

Research Paper

Impact of Counselling Services Among Youths of Educational Institutes on Mental Wellbeing

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ABSTRACT

The objective of education is to provide opportunities for students to reach their full potential in educational, vocational, social and emotional development. Counselling is the bedrock for achieving self-actualisation. Counselling as part of educational activities helps students in their social life. It enables them to come up with experiences that will assist them in understanding themselves and how to live effectively with others in school and society. An analysis of counselling services in providing adequate assistance to students at all educational institutions is paramount. This paper examined the concept of Counselling, principles of Counselling, characteristics of Counselling, aims and objectives of Counselling, advantages of counselling services, and methods of Counselling are highlighted. In conclusion, this paper identified the roles and functions of the school counsellor. The study found that guidance and counselling services in schools help to identify and address the social, emotional, and behavioural needs of students, thus improving their academic performance. Counselling services also help students to develop personal and social skills that are essential for their success in school and beyond. The integration of guidance and counselling services in schools can help to create a conducive learning environment, promote student well-being and enhance academic achievement. Guidance and counselling services are crucial in ensuring that schools provide a holistic education that goes beyond academic excellence. The integration of guidance and counselling services in schools can help to create a conducive learning environment, promote student well-being and enhance academic achievement. Teachers and counsellors need to work together to ensure that students receive the support they need to succeed in school and beyond.

Keywords: *Counselling, Mental Wellbeing, Youths, Teaching*

Young people have to make decisions about important concrete directions in life, for example school, living situation, peer group etc. They must also address new challenges with regard to building their own identity, developing self-esteem, acquiring increasing independence and responsibility, building new intimate relationships, etc. In the meantime, they are subject to ongoing, changing psychological and physical processes themselves and besides that, they are often confronted with high expectations, sometimes too high, from significant relatives and peers. Such situations inevitably provoke

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a certain degree of helplessness, insecurity, stress and a sense of losing control. To address these challenges and successfully cope with these emotions, young people must have access to significant supporting resources such as a stable living situation, intimate friendships, a structural framework and economic resources. Risk factors can be seen as factors that undermine this support or hinder access to these resources, while protective factors strengthen and protect these resources, or serve as a buffer against risk factors.

The impact of counselling on psychological well-being is profound and multifaceted, encompassing various dimensions of mental health, emotional resilience, and overall quality of life. Counselling provides individuals with a safe, supportive, and non-judgmental space to explore and process their thoughts, feelings, and concerns, thereby facilitating the reduction of psychological distress. Through therapeutic techniques such as active listening, empathy, and validation, counselors create a conducive environment for clients to develop into the root causes of their distress, whether stemming from past trauma, unresolved conflicts, or current life stressors. By addressing these underlying issues, counselling interventions aim to alleviate symptoms of anxiety, depression, and other mental health conditions, fostering a sense of relief and emotional well-being.

Concept of Counselling

Counselling is a mutual relationship between counsellor and student that empowers and enhances the student's power to function as a member of society by using assessments and preventative approaches that acknowledge developmental issues. British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP, 2006) defines Counselling as: a private and confidential setting that takes place between a counsellor and a student to explore a difficulty the student is having, the distress or dissatisfaction they are experiencing with life, or loss of purpose and sense of direction. Counselling is a relationship that seeks help between the counsellor and the student (Modo, 2008). Hence, Counselling is a mature relationship that has an encounter between a professionally trained counsellor and a student to assist the student with personal, social, educational, and vocational functioning to enable them to solve a problem for their development. Counselling relationships involve two people; one of them is a counsellor who renders help to a student who has prepared themselves to receive service for adjustment to life situations. Counselling is giving scientific assistance from an expert in a position to a needy person (Rwechoka, 2014). Counselling is a personal relationship between individuals in which one is more experienced (counsellor), and the other is less experienced (student). The student who has a problem goes to the counsellor to seek help. It is a natural relationship of respect between the two. Okonkwo and Anagbogu (2002) say Counselling is a process of helping a troubled individual or a group of individuals usually behave and function satisfyingly. The counselling process concentrates on the needs of the students.

According to Gustad, J. W. (1953)," Counselling is a learning oriented process, carried on a simple, one-to-one social environment, in which the counsellor, professionally competent in relevant psychological skills and knowledge, seeks to assist the client, by methods appropriate to the latter's needs and within the context of the total personal program, to learn how to put such understanding into effect in relation to more clearly perceived, realistically defined goals to the end that the client may become a happier and more productive member of society ".

According to Patterson (1954)," Counselling is the process involving interpersonal relationship between a therapist and one or more clients by which the former employs

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psychological methods based on systematic knowledge of the human personality in attempting to improve the mental health of the latter".

On the basis of above definitions of Counselling it can be said that –

- Counselling is a continuous process.
- Counselling is an interpersonal relationship between the counsellor client.
- Counsellor helps in the counselling process on the basis of training, experience and psychological facts.
- Counselling work is done in various situations like home, school, hospital, social and community center, rehabilitation center.
- The nature of counselling is developmental, preventive and curative etc.

In addition to fostering individual growth, counselling interventions play a pivotal role in improving interpersonal relationships and social connections. By addressing communication barriers, relational conflicts, and maladaptive patterns of interaction, counselling helps clients cultivate healthier and more fulfilling relationships with others. Through empathy, active listening, and assertiveness training, individuals learn to communicate their needs, set boundaries, and navigate interpersonal dynamics with empathy and understanding. As a result, clients experience a greater sense of connection, belonging, and support within their social networks, which contributes significantly to their overall well-being and resilience.

Moreover, counselling serves as a crucial preventive and early intervention strategy for mental health issues, offering timely support and psychoeducation to individuals at risk of developing psychological problems. By identifying early warning signs, building resilience, and enhancing coping skills, counselling helps individuals effectively manage stressors and prevent the escalation of mental health concerns. Through community outreach programs, school-based initiatives, and workplace counselling services, counselling reaches individuals across diverse settings, promoting mental health literacy, destigmatizing help-seeking behaviours, and fostering a culture of well-being and support.

In essence, counselling plays a transformative role in promoting psychological well-being by addressing psychological distress, enhancing coping skills, fostering self-awareness and personal growth, improving interpersonal relationships, and providing preventive and early intervention support. By empowering individuals to overcome challenges, embrace their authentic selves, and cultivate meaningful connections with others, counselling facilitates holistic healing and flourishing across the lifespan. As an integral component of comprehensive mental health care, counselling contributes to building resilient individuals, thriving communities, and a more compassionate and inclusive society.

The Principles of Counselling

Counselling is tailored to each individual. Each person is one-of-a-kind; we all know that no two people are alike. They differ in terms of abilities, interests, aptitudes, personality traits, values, and attitudes, among other things. This fact must be considered when providing Counselling to a student. This theory implies that a technique or strategy that may be effective for one individual may not be effective for another. As a result, Counselling is tailored to the individual.

Counselling is concerned with the whole individual. The emphasis should be on an individual's overall development rather than just one aspect of their personality. Suggests

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that any scenario or difficulty faced by an individual must always be viewed holistically, resulting in overall personality development.

Counselling is always aimed at achieving a particular goal. Setting goals is a crucial aspect of Counselling. Setting realistic goals and working toward them is fundamental in every counselling situation.

Counselling is considered a professional service. Only a highly qualified individual can provide Counselling. It will cause more harm to the student if untrained individuals deliver it.

Counselling should be based on a complete understanding of the features of human growth and development stages. Each stage of human development has its own set of traits and developmental tasks to complete. The accomplishment of these tasks and the consequences of the environment's contact with the person are the decisive variables that shape the person's overall personality at a certain period of life.

Counselling is available to everyone who requires assistance. Every individual, regardless of age, caste, sex, occupation, or status, needs direction and Counselling at all phases of their growth. It should be supplied to anyone who requires aid at any time.

Counselling is not limited to any development period. It is essential in all life phases. Human beings require instruction on various issues at various stages of their lives. Counselling is an ongoing process. It is considered that Counselling cannot be limited to when problems are being solved. The main focus is on assisting the student in achieving overall growth. When activities are conducted to help people overcome challenges, the services may have to be ended once a solution has been discovered. However, efforts in the form of programmes to prevent a recurrence of the same problem must be maintained. There is no such thing as a once-and-done guidance programme.

Counselling should be based on reliable data. Counselling services are founded on information about the individual or student. As a result, a counsellor should have accurate information on the individual. The counsellor should attempt to obtain information from suitable sources (parents, guardians, teachers, classmates, etc.) by employing validated and reliable psychological tests and methods.

Counselling should be approached with flexibility. By flexibility, we mean adaptability in using data collection instruments, methods/strategies for Counselling, monitoring methods, etc. A process tested on a student would be a learning experience for another situation, bringing insights into similar challenges other students face. As a result, counselling programmes must be designed according to the principles mentioned earlier to meet the needs and requirements of each individual.

The Characteristics of Counselling

According to Adamu (2014), Counselling is defined as a speciality in psychology whose practitioners assist clients in improving their well-being, alleviating distress, resolving crises, and increasing their ability to be creative, innovative, and make appropriate decisions. Emphasises characteristics and features of Counselling, such as Counselling should confidentially take place. The student problem should be between the counsellor and the student alone. The information should be secret and confidential between the two.

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- Counselling is a process between two individuals. The counselling process should only be between the counsellor and the student unless group counselling is involved.
- Counselling is a private relationship. Counselling issues discussed should be confidential between the counsellor and student, with no third party. Nobody has to get information on what the two have discussed unless necessary.
- Counselling is a mutual relationship between two individuals. Counselling should be based on mutual agreement between the counsellor and the student. There is nothing like forcing Counselling on a student.
- Counselling is an agreement between a professionally trained counsellor and a student seeking help. Counselling occurs between a well-trained and experienced person called a "counsellor" and one who has a problem and needs help also called a "student". The counselling process always occurs when one of the two is more knowledgeable and assists the other with a problem.
- Counselling does not involve giving advice. The counsellor does not advise the student during counselling sessions but instead offers many optional suggestions and recommendations to the student according to their problem, allowing them to choose from among the optional suggestions and recommendations.
- Counselling is a non-hierarchical relationship. The counselling process does not depend on the individual's position, rank, title, age, etc. No matter how brilliant the student is, they cannot be more knowledgeable than the counsellor. Counselling is a skilful activity, and one needs to be trained before practising it. A client cannot be said to be of higher rank than a counsellor. Therefore, the student should counsel the counsellor. The educational institutions' counselling services aim to facilitate the total developmental needs of all students and growth (educational, vocational and social/ personal).

Aims and Objectives of Counselling Services in Educational Institutions

- Counselling aims to bring transformation into a student's life through motivating the learner's academic, communal, emotional, as well as personal growth. The counsellors are responsible for the student's progress and development.
- To gather appropriate information on an apprentice to equip them with knowledge, values, skills, and experience that will support them in solving their world-facing problems in a positive direction.
- Assisting students in identifying and recognizing positive personality traits, abilities, interests, values, and skills compatible with their chosen careers is a significant task.
- Counsellors plan how to assist students in working out ways to resolve growing needs in schools, such as Making plans for future living and working.
- Enhancing entrepreneurship.
- He learns to attain adult status by making vocational plans, family, social relationships, and citizenship plans.
- He is attaining individuality.
- Developing a concept of values and desirable behaviour. Enhance the study skills of the students.
- It is establishing personal relationships with individuals of both sexes.
- Counselling services aim to assist students and learners in dealing with upcoming problems in academic development, career growth, and personal or social development.

Advantages of Counselling Services in Educational Institutions

- **Emotional Support-** School counselling programs provide emotional support to students who may be dealing with a range of issues such as anxiety, depression, or stress. A counselor can help students understand and manage their emotions, and develop coping strategies for challenging situations.
- **Academic Success-** A school counsellor can help students improve their academic performance by identifying areas where they need extra help and providing resources to support them. This may include tutoring, study skills, time management, and organizational strategies.
- **Career Development-** School counsellors can help students explore their interests and strengths, and provide guidance on career options and educational pathways that align with their goals. They can also provide information about vocational training programs, internships, and other opportunities that can help students gain valuable experience.
- **Social Skills-** School counselling programs can help students develop social skills and improve their relationships with peers and adults. Counsellors can provide guidance on communication skills, conflict resolution, and teamwork, helping students build positive and healthy relationships.
- **Personal Growth-** Through counselling sessions, students can develop self-awareness, build self-esteem, and learn to set and achieve personal goals. School counsellors can also provide guidance on decision-making, problem-solving, and resilience, helping students develop the skills they need to navigate the challenges of life.
 - Counselling prepares students to face the challenges of the 21st century, including academic, career, and personal/social development.
 - By connecting educational programs to future success, counselling can help students see the relevance of their studies. Career exploration and development are facilitated through counselling services.
 - Counselling helps students develop important skills such as decision-making and problem-solving. Students can acquire knowledge of themselves and others through counselling.
 - Personal development is enhanced through counselling services.

Counselling Procedure

Here are the steps involved in counselling for improving psychological well-being:

1. **Rapport and Trust Establishment:** The first step in counselling had been to establish a trusting and supportive relationship between the counsellor and the client. This had involved creating a safe and non-judgmental space where clients had felt comfortable expressing their thoughts, feelings, and concerns. Building rapport had laid the foundation for effective communication and collaboration throughout the counselling process.
2. **Assessment and Goal Setting:** Once rapport had been established, the counsellor had conducted an initial assessment to understand the client's presenting issues, background, strengths, and goals for counselling. This had involved discussing the client's personal history, current challenges, and desired outcomes. Collaboratively, the counsellor and client had set specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) goals to guide the counselling process and measure progress.
3. **Exploration and Insight:** Counselling had involved exploring the underlying factors contributing to the client's psychological well-being, such as past experiences, core

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beliefs, and patterns of behaviour. Through guided self-reflection and introspection, clients had gained insight into their thoughts, emotions, and behaviours, identifying areas for growth and change. This process of exploration had fostered self-awareness, empowering clients to make informed decisions and enact positive changes in their lives.

4. **Cognitive-Behavioural Techniques:** Counselling had often utilized cognitive-behavioural techniques to help clients challenge and reframe unhelpful thought patterns and beliefs contributing to psychological distress. Clients had learned cognitive restructuring techniques to replace negative thinking with more balanced and realistic perspectives. Additionally, behavioural interventions, such as exposure therapy and behavioural activation, had been used to help clients overcome avoidance behaviours and develop healthier coping strategies.
5. **Emotional Regulation and Coping Skills:** Counselling had focused on developing effective coping skills to manage stress, regulate emotions, and cope with challenging situations. Clients had learned relaxation techniques, mindfulness practices, and stress management strategies to reduce physiological arousal and promote emotional well-being. By enhancing coping skills, clients had gained greater resilience and confidence in their ability to navigate life's stressors.
6. **Interpersonal Skills and Relationship Building:** Counselling had addressed interpersonal issues and relational dynamics that had impacted psychological well-being. Clients had learned effective communication skills, boundary setting, and conflict resolution strategies to improve relationships with others. Through role-playing exercises and feedback, clients had practiced assertiveness and empathy, fostering healthier and more satisfying interpersonal connections.
7. **Support and Empowerment:** Counselling had provided clients with emotional support, validation, and encouragement throughout their therapeutic journey. The counsellor had served as a compassionate ally, empowering clients to overcome obstacles, build self-esteem, and pursue personal growth. By acknowledging strengths and celebrating progress, counselling had instilled a sense of hope and optimism, promoting resilience and well-being.
8. **Evaluation and Closure:** As counselling had progressed, periodic evaluations had been conducted to assess the client's progress towards their goals and identify any areas needing further exploration or intervention. Once the client had achieved their goals or reached a point of resolution, the counselling process had concluded with a collaborative discussion of outcomes and a plan for maintaining progress outside of therapy.

Myths and Misconceptions Among Indians

In India, there are several myths and misconceptions related to counselling and mental health services and beliefs that are firmly held. These misconceptions can contribute to stigma and barriers to seeking help (YLCC, 2020).

- **Counselling is Only for Adults:** There's a misperception that children and teenagers shouldn't receive counselling because it's mostly for adults. In reality, counselling services are for people of all ages, including senior citizens, kids, adolescents and young adults.
- **Counsellors Have Solutions to Your Problems:** Some people expect counsellors to have all the answers and solve their problems for them. While counsellors can provide guidance, support, and tools for coping, they cannot magically fix all problems. Counselling is a collaborative process where clients play an active role in their own growth and look for ways to cope along with the counsellor.

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- **Counselling is Only for People with Severe Mental Illness:** One of the most common myths is that counselling is only for people with severe mental health issues like schizophrenia or bipolar disorder. In reality, counselling can be beneficial for a lot of other concerns and issues that people might have in their day-to-day life, including general stress, relationship problems, career, and personal growth.
- **Counselling is Only for the Rich:** There is a misperception that counselling costs a lot of money and only the rich can afford it. It is true to some extent that private counselling sessions cost a lot of money. However, there are also affordable or free counselling options available through community organizations, schools, and government initiatives. To make counselling more accessible, a lot of counsellors offer their services at a lower cost and even for free.
- **Counselling is Talk Therapy:** There's a misconception that counselling is a casual conversation, just like talking to a friend. However, counselling involves evidence based techniques and strategies aimed at addressing specific issues and helping people develop coping skills and to understand and resolve their life's challenges effectively.
- **Seeking Counselling Means You're Weak:** There's a stigma attached to seeking counselling, with the belief that it indicates weakness. In reality, seeking help is a sign of strength and self-awareness. It takes courage to take steps to prioritize your mental health and well-being and admit when you need help.

The Educational System's Roles and Functions of School Counsellors

- **The counsellor is a curriculum planner**

Counsellors should take an active role in the planning and implementing of school curriculum activities and programmes that aid in the development of pupils. Counsellors should be involved in all levels of curriculum creation and professional organisations, such as the American Counselling Association. Any curricular innovation should have teachers take a stand on its implementation since most of the curricula are written in the third person. The participation of counsellors in such organisations will aid in ensuring that course offerings are diverse and that evaluation techniques address all three learning areas. The fact that university counselling programmes are based on education faculties is encouraging.

- **A career developer is the counsellor role**

Students can be trained toward a goal through the educational system, which usually leads to a job. With a developmental plan in mind, the school counsellor helps children prepare for a profession by utilising their educational resources.

- **The counsellor functions as a consultant**

A consultation is a professional advice given by an expert. It is the practice of offering technical support to teachers, parents, administrators, and other counsellors to identify and resolve issues that restrict their success with kids or the school's effectiveness in a guidance programme. The counsellor's work is characterised by consultation, mainly because they are knowledgeable and have access to all of the student's school-related information.

- **The counsellor acts as a change agent in the community**

A counsellor is a professional who assists people in their personal growth. They become a community agent of change when they do this both inside and outside of the school to benefit students, staff, parents and the community. The counsellor achieves this by

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establishing community ties to uncover resources advantageous to individual student development and effective behaviour change.

CONCLUSION

Counselling serves as a catalyst for personal growth and transformation by facilitating problem-solving and goal-setting. By breaking down complex issues into manageable components, individuals are guided through a process of systematic problem-solving, empowering them to confront and overcome obstacles with confidence and clarity. This structured approach not only resolves immediate concerns but also equips individuals with invaluable problem-solving skills that can be applied across various domains of life. Moreover, counselling extends its impact beyond the individual to encompass their interpersonal relationships and social interactions. By providing guidance on effective communication, conflict resolution, and boundary-setting, counselling empowers individuals to navigate their social networks with greater ease and confidence. As individuals cultivate healthier relationships and establish firmer boundaries, they experience an enhanced sense of connection and belonging, which contributes significantly to their overall well-being.

Ultimately, counselling serves as a beacon of hope and optimism, illuminating pathways for growth and change in individuals' lives. By fostering a strengths-based perspective and instilling confidence in individuals' capacity for change, counselling inspires a sense of agency and possibility, propelling individuals toward a brighter and more fulfilling future. Through its multifaceted approach, counselling empowers individuals to embrace their inherent resilience, tap into their inner resources, and embark on a journey of self-discovery and transformation. However, challenges such as stigma, accessibility and the need for continued advocacy remain pertinent. Moving forward, efforts in education, regulation, public awareness and implementation of rules is extremely important in advancing the status of counselling in India, ensuring that people have access to quality mental health support and well-being.

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Conflict of Interest

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