

COURSE CONTENT

TOPIC #1: INTRODUCTION TO COUNSELLING

BRIEF HISTORY OF COUNSELLING

- ‘A problem shared is a problem halved’ a part of being human is sharing our stories → Tribal times; Role of religion (pastoral care); Philosophers
- Industrial revolution → stress of “modern day” living
- School counsellors, late 1800s (as early as 1600s)
- In 1913 NVGA → published National Vocational Guidance Bulletin; renamed Journal of Counselling & Development (1984)
- In 1929 first marriage & counselling centre established in NY
- In WW2 - triggered significant developments of profession
- In 1950s Carl Rogers → research analysed counselling interactions, established person-centred approach
- Carl Rogers approach → at the heart of almost all theoretical approaches
- In 1961 first Code of Ethics
- In 1970s registration required in US for counselling
- PACFA and ACA in Australia → Registration pathways being consolidated

DEFINITIONS OF COUNSELLING

- Broad definition
 - Counselling uses an interpersonal relationship to help develop the client’s self-understanding, and to facilitate a process through which people can make changes in their lives
- PACFA definition
 - Professional counselling is a safe and confidential collaboration between qualified counsellors and clients to promote mental health and wellbeing, enhance self-understanding and resolve identified concerns
 - Clients are active participants in the counselling process at every stage
 - Counsellors work with children, young adults, couples, families and groups
 - Counsellors may be short term, long term or over a lifetime → according to clients’ needs
 - Counsellors are fully present with their clients → using empathy and deep listening to establish positive working relationships

- Effective feedback
 - is perceived as helpful → not necessarily 'pleasant'
 - will help the receiver improve skills → so is descriptive and not an interpretation of or judgement about the behaviour
 - will help the receiver explore what is suggested → does not ignore positive aspects of practice
 - helps the receiver to realise they are not attacked → so is focused on observed behaviour and not the person
 - is formulated in such a way that you invite the recipient to respond → give explanations of choices/behaviours

TOPIC #3: EMPATHY, REFLECTION AND BUILDING THE ALLIANCE

UNDERSTANDING

- Counsellor needs to develop understanding for the client's world
- Client needs to develop and expand and construct new self-understandings in order to create change for themselves

understanding
/ʌndəˈstændɪŋ/ 🔊
noun

1. the ability to understand something; comprehension.
"foreign visitors with little understanding of English"
synonyms: comprehension, apprehension, grasp, grip, mastery, perception, discernment, appreciation, interpretation, cognizance, ken, conception, digestion, assimilation, absorption; **More**
2. sympathetic awareness or tolerance.
"he wrote with understanding and affection of the people of Dent"
synonyms: compassion, sympathy, pity, empathy, feeling, concern, considerateness, consideration, tenderness, tender-heartedness, kindness, kind-heartedness, sensitivity, insight, fellow feeling, brotherly love, neighbourliness, decency, humanity, humanitarianism, humaneness, charity, goodwill, mercy, mercifulness, gentleness, tolerance, lenience, leniency, warmth, warm-heartedness, affection, love
"he always treated me with great kindness and understanding"

Perceptual or intellectual

Emotional

PERCEPTUAL UNDERSTANDING

- Involves metacognition → cognitive approach
- Perspective taking → on self, on others, making sense of the way a person acts
- Theory of mind - Ability to recognise and attribute a particular 'mental state' to certain behaviour(s) taking into consideration our own and others' beliefs, thoughts, perceptions, intentions, feelings, and desires.
- Combining theory of mind with metacognitive abilities

- Share new information
- Speak feely and openly
- Bring out those things that are of most importance
- What, How > guide the client to reflect and explore their experiences

INEFFECTIVE QUESTIONING

- Being intrusive
- Interrogating
- Creating unnecessary inequality
- Compromising the counselling process
- Controlling what is explored
- (Inappropriately) using 'Why' questions
- Satisfying the counsellor's needs
- Avoid too many closed questions → need them sometimes

CLOSED QUESTIONS

- Lead to a specific answer
- Responses are usually short, limited
- Can be used for specific purposes in counselling → being more precise, eliciting specific information
- Can be inappropriately leading and have the effect of narrowing a conversation

TYPES OF QUESTIONS

- Questions to open up, elaborate
 - "What was life like when...?"
- Questions to clarify
 - "I'm just so fed up!".... "What are you fed up with?"
- Questions for self awareness
 - "What's happening right now for you when you talk about ...?"
- Transitional questions
 - "Earlier you mentioned... Can you tell me more about this?"
- The guru question
 - "Imagine you have a fairy godmother who is always there for you, what would she say?"
 - Mostly used in later sessions
 - can also put into another perspective (parent, professional)

CULTURE IN COUNSELLING

- Key principles in building connection, bridging the gap across difference
 1. Acceptance
 2. Empathy & compassion towards self and other
- What does acceptance mean?
- How do we maintain it when differences create a gap between the counsellor and the client?
 - Perspective taking creates space for seeing possibilities and facilitates choice-based interactions
 - Empathy and compassion foster understanding
- Awareness of yourself as a cultural being is vital
- Without seeing yourself as a cultural being, you will have difficulty developing understanding of others

DIVERSITY AND CULTURE: IMPLICATIONS FOR INDIVIDUALS

- Many people live in a society where the dominant beliefs, values and behaviours are different from theirs
- This brings with itself various experiences associated with classism, sexism, racism, discrimination, oppression, injustice, etc.
- Often involves the imposition of an ongoing search for personal identity as their cultures/values/beliefs are repeatedly represented as secondary/false
- Can be stressful – psychologically, emotionally, behaviourally → a source of both internal/external conflict (might not always be explicit)

ACKNOWLEDGING THAT THE PERSONAL IS THE POLITICAL

- Counsellor being sensitive to client's experience of self as situated in a social and relational context
- Sensitivity to and respectfully curious about the social injustice or various experiences associated with discrimination and marginalisation
- Facilitate the unpacking of what is personal and what is political and how the political and systemic problems in the wider society could have impacted their personal problems
- Recognition and conceptualisation of the problems in such a way that the client is not to be blamed for them → that the problem is not an internal part of their identity

COURSE CONTENT

TOPIC #7: DEEPENING THE RELATIONSHIP → RESISTANCE, RUPTURES, REPAIR AND SUMMARISING

TRANSFERENCE

- Reflects the immediacy of the counselling relationship
- Client behaves toward counsellor as through they were a person from their life
- Usually from past behavioural patterns learned in relationships such as
 - Parental
 - Sibling
 - Non-familial
 - Sexual
- This can lead to counsellor falling into that role → in the way they respond to the client
- It is inevitable in counselling
- It can be powerful tool for promoting understanding and change
- E.g., Projection in other areas of life

COUNTERTRANSFERENCE

- Therapist's emotional reaction to a client based on their own personal experience
- Unconsciously transferring feelings and attitudes from a person or situation in the past
- Aspects of the client or their story, or the contextual setting may be triggers (e.g., school, relationship dynamics)
- Ethical issues
 1. Boundaries → conflict of interest
 2. Self-disclosure
 3. Competence

RESISTANCE

- Often looks like an apparent lack of cooperation or motivation with the therapeutic process
 - being late, postponing
 - deflecting away from particular content and emotions
 - telling the same story over and over
 - avoiding particular activities
 - re-enacting unhelpful behaviour patterns
- Can be major obstacle and cause ruptures in the therapeutic relationship

- Process to follow when closing a session:
 1. Indication of need to close
 2. Positive Affirmation/feedback
 3. Brief summary
 4. Agreement on goal/future appointment
 5. Avoid responding in a way that will invite a continuation of the session

TOPIC #9: CASE CONCEPTULISATION

CASE CONCEPTULISATION

- Case conceptualisation is both a process and an outcome
- The process of case conceptualisation → important part of building the therapeutic relationship and getting to know the client, creating a safe and trusted space for working collaboratively
- As an outcome → it is like a map for understanding and explaining a client's presenting issues and what the counselling process will involve
- Case conceptualisations provide therapists with a coherent and evidence-based plan for intervention that increases the likelihood of working effectively with the client in achieving their therapeutic goals
- We see the client in the context of their inner and external life realities, significant past and current experiences, and personality and physiological influences → systemic perspective
- Frameworks provide a broad lens to see patterns and connections
- Involves shared hypothesis making, discerning meaning → a more complete and informed understanding of the client
- Facilitates reciprocal process of empathy
- Case conceptualisation is not diagnosis
- Two people may present with the same "presenting problem" → yet perceive, see, experience and act upon it differently
- All therapy needs to be able to flexibly adjust to the idiosyncratic behaviours and needs of each client
- Client's experiences are influenced by many, and varied, internal and external factors
- The most central factor that shapes how the client responds to their situation is what they perceive and understand of their experiences
- Need to think beyond 'the story' and understand the client's unique "psychological situation"
- Facilitates considering the best ways for working towards change and supports intervention planning

2. Constructing a new perspective on the “state of the miracle-day”
3. Becoming curious about exceptional times (similar experience in real life)
4. Scaling questions towards broadening of exceptional times (using progress scales)
5. Following up in the next session (reinforcing the miracle scene)
6. Repeat using a progress scale

NARRATIVE THERAPY (NT)

- Narrative Therapy seeks to be a respectful, non-blaming approach to counselling and community work → which centres people as the experts in their own lives
- It views problems as separate from people and assumes people have many skills, competencies, beliefs, values, commitments and abilities that will assist them to reduce the influence of problems in their lives → (Morgan, 2000)

EXTERNALISING CONVERSATIONS

- Our social context and certain dominant forces in our societies, repeatedly convey the message that problems reside within us
- People therefore often see problems as an inherent part of themselves and their identity
- Externalising the problem helps the person to see themselves as someone who is being influenced by a feeling in some settings or at some points
- Major phrase in NT → The person is not the problem; the problem is the problem
- Aims to separate the problem from the person
- Creates distance that allows space to emerge around the person
- This new space fosters the realisation that the person is more than the problem (rather than being engulfed by it)
- Externalising is an opportunity for seeing how the issue affects the person’s life & what mechanisms are at play (intersects with skill of looking for exceptions)
- Hence, opens possibilities for engaging with problem differently:
 - The way it is experienced and understood
 - What options the person has to live differently
- Can encourage the person to take control → increase their sense of capacity to cope and change
- Externalizing Conversations → a way of speaking in which the problem may be spoken of as if it were a distinct entity separate from the person
- It’s the first step in separating the person from the problem and this kind of language continues throughout the rest of our work with a client: