

COUNSELING AND SOCIAL WELFARE

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Abstract

Counseling is an age-old practice and its importance and effectiveness have been felt all through the ages. It is still in practice because of its therapeutic value. Earlier, counseling was in the hands of the learned, wise and experienced people but modern psychology has succeeded in producing trained PROFESSIONAL counselors in the field of counseling. With the changing social scenario and ever-increasing complex life structures and lifestyles, the need of counseling has been strongly felt among persons of all sections of the society

KEYWORDS- Counseling, learning clinic, Social Welfare.

Introduction

Counseling: - Counseling is no more a layman's advice. According to Gilbert C. Wren (1962), counseling is a personal and dynamic relationship between two individuals – an older, more experienced and wiser counselor and a younger less experienced and less wise counselor. The latter has a problem for which he seeks the help of the former. The two work together so that the problem may be more clearly defined and the counselee may be helped to a self-determined solution.

“Counseling” is also viewed as a psychotherapeutic relationship in which an individual (client) receives direct help from an adviser or finds an opportunity to release negative feelings and thus clear the way for positive growth in personality. Thus, the main objective of counseling is to assist the client or the counselee to solve his or her problems independently.

Counseling concentrates on the normals, which include the client's parents or associates of the client. For a counselor, psychology should not be the sole basis of counseling. Other branches of study, his intuition, experiences and insight etc. are also helpful to him. Moreover, counseling is not confined to a single place or situation. It is an individual thing and should be applied whenever a problem arises.

Both the American Association for Counseling and Development (AACD) and Division 17 (Counseling Psychological Association (APA, 1987) have defined counseling on numerous occasions. Their definitions contain a number of points like.

- Counseling is a profession. Practitioners should complete a prescribed course of study, leading eventually to a master's or a doctorate.

- Counseling deals with personal, social, vocational and educational concerns. Counselors should work only in areas they are competent to handle
- Counseling is conducted with those persons considered within the “normal range” of functioning. Clients are not considered “sick” but “stuck”. They require short-term intervention for their problems.
- Counseling is theory-based and takes place in a structured setting. counselors draw from a number of affective, behavioral, and cognitive theories and work in a structured environment with various individuals, groups, families and systems.
- Counseling is a process in which clients learn how to make decisions and formulate new ways of behaving, feeling and thinking (Smiaby & Tamminen, 1978) Counselors focus on the goals of the clients. Clients explore their present level of functioning and the changes that must be made to achieve personal objectives (Egan, 1990).
- Counseling encompasses various subspecialties. These subspecialties include school counseling, marriage and family counseling, mental health counseling, rehabilitation counseling and career counseling. Each has specific educational and experiential requirements for practitioners.

Social welfare

Social welfare expresses a changing concept. It means not only to provide financial assistance and other services to society. Social welfare includes laws, programmes, benefits and services which assure or strengthen the provisions for meeting social needs recognized as basic to the well-being of the society and the better functioning of the social order. It is an organized system of social services and institutions designed to aid individuals and groups to attain satisfying standards of life and health. Counseling is a professional service based upon scientific knowledge and skill in human relations. Social welfare is a specialized work for the benefit of the weaker and more valuable sections of the society and would include women, children, physically handicapped, the mentally retarded and those with special needs in many ways.

Counseling for welfare of Society

It is a fact that counseling is a roaring practice in many European, American and Canadian countries but in India, it is yet to strengthen its roots. Counseling being an applied branch of psychology is far behind in making its services available to the people of India. This is because of

- dearth of trained/professional counselors, and
- lack of psychological mindedness among people to avail the services of counseling.

Need of counseling has been felt at all stages of life span i.e. during infancy, childhood, expected motherhood (pre-natal stage), puberty, adolescence, adulthood, middle age, senescence

and senility. It has also been required for the diseased, family members of the sick with terminal illnesses like cancer and AIDS and for the dying too. The ultimate purpose of counseling is to help people so that they can help themselves, in terms of better adjustment, happy and fruitful life. Counseling is objective and scientific and experiences show that it effectively facilitates the coping styles of individuals.

There is no dearth of psychologists in India but we hardly have counselors. Many of us have very sound theoretical knowledge base in psychology but we fail when we venture to apply this in life and in the society. As psychologists we face difficulties in analyzing and finding out the causes of day-to-day common problems like lack of motivation in studies, truancy among schoolchildren, stubbornness, nail biting, thumb sucking, inattention, destructive behaviour, dislike for the school, problems in reading and writing daydreaming in adolescents, choosing a stream and career, irrational fears, marital conflicts, job dissatisfaction and substance abuse. Welfare of the disabled, tribal development, youth welfare, welfare of aged, child development welfare of SC/ST/OBCs, Medical and psychiatric problems, rural development, social defence and correction, social security, social planning, legal aid, consumer protection, Human syuts, family welfare, social justice, family planning HIV and AIDS, environmental conservation, affected by disasters are important areas where counseling is being used. We too face problems in recommending and counseling in the ways by which one can overcome their problems.

Recently in counseling there has been an emphasis on positive wellness. This refers to health-related activities that are both preventive and remedial and have a therapeutic value to these individuals who practice them consistently. Such activities include eating natural foods, taking vitamins, going to health club, mediating, participating in regular exercise and exploring a variety of humanistic and transpersonal approaches to helping. In an extensive review of literature on the effectiveness of physical fitness or measures of personality, Doan and Scherman (1978) found strong support for the idea that regular exercise can have beneficial effect on people's physical and psychological health. Their review supports counselors who prescribe health habits to accompany regular counseling practices (Peterson 6 Nisenholz, 1995)

Modes of Counseling

- ❖ Directive or prescriptive or counselor-centered counseling.
- ❖ Non-directive or permissive or client-centered counseling, and
- ❖ Eclectic counseling.

E.G. Williamson (1939) is the chief exponent of directive counseling. It involves analysis of problem, synthesis, diagnosis, prognosis, counseling and follows up. Here the counselor plays the

major role in the process. He does all that he can to get the counselee to make a decision. He tries to direct the thinking of the client by informing, explaining, interpreting and advising.

Carl R. Rogers (1946) is the chief exponent of non-directive counseling. Here the client plays the leading role and the counselor's role is relatively passive. This is a growth experience for the client. The goal is to promote the independence and integration of the client rather than the solution of a particular problem. Counseling leads to a voluntary choice of goals and a conscious selection of courses of action. To be effective, the process of interaction must be genuine. F.C. Thorn (1950) is the pioneer of Electric counseling. In this method, the counselor is neither too active as in directive counseling nor too passive as in non-directive counseling. The counselor follows a middle course. Treatment does not end prematurely; it terminates at the optimum time. The idea behind the concept is that the client who is in an acute state of crisis or conflict must not be allowed to terminate until all resources fail.

Ethics of counseling

The validity of the results of counseling is determined by the skill with which a method is used with reference to etiological diagnosis of each individual case. The critical factor is not what method is used but the skill and expertise with which it is used. There are various skills that a counselor should possess for an effective therapeutic counseling. They are: attending skills, exploration skills, understanding skills and action skills. The concomitants of counseling have to be highly objective. Counseling is to be based on scientific information about the client which can be obtained through interview, observation and testing. We can have scientific planning about the nature of counseling for a client only when we have information about his background, personality, aptitude, intelligence needs, interests, aspirations, academic achievements, experiences of success and failure in different avenues of life. Without accurate testing, counseling may fall flat.

Scope for counseling in social welfare

As it has been pointed out and stressed earlier we need professional counselors in different types of problem situations; the need for school counselors seems to be of greatest importance and urgency. Unfortunately, excepting in D.M. Schools run by NCERT, NIPCCD, NUEPA, RIE, ICDS, TISS, Azimpemji University, RGNIYD, NIRD and a few private educational establishments, other schools too have the provision of appointing counselors. School counselors are of immense help in testing intellectual caliber of students and also in providing educational and vocational counseling. They can also handle behavioral disorders among schoolchildren to quite an extent

through behaviour modification therapy Counselors need placements in clinics, hospitals, jails, reformatory home and orphanages.

Training Modules

Moreover, to specialize in practicing counseling, we do not have recognized training centres excepting at Regional institute Education under NCERT. It awards diploma in Guidance and Counseling every year to a limited number of students. The duration of the course is 10 months and selection for admission is based on written and viva-voce examinations on an all India basis. There is provision for sponsorship for in-service teachers from various schools. Thus there is a need for opening up more number of counseling training centers in the country to produce skilled professionals. Recently noble attempts have been made in opening up psycho-clinic cum counseling centers in Bhubaneswar by Prof. J.P. Das from the University of Alberta, Canada. The name of the clinic is The Learning Clinic. The other have been set up by Mrs. S. Ghose of Calcutta. It is an NGO named SNEH (Society for Nature, Education and Health). National institute of Rural development, Rajiv Gandhi National institute of youth developments, Tata institute of social sciences, Nation University of Education planning and administration, Arimprenji foundation, PARYAS an NGO, National institute of public corporation and child development. RCI, ICDS department. These are some welcome measures in the area of counseling in India. The Learning Clinic uses several psycho-educational, tests for identification of problem of children and adults and uses remediation programmes for improvement in their conditions. Counseling services are offered to the children, parents and in some cases to the teachers t yields the desired results. On the other hand these institutes are equally promising in its mission in extending counseling services in welfare context. It focuses on identifying the psychodynamics of stress among social classes, stress management, value inculcation and developing meaningful interpersonal relationship between counselor and counselee as well as generating a healthy and effective psychological environment in the institutions.

Future Perspective

These organizations are in a nascent state. But the responses and feedback of people have been overwhelming. People have started feeling the worth and efficacy of clinic-cum-counseling centres. The strength of counseling in recent times is based on scientific premises and principles. Thus it is becoming more and more objective leaving no room for subjectivity. However we have to strngthen our base with committed and skilled psychologists and counselors to help people out in solving their problems and also overcoming their obstacles in life.

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