



“DEVELOPING VALUES AND THE ROLE OF COUNSELORS”

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Abstract

Attitudes and values are difficult to teach. Unlike academic subjects, it requires providing various kinds of learning experiences. Because the objective is to make students aware to know, to understand, think, react, question and reflect on different aspects of values. These entail knowing, caring, feeling concerned, commitment, disposition to act and take action. It involves awareness, understanding, sensitivity, appreciation, concern, responsible choice, decision making, willingness and commitment to action. A good counselor will guide, rather than judge. A good counselor will listen rather than lecture. It always the client who must make the decisions regarding their life. Some specific strategies which can be used and appropriately integrated to provide a variety of learning experiences to students are discussed here. Some of these are general and others are specific strategies. Silent sitting, Visual and multi-sensory experiences, Enacting, modeling and role-play, Story-telling, Anecdotes, Group singing, Group activities, Questioning, Discussion, Value dilemmas and values clarification, Reflective Practice, are some of the strategies discussed in this paper for developing values which can be attained with the help of guidance workers and counselors.

Key words: Values, Attitudes, Counselor, Therapist.

INTRODUCTION

One of the best reasons why counseling and psychotherapy have become so well established is because people are often confused and want to know the “right” way to live. This opinion has been supported by Strupp, who argues that many people go to their counselor for the purpose of finding meaning in their lives, for actualizing themselves or for maximizing their potential (McLeod, 1998). However, there the situation becomes complicated because different religions place very different base values on the meaning of life on earth, which can have a major impact on the concept of self-actualization. A good counselor will guide, rather than judge. A good counselor will listen rather than lecture. It always the client who must make the decisions regarding their life (Propst 1996).

Cultural value issues in cognitive behavior therapy are so important. The basic principle of cognitive behavior therapy is teaching clients to believe that their irrational beliefs are the cause of their emotional disturbance and behavior, and ultimately how to dispute these beliefs and thoughts (Hoffman, 1984). In this case, Brammer,

Abrego, and Shostrom (1993) argue that beliefs and thoughts are closely related to values. Depression, meanwhile, has been found by many researchers to be caused mainly by irrational beliefs and thoughts (Rowe, 1996). This is apparently supported by Zain and Varma (1996), who state that, religious psychotherapy and cognitive behavior therapy seems to have better results in the depressed patients and anxious patient's respectively. Depression itself is closely related to values. According to Zain and Varma (1996), people who do not behave according to their values and religious beliefs may become weak, and are likely to suffer from mental illnesses such as depression, anxiety, and low self-esteem. This has been supported by Propst (1996), who claimed that people who suffer from depression are usually those who do not have strong faith in God. Since values have such an important role in cognitive behavior therapy, particularly with regard to depression, it is necessary to investigate the impact of values on cognitive behavior therapy.

Attitudes and values are difficult to teach. Unlike academic subjects, it requires providing various kinds of learning experiences. Because the objective to make students aware to know, to understand, think, react, question and reflect on different aspects of values. These entail knowing, caring, feeling concerned, commitment, disposition to act and take action. It involves awareness, understanding, sensitivity, appreciation, concern, responsible choice, decision making, willingness and commitment to action. Some specific strategies which can be used and appropriately integrated to provide a variety of learning experiences to students are discussed here. Some of these are general and others are specific strategies. In view of the complexity of the process of value development and the broad range of values to be nurtured, appropriate strategies need to be worked out. Bemak (2000), have described school counselors as being instrumental in the integration of community-wide mental health services. Other authors such as House and Martin (1998) have suggested that the school counselor plays a powerful role in

1. promoting student advocacy,
2. developing higher educational and career aspirations in students,
3. eradicating educational practices such as student tracking that inadvertently maintain inequities among disadvantaged student groups and stratify opportunities and
4. using data to identify educational practices that may help or hinder student progress.

Following are some of the strategies that can be suggested by the counselors to develop Values.

Silent sitting

It has been considered an important strategy which helps in the habit of sitting quietly, Strengthening the inner being or self, consolidating information received and retaining what is essential. It helps in concentration and assimilation, clear thinking, memory, health, vigour and also helps to be in tune with one's conscience.

Visual and multi-sensory experiences

Learning through visual experiences such as symbols, drawings, poster, charts, cartoons, graphs, photographs and pictures, compared to verbal mode, are less abstract and more powerful for communication of attitudes and values and forming imagery of value themes like national cohesion, scientific temper, environmental conservation, population education etc.

Enacting, modeling and role-play

Role plays are used as a methodology for inculcating values where the emphasis is not on the acting capabilities but on the projection of ideas/values and analysis of the same. The analysis brings out why a person should or should not accept the value in question and act on all occasions upholding the same.

Story-telling

The stories and anecdotes present accounts of the personal view that people take of life, people, things, and events. These could be around a personal life experience or somebody else's experience either obtained first hand or by word of mouth or drawn from literature. These serve the purpose of providing inspiration to people especially to boost their spirits in times of stress and conflict and may give new direction to the life of a person. Stories and examples of the lives of men of eminence can include the emphasis that greatness achieved is not sudden but through patience, perseverance and practice. The study of religious stories highlighting the essentials of all religions would be rewarding as a step towards harmony among religions as basic teachings of all great religions of the world are the same. A lot of ingenuity, however, is required to present the themes relating to unity of faith. In the literature of every religion, stories and parables figure highlighting ethical values. It is essential that lives of great religious and spiritual leaders of all important faiths are represented as part of study of literature. It is important to make an open agreement between client and therapist regarding the relevance of values and religious issues in the counseling process since there is a high possibility that the counselor's values influence those of the client (Corey, 1996). This apparently agrees with Mcleod (1998) claim that it is possible that the client becomes converted in to the counselor's set of values. For this reason, a problem may arise when the counselor has different values and cultural beliefs from those of the clients, since the forces of persuasion are most obvious in cognitive-behaviour therapy (Beutler, Clarkin, Crago & Bergan, 1991). Story telling is a powerful technique as it leaves a perennial impression on the minds of children.

Anecdotes :

Anecdotes are accounts of real life experiences and portray genuine human feelings and expressions. It could be an event, which created a lasting impression on a person's mind touched the core of heart and may have brought about a shift in the course of the life. The anecdotes help in communicating the matter in a user friendly manner, understanding the matter by making abstract concrete and easily comprehensible; motivating and inspiring people to reflect, think deeply about the situations. The anecdotes depicting conflicts, dilemmas, human acts and approaches to dealing with different life situations, drawn from home, school, classroom contexts portraying values important for students can be integrated with teaching of subjects like Social Sciences and Languages.

Group singing

Group singing is important as values in the lyrics of the song remain in the consciousness for a long time Group aspect signifies the unity indicative of a common purpose or goal, co-operation, discipline, self-restraint and the spirit to accommodate.

Group activities Human beings are social beings, constantly interacting with other people. Development of fundamental values of love, tolerance, cooperation, peaceful co-existence, respect for others is important. By working in groups, students learn the value of each other's sincere efforts, joy of doing one's best for the good of the whole group. Role plays, games, group discussion, group projects etc. are part of group activities which could be used in teaching social science and languages.

Questioning

Questioning is an art, a skill which can also be used for assessment and development of creativity and imagination and value clarification etc. Thus the type of thinking it provokes depends on the type of questions asked. As stated by Sue and Sue (1999), in practice, counselors often fail to understand their clients' values of cultures, possibly having a negative impact on counseling outcomes. In describing the potential conflicts over values between counselors and their clients, Bergin (1980) has stated that it is possible that a counselor's own values and certain values of the clients. Conflict of values frequently arises because of the inevitable difference in value standards between two people from different backgrounds, religious or cultures. A certain value that is considered normal and highly valuable in one culture may be considered as very irrational in the other. In Islam, for example, it is an ultimate goal for every Muslim to become a noble person in the eyes of God. Therefore, the followers of this belief should not attach too much value to the material world. This is in marked contrast to atheism, whose followers may attach a higher value to material things due to their disbelief in God. Another solution for conflicts between counselor and clients is to ensure that both the counselor and clients should come from the same background and culture and adhere to the same values (Zain & Varma, 1996).

School counseling in India is often subsumed as guidance; with guidance being offered for careers and vocations. Counseling, which has a facilitative and curative function needs to be distinct from guidance. Both guidance and counseling are necessary in Indian schools today (Kodad and Kazi 2014; 168 Sindhura Tammana Ramakrishnan and Jalajakumari 2013; Sinha 2006). Sinha (2006) refers to the role of the school counselor extending beyond school students to parents of students, who may feel the need of availing of counseling services to deal with issues stemming from their role as socialization agents.

The mandate, however, was passed by CBSE to ensure that counselors provided the following for students:

1. **Academic Guidance:** In helping students understand their learning needs and blocks, such as equipping them with study skills, doing semi-formal assessments for Learning Disabilities and Difficulties. Academic guidance is often necessary for children that are unable to get it at home, or have a paucity of resources to equip them with specific knowledge otherwise.
2. **Career and Vocational Guidance:** While career guidance exists as a field in itself, school counselors are generally required to keep abreast with career options as well as things such as entrance examinations, college requirements etc. School counselors can help by providing information on the various career and vocational options available. School counselors can guide the students in choosing the right career based on suitable aptitude tests.
3. **Issues with Peers:** Issues such as bullying, clique formation, estrangement and infighting, are all issues that we worked with in our fieldwork setting. Within this, we saw how the teachers, administration and parents interacted to either mediate or exacerbate the situation as well as how it was developmentally crucial to resolve these issues.
4. **Psychosocial Problems:** A school counselor helps in early identification of problem behaviours and takes suitable steps to prevent the onset of psychosocial problems. In case of psychosocial problems detected after their onset, the school counselor works towards finding suitable solutions, or due to the time constraints in school, looks at referring the child to a more suitable setting if the child's home environment allows for it.
5. **Working with Parents:** To enable holistic support and to ensure that the child's home environment is secure and nurturing for her, as well as to keep the parents in the loop about the work done in counseling, and how to ensure that the results are maintained at home.
6. **Working with Teachers:** Teacher meetings are extremely crucial in order to ensure two basic things 1) to keep the teacher in the loop about the work being done, and how to modify his/her behaviour

accordingly, as well as for inputs about the conditions of the classroom 2) help the teacher manage his own workload, by providing them with skills such as coping skills or problem solving strategies or emotional unburdening.

7. Working with School Administration.

Value dilemmas and values clarification

Value dilemmas present effective learning situations for helping one to think, reason, reflect and arrive at decisions after considering all aspects. Value conflicts usually result in restlessness and confusion leading to inconsistency in behaviour. Value clarification helps the learners to define their own values and make them aware of others' values. The value clarification procedure involves students to identify, discuss and evaluate alternative courses of action, along with other consequences and thus arrive at appropriate and desirable conclusions relevant to the situation.

Value clarification is a technique which is used for problematic situation, with conflicting alternatives or equally competing values. This technique allows one to choose one out of the two, reflect on what is chosen and what is valued by the person. It aims at helping students look closely at their ideas, behaviour, attitudes thereby clarifying themselves what they really value. Imposing one's own ideas or moralizing what the teacher thinks is right or wrong is deliberately

avoided. In this regard, Bergin (1980) argues that counselors cannot deny fact their own experiences and value systems have an effect on their therapeutic relationships, and that they have an influence on client's decision making and behavior. Despite the inevitable influence of

counselors' values on their therapeutic relationships, it is important to remember that as professional counselors, they should not impose their values on the client. This opinion has been supported by Propst (1996) who obviously demanded that counselors should determine which of the client's thought and beliefs are rational or irrational, judged according to the values adhered to by the clients, because he found it to be more effective. In this case, clients should be challenged to honestly evaluate their values before deciding for themselves in what they will modify these values and their behaviour. Furthermore, in order to be able to relate clients who different values and cultures from their own, professional counselors need to develop sensitivity to value differences, a very important issue in the counseling process (Kelly & Strupp, 1992). This opinion has been supported by Bell (1996), who argues that it is significant for a counselor to be aware of client's values and to look at how psychological problems are treated within other cultures. In this regard, Propst (1996) argues that counselors' sensitivity to clients' values can be decisive to the success of the therapy, since the counselors' competence in communicating within the clients' value framework influences the outcome for the clients.

Reflective Practice

In any case the significant point to remember is that any kind of activity must be followed by reflection on particular experience. Reflection is not enough on its own. What matters is the effect it will have on self. It is often said that action without reflection is just busyness. Some examples of activities to turn reflection into action are a questioning technique: discussion, debates and value clarification sessions. The real benefit of reflection is to be able to see things

in new light. The ability to effect the change in one's attitude is perhaps the greatest strength of reflective practice.

Conclusion

1. Effect of cultural values on the counseling process is inevitable, particularly in cognitive behaviour therapy, and a very major factor with regard to the effectiveness of counseling. Counselors with values differing greatly from the client are less effective, and are less likely to earn the client's respect and trust.

2. When applying cognitive therapy to clients from diverse cultures, It has found that it is important for counselors to not impose their values on the client, or attempt to indoctrinate the client with their own ideas. Instead, counselors should base ideas of rational and irrational thoughts on the client's own values. If there is a great deal of discrepancy between the values of counselor and client the counselor should explicitly state this difference so the client can have an informed choice.

3. Counselors should experience value sensitization as part of their training in order to help them recognize their own values and prejudices, and understand the values of clients. Not being aware of their own values and prejudices can have a negative therapy needs to increase as more clients from the minority cultures require counseling.

Discussion

Discussion' can serve as a means for other students to deliberate on certain social, political and moral issues where values as such are not the focus of discussion in their own right but are underlying the topic. For example, in the modern times, people are faced with perplexing situations, dilemmas and issues related to social justice, human rights and freedom, environment,

ecology, population control, peace and disarmament. It is important to realize that discussions can help students become aware of the variety of ideas and vie points be tolerant to the different views, can help them clarify their own views through the effort of having to get across to others, can help them resolve a dilemma or clarify their values. counselor's role in organizing discussions is that of a facilitator. Identification of value issues suitable for different age groups with potentials for discussion is important.

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