

NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA

EGC 801



Principles of Guidance and Counselling **Module 3**

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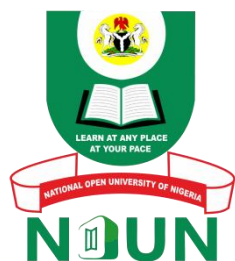
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Module 3 Counsellor's Processes, Characteristics and Training

Unit I Processes of Counselling

1.0 Introduction

The counselling process refers to the totality of activities involved in a counseling situation in which the counsellor gives to the client and to the counselling situation in such a way that the client can discover his own powers and achieve his own self-determination. The counsellor's main focus in a counselling process is the growth of his clients, but the realisation of that growth lies primarily in the counsellor's intense involvement in what is presently happening within the private world of his clients and with the relationship which he seeks to establish with his clients and with the relationship which he seeks to establish with his clients. In other words, it is not the counsellor who seeks to change the client. It is the counsellor's role is to aid such change not by taking over directions for the client but by enabling him to clarify goals and feelings to the point where he can confidently assume self-direction.

2.0 Objectives

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- define the counselling process
- discuss steps to take in the counselling process
- explain Referral Counselling

3.0 Main Content

3.1 A Hypothetical Model of the Counselling Process

1. The person comes for help: He may come of his own accord or because someone else has suggested he should. In certain cases, he may even have been told to come; if this is the case the counsellor needs to be fully aware of the fact if he is to cope effectively with the initial hostility which such pressure may have generated.
2. The counsellor attempts to relate to the client: The nature of this relationship is of crucial importance and if it goes wrong there will be little hope of achieving anything very constructive. The regard for him as a person of unquestionable value – he must convey, too, that he is willing for him to reveal his own feelings in his own way or, in other words, he must communicate his desire to help but not to control. Such acceptance is indicated by word, gesture, posture – by the total response of the counsellor to his client. This is, however, difficult to accomplish unless the counsellor actually likes his client but, without it little growth will take place. If it happens, however, and the client does begin to experience that he is unconditionally liked and respected there is hope that he will then be able to face himself in the counsellor's presence without the fear which operates so strongly against the birth of insight.

3. The helping situation is defined: It is important to structure the counselling relationship at the outset by exploring what kind of help may be possible, what period of time is available, what sort of goals (however vague initially) can be established. This does much to rid the counsellor of an aura of omniscience which the client may have ascribed to him. Structuring the counselling relationship in the context described above is highly relevant to the client since it communicates to the client that there is a shared task ahead and that this will involve work and effort on both their parts.
4. The counsellor encourages his client to give free expression to his concerns: It is at this stage that the counsellor's ability to empathise with the client needs to be communicated if further progress is to be made. Unless the client feels that he is being relieved he will quickly lose confidence in the process and become reluctant to commit himself to it. At this juncture the counsellor's ability to reflect feeling accurately and to respond at the right level will be crucial.
5. The counsellor accepts, recognises and helps to clarify negative feelings in the client: It is vital that the counsellor does not seek to evade his client's expression of fear, anger, depression, doubt or whatever it may be. Negative feelings need to be faced and vague reassurance at this stage can be positively harmful; nor must they be cut short before they have been fully expressed. Clearly, it is often painful to listen to a person denigrating himself or spelling out in endured if authentic growth is to take place later. It is usually the case that only when negative feelings have been fully explored can faint and hesitant expressions of positive impulses be voiced.
6. The counselor accepts and recognises positive feelings. In other words the counsellor's behavior will indicate an understanding totally devoid of judgment. To call a person good can be just as threatening as to call him bad for it leaves the counsellor in the position of power, able to grant or to withhold approval at will.
7. Development of insight: With a lessening of fear and anxiety, insight should now be developing and the counsellor, by his responses, will try to aid the growth of self-acceptance which is the vital concomitant of awareness if behaviour change is to occur.
8. Establishing of new goals: With the development of more self-acceptance there will come an increased clarification of needs which will lead to the tentative establishment of new goals and objectives. It is possible at this point that the counsellor's role may take on a more directive or didactic flavour for the client may set up for himself goals which require for their attainment certain forms of expertise or information which the counsellor possesses. Obvious examples might be guidance in achieving more effective study skills or authoritative information about an occupational area.
9. Growth of confidence and an ability to take decisions: At this point the client will be initiating small but significant actions and will need the counsellor's reinforcement and support. The counselor will be alert now for the moment when counselling sessions should terminate.

It is perhaps worth remarking that with some clients' stages 7, 8 and 9 may well be reversed. For many insight does indeed lead to the establishment of new goals and the development of new behaviours, but there are others for whom insight only follows in retrospect. Such clients need to gain confidence by successfully adopting more appropriate forms of behaviour before they can come to a clearer understanding of their overall needs.

10. No more need for help: Ending a counseling relationship is not always be easy and the counsellor must beware of breaking off the process prematurely. Usually, however, the client himself will take the initiative, thereby giving further proof of his desire to exercise his new-found autonomy (Adapted from Newsome et al 1973).

While this model may have presented an idea of the process which can and does occur, it is necessary to point out that in some cases the development may be very rapid while in others each step forward will painfully drag especially if the client is not willing to “open-up”.

3.2 The Stages of a Counselling Session

The Counselling session could be divided into five stages. The first stage referred to as referral takes place before actual contact with the counsellor, yet it is often considered an integral part of the counselling process. The stages as shown in Figure 3 include referral, diagnosis, treatment, termination and follow-up.

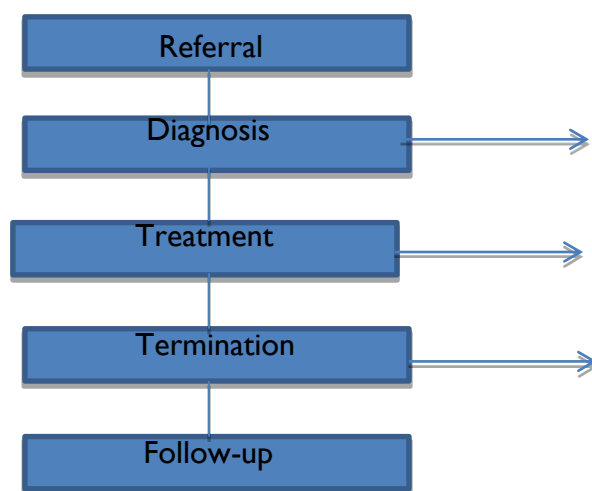


Fig. 3: The Stages of a Counselling Session

Referral in the context of counselling process has a bi-modal ‘meaning.

First, it refers to the process by which a client is brought into contact with the counsellor. Referral of clients to a counsellor could be from the family, from teachers, from medical doctors, from bosses, form other helping agencies such as hospitals, churches, prisons remand homes or other counsellors. It could also be self-referral in which the client ‘of his own accord seeks assistance from a counsellor. These various sources of referral have implications for the counselling process itself. Referral in the context described above is the first stage of counselling session. The second context in which referral is used implies the sending away of a client to more appropriate helpers whose expertise best suits the needs of the client. Referral in this context can take place at any stage of a counseling session, but it would be most suitable after diagnosis.

The underlying assumption in referral is that a counsellor may not be the best available counsellor for every client or every type of problem, and this may become apparent at any stage of counselling for a particular client. Some counsellors have mixed feelings about referral. They sometimes feel inadequate or ambivalent, experiencing both a sense of failure and relief about referring their clients. It must be pointed out that referring client to a superior or a more appropriate helper does not imply failure on the part of the counsellor. A good counsellor should endeavor to refer his clients whenever it is necessary. The

following are some of the circumstances in which it is ethically responsible and appropriate for counsellors to make referral:

1. The client wishes to be referred.
2. The client needs longer-term work, an open-ended contract, or more frequent sessions than the 'counsellor can afford or, if the counselling demands of the client are not possible 'within the constraints of the agency's policy (if the counsellor is employed by any agency).
3. The counsellor feels overwhelmed, does not understand or has insufficient training or experience to deal with the presenting problem.
4. The presenting problem is one for which others more appropriate or specialist agencies exist. Similarly, at a later or action-planning stage of counselling it becomes apparent that the client needs more specialist advice, information, longer-term counselling, or practical help.
5. The client persistently fails to respond to the counsellor's counselling efforts and may be helped more effectively by someone else.
6. The client needs medical attention.
7. The client shows signs of severe mental illness and is not able to continue without intensive care and support.
8. There is in the counsellor's view a real risk or harm to the client or others.
9. The counsellor or the client is leaving the area to live somewhere else.
10. The counsellor experiences a very strong negative reaction to a client or there is a clash of personalities.
11. When it is discovered that the counsellor and the client share a close relationship.

You and 'your clients can experience a whole range of emotions about referral. While it can bring a real sense of relief and hope, referral can also be disruptive and disappointing. Clients can feel hurt, rejected and reluctant to start again with someone else, or feel that counselling is not for them anyway. Those who have been passed on from one counsellor to another may come to believe that their problem is too big for any counselor and that they are beyond help. Other clients in similar situations feel powerless and become very angry. Referrals in the early stage of the relationship are likely to be less emotionally fraught for both client and counsellor.

Whenever the possibility of referral arises, it is always appropriate that a decision about it is made with the client, although the initial suggestion may come from the counsellor. The process can be brief or take a number of weeks or longer, and the counsellor may wish to serve as a 'bridge' and provide short-term supportive counselling. Facilitating any referral involves a number of tasks to ensure as far as possible that clients feel generally positive about it.

These include:

- Checking that the agency or individual will be able to accept the referral.
- Helping clients explore and perhaps resolve any emotional blocks towards the agency or referral.
- Working towards bringing clients' perceptions of the problem close enough to that of the referral agency for the referral to "work".
- Explaining the nature of the help that might be offered and perhaps encouraging the client to consider accepting the help.
- Helping clients if necessary to make their own approach or application.
- Reviewing what has been achieved with clients and exploring what still needs to be achieved and how the referral agency may contribute to this.
- Anticipating and exploring ways of coping with possible differences and potential difficulties in starting work with someone else.
- Letting clients know that referral doesn't end your care and concern.

In order to increase the number of options and establish an efficient referral system the counsellor needs to develop his own personal contacts and resources file, with people in a variety of occupations-lawyers, osteopaths, psychiatrists, but particularly counsellors and psychotherapists with different strengths and specializations.

In addition to the nature of the help offered by an agency or individual, it is useful for the counsellor's resources file to contain adequate information on each agency, e. g.

- Name of the contact person, telephone number and address; whether they offer a 24-hour service, drop-in or appointment system;
- Scale of fees charged, if any, or if financial assistance is available;
- Likely waiting time;
- how the referral can be made and by whom;
- whether they offer a telephone service;
- whether they send information or publications;
- theoretical orientation of counselors;
- training and supervision of counsellors;
- code of ethics to which counsellors subscribe;
- whether the agency offers individual and/ or group counselling.

b. Diagnosis: This stage which is often the first contact between the client and the counsellor, is preoccupied with the attempt to clarify the nature and the associated causes of the client's problems. Thus, diagnosis embodies the attempt of the counsellor to establish rapport with the client. This involves the establishment of mutual trust between them so that further progress could be made. The establishment of rapport assists the so-called **Intake-Interview** to which a number of questions are asked so as to encourage the client to talk about his problems.

During this stage, some counsellors use a range of assessment procedures and devices which may involve lengthy intake interviews, case histories, and psychological tests. Observations, and diagnostic classifications systems (e. g. dsm – III).

Diagnostic procedures are employed in counselling sessions to obtain a full picture of the clients' problems. Whichever diagnostic method used, assessment of the client's problem(s) will typically be concerned with one or more of the following' objectives.

- a) Helping the client understand the nature of the client's presenting' problem and related issues:
- b) Identifying' the factors that may be associated with the problem and the client's experience or behaviour.
- c) Determining the client's expectation and desired outcomes.
- d) Collecting' baseline data that can be compared with subsequent data to evaluate progress.
- e) Facilitating' the client's learning' and motivation by sharing' the counsellor's view of the problem. This may in itself contribute to therapeutic hang through increasing' self-awareness.
- f) Producing' an initial assessment (formulation) which provides the counsellor with the basis for, first, making' a decision about whether to offer a counselling' contract, to initiate referral or to suggest that counselling' would not be appropriate, and second to provide the basis for 'developing' a therapeutic or counselling' plan, including' the length and pattern of contract.

Categories in Diagnosis

Various kinds of information can be gathered or areas explored during assessment:

- a) Presenting problem – including' affective (emotions, feelings, mood), somatic (body-related sensations), behavioural (what the client does or doesn't do) and cognitive (thoughts, beliefs, attitudes, values, images, fantasies, internal dialogue) elements.
- b) Antecedents – factors that may have influenced or caused the presenting' problem.
- c) Consequences – factors which may be maintaining it, at least in part.
- d) Previous attempts 'to solve or cope with it.
- e) Client resources and strengths.
- f) The frequency, duration and severity of the problem, i. e. how long or how often the problem occurs, when it first started and its effects.

c. Treatment: At this stage, a treatment plan is formulated and carried out, it is at this stage that the counsellor draws upon his wide variety of skills and techniques and selects those which in his judgement, would be of assistance to the client. Depending on his own theoretical orientation, his conception of the problem and causes of his client's problems, the counsellor could select techniques from Psychoanalytic approach, the client centred approach, the rational – emotive approach or from the **Behavioural approach** to tackle his client's problems.

d. Termination (end): After a period of treatment, the counselling encounter is brought to an end so that the client could try to exist on his own using his newly acquired skills. Termination of counselling encounters usually takes two forms. It could be negative – that is usually by default, with a client falling to turn up or leaving a message about not wanting to continue. A more satisfactory form view. The counsellor may negotiate at the beginning of

the session how long counselling will last and even specify the ending date. More usually, however, the idea of ending will be put forward by the counselor or his client when it is considered appropriate.

Peake *et al* (1998) suggest that counselors may find it helpful to reflect on three questions about termination. This is concerned with explicitness, flexibility and the client's needs.

- i. **How explicit is the issue of termination?** The question is whether the counsellor should make use of the fact that counselling will terminate or give way to the temptation to let it pass without any mention, inwardly promising 'to deal with it when it happens. Knowing that 'termination is near' can enhance motivation; it helps some clients to concentrate their efforts on making 'the best use of the time available. Similarly, it can work against the procrastination and resistance to change that can accompany a sense of counselling' as open-ended and everlasting. The loss, whether it is real or symbolic, embodied in ending' the counselling' relationship can be a very potent force for positive change
- If the counselor uses termination to try to stimulate change, the next question is when to raise it. At the beginning, many may take and there may be at least some implicit understanding that it will be a matter of so many sessions or so many weeks, months or years. After that, unless there is an explicit time-limited contract, it would probably be premature to raise the issue until counselling' is firmly under-way and indeed some real sense of progress has been achieved. Some counsellors find it useful to remind clients some time during each session how many sessions have gone and how many remain.
- ii. **How rigid is the decision about ending?** There are several related questions here. Should counselling' finish on the agreed date. Or can it be allowed to continue if the client wants it to do so? How flexible should a counselor be about termination and what are the ramifications? What circumstances justify an extension? The answers to these questions depend on the nature of the counselling goals and of the counsellor's philosophy and theoretical model.
- Some counsellors favour a staggered ending increasing the time ending, increasing the time between sessions towards the end of a contract. This seems an especially useful way to work towards ending with a client you have seen for a long time. Another option is to offer a follow-up session some 3-6 months after the counselling has ended. This can help to consolidate progress made.
- iii. **What are the needs of the client around ending?** Many clients experience little if any difficulty, seeing the end of counselling as an inevitable and natural event. This may be most likely when the counselling is relatively short term, where there wasn't a strong attachment, or where the focus was on problem management. However, other clients find ending very difficult. They feel they won't be able to cope without the counsellor, and ending may re-stimulate earlier painful experiences of loss and separation. The counsellor needs to help these clients cope with ending by talking through their existential or developmental needs, acknowledging their achievements and resources, and deciding on particular strategies.

3.3 Some Practical Suggestions for Terminations

The aims of spending some time on ending are to help clients to sustain any changes they have made and to look forward to a new beginning. Bayne, Horton, Merry and Moyes

(1994) have provided practical suggestions for termination, which are represented in the following questions:

1. **How does the client feel about ending?** The counselor needs to encourage clients to talk about ending. Sometimes it is helpful to reassure clients that ending can produce feelings of loss and that this is a normal and natural part of the process.
2. **What has been achieved?** The intention here is to consolidate learning by examining what changes have occurred. Further changes may be anticipated and it may be appropriate to review and celebrate the client's strengths and achievements.
3. **How has it been achieved?** This question is concerned with the counsellor's efforts in helping his clients identify the ways in which the clients themselves have contributed to or are responsible for what has been achieved and the positive aspects of their relationship with the counselor. The client's account of what has happened is the best predictor of whether changes will last; if clients attribute responsibility for any gains to the counsellor then it may be difficult for them to sustain and build on any useful changes beyond the ending (Peake et al., 1988).
4. **What still needs to be achieved?** This question is about identifying unmet goals, relative weaknesses and aspects clients feel they still want to develop. Many counsellors believe that a lot of learning and change go on not only between counseling sessions, but after counselling has ended. It is useful here to examine your client's available resources and support network and other options for maintaining and developing the gains achieved in counselling.
5. **What may happen in the future?** The counsellor may wish to help clients look positively towards the future, while not ignoring the possibility that problems or symptoms may return. It may also be appropriate to anticipate stresses and 'rough spots', and ways of coping or trying to cope with them. It can be helpful to identify indications of the need to start counselling again. Typically people go in and out of counselling rather than having one continuous period. A good ending makes it more likely that clients have positive feelings about this prospect rather than feeling like a failure or seeing counselling as a waste of time.
6. **What has happened in counselling?** The attention here is to help clients evaluate their experience of counselling. It may also provide the counsellor with valuable feedback on his approach. The framework outlined above focuses on the client. The counsellor may also wish to reflect on his own experience, to review what has been achieved and how, and to work through his own reactions to an ending.
7. **Follow-up:** This refers to the attempt to reassess the client's condition after a period has elapsed since the termination of the counselling relationship. Such reassessment could include the use of psychological tests and other assessment tools. If conditions demand, the client could be returned to any of the earlier stages of counselling. However, if the client is progressing satisfactorily the counselling relationship is then permanently closed.

Self-Assessment Exercise

Explain counseling process.

4.0 Conclusion

Essentially, the counselling process is very much a shared enterprise (Newsome Thorne Fwyld, (1993). The client who expects the counsellor to provide infallible solutions must quickly be disillusioned.

The counsellor's responsibility for his own life in full awareness of his own resources.

5.0 Summary

The model of the counselling process includes:

- The person comes for help
- The counsellor attempts to relate to the client
- The helping situation is defined.
- The counsellor encourages his client to give free expression to his concerns.
- The counsellor accepts, recognises and helps to clarify negative feelings in the client
- The counsellor accepts and recognises positive feelings.
- Development of insight.
- Establishment of new goals.
- Growth of confidence and an ability to take decision and
- No more need for help.

6.0 Self-Assessment Exercise

Describe the major steps in counselling process.

7.0 References/Further Reading

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Unit 2 Characteristics of Counsellors

1.0 Introduction

The counsellor is a trained personnel who listens to student's problems, conceptualises them, clarifies issues and assists them to understand their potentials with a view to resolving their educational, vocational and socio personal problems.

According to Patterison (1967), the counsellor is concerned with and accepting a responsibility for assisting all pupils and having as his major concern the developmental needs and problems of youth. According to Denga (1983), the school counsellor is a staff member with specialised skills who provides assistance to individual students and their parents in making decisions that ensure an efficient and orderly progression of the student throughout the various stages of their growth and development.

2.0 Objectives

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- mention at least 5 attributes of a counsellor.
- explain non-threatening, safe and non-possessive warmth of the counsellor towards his or her client.

3.0 Main Content

3.1 Counsellor's Characteristics

The counsellor whether in the school setting or non-school setting possesses a lot of admirable qualities which help him to relate well with clients and people around him or who work with him. These characteristics are those which have been found to increase the effectiveness and overall success of the counsellor when they exist in him in sufficient numbers and at adequate level of intensity. While no counsellor is expected to be endowed with all these qualities at birth, these characteristics are such as could be acquired through training.

3.1.1 Personal Qualities

The personal qualifications of the counsellor derive from his inherent qualities. Although not part of any official curriculum, there is the need for personal psychological growth of the counsellor. He is the most important single factor in counselling. He needs to understand himself psychologically in order to help others. He needs to know how to control his biases and defences so that they do not interfere with the progress of any person with whom he is working.

As a personal quality, the counsellor must have love for persons and interest in helping. Since the focal point of the counsellor is man, it is beholden on the counsellor to not only have the love of his clients but at the same time he should be interested in analysing issues, solving problems and giving help. As a helping professional, the counsellor should de-emphasise monetary reward. In other words, he falls within the rank of professionals that

consider services to humanity an integral aspect of living and a thing of joy rather than material reward.

The counsellor needs to be socially sensitive and flexible, imaginative, with good control of both his intellectual activity and his emotions. To make success out of the counselling relationship, the counsellor must be socially active. He interacts with a number of people, the young and the old alike. In this way, he gets to know the needs of people at the different age levels. In addition to this, he does not hold a view and stick dogmatically to it. He remains flexible in the face of change so as to follow in the scheme of things. For example, he knows when a particular theory or technique should be applied or is no longer working. A counsellor is one that is imaginative. He has an open mind and is continually craving for improvement in his relationship with others. He is abreast with changes that occur around him and so adapts himself to such changes. Being imaginative has the advantage of invoking new knowledge rather than being perpetually “fixed” to outdated knowledge.

In addition to the above, the counsellor must be one who is emotionally balanced and has good control of his intellectual ability. The term emotional balance here implied that the counsellor should not have unusual difficulty in maintaining satisfactory interpersonal relationships. He should be able to express feelings and needs without creating serious difficulties for himself or his clients. Because he needs to carry along the client with him, he cannot “act out” in aggressive ways neither can he retreat from interpersonal contracts. Can you imagine what the reaction of his client would be if the counsellor who has temper tantrums should slap him because he is talking ‘rot’? Of course the slap could ensure both a fight and a termination of the counselling relationship. Added to this factor, is the fact that the counsellor must have good control of his intellectual ability. As a counsellor, one meets with the dullard and the intelligent. If the counsellor is cognitively weak and allows himself to be “dribbled” by his client, he then becomes a laughing stock and most clients would begin to make caricature of him. Unfortunately, most people who go in to read counselling today in our Nigerian Universities are drop-outs from other disciplines who think that counselling is the “easy” way out. This is especially true when one remembers the sandwich programme. This is unfortunate because they took the wrong way.

Empathic understanding is another quality which the counsellor necessarily has to possess. In attempting to understand the client in his work, the counsellor should be able to imaginatively transpose himself to the client’s position. He should be able to understand the client from his internal frame of reference. In short, it is when the counsellor is sensing the feelings and personal meanings which the counsellee is experiencing in each moment, when he can perceive that from “inside”, as they seem to the client, and when he can successfully communicate something of that understanding to the counsellee, would there exist the rapport for meaningful interaction. In fact, Carl Rogers (1959) says:

Empathy is perceiving the internal frame of reference of another with accuracy, and the emotional components and meanings which pertain thereto, as if one were the other person, but without ever losing the “as if” condition. Thus it means to sense the hurt or pleasure of another as he senses it, and to perceive the causes thereof as he perceives them; but without ever losing the recognition that it is as if, I was hurt or pleased, etc. if this “as if” quality is lost, then the state is one of identification.

According to Rogers, the counsellor should not only be able to understand his client but should be able to communicate this understanding to the client so that he senses it. It communicates to him that much value is placed on him as an individual and that the feelings and meanings which he attaches to his experiences are respected, worth attending to, and

understood. Thus, when a client senses that he counsellor feels his pains and pleasure, he feels he is with him and therefore, ready to cooperate and explore his problems more.

As a personal quality, the person called the counsellor must have a good sense of humour which helps build up confidence in the counsellee, thus making repertoire of social-emotional skills that enable him to respond spontaneously and effectively to a wide range of human needs. “Ipaye (1983). Thus, humour is an important quality the counsellor must possess.

A counsellor should have a patient understanding of his clients, sometimes, clients come with aggressive, at other times they become inarticulate. In either cases or in any way the client comes, the counsellor should not be in a hurry. He should be a patient listener; he should clarify meanings and attempt to assist the client in a very cool and calculating manner. Sometimes, a client talks continuously without stopping. The counsellor should not be bored. He listens quietly, sometimes nodding and putting in a word or two. In this way, he captures vividly the problems of the client and then be in a better position to offer his assistance. According to Ipaye (1983), “Patient understanding enables the counsellor to respond from the frame of reference of his counsellee’s actual feelings and actual behaviour rather than mere generalities or vague formulations.

Good communication ability has also been recognised as a personal quality of the counsellor. To a very large extent, counselling depends on verbal encounter. The counsellor should therefore, be able to communicate with his clients effectively. He should be audible without necessary shouting, able to communicate his feelings without repression. Apart from verbal communications, the counsellor should be able to interpret and communicate the non-verbal messages of the clients to him.

Unconditional positive regard or non-possessive warmth is also a personal quality valuable to the individual called the counsellor. The quality of unconditional positive regard simply means “prizing the individual as a whole”. The counsellor, irrespective of his values, does not lay down conditions for accepting a client in the counselling situation, sometimes, the client may come in moody, smelly or happy. In whatever situation he comes, the counsellor does not reject him. At all times therefore the counsellor communicates a feeling of total acceptance and liking for the client. In short, the counsellor has to be nonjudgmental in accepting the client. According to Achebe (1988), “this level of acceptance gradually conditions the client to accept all of his own experiences, making him more of a whole and congruent person able to function effectively”. Thus, the client feels accepted, and, therefore will reduce all defense mechanism that would inhibit effective rapport in the counselling session.

The counsellor must also possess the quality of genuineness or congruence. This implied that at any point in time he is his real self. He does not fake situation, “not phony and without pretense or façade”. If for example, the client came in when the counsellor is tired, instead of pretending to be helping, he should let the client know of his feelings, namely, that he is tired and, therefore, an appointment could be made against another time. The client is likely to have more trust in a counsellor that he finds to be genuine. Thus, the client must sense that the helper is being genuine and not just faking a professional role or being polite. According to Achebe (1988), “Rogers places such importance on this quality that he affirms that “the unmotivated, poorly educated, resistant, chronically hospitalised individuals respond to those who are first of all real, who react in a genuine human way as persons, who exhibit their genuineness in the relationship.

3.2 Professional Qualities

Wrenn (1962) says “the counsellor must be professionally educated and not merely “trained”. Like the minister or physician or any other educated professional, he must learn specialised procedures and be responsible for their application in the light of a broad knowledge of his field”.

The counsellor profession in Nigeria today is still grappling with some of the teething problems expected of a new profession, one of which is legislating on the academic qualification which a counselor should hold. For now people with the Bachelor’s Degree in Guidance and Counselling, practice in the school. The third set is the stop-gap counselors usually called the Teacher-counsellors. In fact, the counselling profession in Nigeria is one in which “dead woods” from other fields infiltrate. According to Denga (1983), the Counselling Association of Nigeria (CAN), the sole body charged with regulating the registration of counsellors, is still in the process of doing this. However, “it might be safe to say that a Master’s Degree in Guidance and Counselling is considered to be minimum requirement for holding a position as a trained school counsellor”.

In addition to academic requirement of a Master’s Degree, the counselling profession recognises that as a social being, and can only be understood from different and varied compartments of life. In recognition of this, counsellor educators insist that the counsellor should be an “Encyclopedia”. In other words, he should be very knowledgeable in a wide range of disciplines, some of which are:-

- (i) **Psychology-** This will help the counsellor to understand, predict and control human behaviour. Thus, a study of psychology exposes the counsellor to principles of child-development including intellectual as well as socio-emotional development. It will also expose him to the dynamics of personality.
- (ii) **Appraisal Methods-** This helps he counselor in the construction of tests which he uses in appraising his clients’ interests, abilities and other potentials
- (iii) **Counselling Theory-** This exposes him to various theoretical position so as to be able to adapt them to suit his individual clients.
- (iv) **Vocational Development Theory –** These expose the counsellor to the vocational growth processes of his clients.
- (v) **Supervised Practicum-** This relates all the theories learnt in the classroom setting to the practical realities of students problems.

Others include ethical and professional responsibilities, occupational information, behaviour modification techniques, group process and a host of others.

Another professional quality which the counselor has to possess is that he should be able to keep information regarding the clients’ problem confidential. Thus, when clients come to the counselling situation they disclose information especially their social-personal information at times, Willy-nilly. As part of the ethical requirements, the counsellor is under obligation not to disclose such information to an unauthorised person unless professional colleagues such as the psychologists, the psychiatrists and the medical doctors who might need the information for the good and growth of the client. The counsellor can also reveal information divulged to him if the client permits him to.

Self-Assessment Exercise

Mention and explain 5 attributes of a counsellor.

4.0 Conclusion

The professional counsellor is an expert in his field and also has cultivated skills in helping people understand their situation, clarify their values and make informed decision for which they assume responsibility. He must have received training as a counsellor and must possess certain skills and expertise that enables him to be effective. Moreover, it is also believed that the counsellor's personality is relevant to his effectiveness and that a key element in any counselling relationship is the person of the counsellor.

Sofenwa (1977) described a counselor as “....a ready, patient and sympathetic listener. His authority derives from his temperament, candour integrity, disposition and approachability. The more versatile he is, the more interaction he/she has with the staff and students, and the more diversified the point of contact, the more he will be respected and accepted by the students and the easier it would be for him to reach them and win their confidence... he is frank and truthful, and uses facts, skills and training to turn his client on himself.

5.0 Summary

The counselor should possess among others the following attributes:-

- A caring attitude and sincere interest in people
- Flexibility in thought and action
- Attractiveness, approachability and pleasantness
- A sense of humour
- Above average intelligence
- A good self-concept and self-acceptance
- Empathy, objectiveness, sincerity, broad-mindedness, friendliness and cooperativeness.

Some conditions are identifiable for counsellor success, all of which are related to counsellor's personality. The first of these qualities is the ability to empathise accurately with the person who is being counseled or interviewed. Empathy is the capability to “feel into” a person. It is a very special type of understanding. Certainly it is a complex ability which is difficult to define in few sentences. Empathy is the ability to feel with the client, the capacity to take for the purposed of counselling, his stand point or client perspective about affairs. This description makes empathy appear an intellectual exercise, but it is far more than this. It is a type of momentary identification. Identification is emotional merging with another person, and this is what empathy is. It can be illustrated quite simply by the phrase “get into the other man's shoes, and if they pinch then you feel the hurt”.

The second essential quality is one of spontaneity and genuineness. In the counselling situation, spontaneity means the capacity to relate honestly to the client and reveal oneself as one human being to another. This means that there should not be any false professional front, for this can be easily detected by the intelligent client. When questioned about his or her beliefs and values he must answer frankly, accepting the existence of other viewpoints. It means the counsellor should be able to reveal himself as a human being and not indulge in defensive manoeuvres to maintain a position of false authority and security. In other words, the counselor must be open to new evidences, be flexible when necessary, admit his errors and generally function in a way which provides the client with a model of purpose and

maturity. The authority in counseling is constructive containing and not coercive. This is very close to Carl Roger's "structured permissive relationship.

Another quality is the counsellor's capacity to show a non-threatening safe and non-possessive warmth towards the client. This implies

- The ability to adapt realistically to both the client and the situation which led to the counselling.
- The possession of intellectual ability, especially sufficient imagination and flexibility of thinking to look for new solution to problems.
- The ability to communicate effectively.
- The possession of sufficient sensitivity and skill to note the signal coming from the client.

6.0 Self-Assessment Exercise

Explain some characteristics of an effective counselor.

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Unit 3 Counsellor Training and Certification

1.0 Introduction

This unit will examine the mode of training of counsellors in Nigeria and their present certification. The training and certification of school counsellors was not taken up seriously in the early years of Guidance practice in Nigeria.

2.0 Objectives

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- discuss the training of a counsellor.
- explain the certification of a trained counsellor.

3.0 Main Content

3.1 Counsellor Training and Certification

Within the time of its inception in 1986, teacher counsellors were employed to take up Guidance and Counselling role in schools where there were no trained counsellors.

This was understandable since in the 1960's and the 1970's there was acute shortage of trained counsellors in the country. After 1977 when the Federal Government had published its policy to support the training of counsellors, because she saw the need to have guidance programmes in schools (National Policy of Education, 1977). Tertiary Institutions took up the challenge of training counsellors. Some counselling topics were taught in NCE (National Certificate of Education) programmes by Colleges of Education. However, it was in the Universities that solid training was done. Bachelor of Education programmes and postgraduate programmes were offered. The postgraduate courses, especially the PhD level, have helped to train counsellor educators who are helping in the training of school counsellors today.

Presently, several students are being trained as counsellors in regular and sandwich programmes in most Universities and colleges of Education in the country. Besides, in 1986, the Counselling Association of Nigeria became concerned about the training and certification of counsellors. The 1986 annual conference which celebrated the tenth anniversary of the Association touched training and certification. It was in that year that the CAN took the major step of certifying individuals as legitimate members of the Association based on their training and qualification. The Association had earlier set up a sub-committee to draw up guidance for certification and licensing. This sub-committee reported its work in 1988 at the 12th Annual Conference of the Association. Some of the things they recommended for certification were amount of semester course units required to certify a bachelor degree holder and a Master's Degree Holder as a member of CAN. The committee also recommended the setting up of a board to be called the Certificate and Licensure Board of the Counselling Association of Nigeria (CALB/CAN) which would be responsible for all matters concerning certification and licensing.

The CALB/CAN was authorised to do among other things the following:

- i. Maintain an up-dated register of accredited practising counsellors of the CAN including foundation members
- ii. Recommend the issuance of certificate and licensure to individuals upon fulfillment of all requirements set up, after scrutinising thoroughly all educational experiences and examination provisions as approved by the CAN.
- iii. Advise various governments of the federation on counselling policies for implementation and advice on those qualified to practice both in schools and communities.
- iv. Advance high standards of professional conduct among the members of the Association and thus provide excellence in the profession.
- v. Promote the ethics of the counselling profession.

This document of the sub-committee was adopted by the members at the conference and the board was set up. CALB/CAN is presently at work with regard to standards, certification, licensure, accreditation and formulation of ethical code for the profession.

The Counselling Association of Nigeria endorsed a suggestion that an ethical committee be formed to lay a regulatory role for practitioners through licensure and certification. At the 12th Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the association which held in Maiduguri in 1988, a Certification and Licensure, Board (CALEB) was proposed to, among other functions, recommend to the association policy and inaugurated at the 25th AGM which held in Makurdi, Benue State in August 2001. It is expected that the operations of the board would commence soon.

As a way of controlling the quality of counsellors produced in our higher institutions, the National Universities Commission (NUC), in concert with the Federal Ministry of Education (FME) developed the Approved Minimum Academic Standard (AMAS) of courses required for training guidance counsellors in Nigerian Universities. A critical look at the courses show that career development, psychological testing, behavior modification, techniques of individual and group counseling, principles of interpersonal behavior, practicum etc feature prominently. Through this action, it is presumed that a product of any recognised guidance and training programme in Nigeria would have been exposed to basic minimum courses required for certification and practice.

Self- Assessment Exercise

Discuss how to train a counsellor.

4.0 Conclusion

Counselling both in school setting and non-school setting is provided by professionals, trained to assist clients to work on developmental tasks or major life transitions, such as adjustment, disability, career changes, divorce or care-giving responsibilities. These words convey a challenge for counsellors, for they imply that counsellors will have a unique body of knowledge and skills to assist clients who may present many varied complex problems.

5.0 Summary

A counsellor can be commonly described from three distinctive perspectives-occupational role perspective, personality quality perspective and educational qualification perspective.

A counsellor is described educationally by the professional certifying and programme accrediting bodies in counselling as having earned masters with a minimum of 48 semester credit hours or doctoral degree and must have done course work in the areas listed below in addition to 12 weeks supervised practicum and internship experiences.

- 1) Foundation of Counselling (Introduction)
- 2) Organisation of Counselling
- 3) Human Development
- 4) Theory and practice of Counselling and consultation
- 5) Group processes and procedures
- 6) Psychological assessment and appraisal
- 7) Vocational development and adjustment
- 8) Professional Orientation, Legal and ethical issues
- 9) Psychology of learning, research, evaluation and related education programmes
- 10) Practicum in Counselling.

Counsellors are educators with perfected skills and knowledge which distinguish them from the rest of the population.

6.0 Self-Assessment Exercise

Discuss the training and certification of a counsellor.

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Unit 4 Professionalism

1.0 Introduction

For any occupation to be realised as a profession it would have to have certain features which would qualify its professional status. Guidance as a professional is examined but more especially with regard to the ethical codes and professional responsibilities of its members.

2.0 Objectives

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- discuss guidance as a profession.
- briefly discuss the Counselling Association of Nigeria (CASSON)

3.0 Main Content

3.1 Guidance as a Profession

A profession has been defined or described by several authors in various ways. For example, Moore (1970) describes a profession by identifying the presence of four major characteristics. According to him a profession must be a full time occupation which comprises the principal source of income for its members. A profession has the characteristic of a commitment to a calling, that is the members accept the appropriate norms and standards of the profession and identify with one another and the profession as a whole. There is a formalised organisation to protect the occupational interest of the members. For example, members need to ascertain appropriate qualification and certification of new members and ethical conduct of all members.

For an occupation to be a profession there must be a body of “esoteric but useful knowledge and skills based on specialised training or education of exceptional duration and perhaps exceptional difficulty” (Moore, 1970:6). This implies that the members must exhibit a service orientation that there are individuals (clients) in the community who require their services and that these services are performed with maximum competence and efficiency. Lastly, professional members enjoy autonomy due to the use of their exceptional knowledge and skills. However, this autonomy is restrained with responsibility.

Leggatt (1970) writing on the teaching profession also give five characteristics of a profession which appear with greatest regularity. These according to him are:

- i. Practice is founded upon a base of theoretical, esoteric knowledge.
- ii. The acquisition of knowledge requires a long period of education and socialisation.
- iii. Practitioners are motivated by an ideal of altruistic services rather than the pursuit of material and economic gain.
- iv. Careful control is exercised over recruitment, training, certification and standards of practice.
- v. The colleague group is well organised and has disciplinary powers to enforce code of ethical practice. (Leggatt, 1970:15b)

From the descriptions of the two authors above, it can be realised that an occupational group can be said to be a profession when it has a body of knowledge and skills to offer to the community not merely for material and economic gain but with an altruistic motive to give needed and competent service. Members must have been appropriately certified or passed qualification requirements to practice after a long period of education or training. The occupation is well organised to ensure good practice, personal growth of members, the presence of code of ethics which are enforced by the profession. Though members enjoy autonomy they owe great responsibilities to their clients and are committed to maintain and improve the welfare of the profession and its members.

Can guidance as an occupational group be said to be a profession? Certainly, guidance as practiced in developed countries like United States of America has all the characteristics listed above to qualify as a profession. Since its origin in the early 1900's when Frank Parson started a vocational guidance bureau for the youth (Shertzer and Stone, 1976), large volume of knowledge and skills have been accumulated. The scope of guidance has broadened to include all the domains of the individual in which he can experience problems, namely social, emotional, educational, moral, spiritual and vocational.

The National Vocational Guidance Association (NVGA) was formed in 1913. This later (1952) became the American Personnel and Guidance Association (APGA). With the formation of an Association, the Guidance movement in America established codes of ethics for its members and ensured that the codes were enforced. Through its journal, "the personnel and Guidance Journal", members improved themselves through keeping abreast with new ideas and practices. The Association guides its members to know their legal rights and responsibilities. It also ensures and stipulates good educational and professional standards for qualification to practice as a member. Members should have Master's degree qualification in addition to being certified by their state governments. Counsellors who want to go into private practice are to acquire appropriate licence just like practicing psychologists (Shertzer and Stone, 1980).

The main aim of guidance as practiced in the United States of America is to give altruistic service to the American community and not merely for material gain. The first sentence of the preamble of the Ethical Standards of APGA (Shertzer and Stone, 1976) describes the Association as an educational, scientific and professional organisation meant to give service to the society through improving the dignity, worth, potential and unique characteristics of every individual. The statement confirms the altruistic motive of the Association. It can therefore, be concluded convincingly that guidance as an occupation has achieved the status of a profession in United States of America where it originated.

Can we have the same conclusion for guidance in Nigeria? Can guidance be said to be a profession in Nigeria? To some degree, Yes. But we cannot convincingly say that guidance has reached a full professional status in Nigeria. Since its inception in Nigeria in the early 1960's by the Federal Ministry of Education (Cote, 1972) and through the formation of the Ibadan Careers Council which later became the Nigerian Careers Council, several developments have occurred which have culminated in the present status of the occupation as we realise it today. First through the efforts of the Career Council, workshops, conferences in career guidance were organised throughout the country. The initial aim of the council was to provide occupational placement services to the youth. In 1976 the counselling Association of Nigeria was launched at the University of Ibadan. The aim of forming the Association was to promote the practice of guidance throughout the federation at a professional level. A year before and after the Association was formed, the federal

government came out with policy statements to support the promotion of Guidance and the training of school counsellors. These policy statements found in the Third National Development Plan (1975) and the National Policy on Education (1977, 1981) must have encouraged the establishment of guidance in schools, the organisation of workshops conferences and seminars in the country by governments and CAN and the training of full time counsellors and teacher counsellors in the Universities and Colleges of Education.

Presently, the Federal and many state governments are eager to see that guidance is established in every post primary school. In Anambra State, for example the Ministry of Education and the State Education Commission are working hard to ensure that every school has a guidance programme. In Imo State, the trend now is to ensure that Guidance is introduced not only in the post primary institutions but also in the primary schools. The Honourable Commissioner for Education in Imo State recently gave a speech on the occasion of a career's day organised by student counselors of the author. In that speech he said the following:

... conscious of the importance of Guidance and Career Counsellors in schools and to ensure that guidance is given its right place in the school system Government recently employed more guidance counselors. we hope to employ more as our financial resources improve so as to satisfy the Federal Government directive that, "all secondary schools in each state must have a trained counsellor for the enhancement of the 6-3-3-4 system of education.(commission Onwukwe, March 1990:1).

To know that the federal government wants every secondary school in each state to have a trained counsellor is a healthy development. We have come a long way.

Now let us look at the main characteristics of guidance in Nigeria which can make it a profession. In terms of a body of knowledge and skills to form the basis for rendering the guidance service, there was no problem to begin with. Theories, procedures of practice and skills in guidance were borrowed from the pioneer country. Books written mostly by American authors have been in use in 1960's and 1980s. However, many Nigerian authors have contributed in writing books and other materials like tests. Many of the books and tests by indigenous authors are based on Nigerian environmental background. Theories, however, have virtually remained unaltered. In terms of training or education, a trained qualified counsellor should have had admission into an approved University or College of Education to do either an undergraduate or postgraduate course in guidance and counselling and must have successfully completed the course. Presently, the counselling association is working out standards for certification, licensure for its members. More is said on these later.

Guidance in Nigeria has developed to a stage where there is a national association "Counselling Association of Nigeria (CASSON) which aims to organise the occupational group, in terms of organizing workshops, conferences, seminars and meetings, seeing to the professional growth of its members. Guidance as practiced in Nigeria has a major objective of providing altruistic service to the Nigeria community. This is explicitly stated in the Constitution of the Counselling Association of Nigeria (1975:1) Section 3 of Article 11 of the constitution talks of the promotion of sound guidance and counselling in the interest of the society and the individual. Thus it is expected that members practice the occupation with the prior aim of seeking to promote the welfare of their clients.

3.2 The Counselling Association of Nigeria (CASSON)

The counselling Association of Nigeria (CASSON) which is supposed to be the professional organisation of individuals practising guidance in Nigeria. Counselling Association of Nigeria was born on Saturday 1st December, 1976 at University of Ibadan. CAN is an off-shoot of the Nigerian Careers Council. Members of this council felt at the time that there was a need to form an association which would promote the practice of guidance throughout the federation and help to bring it into professional lime-light. Before the launching of the Association, a constitution had been drawn to guide its operation. Among the twelve objectives in the constitution formulated to guide the activities of the Association are the following six which the author believes are highly important. They are:

- i. To promote sound guidance and counselling in the interest of society and the individual;
- ii. To publish scientific, educational and professional literature;
- iii. To advance high standards of professional conduct amongst members of the Association;
- iv. To conduct scientific educational and professional meetings, work-shops and conferences;
- v. To create an awareness in the general public about guidance and counselling;
- vi. To examine conditions which create barriers to individual development and to work to remove them.

From 1976 up to now a number of these objectives have been achieved. For example the general public including federal and state governments are now very aware of the need for guidance and counselling in schools. The awareness has reached such a proportion that the federal government has declared that every post primary institution must have a trained counselor to run its guidance programmes. In the area of publishing, the Association has also succeeded in producing its journal “the Counsellor” even though the rate of production lags behind what is stated in the constitution, namely, twelve a year. Another area which the Association has held on and has been effective despite several odds is in conducting scientific, educational and professional meetings, workshops and conferences. Within more than ten years of its operation there has been an annual conference held every year, in addition to workshops and seminars held in various regions and states of the country. These inevitably have helped members to grow professionally.

Perhaps, areas which the Association needs to do more work so as to make the Association completely professionalised are in “advancing high standards of professional conduct amongst members...”, stimulating, promoting and conducting programmes of scientific research in guidance and counselling.

On December 11, 1976, the Counselling Association of Nigeria (the name of the association remains the same today but the acronym was changed from CAN to CASSON at the 16th National Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the association which held at Bayero University, Kano in August 1992 was launched as the professional association responsible for the welfare of all careers masters and a guidance counsellors in Nigeria. In a landmark address delivered at the launching ceremony, Colonel (Dr.) Ahmadu Alli, then Federal commissioner for Education stated **inter alia**:

Guidance and counseling is an educational innovation that enjoys my full support. Any educational system will be deficient without educational guidance. Our students need to be helped by personal counselling, career education and vocational guidance to discover their talents, aptitudes and to make intelligent career decisions.

At the second Annual General Meeting of CAN held in Calabar between 3rd and 6th August, 1977, it was resolved that the association be affiliated with the American Personnel and Guidance Association (APGA) (now the American Association for Counselling and Development, AACD) so as to draw inspiration from it and to gain strength and support. The association has since been publishing its journal, *The Counsellor*. At about the same time, the Federal Government of Nigeria published its 1977 National Policy Education (NPE) which was revised in 1981. In the document, government endorsed its total commitment and support to the counseling movement by stating that:

In view of the apparent ignorance of many young people about career prospects and in view of personality maladjustment among school children, career officers and counsellors will be appointed in post-primary institutions ... Guidance and counseling will also feature in teacher education programmes. (NPE, 1981 p.30)

Since then, the association and indeed the profession has witnessed some notable developments. Prominent among these are:

1) The recognition of guidance counsellors as full-time professionals in School -

The National Council on Education (NCE), being the highest policy making body on educational matters, commissioned a task force in 1987 to study and report on some vital issues relating to guidance and counselling in Nigeria. After series of meetings; the task force presented its report to council at the Bauchi January 1988 meeting and recommended that counsellors should be allowed to practice on full-time basis in schools and that because of the impact status of the discipline, separate budgetary allocation should be reflected in State's budget for guidance and counseling at the Ministry of Education. These recommendations, among others, were accepted for implementation by the NCE at its Ibadan meeting of August 1998. Later Dr. (Mrs.) Rahmatu Abdullahi, then Hon. Commissioner for Education in Kwara State was chairperson of the task force.

2) Blueprint on Guidance and Counselling

Arising from the work of the NCE task force, recommendation was also made for the production of a policy document in form of a blueprint. The Federal Ministry of Education printed the first edition of "Blueprint on Guidance and Counselling for Educational Institutions in Nigeria" in July 2000, with a reprint in August 2001. The document, made up of thirteen sections, outlines the objectives, scope, activities and strategies for implementing guidance and counselling services from pre-primary through secondary to tertiary institutions. There are also sections in document for counselling in relation to Non-formal education, Special Education, Administration and Funding as well as Research and Evaluation.

3) Certification and Licensure of professionals

The Counselling Association of Nigeria endorsed a suggestion that an ethical committee be formed to lay a regulatory role for practitioners through licensure and certification. At the 12th Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the association which held in Maiduguri in 1988, a Certification and Licensure, Board (CALEB) was proposed to, among other functions, recommend to the association policy and inaugurated at the 25th AGM which held in Makurdi, Benue State in August 2001. It is expected that the operations of the board would commence soon.

4) Minimum Standards for Counsellor training

As a way of controlling the quality of counsellors produced in our higher institutions, the National Universities Commission (NUC), in concert with the Federal Ministry of Education (FME) developed the Approved Minimum Academic Standard (AMAS) of courses required for training guidance counsellors in Nigerian Universities. A critical look at the courses show that career development, psychological testing, behavior modification, techniques of individual and group counseling, principles of interpersonal behavior, practicum etc feature prominently. Through this action, it is presumed that a product of any recognised guidance and training programme in Nigeria would have been exposed to basic minimum courses required for certification and practice.

5) Sectionalisation of Guidance and Counselling in the NPE

The counseling Association of Nigeria at the 1988 Maiduguri Conference set up a sub-committee on the implementation of guidance and counseling in Nigeria. One of the functions of the sub-committee was to look into the areas of guidance and counseling relevance in the National Policy on Education (NPE) and recommend amendments where necessary. The sub-committee submitted its report to the association and in it observed that guidance and counseling deserved more than the little prominence given to it in the policy, all condensed into just six lines. It further observed that the contributions of guidance and counseling services to educational development and to other issues which have guidance implications are scattered through the policy.

It was the reasoning of the sub-committee that if guidance and counseling covers the scope of all individuals in the whole gamut of the educational system from pre-primary to the tertiary levels, both inside and outside the formal school setting, then it is a major component of education deserving of a whole section of its own. The report of the sub-committee was approved by the association and forwarded to the implementation committee of New National Policy on Education headed by Dr. J. A. O. Sofolahan.

6) Registration of the Association

The Counselling Association of Nigeria (CASSON) was registered as a corporative body with the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC) on the 22nd of April, 1996 with five duly appointed trustees. This registration of the Association, coming twenty years after its establishment, marks its recognition and status as a corporate entity with necessary rights and privileges.

7) Development of a National Secretariat

In an attempt to establish the needed presence of the association in the Federal Capital Territory, efforts have been made to procure a piece of land in Kuje, Abuja for the purpose of erecting a befitting National Secretariat building. Along this line, a Customary Certificate of Occupancy on the land was approved on the 6th of January, 1988. Plans are already at an advanced stage to commence work on the site.

8) Academic/Professional Publications

In addition to the annual publication of 'the Counsellor', the official journal of the association, three other publications of the association have come on stream. These are (i) Edited Conference Proceedings, a supplement to the journal and an annual publication of

papers presented at CASSON conferences since August, 2001 (ii) Roles and functions of School Counsellors within the Nigerian Setting, which is a guide to both practitioners and non-practitioners on the roles and functions expected of practicing counsellor in Nigeria. The booklet was first printed in 1991 while the revised, expanded edition was reprinted in 2003; (iii) Curriculum in Guidance and Counselling – this harmonises and integrates all previous publications on the subject by State chapters. It was commissioned for publication by the National Executive Committee of the association at the Ibadan 2003 conference.

9) Fellowship/Honorary Fellowship of the Association

The first set of five (5) fellows and two (2) Honorary fellows of the association were inducted at the 10th National Annual Conference which held at OAU, Ile-Ife in August 1986. As at the 27th National Annual Conference of the association which held at the University of Ibadan in August 2003, the number of fellows had risen to thirteen (13) and that of Honorary fellows to three (3).

10) Legislation on Guidance and Counselling

The association is yet to be backed by an act of parliament. To ensure that the association gets the necessary legislative support, papers are currently being processed to the National Assembly for this purpose (see Idowu, 2004).

Self-Assessment Exercise

Discuss Guidance as a profession.

4.0 Conclusion

It is in the area of code of ethics, standards for certification and licensing that guidance may be said not to have fully become a profession in Nigeria. At the time of writing no code of ethics had been formally established by the Association steps are however on the way for this to be realised as is seen in the report of the sub-committee for policy guidelines on certification and licensing.

5.0 Summary

One cannot say with absolute conviction that guidance in Nigeria has attained full professionalisation. We can only say that it has partially achieved this. Major areas which are required to make guidance attain full professional status are the following

- i. Proper legal registration of the Association by 1985 this had not been done as can be inferred from the minutes of the ninth annual general meeting held at University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Enugu in August 1985.
- ii. The issue of code of ethics and professional responsibilities has not been explicitly spelt out.
- iii. The question of a mode of certifying and licencing members should be firmly established in the occupational group.

Each of the three areas mentioned above are important areas without which we cannot claim professional status.

6.0 Self-Assessment Exercise

Is Guidance and Counselling a profession? Give reasons for your choice.

7.0 References/Further Reading

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Unit 5 Paradigm Shift in Counselling

1.0 Introduction

Technology and social conditions are constantly and rapidly changing thereby making obsolete certain practices that used to be valid not too long ago. The dynamism in the area of counseling has necessitated a paradigm shift from dependence on face to face and manual counseling to on-line counselling. On line- counseling is the provision of professional counselling services via the internet. It is ICT based counselling. This could be through an exchange of series of e-mails, through chat room and video conferencing. Today, we are very easily and instantly connected to each other through e-mails, cell phones, social media sites and a myriad of such technologies.

2.0 Objectives

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- define social media
- discuss the need for paradigm shift in counselling
- describe what Facebook is
- discuss the use of Twitter & E-mail in counselling.

3.0 Main Content

3.1 Social Media and Counselling

Social media is a term that is broadly used to describe any number of technological systems related to collaboration and community (Joosten, 2012). While it appears that a specific definition may be elusive (Kaptan & Haenlein, 2010), social media is often described by example, social networking sites, e.g. blogs, wikis, multimedia platforms, virtual game worlds and virtual social worlds etc. Social Networking Sites (SNSS) were chosen to be the focus in recognition of the prevalence of SNSS such as Facebook, and my space and LinkedIn, it can be used interchangeably with terms such as social networking or online social networks, SNSS are web-based services that allow users to make personal profiles, create content and share messages by connecting with other users the system. (Boyd & Ellison, 2007).

The task of defining social media is made more challenging by the fact that it is constantly in a state of change. SNSS evolve as developers create new or enhanced features that will meet the demands of users. Inside Facebook, users can send messages, add friends, update personal profiles, join groups, develop applications, host content and learn about other users through their online profiles. (Haase, 2010) writing on the use of social media in connecting people. Ken Stevens (2010: 108) observes that:

The last 30 years have brought major changes to the way people can communicate electronically, from text-based e-mail to the present proliferation of social networking and communication tools capable of varied combinations of text, audio, images and video in both synchronous and asynchronous modes. Often called web 2.0. or the “Read/Write Web” because of the ability of users to both receive and create content as well as to collaborate, share and repurpose content, these tools have provided teachers and learners in ODL

programmes with the potential to address some of the perceived social and communication shortcomings of earlier programme models. Their use can reduce isolation and build a sense of community among learners.

On the other hand, the counsellor among other things is (i) to provide students with information which may help improve their educational process (ii) to provide student with information which may help in their educational and vocational choices (iii) to discuss with students problems of psychological and educational nature (iv) to provide students with some skills such as reading skills to acquire information and knowledge rapidly (v) to help student to understand himself, his abilities, aptitudes, interests and weaknesses. (vi) to discover and diagnose student's problems and help the student to understand his problem, and provide him with information and many more.

Since guidance and counseling service are crucial to successful implementation of educational programmes in the world over the counsellor therefore holds exalted position within the school system and the society. He is a professional that is skilled in assisting the individual in understanding himself in relation to his worlds. By virtue of his training, he tolerates human differences and assists people to accept their strengths and weaknesses.

The counsellor adopts guidance and counselling principles in his relationships with students (clients) for positive behaviour change so that the concerned students can learn to solve problems, make choices and decisions that would make them become healthy and happy individuals.

With the advent of information technology, there is an increasing need for counselors to communicate and interact with students (clients) beyond the traditional face-to-face medium technology facilitates the aims of academic counselling by making it easier for students and counsellors to connect and interact through social networking sites. Dahl (2005) with social media sites like Facebook, e-mail, g-mail, Google talk, twitter, Skype and blogs, information dissemination to and interactions with students is not only simplified but are also greatly enhanced. Let us look at some social media sites.

Facebook: McCarthy (2010) suggested that Facebook was the ideal host site for a blended learning environment Facebook may be the face of online social networks. It was developed in 2004 by Mark Zuckerberg. It is the "dominant" social networking site. (Lenhart *et al*, 2010). This is one of the most widely patronised social media network sites used by people to reach out to friends, family and colleagues. As an aid to counselling, a counsellor can post important announcements, information and quick updates to students on his or her wall or tag them as e-mail notifications which students can see and access immediately they login to their Facebook account. Most importantly counsellors can use Facebook interactive online chat to connect to students and answer their questions.

Blogs

The weblog or blog has high visibility and popularity in the world of social media networks perhaps explaining its prominence in research investigations. A weblog or blog is essentially an online journal where a number of contributors participate by dialoging about a particular topic or focus, like other social media, blogs allow users to post personal content, to comment on and connect too other media sites, and to make observations about other users posts. (Du & Wagner, 2006). The word weblog was used as early as 1997 (Blood, 2000).

Researchers, for instance, Deng & Yuen (2010) hold that blogs can be used in the academia to connect students, foster social support, and promote self-expression. According to Bartome (2008) blogs are used as a means of sharing news/information, or sharing personal opinions. With this, blogs can be used by the counsellors and students as a means of sharing information or use it to share personal opinions.

Twitter

It is a social networking that is often termed a micro blogging service in contrast to Facebook or my space. Twitter limits posts or updates to 160 characters. Some have suggested that twitter makes for a faster mode of communication because of the relatively short post lengths (Java, Song, Finin & Tseng 2007). The average blogger may update every few several times a day. (Java et al. 2007) it is an online social media network site which counsellors can exploit to connect with students. Twitter users can send and receive messages popularly called tweets. It is fast, quick and a free online service which only requires users to have an account and be connected to a computer. One of the advantages of twitter is that non-registered users can read tweets posted online while registered users can post and read tweets posted by other users through the platform of the website.

E-mail

This is one of the most popular and widely used means of sending digital information online which educational counsellors can use to reach a large number of students. E-mail messages are quick and fast and can reach a recipient's account within seconds. E-mail users are not required to be online simultaneously. A student or a client can access his account at his convenience and read, and reply to any inbox message.

My Space

My space co-founded by Chris De Wolfe and Tom Anderson in 2003. With enormous growth in its first few years, by 2009 it was considered the leading social media site (Lenhard 2009) users were found to be more likely women, Hispanic or black and high school educated with some college experience. Like facebook it offers an interactive, users-submitted network of friends, personal profiles, groups, photos, music and video (Boyd, D.M & Ellison N.B, 2007)

LinkedIn

Used primarily for professional networking. LinkedIn is a networking site that launched in may 2003. LinkedIn users usually affiliate with others in their work maintaining a list of contacts for people they know and trust. The trust factor is an important concept in this SNS as connecting with others requires either a pre-existing relationship or some mutual contact (Papacharissi, 2009). This is an effective communication tool between the counsellor and the client or students.

Self-Assessment Exercise

Write short note on Facebook and Twitter.

4.0 Conclusion

Social media technology has become an essential part of personal life as users generate content, share photos, choose to like or interact in a game. The ubiquity of social media is

no more apparent than at the University where the technology is transforming the ways students communicate, collaborate and learn. Widely embraced as a tool for personal or business purposes, the notion that social media could be an effective tool for educational purposes especially for guidance and counselling purposes has received recent attention. At the same time, this developing arena is receiving an increased research interest. The potential role for social media as a facilitator and enhancer of learning and counselling is worth investigating.

5.0 Summary

Education likes to explore emerging technologies as new or improved tools to enhance instruction and learning. Social media has emerged as a highly useful personal communication technology that is effective in guidance and counselling. Certainly social media has been prevalent on the higher institution campuses but not until recently has its viability as a learning and counselling medium been considered by a growing number of educators.

A lot of research has been conducted on the burgeoning internet social media sites from different perspectives. Social media network like Facebook enables like-minded people with similar interests to connect, communicate and interact. This makes it easy for counsellor to use this medium, using social media sites to communicate, to interact, to guide and to counsel students or clients. It is quick, faster and very effective. However technology should not replace face-to-face interactions. Rather counsellors should see technology as a tool to enhance the counselling experience and not a substitute for it. Social network sites reach out to larger numbers of students efficiently despite the distance in space and time.

6.0 Self-Assessment Exercise

Discuss paradigm shift in guidance and counselling.

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