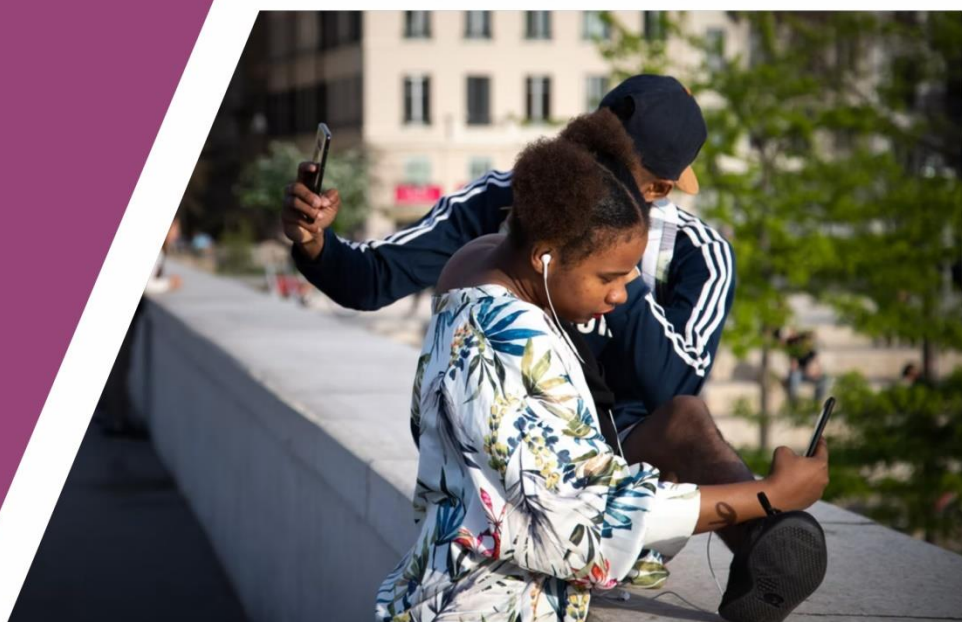


NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA

EGC 811



Principles of Interpersonal Relations **Module 1**

EGC 811 Principles of Interpersonal Relationship Module I

Course Developer/Writer

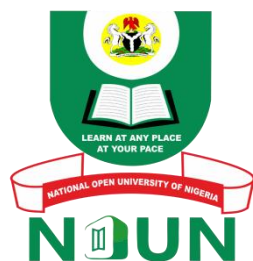
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Unit I Concepts in Interpersonal Relationship

1.0 Introduction

Any worthwhile book on the principles of Interpersonal Relationship will definitely be discussing the nature of the course. The principles of this course include conceptual classifications of significant concepts that are related to the subject matter of discourse definitions, purposes and principles. This unit will provide the definitions and meanings of the terms interpersonal relationship, values of interpersonal relationship, the need for it and its functions in organisations.

2.0 Objectives

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

- define interpersonal relationship
- list the concepts of interpersonal relationship
- enumerate the objectives of interpersonal relationship.

3.0 Main Content

3.1 Definitions

3.1.1 Meaning of Interpersonal Relationship

The term interpersonal relationship is explained in different ways by various and many authors, but they all are pointing to the same meaning. Devito (2004) defines interpersonal relationship as communication that takes place between two persons who have established a relationship, the people are in one way or the other connected. Thus, relationship can occur between romantic partners, business associates, doctors and patients, counselors and counselees, and so on, it permeates our lives. Berschield (1999) defines interpersonal relationship as a strong, deep or close association and acquaintance between two or more people that may range from duration to enduring. This association may be based on love, inference or solidarity. The context can vary from family or kinship, friendship, work, clubs, neighborhood and places of worship. Levinger (1983) proposed a relationship model called heterosexual adult romantic relationships but has been applied to other kinds of interpersonal development of a relationship that follows five stages:

1. Acquaintance and acquaintanceship: this is having a personal knowledge or a state of familiarity and having a relationship with a person you know just slightly, that is the situation of not too strong friendship.
-
2. Buildup: to build up a quality entire relationship, these rules are to be followed.
 - i. maintaining regular contact with each other
 - ii. ensuring that time spent together is meaningful
 - iii. seeking values agreement or concord and acknowledge each other
 - iv. showing empathy and experience in interactions
 - v. providing chances for mutual progress in different aspects of interpersonal relations.

3. Continuation: for a relationship to grow or continue, some friendship rules should be maintained. Such are:
 - i. standing up for a friend in absentia
 - ii. information and feelings about successes should be shared
 - emotional support should be demonstrated
 - there should be trust and confidence
 - help should be rendered in times of need
 - making each other happy when together is vital
 - do not criticise your friend in public
 - confidences should be kept
 - do not be jealous or negative about other relationships around you
 - respect each other's privacy.
4. Deterioration: This is the stage in a relationship when the connecting bonds between the partners weaken and there is drifting from each other.
5. Termination: There are five ways to terminate a relationship. They are differentiating; circumscribing, stagnation, avoidance, and termination.

Termination according to Baxter can be incremental or can go through a critical event. Incremental means to slowly drift apart, which unravels itself in steps. It can also be referred to as disengagement. Gottman (1999) proposes the theory of magic ratio for successful marriages. The theory says that for a marriage to be successful couples must have the average ratio of five positive interactions to one negative interaction, as the ratio moves to 1:1, divorce becomes more likely. In addition, Seligman (2011) proposes the concept of active constructive-responding, which stresses the importance of practicing attentive skills.

From the above, interpersonal relationship can be summarily defined as a process involving the nonstop, interrelated thoughts, feelings and behaviours of persons in a relationship or association in which they respect empathy, social skills and active participation.

3.1.2 Concepts in Interpersonal Relationship

An interpersonal relationship is a strong, deep or close association and acquaintance between two or more people that may range from brief duration to a long enduring relationship. According to Adegoke (2011), it means a process of understanding human relationships with emphasis on social skills, self-analysis techniques of effective communication and resolving interpersonal conflicts. Interpersonal Relationship

Attribution Theory: This argues that we attempt to assign motive or cause to the behaviour of another individual. It is a humanistic theory that believes that there is a direct relationship between our behaviour and its causes. From the humanistic outlook of attribution theory, epistemological assumption posits that there are multiple truths or realities as opposed to only the truth. As for the ontological assumption, it states that our human nature is of free will and not predetermined. In the case of axiological assumption, values are important in studying the discipline of communication as opposed to objectivity.

Implicit Personality Theory: It argues that we develop a list of associated qualities that we attribute to the individuals with whom we interact. This allows us to make guesses about an individual's personality based on whatever information we currently have about him. It is

about the inward sense of our body, its tension or its well-being. Toward a further reflection, we can notice that only its direct sensing do we have meanings to what we say and think. We need to have our 'feel' before verbal symbols can have concrete meanings

Impression Formation Theory says we form impression about others on their qualities and behaviours, the information given about them and the information third parties give about them.

Social Exchange Theory: It talks about rewards of a relationship or the derived outcomes of a relationship. It explains that the outcomes must be greater than or equal to the investment costs of the relationship. Rewards can be love, status information, money, goods, service and the like.

Systemic Coaching: This is a form of individual coaching in a relationship. It is used to identify problems in an evident and immediate way. In another form, they show different possible solutions. It is a very effective tool for conflict resolution in any interpersonal relationship.

Equity Theory: It is a more complex version of the social exchange theory. It explains that people are concerned about equity in their relationships which is the fact that rewards and costs they experience in a relationship should be roughly equal to the rewards and costs experienced by their relationship partners.

Relational Dialectics: It is a concept within the communication theories introduced by Leslie Baxter and Barbera M. Montgomery in 1988. It focuses on the contradictions in relationships. It stems from the concept of the extreme that will sustain the sources of the contrary. This arises when two people of varying differences maintain a dialectics in a relationship. The most dialectics in a relationship are:

- i. Openness and Closeness: Both partners expect openness in their communication as to be a dependable one and to also maintain a healthy relationship. However, on the contrary, one of them desires privacy.
- ii. Certainty and Uncertainty: Certainty is a bonding factor in a relationship. It is a promise kept to comfort partners in a relationship. However, on the contrary, predictability makes the relationship uncomfortable.
- iii. Connectedness and Separateness: It is natural to desire a close and permanent bond in a relationship. However, a partner in the relationship may want to be alone. Too much staying together may result in the loss of an individual's identity.

Socionics: This projects the idea that a person's character acts like a set of blocks called psychological functions result in the different ways of producing and accepting information which results in different behaviour patterns and character types.

Minding Relationship Theory: It is the mindfulness theory that projects how closeness in relationships may be maintained and enhanced. It explains why thoughts, feelings, and behaviours of individuals in a relationship should be reciprocal. The five components of 'minding' can be:

- i. Knowing and being known- each partner should seek to understand themselves and be understood.
- ii. Making relationship – enhancing attributes for behaviours, that is, giving the benefit of any doubt.

- iii. Accepting and respecting empathy and social skills.
- iv. Reciprocity should be maintained.
- v. Continuity should exist in 'minding' and 'mindfulness' should persist.

Attachment Style: according to Bolt (2004) says it is by "both nature- the infant's inherent need to bond and belong- and nurture parental responsiveness. There are three factors determining the achievement styles. These are care, or safety; commitment and physical closeness. The type of attachment an individual has developed as a child. It has a predictive effect on the type of love relationships one develops as an adult.

3.1.3 Types of Interpersonal Relationship

There are three major types of interpersonal relationship. They are nonverbal, written and oral interpersonal relationships.

Non-verbal interpersonal relationship: This involves communication that is void of words; such as gestures, actions, facial expressions, body language and other aspects of physical appearance. Effective communicators send, receive and interpreted non-verbal messages, the same way, they would oral or written communication.

Written interpersonal relationship: Human interpersonal relationship, especially, in an organisational setting, refers to those messages that are transmitted via writing. Advantages of written communication, E-mail, for instance, is less expensive than long distance phone calls and certainly less than travel expenses, especially when a message needs to be conveyed to a large number of people. It enables efficiency and accuracy. Written communication also allows for reflection.

Oral communication: A manager would use oral communication for a variety of things, such as meetings, interviews, and performance reviews, presentations trainings, soliciting and providing feedback to subordinates or when communicating progress to upper management.

3.2 Classification of Interpersonal Relationship

Interpersonal relationship can be classified according to different spheres of life in which human beings could encounter problems.

These are:

- a. Love or marital relationship
- b. Family or kinship relationship
- c. Workplace relationship
- d. Neighborhood relationship
- e. Places of worship relationship.

All these relationships may be regulated by law, custom or mutual agreement, as they form the basis of social groups and the society as a whole.

Self-Assessment Exercise

What are the classifications of interpersonal relationship?

3.3 Approaches to Interpersonal Relationship

There are many approaches to interpersonal relationship, and these approaches can be grouped under the following headings.

1. **Indirect approach:** The indirect approach to interpersonal relationship allows the counselee to express self while the counselor only listens with apt attention and intermittently, when necessary, injects words that can elicit more responses on the discourse. The professional counselors that use this approach rely on the tenets of the Client-centered Theory as their counseling skill.
-
2. **Direct approach:** This is just the opposite of the indirect approach. In this approach, talking is done by the counselor who uses questions and counseling skills to elicit responses from the counselee about the problem at hand. Here the counselor dictates the pace and alive is the counselee based on what can be made out of the sparing responses gathered from the counselee.
-
3. **Eclectic approach:** This approach to interpersonal relationship in counseling is not totally an indirect or a direct approach. Rather it finds the two approaches named above with any other suitable one handy during counseling sessions. It thereby relies on chosen skills that suit the counseling session at hand, from all available approaches to resolve the counselor's conflict.

4.0 Conclusion

The unit acquainted you with what interpersonal relationship is. This will in no doubt help lay the necessary foundation as you work through the course for better understanding of the subject matter.

5.0 Summary

In this unit you have been introduced to the meaning of interpersonal relationship, its principles, techniques and the values that have been established.

6.0 Self-Assessment Exercise

1. What are the different types of interpersonal relationship, describe each of them.
2. What is eclectic approach?

7.0 References/Further Reading

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Unit 2 Principles of Interpersonal Relationship

1.0 Introduction

In this unit you will learn about the basic principles of interpersonal relationship. The values and justification for the course will also be discussed. The knowledge from this unit will help justify the reactions for introducing this important course in the tertiary education's curriculum in Nigeria.

2.0 Objectives

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

- discuss the basic principles that guide the human behaviour towards healthy and positive interpersonal relationship
- enumerate the values and justification for interpersonal relationship.

3.0 Main Content

3.1 Basic Principles of Interpersonal Relationship

The basic principles of interpersonal relationship accepted by most authorities in the field of social psychology and relationship science are described as follows:

1. The study of interpersonal relationship involves several branches of social sciences including such disciplines as sociology, psychology, anthropology and social work.
2. Interpersonal skills are extremely vital when trying to develop a relationship with another person.
3. Interpersonal relationships are dynamic systems that change continuously during their existence. Like living organisms, relationships have a beginning, a lifespan and an end.
4. All relationships are governed by Levinger model, a model developed by George Levinger to describe heterosexual, adult romantic relationships. According to the model, natural development of a relationship follows five stages:
 - a. Acquaintance/acquaintanceship- becoming acquainted depends on previous relationships, physical proximity, first impressions and other factors. If two people begin to like each other, continued interactions may lead to the next stage, but acquaintance can continue indefinitely.
 - b. Build-up – During this stage people begin to trust and care about each other. The need for intimacy, compatibility and such filtering agents as common background and goals will influence whether or not interaction continues.
 - c. Continuation: This follows a mutual commitment to quit a strong and close long-term friendship, or even marriage. It is generally long, relative stable period. Nevertheless, continued growth and development will occur during this time. Mutual trust is important to sustain the relationship.
 - d. Deterioration: Not all relationships deteriorate, but those that tend to show signs of trouble, boredom, resentment and dissatisfaction may occur, an individual may communicate less and avoid self-disclosure. Loss of trust and betrayals may take place as the downward spiral continuous deterioration may eventually end the relationship.

- e. Termination: The final stage marks the end of the relationship, either by break-up, death, or by spatial separation for quite some time and severing all existing ties of either friendship or romantic cure.

The list of interpersonal skills needed for healthy and positive relationship include:

- verbal communication - what we say and how we say it
 - non-verbal communication – what we communicate without words, body language is an example
 - listening skills – how we interpret both the verbal and non-verbal messages sent by others
 - negotiation- working with others to find a mutually agreeable outcome
 - problem-solving – working with others to identify, define and solve problems
 - decision making: exploring and analysing options to make sound decisions
 - assertiveness – communicating our values ideas, beliefs, opinions, needs and wants, freely.
- I. Healthy relationships are built on a foundation of secure attachment. Secure attachment models represent an internal set of expectations and preferences regarding the intimacy that guide behaviour.

Characteristics of relationship: They include goals. These are mutual support goals, problem solving goals, individual growth in the relationship goals, structural goals, financial goals, and family goals. These are meant to be pillars holding the whole water front of relationships.

Mutual support goals

- i. to nurture one another
- ii. to communicate with one another
- iii. to determine how independent of each other
- iv. openness
- v. the length or duration of the relationship
- vi. what extreme to take when the relationship grows cold
- vii. how pleasurable will the relationship be
- viii. how much can people be allowed or included in the relationship without affecting the support for each other.

Problem solving goals

- i. how to approach problems in the relationship
- ii. what will be the problem solving model to be adopted
- iii. how to tolerate each other
- iv. how to fight or quarrel
- v. how to handle such fights and resolution strategies
- vi. when to seek third party's involvement
- vii. how to encourage each other to be good problem solver.

Individual growth in the relationship

- i. how to ensure mutual growth in the relationship
- ii. how open will taking joint and individual responsibility of the relationship's needs

- iii. how to use the unique and individual personalities to assist each other
- iv. what steps to take if any of the partners need mental health assistance
- v. what steps to take to handle jealousy or a sense competition
- vi. how to help each other to have pleasure in the relationship

Structural goals

- i. planning for time limits in achieving goals
- ii. arranging for schedules to pursue specific and individual interests
- iii. level of freedom allowed to pursue the interests
- iv. commitment to settling long-term relationship goals
- v. right placing the position of religion, hobbies, sports and any other outdoor interests.

Financial goals

- i. what career goals do each have, should be discussed
- ii. how to promote each other's career
- iii. who pays the bills
- iv. how to pay for wants or luxuries
- v. agreements on insurance, savings, investments, retirement and so on.

Family goals

- i. how to handle the role of in-laws
- ii. how many children should they have and at what intervals
- iii. how to fit the children into the relationship without losing the other
- iv. how to educate the children
- v. how to be functional as parents
- vi. how the children will not affect the pleasure timing.

Attitudes: They have a powerful influence on behaviour. Attitude is a relatively enduring organisation of beliefs, feelings and behavioural tendencies. It is an expression of favor or disfavor towards a person, place, thing or event.

Behaviour: It is a range of actions and mannerisms exhibited by a person.

Relationships are activated through communication. Relationships are used to mould people to adapt and adjust to situations affecting each other. Relationships are transitory:

- a. Deep
 - b. Moderate
 - c. Casual
 - d. Passing.
2. Lastly is the principle of Confucianism, which means that an individual knows his place in the social order and plays his or her part well. For instance, juniors are considered in the principle of Confucianism as owing their seniors, reverence and the seniors have their duties to benevolence and concern towards their juniors.

3.2 Values of Interpersonal Relationship

The main objective of this course is to identify and describe the usefulness of interpersonal relationships in different areas of life with a view of assisting the students to discover the value of interpersonal relationship. The values of interpersonal relationship include the following:

- knowing and being known - seeking to understand the partner
- making relationship – enhancing attributions for behaviours, giving the benefit of doubt
- accepting and respecting empathy and social skills
- maintaining reciprocity- active participation in relationship enhancement
- continuity in minding and persisting in mindfulness.

Sternberg (1999) theorises that love is a mix of three components (1) Passion or physical attraction (2) Intimacy or feelings of closeness and (3) commitment, involving the decision to initiate and sustain a relationship. The presence of all these three components characterises consummated love, which is the most durable type of love. In addition, the presence of intimacy and passion in marital relationship predicts marital satisfaction. Again, effective communication in the work place, is fully attained as there is improved interpersonal communication through empathising with the speaker, maintaining interest, postponing evaluation, organising information, showing one's interest and providing feedback. Thus communication in the work place must be credible, trustworthy, persuasive and physically attractive.

3.3 Formation of Interpersonal Relationship

These are stages of help in the formation of interpersonal relationship

- awareness
- acquaintance
- groundbreaking
- rapport building
- exploration that is:
- seeking information and
- giving information
- negotiation
- self-disclosure which involves a) formation of bond; b) reduced need for further testing
- Identification a) efforts made to determine the partner's needs; b) efforts made to meet the partner's needs
- breakdown.

3.4 Techniques of Interpersonal Relationship

- i. avoid criticism and condemnation of other people
- ii. don't complain about people
- iii. resolve conflict
- iv. communicate clearly
- v. appreciate people
- vi. display sense of humor
- vii. attend to your problem and others too

- viii. smile at people
- ix. demonstrate genuineness in your interaction with other people
- x. demonstrate attentiveness and good listening
- xi. show others that they are important
- xii. admit your guilt or fault
- xiii. manage your anger
- xiv. suggest to people what to do, do not enforce
- xv. understand other people's feelings
- xvi. understand your feelings too
- xvii. synchronise cooperatively
- xviii. act authentically
- xix. acknowledge generously
- xx. feel empathetically

4.0 Conclusion

Interpersonal relationship activities should therefore be based on the continuous need for improved interpersonal relationship at home, social groups and work place. This background has prepared you for the next unit where you will read about how to avoid the pitfalls of negative human relationships.

5.0 Summary

This unit has exposed the values of interpersonal relationship at home, social clubs and in the work place. It has also shown that it is very expedient to be exposed to the justification of the course.

6.0 Self-Assessment Exercise

1. Discuss why the learners need the inclusion of interpersonal relationship in the counselor education curriculum.
2. What are the basic principles of interpersonal relationship using your own words?
Discuss the key aspect of interpersonal relationship.

7.0 References/Further Reading

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Unit 3 Difficulties in Forming Relationship

1.0 Introduction

Interpersonal skills are sometimes also referred to as people skills or communication skills. Interpersonal skills are the skills a person uses to communicate and interact with others. Interpersonal skills are used often in business contexts to refer to the measure of a person's ability to operate within business organisations through social communication and interactions.

2.0 Objective

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

- explain factors that are responsible for difficulties in forming relationships.

3.0 Main Content

3.1 Causative Factors for Interpersonal Skills Deficit

The discovery of the establishment of common ground between individuals is a fundamental component for enduring interpersonal relationship. Due to loss of common ground, which may occur over the time, many tend to end interpersonal relationship. For each relationship, certain set of skills are needed and without these skills, more advanced relationships may not be possible. Systemic-coaching advocates a hierarchy or relationship from friendship to global order. Expertise in each relationship type requires skills of all previous relationship types (for example, a partnership requires friendship and team work, skills).

Interpersonal relationship through consanguinity and affinity can persist despite the absence of love, affection or common ground. When these relationships are in prohibited degrees, sexual intimacy in them would be a taboo of incest. Relationships are not necessarily healthy. Unhealthy examples include abusive relationship and co-dependence. Sociologists recognise a hierarchy of forms of activity and interpersonal relations, which divides into behaviour, action, social behaviour, social action, social contact, social interaction and finally social relation. Therefore the various difficulties in forming relationships include:

1. **Lack of sensitivity to receiver:** A breakdown in relationship may result when a message is not adapted to the receiver. Recognising the receivers' needs, status, knowledge of the subject matter and language skills, assist an individual in living a healthy relationship. If a customer is angry for instance, an effective response may be just to listen to the person's vent, for a while.
2. **Lack of basic communication skills:** The receiver is less likely to understand the message, if the sender has trouble with choosing the precise words and arranging these words in a grammatically correct sentence.
3. **Emotional distractions:** If emotions interfere with the creation and transmission of a message, they can also disrupt the reception. If you receive a report from your supervisor regarding a proposed change in work procedure and you do not particularly like your supervisor, you may have problem reaching the report objectively. You may

find fault by misinterpreting words for negative compressions, consequently, there may be a strain relationship.

Social skills are very critical to successful functioning in life. They enable partners to know what to say, how to make good choices and how to behave in diverse situations. They include:

Basic interaction skills

- i. making frequent eye contact
- ii. smiling when greeting people
- iii. showing confident body language
- iv. basic politeness
- v. showing interest in others

Making conversation

- i. taking turns when talking
- ii. listening and showing interest in what the other person has to say
- iii. do small talks
- iv. nodding and smiling to indicate that you are following along
- v. using humor
- vi. knowing when to disclose personal information and when not to.

Building and maintaining friendships

Approach skills:

- i. being able to start talking to someone
- ii. sharing decision making
- iii. maintaining contact
- iv. showing appropriate affection and appreciation
- v. being supportive – showing concern in hard times
- vi. allowing distance and closeness
- vii. thoughtfulness.

Empathy: This is putting oneself in someone else's shoes and recognising their feelings

- i. noticing other people's feeling
- ii. expressing concern at other people's distress
- iii. being able to recognise what someone else might be feeling in a given situation
- iv. showing sensitivity to others' feelings when communicating, especially when criticizing

Dealing with conflict:

- i. Assertiveness or being able to say what you are feeling without being aggressive or getting personal.
- ii. Negotiation skills: being able to discuss a conflict calmly and rationally to get at solutions.
- iii. All these social skills if not attainable, result in the following deficits:

Alcohol: Social skills are significantly impaired in people suffering from alcoholism due to neurotoxic effects of alcohol on the brain, especially the prefrontal cortex area of the brain. The social skills impaired by alcohol abuse include impairments in perceiving facial emotions, prosody perception problems and mind deficits, the ability to understand humor is also impaired in alcohol abusers.

- iv. **ADHD:** Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder Studies have revealed that half of the ADHD children and adolescents experience peer rejection compared to 10 – 15 percent of non-ADHD children. Adolescents with ADHD are less likely to develop close relationships. Going into relationships might be easier by the time adolescents grow into adulthood and enter into the workplace. Poor peer relationship can constitute major depression, criminality, school failure and substance abuse disorders. Adolescents with ADHD are more likely to find it difficult in making and keeping friends due to their attention deficits, causing impairment in processing verbal and non-verbal language, which is important for the development of social skills. Romantic relationships are usually difficult in the adolescent who are of the college age because of the lack of attention of nonverbal cues such as flirting gestures, tone of voice which may include misinterpretation of whether the person is romantic or not.
- v. **Autism:** People with autistic spectrum disorders such as Asperger's syndrome, generally have difficulty in social skills, they hardly understand people's emotions. Most people in the spectrum have many social idiosyncrasies such as obsessive interest and routines, lack of eye contact, one-sided conversations, abnormal body language and non-verbal communication.

According to Schneider & Byrne (1985) the procedure for training social skills had the largest effect size, followed by modeling, coaching and social cognitive techniques. Behaviour analysts prefer to use the term behaviour skills to social skills. Interpersonal skills can be measured on about how you treat other people and how you react to them.

4.0 Conclusion

There is harmony between the behaviour and theoretical analysis of interpersonal deficits or social skills deficits. As stated in the unit, the knowledge of the two aspects will help in the understanding and appreciating the depth of the difficulties in forming healthy relationships.

5.0 Summary

The synergy of the theoretical and behavioural analysis of the difficulties in forming a healthy relationship provides the format of understanding. It also shows that the various deficits in social skills cannot be trivialised. The characteristics of each problem cannot be over emphasised either.

Self-Assessment Exercise

Mention the various precipitating factors that are capable of causing unhealthy relationships.

6.0 Self-Assessment Exercise

Mention the essential characteristics of each factor that inhibits forming relationships.

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Unit 4 Forming and Maintaining Positive Relationships

1.0 Introduction

It is important to note that all forms of families are equally important as long as they share the basic features of a healthy family, these features include:

- i. **Affection** – Love for each other, encouragement and commitment to each other.
- ii. **Respect** – Positive communications and interactions with each other.
- iii. **Emotional strength** – ability to deal with stress and resolve conflict.
- iv. **Shared experience** – enjoying each other's company. The old expression "You cannot judge a book by its cover" is something to remember when you work with families. The structure of the family is the cover. The real story is how the family loves, respects, encourages and enjoys one another.

2.0 Objective

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

- explain as a counsellor, how you can form, build and maintain positive relationship with the family.

3.0 Main Content

As a counselor, you will in very practical ways interact with families. This means working together to achieve a common goal. Other qualities; you must be reasonable and friendly with the family, seek and share information in a respectful manner in order to help create positive relationships with the family, you must build trust and share information with the family.

The relationship between parents and professionals was marked by what is called social distance. The relationship is impersonal and cold; and it is no longer suitable for most direct support work. The parents of today expect and want to share power, responsibilities and information with the people and support a family member. Therefore the counselor can promote positive relationships by being friendly, showing interest, asking questions and sharing information.

3.1 Sharing Information with the Family

For the relationship between the counselor and the family to work, you will have to share information about the person you are helping, and the family will need information about you as the helper. Most parents want to know how things are going on with their children, and they will work up to you for this information.

3.2 Building Trust with the Family

Trust is a key component of any partnership between the family and the counselor. Families have to trust you to care for their children. Remember you are at a point a stranger to the family. The challenge for you is to move from a stranger to a trusted ally. How can you get

the family to believe you? How can you get them to take you as a person who is worthy of their trust?

Byrne (2008) proposed the keys to good practice in the family, interacting with children and young people.

Appropriate behaviour	Inappropriate behaviour
Using correct terminology	Discussing own problems
Responding honestly to questions	
Listening to problems and concerns	Sitting an older child on your knee/ kissing them.
Giving space	
Using appropriate touches	
Offering options and choices	Giving advice that contradict policies

Coleman (2004) advocates for a healthy relationship among valuable groups including parents. Among other tips, he proposed the following:

1. **Smile when you see parents and greet them:** Most parents only occasionally interact with counselors only when they are positive, warm and friendly. The impressions left from first encounters last for a long time.
2. **Learn their names:** Learn how they want to be addressed and how to pronounce them correctly.
3. **Declare your intention:** Tell them that you want to partner with them, that you appreciate their support and look forward to working together.
4. **Communicate often and in various forms:** Provide information about what is going on in your class. A weekly report will be a good idea on what students are learning, what they have accomplished, what you are excited about, what they are excited about, the learning and growth you are seeing. Suggest what they might ask their children about.
5. **Your language is powerful:** It communicates awareness that there are many difficult kinds of families. Be careful not to assume a mother is or not married even she is married to a man. Learn how to ask open-ended questions and understand that, sometimes parents/guardians might not want to share some information.

4.0 Conclusion

This unit acquainted you with how as a counselor you can form, build and maintain a positive relationship with the family, as you work through the course for better understanding.

5.0 Summary

In this unit, you have been introduced to the various ways and techniques through which a positive relationship can be built and maintained with the family. The appropriate ways of dealing with the children and young people are also established.

6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment

What are the various ways of forming and maintaining positive relationship within the family?

7.0 References/Further Reading

Coleman, W. L. (2008). *Social Competence and Friendship Formation in Adolescent with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder*, *Adolescent Med. State Dev. Rev.* 19(2) pp. 278-299 PMID 18822833.

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Unit 5 Self-Disclosure

1.0 Introduction

The goal of this unit is to assist learners to develop the ability to be open to each other with a view of developing a lasting relationship. Essentially, self-disclosure is conceptualised as verbally revealing thoughts, feelings and experiences to others (Derlega, Petromio and Margulie, 1993). But self-disclosure is more than personal and private talk (Billetter, 2000). Studies have revealed two types of self-disclosure; self-disclosure given and self-disclosure received.

2.0 Objectives

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

- discuss self-disclosure
- enumerate the concepts of self-disclosure in human relationships.

3.0 Main Content

3.1 Conceptualizing Self-Disclosure Relationship

Self-disclosure is sometimes referred to as verbal and non-verbal activities like in the case of thoughts, feelings and experiences of others.

These activities are used often to express ideas, descents, deep seated feelings and judgment, the knowledge to relate better with peers and help others in dire need of relationship sincerity. Self-disclosure given is referred to as, self-reported self-disclosure. This refers to disclosing one's personal feelings, thoughts and experiences. Self-disclosure received is also referred to as information disclosure by others.

Billetter (2000) identified the direction of self-disclosure as friendship disclosure, which according to Sprecher (1987) was found to be a more important predictor of liking, love and stability in romantic relationships. Derlega, Gerzelak (1979) posited that non-verbal menaces are intended to communicate information. Self-disclosure is a transaction that occurs between two or more people. They play the roles of disclosure giver and the disclosure recipient or listener. Some aspects of disclosure or non-disclosure may influence how close a relationship begins, including privacy regulation. It shows how much of the actions of the discloser and the disclosure recipient's behaviour, that are contributing to the underlying reactions. Information is conveyed from the discloser and the disclosure recipient's behaviour reveals the reasons underlying each person's reaction.

Taylor, Gowld and Brounistein (1981) are of the opinion that self-disclosure may be perceived as personalitic (like, uniquely intended for a recipient) or non-personalitic (such as, intended anyone for the basis for social penetration). Social penetration theory as proposed by Irwin Altman and Dalmis Taylor (1973) provided important early perspective about self-disclosure, the development about self-disclosure and the development of close relationship. According to this theory, at the start of a relationship, prospective partner may be limited to fairly stereotyped and superficial behaviours, but as relationship progresses, individuals

are predicted to increase the range of activities they share with one another, including disclosing more personal information to one another. Partners also compose a mental picture of one another, based on positive and negative experiences. Social penetration include any behaviours that is interpersonal-verbal (self-disclosure) non-verbal like someone moving a chair to sit closer or farther away from the other person.

Yum and Hara (2005) also reported the increase in the breadth and depth of self-disclosure in internet communication which was associated with increased feelings of liking, love and interdependence with one's partner as based on a survey of Japanese American and South Korean internet users. This is consistent with self-disclosure in counseling.

The knowledge and competence of the counselor in self-disclosure will facilitate the following;

- a. Ability to keep the client and find the appropriate words to disseminate his emotion.
- b. Ability to help the client to verbalise the key concerns, meanings and memories which arose from emotional arousal.
- c. Ability to help the client to verbalise the wishes, needs, behaviours and goals associated with failings and emotions.
- d. Ability to suggest imagery and metaphor to help the client to become more aware and to articulate the meaning of their experiences.

3.2 Characteristics of Self-Disclosure

- i. The story is always representing the individual disclosing
- ii. It is influenced by the culture of the person disclosing
- iii. Self-disclosure is usually symmetrical
- iv. It stimulates feedback
- v. It can be most revealing
- vi. It occurs incrementally
- vii. Too elaborate amount of self-disclosure is not necessary
- viii. It is usually rare.

4.0 Conclusion

This unit acquainted you with how as a counselor you can understand the value of self-disclosure and develop the needed competencies for counseling needs that care to do with emotional disturbance and relationship instability.

5.0 Summary

In this unit, you have been introduced to the various concepts in competencies that a counselor should develop in order to help his clients.

6.0 Self-Assessment Exercise

In what ways can a counselor develop self-disclosure in the client?

7.0 References/Further Reading

Billetter, R. B. (2000). *Statistics for Social Data Analysis*. Alaska, Illinois: F.E Peacock Publishers.

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