

Contemporary Counselling Approaches/Therapies for the Treatment of Behavioural Problems among Adolescents Youths in Nigeria

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Abstract

Mankind in all ramifications is in a dire need of help in almost all aspects of human endeavour. Counselling theories and behavioural change are critical elements in Guidance and counselling education. A lot of researches indicated that most of the problems that take the centre stage of today's woes are however, as a result of lack of guidance and counselling in both the day to day activities and even in the systems of education. Researchers have opined that most of the problems are available essentially because counselling theories are not incorporated in the process of seeking solutions to the daily problems. This singular reason makes this author to make an attempt of availing some of the major effective theories that can be used in order to curtail many of the problems associated with mankind today. The writer therefore carefully selected ten theories that are popular and also widely used and that are at the disposal of school counsellor as an important tool in resolving the problems. The theories if harnessed very well by counsellors can be a veritable tool in solving educational, vocational and persona-Social dilemmas that can hamper the development of the children.

Keywords: Counselling, Approaches, Treatment, Behavioural, Problems

Introduction

Counselling is in many ways a synthesis of approaches from related movements such as social casework, psychometrics, clinical psychology and psychotherapy. Although human difficulties appear to be in different or specific areas, for example educational, vocational, personal/psychological or marital difficulties, it is people who need help. Consequently, the person not the problem is the main focus of the counselling process. This applies even when the counsellor is using a behavioural approach which is specifically problem centered.

According to Carew (1988) and Uba (1989), to work effectively to help a person, it is important that the counsellor should analyze what is happening in the counselling sessions. The theories upon which his/her approach to counselling has been based offer

the conceptual tools and provide a framework for this thinking. Although theories provide a framework as highlighted by Corey (2001), this does not imply that they are rigid and inflexible rather they are working assumptions which offer provisional ways of analyzing and organizing evidence in search for something better.

Theory, as highlighted by Carew (1988), helps to explain, predict, evaluate and improve what happens in the counselling relationships and to answer questions such as what is happening now? What account for this? Using their particular theoretical orientation with its underlying philosophical implications, each counsellor attempts to answer these questions with their own unique yet limited perception. Work on a satisfactory general theories of counselling has been done by a number of authors in Nigeria like Carew (1988), Uba (1989) and Dakasku (2001), just to mention very few among others.

Theories of counselling for the treatment of behavioural problems as opined by Carew (1988) are drawn from a number of schools or approaches and although they differ in emphases, they all acknowledge acceptance, rapport, the need for support, some limits and the professional status as well as competence of the counsellor. It is possible to trace the two historical bases for counselling theory in the opinion of Dakasku (2001), one depending on psychoanalytic principles and emphasizing the emotional feeling aspect of personality and the other on learning theory concentrating on re-learning some adaptive behaviours in response to the demands of life. This paper discusses some of the counselling approaches briefly and how they can aid in solving behavioural problems.

Psychoanalytic Theory to Counselling

The origin to this therapeutic approach to counselling has been attributed to Sigmund Freud (1856-1939). The basic philosophies of this counselling approach according to Dakasku (2001) are that human beings are basically determined by psychic energy and by early experiences. The theory holds that unconscious motives and conflicts are central in present behaviour; and that irrational forces are therefore strong, as the person is driven by sexual and aggressive impulses. It is also the view of the theory that early development is of critical importance for later personality problems and these have roots in present childhood conflicts. According to Freud, the behaviour of an individual is determined by irrational forces, unconscious motivations, biological and instinctual drives, and certain psychosexual events during the first six years of life.

The therapeutic or counselling goal of the psychoanalytic therapy is to make the unconscious conscious. Another goal is to construct the basic personality, and also, to assist the client in relieving the earlier past experiences and working through repressed conflicts. It again, aims at intellectual awareness of the clients. Corey (2001) reported

that the important goal of the Freudian psychoanalytic theory is to modify the individuals' character and to strengthen the ego personality so that behaviour is based more on reality and not so much on the demands of instinctual cravings.

The basic assumptions of this approach are that man is a pleasure seeking animal. In other words, as reported by Carew (1988), man seeks or is motivated by the desire to seek for pleasure and therefore avoids painful experience. The psychoanalytic approach also assumes that the personality consists of three systems, the id, the ego and the super—ego. The id is the primary source of psychic energy and the seat of the instincts. It always seeks the fulfillment of immediate gratification and therefore it is highly egocentric and too selfish. The ego has contact with external world of reality. It is basically operating on reality principle. Ego governs and controls the personality of the individual. There is thus, a permanent conflict between the demanding id and the regulating ego because they are always at loggerheads. The super ego is the person's moral code; the main concern being, whether action is good or bad, right or wrong. Super ego is the judge and therefore it is judgmental (Uba, 1989).

On the strength and effectiveness of the psychoanalytic theory, Corey (2001) and Carew (1988) reported that it provides a conceptual basis for understanding unconscious dynamics, the importance of early development as related to present difficulties, anxiety and ego defenses as a way of coping and the nature of transference. The psychoanalytic approach provides a framework for a dynamic understanding of the role of the early childhood events and the impact of these experiences on the contemporary struggles faced by clients. It is thus, a framework for understanding the clients the counsellor works with and for helping them to achieve a deeper understanding of the roots of their conflicts.

On limitations of the psychoanalytic approach, Corey (2001) stated that the goals of this approach which is probing the unconscious and working toward reconstruction of personality are inappropriate for typical counselling setting. Most clients tend to want help in getting information and finding solution to solve immediate and pressing problems, but this is not practicable in the psychoanalytic counselling approach.

Behaviour Therapy approach

According to Carew (1988) and Corey (2001) the growth of the theoretical concept and practical method of treatment commonly known as behaviour therapy owes much to a large number of people. Carew (1988) as cited in Dakasku (2001) reported that the behavioural approach was originally conceived by John B. Watson, but prominent among them recently was the works of Dollard and Miller (1973), Wolpe (1965) and Eysenck (1972) all cited in Dakasku (2001). The basic philosophy of this approach is that human behaviours are shaped and determined by socio-cultural conditioning. The

view according to Dakasku (2001) is basically deterministic, in that behaviour is seen as the product of learning and conditioning. The behaviour therapy offers various action-oriented methods to help the clients take definite steps to change their behaviour.

Most current behaviour theories pose the basic premise that behaviour is dependent upon preceding events and therefore behaviour is lawful (Corey (2001). Central to this theory is the concept of fear and anxiety. The basis of counselling therefore is to eliminate fear and anxiety. There are two approaches to fear and anxiety reduction – the direct and indirect approaches. The indirect approach, according to Uba (1989), advocates the use of procedures and techniques typically used in the traditional psychoanalytic oriented approaches to counselling. The direct methods of behaviour theory are the typical learning theories that emphasize that behaviour, whether good or bad, desirable or undesirable, learned can as well be unlearned and thus take cognizance of reward and punishment as well as stimulus and response.

The therapeutic techniques in behavioural approach, according to Corey (2001), Carew (1988) and Uba (1989) include systematic desensitization, assertiveness training, operant conditioning, shaping, flooding and extinction just to mention few among others which are all based on principles of learning and which are all geared towards behaviour change. Corey (2001) and Carew (1988) all reported that behaviour therapy has wide applicability. According to them, it could be applicable to individuals and groups, institutions, schools and other behaviour situations such as embarking on studies and researches. Moreover in the opinion of Dakasku (2001) behaviour therapy is a pragmatic approach based on experimental validation of results; progress or lack of it can be continually assessed and new techniques developed. One of the major advantages of behavioural technique of counselling, according to Corey (2001), is that it gets into the heart of the problem and clients feel momentarily better when its tenets are being applied to them.

Rationale Emotive Therapy

This theory was developed by Albert Ellis in 1958 after concluding that psychoanalysis theory was a relatively superficial and unscientific form of treatment. Ellis experimented with several other systems; notable among them is the psychoanalysis of Sigmund Freud. In 1955, Ellis combined humanistic philosophical and behaviour therapy to form rational emotive therapy (Corey, 2001). The basic philosophy of the rationale emotive therapy is that humans are born with potentials for rational thinking and tendencies towards illogical thinking. They tend to fall victim to irrational beliefs and to re-indoctrinate themselves with these beliefs.

The objective of the rationale emotive group counselling approach is to eliminate the clients' self-defeating outlook in life. According to Ellis (2004), one major objective of this approach is minimizing the clients' central self-defeating outlook and acquiring a more realistic and tolerant philosophy of life. The basic assumption of the rationale emotive therapy as reported by Uba (1989) is that emotional disturbances are largely the product of irrational thinking. People have predispositions for self-preservation, happiness, thinking and verbalization. They also have propensities for self-destruction, avoidance of thought, procrastination and endless repetition of mistakes, superstition, intolerance, perfectionism and self-blame and avoidance of actualizing growth potentials.

On the advantage of Rationale Emotive therapy, Carew (1988) noted its emphasis on putting newly acquired insight into action. The therapy is action oriented. Clients can gain multitude of insights into their problems and can become aware of the nature of the problems. Another important benefit of this approach, according to Carew (1988), is that of teaching clients ways that they can carry on their own therapy without the direct intervention of a therapist. On limitations of the therapy, Uba (1989) reported that the therapist does not listen to a client's history and does not encourage clients to recount "long tales of woes" because the therapist in rationale emotive approach has large degree of power by virtue of length of training and the experience.

Client Centered Approach

This therapy was developed by Carl Rogers in 1970 and his proponents like Patterson, Gendlin and Hobbs in 1978. The underlying philosophy of this approach is that the view of human being is positive, in that human beings have an inclination towards becoming fully functioning human beings who have an innate ability to reach their potentials. According to Carew (1988), the general theoretical orientation of this approach is phenomenological; that is all behaviours are determined primarily by immediate individual perpetual events that have passed.

The objective of the client centered group counselling approach is to provide a safe climate conducive to clients' self-exploration, so that the clients can recognize threats to their growth and experience aspects of self that were formally denied or distorted. The other objectives of this approach according to Omeogun (2001), are to enable the clients to move toward openness to experiences, greater trust in self, willingness and increased spontaneity and aliveness. The basic assumption of the client centered approach is that, given an optimal psychological climate, individuals have within themselves, vast resources for self-understanding, for altering their concepts of self and others and for generating self-directed behaviour.

On the effectiveness of the client centered group counselling approach, Nystul (1999)

reported that it is one of the dominant approaches used in counsellor education because of its built-in safety features – it emphasizes active listening, respecting clients, adopting their internal frame of reference, and staying with them as opposed to getting ahead of them with interpretations. Hence, Nystul (1999) further asserted that this approach is far safer than many models of therapy that puts the therapist in the directive position of making interpretation, forming diagnosis, analyzing dreams and working toward more radical personality changes. On the limitations of this therapy, Corey (2001) reported that some practitioners become “client centered; and lose a sense of their own personhood and uniqueness. Another disadvantage is the tendency of some practitioners to give support to clients without challenging them.

Counsellor Centered Technique

Counsellor centered theory is known as directive counselling, which is also referred to as trait and factor viewpoint or the Minnesota counselling view. Advocates of this viewpoint, explain personality as a system of independent traits or factors such as abilities, (e.g. memory, spatial relations, verbal etc) interests, attitudes and temperaments. The proponents of this viewpoint as pointed by Omeogun (2001) include Walter Bingham, John Darley, Donald Paterson and Edmund G. Williamson.

Fundamental to directive counselling, as stated by Williamson (1958) cited in Carew (1988), is the assumption that, individuals seek to use self-understanding and knowledge of their abilities as a means of developing their potentialities. Achievement of self-discovery results in intrinsic satisfaction and reinforces efforts to become all that one is able to become. Williamson (1958) as cited in Uba (1989) argued that the goal of education and counselling are the same; that is the optimum development of the individual as a whole person, and not solely with respect to his/her intellectual training. Counselling is seen by Williamson as being concerned with the interaction of personality and the surrounding culture. Williamson (1958) as cited in Uba (1989) emphasized that counselling must deal with both the content of the adjustments and also with the individual's attitude and valuation of his/her adjustment. Williamson (1958), cited by Singh (2007), again noted that the foundation of modern concepts of counselling rests on the assumption of the unique individuality of that uniqueness through objective measurement as contrasted with techniques or subjective estimation and appraisal.

Chand (2006) expressed that trait and factor theory viewpoint assumes that man can become himself through education, and counsellors must believe that man is capable of learning to solve his problems. Man is also seen as rational being who is able to think and use science to further his own development and human progress. Man is also assumed to be born with the potential for both good and evil, and the meaning of life

is to seek well and reject or at least control evil. Directive counselling postulates that the counsellor actively influences the development of the client. The counsellor is essentially a teacher. The curriculum is the client. The client's role is to learn how to understand himself and to use intelligence or rationality to change or correct his responses in order to achieve a rational and satisfying life. According to Martin and Pear (2007), Williamson is the chief exponent of this viewpoint. To Williamson, counsellor centered counselling approach involves six essential steps. The steps are:-

- a) Analysis – is collecting from a variety of sources, the data needed for an adequate understanding of the student.
- b) Synthesis – is summarizing and organizing the data so that they read the students' assets, liabilities, adjustments and maladjustments.
- c) Diagnosis – is formulating conclusions regarding the nature and the cause of the problems exhibited by the student.
- d) Prognosis – predicting the future development of the students' problems.
- e) Counselling – the counsellor taking steps with the student to bring about adjustment and re-adjustment for the student.
- f) Follow-Up – this is helping the student with new problems or with recurrence of the original problem and determining the effectiveness of the counselling provided to the student.

Here the counsellor plays a major role. According to Carew (1988), the counsellor does all that he/she can to get the counsellee to make a decision on keeping with his/her diagnosis. He tries to direct the thinking of the counsellee by informing, explaining, interpreting and advising. A considerable use of interpretations and directives by the counsellor has led to this type of counselling being described as directive or counsellor centered or active approach technique.

Reality Counselling Approach

This theory is one of the simplest cognitive oriented theories to understand and apply by any counsellor. It was developed by William Glasser, a psychiatrist trained in psychoanalytic therapy, in 1925. The theory states that every individual aspires to have a fair amount of identity. According to Haves (1969) cited in Ikechukwu and Makinde (1997), an individual achieves a healthy identity when he lives his life in a manner which enables him to fulfill his basic needs. The two prominent needs in man as opined by Ikechukwu and Makinde (1997) are: (a) feeling worthwhile towards self and others and (b) to be loved. Suffering in one's life results when one is unsuccessful in fulfilling any of these needs. This suffering is always expressed in irresponsible behaviour.

Glasser (1965) stated that responsible behaviour connotes that behaviour which satisfies one's needs in a way that does not deprive others of the opportunity of satisfying their own needs. When this is done, the individual gains a sense of worth by

knowing that he has done right and by being acknowledged by others. Glasser further maintained that individuals learn responsible behaviour from significant models in their lives namely, parents, sisters, brothers, relatives, teachers and friends. Correspondingly, irresponsible behaviour in individual is a result of deficient learning process or loss of ability to act responsibly. Even when responsible behaviour manifests, it is still the individual's effort, although unrealistic and inadequate, to satisfy his needs.

Glaser's Reality theory maintained that everything that happens is reality, but it is sometimes necessary or preferable to weigh the satisfaction of long term reward of an action against its immediate consequences. This is why it is necessary for the client and therapist to dialogue and evaluate their different conceptions of the behaviour to know which is better. Correspondingly, Reality therapy firmly believes that responsibility requires the willingness to make immediate sacrifice for long term rewards. It is by so doing that the individual will be aided in achieving love and self-worth, which together will lead to self-identity. The therapeutic procedure of reality therapy according to Carew (1988) are three which explained that the therapist has to become involve with the client in a warm, honest, open ways so as to enable the client to begin to face reality and evaluate the behaviour that is unrealistic. Secondly, the therapist must reject the behaviour which is unrealistic and irresponsible and reinforce the appropriate behaviour. And lastly, the therapists help the client to restructure the fulfillment of these needs within the framework of reality.

Gestalt Therapy

This counselling therapy was developed by Fritz Pearls in (1969). The theory emphasized the importance of clients fully experiencing in the present moment their feelings, thoughts, and actions and then taking responsibility for them. The goal of gestalt therapy is to help clients achieve a more integrated self and become more authentic and self-accepting. In addition, they learn to assume personal responsibility for their behaviour rather than blaming society, past experiences, parents and/or others. According to Carew (1988), Gestalt therapy is a directive therapy, one in which the therapist takes an active role in determining the course of therapy sessions and provides answers and suggestions to the client. In the opinion of Corey (2001), the well-known phrase "getting in touch with your feelings" is a major objective of the Gestalt therapy.

Pearls suggested that those who are in need of therapy carry around a heavy load of unfinished business, which may be in the form of resentment toward or conflicts with the parents, siblings, lovers, employers, or others. If not resolved, these conflicts are carried forward into present relationships. One method of dealing with unfinished business is the "empty chair" technique. The client sits facing an empty chair and

imagines for example that a wife, husband, father or mother sits there. The client proceeds to tell the chair what he or she truly feels about that person. Then, the client moves to the empty chair and role plays what the imagined persons response would be to what was said.

Eclectic Counselling Approach

This theory was propounded by Thorne (1964); it means choosing and reconciling an appropriate method from many sources. Counsellor builds with what he/she knows in counselling. Counsellors are aware of their own personality and interacting styles of the clients. The clients come for counselling because they cannot solve their problems. Tosi (1971) as cited in Singh (2007) observed that people come for counselling due to four reasons:-

- 1) To avoid future maladjustment
- 2) Want to gain relief
- 3) Want to avoid pressure or punishment
- 4) To gain success or to avoid failure

There must be diagnosis of maladjustment, causes, plan and goal setting, and securing proper condition. As for efficient learning and stimulating, the client develops his/her own resources and assumes responsibility for practicing new mode of adjustments; eclectic theory provides that opening relationship, dealing with causes and symptoms and terminating the therapy are fundamental conditions of the therapy which is possible when either the clients gains relief, or failure to establish rapport or there is evidence of crude direction by the counsellor's inability to break the resistance.

Human nature is dynamic as such there is need for eclectic theory to be used in Nigeria, so that the counsellor is free to choose from variety of sources to counsel his/her clients without fear of intimidation from behaviours of one theory or another. Human beings are dynamic in nature as such the other three methods of counselling, clients' centred, counsellor centred, indirect or direct counselling therapy may not be effective in one session as such the combination of all the techniques may be necessary. Jindal (2004) observed that those who choose these options enter the possibility that some set of behaviours can result from a variety of antecedent conditions.

The rate of antecedents is very wide - constitutional, environmental, socio-cultural, interpersonal, physiological, cognitive and emotional - often do not occur in isolation, but in combination with behavioural problems typically representing a contenance of a number of determinants acting in relationship with one another. These different sets of conditions call for different set of things that need to be done to alleviate the difficulty. Allen (1971) as cited in Carew (1988) observed that it is the general view that it has many psychiatrists in America. Eclectic theory is interested in the entire

array of treatment procedures that can be mobilized to intervene and to effect change in multiple conditions that relate to and govern the occurrence of the behavioural dysfunctions.

The eclectic theory of counselling enables the therapist to combine the directive/psychoanalytic, client centred or learning approaches to psychotherapy. By implication Carew (1988), Jindal (2004) observed that the counsellor/therapist is not married to any of the theories but can in one moment use directive and in another moment drop directive and adopt indirect approach. This is in consonance to the dynamic nature of human beings which can change from one extreme to another.

Conclusion

Throughout this paper an attempt was made to discuss some of the major effective theories at the disposal of the counsellor that can be used to treat behavioural problems in both school and non-school settings and their uses in dealing with behaviour maladjustment. However, it has to be explained and emphasized here that all the theories can withstand the test of time and the choice of any theory by the counsellor depends on many factors including the nature of the problem presented, the resources available for the counsellor's use, the nature of the environment and above all the general professional competence of the counsellor. In conclusion, theories are important to counsellors, and counsellor's use of one theory or another depends upon the nature of the problem presented by the client/clients and the circumstances and conditions that make the therapist or counsellor's choice of a theory. And none of the theories discussed can be said to be superior to another; therefore they can be used by the counsellors as the condition warrants their usage.

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