

Multi-cultural counselling

Psychology



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Multi-Cultural Counselling

The world has increasingly become globalized due to technological advancement. The global nature of the world has facilitated migration of people especially from the less developed world. This creates culture shock as the immigrants try to fit in the society. This has given rise to the need for cross- cultural counselling. This presents problems to the psychotherapists as they try to counsel the immigrants as they try to understand the cultural backgrounds of the immigrants. Clemmont E. Vontress carried out a research that studied the scope of the problem and offered a number of suggestions on how to handle cross- cultural counselling.

Purpose

The purpose of the study by Vontress was to study the scope and nature of the problem that psychotherapists face with cross- cultural counselling. His objective was to determine the extent of the problem and the factors that cause the psychological problems experienced by immigrants. Vontress went further ahead to suggest ways in which psychotherapists can combine traditional counselling methods with modern techniques so as to provide a holistic approach (Vontress, 2001). The hypothesis is the nature and scope of cross- cultural counselling in the twenty first century. Psychologists acknowledge that the problem of immigration is an emerging problem and a major feature of the twenty first century that ought to be handled through a cross- cultural counselling approach.

Method

The researcher used a quantitative as well as a literature analysis to study the problem. Vontress studied documented information about the psychological nature of immigrants and their likelihood to experience

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cultural problems in their new countries. He studied the societal structure in terms of societal integration, family, religion, societal values, education level, division of labour, and class structure (Vontress, 2001). Vontress systematically studied the factors that are attributed to culture shock and factors in the immigrant's original country that contribute to psychological problems. These included cultural anxiety, pre-immigration problems, and post-adjustment problems. He then compared the traditional ways of healing and modern ones and the considerations that are used in both.

Findings

Vontress found that social and environmental changes contribute to the psychological problems experienced by immigrants. These lead to cultural anxiety and social pressure that predispose the immigrants to psychological problems. He found that the immigrants face emotional problems inflicted on them in their home countries such as war, poverty, and civil conflicts that affect them mentally (Vontress, 2001). The host countries also lack structures that are meant to help the immigrants to deal with their psychological trauma. This coupled with the problem of cultural adjustment and the often individualistic nature of the host countries result in stressful situations that result in psychological problems. He also found that counsellors have a hard time integrating traditional and modern ways of healing to help the immigrants deal with the psychological problems.

Discussion

Vontress studied the nature and scope of the problems faced by psychotherapists as they deal with cross-cultural counselling. He studied the independent variables being the ability of the counsellors to understand the cultures of the patients and the independent variables being the causes of

the psychological problems experienced by the immigrants (Vontress, 2001). These revealed the factors that counsellors need to consider when treating cross- cultural patients. Vontress also studied cultural factors that affect the ability of psychotherapists to offer a holistic approach to the process of counselling their patients (Vontress, 2001).

Implications

The study implies that it is best for the counsellor to understand the cultural background culture of cross- cultural clients. This helps the therapist to understand the factors that affect the immigrants due to cultural conflicts. The counsellor can only understand this by having a close relationship with the client so that he can understand the nature of cultural conflict and cultural differences (Vontress, 2001). The counselling approaches ought to focus on tackling background problems that may be affecting the ability of the immigrant to comfortably settle down in his new environment.

Recommendations

The study ought to consider the exact nature of society of the immigrant as societies vary in their characteristics despite being either developing or developed. This is because the societies keep going through cultural changes that ought to be considered in the study. The study should also consider the gender variations and how these seem to impact on the psychological nature of the problem. The researcher should also investigate the reasons for immigration as these have a bearing on the nature of expectations of the new country.

References

Vontress, C, E. (2001). “ Cross- Cultural Counselling in the 21st Century.”
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