

SOS POL. SC. & PUB. ADMN.,

JIWAJI UNIVERSITY, GWALIOR (M.P.)

MBA HRD IV SEM

PAPER- INDUSTRIAL PSYCHOLOGY (405)

UNIT-V

TOPIC: PROCESS OF EMPLOYEE COUNSELLING

Employee Counselling – Process: Rapport Building, Exploration and Action Planning

Counselling, basically, is to help the employee grow and develop in the organization. An effective counsellor is one who helps employees to make them aware of their strengths and weaknesses and to improve upon them. Through mutuality, he/she helps the employee to develop providing them the proper emotional climate.

Mutuality involves working together with the employees and developing future plans of action for their growth in the organization. Counselling requires certain interpersonal skills which can be acquired easily if a person is genuinely interested in developing his/her subordinates. Such skills are important at the time of potential appraisal and performance review.

The counselling process has three important phases:

(1) Rapport building

(2) Exploration, and

(3) Action planning.

1. RAPPORT BUILDING:

Rapport building is essential for any effective counselling outcome. In this phase, a good counsellor attempts to establish a climate of acceptance, warmth, support, openness, and mutuality. He/she does this by listening to the employees' problems and feeling, by communicating his/her understanding to the employees, and by expressing a genuineness of interest in them. This phase involves generating confidence in the employee to open up frankly, share his perceptions, problems, concerns, feelings etc. The subordinate must be made to feel wanted and that his superior is genuinely interested in his development.

Initially the counselor-manager should level himself with his employee and tune himself to his orientations. General opening rituals like offering a chair, closing the door to indicate privacy, asking the secretary not to disturb are all important in demonstrating the manager's genuine interest in employee's problems. The counselor must listen to the feelings and concerns of the employee carefully and attentively. Leaning forward and eye contact are important signs of active listening. The employee must feel that he is wanted and the counselor is interested in him genuinely.

2. EXPLORATION:

In the exploration phase, besides accepting the employees, listening to them, and establishing a climate of openness, the counsellor attempts to understand as well as help the employees understand their own situational strengths, weaknesses, problems, and needs. Counselling skills lie in this.

Besides active listening, the counselor should help the employee find his own weaknesses and problems through open and exploring questions. He should be encouraged to open up fully and talk more on the problem. This would enable both parties to uncover various dimensions of the problem clearly. Once the key issue is identified, (e.g., inability to get along with colleagues, not being promoted despite hard work, boss does not like his work etc.,) it should be diagnosed thoroughly.

Open questions like-

Why do people pick arguments with you?

On what occasions did you try to get ahead in the race?

Who are coming in your way and why? — May help the employee visualize the problem from different angles. The whole exercise is meant to generate several alternative causes of a problem.

3. ACTION PLANNING:

In the action planning stage, the counsellor and the employee jointly workout or plan specific action steps for the development of the employee. Counseling should finally help the employee find alternative ways of resolving a problem. The list of alternatives could be generated after two or three brain storming sessions. The

merits and limitations of each course of action could also be identified and the best course of action picked up-keeping the background factors (boss, colleagues, work-related issues, competitive pressures etc.) in mind. The employee should be encouraged to self-monitor the action plan without seeking further helps from the counselor. The counseling sessions could be monitored and reviewed at regular intervals later on.

PROCESS/STAGES OF COUNSELLING PROCESS:

1. RAPPORT/RELATIONSHIP BUILDING – Rapport building is the first step in counselling. It demonstrates such essential skills as mirroring, tracking, pacing, attentive listening, and empathizing and presents such tools as obtaining informed consent, using self-disclosure, reflecting client feelings etc.

2. ASSESSMENT/PROBLEM DEFINITION – The counsellor assesses the employee's feelings, thoughts, behaviours, and interpersonal dynamics. It involves asking the Counselee exploring questions.

3. GOAL SETTING – Third stage of the counselling process, involves focus on goal setting. It shows how goal setting is a collaborative focus and demonstrates the use of the three Cs choice, change, and coping in the process.

4. INTERVENTION – It demonstrates establishing a plan for change, reviewing the goals set in the process, and preparing for dealing with the problem

5. TERMINATION – The counsellor assesses goal accomplishment, skills gained, available resources and supports, and potential obstacles and looks at follow-up planning. It involves finding alternative ways to help the Counselee.

EMPLOYEE COUNSELLING – PREREQUISITES AND STAGES

Prerequisites of Employee Counselling are:

1. LISTEN AND SHOW CONFIDENCE:

Do not ignore the employee problems as trivial and listen to them. Believe in their abilities, show confidence in their work and tell them that the organization has a lot of expectations from them. Such trust and confidence motivates the employees to resolve issues and perform better.

2. FOCUS ON THE PROBLEM AND NOT THE PERSON:

However big or small the problem is, it is affecting performance and needs to be discussed. But remember the real culprit is the problem and not the person. So, instead of focusing on the employee, try to focus on understanding the problem.

3. GIVE SUGGESTIONS AND SOLUTIONS:

After understanding the problem, try to help the person solve it. Take the employee's opinion about the ways the issue can be resolved. Analyse the various solutions and give suggestions. A discussion about the solutions may actually help you figure out and eliminate the pain point.

4. CREATE AN ACTION PLAN:

Some problems may warrant a series of tasks to be performed over a period of time to be resolved. Create action plans for yourself and the colleague. Clearly note down the actions that each party has to perform. Show active involvement to make

the team member feel comfortable with your initiatives and motivate him/her to perform to the best of his/her abilities.

5. FOLLOW UP:

Follow up after regular intervals to see if the counselling has helped. It not only shows the genuine interest in the well-being and performance of the team mate but also helps to identify gaps and other issues. Moreover, follow up helps to evaluate the success of the action plan by HR Head.

Counselling, if done well, can produce spectacular results, in terms of improving employee morale and productivity. However, when it comes to counselling co-workers, one has to be really careful and take the working environment and current situation into consideration. Go with a genuine intention to help and see how your counselling works wonders.

EMPLOYEE COUNSELLING – STEPS AND VARIOUS REQUISITES INVOLVED IN EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE COUNSELLING

The counselling techniques are used to help employees deal with personal problems that may interfere with the achievement of these goals. Counselling may address such issues as substance abuse, stress management, smoking cessation, or fitness, nutrition and weight control.

The employees counselling helps lot in the performance achievement.

Let us analyse the various steps involved in employees performance counselling:

(A) TO ESTABLISH RAPPORT OR PREPARE A BASE FOR COMMUNICATION – This step is very necessary as it generates the necessary confidence in the subordinate and assures him of his superior's genuine interest in helping him. For the success of this step it necessary that the counsellor carefully listens to what the subordinates says and displays warmth and responsiveness from his behaviour.

(B) TO EXPLORE INFORMATION ABOUT PERFORMANCE – During this stage the counsellor puts to the subordinates various questions, which may elicit elaborate information on the latter's achievement, strengths, failures and short coming. The object is to make the subordinate himself to introspect and define his strengths and weakness.

(C) TO HELP DEFINE THE FUTURE GOAL AND INTERNALISE THE PROBLEM – Once the counsellor has succeeded in making the subordinate reflect on his strengths and weaknesses he can easily make him realise what his problems are. There is generally a tendency to attribute ones' failures, weaknesses or shortcoming to external reasons. The counsellor has to help the subordinate to internalise the problem and its causes. He must also help him in setting his future goals.

(D) TO DRAW ACTION PLAN – Both the counsellor and the subordinate jointly consider all possible alternative solutions to the problems. Their pros and cons are weighed and the best alternative selected and a stepwise action plan is prepared along with the timetable. The subordinate is allowed to monitor the plan himself. The plan is reviewed by the two parties at regular intervals.

Counselling the employees should be taken utmost care in the HRD. It is one of the prestigious functions and the great intervention of HRD in which the employees can be motivated and his latent skills can be extracted for the benefit of the organisation.

The various requisites of the counselling are listed below:

1. INDIVIDUAL'S DESIRE TO IMPROVE:

The first most important requirement for effective counselling is that the individual to be given counsel should be interested in developing himself. Superiors usually hold the view that subordinates do not take sufficient interest in their growth and development. On the other hand, subordinates allege that they do not feel free to participate in the process of the review and feedback.

2. CONTINUOUS DIALOGUE:

Counselling is not one-way process of communicating to the employee what he should or should not do. It is a process of continuous dialogue directed toward better understanding of the situation. This presupposes the existence of a general climate of openness, mutuality and trust.

3. INTEREST OF SUPERIOR IN SUBORDINATES' DEVELOPMENT:

In order to make counselling effective it is necessary that the counsellor should have empathetic attitude towards his subordinates. To put it differently, counselling should not be considered as a burden or an unpleasant task and practised half-heartedly or as a compulsion.

4. MUTUAL PARTICIPATION:

Both the superior and the subordinate should whole-heartedly participate in the goal setting and reviewing of goals and performance. Without such collaboration counselling would be reckless.