

HOW A COUNSELLOR CAN ENCOURAGE POSITIVE SELF-CONCEPT IN A CLIENT

Mr Damisa Anthony Mattaga

Abstract

One of the important roles of a counsellor is to develop self-concept in the student or client for the purpose of self-realization and actualization. The understanding of self will lead to building of positive self-concept. So, the focus of this paper is to address how a counsellor can use the knowledge of Interpersonal Relationship to Encourage Positive Self-Concept in a client.

Introduction

The term "self-concept"⁷¹ could be described as the genetically inherited traits that make up an individual. This Self-concept which is as well called ego is the building up of the innate potentials which in return reflect the behaviour of the individual. Hall and Lindzey, (1978) described self as a system of attitudes or feelings that the individual has about himself. While Denis Child, (1973) sees Self-concept as self-knowledge. He further stated that Self-concept be viewed as the amount of information a person possesses about himself.

In the same vein, Goldman, (1971) relates Self-concept to self-disclosure and self-exportation and perception. He added that all these involve courage, trust and risk to tell another person things that are intimate to you.

From the foregoing therefore, one can rightly say that Self-concept is the ability to understand one's potential, interest, ability and capability to relate effectively well with the others within and around our environment. Thus, interactions are extremely influential in maintenance or change of self-attitudes.

The determination of positivity and negativity of Self-concept depends largely on the environment in which the individual is born and brought up.

Psychoanalytic Therapy

Sigmund Freud in his psychoanalytic therapy stated that the different development stages of human development and environment under which such stage takes place goes a long way to determine the behavioural remittance of the individual whether positive or negative. In his submission, he believed that every behaviour is subject to change provided the therapist can dig deep into the past biological development of the organism concerned and his use of various therapeutic techniques until there is a change from irrational to rational behaviour. From the above, it can be deduced that depending on the professional competence of the counsellor a client can be helped or encouraged in the act of positive self-concept; through which (client) would get to understand himself, his world, interest and ability and thus be able to function well in his environment.

Negative Self-concept is shown through loneliness, depression, a sense of helplessness and shyness. Most psychologist (the behaviourists) suggested that new behaviours can be learnt to replace the old ones that are less productive. As a counsellor having the knowledge of interpersonal relationship can help the client build up in himself Self-concept.

The first step to be taken towards encouraging positive concepts is the creation of rapport with the client. Here the client will be encouraged to talk about himself. And as a therapist mind not whatever the client says, be it reasonable or not. It should be observed that during this first stage of self-revealing, the client is exploring his environment and at the same time digging deep into his thoughts, so he should be allowed to talk at length about himself.

Secondly, the counsellor can subject the client to self-concept work, which means, skillful counselling that sometimes requires more than ten to fifteen minutes allowed for the routine interview. To be really meaningful to the client, there must be some depth and some emotional involvement. There must also be some opportunity to relate the test information to other aspects of the client's experiences whether to his school work, his leisure time activities or his family values and those of his neighbourhood. Without these elements self-concept development through information about himself is likely to be superficial and lacking in real impact on the individual.

Another step is the use of 'The Magic Box' (Myrick & Moin, 1972), The Magic box is meant for

people with low Self-concept. Get a small box with a mirror inside so as to reflect the face of the anyone who looked inside. (Special) man/woman/boy/girl in the world. The counsellor first tells a related story about the importance of an individual. Later let the client looks into the box and says out what he has seen and then tells the audience about himself (Whose magic he has seen in the mirror).

Counselling Interview

The counselling interview should provide the client a meaningful experience leading to change. Rogers (1951) called this unconditional positive regard. The client's experience thus arise as the result of his relationship with the counsellor; change is what hopeful results from his nature of relationship. The counsellor must consider the client as being responsible for himself, his actions, thoughts and feelings and that we believe in his capability to use his own resources increasingly. To sum this the counsellor should show the client love, interest and sincerity.

The counsellor should accept the client as an equal and regarding his thoughts and feelings; In the relationship there should be mutual understanding. The counsellor should understand the client's world. Bernstein (1982) emphasized genuine liking as a very effective tool to positive Self-concept. With genuine likeness for the client and being a model, the client will also show a genuine interest in learning from the counselling from the counsellor and thus effect a change positively. All the above stated characteristics can be effectively communicated to the client for positive change through the removal of all barriers to effective communication. The environment in which the relationship will come up must be a conducive environment, noise free and devoid of other distortions that might hinder effective communication.

Though the client being a disturbed person, in the relationship should be made to realize himself before getting information across to him. Having realized self, the tension will be eased and thus communication will be swift. If there is any language barrier as much as possible the counsellor should effect a change either by the use of an interpreted or another means through which the appropriate message can be implanted into the client's understanding. As one of the characteristics of meaningful communication. They encourage each other to become all that they are capable of becoming. How can you as a counsellor help your students attain their future career aspiration?

Career education according to Jesser (1976) is an instructional strategy aimed at improving educational outcomes by relating teaching and learning activities to the concept of career development. He went further to state that a complete career programme include (a) Awareness of the work, (b) Broa'd orientation to occupation both professional and non-professional, (c) In depth exploration of selected cluster, (d) Career preparation and understanding of the economic system of which jobs are part, (e) Placement for all students. From Jesser's definition and explanation of what career education is and involve, it can be inferred, that career per se is a set of vocations out of which the learner after realizing himself, interest, ability and capability will have to chose one of his future living, i.e. future career aspiration.

Communication

Effective Interpersonal Communication involves transaction or communication between people and other environment which of course include other people such as family members, children workers and even strangers including issues relating to education, automation, vocation etc taken place within and around their environment. Having been adequately informed will amount into encouraging people to become all that they are capable of becoming. The duty of the counsellor therefore is to help the students develop positive self-concept, help them to realize their ability and capability, get them series of information about the world of vocations and all that required before entering each vocation.

As mentioned above, the counsellor's first task is to help the student realize himself i.e. development of private Self-concept, after which the student will realize himself, rid of irrational behaviours and remove all impediments to his academic success. The counsellor should help the student establish educational and occupational goals. *Understanding himself, Understanding his environment, Plan skills for vocations,*

Help the students to develop decision-making skills. Having given the student enough of career information and with the development of positive self-concepts then the student should be able to

decide on his own the nature of career that will be suitable for his future living. Developing this skill will reduce the possibility of unwise or poor choices by students.

The next step is environmental awareness components. This includes helping students acquire information about available jobs, skill requirements for these jobs, occupational trends, training opportunities, financial aids, experiential opportunities, working conditions, employer expectations and the relationship between education and work. Thus accurate occupational information helps a student to match job information with his/her interest and capabilities.

Once a student has gained self-understanding about his/her career potentialities, has learned how to make career decisions and has narrowed the list of job possibilities to a reasonable number, the next step is to learn how to locate a job and get employed. Almost all the job enhancement skills are acquired in academic subjects such as English, Mathematics, Government, Science and French etc. Marketable job skills can be acquired in Arts, Music. Vocation/technology education courses provide great variety of job skills. As a counsellor therefore, one has to make sure that all the above subjects already in the school curriculum are thoroughly taught by the class teachers.

In conclusion, meaningful communication can help the individual to develop in all ramifications. The work of a counsellor in this regard therefore, is to put into use all machineries for effective communication. As a counsellor, he has to be a model to be emulated, as a professional helper, he needs all the skills with which to help the students realize their selves, ability and capabilities. For helping the students in their future career aspiration, since he the counsellor knows that the work, thus should be able to carry all other staff, both academics and non-academics along with him in his daily routine and planning. Therefore following all the above steps, the counsellor should be able to assist the students attain their future career aspiration.

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