

A look at counselling psychology essay



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Introduction

This essay will comprehensively provide definition of counseling and discuss what the counselor can do with regards to the counseling setting to make the client feel safe. It will also discuss the characteristics of an effective counselor and discuss the importance of unconditional positive regard, empathy and congruence in the counseling process, and attribute to Carl Roger's Person-Centred Approach. It will also discuss importance of self-care for the counselor. Reference will be included.

Counselling is a relationship between a trained counselor and a client. They interact with one another to produce change in the client's cognition, feelings and behaviour. Counselling is a process that enables a person to figure out and gain insight in issues and reach decisions affecting their life. Often counselling is practiced out in challenging times in a persons life, it need not be so, however, as counselling can also be helpful and necessary in ones life at any time.

Talking with a person (client) is the essential factor in counselling in a way that the client acknowledges the problem and strive to solve it or help create conditions that will adhere understanding to the client and/or improve his/her behaviour, character, values or life circumstances. Counselling is often performed face-to-face in confidential sessions between the counsellor and client(s). However, counselling can also be practiced by telephone, internet, by email or video conferencing and in writing, but most preferably by face-to face in an appropriate venue comfortable to the client.

For a client to feel safe, the counselor should create a setting- physical and emotional space for the client to develop a strong therapeutic alliance.

Creating a warm and safe environment is essential for a client to break the tension and build trust and boundary issues such as such as contracting and terminating sessions on time. According to Jan Sutton (2009), the counselor should strive to keep the room neutral, in other words free from personal belongings such as books, ornaments and family photographs, to reduce the quality gap. And barriers such as a desk should be avoided, and chairs should be uniformed and placed approximately three to four feet apart and slightly at an angle. Sutton advises that a box of tissues must be strategically placed where the client can easily reach them, and a vase of fresh flowers or a potted plant can add some kind of warmth and colour to the setting.

The setting should be private and the same every session. The confidentiality of the client must be assured at all times. It is also suggested that addressing the client with their first name builds comfort ability and acceptance, but first ask how the client wants to be addressed. Also the counselor referring themselves by their first name breaks the barrier of inequality.

An effective counselor should clearly define his expectations to achieve with his client and discuss realistic time frames for reaching his goals and agree on how he will measure his client's progress. He will establish a good relationship with his client and allow the client to be completely honest about his thoughts and feelings. He will create chemistry that the client feels comfortable, and help cope with the trying circumstances. “ An effective

counselor can identify negative thinking pattern that may be feeding feelings sadness, depression or anxiety. By encouraging you to build upon personal strengths and suggesting skills that can overcome self-afflicted feelings of hopelessness, a counselor can help develop a more positive attitude” (Poston, L. 2006).

A good counselor can assist the client in making effective changes and help establish acknowledgement or bring insight of the clients behavior and can teach the client effective ways of communicating with the people who may be causing the distress. The counselor should be able to empower and create personal growth in the client’s life.

The personal qualities found in effective counselors include self-awareness and understanding, good psychological health in terms of being qualified to perform and being cognitively constructed and ready. It also involves the counselor being sensitive and considerate of racial, ethnic and cultural factors in self and others. And possessing the ability to be open-minded – having a broad perception and being objective. This also should acquire Person Centred counseling.

Carl Rogers is known as the ‘ father’ of counseling. He believed that people are relatively good and born independent. He helped change ‘ Patient’ to ‘ Client’. He invented the humanistic approach named Person-centred Approach- which is basically focusing on the client being in control of the therapy, which encourages the client to develop sense of autonomy, self-exploration and improves self-concept and their perception. There are three main core condition considered to be essential in an effective counseling are;

Unconditional Positive Regard (UPR), Empathy and Congruence. These core conditions are needed to facilitate change.

Congruence is the first element; it is called genuineness and realness. It is considered that the counselor becomes himself during the session and not put up the professional facade. This will suggest that the counselor shows feeling according to the manner of the session. And make the client feel comfortable to make alterations and grow in the constructive manner.

Unconditional Positive Regard is important in creating a climate for change by the counselor to possess an attitude of acceptance, caring or prizing. The counselor should enforce positivity towards whatever the state of the client is so change can occur. Prizing the client as a total rather than a conditional manner is necessary.

Empathy is the third facilitative aspect of the relationship between the client and the counselor. This is where the counselor picks up the feelings of the client and reflects back to the client. It is based on understanding the client's feelings and personal meaning of what the client is experiencing. The counselor also reflects the private side of the client by observing below the level of the client's awareness and bringing it insight to be acknowledged and understood. Empathy is shown through way of being non-judgmental and understanding from the client's perspective.

Counselors use an approach of being empathetic, such skills involve; active and empathetic listening, reflection of the client's feelings and content, and include appropriate self-disclosure of the counselor. Roger also emphasize other skills such as; active listening, encourage body language, open ended

and closed questions- questions that allow the client to express feeling and openness- good tone, paraphrasing so the client can see that you are listening and also acknowledge him about what he said out of the unconscious mind and summarizing so that he knows in words what he is really feeling and feel accepted.

Core conditions can improve relationship between client and counselor. If one feels safe and comfortable, he will open up and completely express himself, which will empower change and growth. The way the counselor represent himself also has an effect on the client's perception and where his cognitive approach is constructed.

It is important for a counselor to always look representable. Self-awareness and self-care include the counselor reflecting on their personal issues first and their own development before attending the client. For the counselor's self-care, it is advised that they take note of the important aspects of self-care; firstly, Physical self-care which consist of eating breakfast, lunch and dinner, eat healthy and exercise, get enough sleep, do activities that are fun, take time to be sexually active, and take vacations and time away from the telephone.

Secondly, Psychological self-care; have your own counselor, reflect on yourself, engage yourself in new areas, socialize, talking to colleagues and decrease stress in your life. Thirdly, Emotional self-care means spending time with loved ones and those you value the most, and find ways to increase self-confidence and esteem, cry when you feel like it and value and praise yourself. Lastly, Spiritual self-care includes spending time with nature,

meditate, pray, sing, journaling and be open for inspiration. It is also considerable to seek social support of peers as an asset to maintain self-care. Being active with a supportive relationship is valuable and helpful.

Conclusion

This essay comprehensively provided definition of counseling and discussed what the counselor can do with regards to the counseling setting to make the client feel safe. It also discussed the characteristics of an effective counselor and discussed and elaborated further on the importance of unconditional positive regard, empathy and congruence in the counseling process, and considered Carl Roger's Person-Centred Approach. It also discussed importance of self-care for the counselor. Reference is included.

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