1. Describe in detail the process of counselling.

**Ans:** The counselling process is a planned, structured dialogue between a counsellor and a client. It is a cooperative process in which a trained professional helps a person called the client to identify sources of difficulties or concerns that he or she is experiencing. Together, they develop ways to deal with and overcome these problems so that person has new skills and increased understanding of themselves and others. For example, students in a college or university may be anxious about how to study in university, lack of clarity on educational or career direction, have difficulty living with a roommate of another race or religion, have concerns with self-esteem, feelings with being “stressed out”, difficulties in romantic relationships and so forth.

The fact that counselling is described as a process, there is the implicit meaning of a progressive movement toward an ultimate conclusion. Hackney and Cormier (1987) describes the counselling process as a series of steps through which the counsellor and client move.

1st Stage: Initial Disclosure - Relationship Building

The first step involves building a relationship and focuses on engaging clients to explore issues that directly affect them. The first interview is important because the client is reading the verbal and nonverbal messages and make inferences about the counsellor and the counselling situation. Is the counsellor able to empathise with the client? Does the client view the counsellor as genuine?

2nd stage: In-depth Exploration - Problem Assessment

While the counsellor and the client are in the process of establishing a relationship, a second process is taking place, i.e. problem assessment. This step involves the collection and classification of information about the client’s life situation and reasons for seeking counselling.

3rd stage: Commitment to action - Goal Setting

Setting goals is very important to the success of counselling. It involves making a commitment to a set of conditions, to a course of action or an outcome.

Step 4: Counselling Intervention