

## Supportive Counseling Fact Sheet

### The Approach to Office Counseling

Some patients benefit from supportive counseling with the primary care provider and/or knowledgeable staff. You can provide brief counseling sessions using these techniques:

- Listening actively
- Giving advice
- Adding perspective
- Confirming the appropriateness of the patient's concerns

### Focus on Solutions

Empathize with the patient, while moving the dialogue toward the construction of clear, simple and specific plans for behavioral change regarding:

- Work
- Home
- Finances
- Health

### Focus on Coping Strategies

Coping strategies can be divided into two categories: problem focused, which are directed at situations that can be changed, and emotion focused, which are directed at situations that cannot be changed. After helping the patient recognize whether a situation can be changed or not, suggest some helpful coping strategies, such as:

#### *Problem Focused*

Gather facts.

Use problem-solving techniques.

Notice negative thoughts and replace them.

#### *Emotion Focused*

Participate in pleasurable activities...

Participate in activities that boost...

Participate in activities that relax...

### Developing and Monitoring Coping Strategies

1. Identify two to three coping strategies that may be helpful for the patient. Clarify if the strategies are consistent with the patient's personality and lifestyle.
2. Create a list of coping strategies for the patient. Retain a copy of this list for the medical record.
3. Have the patient keep track of problems that occur during the next week or couple of weeks and the coping strategies used. Tell the patient to bring a summary to the next office visit.
4. Assess the coping strategies used by the patient. Reinforce strategies that are effective, and suggest improvements when needed.

Adapted from the Three Component Model, 3CM™, with permission. 2005.

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