

UNIT – II COUNSELLING PROCESS

Building Counselling Relationships:

Introduction

The most important element in a counselling relationship, whether a single session or long-term counselling, is the quality of the relationship between the counsellor and the client.

For this reason, basic counselling courses spend a large amount of time on how to effectively build

relationships.

There are five factors influencing the counselling process:

1. Seriousness of the presenting problem (the more distressed a client is, the greater improvement they will experience)
2. Structure (helping clients understand what counselling will involve, setting time limits and expectations, etc.)
3. Client initiative or motivation
4. The physical setting in which counselling occurs
5. Client and counsellor qualities

Seriousness of Presenting Problem

The more distressed a client is when they first come in for counselling, the greater the reduction in distress they will experience during counselling. (Leibert, 2004)

Edwin Schneidman once said that the more intense the crisis, the less trained an individual needs to be to respond. This is why many individuals are talked down from bridges by totally untrained individuals while the management of low-level suicidal ideation requires extensive clinical training structure.

The structure of counselling helps build relationships by providing expectations. This involves

setting practical limits like an understanding of the length of sessions, explaining what will happen during each session, letting clients know what they can do in emergencies or high-risk crisis situations, and other elements that impact the procedure of counselling.

Most clients experience anxiety before the counselling session so the more expectations will help.

Client Initiative

Clients may be reluctant to enter counselling or even mandated to attend because of the legal system, mental health treatment or other situations. Gladding and Alderson (2012) give several suggestions for how clients can help provide initiative to clients:

- Anticipate the feelings a client may display
- Demonstrate understanding, acceptance and a non-judgemental attitude
- Try to persuade clients of the benefits of proceeding through counselling
- Use of gentle confrontation (point out how client behaviours are moving them away from their goals)

Physical Setting

Pressly and Heesacker (2001) noted that physical elements in a counselling office can contribute to

the development of the counselling relationship. For instance, brighter colours were associated with more positive emotions, while softer light was associated with more positive feelings than more intense light. As well, physical barriers between client and counsellor (like a desk) has been

associated with reduced perception of empathy.

Empathy

Empathy is the ability to enter a client's world and understand their perspective. (Rogers, 2007)

Empathy may be separated into two categories: primary empathy and advanced empathy.

Primary empathy is the ability for a counsellor to respond in a way that shows they've understood

the situation a client is experiencing. (Singh, 2015) This is the level of empathy that crisis line workers aim for. On the Carkhuff and Truax Scale this is level 3 or Interchangeable or Reciprocal

Level of Responding. Advanced empathy is a more in-depth procedure, helping to bring elements the

client was holding subconsciously or below their awareness. (Veach, LeRoy & Bartels, 2003)

Building an Effective Working Alliance

While a counsellor can use empathy during their conversation during a client to begin building the

relationship they need to continue establishing the 3 components required for an effective working

alliance identified by Horvath (2001). Working Alliance consists of three components:

1. Agreement about what goals to be accomplished in therapy
2. Agreement about tasks (how will those goals be accomplished)
3. Bond between counsellor and client

Attending Behaviour

Attending behaviour is the physical and behavioural choices a counsellor makes in order to show a client that they are paying attention. The acronym SOLER (Egan, 2007) is one acronym to remember how to show attending in person. The SOLER elements apply only to those in Western (North American or other British cultures) – it is important to modify your approach for other cultural backgrounds.

- S – Sit Squarely
- O – Open Posture
- L – Lean Towards the Client

- E – Eye Contact
- R – Relax

Factors that Influence the Counselling process :

The effectiveness of counselling isn't all down to the counsellor nor is it completely within the control of the client, according to Dr Scott D. Miller's research. What's happening with the client both in terms of beliefs and of circumstances is a key factor (40%).

So is the therapeutic relationship (30%). Smaller contributors include the client's degree of hopefulness (15%) and the type of therapy used by the counsellor (15%).

Extra-therapeutic Client Factors (40 percent of effectiveness).

These include the client's personal strengths, weaknesses and other characteristics including beliefs and attitudes; and also factors in the client's environment that help or hinder. How the therapist can help: Identify and talk about strengths while helping client to deal with weaknesses. Tailor solutions to client's beliefs and values.

Therapeutic Relationship (30 percent of effectiveness). Empathy, warmth, acceptance (i.e. Rogerian factors) perceived by client.

How the therapist can help: Be warm and empathic. Address issues the client wants to deal with i.e. work with the client's goals rather than those of your theoretical model. Be collaborative – don't dictate.

Realistic hope (15 percent of effectiveness).

This refers to the client's hopefulness about the outcome and the possibility of improvement. How

the therapist can help: Communicate hopefulness about what can be achieved. Don't get stuck in the

past – look also at what is possible now and in the future.

Model of counselling (15 percent of effectiveness)

Using the right approach for the particular client or situation. The approach should be tailored to the client's needs, beliefs and strengths. How the therapist can help: Be willing to change the approach/model to suit the needs of the client on the day.

Seriousness of the presenting problem, Structure, Initiative, The physical setting,

Client qualities and Counsellor qualities :

€ The first stage in counselling involves establishing a solid therapeutic alliance with the client. € There are several factors that influence the counselling process including the following: - STRUCTURE - INITIATIVE - PHYSICAL SETTING - EMPATHY & RAPPORT

Structure refers to the characteristics and conditions of counselling including the time frame, frequency of sessions, place of sessions and the role of the client and sessions, and the role of the client and counselor

€ Structure counteracts instability in clients' lives with stability

€ In some theories of counselling, structure serves the purpose of creating an attachment relationship between the counsellor and client similar to the relationship between an infant and his/her parent The level of structure needed depends on the nature of the client's presenting problems

€ In a crisis situations, change in the counselling structure may be necessary (e.g., suicidal client)

€ The nature of the structure of counselling and the physical setting in which it takes place may also need to vary in response to the culture and expectations of the client € Initiative refers to the client's motivation to change and inclination to make an effort to move towards changing or improving in response to interventions used in counselling

€ Two types of problems in initiative: 1) Reluctance 2) Resistance

€ Pre-contemplation: involves denying one has a problem or becoming defensive in holding onto one's current ways of being

€ Contemplation: involves the development of a willingness to change, paired with some barriers to going ahead with it

€ Preparation: involves feeling ready to move towards change but not yet being totally clear on one's goals or not being

fully committed to changing Action: involves the client actively working towards change in their lives.

€ Maintenance: involves the client taking the steps to maintain the changes that they have already

initiated. The physical setting of where counselling takes place often serves as a very important element in the general counselling experience for clients.

1. Professional counselors are licensed mental health therapists who provide assessment, diagnosis and counseling to people facing a variety of life stresses and psychological problems. They help people with relationship issues, family problems, job stress,

mental health disorders such as depression and anxiety, and many other challenging problems that can impact feelings of well-being and happiness. To be effective in their roles, counselors should enjoy helping others and possess specific attributes and skills. The personal and professional qualities of counsellors are very important in facilitating any helping relationship. A counsellor must be well equipped to assist individuals to make adjustments and live a happy and harmonious life. For effective counseling, the counselor must be equipped with two kinds of data. First he must have data relating to the counselee's background aptitudes, achievements, interests, plans etc. Further, he must have the skill to interpret this data. Secondly, the counsellor must have information about the areas in which the counselee may seek his assistance. These areas may be educational or personal.

2. 3. • A person trained to give guidance on personal or psychological problems. • A person who gives advice on a specified subject. • A person who advises students or others on personal problems or academic and occupational choice.

3. 4. • Educational counselors offer a wide range of services to families of students

seeking to enroll in different fields. These services vary depending on when the counselor is hired. For secondary school students, college admissions counselors can help shape the early academic path for these young scholars. After learning about the interests, academic goals and career goals of the student, the counselor can begin making suggestions, beginning with class choices. The counselor may also make recommendations on extracurricular activities, clubs and volunteer opportunities to pursue.

4. 5. A GOOD COUNSELOR HAS SEVERAL BASIC QUALITIES: 1. Professional Qualities:

• He know the demands and responsibilities of the counseling profession. • He knows the aims and objectives of counseling. • He is aware of the steps and techniques involved in the

counseling process. • He has the best interest of the counselee in mind and receives the trust of the counselee. • He is confident and well versed in the methods and approaches of counseling.

5. 6. 2. Personal Qualities: • The counselor respects the client's individuality and dignity.

- He knows the psychology of each client, how they think and behave.
- He is kind and sympathetic to clients' problems and anxieties.
- He is gentle, especially when sorting out corrective measures.
- He is dignified and neat in his manners, speech and appearance.
- He is in control of his emotions especially of anger, impatience and frustrations.
- He is able to use humor and laughter in his counseling, laugh with clients, not laugh at them

6. 7. 3. Communication Skills:

- Effective counselors should have excellent communication skills.
- Counselors need to have a natural ability to listen and be able clearly explain their ideas and thoughts to others.

4. Acceptance:

- The ability to relate to clients with an open, nonjudgmental attitude.
- Accepting the client for who she is and in her current situation.
- Counsellors need to be able to convey acceptance to their clients with warmth and understanding.

7. 8. 5. Empathy: • Counselors must be able to display empathy, the ability to feel what another person is feeling. • Empathy means that you are truly able to imagine what it's like to stand in someone else's shoes. • Compassion and empathy help your clients feel understood and heard.

6. Problem-Solving Skills: • It's not up to a counselor to solve her clients' problems, no matter how much she might want to help. • Counselors must have excellent problem-solving skills to

be able to help their clients identify and make changes to negative thought patterns and other harmful behaviors.

8. 9. 7. Rapport-Building Skills: • Counselors must possess a strong set of interpersonal skills to help establish rapport with clients and develop strong relationships. • Counselors need to be able to place all of their focus on what their clients are saying and avoid being distracted by their own personal problems or concerns when they are in a session.

9. 10. 8. Flexibility: • Flexibility in counseling is defined as the ability to adapt and change the way you respond to meet your clients' needs. • You don't stay rigid and stick to a predetermined treatment path when your clients require a different approach. • Being flexible is one of the most important attributes of a professional counselor.

10. 11. 9. Self-Awareness: • Self-awareness is the ability to look within and identify your own unmet psychological needs and desires. • Such as a need for intimacy or the desire to be professionally competent. • This ability prevents your issues from affecting or conflicting with those of your clients. • Self-awareness has a major impact on a counselor's effectiveness.

10. Multicultural Competency: • Counselors help people from all walks of life. • Multicultural competency means that you try to relate to and understand your clients regardless of their race, ethnicity, religious or political beliefs or socioeconomic background.

11. 12. 11. Human Skills: • Counseling effectiveness is measured by outcomes, so skills are required that facilitate clients improve their lives through changes in their thought processes and behavior

• A skilled counselor can identify negative thinking patterns and enable the clients to replace them with positive ones.

- The process involves goal-setting and creating appropriate action plans with the client.
- The counselor needs to be able to challenge, pressure and motivate the client, especially when the client is resistant or finds it difficult to face painful memories.
- By using the voice to relax the client, the counselor enables him to face challenges more effectively.

12. 13. 12. Practice Management Skills: • Whether running her own practice or simply managing her workload as an employee, the counselor needs to possess a number of organizational skills including prioritizing and timekeeping. • Failure to be organized can result in the counselor herself appearing unprofessional and potentially have catastrophic outcomes for the clients and the practice. • Good record-keeping is particularly important, because all records must be treated confidentially and the counselor will be responsible for effective note-taking during the session. • Conducting the session in a professional manner involves a number of skills, including the ability to adhere to a timescale and avoiding disclosing personal information.

- It is essential the counselor learns to control her own emotional involvement during difficult sessions, which may raise personal issues of her own.

Types of Initial Interviews:

There are three types of clinical interviews: structured, unstructured, and semistructured. The type of interview used varies according to the setting and the theoretical or professional orientation of the therapist. A structured interview requires that the same questions be asked of each client in an identical manner. An unstructured interview allows the counselor to determine the questions and topics covered during the interview. A semistructured interview combines these formats. Specific questions are always asked, but these are coupled

with opportunities to explore unique client circumstances. There are advantages and disadvantages to each interview format. The questions asked in a structured interview have been researched to determine if they are reliable and whether they elicit useful and valid information.

Consequently, the structured interview provides more consistent information. However, a structured interview may not be appropriate for clients with less common problems or clients from diverse cultures. Although the unstructured interview can be adjusted for individual clients, its effectiveness depends on the clinician's interviewing skills and ability to interpret the clients' answers.

Conducting the Initial Interview :

When interviewing job candidates, you want to determine what sort of people they are, how good their interpersonal skills are, how they might react under stress, whether they have the skills for the job, and whether they have been honest in their resumes.

- Introduce yourself. Greeting candidates courteously shows respect for them and will help put them at ease. Tell them something about yourself and the company. This is the first impression

the candidate will make of you, so present a tidy office and turn off your cellphone.

- Set the stage. Set the tone by telling the applicant what to expect for the next half hour or so. Remember, you too are being observed. Your behaviour will set the tone for the interview. If you come across as being too casual, an applicant may take the interview less seriously. But being too serious will likely make the candidate more nervous. In either case, you're unlikely to bring out the best in the individual. How you conduct yourself during the interview must also reflect the image and values of your business.

- Review the job. Spell out what the position involves in more detail than was outlined in the job posting, so candidates can make sure the job is right for them. Let them know what the core

duties and responsibilities will be, and any working conditions that may affect them. Say whether the position is permanent or temporary, or on contract.

- Start with generalized questions. Begin by asking a few questions about a candidate's background and interest in the position. Get candidates to tell you about how they see themselves in relation to the job and what they can contribute.
- Review the applicant's resume. Ask candidates about specific positions on their resume that relate to the position you are hiring for. Ask them about job details, responsibilities, what they accomplished, pressures they encountered. Ask about any inconsistencies or gaps in employment or education, as there may be a simple explanation. Ask about the candidate's reasons for leaving a past or current job.
- Ask some consistent questions. Use a specific set of questions for all applicants. This will help you to compare candidates and find the one whose skills and abilities most closely match what you're looking for.
- Vary your questions. It's important that you ask questions on skills specifically related to the duties and responsibilities of the position. This will help you uncover candidates' strengths and weaknesses. Don't forget that open-ended questions are best during interviews, such as "What was the most difficult challenge of your last job?"
- Give candidates a chance to ask questions. Confidently answering any question thrown at you means knowing all aspects of the position and being able to clarify your expectations, in addition to listing the benefits of working for your business. Applicants should be given the chance both to answer your questions and to ask questions of their own to determine if the job and the company are right for them. Their questions can help you assess whether candidates have adequately prepared for the interview and are genuinely interested in the job. An effective strategy is the 80/20 rule: You do 80 per cent of the listening and 20 per cent of the

talking.

- Provide a timeline. Always provide an estimate of the length of time until final selection will be made. Provide an indication as to when candidates might expect to hear back from you regarding the final outcome or the next step in the recruitment process.

Exploration and the Identification of Goals

Client problems are intimately linked with client goals (Jongsma & Peterson, 1995).

Unfortunately, many clients who come to therapy are unable to see past their problems.

Consequently, it is the interviewer's task to help clients orient toward goals or solutions early in the counseling process (Bertolino & O'Hanlon, 2002; Murphy, 1997). Remember that behind (or in front of) every client problem is a client goal. Common problems presented by clients include anxiety, depression, and relationship conflicts. Other problems include eating disorders, alcoholism or drug addiction, social skill deficits, physical or sexual abuse, stress reactions, vocational confusion, and sexual

Disfunction.

Because of the wide range of symptoms or problems clients present, it is crucial that interviewers

have at least a general knowledge of psychopathology and DSM-IV-TR (American Psychiatric Association, 2000). However, every problem has an inherent goal. Therefore, early in the intake, interviewers can help clients reframe their problem statements into goal statements. For example,

when clients begin talking about anxiety, interviewers can translate such language into a positive

Framework:

"I hear you talking about your feelings of nervousness and anxiety. If I understand you correctly, what you're saying is you really want to feel calm and relaxed more often. I guess maybe

one of your general goals for therapy might be to feel calm and relaxed more often and to be able

to bring on those calm and relaxed feelings yourself. Do I have that right?" By reframing client problems into goal statements, interviewers help clients feel hopeful and also begin a positive, therapeutic goal-setting process (Selekman, 1993; J. Sommers-Flanagan & Sommers-Flanagan,

1997). Such goal-setting reframes can also provide useful assessment information regarding

the client's openness, or resistance, to actually setting realistic goals for therapy.