anyway whether they receive medical attention or not, and
3. Those who will survive only if they receive timely medical attention.

Despite its morbid nature, triage is extremely important if you want to maximize the number of lives, you save. If you don't do it, the results will be far worse than if you do.

Triage is also a key principle of time management. In this case, you'd divide your counseling into ²**three groups**:

³**1. *Counselees that are chronic... have a track record/history of their dysfunction.***

⁴**2. *Counselees that are in crisis... but in control. They are not traumatic.***

⁵**3. *Counselees that are in crisis... and are traumatic... out of control.***

⁶**Group 1** includes counselees that may be:

- Urgent or non-urgent,
- They have demonstrated their lack of desire or ability to effect change.
- This group is best worked by professionals along with support groups.
- Chronic behaviors can demand 80% of your time with less than 10% effectiveness [**high maintenance**]

⁷**Group 2** includes counselees that are:

- **In crisis... but are in control.**

- **They can be seen during normal office hours.**
- **A simply “boundary” and “homework” will usually give them the necessary temporary focus.**
- **Reschedule appointment within 72hrs.**
- “Homework” is usually an article from the bibliography that will prepare them for a more focused inquiry at the next session [**low maintenance**].

⁸Group 3 includes counselees that are in ***crisis... are traumatic... out of control***. This group frequently requires a “group” effort especially when hysteria or another form of detachment is evident. ***Out of control*** may also be accomplished through medication... both legal and illegal (drugs & alcohol)

- **Is there physical danger to the counselee or from the counselee?** Remember that the law requires you to report any such danger (suicide, threatening harm to another, etc.)
- **Is there abuse? Physical / emotional / mental**
 - If there is physical abuse, can you provide a “safe haven” without endangering others?
 - Where physical abuse of children is found, again, you are required by law to report the abuse to the CPS (Child Protective Services).
- **Grief – remember the five stages of grief: *denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance*.**
[**Intervention**]

⁹Emotional Triage is somewhat different from medical or physical triage. Physical triage does not allow time to “connect” with the patient. The doctor or nurses have only minutes to make a diagnosis and prognosis. Emotional triage is different in that most of our symptoms come from the “story” of the patient themselves.

If the person is in traumatic shock, you might have to rely on others to tell the “story” to gain insight as to the

issues. So the first step is the Connection & Listening phase:

1. **¹⁰Connection Period** – This is the “acquaintance” period where you get to know them.
 - a. **¹¹Empathetic Listening** - Remember, “They have to know how much you care, before they care how much you know.”
 - i. Let them tell their story
 - ii. Keep eye contact
 - iii. Ask questions of interest & clarification
 - b. **¹²Triage** – “stop the bleeding”
 - i. **¹³Danger Zones** – physical danger like abuse; emotional trauma’s; grief, self-injury, etc.
 - ii. **¹⁴Need to Stabilize** –
 1. **¹⁵Deal with immediate crisis situations**
 2. **Give at least one step of practical activation/implementation.** The purpose of this step is two-fold: to give immediate “stop-gap” solutions; and to divert the internal emotional energy to external actions.
 3. **Set next appointment within 24-72 hrs.**

¹⁶Triage Questions & Notes

- After cordialities, the introductory question of, **¹⁷“Why have you come?”** is in order. During this time, you may make notes always **listening for cues** to systems of destructive behavior. Be sure your **body language** is “attentive” and “encouraging.” Listening and empathizing are essential skills when relating to others.

Most of us spend 70% of the day communicating, 45% of that time listening. We all want to be listened to (but spouses talk only 10-20 minutes per day). It is insulting to be ignored or neglected. We all know what it means to listen, to really listen. It is more than hearing the words; it is truly understanding and accepting the other person's message and his/her situation and feelings. **Empathy means understanding another person so well that you identify with him/her, you feel like he/she does.** The Indians expressed it as: "Walking a mile in another person's moccasins." It is listening so intently and identifying so closely that you experience the other person's situation, thoughts and emotions. Good counselors do this, so do good friends (Berger, 1987).

- ***18 Listen for "feeling" words.*** *Most people do not have a vocabulary of emotions... so you will have to listen carefully to hear the real point of pain.*
- ***19 Refocus "events" into "feelings."***

Example:

Client: " I am going through a divorce... we are presently separated." [Event]

Counselor: "How does that make you feel?"
[Feeling]

- ***20 Discern between symptoms and roots... between cause and effect asking "clarifying questions" to get clarity.*** After the initial time of *empathetic listening*, you will begin to target specific areas of relationships **asking clarifying questions.** These *clarifying questions* are to search out specific areas or relationships such as the clients relationship with their father and mother, siblings, spouse, other authority figures in their lives, etc. The "pre-counseling inventory" becomes a helpful starting place for these questions.

Client: "I think that I might have a drink problem."

Counselor: "Really? **What makes you think that?**"

Client: "I drink just about every day... sometimes most of the day."

Counselor: "Are there days when you don't drink?"

Client: "Yes"

Counselor: "What do you do on those days?"

Client: "I stay at home... watch TV... play on my computer."

Counselor: "**Why do you drink?**"

Client: "It numbs me..."

Counselor: "Numbs you from what? **What do you feel that requires numbing?**"

Client: "I have always been told that I would never amount to anything. It began with my parents... continued with my wife... now my ex-wife... I feel so worthless."

- **²¹Beware of transference & counter-transference.**

Many times a person in pain will provoke a hidden feeling or presupposition within the counselor. For example, a man with a feminine approach may be misconstrued as gay. This type of transference, or counter transference can cause us to misinterpret and misunderstand the feelings and actions of the client.

- **²²Listen for "new birth" experience... vital connection with God.** Many times the trauma of the moment may (or may not) present the timely opportunity to lead a person to Christ. Be sensitive with this endeavor. Sometimes, especially in traumatic grief, the person is unable to really think clearly... so your efforts may prove somewhat futile.

- **²³Understand and communicate the limits of your confidentiality.** Explain that what they say will be kept **confidential**, but they need to understand that that **confidentiality may not be limited to those in that room**. For example, in a church, the pastor and the person in charge of ministry might need to know what goes on in the ministry session. Other people do not need to know and will not be told. At a subsequent meeting, a “**confidentiality agreement**” is the best way to denote the specifics of this issue of confidentiality.

“There are, however, three exceptions when I have a moral and legal duty to inform others: when you (1) discuss your intent to harm someone; (2) inform me you consider hurting yourself; and (3) describe a future illicit act. While your interests and welfare are my primary concerns, when believing you want to hurt yourself or others, I will intervene.”

- **²⁴Understand your limitations** – It is important to realize your limits. It is never wrong to say to a person, “I am not really sure how to best counsel you... but I will find you a person who can help you.”

²⁵Mental Soul-Mapping

- **²⁶Listen for a desire to change.** **Where there is no desire to change, there is no recovery.** Don't feel bad about sending someone home if there is no desire to change. Without desire and intention, it isn't time for ministry. **Owning your own problems** is the beginning of recovery. Also, it may not need to be said, but if your client comes in high, stoned or drunk, postpone until they are sober.

- **²⁷Keep your focus...** don't allow the person to sidetrack you into trying to evaluate the problems of somebody else's life. At this point, we practice what we call "circle therapy." ²⁸**"Circle Therapy"** is where you draw a circle around yourself and we will work on only that which is within the circle."

For example, often when there are marital problems, the person will want to talk about the problems of their spouse. They will want to place the blame there. Don't allow the client to be diverted from the person's **own feelings, problems and responsibilities**. Stop the person and **redirect and restate your purpose** in the counseling session if for him. Say you want to hear about **the person himself**, not his wife or her husband. What is it in him that causes him to respond as he does to the spouse? Remember, **you cannot change what you do not own!**

- **²⁹Identify the Roots** – Realize that "**the problem is seldom the problem.**" Drinking and drugs are seldom the real issue. Anger is seldom the real issue. With an understanding of **30roots**, listen to identify the root of the behavior or problem.
 - **³¹Trans-generational Iniquities** – problems that have been in the family for generations are most frequently "trans-generational."
 - **Dealing with trans-generational iniquities** – Exodus 34:7 says that there are three things that God forgives; iniquities, transgressions and sin." The starting place to deal with iniquities is confession. 1Jn.1:9 says, "If we confess our sins... He is faithful to forgive and cleanse...". I think this also applies to **iniquities**. After confession, pronounce the iniquities forgiven and the right(s) attached to those iniquities **severed**.

- **³²Repeated sin** – repeated wrong choices can lead to repeated wrong behavior. The choices can be from wrong programming (molestation, abuse, etc.) or from other desires.
 - **Dealing with repeated sin** – repeated sin is evidence of repeated wrong choices. Again, confession of sin is the beginning place. Be aware that repetitious sin is usually evidence of a more entrenched scheme... usually a scheme that requires a bit more “dismantling” than a simple confession. The will which produces the volitional issues (choices) usually needs some type of cast (accountability) until it is strengthened.
- **³³Judgments** – when we make a judgment (from perception – to assessment – to resolve - to realignment) we have “locked-in” a particular behavior pattern. Judgments can be familial, cultural, or even national. Judgments have two stepchildren... **vows** (an inward expression) and a **curse** (an outward expression).
 - **Dealing with Judgments** – a judgment is interrupted and disarmed the same way it is made. First, the truth replaces any lies that may exist... then we replace the negative words and resolves with positive words.... The result is a blessing, which is in fact, a positive judgment.
- **³⁴Soul-ties** - So what is a “soul-tie”? ***It is a natural sense that triggers an old behavior pattern or feeling, thought or decision pattern.*** Is there a special song that triggers a special feeling within you? Is there a special perfume that triggers a special feeling within you? These are forms of soul ties.

I remember one time playing fast pitch softball. One of the guys offered me some tobacco. Wanting

to be “one of the guys”, I accepted the tobacco. On the next pitch, a ground ball was hit to me. I was playing third base, and the ball bounced and hit me on jaw. As a result, I swallowed the tobacco and promptly threw-up. From that point forward in my life, I never seemed to be tempted by tobacco. Every time I would even smell tobacco, I would have a sensation to throw up.

- **³⁵Identify the Lie** – remember that behind each root there is a general lie that operates (remember the **³⁶Three basic lies from Genesis...**

³⁷Lie Number One – God doesn’t really care about me. One of the enemies most common and most frequently used lies is one that insinuates that God is withholding something good from you... that somehow, you are incomplete... that God doesn’t really care about you.

³⁸Lie Number Two – Life is unfair. The enemy communicates this lie through circumstance that seem to convey that there are no real consequences to wrong choices and wrong behavior.

³⁹Lie Number Three – You don’t measure up. This lie diminishes who God says we are, and attempts to make us feel that we are somehow disfigured or not really in God’s image & likeness. It screams that we are less than who God says we are, therefore, we need to do something extra to achieve that place of *likeness*. The result is a life spent trying to “*measure up*.”

These three lies speak to us primarily through ***circumstances*** and the ***careless words*** of others... seeking to distract our eyes from Him to

something that we have to do to bridge the gap of trust.

Understand that these lies frequently write upon the heart definitions that present a conflict to the heart and soul of the individual.

For example: I recently was working with a man that was in his late forties. He was repeatedly raped from about 5 years old until he came to the Lord at 18 yrs old. The men that perpetrated this crime were an older cousin... somewhat of a father figure... and a close friend. As I began to work with the man, we will call Sam, it became evident that that he was full of guilt and condemnation. He felt guilty that he "willfully participated" with the guys. I began to explain to him that the "programming" of his mind and heart to the physical stimuli (physical feelings) had a "writing" effect on his heart... so that later in life, he would be driven by the physical feelings... feeling guilty that he felt "good" from the encounters with the guys. These heart writings worked together with Lies to say to him, "you are a fake... you are simply not coming out of the closet."

It is important to understand that the writing on the heart affects all aspects of the soul... the mind, will and emotions. These in turn are directly connected to the motor nerves that produce "sensual feelings."

After a few hours of explaining, Sam finally got hold of the point that he was a victim and had been programmed by the physical abuse... and now his responses were actually the result of the programming... not his own willful participation.

I go to great lengths to demonstrate the affect that **Lies** can have on an individual. Lies can produce great confusion as they are written on the heart... and thus affect the mind. For Sam, God had written on his heart that he was in the **image of God** and thus was a male with natural feelings for his wife. Sam was married with three beautiful daughters.

Armed with this new information about Lie's, Sam now refused the mental assaults that he was in fact a "closet homosexual." After about 90 days of:

- (1) Refusing the mental assaults and replacing the lies with truth (I have Sam journal the lies... and then articulate the truth that replaced the lie).
- (2) Replacing old pictures in the mind with pictures of his wife and girls (I had Sam carry pictures in his wallet of his wife and girls... place pictures around his office at work).
- (3) I also had Sam begin to work on the issue of Condemnation... and work through the sources of shame and guilt.

Within 90 days, Sam began to feel the oppression lift and the struggle to lessen. Today Sam is an elder in his church... a strong prophetic gifting that is being used to free others caught in the same trap that previously help him captive. When asked what the single most important key for his freedom he responded, "the 'Lies Journal'"... they were the key in dealing with the condemnation and shame.

- **⁴⁰Listen for patterns of behavior** - Frequently the **repetition** of events, a particular type of relationship, and destructive behaviors that are the keys to discovering "cause & effect." A one-time failure does not usually signify a problem... but repeated failures do.

For example, I had a client that around every major holiday would re-engage his drinking problem:

Counselor: "Sam, where do you go to spend Christmas?"

Client: "I go to my brothers house."

Counselor: "Do you enjoy your family?"

Client: "Yeah... all except my oldest brother."

Counselor: "Why do you not like your oldest brother?"

Client: "Because when dad died, my oldest brother raised us... I was about 4 years old... and he would also call me names... because I was slow in school."

Counselor: "What type of names did he call you?"

Client: "Stupid. Retard. Idiot."

Counselor: "How did that make you feel?"

Client: "It made me feel worthless... and stupid. I guess he was right (chuckle)."

Counselor: "So each time you are thinking about going to see your family... you think about the things your older brother called you."

Client: "Yeah."

Counselor: "And you start to drink to numb the pain?"

Client: "Yeah... I guess so."