COUNSELLING

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Introduction

Since the beginning of time, man has been seeking, giving and receiving advice in an informal way. Thus counselling may be considered as old as man's experience but often neglected in the modern world.

Many unpleasant incidents in life can be avoided or prevented by counselling at the right time, by the right person, to those in need of help. It is essential to mankind in all walks of life, at all places and to all age groups in order to lead a well adjusted and happy life.

Counselling has been defined in many and often conflicting ways. Webster's dictionary defines it as "consultation, mutual inter-change of opinions, deliberating together".

Talbert's definition

Counselling is a personal face to face relationship, between two people. The counsellor by means of the relationship and his competencies, provides a learning situation in which a counsellee is helped to know himself and his present situation as well, so that he can make use of his potentialities in a way that is both satisfying to himself and beneficial to society, and can learn how to meet the future needs.

The above definition is quite comprehensive and it can be seen that counselling is an asset to society.

Counselling is interviewing where verbal and non-verbal inter-action takes place between the counsellee and counsellor. The counsellor provides a learning situation for another person who will promote a change of attitude, of habits of thinking, of feeling and behaviour. The counsellor provides conditions that promote and foster insight, which is an understanding of one's behaviour.

Need for counselling

In a rapid, complicated, changing, impersonal modern society the trend towards urbanization and disruption of joint families has increased. The individual no longer feels secure and faces numerous problems and is in need of counselling which is vital in a changing world.[1]

Who should receive counselling service

Any one who has problems related to education, social adjustment, personal matters, health, vocation, financial matters, interpersonal relationships, and religious matters needs counselling. It should not be confined to those who seek help, who can think through their problem of adjustment, but counselling should be extended to all students as an aid to their optimum development. It should be directed toward the prevention of maladjustments, not merely toward their removal. "The important part is the establishment, even in the absence of a pressing problem, of a warm, sound relationship of the pupil with a mature adult to feel that such a person is genuinely and personally interested in him."[2]

Who should do counselling

Parents, teachers, senior students, doctors, lawyers, clergymen, policemen, judges, psychologists, social workers, and nurses.

Each one counsels for different reasons and from different angles and points of view. In deciding who should do counselling, one must keep in mind the characteristics of the counsellor.

The counsellor

The Counsellor's personal characteristics are important. He should be confident and give a feeling of security to the counsellee, have a knowledge of techniques, be friendly and warm with a desire to help, and at the same time be able to set limits. He must be objective in his attitude. He must like people and have the ability to show he likes them. He should recognize individual differences and be liked by people who feel they can trust him.[3]

Types of counselling

Counsellor's versus client-centred, directive versus non-directive, controlled versus permissive. All service activities are, by their nature centred on the person to be helped. Client-centred versus counsellor-centred refers to the relative activity of the counsellor and the counsellee in the guidance programme. The client (the counsellee) has within himself the power to solve his problem. Here the teachers and counsellors realize the resources of the young people and help them to make their own decisions and adjustments. The counsellee can see his problem and solution better than the counsellor. Directive versus non-directive indicates also the degree to which the counsellor attempts to direct the discussion along the lines that he thinks profitable as compared with encouraging

1. Turner. L. "Counselling in Nursing". *The Canadian Nurse*, 61:4:287-288, April 1965.

2. Jones A.T. *Principles of Guidance* (New York: McGraw Hill Book Company) 1963. pages 214-218.

3. Strong. R. Educational Guidance. Its principles and practice (New York: MacMillan Co. 1960). pp. 106-117.

the counsellee to determine the direction of the discussion.[4]

The Nature of Counselling

Has three inter-related stages :

1. *An exploratory stage* in which the individual brings facts and attitudes out into the open.

2. *An interpretative stage* in which he sees more clearly what the facts mean.

3. *An adjustment stage* in which he translates new insights into his behaviour.[5]

Techniques and essentials of counselling that would be applied in the School of Nursing or any situation :

1. Prepare counselling sessions, plan, select suitable place. Have facts from records. Konw strengths and weaknesses of the counsellee.

2. Establish rapport, put counsellee at ease, gain confidence, recognize individuality.

3. Give opportunity to express his feelings, wishes, hopes and fears. Permit to arrive at his own conclusions.

4. The counsellor must recognize the underlying significance of what the person says and does. The spoken words and outward behaviour may conceal real feelings. Be sympathetic, expert in understanding and recognize that counselling is a gradual process requiring time and practice.

5. Encourage students to keep a diary. This will be of help at the time of counselling. Weekly or monthly reviews of diaries will be of help.

6. Students' panchayat is a democratic way to solve their problems.

7. Proper preparation and selection of faculty members is essential for counselling.

8. The counsellor must make sure of what he wants to accomplish.[6]

9. It is advisable to have a few non-faculty members in the counselling programme to whom the students could freely approach e.g., Assistant Matron, Departmental and Ward Sisters, Doctors etc.

There are times when the professional future of a student nurse may depend on the kind and quality of counselling she receives from an instructor. It is often necessary for the nursing instructor to be alert to an impending critical situation before it becomes a reality.

In no other profession is the young adolescent exposed to such varied, strange and stressful situations as the student nurse, where she has to exercise great judgement and understanding among a wide category of people. Counselling thus becomes vital and a necessity in the educational programme of a nurse, be it a diploma or a degree programme.

In the school of nursing, the students, faculty, and the nursing service personnel are involved in the counselling process. Even before the student is mature enough, she is called to counsel the patients. It goes without saying that this individual herself be of good physical and mental health, be able to have an insight into her difficulties and solve her problems, and it is here we are convinced that there is a pressing need for counselling in nursing education. It will certainly prevent a good number of alarming situations where the student is involved.

Every school of nursing should have an organized counselling programme with the co-operation of the faculty and administrative staff involved in teaching. Some faculty members feel incompetent but they are in a much better position than some other person to whom the students go in the absence of a counsellor e.g. a student developed undesirable friendship with a ward orderly and stated that he was the only person who gave help and advice when she got into trouble with one of the servants.

The new students should be oriented to the total programme. They should be helped to understand contradictory medical statements and adjust their procedure of nursing care. They need counselling in relationship with other students, graduate nursing staff, patients, and others and also in community living.

Older students can contribute to counselling by taking over "older sister" assignments and care for new students.[7]

Preventive counselling is useful to students doing poor work, to students who are withdrawn, shy and apathetic. The student who has conflict with other students, patients, or authority figures; the student who is aloof, angry, hypercritical, arrogant and argumentative, the student who is late for appointments, who hands in assignments late, misunderstands direction and is forgetful. Students who seldom express anger, who often regret and appear apologetic and who tend to promise "it won't happen again" are also students who need counselling.[8]

On the job counselling is useful to nurses in the wards and can improve patient care ; it may be planned or incidental. Counselling could be in the form of unplanned conferences on occasions like the death of a patient, a failure in examination or in any time of crisis.[9]

Academic counselling includes evaluation of student's progress.

Group counselling to student organizations prove to be useful when the problems are similar and common to all.

The faculty and supervisory staff have their own problems and should have counselling by the director of nursing education and administration respectively ; they in turn should get expert opinion from trained counsellors.

Conclusion

Counselling is a vital need though at times a difficult one. It can be

4. Jones, op. cit, page 2
5. Strong, op. cit, page 2
6. Freeman, Ruth B. Public Health Nursing Practice. Philadelphia W. B. Saunders Co., 1963. pages 183-217.
7. *Basic Nursing Edueation—Principles and Practices of Nursing Education*, Published by the International Council of Nurses. 1958 : pages 64-66.
8. Nehien J, Killen B, "Preventive Counselling for Nursing students", *Nursing Outlook*, 15:1:37-39, Jan. 1967.
9. Jennings M. "On-The-Job Counselling" *American Journal of Nursing*, 61:3:67-70, March 1961.

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