

Introduction to Psychological Counselling

The General Concepts of Counselling

Session Week 1

Abba Hailegebriel Girma, PhD

*The Ethiopian Orthodox Theological
College Houston, Texas, USA*

Aim and Learning Outcomes – Week 1 Session

Aim

- Students will acquire an understanding of basic counselling skills, and through this process they will also begin to develop an awareness of themselves.

Learning Outcomes

- At the end of this session, students will be able to:
 - Demonstrate their ability to use basic counselling skills in their counselling practice.
 - Demonstrate an awareness of factors that influence an appropriate counselling environment.

Introduction

- Counselling Skills involve the ability to listen to another person and hear exactly what they are trying to say, from their point of view.
- This introductory course will benefit both those interested in finding out what counselling is all about, and those who want to gain basic listening/counselling skills.
- It will provide the opportunity to explore a range of listening and communication skills.

What is Counselling?

- Counselling is an idea that has existed for several centuries. Human beings have sought through the years to understand themselves, give counsel and build up their capacity, become aware of prospects and, mainly, support themselves in methods related with formal counselling tradition.
- In most societies, there still is a genuinely embedded view that, under good circumstances, societies have supported each other with their difficulties.

Definition

- The definition of counselling and its impact will depend upon where in history counselling started.
- The first specialized dictionary of counseling (Feltham and Dryden) also describes:

“Counseling is a principle relationship characterized by the application of one or more psychological theories and a recognized set of communication skills, modified skills, modified by experience, intuition and other interpersonal factors, to clients’ intimate concerns, problems or aspirations. Its predominant ethos is one of facilitation rather than of advice giving or coercion. It may be of very brief or long duration, take place in an organizational or private practice setting and may or may not overlap with practical, medical and other matters of personal welfare.”

Feltham, Colin and Dryden, Windy (2004) *Dictionary of Counseling*, 2nd ed. (London and Philadelphia: Whurr Publishers), p. 51

Continued (1)

- Leona E. Tyler understands that the principle of counseling as facilitating “wise choices of the sort on which the person’s later development depends” and Leroy Peter suggests a broad definition of counseling. He defines, “Counseling is helping people face their lives, to find answers to their lives and to grow and develop to maturity.”

Tyler, L. (1969) *The Work of the Counselor*, 3rd ed. (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts), p. 13

Peter, Leroy (1992) *Pastoral Counseling* (Nairobi: The Christian Churches Educational Association), p. 2

- As the British Association of Counseling definition quoted by Colin Feltham and Windy Dryden nicely put it,

“... people become engaged in counseling when a person, occupying regularly or temporarily the role of counselor offers or agrees explicitly to offer time, attention and respect to another person or persons temporarily in the role of client. The task of counseling is to give the client an opportunity to explore, discover and clarify ways of living more resourcefully and toward greater well-being.”

Feltham, Colin and Dryden, Windy (2004) *Dictionary of Counseling*, 2nd ed. (London and Philadelphia: Whurr Publishers), p. 51

Continued (2)

- American Counselling Association Governing Council has approved a new definition of counselling. “Counseling is a professional relationship that empowers diverse individuals, families, and groups to accomplish mental health, wellness, education, and career goals.”

American Counseling Association (2010) Available at <<http://www.counseling.org/Resources/>>

- Ndondo describes counseling as a process in which the individuals having acknowledged emotional difficulties are assisted by the counselor to understand their difficulties clearly.

Ndondo, O. (2004) *Guidance and Counseling for Schools and Colleges* (Nairobi Oxford University Press)

Continued (3)

- The definition also includes these additional attributes:
 - Counselling deals with wellness, personal growth, career, and pathological concerns. In other words, counsellors work in areas that involve relationships. These areas include intra- and interpersonal concerns related to finding meaning and adjustment in such settings a schools, families, and careers.
 - Counselling is conducted with persons who are considered to be functioning well and those who are having more serious problems. Counselling meets the needs of a wide spectrum of people.
 - Clients seen by counsellors have developmental or situational concerns that require help in regard to adjustment or remediation.
 - Counselling is theory based. Counsellors draw from a number of theoretical approaches, including
 - those that are cognitive, affective, behavioural, and systemic. These theories may be applied to individuals, groups, and families.

The Main Aims of Counselling

- To help individuals who need help get close into the foundation and development of mental, emotional, psychological problems, guiding to an improved ability to take rational control over moods and activities.
- To help individuals to change disturbed behaviour.
- To help individuals to approach the direction of their satisfying capability, or reach an integration of conflicting sources within themselves
- To assist individuals with good information, understanding, knowledge and awareness, this can allow them to deal with social deficiency.

Factors

- The counselling process is influenced by several characteristics that help it become a productive time for the client and counsellor. Not all characteristics apply to all situations, but generally, the following help bring about positive results.
- The main factors in Counselling are:
 - **Structure** - joint understanding between the counsellor and client regarding the characteristics, conditions, procedures, and parameters of counselling.
 - **Setting** with Privacy, Confidentiality, Quiet and Certain comfort
 - **Client Qualities** - Clients, depending on culture, initially like to work with counsellors who are perceived as experts, attractive, trustworthy.
 - **Counsellor Qualities** with important skills – Good listener, Empathy

Conclusion

- Counselling is not about giving advice or providing solutions but facilitating – putting a person at ease, being attentive and helping that person tell their ‘story’, or talk about what is troubling them. In so doing, that person will be in a much better position to make a decision about what to do.
- It is helping individuals with good understanding
- It can create connection and discussion between a caregiver and an individual who needs help.
- Counselling is offered under a range of models with diverse meanings.

Learning Journal

- Keeping a Learning Journal is a course requirement
- Guidelines for keeping a Learning Journal are on “Online Classroom Portal” (<http://class.eotc-edu.org>)
 - follow the course materials link to ‘Introduction to Psychological Counselling’ folder
 - look in Additional Learning Materials.
- Record your impressions, self-observations and reflections, responses to course exercises and material.
- Your Learning Journal is an aid to learning about yourself.
- Spend a few minutes by yourself, jot down some notes that you can use later to record in your learning journal your initial impressions of today.
- Write your learning journal each week after lesson.

Hopes – Listening Exercise

1. What are your hopes for this course?
2. List your understandings about ‘Counselling’.

Next – Week 2 Session

- We continue the Counselling Theory.

References

- American Counselling Association (2010) Available at <<http://www.counselling.org/Resources/>>
- Claringbull, Norman (2010) What is Counselling & Psychotherapy?
- Feltham, Colin and Dryden, Windy (2004) Dictionary of Counselling, 2nd ed. (London and Philadelphia: Whurr Publishers)
- Guindon, Mary (2011) A Counselling Primer: An Introduction to the Profession (New York and Hove: Routledge/ Taylor and Francis Group)
- McLeod, J. (1998) An Introduction to Counselling, 2nd ed. (Buckingham: Oxford University Press)
- Ndondo, O. (2004) Guidance and Counselling for Schools and Colleges (Nairobi Oxford University Press)
- Peter, Leroy (1992) Pastoral Counselling (Nairobi: The Christian Churches Educational Association)
- Tyler, L. (1969) The Work of the Counsellor, 3rd ed. (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts)