

Module 24

Similarities and Differences between Social Case Work, Counseling and Psychotherapy

Component 1A

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Component 1B

	Description of Module
Subject Name	Social Work Education
Paper Name	WORKING WITH INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES
Module Name	Understanding Similarities and Differences between Casework, Counselling & Psychotherapy
Module ID	SW/SCW/24
Pre Requisites	Not applicable
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grasp the concept of casework, counseling, and psychotherapy Understand the similarities among casework, counseling, and psychotherapy Know the differences between casework, counseling, and psychotherapy
Key Words	Social Casework, Counselling, Psychotherapy, Individualized and differential intervention, Inner resources, Crippling feelings, Stressful behavior, Values of individuality, Dignity of human person, and Respect for the client.

Quadrant 1

Introduction

The terms social casework, counseling and psychotherapy are often understood by many as the same and used often interchangeably. Primary reason for such understanding is that all these three terms mainly deal with mostly individual who is need of something. Here, the fact has to be cleared that the three terms have, of course, some elements of similarities but they are very much different from one other. Therefore, this module is designed in such a way to make the readers understand first and then facilitate them to just critically consider the points of similarity and difference between social casework, counseling and psychotherapy, when it comes to application and practice of professional Social Work.

Objectives

1. To have thorough and good understanding about the meaning of the terms - social casework, counseling, and psychotherapy,
2. To gain an insight into the salient features of social casework, counseling and psychotherapy,
3. To understand and be familiar with the similarities between social casework, counseling and psychotherapy, and
4. To identify and know the differences between them.

Social Casework

Social Work practice basically aims at assisting individuals, groups, or communities to enhance or restore their capacity and competence for appropriate social functioning, and creating a favourable environment to reach their goals.

Social Casework, one of the methods of social work practice was given a systematic treatment by Mary Richmond through her book 'Social Diagnosis', in 1917. She defined social casework as 'Social case work consists of those processes which develop personality through adjustment consciously effected, individual by individual, between man and his social environment'.

Her work sets forth the principles of social investigation and gathers all significant facts to know the personality of the person with problem and his or her situation. Prior to her approach, the case workers dealt with the problems, and not the individuals.

In short, Social Case Work stands not only as a tool but also a specific area of work that consists of processes that help to develop personality of individuals through meaningful adjustment between themselves as well as their social environment in which they have been brought up and socializing till this moment.

Important Aspects of Social Casework

The important aspects of case work may be outlined on the basis of some definitions and the various shades of meaning of social casework.

- Social case work is a method of providing services whereby a professional social worker assesses the needs of the person and his or her family, in an appropriate manner, and arranges, coordinates, monitors, evaluates, and advocates for a package of multiple services to meet the complex needs of the person.
- Case work is recognizable by its aim of social betterment and its method of individualized and differential intervention. It is concerned with the release of resources in the immediate environment and capacities in the individual which may give him or her a fuller and more satisfying life that becomes socially beneficial.
- Case work has always been concerned with the family as the primary social unit within which concepts are formed which, in our culture, have a profound bearing on social adjustment.
- The practice of casework is a humanistic attempt to help people who have difficulty in coping with the problems of daily living.
- Enabling the person who has a problem to make meaningful adjustment is not only typical, but classical type of case work. As one of the direct methods of social work, it uses the case-by-case approach for dealing with individuals or families as regards their problems of personal or social functioning.

- Case work aims at individualized services in the field of social work in order to help the person to become aware of his or her inner resources, so that the person may be able to handle any difficult situation in his or her life and make the necessary adjustment with the environment in which he or she lives.

Assumptions of Social Casework

- Human persons are bio-psycho-social beings who continually interact with their environment.
- Every person has specific nature and at the same time has his or her unique practice and characteristics similar to other persons with whom he or she has been socializing.
- In a social environment it is next to impossible to live absolutely independent of one another. However, total dependence on others is not healthy, nor growth-oriented.
- Most of the problems in the realm of social functioning are psycho-social in nature and also interpersonal.
- A person can be understood and helped to live his/her life effectively provided he/she is aware of the human limitations, and cooperate with one another in the social environment.
- Human beings can change to certain extent if they learn to make use of their innate capacities and potentials to the optimum level.

Counselling

Regarding the definition of Counselling, it is a process of assisting and guiding persons, through a relationship of reasonable trust, especially by a trained person on a professional basis, to resolve especially personal, social, or psychological problems and difficulties. It is a process that occurs when a counselor and a client meet face to face in order to identify the factors that cause crippling feelings and very stressful behavior for the latter.

This involves an act of helping the client to see things more clearly, possibly from a different view-point. This can enable the client to focus on feelings, experiences or behaviour, with a goal to bring about positive change. The interaction between the counselor and the client is based on a relationship of trust. Hence, confidentiality is of paramount importance to effective counselling. Professional counsellors usually explain the policy on confidentiality.

They may, however, be required by law to disclose information, if they believe that there is a risk to life of the client or any others associated with his/her life.

According to the Governing Council of the American Counselling Association, counseling is the application of mental health, psychological or human development principles, through cognitive, affective, behavioral or systemic interventions, strategies that address wellness, personal growth, or career development, as well as pathology.

Role of Counsellor

- The role of the counsellor is to create an atmosphere of trust and enable the client to explore many aspects of his/her life by talking openly and freely.
- It is important that the counsellor is **not** emotionally involved with the client.
- The counsellor neither judges, nor offers advice.
- The counsellor gives the client an opportunity to ventilate difficult feelings such as anger, resentment, guilt and fear in a non-threatening environment.
- The counsellor may encourage the clients to examine parts of their lives that they may have found difficult or impossible to face before. There may be some exploration of early childhood experiences in order to throw some light on why an individual reacts or responds in certain ways in given situations. This is often followed by considering ways in which the clients may be able to change such behaviour.
- Effective counselling creates clarity about the problem situation, helps the clients to explore the choices before them for bringing about the necessary positive changes in their attitude and behavior.
- The ultimate aim of the counsellor is to enable the clients to make their own choices, make their own decisions and to act upon them willingly.

Psychotherapy

With reference to Psychotherapy, it is a general term that is used to describe the process of treating psychological disorders and mental distress. During this process, a trained psychotherapist helps the client tackle a specific or general problem such as a particular mental illness or a source of life stress. Depending on the approach used by the therapist, a wide range of techniques and strategies can be used. However, almost all types of psychotherapy involve developing a therapeutic relationship,

communicating and creating a dialogue, and working to overcome problematic or stress-related thoughts and behavior.

Psychotherapy is a form of psychological intervention for problems of an emotional in nature in which a trained person deliberately establishes a professional relationship with a client with the aim to remove, modify or retard present symptoms, of mediating distributed patterns of behavior, and prompting positive personality growth and development. It is to change the behavior and alter the attitude of the maladjusted persons towards a more constructive outcome.

Psychotherapy can perhaps be defined as the process in which a therapist helps the client in the process of re-organizing his or her personality.

Development of Psychotherapy

Psychotherapy was practiced in various forms as far back as the time of the Ancient Greeks. However, it was Sigmund Freud who gave a real start by using the talk therapy while working with his clients. In the early part of the twentieth century, behaviourism emerged as a more popular school of thought and began to play a significant role in psychotherapy developing techniques such as conditioning and association. Behavioural therapy often uses classical conditioning, operant conditioning and social learning while helping clients to change their problematic behavior..

Since the beginning of 1950, the school of humanistic psychology began to make a great impact on psychotherapy. Carl Roger, a well-known humanistic psychologist propagated an approach known as client-centered therapy which placed the emphasis on the therapist showing unconditional positive regard towards the client. Till to day this approach continues to be one of the widely used models in psychotherapy.

In 1960s psychologists began to focus on understanding the influence of the internal state of mind and the consequent behavior of clients. As a result, the approach known as cognitive behavioural therapy evolved and took the shape of another type of psychotherapeutic intervention. This therapy helps clients to understand their thoughts and feelings that influenced their behavior and hence it is commonly used to deal with a wide range of disorders such as phobias, addiction, depression and anxiety.

Psychotherapy is increasingly viewed as a distinct profession in its own right, but many different types of professionals engage in psychotherapy regularly. Such individuals include clinical psychologists, psychiatrists, counselors, marriage and family therapists, social

workers, mental health counselors, occupational therapists and psychiatric nurses. Psychotherapy uses a wide variety of techniques and practices. Many factors such as the exact nature of problem, the training and background of the therapist, and the preferences of the client determine the exact approach the psychotherapy has to take.

Similarities between Social casework, Counselling and Psychotherapy

Social casework, counseling, and psychotherapy have their own distinctiveness but share professional association that safeguards the interest of the persons with problems as well as the practitioners. These professional workers receive their training and accreditation from their respective Professional Associations to serve their clients as individual practitioners. Although they have their separate identities in the field of therapeutic interventions, it is a common view that there is a lot of overlapping among these three entities, as they make use of similar theoretical framework of reference, the same training materials, books and resources. This is particularly true when courses are based around the same theoretical school of approach; for example, person-centered or psychodynamic. A person may reach a professional status either as person-centered counselor or a psychotherapist, yet their fundamental differences are unclear.

Specific Aspects of Similarities between Social casework and Counselling

There are some Specific Aspects of Similarities between Social Casework and Counselling.

Both social casework and counseling have the same objective. They attempt to help the individuals who have some problem. Their process necessarily involves the individuals in such a manner that the capacities of the individuals are enhanced, so that they can help themselves and solve their problem themselves not only at the present but also in future.

Both are interested in the well being of similar types of persons or clients who need help in solving their problems.

Casework and counselling deal with similar kinds of problems. Both make an attempt to address problems, clients' inner problems which exert pressure on their social functioning, and which are mostly psycho-social in nature.

The effectiveness of these two approaches depends, to a great extent, on the strength of relationship between the caseworker or therapist and the client or person. The relationship is the medium in case

work as well as in counseling through which help is provided to the person with problem. It is the channel of the entire process of casework as well as counseling through which the mobilization of the capacities of the person with problem turns out to be possible. It takes place throughout the case work process.

Both the approaches believe in the intrinsic worth and dignity of the person with problem. Case work and counseling view the person with problem as an individual who has right to get help and reorganize as a person of human worth and dignity. In decision making he/she has all the right to make his/her choice and decide for himself or herself.

Casework and counseling follow common principles. Both accept the person as he or she is, and provide him or her with opportunities for self expression. Both believe that the person or the client has every right to determine. Both the social Case worker and counselor do not ever give their own judgment to the person with problem. The person has every right to determine his or her own path for his or her easy recovery from malfunctioning.

Similarities between Casework and Psychotherapy

1. Both casework and psychotherapy help individuals who come with emotional problems and painful situations.
2. Both the approaches make efforts to put the client at ease and create an environment for him or her to express his or her feelings freely.
3. They share the same values of individuality, dignity of human person, and respect for the client.
4. They make use of interview as a technique in the therapeutic process.
5. Both casework and psychotherapy believe in the client's right to self-determination.
6. These two approaches recognize the role of emotional and pre-conscious or unconscious processes at work in the client which influence the client's thoughts, feelings and behavior.

Differences between Counselling and Casework

In counseling, help is provided to the client without social services whereas in casework, administration of services in concrete forms is an essential component of the intervention strategy.

An agency setting is not essentially necessary for counseling but casework is always practiced in an agency setting.

Counseling is most of the time concerned with one type of problem but in casework the client is assessed and understood as a whole.

Differences between Casework and Psychotherapy

- Psychotherapy entails a long term process of intervention that identifies emotional issues and the background to problems and difficulties, whereas casework consists of short term process characterized by specific goals, planned intervention strategies, and a time frame.
- Psychotherapy helps people with psychological problems that have built up over long years. Casework is mostly interested in the psycho-social problems of individuals.
- The objectives of psychotherapy are to bring about change in the attitude and behavior of the individual by restructuring his or her personality, but casework aims at enabling change in the individual, or in the environment or both. Sometimes, the change in the environment is specifically directed to effect change in the individual for effective social functioning.
- Interpretation of the individual's experience, thoughts and feelings is common to both psychotherapy and casework, but in casework it is the pre-conscious material that is interpreted and in psychotherapy it is the unconscious material.

SUMMARY

- The terms social casework, counseling and psychotherapy are often understood by many as the same and used often interchangeably. This is basically because all these three terms deal with mostly individuals in need.
- Social Case Work is not only a tool but also an area of work that consists of processes that help to develop personality of individuals through meaningful adjustment between themselves as well as their social environment.
- Counselling is a process of assisting and guiding persons, through a relationship of reasonable trust, especially by a trained person on a professional basis, to resolve especially personal, social, or psychological problems and difficulties.
- Psychotherapy is a general term that is used to describe the process of treating psychological disorders and mental distress. During this process, a trained psychotherapist helps the client

tackle a specific or general problem such as a particular mental illness or a source of life stress.

- Social casework, counselling, and psychotherapy have their own distinctiveness but share professional association that safeguards the interest of the persons with problems as well as the practitioners.
- Professionals of these three approaches are interested in the well being of similar types of persons or clients who need help in solving their problems.
- They deal with similar kinds of problems. Both make an attempt to address problems, clients' inner problems which exert pressure on their social functioning, and which are mostly psycho-social in nature.
- They share the same values of individuality, dignity of human person, and respect for the client.
- These approaches recognize the role of emotional, pre-conscious and unconscious processes at work in the client which influence the client's thoughts, feelings and behavior.
- Psychotherapy entails a long term process of intervention that identifies emotional issues and the background to problems and difficulties, whereas casework consists of short term process characterized by specific goals, planned intervention strategies, and a time frame.
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