Counseling Psychology: Types, Objectives and the Role of Counseling Psychologist

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Abstract

In this article the concept of counseling psychology, the four major general groups of counseling psychology, its goals, objectives and types and the role of the counseling psychologist and the characteristics that he should have regardless of the type of counseling he uses are analyzed. The counseling psychology through different theoretical approaches will be discussed in more detail. Regarding the types of counseling psychology a general distinction that can be made as to methodology and procedure which is used in counseling psychology, is between individual or personal and group counseling. The role of the counseling psychologist it could be argued that he does not only deal with psychotherapy, but also with research, teaching as well as with administrative activities, depending on the context in which he operates.

Keywords: counseling psychology, counseling psychologist, objectives/types of counseling psychology, roles of counseling psychologist.

1. Introduction

"Counseling psychology" is a branch of psychology that deals with the development or restoration of mental health of people (or group of people), which has been disrupted by a variety of environmental influences or internal conflicts (Malikiosi-Loizou, 1996).

As a scientific discipline, counseling psychology is concerned with research, theory and application. Through these three core levels we can discover the main elements of counseling psychology and to define it by stressing only one or more of its aspects. Thus, it can be considered at a theoretical level, i.e. in terms of trends and prevailing theoretical groups. At the process of level on the other hand, the basic relationship between consultant and consulting, all the techniques through which the consultative process leads to better results, but also the key objectives that every time are raised during counseling are pointed out (Malikiosi-Loizou, 1996).

The American Psychological Association, taking into account the range of definitions that have been given from time to time based on various theoretical approaches, defines Counseling Psychology as "... the specialty under which the consultant psychologist helps the consulting to improve his personal situation, to relieve the sorrow and sadness, to resolve the crises he faces, to develop the ability to solve problems and be able to take his own decisions. It also supports the psychological growth and development of the consulting, by helping them to make better use of the resources and capabilities they have or by showing them the way to develop

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new methods that will help them to help themselves. In order to approach the consulting, the counseling psychologist uses systematic approaches that rely on research to help him, but also the consulting to understand fully his problems and develop ways to solve them. The problems that lead a man to seek the support of an advisory psychologist spring from environmental influences or internal conflicts and can be professional, educational, emotional, social, developmental or health problems" (American Psychological Association, 1956).

Current data of a society with revolutionary changes in the institution of family, in morality, in values and attitudes, in occupations and working life, in economy, in politics and in educational systems, create a great need for counseling psychology.

2. Counseling psychology through different theoretical approaches

Counseling psychology is based on a variety of theoretical views. Each of these approaches man through a different theoretical framework, following its own special consultative procedure and using a variety of techniques depending on the subject to be treated.

Ms. Malikiosi-Loizou, in the book of *Counseling Psychology* (1996) makes an attempt of grouping the theories of counseling, based on the clustering model of psychotherapeutic theories of D. Frey (1972). The two axes, proposed by Patterson (1966) and London (1964) intersect and create a system that is able to show the relationship between the theories as to the process of counseling – to change a behavior (Patterson), and the objectives of this process (London). The closer one theory is at the intersection of these two axes (process and objectives), the more similarities it has with others in a similar position. On the contrary, the further away one theory is from the intersection of these two axes, the more it differs from other approaches (Malikiosi-Loizou, 1996).

In brief, the four major general groups of counseling psychology are:

- Logical-intuitive theories

In this group there are theories that express the view that man can, using logic, gain insight that will lead him to change his behavior. Such theories are Transactional analysis, the logic-thymic analysis of Ellis and the individual psychology of Adler. The psychology of Adler is located near the intersection of the two axes and contains data of processes and goals from all four groups.

- Intuitive-emotional theories

The theories of this group profess that man can gain insight only if he first understands his feelings and his inner motives. This group includes the psychoanalytic theory of Freud, the Ego counseling of Erickson and Fromm, person-centered approach of Rogers and the existential approach. Of the above approaches the last two are very close together highlighting the inner, subjective world of man.

- Emotional-reactive theories

They point to the activation of the individual for behavior modification through the understanding of emotions and internal motivation. Representative theory of this group is the morphological theory.

- Active-logical theories

The behaviorists, the theory of characteristics and factors of Williamson's and the theory of reality of Glasser belong in this category. These theories emphasize rational processes

that lead to specific changes in behavior. They believe that first changes behavior and then feelings (Malikiosi-Loizou, 1996).

Each of these theories, which are classified in four groups, takes a different approach to technical situations, while their application is suggested for specific cases. So, the logic-thymic due to its nature and the treatments it suggests, is appropriate for people with mild or severe emotional difficulties. In contrast, people with severe mental disorders (schizophrenia, manic), with severe brain damage and autistic cannot be helped by it (Malikiosi-Loizou, 1996).

The Transactional analysis is primarily a group treatment approach; this does not mean that it cannot successfully apply on individual cases. It is used with prisoners and hospitalized people and in institutions in general to develop better human relationships in them. It is also suitable for marriage and family problems. It is applied with great success on people mentally retarded, increasing their effectiveness (Malikiosi-Loizou, 1996).

The Adlerian psychotherapy method is used for the treatment of all mental disorders and is widespread in family counseling, with educational programs for better parenting (Malikiosi-Loizou, 1996).

The psychoanalytic approach is dealing with any human behavior and experience of family or marital problems, alcoholism, and homosexuality until severe neurotic and psychotic conditions, while the followers of *Psychology of the Self* do not deal with the field of psychopathology. Instead, they place great emphasis on developing healthy personality (Malikiosi-Loizou, 1996).

The person-centered approach can be widely applied to all kinds of human relationships and treat successfully various neuroses and other mental disorders. The existential counseling seeks to help the consulting to approach his existential knowledge, while speech therapy, as an existential approach, is particularly helpful in the treatment of neurotic or psychotic conditions, showing strongly prodromal stress (Malikiosi-Loizou, 1996).

Morphological approach is most effective with people too social, moderate and oppressed, often described as individuals with phobias, as non-effective, depressed etc. (Malikiosi-Loizou, 1996)

Counseling based on behavioral therapy is widely used in personality disorders, neurotic and psychotic reactions, childhood disorders, etc., using a variety of techniques (reinforcement, systematic desensitization, etc.) (Malikiosi-Loizou, 1996).

The theory of reinforcement and psychoanalytic therapy is effective with people whose confusion is a result of learning and is not due to organic causes (Malikiosi-Loizou, 1996).

Finally, counseling based on treatment of reality cannot be applied in cases of great mental retardation, autistic and in other similar situations. Nevertheless, it has been used with great success in the field of education, in cases of juvenile delinquency, in family and marital conflicts and in mental illness, mild or severe (Malikiosi-Loizou, 1996).

Counseling process can be based on these different theoretical approaches, which despite their differences tend to agree and converge on some of their key points. So, they all agree that man is motivated by internal or external needs which must be met and that the environment plays an important role in shaping one's personality (Malikiosi-Loizou, 1996).

They also agree on the ultimate goal of the counseling process, which is to facilitate personality change (Hamblin, 1974) by putting however on every one of these general or specific objectives. Some talk about reorganization of the personality, others about treatment of mental illness, and others about adaptation to the environment, others about learning adaptive habits,

about stress reduction, about relief from pain. Finally, others aim at self-realization, self-knowledge and others at eliminating an undesirable behavior (Malikiosi-Loizou, 1996).

Counseling is based on the importance of the relationship between the consultant and the consulting, which is of great importance in all theoretical approaches. Thus, there is complete agreement on the basic traits of a good consultant or therapist, such as authenticity, maturity, empathy, the ability to create an atmosphere of acceptance, trust and security, a warm and acceptable climate, to help the client to overcome the difficulties (Malikiosi-Loizou, 1996).

3. Objectives of counseling psychology

Besides the many goals that are set in the context of counseling, depending on the theoretical direction of the consultant and the individual needs each situation dictates, the American Psychological Association (APA) stated the main objectives of counseling psychology and stresses that counseling psychology contributes to (Wrenn, 1957):

(1) The realistic acceptance by the patients of their capabilities, motivations and attitudes toward themselves,

(2) The attainment by the consulting of a reasonable harmony with his social, economic and business environment,

(3) The acceptance by society of individual differences and the importance they have on social, employment and marital relationships.

Besides these general objectives of the American Psychological Association, there are some commonly accepted goals, such as self-enhancement, self-understanding and behavior change (Hamblin, 1974; Malikiosi-Loizou, 1996).

The counseling procedure should tend to try and eliminate any tendency of self-failure the individual might have. In specific, the consultant is required to understand the system of expectations-anticipations of the consulting regarding the impact of a change. For example, the sense of worthlessness and helplessness in the deprived and disadvantaged people predicts failure and passive behavior, despite the success and their proactive attitude to achieve realistic goals. Expectations, i.e., they have about themselves and have built during their life, function as self-fulfilling prophecy and define their behavior. Therefore, basic aim of the counseling process is the process of the expectations the consulting has for him, as these will greatly determine whether there will be a change in behavior (Hamblin, 1974).

The consultant should help in the development of the capacity of the individual to make decisions on his own and be able to plan and organize future activities (Malikiosi-Loizou, 1996). This often requires change of attitudes and behavior in order to cope effectively and realistically with their situation (Hamblin, 1974).

The objectives of the counseling result from the assessment of the problem, namely through the diagnosis. The setting of the objectives, whether they are special and specific or general should be done together, i.e. both the consultant and the consulting to agree meeting them. This process requires special attention; as the consultant psychologist might be carried away by his own values and emotions and so eventually the objectives end up to express his own needs and not the ones of the consulting (Malikiosi-Loizou, 1996).

Setting objectives will generally help to reduce man's confusion and his fears on how to achieve them. They direct the counseling process, determine its duration and are a benchmark of the consulting's progress. The more specific the objectives are, the more easily they are understood and the simpler you can verify their fulfillment (Malikiosi-Loizou, 1996).

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4. Types of counseling psychology

A general distinction that can be made as to the methodology and procedure used in the counseling psychology is between individual or personal and group counseling.

Individual counseling is conducted between the consultant and the consulting psychologist. It aims to advance the status of the consulting's mental health, helping him to gain better adjustment, self-aware and more successful ways of dealing with difficulties (Malikiosi-Loizou, 1996).

There are many cases where individual counseling is preferable and more effective. Even when it comes to cases of children in school, often counseling psychologist is required to work only with the child, despite the general view that it is necessary to approach the child in its family environment. There are many cases where parents cannot cooperate with the therapists or cause problems and delay the counseling process. For some of them, the consultant may be the "scapegoat" or a threat of their family status. In other cases, parents may cause a state of negative interaction or getting too much involved when the approach only of the child is necessary (Hamblin, 1974).

On the other hand, group counseling is an interpersonal process that includes an advisory psychologist and two or more people who have something in common (attitudes, ideals, concerns, etc.). Its aim is to detect one's self, the group and/or the circumstances in an attempt to change the behavior of their attitudes. It may involve individual counseling, because through group process every consultant is helped in personal self-awareness as well as in overcoming his difficulties (Malikiosi-Loizou, 1996).

Group counseling creates a positive atmosphere for creative change. It gives individuals the opportunity to compare themselves with other members of the team and to view things from a different point of view. Prerequisite is the establishment of trust, not only between the consultant and each member individually, but also between the members of the group. The consultant should be extremely careful to keep the group under his control, but also to create a climate suitable for the interaction between the members and the expression of their emotions (Hamblin, 1974).

Family therapy or counseling is based on this idea of interaction between the members. According to family counseling the self is a product of interaction with people who are important in our lives. It suggests a variety of family therapy models and interaction, such as the binary model, the model of parents' education, family development model and various other models of intervention in special populations and specific problems. All these models consider family as a subsystem that operates within a wider system (Gibbons, 1998).

A second division of counseling psychology is made as to the kind of help offered and as to the features of the people that aid is aimed at. Thus, we have the following types of counseling:

- Developmental counseling

Developmental counseling ties to determine how to use the basic evolutionary theories in psychotherapy. It emphasizes on specific processes of change, evolution and development, rather than the products of each stage of human evolution. This development may be behavioral, cognitive, emotional, and as appropriate. In general, it helps people learn ways of achieving their healthy development in society.

It is used in children, who are in any case in an evolutionary process. It is not limited only to help resolve or overcome a problem, but also to gain self-awareness and awareness of their potential and to find ways to use their skills.

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Developmental counseling aims at helping people to know, understand and accept themselves. It is based on the principle that the basic rules that apply to the development of the child are constantly repeated through processes in everyday life and in the therapeutic relationship (Malikiosi-Loizou, 1996).

- Accommodative counseling

Its purpose is to help people clarify their goals and to act responsibly and in accordance with their personal and individual interests. The lack of the ability of an individual to behave in accordance with the requirements of a state leads to a non-effective behavior.

So, accommodative counseling aims to develop problem solving skills and better ways of making decisions, through the recognition of individual skills, interests and potential in areas such as choosing profession, relationships with other family members, other loved persons with colleagues or classmates. A general rule is that a choice or a decision is considered good when we have thought about the alternatives and we are willing and prepared to accept the consequences of our choice (Malikiosi-Loizou, 1996).

- Counseling for dealing with critical situations

The main objective of this type of counseling is to help the individual to overcome the critical situation he is facing by inspiring confidence first. If the individual feels that you he can trust the consultant he will be able to speak more easily and thus help to reduce stress and consequently to overcome the crisis he is facing (Malikiosi-Loizou, 1996).

- Preventive counseling

Preventive consulting has notably developed in recent years in an attempt to promote information, awareness and sensitize people on various topics of professional, interpersonal, sexual or health issues that may arise, and how to face them. It also aims to prevent an event, which can negatively affect people.

Its key features are: (a) that it is designed to help people who have not asked for help, (b) that it is designed to help many people, (c) its effects are indirect, (d) it creates ways to ensure that its influence will not stop, and (e) it may include changes of basic rules or organizational structures (Malikiosi-Loizou, 1996).

- Vocational counseling

It helps the individual to prepare for his working life and choose a profession that suits him. It is the first kind of counseling that was developed by psychologists and holds quite a significant place among the other types of counseling, as career choices play an important role in the integration of any individual and directly related to the abilities, interests, maturity and other traits of our personality.

Prerequisite is from the one hand for the consultant to know well the individual's personality and from the other hand to be fully aware of the variety of jobs available and the requirements or the risks involved, in order to help the individual to choose the right profession (Malikiosi-Loizou 1996).

- Educational counseling

Educational counseling is focused on the child's development and adaptation to the school-learning environment. It applies to all levels of education from kindergarten to university and assists in the areas of educational, professional and personal development. Thus, it extends beyond school, home and community, to gather useful information in order to help more efficiently every child's evolution. It aims primarily to help individuals develop psychologically

and biologically, to seek their identity and proceed to choose a profession (Malikiosi-Loizou, 1996) (Hamblin, 1974).

- Work counseling

Work counseling is encountered in the workplace and deals with issues or concerns that people have about their work or problems that complicate their job performance. It aims at better adaptation to one's workplace, to raise morale and greater satisfaction through work, so as to eventually be more efficient (Malikiosi-Loizou, 1996).

- Restoration counseling

With the term restoration we mean the process to assist a person with physical disability or mental disorder to be a part of society to the fullest extent his capacities and capabilities permit him to.

The counseling psychologist works with disabled people to help them overcome their personal, educational, working or social problems. It covers all ages and may work in various areas, such as hospitals, schools, rehabilitation centers, community centers, etc. It deals with issues such as the need of disabled children to special educational opportunities and smooth social experiences, emotional issues that a disfigured person may be facing, adjustment to reality etc.

In general, the main goal is to help people who are disadvantaged to join or be reintegrated into society, not only by helping them but also by sensitizing and informing at least their immediate family environment (Malikiosi-Loizou, 1996).

- Family-marital counseling

This kind of counseling mainly deals with solving problems that arise from marital or family relationship, and also family planning and divorce cases, helping the family to cope more constructively with the problems arising from this dissolution. It helps the family members to communicate better so as to find together a solution to their problem.

It generally deals with interpersonal relationships between spouses, parents and children, siblings, problems with parenting, sexual problems with spouses, with financial and legal problems within the family, as well as with the choice of partner and the prediction of success or failure of a relationship in family planning (Malikiosi-Loizou, 1996).

- Multicultural counseling

It applies to "any counseling relationship in which two or more of the participants differ in their cultural background, their values and their way of life" (Sue et al., 1982).

It is possible, therefore, for people who migrate from one country to another, to seek help in a counseling psychologist. He should be sensitive enough to understand the feelings that this particular group of people may have, due to lack of help and strength. He needs to know the benefits the national minorities can offer in the country, such as labor supply, in order to be able to help them (Malikiosi-Loizou, 1996).

- Elderly counseling

It offers its services to elderly people who have biological, psychological and social changes that affect their behavior and ability to adapt. There are various types of counseling an old person might need (legal, economic, psychological and other). The elderly counseling follows the laws, principles and procedures of counseling that apply to any other age group, but stress the special knowledge and sensitivity of the consultant to identify the characteristics and problems that occur with age (Malikiosi-Loizou, 1996).

- Pastoral counseling

Pastoral counseling is offered by clergymen who try to connect and combine spiritual values with a psychological approach. It faces and handles personal, emotional, social and religious difficulties and problems. Most of them are about marriage, parenting, family relationships, grief, sorrow, pain, illness, guilt and religious pursuits (Malikiosi-Loizou, 1996).

5. The role and characteristics of the counseling psychologist

The main role of the counseling psychologist is therapeutic or remedial, preventive, educational and evolutionary. On the issue of treatment or rehabilitation in particular the counseling psychologist helps people who experience directly some difficulty. As far as prevention is concerned, the advisor provides or prevents difficulties that may arise in future. The teaching and evolutionary role of the consultant involves the design, acquisition and production of the greatest possible profit from experiences that will help people discover and fulfill their potential. Counseling psychology deals not only with psychotherapy, but with research, teaching and administrative activities, depending on the context in which it operates (Malikiosi-Loizou, 1996). It is obvious that the counseling psychologist must be aware of the various departments, centers and generally institutions that anyone can address to, although this is the role of the social worker.

The counseling psychologist, offering either individual or group counseling, should be able to feel empathy, non-possessive warmth and to be distinguished by the authenticity of the therapeutic relationship with the consultant. These features are considered to be fundamental to the counseling relationship, regardless of the theoretical direction of the consultant, the method he follows and techniques he applies. Moreover, it has also been proven by many studies that these traits are highly correlated with the successful outcome of the psychotherapeutic process. In specific, studies emphasize that the level of empathy, warmth and genuineness of the therapist is associated with constructive behavioral change of the patient (Malikiosi-Loizou, 1996).

These characteristics are of course necessary in a therapeutic relationship, they are not however sufficient alone. As studies have shown, even therapists who have these traits at the same level, have different therapeutic effects (Malikiosi-Loizou, 1996).

The consultant is often required to respond in various and creative ways, which means that he must have the appropriate mental capacity. Adequate psychological knowledge is considered perquisite, and many times he will have to develop the ability to combine intuition with clear thinking and identify the significance between seemingly isolated data (sometimes not at all unrelated, but actually very relevant) (Hamblin, 1974).

Many studies, however, says Polmantier (1966), agree on some other features of the consultative psychologist which are considered necessary, regardless of the type of counseling (according Malikiosi-Loizou, 1996):

- Interest in working with people.
- Intelligence, that is, to have the necessary spiritual qualities, which enable him to think logically and solve problems with reason and perception, but also to discover problems with pointed questions.
- To accept himself, so as not to use his clients to meet individual wishes and needs beyond the limits imposed by his office.
- To be distinguished by humanity and dignity accompanied by a sense of humor and for his emotional balance. His external appearance must suggest acceptance of himself and his role as an advisor.
- He must have a personal value system to which he should be committed and through this he should understand and recognize its influence on his advisory behavior, but also in his general behavior.

- He must have tolerance to vague and ambiguous situations and have the ability to treat them without disrupting his work and his life. The ability to recognize sources of deprivation and handle them successfully is very closely related to the above.
- He should know human psychology well enough to be flexible, to recognize, understand and deal with psychological way all kinds of human behaviors, without allowing authority and social pressures compel the customer behavior to comply.
- He must have empathy, authenticity and understanding in order to be able to work with people of different national, cultural and religious backgrounds.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, a reality counseling psychology aims to help individuals or groups of all ages to face problems arising from the field of education, career, transgender relationships, marriage, family, health, aging and situations of social and biological disability. Counsel psychology tries to help people improve their psychological state, to resolve the critical circumstances they face and to increase their ability to solve all the problems that might come up. The services of Counseling Psychology are offered by relevant psychologists in working and learning environment and in health and rehabilitation centers of the private or public sector.

Acknowledgements

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