



After exploring active listening and empathy techniques, it is essential to delve into the helping relationship and the therapeutic alliance, which are at the heart of all healing and change processes. The helping relationship is a unique bond that forms between a professional counselor and a person seeking help, with the aim of promoting their well-being, autonomy, and self-fulfillment. The therapeutic alliance, on the other hand, refers to the quality and strength of the collaborative bond that is woven between the therapist and the client, and which is a key factor in the effectiveness of counseling. As a Spiritual Healing Coach, it is crucial to understand the stakes of this particular relationship and to know how to create conditions for a fruitful and transformative alliance.

The helping relationship stands out from other types of relationships by its specific purpose, which is to support the person in resolving their difficulties and in the fulfillment of their aspirations. It is based on a fundamental asymmetry between the helper, who puts his skills and presence at the service of the helped, and the helped, who exposes his vulnerability and needs in a climate of trust and safety. This asymmetry is not a value inequality, but a complementarity of roles and responsibilities, which allows each to fully play its part in the counseling process.

For this asymmetry to be fruitful and not abusive, it is essential that the helper adopts a rigorous ethical and deontological posture. This implies respecting the person's autonomy and freedom of choice, preserving the confidentiality of exchanges, not imposing one's own values or beliefs, and recognizing the limits of one's field of competence. The helper must be careful not to create emotional dependence or confusion of roles, by maintaining a clear and secure framework for the relationship. Carl Rogers, one of the pioneers of the person-centered approach, emphasized the importance of congruence, unconditional positive regard, and empathy as fundamental attitudes of the helper.

The therapeutic alliance, on the other hand, is gradually built over the course of sessions, through a dynamic and interactive process between the therapist and the client. It is based on three essential pillars: the emotional bond, the agreement on goals and the collaboration on tasks. The emotional bond refers to the emotional quality of the relationship, which consists of trust, respect, and mutual appreciation. It is nourished by the authenticity, kindness, and humanity of the therapist, who is fully committed to the encounter while maintaining a secure and structured framework. Irvin Yalom, a famous existential psychotherapist, talks about the need for the therapist to be a "fellow traveler" who is warm and sincere, rather than a distant and neutral expert.

Agreeing on goals is another key element of the therapeutic alliance. It involves a clarification and negotiation of the counseling goals, based on the needs, expectations, and resources of the client. It is not about imposing standardized or predefined goals, but about co-constructing a personalized and meaningful project for the person. This requires attentive listening to the client's deep aspirations, an exploration of his representations of change, and a validation of his subjective success criteria. William Miller and Stephen Rollnick, the founders of motivational interviewing, emphasize the importance of eliciting the person's intrinsic motivations and resolving his ambivalence towards change.

Finally, collaboration on tasks is the third pillar of the therapeutic alliance. It refers to the mutual commitment of the therapist and client in the concrete activities that will achieve the set goals. This can include experiential exercises, role plays, homework assignments, or spiritual practices such as meditation or visualization. The challenge is to choose tasks suitable for the client's style, pace, and preferences, drawing on his strengths and skills. It is also about promoting his sense of personal effectiveness and his responsibility in the change process, by allowing him to experiment with new ways of being and acting in a caring environment.

To create and maintain a quality therapeutic alliance, the Spiritual Healing Coach must develop several essential relational competencies. In addition to active listening and empathy that we have already discussed, it is about mastering the art of open questioning and paraphrasing, to help the client explore his experience and clarify his needs. It is also important to know how to reflect the client's strengths and progress, to nourish his self-esteem and trust in his resources. The coach must also learn to manage resistance and relational deadlocks with tact and creativity, by exploring underlying fears, beliefs, and issues. Finally, he must cultivate his own presence and self-awareness, to provide an authentic and embodied quality of relationship.

For example, when faced with a client who struggles to engage in the proposed tasks and questions the usefulness of the counseling, the coach can empathetically explore his doubts and reluctances, by legitimizing his ambivalence and helping him clarify his deep motivations. He can also propose to redefine together the goals and means of the

counseling, adapting to the client's needs and preferences. By showing flexibility, transparency, and non-judgement, the coach demonstrates that he respects the client's pace and freedom of choice, while keeping the focus on his healing project.

Similarly, when faced with a client who expresses a strong emotional charge and struggles to contain his affects, the coach can offer a stable and reassuring presence, by welcoming his emotions with calm and kindness. He can help him put words to his feelings, identify his underlying needs, and find healthy ways to satisfy them. He can also offer him exercises in emotional regulation, such as mindful breathing or visualization of an inner safe place. By showing empathy, validation, and support, the coach helps the client tame his emotions and build resilience to internal storms.

As a Spiritual Healing Coach, it is essential to keep in mind that the helping relationship and the therapeutic alliance are at the heart of our counseling mission. More than just a technique or a tool, they are the living soil in which our clients' healing process can take root and flourish. By cultivating an authentic presence, deep listening, and sincere engagement in the relationship, we create the conditions for a truly transformative encounter, which reveals the unique potential of each being and invites them to spread their wings towards a life that is freer and more aligned with their soul.

Of course, building a solid and fruitful therapeutic alliance is a subtle art that feeds on our own inner journey and our commitment to personal growth. It is essential to take care of ourselves, to cultivate our own balance, and to nourish our spiritual life, in order to offer quality presence to our clients. It is also important to regularly seek an external perspective on our practice, through supervision, peer supervision, or personal therapy, to continue refining our relational skills and expanding our self-awareness.

By cultivating an authentic helping relationship and a strong therapeutic alliance, we lay the groundwork for deeply human and transformative counseling, which honors the dignity and uniqueness of each person, and invites them to realize their full potential for self-fulfillment and contribution to the world. We then become soul guides, midwives of consciousness, serving the healing and awakening of the human heart.

Key points to remember:

- The helping relationship is a unique bond between a professional and a person seeking help, based on a complementary asymmetry of roles, aimed at supporting the person in resolving their difficulties and realizing their aspirations.
- The therapeutic alliance is the quality and strength of the collaborative bond between the therapist and client, based on three pillars: the emotional bond, agreement on goals, and collaboration on tasks.

- The helper must adopt a rigorous ethical and deontological posture, by respecting the client's autonomy, confidentiality, not imposing his values, and acknowledging the limits of his competencies.

- According to Carl Rogers, congruence, unconditional positive regard, and empathy are fundamental attitudes for the helper.

- Agreeing on goals involves co-constructing a personalized project based on the client's needs, expectations, and resources. The person's intrinsic motivations need to be elicited.

- Collaboration on tasks requires mutual engagement in concrete activities suitable for the client, promoting his sense of personal effectiveness.

- The Spiritual Healing Coach must master active listening, empathy, open questioning, paraphrasing, reflection of strengths, handling of resistance, and cultivate presence and self-awareness.

- In the face of difficulties in the alliance, the coach must show flexibility, transparency, non-judgment, empathy, validation, and support.

- Cultivating personal growth and seeking an external perspective is essential for the coach.

- A strong therapeutic alliance allows for deeply human and transformative counseling in service of healing and awakening.