

PREFACE

Without a practicum component, the experience of a trainee Guidance Counsellor will just be a mere theoretical mirage.

It is against this background that this booklet was designed to acquaint users with the practical application of the knowledge they have derived from their course books and tutorials.

Through practicum, the student-counsellor acquires skills necessary for in-depth mastery of the Guidance and Counselling experience/profession. This book in essence states clearly what the counselling practicum experience aims to achieve, the expectations of the student-counsellor and others involved during the practicum, the preparations for practicum and the techniques required for counselling sessions.

Above all, the guide on practicum presents a picture of a typical counselling encounter that will help student-counsellor learn some of the practical skills needed in counselling.

It is hoped that student-counsellors will find this book an indispensable companion in their pursuit of Advanced Diploma in Guidance and Counselling.

UNIT 1 INTRODUCTION

Experience they say is the best teacher. In our everyday life, we need experiences or situations that will either toughen us or spur us into action. Infact, each day we live is an opportunity to learn and also to put what has been learnt into use.

Imagine a situation whereby one keeps on learning and does not put what is learnt into practice. The tendency to forget and not to retain anything is very high. If some skills are acquired and are not used, then, the time spent for the acquisition has been wasted. For example, if a person finishes acquiring skills in auto mechanic and he did not immediately look fro a place to start off, he stands the risk of stagnating what he has used several years to acquire. The same goes with Guidance and Counselling skills. This is why the practicum programme is regarded as the most important aspect of the process of training Guidance Counsellors. The practicum experience is not different from what doctors, nurses, student teachers, pharmacists etc are usually exposed to during their course of study.

For Counsellors in training, the practicum programme is designed to assist them acquire certain skills and behaviours which display the Counsellors' mastery of techniques and knowledge. In fact, when skills are properly used, it builds the confidence of clients and this consequently develops into a relationship between the two.

In this unit and subsequent units, you will therefore gain a lot of in-depth knowledge vis, practicum in Guidance and Counselling, skills/techniques required for interview and typical counselling encounter.

OBJECTIVES

At the end of these units, you should be able to:

- 1) explain counselling practicum;
- 2) state the objectives of counselling practicum;
- 3) explain the 3 major levels of practicum;
- 4) identify the various expectations of all concerned during counselling practicum;
- 5) list the qualities of a practicum supervisor;
- 6) identify the constraints of effective supervision and the levels of evaluation in counselling practicum;
- 7) describe interviewing techniques required for counselling; and
- 8) review typical counselling encounter.

WHAT IS COUNSELLING PRACTICUM?

Counselling practicum is usually regarded as a learning experience with growth potential where the student learns about his strengths and weaknesses in his counselling skills (Gesinde, 1991).

This period also helps the student-counsellor to correct himself when mistakes are made before his practice as a professional.

The practicum supervisor expects the student-counsellor to have some potentials such as:

- a) gaining counselling experience by striving to develop the necessary skills or traits required of a professional counsellor.
- b) ability to develop, test or practicalise the counselling skills acquired during training by exploring and understanding the experience of the client from a theoretical background, reviewing alternative lines of action with the client, making use of the background information collected while developing skills and making use of his overall training to the effective counselling of the client or when he makes use of information resulting from his explorations in the diagnosis of adjustment problems.
- c) Knowledge of counselling techniques whereby one can use different counselling techniques/theories for different problems. In this case, some can be exclusively psycho-analytic, client-centred or rationale-emotive in approach while some allow the nature of the problem to dictate the counselling theory or approach to be used.

OBJECTIVES OF COUNSELLING PRACTICUM

Standard Counsellor education programmes in all the world have at least 2 basic objectives. These are:

- (i) to initiate students to the theoretical foundations and principles of effective counselling practice; and
- (ii) to give students some practical opportunities for putting into supervised practice the principles and theoretical constructs they have been led to gather in the course of their training.

Gesinde (1991) also postulated eight objectives of practicum. These are explained as follows:

1. Opportunity to Synthesize Ideas from Various Courses

The practicum period makes it possible for trainees to see the inter-relationship among courses because ideas from various courses definitely need to be synthesized in order to make a meaningful use of them. Since the didactic instructions in various courses are handled by several instructors, the practicum period therefore makes it possible for trainees to integrate or synthesize all the fragmented academic courses that they have been exposed to since they entered the counselling programme.

2. Collection and Utilization of Educational, Vocational and Socio-Personal Information

Since information service is a major aspect of the counsellor's work, the counsellor trainee should make sure that each trainee acquires the expected competence in collecting, disseminating, identifying and classifying all kinds of information and also utilizing to the maximum advantage the bulleting board, reading corner or any other avenues for the display of such information.

3. Ability to Select, Administer, Analyse and Interpret Relevant Tests

This aims at developing in the trainees ability to choose and use appropriate tests for the appraisal of an individual or a group of clients in educational, vocational and social/personal problems. By so doing, it is expected that the trainee masters the act of feeding into the on-going counselling sessions the results of any tests used.

4. Development of Skill in Handling Group Activities

The practicum programme should stress the acquisition of skills in handling group activities which can be related to the orientation service, information service or the creation of necessary awareness for the need of guidance services within a particular setting.

5. Development of Utilisation of Initiative and Resourcefulness

Since many issues trainees will be exposed to during practicum might not be found in or learnt from textbooks, it therefore becomes necessary that the practicum training programme should try to assist the trainees in acquiring and putting into full use a tremendous amount of initiative and resourcefulness.

6. Acquiring Administrative Skills

Without administrative competence, the entire guidance programme is doomed. Guidance counsellors should know how to keep records/information and diary of events about clients, summary of counselling sessions, write recommendations for placement, referral notes etc. All these skills must be mastered before becoming a full-fledged counsellor and the practicum period must provide the opportunity for acquiring such administrative expertise.

7. Acquiring Counselling Skills

Counselling is the heart of guidance, hence, the practicum period is expected to sharpen the trainees' ability and skill on how to receive clients warmly, kindly, cheerfully and also maintain a rapport/motivation throughout the duration of counselling. Some of the other skills expected to be perfected during practicum are the ability to effectively without ambiguity and mannerisms, identify clients' real problem and rearrange the problems in order of priority, elicit, clarify, probe and interpret both content and feelings, notice and utilize non-verbal cues during interaction with clients, bring significant persons who can contribute to the resolution of the clients' problems and the ability to evaluate objectively the counselling outcomes.

8. Increased Self Understanding

The practicum period is supposed to have a good effect on the trainee counsellor. It is a period for increased self-understanding, understanding of one's own strengths and weaknesses, period of insight into one's values and attitudes which may promote or mar counselling relationships and outcomes and a period of realizing one's limitations in handling certain delicate problems.

To achieve all these objectives therefore, counselling students are usually exposed to two major aspects of the counsellor preparation programme. These are the **didactic** and **practicum** aspects.

DIDACTIC ASPECT

The didactic aspect of the programme usually comes first before the practicum. This is so, in order to make sure that before students are given the opportunity to go out for their field experience in counselling, they would first of all, have been given the opportunity to gather

the basic principles and theoretical constructs for organizing and administering such counselling practicum experiences when they eventually go out.

PRACTICUM ASPECT

Counselling practicum component of the programme has 2 basic aspects. These are the classroom or the lecture based experience and the counselling practicum proper or the field-based experience.

The lecture-based experience involves the content of exposure to theoretical content of the subject-matter to prepare them for the field-based experience.

Counselling practicum is that section of the counsellor education programme by means of which some efforts are made to orient the would-be practicum students on what is expected of them in their counselling practicum experience and the role of the supervised practicum experience in the economy of their professional education as counsellors.

Thus, in content, the practicum course is not meant to get the counsellor-trainers informed of the mechanics of the Counselling practicum process but designed to teach them those necessary counselling and interview skills which they need to possess to be able to go through the experience with success and growth.

COUNSELLING PRACTICUM REQUIREMENT

The first and most important of all is the issue of setting. Though setting for practicum could be anywhere, for example, schools, the prisons and the industrial environments. However, the school remains the most commonly and most important of all being considered for counselling programme at present. In Nigeria, other settings which can be considered for the exercise include hospitals, remand homes, welfare agencies, the child guidance clinics and the missions, which are commonly used even in the developed world overtime.

Suffice it to say that practicum students have the option to decide on which of these settings to choose from for the purposes of practicum, they must however remember that the most recommendable setting in this case is that environment where his counselling skills will not only be put to more effective use, but also where some positive promise exists for his being fully received and cooperated with by the relevant host officials. It is therefore advisable that every practicum student should see it as a responsibility to choose and secure an appropriate setting for himself or herself.

LEVELS OF PRACTICUM

There are three major levels of practicum and these are explained below:

Pre-practicum preparation

During this period, trainees are expected to start developing and mastering the acquired skills and abilities during training. They are also exposed to cases which have been treated by other counsellors as well as make-belief cases so as to help them understand the multi-dimensional nature of clients' problems. This period also helps trainees to learn how to select, administer, score and interpret various available local tests which may be applicable to the needs of individual clients. Above all, trainees are given opportunity to see their trainers handling specific problems during counselling sessions and at the end, they will react or criticize the approach of the counsellor as well as suggest solutions.

Real Practicum Period or Field work

After the mastery of most counselling aspects, the trainee is then allocated to a school system, social welfare, an industry, a counselling centre or a child clinic in order to practice the techniques and skills gained during pre-practicum preparation.

Internship Level

This is the last stage of training counsellors and it is not different from the housemanship for medical doctors.

During this period, interns are supposed to be posted to agencies or institutional settings so as to acquire familiarity with the peculiar problems of that setting. Unfortunately, the Nigerian socio-economic system had not made it possible to send interns on permanent basis for a period of time in which they would be paid some allowances. Even if the services they will render at that period is free, some school system still refuse to accommodate interns. It is hoped that as the level of awareness and enlightenment about guidance and counselling gains more ground, internship will become possible and acceptable.

ACTIVITY 1

1. Define counselling Practicum.
2. State the objectives of practicum and how to achieve them.
3. Explain the three major levels of practicum.

PREPARATION FOR PRACTICUM

When preparing for practicum, there are some essential requirements the practicum coordinator usually stipulates for the exercise. Gesinde (1991) postulated that the requirements for assessment and what the supervisor expects from the student-counsellor during practicum will serve as a guide to the materials he is to get ready and the mental preparation for the exercise in terms of frame of reference and psychological disposition.

STUDENT EXPECTATIONS IN THE PRACTICUM EXPERIENCE

Hector (1983) summarized that “once on the practicum, the student counsellor is expected to do more than just one-to-one counselling”. The student-counsellor therefore needs to provide some materials which will be useful to him/her during the practicum exercise and in his/her overall assessment by the practicum supervisor.

The following are therefore what the students need to prepare for the practicum:

a) Involvement in all Guidance Activities.

Ideally the practicum student is expected to be involved in all the known guidance activities which traditionally include appraisal service, occupational service, educational service, counselling service, placement and follow-up service. The student is expected to try his hand in each of these activities so as to allow him the opportunity to assess his level of understanding in these activities.

b) Collection of Information Materials.

There is need for the student-counsellor to collect relevant and appropriate educational, occupational and personal – social information that may be useful for his clients.

“Guidance Posters” can be designed or information materials from newspapers and magazines can be cut and displayed on bulletin boards when evidence of information becomes necessary to students.

c) Tape Recording of Counselling Exercises

When rendering counselling service at this period, the student-counsellor can record some of his counselling exercises in audio-tape. It is assumed that by means of such recordings, the practicum student supervisor could be better enabled to make an objective evaluation of the performance of the student in question in the counselling practicum exercise. Note that it is the responsibility of the practicum student to provide both the cassettes and the tape recorder for all the recordings.

d) Choice of Counselling Theories

The student-counsellor is expected to make appropriate choice of counselling theories and relevant techniques. This, he is expected to do in order to show commitment for helping his clients to use a pertinent counselling theory in pursuance of his case, to apply relevant counselling techniques in the exercise to make referrals where appropriate, to behave in accordance with the demands of professional counselling ethics and to exhibit some positive professional and personal qualities in the encounter (Hector 1983).

e) Interviewing Skills

The fifth and related expectation of the practicum student is the ability to use basic interviewing skills that may often cut across all theories of counselling and psychotherapy. Such skills include:

- i) The ability to begin, to carry through and to end a counselling interview;
- ii) The ability to use the technique of restatement of the problem, reflection of feeling and the technique of summarization in the course of a counselling encounter.

This point is emphasized to avoid plunging oneself into inability to use these vital interviewing skills in the service of a case.

f) Referrals

The student-counsellor is expected to recognize and identify cases that require referrals. Whenever he comes across a case he seems unqualified, or unable to handle alone, for example, problems bothering on legal, medical and psychiatric complications, he needs to invite the most relevant and qualified expert to bring in his/her skills to help.

Nobody should claim “all-knowing” in attending to problems involving human beings.

g) Familiarity with Counselling Ethics

The student-counsellor is expected to remember that there are a number of “do’s” and “don’ts” in counselling encounters. These relate to the issue of ethical standards, which he/she must be familiar with before going out for the practicum.

It is pertinent to mention here that these ethical standards have been modified in recent times for continuous relevance.

The American Personnel and Counselling Association had since 1974 modified these guidelines while Counselling Association of Nigeria also modified same to suit Nigerian situation.

h) Completion of Counselling Interview Form

It is wise that the student-counsellor completes a counselling interview form for each client along with the tapes submitted. This is necessary because the form will supplement the information on the tape, provide the supervisor a summary of the interview and also help the supervisor to have an insight into the client’s problems or the approach that was used.

i) Provision of File Jacket

At the beginning of the exercise, the student-counsellor should provide his or her supervisor with a file jacket where tapes, weekly assessment reports or any other information relevant to the student’s appraisal could be kept.

The following information are to be kept in the file jacket:

- i) Name of student counsellor;
- ii) Identification number (for example, Part II or M.Ed or Adv. Diploma etc.);
- iii) Practicum site; and
- iv) Date and year of Practicum (optional).

j) Submission of Practicum Time-table

A practicum timetable, indicating the available time slated for counselling should be submitted by the student-counsellor to his or her supervisor.

The student-counsellor is therefore expected to visit his/her counselling site and discuss with the authorities issues relating to the appropriate time and the exact place that counselling sessions can be held before drawing the practicum timetable.

Finally, the practicum student is expected to exhibit a number of personal qualities that have been known to correlate highly with success in the exercise of counselling. Though some of the qualities are many and difficult to describe in practical terms, they include cooperativeness, creativity, enthusiasm, flexibility and responsiveness (Hector 1983).

COUNSELLING PRACTICUM SUPERVISION EXPECTATION

The exercise is ideally a supervised experience, where supervision is involved.

- (a) The practicum student is required to hold meetings with his supervisor, when the student is usually required to be punctual, regular, natural and open-minded on issues that affect the no-going exercise. Similarly, the student plays his/her recorded tape(s) for the attention of his supervisor, where relevant counselling theories and techniques are identified in the course of playing them.
- (b) Indeed, a vital requirement in the course of this meeting is for the practicum student to listen and to react with the largest open-mind to the feed-backs of the supervisor. It is here that the supervisor makes vital suggestions on how improvements can be pursued.

PRACTICUM SUPERVISOR EXPECTATIONS

Practicum experience makes demands not only on the practicum students, but also on the practicum student, and on the supervisors. Among such are the following:

- a) **Providing a suitable atmosphere for the counselling supervision.** The supervisor provides a suitable setting for supervision to hold, which is usually the supervisor's office. The atmosphere must usually be friendly and informal for the encounter.
- b) **Group encouragement and moral support to students** who present themselves for supervision.
- c) **Possessing the ability to be open to the practicum students' observation or suggestions.** The supervisors should be open, honest and empathetic when dealing with their student counsellors.
- d) **Listening to the tapes and providing meaningful reactions to students under his care.** This, he should do after listening to their tapes and reacts in accordance with the goals of counselling and the problem attended to.
- e) **Paying occasional visits to the practicum sites.** This is because, it is expected that out of the office-based supervision meetings, the supervisor's visit will amongst others:
 - i. Foster good relationship between the counselling trainees and the supervisor.
 - ii. Allow supervisor gain first hand impression of the nature of the reception given to the practicum student by the host institution.
 - iii. Allow the supervisor understanding of the problems faced by the practicum student.

STUDENT COUNSELLOR AND DURATION FOR PRACTICUM

The student-counsellor is one who has been able to cover the course in counselling theories and techniques, psychological testing, principles and practice of counselling (individual and group), basic counselling and interviewing skills and ethical standards of the profession.

This information serves to explain why it is now almost the rule that before one can be allowed to go out for practicum experience, he/she must have been able to cover the didactic aspect of the counsellor preparation programme. This explains why practicum takes the last stage after theoretical aspects have been covered.

The duration for practicum depends on the type of programme that is being run. Nevertheless, it is regular to find some programme designers devoting a six week duration for

the counselling practicum experience of B.Ed programmes (where Advanced Diploma fits into). Whereas a semester and one year duration is recommended for M.Ed and Ph.D. programmes respectively.

ACTIVITY II

1. “The student-counsellor needs to prepare and provide some materials for the practicum exercise”. Discuss.
2. Enumerate the practicum supervisor expectations.

QUALITIES OF A GOOD PRACTICUM SUPERVISOR

From the discussions, one can see that it really requires a number of both personal and professional qualities for one to be able to effectively contend with the work of a practicum supervisor. Many authorities have agreed that the following are among the crucial, personal and professional qualities needed in any person interested in participating in counselling practicum supervision. Such qualities include:

1. Possession of **adequate knowledge** of the meaning and intent of the counselling practicum;
2. Possession of **adequate exposure to the variety of techniques, theories and skills** that may be used in organizing counselling practicum;
3. Having a **likeable character**;
4. Having a **firm respect for uniqueness** of persons, open-mindedness and flexible to reception of new ideas;
5. Possession of some **solid experience in the art of organizing counselling relationships** with real clients and having the opportunities for using different theories and techniques of counselling available in the related professional literature;
6. Possession of **above average intelligence**;
7. Possession of **advanced degree(s)** in such disciplines on counselling psychology, social work or sociology;
8. Possession of the **ability to attack novel problems** that may be encountered by his students in the course of their practicum;
9. Possession of the **ability to inspire confidence in others**;
10. Being **self-confident**;
11. Ability to **communicate fluently and a good power of interpretation of situations**;
12. Fairness in judgements, that is, the **ability to maintain objectivity of perception on evaluating and rating** of practicum students;
13. Being an **effective model in dressing and neatness**;
14. Being **able to control his emotions and control that of his members**;
15. **Non-possession of perfectionistic attitude** in reacting to the performance of the students in the course of the practicum;

16. **Ability to relate to fellow authorities** such as we encounter in the settings where practicum takes place; and
17. Possession of **eclectic frame of mind** as regards use of theories of counselling and careers development.

FACTORS MILITATING AGAINST EFFECTIVE SUPERVISION OF COUNSELLING PRACTICUM

It is important to understand strings or factors that constrain effective supervision of counselling practicum in any programme. These include the following:

- i) Scarcity of qualified supervisors to take part;
- ii) Availability of large number of students to be served;
- iii) Problem of long distances to be covered in supervising students;
- iv) Scarcity of funds to be used by the supervisors;
- v) Problem of students' ignorance about practicum supervision; and
- vi) Inability to satisfy adequately the needs of individual students in the practicum exercise.

LEVELS OF EVALUTION IN COUNSELLING PRACTICUM

There are 3 levels in evaluating students' performances in counselling practicum. These are:

1. ***Field Observation***

This level involves the use of the following persons as judges:

- a) Supervisor-in-charge;
- b) The in-school counsellor supervisor;
- c) The principal or head of institution where practicum is taking place; and
- d) The client himself/herself.

Though these four persons are used as judges, it is the final report of the supervisor-in-charge that is used for rating and grading.

2. ***Transcripts of Cases for Evaluation***

This is the transcription of cases recorded during the counselling interviews with the various clients.

3. ***The Case Study Report Evaluation***

The supervisor in-charge is the sole judge for the evaluation of the case study report usually submitted along with the final practicum report.

SUMMARY

- Counselling Practicum is a learning experience with growth potential where the student learns about his strengths and weaknesses in his counselling skills.

- Standard Counsellor education programme in all the world have at least two basic objectives: These are initiating students to the theoretical foundations and principles of effective counselling practice and giving students practical opportunities to practice what they have been led to gather in the course of their training.
- Setting is the most important issue for practicum and it could be anywhere (for example, schools, prisons, hospitals, remand homes, child guidance clinics, etc). Practicum student therefore have the option to choose an appropriate setting for himself/herself.
- The three major levels of practicum are pre-practicum preparation, real practicum period or field work and Internship level.
- Some of the materials the student counsellor is expected to prepare and provide for the practicum are collection of information materials, involvement in guidance activities, tape recorders/cassettes, familiarity with counselling ethics and theories, referrals, file jackets, counselling interview forms and practicum timetable.
- Counselling Practicum supervisors are expected to provide a suitable atmosphere for the counselling supervision, possess the ability to be open to practicum reactions to students and give encouragement/moral support to students who present themselves for supervision amongst others. They are also expected to possess adequate knowledge of the meaning of counselling practicum, be self-confident, fair in judgement, able to control their emotions and being an effective role model to mention a few.
- The duration for practicum experience of B.Ed and Advanced Diploma is six weeks while a Semester and one year duration is for M.Ed and Ph.D programmes respectively.
- Some of the strings that constrain effective supervision are scarcity of qualified supervisors, availability of large number of students to be served, scarcity of funds, students' ignorance of practicum supervision, etc.
- The three levels of evaluating students' performances in counselling practicum are field observation, transcripts of cases for evaluation and case study report evaluation.

ASSIGNMENT

1. "The Practicum supervisor requires both personal and professional qualities to supervise effectively." Discuss.
2. List the factors hindering effective supervision of counselling practicum.
3. Briefly explain the 3 levels of evaluation in counselling practicum.

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UNIT 2 COUNSELLING AND INTERVIEWING TECHNIQUES

INTRODUCTION

Guided by the fact that students are greatly frightened when they are informed about going out for counselling practicum, authorities in counsellor education programmes have long taken the encouraging resolution that before students are sent out for their counselling practicum experience, adequate effort would have been made to give them some opportunity to get effectively groomed on what their roles ought to be in such counselling encounters. For instance, making them to understand how a counselling interview can be started and the basic elements that make for an effective counselling relationship. However, the following critical issues relating to professional counselling interview situations must be understood before proceeding on counselling practicum exercise:

1. What they aim to achieve and how they try to achieve it;
2. Procedures to follow in getting the first interview started;
3. Skills to use in getting the relationship advanced;
4. Requisite attitudinal qualities for counsellors who intend to establish and advance an effective counselling relationship;
5. Requisite cognitive/attitudinal qualities for clients who want to enjoy a rewarding therapeutic experience;
6. Summary of effective counselling techniques in use by counsellors all over the world; and
7. Skills to employ to terminate counselling interview.

WHAT COUNSELLORS AIM TO ACHIEVE IN COUNSELLING INTERVIEW SITUATION

The practitioner of counselling must be aware of what counselling is all about and what it purports to achieve. Counselling, as a psychological human service according to Tyler (1965) is aimed at achieving the following:

- (a) Facilitating wise choices and decisions on clients;
- (b) Helping clients to solve their emotional difficulties or psychological problems such as shyness, delinquency, emotional disturbance, or persons who are at the breaking point of their lives.

COUNSELLING OUTCOMES EMERGING FROM THE TWO AIMS

The counselling outcomes that can emerge from these two aims include the following:

- (i) Power of psychological independence, that is, the freedom to be oneself or to do what one wishes when there are no realistic restrictions.
 - It involves the ability to take responsibility for one's actions or the ability to tolerate the opposite of what is highly important to oneself.

- (ii) Self acceptance and accepting other people.
 - It inculcates self adequacy and self-approval despite his weaknesses and disapproval by others.
 - It also involves applying the above philosophy to other people and not requiring them to be perfect.
- (iii) Presence of increase in enlightened self-interest, that is, the power to feel oneself first, but not in an over-focused way or in such a way as to be termed socially irresponsible.
- (iv) Power of reality acceptance, that is, live a simple life devoid of perfection, self-discipline and learning to postpone present pleasure in the service of some longer-range values.
- (v) Decrease in self-defeating emotions, feelings and habit pattern. This is a crucial counselling outcome since anger, fear, anxiety, low frustration, tolerance, depression among others can be shown to be at least potentially self-defeating.
- (vi) Ability to fully experiencing oneself and the world. This involves access to more knowledge and awareness of oneself and other people.
- (vii) Increase in problem-solving and decision-making abilities, each of which is a crucial aspect of human functioning that can be taught and are directly or indirect outcomes of counselling.
- (viii) Learning new concepts and principles. This is crucial because, one of the major objectives of counselling is to help clients learn new and useful life concepts, ideas and principles which will guarantee them more effective living.
- (ix) Development of emotional catharsis. This is very essential in counselling, because, when clients are unduly upset, the desire of the counsellor is to help them reduce their tension and even acquire perspectives and new learning from “talking out” their disturbed feelings with the counsellor in the course of interaction. Such interaction is represented by the term “emotional catharsis.”

GETTING THE FIRST COUNSELLING INTERVIEW STARTED

In the beginning, the counsellor is assumed to have been cognitively ready to get engaged in counselling, but the strangulating issue is often how to get a counselling interview started.

The following points can therefore be considered:

- a) Make client relaxed by extending greetings and physical comfort (by offering client a seat).
- b) Counsellor raises client’s confidence regarding his (counsellor’s) ability to offer professional help by minding the mode and the way the client speaks and acts.
- c) If the client is adequately and physically settled, make a general remark or a humorous comment to start.
- d) Tune to general questions that are meant to set the conversational part of the interview rolling. For example:
 - Avoid remarks which will fuel negative feelings concerning the counsellor or counselling relationship.

- Avoid comparing abilities of clients or making jest of the clients' problem rather than offering emotional relief, though it must not always be pleasant for the clients.

Tyler (1969) emphasized this point by saying,

“If a client comes in obviously disturbed about something, to start with a calm reassuring conversation is neither possible nor desirable (p.51).”

- Ask simple question like;
“What is it that you would like to talk to me about?” This may be the only thin that is needed after the person has been seated and made to feel physically comfortable.
 - If there is any situation that slights the client, the skillful counsellor can make use of what has happened to manipulate it in such a way that the relationship can get on again.
- e) Where the client does not open up his case objectively and precisely, the counsellor gets in immediately to structure the experience for him. This displays the level of the counsellor's skillfulness.
- When this is done, Tyler (1969) suggests that it is good to set the structure for the client so as to get him (client) started in the right direction and focus and to let him, if necessary, reshuffle his wrong notions about what is to be expected in counselling.

By so doing, it means among other things that:

- (i) The client is oriented about what counselling is all about;
- (ii) He identifies what his roles are as regards seeing his present problem through;
- (iii) Client sees his level of confidentiality to attach to what is discussed;
- (iv) The client sees the type of help the counsellor can give;
- (v) The counsellor makes the client know that solution is not feasible until certain details about him are known. Such details include his background, life plan, his likes and dislikes and people that have been or are still important to him in life among other things.

SKILLS REQUIRED TO GET THE RELATIONSHIP ADVANCED

Now that the spadework for the relationship had been done, the next step is to sustain what had begun. Here, the counsellor requires some skills to give this relationship a forward movement.

Some of these skills include:

- a) Ability to reflect what the client is saying or trying to express;
- b) Effective communication of understanding of the problem, being expressed by the client;

- c) Possession of some listening skills, that is, focusing, following the ideas expressed, making effective inquiry, reflection of client's feelings and reflecting the content of the thing being expressed. These are explained as follows:
- **Focusing.** In counselling, this involves (a) maintenance of eye contact with client without gazing or staring at him and (b) concentrating attention on what the client is saying.
 - **Following the ideas expressed.** This involves keeping track with what is being expressed by the client.
 - It involves the art of using comments that reflect the need of the counselling exercise at the time.
 - Use of a nod, a smile, recognition of non-verbal cues/behaviours, effective glances and counsellor's body language can be important ingredients during counselling interview. Such non-verbal skills usually do have the effect of letting the client be at ease to freely open up during interaction/counselling sessions.
 - Do not over-talk the client.
 - **Making Effective Inquiry.** This helps to get client fully attuned to the freedom to pursue the case being addressed.
 - It involves exploration of facts which should feature open-ended questions rather than closed ones.
 - **Reflection of Client's Feelings and Reflecting the Contents of the Thing being Expressed.** Here, the counsellor demonstrates to the client that he understands the problem or feelings he is trying to express and the joy with which he does it.
- d) Avoidance of the use of injurious language like, "emotionally stupid", "coward", "fool" etc which can thwart the smooth relationship;
- e) Ability to discern/note that prolonged silence on the part of a client signifies:
- Client is against the relationship.
 - There is a foreign party in the setting.
 - Client doubts the confidence of the counsellor to maintain secret being divulged.
 - Client wants the relationship terminated.

ACTIVITY 1

1. a. Enumerate the aims counselling hope to achieve.
b. What are the emerging outcomes from these aims?
2. As a Counsellor, how do you start the first counselling interview?
3. What are the requirements you need to give the counselling relationship a forward movement?

COUNSELLOR'S QUALITIES IN COUNSELLING INTERVIEW SITUATION

Practicum students must cultivate critical counsellor attitudinal qualities that encourage significant counselling effectiveness (Geis, 1975). Some of these qualities include:

1. Disposition for non-condemnation of the counsellee as a person, that is, recognize the worth of the client.
2. Non-possessive warmth. As emphasized by Traux and Carkuff (1967), it involves a certain openness and respect for the counsellee, with overtones of the counsellor's humanity and personalized caring.
3. Communicated competence, authoritative, confidence and wisdom.
4. Genuineness, humaneness, sincerity and openness. These are aspects of the counsellor's personality which Rogers (1951) has designated as self-courage.
5. Empathy and understanding which involves understanding and acceptance manifested in the motion: "I can really see the issue you are talking about", "Okay," etc.
6. Sensitivity to the feelings of others, involving acuteness to perceive what is taking place in the counselling process.
7. Objectivity. This is the ability to take a detached, neutral, non-personally involved stand on the counsellee's problem.
8. Flexibility.
9. High intelligence. This is considered crucial for the counsellor.
10. Observance of serious emotional disturbance.
11. Observance of communication that can be disruptive to personal values.
12. Personality style. This is usually manifested in counsellor's forcefulness and rigour versus importance and lack of emphasis in counsellor responsiveness. Other manifestations are in the emotional state, sense of humor and activity versus passivity in manner and speech.
13. Ability to receive information from clients and also transmit to them through verbal and non-verbal cues. (The non-verbal cues can make counselling sessions become very difficult if counsellors cannot recognize easily).

RECOGNITION OF NON-VERBAL CUES/BEHAVIOURS DURING COUNSELLING SESSIONS:

Recognition of non-verbal cues/behaviours is another very good quality the counsellor is expected to possess during counselling sessions because this helps to decode some difficult attitude the client can possess anytime.

Gesinde (1991) said that non-verbal cues can be referred to as body language or "kindness" (Gesinde). He went further to cite authors like Feldman who said that non-verbal behaviour can be used either as an emblem to signify some thing as an illustration to explain what has been said, or as an effort to show one's emotional disposition etc.

Non-verbal behaviours are classified into eight categories. These are summarized as:

- (a) **Physical Traits Or Characteristics.** These are facial features, body shape, body odours, etc which express how the client feels about any aspect or totality of his body.
- (b) **Vocal Characteristics:** These are the sounds made by human voice by mouth (loud or soft), tone pitch, speech rhythm utterances (like “uh-hun” “un”), yawning, hissing, moaning, silence. This usually expresses emotions and feelings such as being happy, sad, angry, nervous, disgusted etc.
- (c) **Body Motion:** This includes ways in which individual can vary the motions and position of his body, facial expressions, hand gestures, clenched or open hands, tightening of lips, folding of arms across the chest, etc. All these can indicate suppressed aggression, pride, good feeling about self, etc.
- (d) **Touch:** This means by touching of the body of another person, shaking hands, holding hands, massage a person, feeling the body of another person or oneself. By this, the extent of familiarity, closeness, openness or otherwise is being shown.
- (e) **Objects:** The way an individual surrounds himself, utilizes the physical objects in his environment or displays material things clearly portrays this aspect. For instance, the kind, colour and style of clothing materials (clean or rough), the kind of vehicles preferred for use, electronic gadgets, designs or posters in one’s room or office etc. These therefore express the person’s perception about himself-whether modern or traditional in outlook, liberal or conservative in values, careless or careful, a status seeker or a contended person, etc.
- (f) **Place:** This refers to one’s constant choice of sitting place or exhibiting an association with a particular place or club. For example, preference for sitting in the front or at the back, exhibition of car stickers to show association with club or institution, etc.
- (g) **Space Utilisation:** It is a reflection of how an individual utilizes his physical space which may include sitting at a distance or close to other people. This can mean readiness for association or not wanting to be close to anybody which is a form of defense mechanism.
- (h) **Time Utilisation:** This concerns the concept of an individual deal and the utilization of time such as attitude to lateness or punctuality which is related to one’s work or attitude to people generally.

ACTIVITY II

1. List ten qualities a counsellor must possess for effective counselling interview.
2.
 - a. Identify the non-verbal cues/behaviours that can be displayed by clients during counselling sessions.
 - b. Enumerate the interpretations of non-verbal cues in counselling.

WHEN AND HOW TO MAKE USE OF NON-VERBAL CUES IN COUNSELLING

Having said much about the categories of non-verbal behaviours for the purpose of thorough understanding, then we can outline the right time to capitalize on non-verbal cues in

counselling. This is still generally not agreed upon by practitioners; however, there are three approaches to this as postulated by Gesinde (1991). He said that:

- (a) Some practitioners feel it is better to pick up the cue as soon as it is omitted by the client or is elicited by the counsellor. Since this cue is fresh, it will help produce maximum effect which the counsellor can quickly follow it up with more probing questions and interpretation or confrontation.
- (b) A small interval can be allowed between the period the cue is given out and the reaction of the counsellor. This approach spares the client of the agony of a prolonged threatening situation or experience.
- (c) The counsellor can simply ignore the cue either immediately or thereafter hoping that the on-going intensive or in-depth interview will lead to the same result of having a clearer understanding of the client, his problem and his message. The only disadvantage of this approach is that the client may see the counsellor as an incompetent professional who cannot recognize or understand a cue that he finds difficult to put into words.

Generally, the counsellor is advised to judge the prevailing mood of the client and also consider the relevance and importance of the cues before using any of the three outlined approaches. This then will bring us to the issue of how to interpret non-verbal cues during counselling.

INTERPRETING NON-VERBAL CUES IN COUNSELLING

The following are some of the interpretations of non-verbal cues as cited by Gesinde (1991) from Feldman and Shertzer and Stone (1966):

- a) Erect head. (Self-esteem, confidence and courage);
- b) Bowed head. (Humility, resignation, guilt and submission);
- c) Touching the nose. (Anxiety or stage-fright);
- d) Artificial cough. (Criticism, doubt, surprise and anxiety)
- e) Pressing head with hands. (Distress, despair and helplessness)
- f) Placing head between the two palms. (Sadness, exhaustion, medication, etc).

CLIENT'S QUALITIES THAT ENCOURAGE REWARDING COUNSELLING INTERACTION.

Some of these qualities are highlighted below:

- Fluency in speech.
- Personal wish to accept change in life.
- Ability to engage in meaningful interaction with superiors.
- Being humble and assuring.
- Ability to seek alternatives for improvement in one's life.
- Ability to see connections on issues expressed.
- Ability to be punctual, steady and consistent in demanding for counselling assistance.

- Honesty with oneself in approaching things that matter to one's life.
- Emotionally moderate, open-mindedness and reliable in performing during counselling interview situations.
- Non-possession of the tendency to hide facts away from the counsellor.
- Free expression in counselling interview situation.

SUMMARY OF EFFECTIVE COUNSELLING TECHNIQUES USED BY COUNSELLORS ALL OVER THE WORLD

Practicum students may not use those techniques religiously, but a combination of a few or many of these in concert with other aspects of the counselling process will be useful in producing successful counselling relationships.

Some of the techniques are listed below:

- (i) Questioning or evoking the client to release facts
- (ii) Identifying, labeling, clarifying and reflecting feelings.
- (iii) Summarizing and reviewing important materials.
- (iv) Restating content, that is, putting what client has said using different words or phrases.
- (v) Establishing connections, accenting or underscoring, for example, "if you don't do well in Mathematics, you would not fit into Sciences, Medicine, Engineering" etc.
- (vi) Interpreting consequences of certain actions. For example, "if you continue doing this, you will..."
- (vii) Confrontation, that is, replying the client in order to make him restructure them cognitively. This is referred to as cognitive restructuring technique in counselling.
- (viii) Reassuring, encouraging, supporting. For example, if a client comes to inform you that he is finished – insist on reassuring, supporting and encouraging him that it is not so.
- (ix) Creative and maintenance of tension for example, "if you don't read, you will fail". This causes fear that in turns motivates client to work hard or move ahead.
- (x) Constricting and showing automotives of a student whose handwriting is bad. The student could be given alternative to undertake remedial writing lessons outside the normal class session.
- (xi) Information and advice – giving. If a client seeks help from you, you will provide him with relevant information and advice where he could seek relief.
- (xii) Use of ambiguity and inability to understand using ambiguity as a dimension for therapeutic change.
- (xiii) Using oneself and others as role models.
- (xiv) Using hypothetical situations
- (xv) Communicated focus on the counsellee's self-interest, that is, making the client know that counselling is for his own good. For example, if you do this, it is for your interest/good".

- (xvi) Use of clear, concise and meaningful communication, amplified in use of simple rather than complicated terminologies and phrases.
- (xvii) Emotional catharsis and sensitization allowing the client time to speak up his case, and feel relaxed without getting stressed up.
- (xviii) Psychological home work- a client who is shy might be given homework to practice boldness.
- (xix) Persuasion, exoneration, pressure and coercion – emphasized by the cognitive restructuring or intellectual reduction.
- (xx) Frustration technique – used to motivate clients to action and to prevent them from developing dependency personality.

SKILLS FOR BRING AN INTERVIEW TO A CLOSE

Most authorities assured of that for the ending to be effective, the following behaviour may at times be adopted by the counsellor:

- (a) Summarizing issues discussed and goals achieved.
- (b) Identifying what to do next.
- (c) Asking the wish of the client concerning the need for another appointment and further interaction.
- (d) Make the client personally commit himself/herself to the actual time and date for future appointment.
- (e) End relationship in a non-threatening and non-rushed manner, as well as in a warm, friendly and reassuring tone, as usually in bidding farewell to a very familiar friend.

SUMMARY

- Counselling as a psychological human service is aimed at achieving facilitating wise choices and decisions on clients. It also helps to solve client's emotional difficulties or psychological problems.
- Some of the counselling outcomes emerging from these two aims are the ability to take responsibility for one's actions, self acceptance/accepting other people and learning new concepts and principles.
- In getting the first counselling interview started, the counsellor must make client relaxed by greetings, make general remark or humourous comment to start with and ask simple questions amongst others.
- The counsellor requires some certain skills to sustain a counselling relationship, for example, ability to reflect what the client is trying to express and possession of some listening skills.
- Some qualities the counsellor must possess during counselling interview are genuineness, empathy, sensitivity to client's feelings, high intelligence, sincerity and openness, wisdom etc.
- Non-verbal behaviour can be used to signify something as an illustration to explain what has been said or as an effort to show one's emotional disposition. Non-verbal behaviours are classified into eight categories and have three approaches to the use.

They have interpretations and the counsellor is advised to judge the prevailing mood of the client and importance of the cues before using any of the three approaches.

- Some of the client's qualities that encourage rewarding counselling interaction are fluency in speech, humility, punctuality, steadiness, consistency, honesty, emotionally moderate etc.
- Some of the techniques used by counselors all over the world are questioning, identifying, clarifying, information and advice-giving, reassuring etc.
- The counsellor must possess some skills to bring an interview to a close, for example, summarizing issues discussed and goals achieved, identifying next action and ending a relationship in a non-threatening, friendly and reassuring note that bids farewell to a very familiar friend.

ASSIGNMENT

1. List some client's qualities that can make counselling interaction a rewarding experience.
2. Identify the various techniques used by counsellors all over the world during counselling relationships.
3. Enumerate the counselling skills the counsellor must possess to close an interview.

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UNIT 3 TYPICAL COUNSELLING ENCOUNTER

INTRODUCTION

Whenever we get knowledge and we do not try our best to process it for an effective use, we tend to make a mess of it.

In this unit, you will come across a typical counselling encounter and the strategies/techniques/skills that can be used on the client who comes for counselling. Do you believe that during counselling, a relationship between the counsellor and the client must develop so as to bring desirable changes in the client's behaviour? Certainly yes, because it is one of the most important tools for any effective counselling to take place.

Imagine yourself with a client who is so depressed, adamant or hopeless. If your counselling skills do not come to bare or are not properly demonstrated, you might not be able to win the confidence of your client or even handle the case properly.

Hence as counsellors, we must try as much as possible to handle cases in such a way that there will be a free-flow of communication and above all, a lasting counselling relationship that will bring about an expected end.

A REVIEW OF PROBLEM

Funmi Adelowo (a fictitious name) was a senior pupil in a Nigerian comprehensive high school. She was very creative, clever and considerate but reserved, pessimistic and introverted. After her Higher School Certificate (HSC) course, she was offered a place at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, and another at the London School of Economics, England. Both offers were for studies in the Economics of Underdeveloped Countries. However, Funmi was worried about how to finance her education at either of the two universities. Her parents were very poor and had to take a loan at 100 percent interest to allow her to finish high school. Her parents were expecting her to take up a job and help pay off the debt but Funmi's ambition was to have a college education, and it was undoubted that Funmi would perform brilliantly in college if she could find the necessary funds.

THE COUNSELLOR AND TYPICAL ENCOUNTERS

Judging from this story, Funmi preferred to study overseas rather than at a Nigerian university for which she was qualified to attend at a lower cost.

The first interview between Funmi Adelowo (counselee) and Ibrahim Bussa (counsellor):

Counsellor: Hello, Funmi (as she walks in looking up at the ceiling. The counsellor happens to know Funmi by name and her parents, too).

Funmi: *Hi. (Very softly) "you keep working hard!"*

Counsellor: How are you today?

Funmi: *Fine.*

Counsellor: How about your parents, your brother and your sister? Have you heard from Gbola (her uncle) in Lagos?

Funmi: *They are all doing fine. Gbola even sent a congratulatory card on my admission to Nsukka and the London school of Economics.*

- Counsellor:** How nice, congratulations! I wish you success too. Your parents are very fond of you and I guess they too will be happy at this brilliant result.
- Funmi:** *Mmmm... (Funmi mutters) not too much. In fact, daddy blamed me for using my pocket money to seek entrance to colleges and universities, telling me proverbially that there is no hope of funding. (students mix English with the vernacular language when they cannot find appropriate words).*
- Counsellor:** Your 'chi' will provide.
- Funmi:** *Amen.*
- Counsellor:** Could that hopelessness be one of your reasons for coming this afternoon?
- Funmi:** *Yes... and well... (she swallows her words)*
- Counsellor:** Ok. In any case, sit down on the mat (carpet) with me and let us get into all that are worrying you. Spend a moment of silence with me during which you can put your thoughts together...(After a minute or two, Funmi looks up at the ceiling and again turns around)...Are you all right now?
- Funmi:** *Yes.*
- Counsellor:** As God accepts whatever colour a chameleon takes on, so will your God grant you your request. May your request be granted today.
- Funmi:** *Ase (Amen). As you know, this is my last year in the high school...(pause).*
- Counsellor:** (Counsellor quickly comes in) Yes...I remember.
- Funmi:** *And I'm afraid, I still don't know what...next. Indeed, I gained admissions to two reputable universities, but...but.....I hope, I need your advice.*
- Counsellor:** I...I see...you are telling me to advise you on what to do next year?
- Funmi:** *Yes.....that's it.*
- Counsellor:** May be before I take responsibility for what advice, you too should do your own part. By the way, could you give me some ideas of what you really would like to embark upon next year?
- Funmi:** *You see... I like my parents, and I would like to work to help them pay their debts on my high school education. But at the same time, I would like to go to the university and qualify as an Economist so that when I return to my parents we will all benefit immensely.*
- Counsellor:** That sounds good. You really want to be an Economist?
- Funmi:** *Yes, that's it (emphatically).*
- Counsellor:** Now, I can understand what your problem is. I guess it is centered on qualifying as an Economist either in Nsukka or in London School of Economics.
- Funmi:** *(Funmi mutters again, pauses, then softly and slowly says) Yes, yes. But...but...my daddy...*

- Counsellor:** But your daddy what?
- Funmi:** *You see, my problem is really how to get money to go to England for my education. Daddy is in debt for my high school education...I...I...know it.*
- Counsellor:** *Now I understand. You have got admissions to universities; you have thought about your major college, but now you need funds to embark on your goal to study and as I heard you, preferably in England.*
- Funmi:** *That's right.*
- Counsellor:** Did you talk to your parents after you noticed some indifference?
- Funmi:** *What for? No...they are poor, and I know it. They cannot do anything further about college education. There are six of us in the family and mother keeps the house...having no job of her own...and as much as she would have liked me to go to college, and daddy...oh(almost in tears)...God...Oh...God*
- Counsellor:** Listen, Funmi, I think you have done what many Napoleons could not do. You have crossed a great milestone...admission. Is there any other university in Nigeria where you can be admitted to study economics?
- Funmi:** *As a matter of fact, the principal told us that anybody who scored three 'As' with a pass in English is automatically qualified to enter Ibadan University which is the nearest to our village.*
- Counsellor:** Which means Ibadan would likely give you admission, too!
- Funmi:** *Sure.*
- Counsellor:** And Ibadan is about 30 miles from your home.
- Funmi:** *Yes, but distance is not the question, I am not keen on Ibadan or Nsukka. I want overseas experience if possible.*
- Counsellor:** I see. Then we have to concentrate on ways by which Funmi could get out to England.
- Funmi:** *Yes (hoping and almost smiling).*
- Counsellor:** Are you familiar with the Financial Aid System of English Universities for Common Wealth Citizens?
- Funmi:** *Not very much! All that I know is the Federal Government's Student Loan Scheme which I was told is to be paid back in instalments.*
- Counsellor:** Would you like to try the Freshman Academic Scholarship provided by the London School of Economics; the College Work Study or the Educational Opportunity Grant designed primarily to assist extremely needy brilliant students? Apart from these, the United African Company Scholarship Programme and the Federal Government Scholarship for Crash Recruitments in the Ministry of Economic Affairs are also there for you to try.
- Funmi:** *Gee!-How do I go about all these?*

Counsellor: Let me find their addresses (he gets them). Write a letter of request to each agency and tell each about your success and problems of finance. If you bring them, I can help to edit them for you before mailing.

Funmi: *Thank you....But suppose I am not successful?*

Counsellor: How do you come to that? Are you pre-judging yourself as a failure?

Funmi: *Not really, But I've not been so lucky all my life for such a windfall. I...I...am working for everything that I get.*

Counsellor: So, you enjoy working for everything you get?

Funmi: *Yes indeed...but sometimes I wonder why my own life is so difficult and unpredictable?*

Counsellor: Funmi, you are already working on your college education. Maybe this is another opportunity for you to work harder by writing a convincing application for the scholarship under the above programmes and get the principal of your high school to recommend.

Funmi: *OK, I'll try. May be your advice will work this time.*

Counsellor: It isn't mine, but yours really. You take delight in working for everything you get, and if you work hard this time on your scholarship applications and the written essays to be attached, you might be offered financial aid. And of course, if you need my help on the forms, I'm certainly at your disposal. You see...listen to what the elders say, 'Slow and steady wins the race'. Though we are not as large as the elephant, or as stout as the buffalo, nor are our connections as long as the beads of the sea goddess, yet we will succeed if we try. Just as the hand reaches much higher than the head, and the young palm fronds reach much higher than old palm fronds, so shall we be stronger and better placed than our forefathers. No forest is so dense that the Iroko tree (Mahogany) cannot be seen. No music is so loud that the gong cannot be heard. That this client will excel to the heights of her determination, that she will be prominent among her associates and that she will succeed in whatever she undertakes is not only a prayer, but a sanction.

Funmi: *Thank you. I do appreciate this.*

Counsellor: When would you like to come back to report on what you have found out?

Funmi: *May be in three weeks time, after I have obtained the forms, filled them out, and possibly received some replies.*

Counsellor: Splendid! What if we fix our next meeting for May 26, when you should have heard from the Federal Government Scholarship Commission in Lagos? However, feel free to drop in before then if something develops.

Funmi: *OK. Thanks a lot.*

Counsellor: Bye-bye.

Three weeks later, Funmi returned to report successful results. She had been granted a Federal Government Scholarship to go to England. The Counsellor congratulated her and told her to work harder in England and do her best to achieve other awards and laurels.

Analysis:

This is by no means a perfect interview. However, the counsellor has followed the indigenous approach of looking at the client's behaviour in relation to family, environment, physical world, and in relation to herself. He then developed a rapport with the counsellee and tried to maximize the level of warmth, acceptance, empathic understanding, genuineness and congruence, and provided the necessary information and alternatives to achieve the client's goals. It seems clear that Funmi had an idea of what she wanted but the means to success were scarce, if not difficult. The counsellor therefore tried to consider the limits of the situation within which Funmi's choice operated and explored with her the range of possibilities open to her through scholarships, thus cutting down on the amount of confusion she was then experiencing. The counsellor was not just listening but perceiving and clarifying. He did not prematurely give the advice which Funmi originally requested but waited to hear from the client about her priorities.

Funmi's case is a relatively simple one. Counselling practice can involve many more complex and intricate cases. But the most important thing is to explore a client's problem rationally and objectively and let the client take responsibility for his or her own decision.

COUNSELLING CASES FOR PRACTICE**A. THE CASE OF NZEGU**

Nzegu is 16. His father died when he was 4. He has two older brothers. Both of them are very clever at school. Nzegu also has two younger sisters who are clever too.

However, Nzegu is a rascal. He often rebels against his mother's discipline and he snubs his teachers at school. He is the most troublesome of all the children in the family. Nzegu is unable to cope with his studies, hence, the headmaster has told him to repeat a class. His teachers have written similar comments in his cumulative records. He will not work or co-operate with the teachers or his classmates unless he is ruled by a strong hand. The mother, with tears rolling down her cheeks, has sought counselling.

QUESTIONS

- i. Carefully analyze Nzegu's problem(s). Give reasons to support your identification.
- ii. As a school counsellor, carefully describe how you would counsel the mother.
- iii. How would you assist Nzegu in coping with his school environment?

B. THE CASE OF OGUNSEYE ROBERTS

Ogunseye, a Secondary School student, is specific about his predicament. After several unsuccessful attempts to discuss it with you in your room, which is adjacent to the principal's office, he writes this letter.

Dear Sir,

I seek your advice on this problem with the hope that you will give me a good help.

I am a poor Secondary School boy promoted to class five for 1978/79 session. I am offering music as one of my subjects and I intend to further my studies in music. I have been playing the piano.

I will be very grateful if you can tell me which one I should do because I am from a poor family.

Thanks.

QUESTIONS

- (i) As a trained counsellor, how would you analyse Ogunseye's problem?
- (ii) Outline fully the help you will render, based on sound principles and theories of counselling.

The students have liberty to identify a range of other situations that regularly limit the student's ability to cope within the school and at home with parents. Since counselling now goes to the lower ebb of education, the practicum student has the option to approach cases involving other settings.

ACTIVITY 1

1. As a student-counsellor, discuss some of the techniques and skills you would use in solving counselling cases.
2. Illustrate two cases and describe your encounter with the clients. Mention the theory(ies) you intend using to tackle these cases. (You can make a presentation on this during your contact sessions).