

Three stages of Counselling in Perspective

Overview of three of the main approaches used by professional counsellors, psychodynamic, humanistic and behavioural – there are many more approaches but these three are the most commonly practised. While some professional counsellors use only one approach, others are more flexible and might use techniques from more than one method.

Counselling Theories, Approaches and Techniques

Theories tell us why people do and what they do.

Some theories are applied to specific group while other theories are applied to large populations.

Various theories have been advanced to explain human growth and development.

These Counselling theories traditionally have been grouped according to their common underlying principal,

This theories includes;

- 1. Psychoanalytic theory**
- 2. Behaviour theory**
- 3. Cognitive theory**
- 4. Humanistic theory**

The theories provide the justification for Counselling and a basis on which practice is founded.

- It is important that Counsellors be able to accurately describe what they do rather than rely on the assumption that others know what they do.
- A Client approach to counsellor is expecting a service, and Counsellors should be able to state exactly what that service is.
- Counsellors have a responsibility to inform their clients about when they can help and what they cannot help - Counselling is a helping service, but it cannot help in all cases.
- Counselling is essentially information giving and the information must be accepted and used by the client in order to effect changes in himself/herself.

Psychoanalytic theory

- Psychoanalytical theory was developed from the work of Sigmund Freud; an Australian psychiatrist (1856-1939).
- His work centred on the unconscious mind and investigates the drives and impulses for behaviour.

Directive/clinical/Counsellor centred Counselling

This theory rely on Counsellor or therapist, who is the major player,

- The counsellor directs the client to do what he/she feels can help in solving the client's problem.
- Counsellor who uses this method draws from his/her competence and experience and prescribe solutions to the clients problems

PSYCHOANALYTICAL COUNSELLING

- Freud maintain that personality development is connected with three areas of personality:

Psychodynamic Approach to Counselling

Psychodynamic counselling evolved from the work of Sigmund Freud. During his career as a medical doctor, Freud came across many patients who suffered from medical conditions which appeared to have no 'physical cause'. This led him to believe that the origin of such illnesses lay in the unconscious mind of the patient. Freud's work investigated the unconscious mind in order to understand his patients and assist in their healing.

Over time many of Freud's original ideas have been adapted, developed, disregarded or even discredited, bringing about many different schools of thought and practice. However, psychodynamic counselling is based on Freud's idea that true knowledge of people and their problems is possible through an understanding of particular areas of the human mind, these areas are:

The Conscious – things that we are aware of, these could be feelings or emotions, anger, sadness, grief, delight, surprise, happiness, etc.

The Subconscious – these are things that are below our conscious awareness but fairly easily accessible. For example with appropriate questioning a past event which a client had forgotten about may be brought back into the conscious mind.

The Unconscious – is the area of the mind where memories have been suppressed and is usually very difficult to access. Such memories may include extremely traumatic events that have been blocked off and require a highly skilled practitioner to help recover.

Freud's main interest and aim was to bring things from the unconscious into the conscious. This practice is known as psychoanalysis. Psychoanalysis is used to encourage the client to examine childhood or early memory trauma to gain a deeper understanding – this in turn may help the client to release negativities that they still hold, associated with earlier events. Psychoanalysis is based upon the assumption that only by becoming aware of earlier dilemmas, which have been repressed into our unconscious because of painful associations, can we progress psychologically.

Freud also maintained that the personality consists of three related elements:

Id, Ego and Superego

Id - The Id is the part of our personality concerned with satisfying instinctual basic needs of food, comfort and pleasure – the Id is present from (or possibly before) birth.

Ego – Defined as "The realistic awareness of self". The 'Ego' is the logical and commonsense side to our personality. Freud believed that the Ego develops as the infant becomes aware that it is a separate being from its parents.

Superego – The Superego develops later in a child's life from about the age of three, according to Freud. Superego curbs and controls the basic instincts of the Id, which may be socially unacceptable. The Superego acts as our conscience.

Freud believed that everybody experiences tension and conflict between the three elements of their personalities. For example, desire for pleasure (from the Id) is restrained by the moral sense of right and wrong (from the Superego). The Ego balances up the tension between the Id wanting to be satisfied and the Superego being over strict. The main goal of psychodynamic counselling, therefore, is to help people to balance the three elements of their personality so that neither the Id nor the Superego is dominant.

HUMANISTIC THEORY

- Carl Rogers (1902-1987) and Abraham Maslow took humanistic approach to personality theory.
- They believed in the basic goodness of human nature and inherent desire of individuals to achieve higher level of functioning.
- Humanistic theory emphasizes the essential elements of being human-the genuineness, inherent worth and dignity of human beings and people should explore their potential for growth and achievement.
- The role of the Counsellor is to provide the necessary conducive climate characterized by core conditions to enable clients to solve their own problems.

Humanistic Counselling depends on the assumptions that:

- Individuals should have the freedom to explore their subjective experience
- The people should be aware of their inner feelings.
- People have the capacity to solve their own problems.
- Counsellor should be genuine, empathic and warm.

The humanistic theory suggests a particular Counselling process (e.g., the Egan model) divided into four stages;

- i) Relationship building
- ii) Exploration-Counsellor facilitates client to look at the issues that concern him or her.
- iii) Understanding-It occurs after the issues have been identified and prioritised for action.
- vi) action plan-Counsellor and client have drawn up a plan of action that the client can implement.

CLIENT CENTRED/NON DIRECTIVE COUNSELLING

- Theory rely on client –centred/ non–directive Counselling take the opposite of directive Counselling
- The Counsellors believe that the client can achieve his/her own goals.
- Counsellor gives the client the opportunity to determine his/her own direction.
- The client comes willingly for help and accepts specific conditions for Counselling.
- The Counsellor and the client talk freely and extensively about the presenting problem
- The Counsellor and client freely and extensively discuss about the presenting problem and finally the client is able to determine the solution.

Benefits and limitations in relation

- Humanistic theories of Counselling enable the Client to be the expert and to make their own decisions. Humanistic Counselling empowers the client.
- VCT, however, even though the session is client focused, the Counsellor leads the session to ensure that all issues are covered, so it is not totally humanistic.

Humanistic Approach to Counselling

In contrast to the psychodynamic approach to counselling, childhood events and difficulties are not given the same importance in the humanistic counselling process. Humanistic counselling recognises the uniqueness of every individual. Humanistic counselling assumes that everyone has an innate capacity to grow emotionally and psychologically towards the goals of self-actualisation and personal fulfilment.

Humanistic counsellors work with the belief that it is not life events that cause problems, but how the individual experiences life events. How we experience life events will in turn relate to how we feel about ourselves, influencing self-esteem and confidence. The Humanistic approach to counselling encourages the client to learn to understand how negative responses to life events can lead to psychological discomfort. The approach aims for acceptance of both the negative and positive aspects of oneself.

Humanistic counsellors aim to help clients to explore their own thoughts and feelings and to work out their own solutions to their problems. The American psychologist, Carl Rogers developed one of the most commonly used humanistic therapies, Client-Centred Counselling, which encourages the client to concentrate on how they feel at the present moment.

Client-Centred Counselling The central theme of client-centred counselling is the belief that we all have inherent resources that enable us to deal with whatever life brings.

Client-centred therapy focuses on the belief that the client - and not the counsellor - is the best expert on their own thoughts, feelings, experiences and problems. It is therefore the client who is most capable of finding the most appropriate solutions. The counsellor does not suggest any course of action, make recommendations, ask probing questions or try to interpret anything the client says. The responsibility for working out problems rests wholly with the client. When the counsellor does respond, their aim is to reflect and clarify what the client has been saying.

A trained client-centred counsellor aims to show empathy, warmth and genuineness, which they believe will enable the client's self-understanding and psychological growth.

Empathy involves being able to understand the client's issues from their *own frame of reference*. The counsellor should be able to accurately reflect this understanding back to the client.

Warmth is to show the client that they are valued, regardless of anything that happens during the counselling session. The counsellor must be **non-judgmental**, accepting whatever the client says or does, without imposing evaluations.

Genuineness (sometimes termed **congruence**) refers to the counsellor's ability to be open and honest and not to act in a superior manner or hide behind a 'professional' facade.

BEHAVIOUR THEORY

- In behaviour Counselling the Counsellor takes a directive role, believe that he/she is there to help the client and that the Counsellor has something to offer to help the client solve a problem.

Behavioural Counselling is based on the following themes:

- The consequences of a behaviour rather than its causes
- The immediate effect of dysfunction behaviour
- The therapeutic interventions that are aimed at unlearning a dysfunctional behaviour and replacing it with approved behaviour.
- The motivations for behaviour are mainly environmental.

Techniques of behaviour Counselling include:

- Visualization
- Feedback
- Role – play
- Desensitisation

BENEFITS AND LIMITATIONS IN RELATION

- Behavioural theories emphasize the responsibility of the client and focus on action planning and self – management.
- This emphasis is strongly relevant to planning risk-reduction strategies.
- Behavioural theory is not focused on the emotional responses of the client or the way in which the past will influence the present.
- It can therefore feel a little cold and mechanical.
- Behaviour theory works much faster than psychoanalysis, behavioural therapists usually see clients for a number of sessions whereas the majority of clients for VCT are seen only once.

Behavioural Approach to Counselling

The Behavioural Approach to Counselling focuses on the assumption that the environment determines an individual's behaviour. How an individual responds to a given situation is due to behaviour that has been reinforced as a child. For example, someone who suffers from arachnophobia will probably run away screaming (response) at the sight of a spider (stimulus). Behavioural therapies evolved from psychological research and theories of learning concerned with observable behaviour, i.e. behaviour that can be objectively viewed and measured.

Behaviourists believe that that behaviour is 'learned' and, therefore, it can be unlearned. This is in contrast to the psychodynamic approach, which emphasises that behaviour is determined by instinctual drives.

Behaviour therapy focuses on the behaviour of the individual and aims to help him/her to modify unwanted behaviours. According to this approach unwanted behaviour is an undesired response to something or someone in a person's environment. Using this approach a counsellor would identify the unwanted behaviour with a client and together they would work to change or adapt the behaviour. For example, a client who feels anxious around dogs

would learn a more appropriate response to these animals. Problems which respond well to this type of therapy include phobias, anxiety attacks and eating disorders. Behavioural counsellors or therapists use a range of behaviour modification techniques.

Once the unwanted behaviour is identified, the client and counsellor might continue the process by drawing up an action plan of realistic, attainable goals. The aim would be that the unwanted behaviour stops altogether or is changed in such a way that it is no longer a problem.

Clients might be taught skills to help them manage their lives more effectively. For example, they may be taught how to relax in situations that produce an anxiety response and rewarded or positively reinforced when desirable behaviour occurs. Another method used involves learning desirable behaviour by watching and copying others who already behave in the desired way. In general, the behavioural approach is concerned with the outcome rather than the process of change.

The behavioural counsellor uses the skills of listening, reflection and clarification, but rather than use them as a process of revealing and clarifying the client's thoughts and feelings, the skills would be used to enable the counsellor to make an assessment of all the factors relating to the undesirable behaviour.

Conclusion

Counselling, in different forms and with different interpretations, has existed in societies for a long time. Counselling has now become institutionalized. Schools, for example, have to a large extent taken over the task of providing psychological support to boys and girls.

The differences and contradictions in present-day counselling have their origin in the social and historical forces that have shaped modern culture. People in all societies, and at all times, have experienced emotional or psychological distress and behavioural problems. In each culture, there have been well established ways and methods of helping individuals with their problems.

Young boys and girls are a large segment of the population. It, therefore, makes strategic sense to target them through guidance and counselling. Counselling is important at this stage, because this is when boys and girls develop positive sexual attitudes and practices. It is when students begin to understand who they are, and how they can contribute to healthy relationships. They start to develop attitudes of respect toward members of the opposite sex, and see how each community member can contribute to development. Personal and social