

The Nurse Teacher, the Nursing Students and the Counseling Process

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Abstract

World population exploded from one billion (1820) to 7.5 billion (2017) and the addition of millions of people each year is exacerbating problems of illiteracy, poverty, unemployment, jeopardizing the mental health of people leading to poor productivity, and escalation of social problems like violence and crimes. Problems of adolescent students are complex, since adolescence is considered as a period of stress and strain and full of turmoil. The demands of academic life are becoming increasingly stressful for students especially for nursing students. Counseling enhances, self-analysis, self-understanding, improves self-esteem, and also understanding of the world. The teacher counselor by taking special interest in the students, develops confidence, alleviates, fear and anxiety and creates students as successful professionals and responsible citizens.

Keywords: Counseling; Counseling Process; Teacher as Counselor; Nursing Programs; Study Skills; Online Counseling.

Knowing others is wisdom!

Knowing yourself is enlightenment!

Introduction

Leaders of many nations understand that positive mental health of their citizens is a valuable economic and social asset. Counseling has a strong tradition in almost every continent. Best examples of counselors to quote from history are Socrates and Plato, Hayden and Beethoven, Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda and Freud and Jung. The original mentor was described in 800B.C. by Homer in Greece, where Athena, in the guise of mentor, became the mentor of Odysseus' son Telemachus. The most widely acknowledged counseling situation in India is in the great Epic Bhagavat Gita where, in the battlefield of Kurukshetra, Lord Krishna counseled prince Arjuna. The old Indian adage; "Mata, Pita, Guru, Deivam" (Mother, Father, Teacher, God) reminds youngsters of the agents of

counseling. In all cultures, the elders not only set the norms of behavior within that culture but also counsel the youngsters to follow the norms. In India, elders especially parents and teachers impart counseling in the form of advice and guidance and they consider it as one of their fundamental and sacred duty.

World population exploded from one billion (1820) to 7.5 billion (2017) and the addition of millions of people each year is exacerbating problems of illiteracy, poverty, unemployment, depletion of natural resources, urbanization and industrialization. The mental health of people is jeopardized leading to poor productivity, and escalation of social problems like violence and crimes. To cope up with the stress & to be a good citizen, counseling is needed.

Why Counseling is Necessary for Students?

Problems of adolescent students are complex, since adolescence is considered as a period of stress and strain and full of turmoil. The rapid growth and development, changes in the character of students,

changes in education system and pedagogy of institutions of higher learning as well of educational social, economical, political and technological changes have favored the development of student guidance and counseling services mandatory in all educational institutions. The demands of academic life are considered to be increasingly stressful for students. There are many "issues" commonly experienced by students in college that can sometimes pose major challenges to study, play, socializing, and living. (Jesse B. Davis - 1909, USA).

Beginning life at college naturally generates both excitement and anxiety, may due to shift from home to hostel, school to college, academic responsibilities, not knowing the methods of studying or the methods of preparing for examinations, leisure time management, meeting new people, adjusting with peer group members, especially, socializing with opposite sex, etc., If they have heterosexual problems, they may not be able to discuss it with their parents. Some quickly overcome, as they adapt to the new environment; For others, this transition become a problem which manifest as homesickness, feelings of anxiety, obsessive thoughts and/or physical ailments leading to poor health, poor academic performance and indulgence in antisocial activities.

In their adolescent period, students must know about their capacities, and they need professional guidance not only to know about themselves and their own potentials, also for right selection of course of study, names of reputed institutions, places of admission, job opportunities after higher studies, the expense for higher education, availability of scholarships, funds, etc.,. They also need personal guidance to come out of the adjustment problems. Even though, the present younger generation has many educated assistance, they may be reluctant to approach the parents or elders and in some families the parents may be uneducated or busy.

According to Denga (1987) a research study was conducted among secondary school students to assess the use of drugs which included pills, alcohol, hemp and the findings revealed that abuse of drugs had assumed unprecedented dimensions. Drug abuse is no doubt, a serious, social problem and it lends students vulnerable to, violating law, committing crimes, etc. The researcher highlighted the importance of counseling services for school students. A study was conducted by McKenzie et al (2015) to assess the effectiveness of counseling among students who had attended counseling service from 129 universities. Self report from students to evaluate the reliable and clinically significant changes before and after counseling revealed that majority of the

students (92%) reported experiencing academic issues. Counseling was found to result in reliable change for 67% and clinically significant change for 40% of the students. Pressure from parents to score high marks and pressure from administrators of academic institutions resulted in increasing number of crimes, suicides and homicides committed by students and made counseling services mandatory in all schools and colleges in the modern days.

When did Counseling Programs Started?

Counseling programs in schools began in the United States, as early as in the 20th century. They started with the vocational guidance which is now called as career development counseling. Jesse B. Davis was the first to introduce the systematic school guidance program in the United States. In India, Patna University was the first institution which started counseling services in 1945. Guidance and Counseling services consolidated their position in India after the recommendation of the Mudaliar Secondary Education Commission (1952-1953). In India, the National Policy on Education(1986) also emphasized this need in very clear terms, making counseling services as imperative and integral component of program of any educational institution.

What is Counseling?

"Counseling is the skilled and principled use of relationship to facilitate self-knowledge, emotional acceptance, growth and the optimal development of personal resources. The overall aim is to provide an opportunity to work towards living more satisfyingly and resourcefully.

- *British Association for Counseling (1986)*

What is not Counseling?

Counseling is,

- Not giving the information, though information may be present.
- Not giving an advice though making suggestions and recommendations.
- Not interviewing, though interviewing is involved.
- Not the behaviors like persuading, threatening, compelling or use of physical force.
- Not the selection and assignment of individual to job.

- *Patterson (1967)*

- The syllabus and curriculum is very comprehensive which expect a lot of effort from the students. When they are not able to cope up with nursing curriculum, their academic performance becomes poor, and students may fail in the examinations.
- Unhappiness prevails, when things are different from expectations of student life (e.g. getting up early to attend clinical areas, playing a dual role as student and nurse as and when situation arises).
- Nursing students are expected to hide their own values and beliefs, at the same time, maintain good human relations with the patients and the health team members.
- Student may be under stress when caring patients with acute or chronic illness, death and dying, etc, which require emotional balance and mental maturity.
- Ongoing stress like, balancing with the actual potential and the expectations, can lead to isolation and depression.
- Students may join nursing course thinking that they will easily get job in abroad but may not be able to clear exams needed for entry.
- Nursing graduates when joining higher course, may not be able to cope up with increased workload, along with family pressure and economic burden.
- Orient with library, sports department, knowledge or tech park where computerization of student entries are made, and other facilities, available to them in the college and in the university.
- Guides them to choose specialization, according to their needs and interests.
- Developing appropriate study habits to study nursing.
- Improving study skills, organizing time to get satisfactory performance.
- Orienting them with clinical field and methods of clinical learning.
- Advising on importance of getting healthy food, mild exercising and getting adequate sleep, avoiding substances like, alcohol, nicotine, caffeine, to stay healthy.
- Making contacts and friends through shared activities such as joining in student organizations, sports club or cultural hub, etc.
- Engaging in a relaxation/ meditation exercise and stopping negative, critical, unrealistic thoughts and increasing positive thoughts.
- Finding ways to let out strong feelings (e.g., journal, friend) and not to suppress them.
- Reminding self that, it is normal to experience psychological distress after a traumatic event.
- Remaining consistent with the routines (eating, sleeping, exercising, social activities), even if they feel they are unproductive.
- Spending some extra time not on the mobile phone but by relaxing (singing, drawing, dancing, etc) or talking to friends, family, or relatives.
- Making help available to students for coping with crisis situations.
- Providing information on profession such as rewards, conditions of employment, opportunities for advancements, the financial assistance, and fellowships for improving their prospects.
- Development of effective communication system within the college, hospital, hostel and home.
- Effective and appropriate use of resources available for the welfare of students.
- Prompt and early detection of disturbed or deviant behavior in pupils and referring them to medical, psycho therapy services.

What is the Role of a Teacher as Counselor?

Often nursing students will not know what questions to ask, what information they need, or what their options are (especially when applying to graduate programs). Teacher, who is taking the role of counselor, fully and completely without any ifs and buts, must accept the student as a worthy person. A good counselor can be of immense help as he or she can lessen confusion or conflict by getting to know students and being familiar with the kinds of suggestions and information that can be useful for them. Information is also provided on interpersonal relationship as students also face problems with parents, teachers, friends and others. He or she counsels the students on the following aspects.

- Orient themselves to the philosophy and objectives of nursing education.
- Helps them to identify the need of educational planning.
- Assists in making an appraisal of their abilities and interest.

The recent trend emerged in counseling is online counseling which the teacher counselor can make use of to counsel students particularly shy and

hesitant students. In online counseling, counseling services are offered through the Internet, via email, real-time chat, and video conferencing. Cohen and Kerr (1998) conducted a study on the effectiveness of online therapy versus direct counseling for treatment of anxiety disorders among students. They found that there was no difference in the level of change between the two modes as measured by the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory. So with less time, avoiding fear, anxiety, hesitation, and face to face embarrassment, students can be benefitted immensely through online counseling.

Conclusion

Counseling enhances, self-analysis, self-understanding, improves self-esteem, and also understanding of the world; Teaching is a difficult task and not every teaching brings out students learning. The counselor no doubt, is instrumental for the student's development and achievement. The teacher counselor by taking special interest in the students, develops confidence, alleviates, fear and anxiety and creates students as successful professionals and responsible citizens.

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