

# GLOBAL CHALLENGES IN ADVISING AND COUNSELLING

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## **Abstract**

*This work examined the global challenges in Advising and counselling. This was done under seven sub-headings. They are the definition of counselling, the evolution of counselling, the need for counselling, what counsellors do, why counselling works, challenges in advising and counselling today, and recommendations for future directions for counselling profession. It examined the definition of counselling from these perspectives; professional, user-centered, etymological and counselling associations. Furthermore, the evolution of counselling was presented from both the historical development in some parts of the world and the different era of counselling until it emerged as an independent discipline. The paper explained why counseling is relevant today especially from the point of view of change, prevention and life enhancing. It goes further to throw light on some of the works of counselors, present day specialities in counselling, and the reason why counselling works, the view points from the, researchers, counselling associations and theoretical development of counselling were presented. Counselling conditions and their effects were used to substantiate the fact that counselling works. The global challenges facing counselling and advising were equally presented. They include diverse society, changing family, religious/spiritual change, over-choice, health and aging, technology and its impact, research and ethical awareness, addiction and violence, were also examined. Finally, some recommendations were made for future direction of the counselling profession.*

Many counsellors agree that counselling is as old as man. This is because man from the beginning has never been without problems. Therefore, mankind has throughout the ages sought advice and counsel of others believed to possess superior knowledge, insights or experiences. In the olden days, the philosophers, priests, Imams or other representatives of the gods and religions assume the function of advising and offering counselling. These counselling activities as time went on could not withstand the emerging societal events; hence, formal counselling. According to Vishala (2012)

counselling is the service offered to the individual who is undergoing a problem and needs professional help to overcome it. She holds that such problem keeps the individual disturbed, high strung and under tension and unless solved his development is hampered or stunted. She also holds that everyone needs guidance at one time or the other and that if properly guided every individual will be satisfied in life. She stated that today's world is highly complex in every sphere of life. To begin with we have the family which has changed its many traditions, customs, beliefs, values and attitudes. Then, the school and the modern society in the 21st century. Nigeria is also within the 21st century.

The complex modern Nigeria with its accompanying complex problems is affecting all of the issue of modern terrorism, Boko Haram insurgency, militants, Fulani Herdsmen, and internally displaced persons are modern challenges in Nigeria that require counsellors' attention. Can Nigeria then do without counselling in the face of these current challenges? The current Nigerian situation cannot be handled effectively by Imans, priests, our parents or classroom teachers. It requires the attention of professional counsellors who are trained to handle such complex problem. If Nigeria neglects counselling, her citizens will not only die in the hands of terrorists and because of the hands of terrorists and because of the recent economic constraints but more will die because of their inability to face or handle the current challenges by themselves without professional assistance. It is therefore this need of professional assistance in the face of the current global challenges in the 21st century that necessitated this work.

### **Definition of Counselling**

Counselling like many other disciplines has no single definition that covers everything about counselling. It can be defined in different perspectives. In this work it is defined in four perspectives – via – etymology, professionals Associations and user – centred.

The word "counselling" is derived from the Italian word "Consulenza" which means "to advise"(<http://www.collinsdictionary.com>). Here, counselling means the same thing with advice. In this perspective, it means that when we find ourselves going through one form of personal crises or the other we need friends, parents, spiritual directors or relations to talk to or to listen to us and advise us.

From the professional perspective, Okeke (2008) defined counselling as the process whereby the counsellor uses his professional training and relevant psychological skills to help the counsellee perceive his problem more clearly so that he can apply the understanding of himself and his problems to the solution of his problem. The relationship is usually person-to-person, although it may sometimes involve more than two people. It is designed to help clients understand and clarify their views of their life space, and to learn to reach their self-determined goals through meaningful,

well-informed choices and through resolution of problems of emotional or interpersonal nature.

Though the term counseling has eluded definition for years, in 2010, twenty nine counselling associations including the American counselling Association gathered to deliberate on 20/20 vision for counselling. These associations defined counselling as a professional relationship that empowers diverse individuals, families and groups to accomplish mental health, wellness, education and career goals..The task of counselling is to give the ‘client’ opportunity to explore, discover and clarify ways of living more satisfying and resourcefully.

From the user-centred perspective Mcleod (2009) defined counselling as a purposeful, private conversation arising from the intention of one person to reflect on and resolve a problem in living and the willingness of another to assist in that endeavour. Apart from the etymological definition Oladele (2000) affirms that counselling has been used to denote a wide range of procedure which includes advice giving.

### **Evolution of Counselling**

Counselling is as old as man. Man always has one thing or another confronting him which he cannot solve easily alone. He therefore needs the assistance of another man to overcome his problem. According to Oladele (2000) the history of guidance and counselling may be identified in the early Grecian Societies with emphasised on developing and strengthening the individual through education so that each could fulfill roles reflecting his greatest potential for himself and his society. Of these Greek “Counsellor”, Plato is more than any other individual, generally recognized as one of the first to organize psychological insight into systematic theory.

According to Gladding (2013) before the 1900s, most counselling was in the form of Advice and information. In United States, counselling developed out of a humanitarian concern to improve the life of those adversely affected by the industrial Revolution of the mid-to late 1800s. But as the United States entered the 20th century, its society was growing more complex, and findings one's appropriate place within it and adjusting to it were becoming increasingly complicated. the time had come for the development of counselling and other psychologically oriented programmes to meet these needs (Gibson, & Mitchell, 2014). In overall counselling emerged in America during a social turbulent period that straddled the ending of one century and the beginning of another, a period marked by great change that caused a major shift in the way individuals view themselves and others (Ginter, 2002: 220).

Most pioneers in counselling identified themselves as teacher and social reformers/advocates. They focused on teaching children and young adults about themselves, others, and the world of work. Initially, these helpers were involved primarily in child welfare, educational/vocational guidance and legal reform. Their work was built on specific information and lessons, such as moral instruction on

being good and doing right; as well as a concentrated effort to deal with intra – and interpersonal relations (Nugent & Jones 2009). They saw the need in American society and took steps to fulfill them.

One way to chart the evolution of counselling is to trace important events and personal influences through the 20<sup>th</sup> century counselling was an infant profession in the early 1900s. During the decade, however, three person emerged as leaders in counselling; Frank Parsons, Jesse B. Davis and Clifford Beers.

Frank Parsons, often called the founder of guidance, focused his work on growth and prevention. His influence was great in his time and it is “Parson’s body of work and his efforts to help others that lie at the centre of the wheel that represents present day counselling” (Gibson & Mitchell, 2014).

Clifford Beers, a former Yale Student, was hospitalized for depression several time during his life. (Kiselica & Robinson, 2001). He found conditions in mental institutions deplorable and exposed them in his book, “*A Mind that Found Itself*” (1908). He uses the book as a platform to advocate for better mental health facilities and reform in treatment of people with mental illness.

In India, guidance and counselling started as vocation guidance in 1950 and in 1952 the vocational Guidance Association of Bombay was formed. In Nigeria, formal guidance and counselling started towards the end of 1959 at Ibadan and by July 1972, the idea of school guidance and counselling spread to other parts of the country.

### **Counselling as a Distinct Profession**

Counselling as a distinct profession, came of age only in the 1940s. One of the public markers of the emergence of counselling at that time was Carl Rogers in the face of opposition from the medical profession to the idea that anyone without medical training could call himself a “psychotherapist”, begin to use the term counselling and psychotherapy to describe his approach (Roger 1942).

The evolution of counselling in 1980s as a distinct helping relationship came as a result of events, issues, and forces both insides and outside counselling associations. Another factor is more diversification in counselling and publications that helped to broaden the scope of counselling services and counsellor awareness. Another factor include the inclusion of counselling in health care (Wedding 2008).

### **Why Counselling?**

It may be necessary to remind some aspiring counsellors and indeed the public that the problems of life can be solved in many ways. Counselling being one of those ways. The vast majority of the human race has never experienced professional counselling. This does not mean that they are functioning at some sub-level of life. Many people adapt to life’s challenges by using personal resources, friends, and family, or religious faith, but with these resources, challenges can

sometimes accumulate to the point that an unencumbered, skilled helper can facilitate the process of growth and adaption to such challenges.

Viewed in this way, counselling can assume the function of change, prevention, or life enhancement. As change, counselling is concerned with situations that, for whatever reason, have become so disruptive that people are unable to continue through the normal passage of life without excess stress, dissatisfaction, or unhappiness. As prevention, counselling is able to take into account those predictable life events that produce stress, cause people to draw on their psychological resources, and ultimately, demand adaption to changing life forces. Finally, a third form of counselling, enhancement counselling, goes beyond life challenges and predictabilities. As a counselling goal, enhancement, attempts to open clients' experiences to new and deeper levels of understanding, appreciation and wisdom about life's many potentialities.

Other needs include Educational changes both in the educational system and curriculum content and how to help student transits from one level to another has made counselling imperative.

Further, Economic and technological change, therefore, counselors are expected to make more determined attempts to help individual students find job which make full use of their skills and talents. Vishala (2012), observed that as the world has shrunk, so has the family. With the breaking up of the joint family system, nuclear families have increased. The traditional old system was a large family or a joint family, while if we look into our family set up today, we find that majority of them are a single unit with one child or maximum of two children, the son is separated from the parents and established on his own. a loneliness pervades in their lives. The break-up of the joint family system has resulted in two major economic problems for the well-being of the family.

### **What Counsellors Do**

Counselling is a multi-faceted profession. However, regardless of the setting, professional counsellors are trained to help people with personal, family, social, environmental educational, and career decisions. Counselling can also be applied to mental health, psychological or human developmental principles, through cognitive, effective, behavioural or systematic intervention strategies that address wellness, personal growth or career development as well as psychology.

In general, professional counsellors help clients to identify goals and potential solutions to problems that cause emotional turmoil, seek to improve communication and coping skills, strengthen self-esteem, and promote behaviour change and optimal mental health.

Within the broader field of counselling, the different specialties have specific emphases. Professional counselling specialties include mental health, school, career, gerontological rehabilitation, substance abuse and behavioural disorder, marriage and

family therapist and many others. It is expected that these specialties be more “narrowly” focused, requiring advance knowledge in the field founded on the premise that all professional counselors must first meet the requirement for the general practice of professional counselling (ACA, 2008). That is, all counsellors regardless of setting and specialty are first and foremost, counsellors.

### **Why Does Counselling Work**

**Counselling Theories:-** A counsellor has a pool of counselling theories from which he draws insight in his helping profession. He uses one or a combination of such theories to address his client's problem. Using a proper counselling theory that matches the client's new state and the proper implementation of such theory to the counselling process often make for successful counselling outcome.

**Research:** On a more optimistic note, for the last half – century, researchers studying the effectiveness of counselling have repeatedly come out to the conclusion that it does indeed work (Eaves & Erford, 2010).

**Counselling Associations:** In counsellor training, as well, there is a strong movement across the nation towards standardization of curricular through accreditation and the development of generic training models. These efforts of the Counselling Association make counselling outcome to be more successful presently.

**Theory Development:-** In the case of theory development as well, efforts are directed towards finding common factors that operate in all helping systems as well as towards combining the advantages of several therapeutic approaches into unified model. (Capuzzi & Gross, 2007). This combination of approaches, also makes for good counselling outcome.

Furthermore, the effects of successful counselling experience on clients contribute to why counselling work today. Such effects include the fact that:

- (a) Clients begin to perceive their problems and issues from quite different context.
- (b) Clients develop a more useful understanding of problems and issues.
- (c) Clients acquire new responses to old issues.
- (d) Clients learn how to develop effective relationships.

These counseling effects reveal that counselling work and why it works even today.

### **Global Challenges in Advising and Counselling**

**Current Trends in the twenty-first century.** In 2002, counselling formally, celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary as a profession in USA under the umbrella of the American Counselling Association (ACA). However, within the celebration was a realization that counselling is ever changing and that emphases of certain topics, issues, and concerns at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century would most likely change with the needs of clients and society. The changing roles of men and women, innovation in media and technology, poverty, homelessness, trauma, loneliness, and

aging, among other topics, captured counselling's attention in this 21st century (Webber & Mascari, 2010) Among the most pressing topics were dealing with violence, trauma, and crises, managed care; social justice, technology; leadership, and identity.

The story is not different in India where Visshala (2012) wrote that today's world is highly complex in every sphere of life. To begin with, we have the family which has changed its many traditions, customs, beliefs values and attitudes. Then, the school and the modern society in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The individual is influenced by his family, his educational environment and by the society. Therefore, it is good to have a look into these three areas and the changes which have taken place in them. The Indian counsellors noticed the on-going changes in the globe but focused the attention on the above three mentioned areas.

### **The Global Challenges Facing Counselling Today**

**Increasing Diverse Society:** Almost in every part of the world people move easily from one country to another. This migration in search of greener pasture has created the issue of increasing diverse society in many parts of the globe. Thus, it is incumbent on the present day counselor not just to be aware of cultural differences but perhaps to be comfortable and familiar with cross – cultural communication.

**Changing Family:** Families are changing and are becoming more diverse. Counsellor educators need to study the intricacies of family dynamics, such as single – parent family, the role of the father in such families and the unique characteristics of same – sex couples (Long & Young, 2007), Television is now showing us that couples come in all sizes, married, remarried, unmarried, heterosexual, and homosexual. Families are chosen, blended, adopted, or can be childless. In addition, the age at which couples are marrying, having children, and the effects of older people having children late in life are changes that are affecting counsellors.

**Religious/spiritual change:** The importance of religious and spirituality in counselling expected to increase as counsellors and the clients become more aware of the changes going on in this sphere. Americans represent the full spectrum of religion, but there is a growing group of individuals who consider themselves spiritual but not religious. These believe in a higher power but not in a church or organized religion. With this kind of response to spirituality, the counsellors now will have to know more than a person religion. (Robertson & Young, 2011). He or she will need to investigate the importance of spirituality in the client's life and be open to the fact that the client may be Buddhist Catholic. The religious belief of many people no longer fit into neat and traditional categories many people are involved in several different practices and they also attend services outside of their own faith.

**Over Choices:** Increasing choice is also a problem (Schwartz, 2004) counselor now and in the future will be more involved in helping people make romantic and unromantic relationship choices. The way people cope with Choices may also become an issue. The increasing ability of choice and freedom may lead to anxiety, and people actually seek to escape the personal freedom by accepting simple solutions, conformity, destructiveness, and authoritarian rules. Freedom and choice can create feelings of alienation and dehumanization. Thus, increasing choice and freedom can lead to an increasing allure of simple minded solutions. The real challenges is how counselor can help clients to embrace the complexity of modern life without pretending that there are simple solution to complex problems or worse, escaping into unhealthy ways of life such as substance abuse or extremist religion.

**Health, Health Care and Aging:** There is growing interest in health and wellness in many countries of the world today. The counsellor of the present and future will need special training in physical health and wellness, because clients will likely want to work on physical health through counselling. The specialized training a counsellor has in helping clients identity and maintain goals will be essential, and an understanding of medications, exercise and treatment adherence protocols will become part of counsellor training in the next transformation. Counsellors will need to take care not to operate outside of their scope of practice, but they will want to assist clients in taking greater control of their own health. Counsellors will need to be comfortable working with older people. They need to understand and devise interventions for a graying client.

**Lifelong learning:** One of the things you face as a counsellor at all phases of your career is the fact that you cannot know everything you need to know. The diversity of client problems and their myriad background issues make it impossible to be completely conversant with the full range of client backgrounds and disorders, from eating disorders in children to counselling low income couples. Lifelong learning is the only answer because, while it would be nice to be able to choose your specialty, sometimes it is prescribed by the client you see. Therefore, counsellors are expected to further the studies, attend conferences, seminars and workshop in order to up-date their knowledge regularly.

**Impact of Technology and Technological Competencies:** Technology use has grown rapidly in counselling (Shaw & Shaw, 2006 and Kennedy, 2008b). what once was considered promising has now become reality, and technology is having a profound impact on almost every aspect of life including coursed and education. Initially, technology was used in counselling to facilitate record keeping, manipulate data, and do word processing. More attention is now being placed on factors affecting technology and client interaction, especially on internet and telephone. On



the issue of online counselling however, the practice is fraught with ethical and legal risks – such as: (a) The issue of confidentiality (b) how to handle emergency situations, (c) the lack of non-verbal information, (d) the danger of offering online services over state judicial lines (e) the lack of outcome research on the effectiveness of online counselling services (f) technology failures and (g) the difficulties of establishing rapport with the client who is not visually seen. (Pollock, 2006 and Shaw & Shaw, 2006) client who may be especially well-served through the use of online counselling are those who (a) are geographically isolated, (b) are physically disabled, (c) would ordinarily not seek counselling and (d) are more prone to writing than speaking.

**Competencies** – Competencies for counsellors continue to be developed with regard to the use of technology in therapy. These competencies include skills they should master. Such as being able to use word process programmes, audiovisual equipment, e-mail, the internet etc. Although the internet, telephone, and letter technologies will never fully replace face-to-face counselling. Clearly they have come to stay. They offer a unique experience with both benefits and limitations. They require a unique set of skills as well as personality traits, such as patience and persistence.

**Research:** Present day and future counsellors must have a strong understanding of research. They must be able to read and evaluate research. Good research should, ultimately, allow the development of a better understanding of events, and processes that are experienced by individual counsellors and clients, and therefore enable practitioners to learn from each other. Research can also promote a critical and questioning attitude in practitioners, and help them to improve the quality of service offered to clients.

Research allows the voice of clients and service users to be heard, and to influence the ways in which therapy is organized and delivered. Research is an international activity, and research journals are used by a world audience. Participation in such an international community of scholars helps counsellors to achieve a broader perspectives on their work. This is a big global challenge for counsellors because it is not easy to read and evaluate research and factors leading to constant research are increasing.

**Ethical awareness:** Here the counsellor has to be aware that ethical matters are guidelines rather than rules themselves. He has in addition to reflect on these ethical principles and where he cannot arrive at decision consult other experts.

**Increasing problems with process addiction:** The present counsellor must not only battle with handling clients with substance addiction like drugs and alcohol but with process addiction. Process addiction has to do with issues of repetitively engaging in

a particular process such as watching internet pornography, playing a video game, gambling, spending money and even working too much. These become addiction when they cause disruptive in the person's career, finances and relationship.

**Dealing with violence, Trauma, and Crises:** There are conflicts and violence in many parts of the world that often result trauma in the life of the people and such cases are often difficult to handle.

### **Conclusion**

This work examined the definitions of counselling from different perspectives and also traced the evolution of counselling until it became a distinct discipline. It further revealed the rationale behind counselling and why counselling works even in the 21st century. What a counsellor does and the global challenges facing counselling were not left out. Finally, some recommendations were made to help counsellors combat these challenges.

In Nigeria, in particular, I would conclude by requesting that counselling should be given its rightful position. This is because Nigeria is part of the globe and is facing the same challenges. secondly, the relevance of counselling can never fade as long as human beings continue to exist on earth. This because of the fact human problems will continue to challenge man.

Man is dynamic as well as the world in which he lives and so does counselling profession. for Nigerians to meet up with these changes and challenges, all tiers of government and meaningful Nigerian should support counselling. This can be done by a equipping counsellors with both fund and other necessary facilities to enable them do their work effectively. There should also be a change of attitude towards Nigerian counsellors by Nigerians especially those working in school settings. Some Nigerians see counsellors as those who sit idle in schools and this has resulted making these counsellors to classroom teachers.

Nigeria should also license her counsellors. this will help Nigerian counsellors to compete favourably with their counterparts in other parts of the world. It will also help them to adhere strictly to the ethics of their profession, it will further help them to practice counselling in school and non school settings. furthermore, counselling should be introduce firmly in all level of education in Nigeria and Nigerian higher institutions should diversify counselling to other areas of specialties beyond school guidance and counselling. This will go a long way to help our counsellor to be relevant to the recent global challenges facing counselling.

### **Recommendations**

Future direction for the counselling profession.

1. **Increasing standards for counsellor preparations:** New counsellors are expected to be ready to acquire new knowledge and to face additional course

work requirement because of broadening of counsellor's responsibilities. Additionally, as in other professions, in the years ahead counsellors must increasingly anticipate a lifetime of learning - of constantly updating their skills and knowledge if they are to serve their clients and the public in general optimally.

2. **Increasing attention to specialities:** As counsellors look to future they can anticipate that increased attention will be given to the special fields that have already evolved in their profession and can project that new, and perhaps at this point unidentified special fields will emerge soon.
3. **Increase use of technology:** It is a known fact that the technology explosion projected in the 21st century will undoubtedly impact and influence all helping professions, including counselling. counselling has changed from face to face bussiness and those in the worlds of developing technology have indicated that we are really just experiencing the beginning of this change. currently, we are witnessing clients receiving counselling through utilization of the internet. therefore, counsellors make effort to embrace this new development.
4. **Increase focus upon empirical results:** Counsellors should have more time and attention to inform the public of factual evidence documented by empirical research supporting their activities and ensuring results. This will go a long way to testify to counsellor's effectiveness in prevention programmes, human relationships, and other areas of critical national needs.
5. **Updating of the profession's traditional theories:** Counsellors should look into the traditional counselling theories and see their relevance in the changing world of today. There is also the need to research and test new theories that will be used to help the 21st century clients in the present day challenges.
6. **Reviewing attention as well as expanding career parameters:** for people born about twenty five years ago, the world of work has undergone dramatic change and in many instances, unexpected changes. such changes have resulted to closing out of certain traditional careers and the emergence of completely new ones. such shifts have produced an upheaval in the career planning of countless adults and have confused young people planning their entries into the world of work and career. therefore, counsellors are expected to pay adequate attention to this new development and to make more effort to specialised in more career settings.
7. **Increased attention to public communication and political activities:** Both in Nigeria and some other countries in the world, the general public appear to be misinformed regarding the significant contributions that the counselling profession can make to individual and to society's wellness. therefore, counsellors should become more politically active in the term of public information to publicly communicate what counsellors do and what they are accomplishing. this will go a long way to wipe out this communication problem that has been the major defect standing in the way of the counselling profession's advancement.

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