

Counseling needs



COUNSELLING NEEDS I am a newly assigned counsellor to an organization, and it is my job to meet the organizations' counselling needs using the theories of guidance counselling studied in school. The rationale behind the counsellor's job is to develop the individuals' career-relevant skills and characteristics, while preparing them to adapt to constant change in the work environment (Krumboltz, 1996 in Patton & McMahon, 2006: 230). In this situation, a pro-active approach, rather than a remedial approach, will be used in determining counselling needs. In assessing the needs of the organization, it is important to work within the System Theory Framework of Patton & McMahon, in which I explore the interactions between the content influences (the individual, social, and environmental/societal system) and the process influences (recursiveness, change over time, and chance). The diagram on the next page illustrates the framework to be followed by me as the counsellor. The figure shows the interrelationship between the client and the counsellor, within the content and process influences that impact upon the individual, with the collaboration and intervention of the counsellor. I should work closely with policy makers in the organization, based on the theory by Savickas, Van Esbroeck and Herr that career guidance is a socio-political instrument for advancing organizational goals while helping the individual to realize a personally satisfying career (Patton & McMahon, 2006: 231). The policy makers set the organizational system, which functions inside the social and environmental/societal systems. Working in the system side by side with the individual is the counsellor, who uses a collaborative and negotiating technique that makes up the pro-active approach. The counsellor finds out the policies and objectives in the organization, and helps the individual to adjust to the constantly changing organization. The

Therapeutic System (Patton & McMahon, 1999) In approaching the clientele, I as counsellor must utilize the essential building blocks, namely genuineness, unconditional positive regard, emphatic understanding, and flexibility (Rogers, 1951 in Patton & McMahon, 2006: 300). By this I create a working partnership between me and the individual, where we relate to each other as collaborators and equals rather than the expert and the subject. I then gain an understanding of how to match as closely as possible the individual with the job traits, to ensure job success and personal satisfaction, pursuant to the Trait and Factor Theory. As counsellor, I could employ the constructivist approach where the individual is asked to create a narrative in order to reveal his individual traits. Through the narrative I gain an insight into the individual's personality type that may suggest the work-related activity best suited for him, and therefore the career that is most reflective of his personality, in line with Holland's Theory. As time passes, the developmental theories become useful in adapting to the change process as people mature. The individual's self-concept becomes identified with his working environment and experiences, according to specific age stages and developmental tasks (Super's Model). It is also important for me to determine the individual's social learning, environmental conditions and events that influence him as well as genetic influences, and from these advise the policy makers in identifying certain behaviours that are modelled rewarded and reinforced. The rewards system provides the client the information he may need on what the company considers desirable behaviour; this information is processed and integrated by the individuals, according to which they react (Social-Cognitive Theories). Finally, these information and influences help the individual arrive at a decision during

critical points in his career. The decision points become learning opportunities that an individual can refer to as a guide in the future, in the light of the constantly changing environment (Decision-Making Theories).

Reference: Patton, W., & McMahan, M. (2006). *Career Development and System Theory*, Second Edition. Rotterdam: Sense Publishers