

# Priority Topic: **COUNSELLING**

## Key Features:

See also **Priority Topic: Lifestyle** and **Priority Topic: Crisis**

### 1. When counselling a patient:

- a) **Set clear therapeutic goals** with the patient.
- b) **Allow adequate time.**
- c) **Evaluate your own skills** (e.g. does the problem exceed the limits of your abilities? Are you the right person and is this the right time to unpack the patient's concerns?).
- d) Recognize when you are **approaching or exceeding boundaries** (e.g. transference, countertransference).
- e) Recognize when **your beliefs or biases may interfere** with counselling.
- f) **Remain aware of the risks of offering advice versus providing options** .
- g) Pay close attention to the **quality of the therapeutic relationship and alliance.**

### **What you should study:**

- ✓ **Approaches to Counselling AAFP 2009**
- ✓ **Counselling for Family Doctors CFP 2007**
- ✓ **Transference and Countertransference 2011**

2. For a patient who is considering or requesting referral for counselling/psychotherapy, clarify concerns and provide realistic information about the process and available resources (e.g. expectations, timing, frequency, costs, duration, homework, starting/ending the relationship if ineffective).

***What you should study:***

✓ **Remember: non-pharmacological therapy should always be part of the management plan!**