

UNIT - 4

Theories of Counselling

Introduction

In the earlier units, counseling has been defined. You have also become familiar with the differences in a variety of professions such as social work, psychiatry, guidance etc. The professional relationship that is established between the client and counselor is crucial for effective outcome. In this unit we will explore the basis on which counseling practice is established. Over the years, a number of systems of counseling have emerged. Most can be traced to a handful of major theories. The different types of counseling that we see today are based on a couple of personality theories. Such theories usually explain how personality develops, changes, what are the components of personality and how they are organized together.

Need For A Theory

The term theory has multiple meanings. In popular usage, theory is contrasted with practice. Theory is generally defined as a set of statements used to explain the data in a given area. A theory can be described as " a group of logically organized laws or relationships that constitute explanation in a discipline (Heinen, 1985)". Theory is a speculation about reality. When it is confirmed it becomes a fact. Theory is a set of conventions. A theorist uses a particular way of

representing data. A theory is as useful as the number of predictions it can generate concerning relevant events. A theory includes assumptions about the topic, definitions of what is studied, and guidelines to relate observations. For example, a theory of personality will

- 1) first of all define what is personality,
- 2) secondly, describe different components of personality: what is personality made up of,
- 3) tell us how personality develops,
- 4) explain why people differ or personality differences exist,
- 5) give an outline of what is the normal process of development of personality,
- 6) indicate what constitutes deviant or abnormal personality or personality disorders,
- 7) explain the causes of such problems,
- 8) and finally, tell us how personality can be changed or disorders could be cured. In

counseling, theory gives a consistent perspective on human behavior, problems that people face and ways of bringing about change. Without a guiding theory of system of counseling, counselors would be directionless. They will not know how to organize the vast amount of information they get from clients. They will not know what information to elicit and how. Without a theory to guide them, counselors will not know how to help a client overcome emotional problems. How should a counselor respond at any given time? Should a counselor empathize or challenge, analyse or advise? Good grounding in theory helps the counselor decide.

A theory helps to delimit the amount of information, organize, determine what is relevant, and prioritize the sets of data one gets. What does a theory do? It leads to collection or observation

of relevant empirical relations not yet observed. It helps formulating empirical statements, which can be verified. Secondly it helps incorporating findings within a logically consistent and reasonably simple framework. A theory is parsimonious. That is, it helps organizing and stating facts in simple and economic manner. It helps avoid getting distracted by unnecessary information. Useful theory helps focus and work with a few assumptions. A good theory should have precision and clarity. The terms used should be specific. A theory should be comprehensive- able to explain most of the events. It should be testable and, finally useful- it should help practitioners in their work. Neither theories of counseling nor of personality meet all these ideal criteria. At best, they provide the counselors with a working model to improve upon.

Counseling Theories

There are a number of theories developed to help people with psychological problems. According to one estimate, there are 400 theories of psychotherapy and counseling. Why are there so many theories? What helps a client get well is still not understood completely. Theories answer this question only in the broadest of terms. The model of human behavior that counseling theory provides helps orient counselor's work. It tells counselor what to ignore, what to emphasize, what is health and what is a psychological problem. Usually counseling practice is preceded by rigorous study of a theory, and the strategies that grow out of the theory. Counselors may identify themselves as belonging to a school or system of counseling. One may be a Rogerian, Existentialist or Freudian in terms of theoretical orientation. Now a days, most counselors do not adhere rigidly to any one theory. They are flexible and borrow from divergent theories. A preference for one orientation does not preclude the use of strategies or intervention from another way. There is now a move toward integrating different approaches. Eclecticism refers to use of techniques and or concepts from two or more theories. In recent years, more and more

psychologists, marriage and family therapists, social workers are identifying themselves as eclectics. Some of the surveys in the West show that psychoanalytic and psychodynamic theories continue to be the most popular single theoretical orientation. In recent years, Behavioral, especially cognitive behavioral approaches have become popular. Asian therapies, therapies based on Buddhist and Hindu concepts are also developing. Counseling and Psychotherapy have been influenced by Personality theories. Some major theories are: Psychoanalytic theory, Existential theory, Person centered theory, Interpersonal theory, Behaviorism, and Gestalt theory. Apart from this, there have been several theories of family dynamics, which have led to different therapeutic approaches to deal with problem families. In recent years gender and culture sensitive therapies have emerged out of ideological advances.

Id instinctively seek to reduce the tension developed through the build up of energies. An object almost people serve as targets for these instincts. The expenditure of energy through an object is blocked, delayed, transformed or even sublimated. Ego Defenses: The external reality is filled with danger and threat to organism. Ego has to master the demands of the external world as well as social and physical world. When ego is flooded by demands and excessive stimulation, it is flooded with anxiety. There are three types of anxiety. Reality anxiety is a response to external threat (a speeding method). Neurotic anxiety arises out of the unconscious. It is due to the fear that instincts may go out of control and we may do something that is prohibited.

Moral anxiety is based on feelings of guilt and shame. It is produced by conscience, which tries to control the impulses of id. Ego develops Defenses to protect against anxiety and maintain self-esteem. There are several such ego defenses.

Defense Mechanisms

There is a long list of ego defenses that we use routinely.

Here is a sample. In Projection, we attribute our own impulses to others. A student may blame teacher for his failure rather than accept that he is sub average.

In Denial, people refuse to accept reality. They do not accept the fact that they can be greedy, untruthful etc. In Repression and suppression, unwanted and embarrassing memories are forgotten and pushed into unconscious. In Displacement, people remove the impulse from original object to another. Ex.,- kicking the dog when angry with the boss. In sublimation, one channelizes impulse socially accepted activities. An aggressive person may sublimate his destructive impulses in wrestling than in fighting with others. In Rationalization, one gives a socially acceptable excuse for unacceptable behavior.

E. Personality Development: Freud argued that as a child develops, the libidinal energy is devoted to different interests and objects. The libido moves through different regions of the body or 'erogenous zones'. Sexuality is seen in infancy itself. Psychosexual development takes place in four main stages. At each stage, libido gets concentrated in one part of the body. The first stage, Oral Stage occurs during the period between birth and 18 months. Infants at this stage are governed by Id. Their activities focus on sucking, biting and spitting. Oral (pertaining to mouth) gratification and activities are important. The child enters Anal stage between 2 and 3 years. This is the time when parents try to toilet train the child. Attention is paid to elimination. Defecation gives child relief and pleasure. During the 4-5th year, child enters the Phallic stage. Boys and girls become aware of genitals and derive pleasure from stimulating them. Boy becomes aware of his penis and the girl, absence of it. A boy develops intense attraction toward mother and sees father as a rival for the attention of the mother. This Freud called Oedipus complex. The boy fears that father may retaliate by cutting off his penis and suffers from Castration Anxiety. Girls may suffer from Penis Envy as they lack the

male organ and blame mother for such a loss. Attraction toward the father in girls is called Electra complex. Resolution of both Oedipal and Electra complex lead to further development. Between 5-6 years, child enters a Latency phase, a relatively calm period. Around puberty (12-13) sexual instincts become active again and child enters Genital stage. Adolescents start experiencing attraction towards opposite sex. Fixation at any of the earlier stages leads to problems in personality development.

Psychoanalytical therapy

Both neurotic and healthy people face problems. But neurotics use substitutions to cope with conflicts. They develop irrational fears, symptoms instead of dealing with problems. During development, if Oedipal complex is not resolved properly, then psychological problems develop. The roots of neurosis, according to Freud, were in childhood experiences. Struggle between Id and defense mechanisms, the escape of unconscious material into conscious were considered responsible for symptom formation. Psychoanalysis was to be used to treat such problems. The primary aim of psychoanalysis is to make conscious what is unconscious.

Replace Id with the Ego. Therapy consisted of allowing the person to bring up old, repressed memories and childhood experiences. This would have a cathartic effect (releasing emotions) on the person. It was a slow and prolonged process in which therapist acted like a blank screen allowing client to come up with material hidden in the deeper layers of mind. Gaining full insight and restructuring the personality are the goals. Psychoanalysis involves the following techniques.

A. Free Association: The person to be analysed is made to lie on a couch. He is asked to relax and keep the eye closed. He is instructed to tell whatever comes to his mind without censoring or preventing it. This method is supposed to bring to conscious all that is hidden in the unconscious. This rule has to be obeyed for analysis to proceed. Free

association also helped abreaction or discharge of pent up emotions.

Dreaminterpretation. Freud called dreams the 'royal road to the unconscious'. Dreams allow repressed materials to come disguised forms. Dreams are forms of wish fulfillment. Dream content

has both manifest (what is apparent) and latent (hidden) conscious material appears in dream in symbolic form. For more information, read "The Interpretation of Dreams', one of the classics written by Freud.common to all human beings Persona- The way individuals present themselves in public (mask) Animus- the masculine part of the female psyche

Shadow-part of personality that contains sexual, unacceptable, aggressive instincts (like Id)

Self center of personality.

Symbols- outward expression of archetypes

Alfred Adler was another analyst who was close to Freud before breaking away to form his own school of therapy. Adler argued that the life style of a person determines how a person adapts to obstacles in his life and how he creates solutions and means of achieving goals.

Striving for superiority to compensate for inferiority complex motivates people. Family is a microcosm of society and order of birth (whether first child, last child etc) influences personality development. He talked about the development of social interest and its importance to psychological health. Counseling is seen by Adlerian therapists as a means to increase social interest, help people change self defeating behaviors and solve problems more effectively.

Adler emphasized on changing lifestyle by reading books, a process known as Bibliotherapy.

His goals for bibliotherapy are embodied in six "Es". Educate by filling in psychological knowledge and gaps Encourage by reading inspirational material Empower by reviewing goal formation and attainment Enlighten by increasing self- and other- awareness Engage with the

social world through modeling and Social mentoring Enhance by reinforcing specific points and life style changes addressed in psychotherapy.

Erik Erikson is one of the neo Freudians who broadened Freud's ideas. He modified Psycho sexual

stages fo psychosocial stages. Personality develops in stages from infancy through life to old age.

There are 8 stages of development. He is known for his concept of Identity crisis. During adolescence, individuals struggle to establish an identity of their own. Similarly, at each stage, there is a developmental task that a person should master. Failure to do so leads to problems. Mastery leads to emergence of a basic ego quality or virtue. Development does not stop in childhood. Even in old age a person has to master the changes and develop a sense of meaning. In old age, adults need to take stock of their lives and maintain integrity in the face of death. Counselors focus on contemporary struggles of the client depending on the developmental stage. Brief forms of Psycho dynamic therapies: Modern psycho dynamic theorists have moved quite far from Freud's central tenets. There is less rigidity in relation to patient selection, setting goals and methods used. Therapy is less historical and more focused on present. Many use experiemnts rather than historical methods. Therapy is seen us a cooperative venture. There is more stress on the conscious aspects. Sexuality 18 reated as just one aspect of generalized human situation. The traditional setting of couch, passivity and privacy are done away Analyst is seen as potential change ugent, Analyst is expected to mobilize the 'will power of the patient. One is not expected to wait for insight to appear before acting. Activity could lead to insight. Recent decades have witnessed the development of several brief forms of psychodynamic theories. In therapeutic practice, these theories have common themes such as: Setting a time limitation on treatment,

12-40 sessions

