

MODULE 1

PDE 203: GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING II

UNIT1: PROCESS AND STRATEGIES IN COUNSELLING

INTRODUCTION

In this unit, you will learn about the process and strategies used in behaviour modification of clients who come for counselling. The counselling relationship between the counsellor and his client is so important that certain processes and strategies must be followed to bring desirable changes in the behaviour of the client. The process and strategies will be discussed.

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit you should be able to:-

- (1) define counselling process.
- (2) explain what strategy means in counselling.
- (3) list some strategies used in counselling intervention.

HOW TO STUDY THIS UNIT

1. Read the unit carefully noting the important points discussed.
2. Take note of any new word used and use your dictionary to check the meaning.
3. Attempt the activities under this unit.

COUNSELLING PROCESS

Just like in the case of a bread baker who must follow some steps in baking bread, so is the case of a counsellor who must follow a process in order to solve the problem of a client.

Process in counselling is defined as series of stages gone through by the counsellor to help the client understand and or solve a problem. The process of arriving at a solution may take some time (sessions) before the desired goal is achieved.

Authors such as Nwoje (1987), Peterson and Nisenholz (1991) and Okobiah (1992) explained what counselling entails.

By going through their work, you will understand that there seem to be similarities and differences in their opinions. However, in this unit the writer has adopted Okobiah's opinion about counselling process. Counselling process according to Okobiah has four phases or stages. The writer discusses them below with slight modification for you to understand. The stages are as follows: Interviewing phase, Working phase, Termination phase and Follow-up phase:-

1. Interview Stage/Phase

Any counselling process, be it individual or group, starts with the interview stage. This stage could also be referred to as the familiarization, orientation or introductory stage. This stage is very important because for you as a counsellor to start well determines the success of other stages and the entire counselling relationship.

The counsellor and the client meet for the first time. The counsellor makes deliberate effort to get acquainted with the client by establishing rapport. This is done by asking the client to sit down, so that he or she would be emotionally relaxed in the counsellor's office.

The counsellor inquires about the client's name, class, parents, friends, progress in school and his mission to the counsellor's office. This should be done with caution so that the client does not feel as if he or she is being interrogated.

The counsellor further assures the client that whatever is discussed will be kept confidential. This is to win the client's confidence and make him or her open up to say his purpose for coming to the counsellors' office.

The client may or may not present his problem during this stage. The counsellor should not be in a hurry to make him/her disclose his mission. During this stage, the counsellor needs to display in his behaviour all the qualities of an effective counsellor by being patient to listen carefully, show empathy, show unconditional positive regards that is treating his clients with respect, warmth, irrespective of his age, sex, race, colour, religion and socio-economic status. This is very important as counselors are not expected to be segregational or discriminative.

2. Working Stage/Phase

This is the second stage/phase of the counselling process. As the title suggests, it is the stage where the counsellor fully engages the client in discussion about what to do and how it will be done concerning the problem of the client. If the client has not disclosed his/her mission in the first stage, the counsellor now asks the client. He uses questioning techniques to make the client open up. Questions such as: Are you okay? Can I help you? What is the matter? What has brought you to my office? The client now responds. The counsellor having listened to the client will suggest different techniques depending on the nature of the problem presented on how the problem can be handled.

The counsellor uses techniques such as responding, exploring, restatement, interpretation, confrontation, unconditional positive regards, empathy, silence and catharsis to diagnose the problem. Also it is during this stage that the goals for counselling are set by the client and counsellor.

The counsellor here tells the client that counselling aids such as cassettes, radio, video, and tape recorder may be used and the purpose for using them will be

explained to the client. The counsellor should also tell the client the number of sessions that the counselling relationship may cover. This will depend on the nature of the problem. If the problem is a simple one, it may take fewer sessions but if it is a complicated one, it may take a longer period to solve especially problems bordering on change of behaviour or breaking of habit.

If the counsellor needs to contact an “outsider” who may be responsible for the problems faced by the client, the permission and consent of the client must be sought. The counsellor also takes the client through the methods to be used in solving the problem. All these are done in the working stage of the counselling process.

3. **Termination Stage/Phase**

This stage is the third stage in the counselling process. Termination means bringing an end to the counselling relationship between the counsellor and client. Different reasons have been given by many authors on why a counselling relationship may end or terminate. Some of these reasons are given below for you to understand.

It is important to stress here that termination of counselling relationship may be a temporary or permanent one. The following reasons are given by different authors.

(1) **Counselling Goals are achieved**

As discussed earlier in this unit, you were told that the client and the counsellor would set the goals for counselling. When these goals have been realised to the satisfaction of the client and counsellor, the relationship can be called off temporarily or permanently. Temporarily because the counsellor may want to follow up the client to see if he is doing well or putting into practice what has been discussed and suggested. Permanently if client’s problem is solved and may not need to see the counsellor again. The client should be told that if he has problem in future, he should be free to see the counsellor.

(2) **Un-cooperative Attitude from the Client**

The counsellor may discover that the client he or she is dealing with is not cooperating with him, especially when the client is a referred person, the counsellor should still try his best to make the client understand why he or she needs counselling. If after several attempt nothing good is coming out of the relationship, the counsellor can terminate the relationship temporarily and ask the client to think over his behaviour and may decide to come back if convinced to continue.

(3) **Client may decide not to continue**

The counsellor and client may enter into a counselling relationship without any problem. After some time, the client may decide not to continue for

reasons best known to him. Sometimes it may be due to the fact that the client is not honest in the relationship and when his attention is drawn to this fact he may decide to stay away and remain with his problem. The reasons for the behaviour may not be given to the counsellor. The best thing to do is to allow the client go as counselling is not by force.

(4) **Referral to an Expert/Specialist**

The counsellor may discover that the client has problem that is beyond his competence, area and experience, when this happens the client should be referred to the appropriate quarters for specialized treatment. For instance, the client may approach the counsellor with a problem that is both medical and educational, such as having bad eye vision and his inability to read comprehension passage during English language lesson. The counsellor should handle the educational aspect if he is competent in English or make referral to English teacher and a medical doctor. He should not start to prescribe glasses or drugs for the client because that is not his area of specialization. The counsellor should get the client prepared before referring him or her. The client should know why he is being sent to another person.

(5) **Practicum/Internship may end before the Counselling Goals are achieved**

There are instances when the counselee in question is a student, either undergraduate or post-graduate, posted to a school for practicum exercise. There may be instance when the practicum period will end without the counsellor achieving his purpose or the school may close for holiday, when this happens the relationship can be terminated temporarily or permanently. As far as the school calendar is concerned, that may be permanent termination, but if the counsellor picks interest in a student's case and wants to help in solving the problem, he may decide to visit the student at home and continue on personal basis.

(6) **Death of Counsellor or Client**

Counselling relationship may be terminated permanently when the counsellor or client dies. If it is the counsellor that dies, the client may seek for counsel from another counsellor.

There may be other reasons for terminating a counselling relationship not mentioned here. You should read other books for more information on processes and techniques on counselling.

4. **FOLLOW-UP STAGE/PHASE**

This is the stage in a counselling process that you the counsellor will want to know what is happening to your client after termination. The follow-up aims at finding out whether the client is carrying out the decisions arrived at before you ended the session

and what problems are being experienced. However this stage may not be necessary for every client so you the counsellor determine with the client whether the stage of follow-up will be necessary.

COUNSELLING STRATEGY

Strategy in counselling is basically the technique or method used during counselling to understand and find solution to a problem presented by the client. Strategies are tools used by the counsellor to handle problems. For instance, a medical doctor may use stethoscope to diagnose a disease, the fisherman uses fishing nets while the mechanic uses spanners, hammer, so also the counsellor uses tools such as listening, responding, interpretation, probing, exploring, restatements, confrontation, disclosure, unconditional positive regards, empathy and summarization as techniques or strategies during counselling; all these strategies are emphasis skills that the counsellor uses while counselling. The ability of a counsellor to solve a client's problem depends on how he uses the strategies.

ACTIVITY

1. What is a counselling process?
2. List two stages or phases in the process and discuss them.
3. List four strategies and show how you can use them in a counselling relationship.
4. Discuss two reasons why you should terminate a counselling relationship.

SUMMARY

- In this unit, the meaning and stages in a counselling process have been discussed. You have also been taught what the stages are and what their aims are. The idea of counselling strategy has also been explained. You will, from the activity above, refresh your memory when you write down the answers to the questions.

REFERENCES

- Kolo, F.D. (1997): **Conditions, Techniques and Skills for an Effective Counselling Process**. Jos: Joregun Associate. (Contact the writer at Dept. of Education, A.B.U. Zaria).
- Niselholz, B. (1991) & Peterson, J.V. **Orientation to Counselling**, 2nd Edition Boston: Allay & Bacon.
- Okun, B.F. (1982): **Effective helping: Interviewing and counselling techniques**. (2nd Edition) Monterey/California: Books Cole.

UNIT 2: INTERVIEWING AND LISTENING SKILLS IN COUNSELLING

INTRODUCTION

In any counselling relationship, there are certain skills that the counsellor needs to display to show his expertise and competence. These skills are very important as they show the mastery of the techniques by the counsellor. When skills are used properly it builds the confidence of clients and assures them that they are in the right place to receive solution to their problems.

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:-

- (1) explain what counselling skills are;
- (2) explain listening skills; and
- (3) discuss with understanding how these skills are used during counselling.

HOW TO STUDY THIS UNIT

1. Get your notebook and writing materials ready.
2. Write all the new words down before reading the unit.
3. Do a general reading of the unit without writing anything in your notebook.
4. Close your book and try to remember what you have just read.
5. Read through the unit again to master what you have just read.
6. Attempt all activities given at the end of the unit.

MEANING OF LISTENING SKILL

The entire counselling process begins with listening to the client. Listening is the ability of the counsellor to pay attention to the verbal and non-verbal expressions of the client. It involves hearing words, receiving the sound made by the client, and gaining insight into whatever is uttered. Attentive listening is a skill that must be developed and used by any counsellor. Some counselors may listen to the client but not hear what he or she has said. When the counsellor listens attentively he is conveying to the client that he understands him, this he may do by nodding and not speaking as the client talks. Okun (1982) observed that, the skill of listening may surface as the only strategy needed in a helping relationship. Infact, listening skill is the foundation stone on which other skills depend. If a counsellor has not listened attentively, he may not be able to use techniques such as responding, restatement, questioning, confrontation and self-disclosure. All these depend on how well the counsellor has listened to the client.

Kolo (1997) also observed that technique like “minimal encourager” may not be used if the counsellor had not listened attentively. These minimal encouragers include, “yes”, “tell me more” “is that so”? “hum! “I am listening”.

Kolo (1997) also highlighted some factors that could hinder effective listening by the counsellor. They are:

- (1) Inability of the client to hear the counsellor.
- (2) Lack of trust between the client and the counsellor.
- (3) When the client is shy or timid.
- (4) Inner rules that inhibit self-disclosure.
- (5) Tension and anxiety on the part of the client.
- (6) Gender influence, socio-economic status, and religious background.

The counsellor should, as much as possible, find a way of handling these factors so that there will be a free-flow of communication between the counsellor and the client.

ACTIVITY

1. What is listening skill in counselling?
2. Mention four factors that could affect good listening.

INTERVIEWING SKILLS

Cast your mind back to our discussion on counselling process. As earlier mentioned, the interviewing skill is very important for any effective counselling to develop. It takes about 50 percent of the counselling time. A good interviewing skill demonstrated by a counsellor only shows his or her competence as a counsellor and may win the confidence of his/her client. It shows that the counsellor has concern and empathy for the client.

A hypothetical case is cited for the readers’ study.

A counsellor and a client.

A client in SS II reading Arts subjects comes to the counsellor for guidance on possible course(s) to study in the university.

The counsellor is sitting in his office reading a textbook on counselling.

The student knocks at the door.

Counsellor - Yes come right in.

Client - She enters the office.

- Counsellor - How are you today? Please sit down.
- Client - She is hesitant but the counsellor encourages her to feel free and sit down.
- Counsellor - What is your name and what class are you?
- Client - I am Amina in SS II.
- Counsellor - Can I help you? Or what has brought you to my office?
- Client - I saw a notice on the bulletin board to see the counsellor when we have problem, so I decided to come.
- Counsellor - Yes you are right, you are in the right place. What can I do for you?
- Client - I bought JAMB form I don't know how to fill it and I don't know what course to read in the University.
- Counsellor - What subjects are you reading? And what do you intend to read later in life?
- Client - I am offering Arts subjects and I want to read Law.
- Counsellor - Most of the Universities offer Law.
- Client - I will rather go to the University in the North because I have never been to the South or East.
- Counsellor - There is nothing bad in trying other places since you are from the north. You need to go out, interact with people from other places, but your choice is final.
- Client - I will think about it and discuss with my parents because they will be responsible for my upkeep there.
- Counsellor - Concerning the subjects you are offering, you need to be good in English, History, Government, Literature and other Arts subjects. You also need to consider the hazards in the job, like travelling to get information about a case, attack from opponents, etc. to mention a few. Are you the out-going and out-spoken type?
- Counsellor - You should come to the office at your free period to fill the form together, so that you can submit it on time.
- Client - Thank you Sir, for your time and assistance.

At the next meeting the counsellor and client will explore the Universities and the client will pick one.

ACTIVITY

1. What is interviewing in counselling?
2. What do you think will affect your listening to another person's problem? Compare your list with what have been listed in this unit?

SUMMARY

- In this unit, we discussed listening and interviewing skills. We said, these two skills are very important in any counselling relationship be it individual or group counselling. The ability of the counsellor to listen carefully and attentively will enhance his interviewing skills. Factors that can affect good listening skills were mentioned and the process of developing good interviewing skills was also discussed.

REFERENES

- Kolo, F.D. (1977): **Conditions, Techniques and Skills for an effective counselling process**. Kaduna: Jofegan Associates
- Okun, B.F. (1982): **Effective helping: Interviewing and counselling Techniques** 2nd (edn) Monterey/California, Books Cole.

UNIT 3: GROUP DYNAMIC PROCESS IN COUNSELLING**INTRODUCTION**

Group dynamic process in counselling is another method of providing guidance or counselling services to a group of students or clients. Although information, observations and studies have shown that some problems experienced by clients are better handled when treated individually, the process of using group process in solving some problems cannot be overemphasized. In this unit, an attempt is made to describe groups in context of counselling relationships, purposes of group formation, forming a group for counselling intervention and stages of group process.

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:-

1. explain what group is.
2. list and explain with understanding the processes involved in group process.
3. organize students into group for counselling or dynamic sessions.

HOW TO STUDY THIS UNIT

1. Read through this unit beginning with the introduction.
2. Write down all the new words and check their meanings using your dictionary.
3. Have you ever been in a group before? Think about how that group was formed.
4. Attempt all the activities under this unit.

GROUP DYNAMICS

Group may be described as any collection of human beings who are brought into a social relationship with one another, while group dynamics is all that it takes to form a group. It should be noted that man's life, to some extent, consists of group life. When a man is born, he is brought into a group made up of his parents, father and mother himself inclusive making it a group of three that continues to enlarge with the arrival of other siblings. He leaves home and goes to the school, he associates with his classmates, another group of individuals in the class, he goes to the secondary and university the same is the case even in his working place he may need to work in a group of people. So group dynamics is very important in determining social relationship of individuals.

Group counselling is an important aspect of counselling activities. There are instances where the counsellor must just see the students in group. The counsellor may not achieve much progress and success if he adopts the individual counselling strategy. Thus for a formation of group for counselling purposes, some group dynamics procedure must be put in place.

For instance, in some schools depending on how prevalent these behaviour problems are, such as excessive fighting, chronic tiredness or fatigue, violent outbursts, aggressiveness, extreme withdrawals (isolates) inability to get along with other peers, shabby dressing, drug abuse, sexual harassment, telling lies etc. these can be approached using group counselling strategy.

When the groups are small, individuals find it easy to express their feelings about a wide range of personal problems.

Individuals who have similar problems when put together for counselling intervention, they identify with others and realise that they are not alone that, there are other people who share similar problems. This makes them open up so as to share experience and find a way of finding solutions to their problems. Because of the opportunity for interaction in groups, the members can express their concerns and difficulties and believe they can be genuinely heard, they therefore help one another gain increased self-acceptance. A counselling group must have a purpose depending on the nature of the problem. Some of the purposes and goals of forming a group according to UNESCO (2000) include the following:

- To grow in self-acceptance and learn not to demand perfection.
- To learn how to trust oneself and others.
- To foster self-knowledge and the development of a unique self-identity.
- To lessen fears of intimacy, and learn to reach out to those who would like to be closer to you.
- To become aware of choice and to make choice wisely.
- To become more sensitive to the needs and feelings of others.
- To clarify values and decide whether, and how to modify them to find ways of understanding and resolving personal problems.

FORMATION OF THE GROUP

In forming a counselling group, students should realise that the place to start from is by clarifying the rationale and purpose for forming it. It is very important to note that adequate time should be spent in planning for its formation. If proper planning is not made and if the members are not carefully selected and prepared the entire process can flounder.

The step to take is announcing the counsellor's intentions and recruiting members. The counsellor needs to announce what the group is for and what it intends to do for the members that will be recruited and participate. How a group is announced influence the way it will be received by potential members, as well as the kind of people that will join the group. Personal contact with potential members has been found to be one of the best methods of recruiting members. For instance when the writer of this unit conducted a study on three modes of treatment on anxiety and improving English comprehension skills amongst secondary school students, he personally visited the school, met the school counsellors told

them her mission and solicited for their support to use the students in that school. All the SS II students were gathered and informed of the purpose of the study and how they stand to benefit from the study in terms of reducing their anxiety level and increasing their performance in English language through study skills counselling, rational emotive therapy and a combination of the two strategies. Volunteers indicated and forty (40) of them were randomly chosen from the 92 volunteers and were assigned to experimental and control groups.

The next process in forming a group for counselling involves screening and selecting members. The counsellor who is the group leader would conduct a pre-group interview, give them inventory to fill or answer the questionnaire given to them. He then selected group members whose needs, goals, problems are compatible or similar with the established goals of the group.

The counsellor may ask each participant these questions:

- Why does this person want to join the group?
- How ready is the person to become actively involved in the process of self-examination that will be part of the group?
- Does the person have a clear understanding about the nature and purpose of the group? Do they have a view of what is expected of them?
- Is there any indication that a person may be counter productive to the development of cohesion in the group? Or will the group be counter productive to the person?

Some practical consideration in group formation:

In selecting members for a particular group, these factors are to be considered.

(1) Size of the Group

In forming a counselling group, the size of the group matters a lot for the effectiveness of the process. In an ideal situation, the size is determined by the age of the members, the experiences of the counsellor, the type and purpose of the group and whether there is a co-counsellor or co-leader. Children in elementary school may be 4-5 members in a group, while adolescent may be 8-10 members UNESCO (2000). For adults a 2-4 hour weekly sessions might be preferable. The frequency and duration of the session is dependent on the style of leadership and the type of people in the group.

For instance on the study on anxiety conducted which was referred to earlier, the members were adolescents, we met once a week for one hour and for ten weeks with the first week as pre-treatment session and tenth (10th) week as the post-treatment session.

(2) Duration and Time for Meeting

In determining the duration and time for meeting, frequent short sessions may be used. This suits their attention span. If the group is taking place in the school setting, the session can be after regular class period. This is to avoid clashing with school time-table and creating unnecessary conflict between the counsellor, students and the school authority.

For the adults, having 2-4 hours may be ideal. However, being civil servants or business men and women they may not be chanced to spare 2-4 hours during the week, but this session can take place during the week ends. The duration time is because they have greater or higher attention span than the adolescents or children.

(3) Place of Meeting

The next pertinent question is where should this meeting take place? Wherever is chosen as the place for meeting, the leader should ensure adequate physical arrangement, good ventilation and the place must guarantee some degree of privacy and freedom from distraction. That is why it is not good to have such sessions in the classroom, staffroom or in the counsellor's office if the space is enough to accommodate all the members.

(4) Nature of Membership

The counsellor needs to determine if the membership will be on voluntary or involuntary basis. Voluntary members have been found to be the best because they voluntarily avail themselves for counselling unlike those referred. Sometimes it may be that the counsellor wants to address a particular issue but can not do it on individual basis so he adopts the group method. The counsellor must orientate the members and prepare them to become part of the group. Also the counsellor should tell the group what they would gain by participating in the group.

(5) Nature of the Group

An open group is one characterized by changing membership while a closed group adds no new members during the lifetime of the group. Sometimes, closed groups have advantages that are distinct, because trust, openness can be developed and work accomplished. If members are allowed to drop from the group and new ones join at random, it may be difficult to determine the success of the therapy used on the group.

PRE-GROUP SESSION

It is absolutely necessary for the counsellor or leader to conduct a pre-group session. This could be an extension of the screening process. Also important information is given to members to get to know one another, and help them decide whether they will participate in the session.

GROUP DYNAMIC PROCESS

This process starts with giving the members certain rules that will guide their participation in the group. It could be verbal or written. Each member has to be committed to this guide as it serves as the guiding rule.

- ◆ Members are to avoid any drug during or before the meeting.
- ◆ Members are expected to be punctual and regular to meeting.
- ◆ Members should not engage in any illicit sexual relationship with the opposite sex in the group.
- ◆ Members must avoid smoking during session.
- ◆ Confidentiality must be maintained by all members.
- ◆ Physical violence must be guided and verbal abusive languages should be avoided.
- ◆ Members are given list of their rights and responsibilities and what is expected of them before they join the group.
- ◆ Children and adolescents must produce written consents from their parents and guardians.
- ◆ Before anyone drops out of the group, he should notify the leader and discuss in the group before leaving.

The next step in group process dynamics are the stages involved in the process. Four stages are identified here.

The initial stages: The central process involved in this stage involves orientation and exploration. Members get to know each other by age, name, class, family background, also learn how the group functions. They also discuss fears and hopes pertaining to the group identified personal goals and determine the safety of the group. They also choose amongst themselves the group-monitor. Each of the members assesses himself or herself and ask pertinent questions.

The transition stage: This is the second stage in the group process and is characterized by expression of feelings regarding interaction in the group, as well as individual personal group. Since the group comprises of people from different family background, culture, religion, socio-economic status of parent, age, each member may be skeptical or hesitant to open up. As time goes on and as they realise that sessions are held to help them out, they open up and free themselves from unnecessary anxiety and fear.

The working stage: The working stage is characterized by commitment of members to explore significant problems they have brought to the session. Group cohesion is used during this stage, members become transparent with one another, this is shown by the level of co-operation shown by members in the group. Also each show some degree of initiative

behaviour and are punctual to meetings, attendance rate is high, trust for one another shown, they support and encourage one another after listening to the experiences of each other. Cohesion is ascertained after negative feelings expressed by members have been dealt with. This ensures trustworthiness.

The final stage: The final stage is characterized by successful accomplishment of the difficult process of consolidation and termination. This is when the purpose of initiating the group is achieved, if the sessions had been handled adequately, the members may have a feeling of sadness that they are parting with friends and the leader. They may also wonder if they will be able to put into practice what they have learned without the help of group members and leader. The leader may suggest having a follow-up session to encourage members put into practice what they have learned or the need to change. The final stage is very important because it gives the members the opportunity to clarify their experiences, consolidate the gains they have made and revisit their decisions about the newly acquired behaviour they want to implement in their everyday life.

The counsellor can use these follow-up devices to check his members.

- (1) Follow-up interviews, the leader may try and arrange interview with each member a few weeks or months after the termination of the group.
- (2) Members can contact one another periodically after termination to give support.
- (3) The counsellor can organize a follow-up group session for the entire members after termination.

SUMMARY

- This unit has discussed extensively the process involved in group dynamic process. The purpose and goals of forming counselling group were discussed. Also steps to take in the formation of groups were highlighted. The stages involved in group process were discussed beginning with the initial stage, transition, working, final and termination stages. The unit is written with the aim of teaching students how to form groups for counselling sessions.

ACTIVITY

1. In your own words explain group process.
2. What is the dynamics involved in forming a group for counselling?
3. Mention five purposes for forming a group.
4. Assume that you want to organize a group in the school system to handle the problem of bullying, discuss some of the things you will consider when setting up such a group.

REFERENCES

- Fajonyomi, M.G. (1977): **Effectiveness of three modes of Treatment on anxiety and performance in English language among co-educational secondary school students in Maiduguri Borno State.** Published Ph.D. thesis, Maiduguri printing press.
- UNESCO (2000): **Counselling Regional Training Seminar on (guidance and counselling) Module 2, counselling** Zambia February 2002

UNIT 4: RECORD AND RECORD KEEPING**INTRODUCTION**

The essence of record keeping cannot be overemphasized. Without proper record keeping there will be no history of events and this would have kept people in darkness. Record keeping in counselling is such an important aspect of the entire guidance programme in the school, that without it, the counsellor, students, parents, and school authority might not be able to appraise the programme effectively.

Let us examine this example, suppose a client visits the counsellor and tells him his problem. In the course of finding solution to the problem, the client had six sessions and at each session, the client had to remind the counsellor about their previous deliberations. The client will definitely not be happy and the counsellor would have portrayed himself before the eyes of the client as a lazy, very forgetful and incompetent counsellor. But if he had been jotting down their deliberations during each session he will be able to recall and help the client. This underscores the essence of record keeping.

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:-

- (1) explain what record keeping is.
- (2) list five purposes of record keeping.

HOW TO STUDY THIS UNIT

1. Read the introduction of this unit.
2. Take note of the new words you may come across.
3. Check the meaning of the words using your dictionary.
4. Attempt all activities in this unit.

RECORDS

A record is any information about an event, or series of events that is either written, stored in a file or computer so that it can be used when the need arises.

RECORD KEEPING

Record keeping on the other hand means a deliberate process of keeping information either written or oral stored in a computer in an orderly manner so that inferences can be made at any given time.

In guidance and counselling records and record keeping are very important and necessary that without it, the counsellor might not be able to function adequately. The counsellor needs to keep every important information gotten from the client, this will make the counselling relationship meaningful and important.

Whenever a client comes to the counsellor's office, there is need to document every transaction between the counsellor and the client, this can begin by opening a file for every client that sees the counsellor.

PURPOSES FOR RECORD KEEPING

The purpose of doing a thing lies in reason for doing something that is the motive. Anything worth doing without a purpose or motive is not worth doing, so some of the reasons for keeping record by the counsellor are discussed below.

- (1) Good record keeping enables the counsellor to know each of his clients personally by name.
- (2) It also enables the counsellor to appreciate and understand each client's problem and the need to find solution to such problems.
- (3) It enables the counsellor to appraise the guidance programme in school and determine its weaknesses and strengths and know where to put more effort.
- (4) Good record keeping can assist the counsellor to explain the problem of the client to significant others like parents, teachers and specialists.
- (5) The counsellor can use his record about a client for referral purpose. In some cases he may need to handover some aspects of the entire record of the client to the specialist he is referring the client to.
- (6) The counsellor can use the records about the client to encourage him/her about the progress made about his problem.

TYPES OF INFORMATION KEPT AS RECORDS

1. Name of client
2. Class, Age, Sex or Gender.
3. Parent's address.
4. Parent's educational background.
5. Position in the family.
6. Reports from teachers (report cards).
7. Career aspiration.
8. Counselling session reports.

INFORMATION STORING

The following means can be used to store information about the client.

1. Personal file jackets
2. Tape recorders/cassettes
3. Video cassettes
4. Computer

EVALUATION IN GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING

Evaluation in counselling as in other educational sectors means taking stock of what happened in relation to the set objectives of establishing the guidance programme. The counsellor has a lot to do to make sure that the programme succeeds in the school. He may not know this until an evaluation of the entire programme is carried out. There are many reasons why evaluation of the programme should be carried out, some of these reasons are discussed below.

One of the most important reasons for carrying out an evaluation exercise is to improve on what has been established. There is the need to evaluate what is on ground to ascertain its weaknesses and strengths. There must be room for improvement of guidance programme.

A good evaluation exercise will give every school personnel an opportunity to appraise how well things are moving and what need to be improved. The principal should be able to say whether the funds and support provided for the programme are adequate to make the programme succeed. The teacher will be in the position to tell whether his relationship with students is cordial and the counsellor may be able to say if the programme is actually meeting the needs of the students.

The other people, the community, who are stakeholders, need to know how the programme is faring in terms of meeting the needs of their wards and also check if the fund provided to the school is properly utilized.

Evaluation can be carried out to ensure accountability especially on the part of the counsellor to his clients, parents and school authority.

ACTIVITY

1. State three reasons why counselling activities should be evaluated.
2. Why should a counsellor keep records. List 5 types of information to be kept as records.

SUMMARY

- In this unit, you have learnt about record and record keeping and why it is essential to keep record especially in guidance and counselling. Also, the purposes for keeping records and means of keeping record were discussed. Also evaluation was discussed, and reasons for carrying out evaluation exercise were identified.

REFERENCES

Makinde, O. (1983): **Fundamentals of Guidance and Counselling**. Ibadan: Macmillan Publishers. Read chapter 16 on records.