

## MANAGER'S ROLE IN COUNSELLING – A REORIENT PHENOMENON

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### ABSTRACT

It is the duty of the manager to keep operations running smoothly throughout the work day. The duties of management have not changed nearly as drastically as the style in which a manager must perform these duties. Probably one of the most important aspects of this task is having the appropriate relationship with employees. Counselling can help reduce frustration, by helping the employees to choose a mature course of action to remove blockages preventing goal accomplishment, or by helping them to reconcile with the reality. Counsellors will have to work with both, the employee and the Management. This task is obviously not one that is simple, nor is there one sure method to implement to insure fluidity.

**KEYWORDS:** Role, Counselling

### INTRODUCTION

Counselling is defined as discussion of an emotional problem with an employee, with the general objective of decreasing it. Counselling is a process through which one person helps another by purposeful conversation in an understanding atmosphere. It seeks to establish a helping relationship in which the one counseled can express their thoughts and feelings in such a way as to clarify their own situation, come to terms with some new experience, see their difficulty more objectively, and so face their problem with less anxiety and tension. Its basic purpose is to assist the individual to make their own decision from among the choices available to them.

Counselling is a discussion of an employee's problem that usually has an emotional content to it, in order to help the employee cope with the situation better. Counselling seeks to improve employee's mental health. People feel comfortable about themselves and about other people and are able to meet the demands of life when they are in good mental health.

In an effective counselling, the feeling of both the managers and the employees are to be considered. Counselling is basically an act of communication. Most of the problems which require counselling have some emotional contents. It is an advice giving activity.

### Vigilance in Counselling

A counsellor may:

- Identify himself with the counselee and help him decide, motivate him to do what is jointly decided, OR,
- Do the most of the above but help him make up his mind to act as he thinks fit.

But in any case, in the counselling relationship, the following conditions are essential:

- Counsellee should psychologically accept the counsellor.
- Counsellor must be able to listen well and communicate effectively.
- An atmosphere of trust and confidence.
- Credibility & Sensitivity of the counsellor.

### **Time for Counselling**

An employee should be counseled when he or she has personal problems that affect job performance.

Some signs of a troubled employee includes sudden change of behavior, Preoccupation, Irritability, Increased accidents, Increased fatigue, Excessive drinking, Reduced production, Waste, Difficulty in absorbing training.

### **OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY**

The objective of this study is enhancing the role of counsellor in an organisation. This study also shows various approaches which are helpful for the managers to recognize the issues of employees related to work and their life. Manager's role as a counsellor is to providing a professional assistance to employees by using various approaches and types which are discussed in this study.

### **FUNCTIONS OF COUNSELLING**

Whatever may be purpose of counselling, functions of counselling can be categorized into six major areas which are detailed as follows:

- **Exposé guidance:** It is the function of coaching by the counsellor, who may be the immediate boss or a professional. Here the counsellor listens to the problems of the employees and then guides them to the right direction.
- **Reassurance:** It is the function of restoring the confidence of the employees, helping them to feel courageous, to gain strength, and to develop positive thinking.
- **Expounding the philosophy:** It is the function of encouragement to the employees to be rational and realistic. Employees often lose their emotional balance in executing their assignments and jobs, and hence commit decisional errors. Helping them to be rational by clarifying their way of thinking, puts them back into the realities and enables them to achieve the results.
- **Liberate emotional apprehension:** It is the process of relief from frustration and stress. The counsellor allows the employees to share their grief. In the process of sharing, employees get relief from their emotional tensions. This does not lead to a solution by itself, but it breaks the ice, allowing the counsellor to understand the possible ways for solution.
- **Sharing:** It is a process of sharing the information and understanding, through upward and downward communication. Upward communication flows from the employees, who bring their feelings and emotional problems to the notice of the management. Downward communication flows from the counsellors, who help the employees get an insight into the activities of the organization.

- **Reorientation:** It is a process of encouragement to bring internal changes in goals, values, and mental models, helping employees to leverage their strengths and guarding against their weaknesses.

## THE COUNSELLING PROCESS

- **Describe the changed behavior:** Let the employee know that the organization is concerned with work performance. The supervisor maintains work standards by being consistent in dealing with troubled employees. Explain in very specific terms what the employee needs to do in order to perform up to the organization's expectations. Don't moralize. Restrict the confrontation to job performance.
- **Comment on changed behaviour:** Get employee comments on the changed behavior and the reason for it. Confine any negative comments to the employee's job performance. No need to diagnose; Listen and protect confidentiality.
- **Agree on a solution:** Emphasize confidentiality. Don't be swayed or misled by emotional pleas, sympathy tactics, or "hard-luck" stories. Explain that going for help does not exclude the employee from standard disciplinary procedures and that it does not open the door for special privileges.
- **Commitment to change:** Summarize and get a commitment to change. Seek commitment from the employee to meet work standards and to get help, if necessary, with the problem.
- **Follow up:** Once the problem is resolved and a productive relationship is established, follow up is needed.

## PERSONA OF A GOOD COUNSELLOR

The set of attitudes required for an efficient counsellor are: • Respect i.e. High esteem for human dignity, recognition of a person's freedom & rights and faith in human potential to grow. • Sincerity, authenticity • Understanding Objectivity • Maintaining confidentiality • Empathy • Non-judgmental approach towards the counsellee.

The set of skills required for an efficient counsellor are • Decency skills i.e. social etiquettes, warm manners Excellent communication skills which also include non-verbal communication and listening skills.

## THERE ARE FIVE MAIN COMPONENTS TO CONSIDER WHEN FORMING AND GIVING CONSTRUCTIVE FEEDBACK (ESTEP, 2004)

- **Consideration:** Know that counsellor is addressing an issue that could possibly hurt the feelings on the recipient.
- **Timing:** There is a lot of truth in the old adage of "There is a time and a place for everything." If the issue is private, do not address it in a public setting. Additionally, it is better to give feedback as close to the time of occurrence of the issue.
- **Obligation:** Know that counsellor can only influence a person, not force them to do something. If counsellor is dealing with an employee, make sure that they know the consequences of not correcting the behavior.
- **Readiness:** Make sure that the recipient is in as close to an ideal emotional state as possible when giving feedback. As the person issuing feedback, there is a need to have a clear head, try not to give feedback when

angry or agitated.

- **Clarity:** This means making sure that the message conveyed is the one received. It is good to ask questions.

## APPROACHES TO COUNSELLING

There are three main approaches used by professional counselors:

- **Psychodynamic Approach to Counselling**

Psychodynamic counselling evolved from the work of Sigmund Freud (1856-1939). During his career as a medical doctor, Freud came across many patients who suffered from medical conditions which appeared to have no 'physical cause'. This led him to believe that the origin of such illnesses lay in the unconscious mind of the patient. Freud's work investigated the unconscious mind in order to understand his patients and assist in their healing. Over time many of Freud's original ideas have been adapted, developed, disregarded or even discredited, bringing about many different schools of thought and practice. However, psychodynamic counselling is based on Freud's idea that true knowledge of people and their problems is possible through an understanding of particular areas of the human mind, these areas are:

**The Conscious** – things that we are aware of, these could be feelings or emotions, anger, sadness, grief, delight, surprise, happiness, etc.

**The Subconscious** – these are things that are below our conscious awareness but fairly easily accessible. For example with appropriate questioning a past event which a client had forgotten about may be brought back into the conscious mind.

**The Unconscious** – is the area of the mind where memories have been suppressed and is usually very difficult to access. Such memories may include extremely traumatic events that have been blocked off and require a highly skilled practitioner to help recover.

### Humanistic Approach to Counselling

In contrast to the psychodynamic approach to counselling, childhood events and difficulties are not given the same importance in the humanistic counselling process. Humanistic counselling recognizes the uniqueness of every individual. Humanistic counselling assumes that everyone has an innate capacity to grow emotionally and psychologically towards the goals of self-actualization and personal fulfillment. Humanistic counsellors work with the belief that it is not life events that cause problems, but how the individual experiences life events. The Humanistic approach to counselling encourages the client to learn to understand how negative responses to life events can lead to psychological discomfort. The approach aims for acceptance of both the negative and positive aspects of oneself.

Humanistic counsellors aim to help clients to explore their own thoughts and feelings and to work out their own solutions to their problems. The American psychologist, Carl Rogers (1902-1987) developed one of the most commonly used humanistic therapies, Client-Centred Counselling, which encourages the client to concentrate on how they feel at the present moment.

### Behavioural Approach to Counselling

The Behavioural Approach to Counselling focuses on the assumption that the environment determines an

individual's behaviour. How an individual responds to a given situation is due to behaviour that has been reinforced as a child. Behavioural therapies evolved from psychological research and theories of learning concerned with observable behaviour, i.e. behaviour that can be objectively viewed and measured. Behaviourists believe that that behaviour is 'learned' and, therefore, it can be unlearned.

The behavioural counsellor uses the skills of listening, reflection and clarification, but rather than use them as a process of revealing and clarifying the client's thoughts and feelings, the skills would be used to enable the counsellor to make an assessment of all the factors relating to the undesirable behaviour.

## TYPES OF COUNSELLING

A counselling session must be planned and organized. The type to counselling will generally fall somewhere on a continuum between extremely directive and extremely non-directive. The continuum looks something like this:

Extremely \_\_\_\_\_ Extremely Directive

- **Directive Counselling:** In a directive counselling session, the manager takes the lead and does most of the talking. These meetings are relatively brief covering only enough time to fully cover the counselling plan. The manager opens the session with a definition of the problem which initiated the need for the counselling. Next, manager should explain the effect of the problem on accomplishing the work of the unit. This should provide the employee with a clear understanding of how the actions of the employee are adversely affecting the work unit.
- Generally, this approach is used for conduct situations where the violation is straight forward and the expectations are clear. When using the directive approach, a follow-up meeting is not necessary unless the conduct has not improved and change has not occurred. A follow-up meeting is usually needed for performance counselling.
- **Non-Directive Counselling:** This approach differs considerably from the directive approach. The manager is still in control, but the employee is responsible for much of the discussion. In this approach, the manager must use advanced counselling techniques to keep the employee talking about the problem, its causes, and possible solutions. This approach is normally used for performance related counselling where the employee is failing, or nearly failing, one or more critical elements of the position. Manager must keep the pressure on the employee since performance problems are primarily that of the employee, not the supervisor. When using the non-directive approach, manager need patience for the process to work.
- **Co-operative Counselling:** It uses the co-operative efforts of both the counsellor and counselee. It is a mutual counsellor –counselee relationship that establish a co-operative exchange of ideas to help solve a counselee's problems. Here, both the counsellor and the counselled develop close mental relationships, exchange ideas, feelings, knowledge, and information, to overcome the problem of the counselee. Since the possible-solution inputs are also collected from the counselee.

In organizations, managers have to adopt suitable types of counselling depending on the reasons, type of employees for whom the counselling is intended, and the underlying situation that prevails at a particular point of time.

## CONCLUSIONS

Counselling will not correct every situation. Manager will correct the majority of issues with one or two counselling sessions, but manager will not be successful in all cases. Some cases will progress to disciplinary action or a performance-improvement period before getting the employee's attention. Counselling takes time and patience, especially performance-based counselling. A well-executed counselling session occurs because the manager has taken the time to plan the session and conduct it. Unless the session is extremely directive, it will take time to discuss all issues in counselling plan and give the employee an opportunity to respond. After the session, documentation is essential. While counselling, the employer or manager shows that he cares and has concern. Counselling service can change an organization's culture because it introduces alternative ways and perspectives of working with people, viewing people in relation to organization and each other.

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