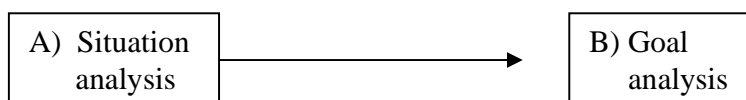


## Problem analysis

### 1. Basic fundamental components:



#### A) The ‘*Situation analysis*’ has to be elaborated together with the client:

- The conglomerate of issues can be separated in to units regarding different categories of the individuals’ life (e.g. personal issues like self denial, family issues like frequent argues with the partner, workplace issues or low achievement in school etc.)
- The selected or most acute issue needs to be elaborated on the 4 levels:
  - Cognitions (Perception, thoughts and believes)
  - Emotions (How the individual feels)
  - Behavior (How the person conducts or reacts)
  - Physiological status (physiological responses as reactions)
- Analyzing is not only trying to find causes for the problem. For complex disorders you can’t find easily causes since there are many reasons and interacting factors in human beings lives.

It is more advisable to look for influencing and interacting factors which can be addressed. Try rather to explore, observe and understand what the factors are which lead to a continuation of the issue than finding intelligent causes. So the question is more: ‘what are the factors and circumstances which bring up the problem or preserve the existence of the problem?’

For example: If an adult suddenly develops depression we are not only interested to find the root for it which might be hereditary. We might rather be successful in addressing the problem by finding out that the person has severe stressors at work and doesn’t know how to cope with it. The work stress might be the preliminary circumstance which has weakened him and made him vulnerable to develop depression.

The next step will be to support the person to get some distance and rest and to find solutions for his/her work matters.

### Various supporting methods to analyze the issue

Some examples:

- Mind mapping
- Fish bone
- ‘The inner voice’ (by Schulz von Thun)
- S-O-R-C model
- Motivational interview
- Observation in vivo

B) The '*Goal analysis*' and criteria to follow:

- Set... S (Specific - means instead of saying: "I want to have a good career" ... "I want to accomplish first my A-Level then.....PhD").
- M (Measurable - means instead of saying:" I want to get in shape" ... "I want to loose 4 kilos").
- A (Attainable – If you want to learn how to stitch a dress you should not become an apprentice to a carpenter. Set the appropriate goal to learn the right skills that you can apply to your ultimate goal).
- R (Realistic – You should not plan to build a 4 store apartment if you have only the money to rent a place).
- T (Time - means to set a time when the goal is supposed to be reached otherwise it might not be followed seriously. Example: "...I'll start May 1<sup>st</sup>" instead of "Someday I will start").

goals!

- The goal should further be
  - defined positively – means to say for example "I want to have 10 min time for my self" instead of "I don't want to be bothered".
  - be independently achievable – this means that you should set goals which are achievable by your self. If it is only achievable with the contribution of others you will depend on them to reach your goal.
- If you have more than one goal the goals need to be congruent. In this example: "I love to have time for my self" and "I always want to spend my free time with my family" the goals are obviously not compatible.  
The same in the case of the following two goals:" I want to lead a life like a monk" and "I want to have a big house with a pool etc."

**REMEMBER:** The goal should be tailored to the client and owned by him / her !

Methods to support and motivate the client for a change and to set an elaborated goal:

## 1. Discussing consequences:

Sometimes the client is not properly aware of the consequences of his issue or behavior.

Or he is not aware of the negative long term impact.

Or he tries to ignore/ avoid the consequences in order not to be troubled now!

With the concurrence of the client we can help him/her to face the real situation and to take a deliberate decision (appropriate goal).

	Short term consequence	Long term consequence
Situation as it is		
Changing the situation		

After proper evaluation and discussion the client will realize and select the right goal!

2. Motivational interview (questions to explore the issue as well as the goals):

- 1) What could you do if you didn't have the problem?
- 2) How would your life be different if you could get the problem out of your life?
- 3) What things does the problem make you do that you don't like to do?
- 4) How is the problem blocking you from being the person you want to be?

C) Some further factors to consider in understanding the issue:

1. Relevance: Explore the relevance of the problem in the clients' daily life. (Exp.: suffering by a Snake Phobia is not as relevant for an urban persons daily functioning as for a person who lives and works everyday on the field in a rural place. The relevance of the issue in daily life will indicate the need for counselling (Add example).
2. Functionality of the problem: Sometimes disorders or problems can fulfill a necessity (a benefit or release or help to avoid unwanted situations). It can serve other objectives or needs. We consider it as a subconscious function that the problems entail. This means that the person might gain other benefits out of the disability which he or she does not gain in a direct way. (Exp.: 1. the child develops headache or a tummy upset in order not to be sent to school.....for what ever fear the child may have.....or 2. A client suffers by an anxiety disorder which will force the husband to be always contactable.....thus she always knows where he is etc.). You should always check with the client whether the problem is in favor to reach a more hidden or unconscious goal.
3. Prioritizing: Setting priorities is needed in handling the issues. After discussing and agreeing upon a priority list with the client the counselling can start accordingly. In case of more than one issue,- these can be addressed one by one and in dept (Add example).
4. Point of view: Taking different points of view is a necessity in order to prevent limited views or narrow mindedness and to decide freely and in a broad way upon the situation. There are always different ways to perceive the same situation. According to our perception and interpretation of the situation we respond to it (Add example). It is important to analyze with the client together his point of view and explore different possible approaches to it. This alone can sometimes help to understand issues better and to solve them.