

UNIT-V

TOPIC NAME: Modern Trends In Counseling Professional Preparation and Training For Counseling, Evaluation.

Meaning of Counseling

It is support process in which a counselor holds face to face talks with another person to help him or her solve a personal problem, or help improve that person's attitude, behavior or character. Counseling is a personal or individual process. Counselling is a series of direct contacts with the individual which aims to offer him assistance in changing his attitudes and behaviour. It is always personal. It cannot be performed with a group.

Definitions of Counseling:

Webster's Dictionary: "Counselling means consultation, mutual interchange of opinion, deliberating together."

Modern Trends In Counseling

Counseling in its widest connotation existed in one form or the other from time immemorial. In all cultures the elders not only set the norms of behavior within that culture but also counseled the youngsters to follow the norms. In India, elders especially parents and teachers thought that imparting counseling in the form of advice and guidance was one of their fundamental, and seared duty. The oft repeated adage; "Mata, Pita, Guru, Deivam" (Mother, Father, Teacher, God) reminded the youngsters not only of the agents of counseling but also of the priority as to who should impart counseling at various stages of life. Ancient epics of India are replete with depictions of counseling.

Elders were only too ready to take up the role of counselors and youngsters sought counseling with prompt compliance. Many such incidents could be explained away as mere acts of 'giving advice'. But in most of those ancient transactions it is not difficult to see the scientific practice and ethics of modern counseling techniques. The most widely acknowledges counseling situation in the epics is that of the dialogue between Krishna and Arjuna in the battlefield of Kurukshetra. Whether this dialogue had all the characteristics of modern counseling may have to be answered by committed researchers in this area.

Counseling as Others See It Counseling is a much-misunderstood concept. To the laymen it is an occasion where an expert solves the problems of others. Laymen believe that the expert has ready-made solutions for all the problems of human beings. Most counselors know that this is far from truth.

Characteristics of Counseling

1. Counseling is usually for normal people with problems.
2. It is essentially a dynamic interaction between the client and the counsellor.
3. Client is expected to be frank and forthright in his approach.
4. It is the duty of the counselor to keep confidentiality regarding the client.
5. Counselor is to show warmth and sympathy while listening to the client's problems.
6. Counselor is expected to be non judgmental and non critical.
7. The relationship between the client and the counsellor is expected to be genuine.
8. Counseling usually works at the level of rapport and not at the level of transference.

Prospective counselors should be aware of major approaches to counseling so as to enable them to acquire a sound basis for developing their own personal brand of counselling. The current trends in this area can be broadly classified into three approaches. They are:

- Cognitive approaches
- Affective approaches.
- Behavioral approaches.

Cognitive Approaches

As Feorge and Cristiani (1981) have pointed out, in the cognitive approaches, the process of counseling is the curing of unreason by reason; i.e., to help clients eliminate most emotional disturbances by learning to think rationally, to help them get rid of illogical, irrational ideas and attitudes and substitute logical, rational ideas and attitudes.

It is believed that this process helps the client to attain rational behavior, happiness, and self-actualization. For example Transactional Analysis (TA) aims at the internal dialogues of individuals, which occurs between the various ego states and the struggles between the real parts of their behavior and the behavior of others by identifying which ego state is in power at any given time.

TA thus gives the clients information about the various types of transactions that occur among individuals and to help them identify the kinds of behavior in which they are involved. The goal of TA is to help clients review their past decisions and make new decisions about their present behavior. It is assumed that this would change their life direction into developing an autonomous life style characterized by awareness, spontaneity. This, it is believed that would, eliminate a life style characterized by manipulative game – playing a self-defeating neurotic tendencies.

Affective Approaches

As the term suggests the affective approaches in counseling focus their attention to what is going on inside the individual, and particularly what the individual is experiencing at a given time. Client-centered counseling of Rogers is perhaps the most well-defined technique in the affective approaches. It also highlights an issue in counseling; namely, how much responsibility can be placed on the client for his own problem solving.

The 'self-theory' of Rogers also assumes a perspective called 'phenomenology'. According to this perspective, people's 'reality' is that which they perceive. The way to understand individuals is to infer the 'phenomenological field' from their behavior. In other words, the 'internal frame of reference' of the client is used in counseling with the implication that counselors must attempt to perceive client's perceptual worlds as closely as they can. This is known as the empathic skill of the counselor.

Individual client's need to strive for wholeness is the focus in Gestalt therapy and counseling. This school of counseling gives importance to the internal world of the individual. Striving for the gestalt or the wholeness is actually a striving for an integration of thinking, feeling, and behaving. The key concept here is awareness. It is believed that the counselors help the clients work toward a total awareness of his experiences. Gestalt psychologists point out that such awareness permits self-regulation and self-control in the direction of increased integration and creativity.

Behavioral Approaches

While the dynamically oriented theorists try to understand conscious and unconscious through inference, the behavioral counselors concentrate on objective study of client behavior and the learning process. As the emphasis is primarily on overt behavior, the first emphasis is to discover how the behavior was acquired and how it can be changed. The second emphasis, which is a later addition, is on precondition for behavior change. This approach is characterized by (1) a focus on overt and specified behavior; (2) a precise and well spelt out target behaviors called goals; (3) a formulation of a specific and objective treatment procedure to the problem at hand; and (4) an objective assessment of the outcome of counseling in terms of the degree of approximation to the target behavior.

In the behavioral approaches well defined counseling goals are of central importance. The much talked about counselor-counselee relationship in other approaches is of secondary importance only. The main aim of this relationship to the behaviorist counselor is to facilitate greater understanding of the client's view of the problem. This helps to formulate a more successful behavioral plan for bringing about change in the client's maladaptive behavior to one of adaptive behavior (target behavior).

Personal Theory of Counseling

The three basic approaches (Cognitive, Affective, and Conative) with their differing foundations vary in their theory and practice of counseling. By about 1973, Patterson began to think in terms of commonalties among the approaches. Fortunately most of the controversies existed only as academic gymnastics at a theoretical level. The practicing counselors were undergoing transformation as the clients were not interested in theories and their subtleties but were interested only in immediate problem solving. This demand of the client to the counsellor had made many counselors to abandon their dogmatic approach. Orientation of the counselors started

changing towards a pragmatic approach. The client and his needs became more important than the counselor's theory and dogma. This was how 'personal theory' emerged.

Professional preparation and Training For Counseling Evaluation

It is for reasons such as these that counsellor educators need to be aware of, and sensitive to, the multiplicity of needs of the counsellor trainee. In addressing the issue of how counsellor training programs can provide a beneficial learning experience, the following five-stage model may be useful to consider: Selection, Induction, Training, Supervision, and Evaluation (SITSE).

Stage 1: Selection

Faculty make decisions as to the most effective ways of attracting, recruiting and selecting students. While flexibility may inherently be the rule in the process of selecting applicants, it is important that selection procedures reflect a clear purpose as to what qualities and abilities are being sought (Pope, 1998). Admission criteria should be established to reflect appropriate ways of screening prospective students and to determine who will have the greatest likelihood of making a valuable contribution to the program and the profession. Counsellor educators must remember that legally, ethically and morally they are gatekeepers to the profession (Frame & Stevens-Smith, 1995).

Stage 2: Induction

It is useful for counsellor educators to incorporate methods that ensure students from a range of backgrounds develop a sense of the uniqueness of the counseling profession. The orientation of students toward counselling as a vocation clearly consists of more than a course in history or counselling foundations. There is a need for a comprehensive way faculty can assess how well students have grasped the content and practical application of introductory courses, prior to practicum or an internship being undertaken. The use of mentors, student-faculty relationships (Hazler & Carney, 1993), and involvement by the professional associations are significantly additive to this process.

Stage 3: Training

The critical components of counsellor training include coursework, research, and clinical practice. Classes, independent work, clinical consultation and practica should focus on the development of professionally appropriate knowledge, skills and attitudes. These experiences may be supplemented by involvement in ancillary professional activities that aim to develop the trainee and thereby maximise personal and professional learning.

Stage 4: Supervision

As the trainee moves through the program of studies, clinical and administrative supervisors (at university and in agencies) in evaluative and supportive positions guide the novice counsellor. With appropriate consultation and well-planned feedback, the trainee is fostered in developmental growth and professional awareness. This growth can occur via individual supervision, or within groups and with peers.

Stage 5: Evaluation

The final stage brings with it the potential for the most challenges and controversy, as it deals with the issue of review and retention. This stage is an indication of the Counselling Trainees expectations of the profession that are reflected by the beliefs of the faculty. This stage cautions that the subjectivity of the process should be recognised and minimised (Baldo, Softas-Nall, & Shaw, 1997). It is at this point that trainees pass from the student ranks to become the emerging professional counsellor.

Training for Counseling

