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COUNSELING THEORY AND PRACTICE 1949

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*2.7.49*

COUNSELING THEORY AND PRACTICE

May, 1949

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## I INTRODUCTION

### A. What do we mean by the word "counseling"?

This series of discussion-conferences on counseling theory and practice has been set up on the premise that counseling is a very common phenomenon in the course of individual experience. What we mean by the word "counseling" is a very simple process of communication that takes place between two individuals. It is characterized by the fact that (1) two people get together and talk; (2) each person plays a different role - that is, one is primarily the speaker and the other is primarily the listener; and (3) the interest of the one (the speaker) becomes for the time being a mutual interest of the two. This kind of experience is one which is familiar to all of us, for it happens in some measure in the course of ordinary day-to-day living. We are sometimes taking one role and sometimes the other. To be sure, we do not think of it as "counseling," nor do we analyze what takes place. But the process is a part of living which is basic to the growth and development of all of us as individuals and to understanding between people.

The process of day-to-day living in close association with other individuals seems to contribute to, if not to demand, the constant change and development of the individual into something tomorrow that he is not today. In this sense, then, each person is changing through experience and associations from day to day. Counseling, in its broader aspects, is one of those associations that is formalized in a conscious effort to aid individuals in making their day-to-day changes with a minimum of lost effort.

We have said that counseling involves a kind of experience which all of us have in some measure. It is with a conviction in our own ability to increase our understanding, skill, and satisfaction in this area that

we embark upon a study of counseling theory and practice.

We will devote attention first to the basic process involved in counseling, as we see it in day-to-day experiences between people, anywhere. Then we will turn to counseling as a conscious, formalized activity, particularly as we are concerned with it in industry.

The formalized counseling programs that are in existence today in various industrial or social institutions vary in their functions and techniques according to the needs that have been found within their sphere of activity and the judgment of those administering the program as to the most effective methods for meeting those needs.

We shall attempt to relate our study to the particular set of concrete situations with which we are faced in our own organization. We shall constantly test theory against practice.

Since our primary concern is with counseling as it relates to Western Electric Company, we shall not attempt in this unit of study to cover the counseling field as a whole. We shall not even pretend to survey the field and divide our attention among the major "types" of counseling which are carried on. However, this is not to say that we have no interest in the broad field of counseling, but only that considerations of time prevent our extending the scope of our study in this way. We need to be alert and curious, constantly, in regard to counseling that is being done by the clinician, the teacher, the doctor, the minister, the vocational guidance counselor, the social worker, etc. We all have much in common, and the thinking and experience of others may well enrich our own. We must, however, bear in mind that if we look to others in the field of counseling it will not be with any idea that we wish to determine what counseling "is," nor with the thought that we will seek someone or something to imitate. We will always come back to our own situation and learn to function in terms of it.

B. How do we propose to study counseling theory and practice?

We propose, first, to review certain general considerations regarding human behavior. This will, of course, constitute repetition of material covered in the preceding unit and will perhaps involve some differences in emphasis. We feel that the importance of this whole area in relation to the development of counseling theory and practice cannot be stressed too much. It is here that we expect to find some of our basic concepts. We look to the individual to find our theory; we do not wish to impose theory upon the individual.

Second, we propose to give some attention to the talking process, viewed as a form of behavior and therefore understandable in terms of the general principles relating to behavior. This means, among other things, that we will try to look at talking in context - not as an isolated activity apart from other activities going on both inside and outside the individual.

Next, we propose to consider together some examples of the communication process as we see it in the interactions between people in various kinds of face-to-face relationships. Here we will try to relate some of our theoretical considerations to our own experiences, and we will try to discover what kinds of satisfactions individuals derive from face-to-face associations with other individuals.

Based on these observations, we will then be ready to consider wherein these face-to-face relationships break down or fail in some way to yield the satisfactions which the individual is seeking. This will begin to point the way for us in our dealings with people in the counseling relationship.

We will then turn to the counselor himself and examine the importance of his own attitudes upon the way he relates himself to other people. We will be concerned here with how well the counselor knows and accepts himself, what kind of picture he has formed of the world outside himself, and his basic attitudes toward his fellow-man.

With a picture well in mind of what particular needs we are addressing ourselves to, we will next consider specific ways for increasing our skills and helping to make the face-to-face relationship in counseling a positive, satisfying experience.

Finally, we will examine the particular context in which we function - that is, the formalized counseling program in Western Electric Company, and we will give special thought to the role of the counselor in this situation.

C. What do we expect to accomplish in this unit of study?

First, we hope to develop a growing appreciation for the dynamic and purposeful character of human behavior. This should help us to recognize the limitations of our "knowledge" about an individual, to be aware of new possibilities for understanding behavior, and to enjoy a more tolerant, patient, accepting attitude toward human beings (including ourselves).

Second, we hope to develop increased skill in making observations of human behavior - especially verbal behavior, which occupies so prominent a place in counseling. We hope to develop alertness and sensitivity, so that we can observe more of the total picture, and we hope to develop finer, more careful discriminations between "me" and "not-me," in order to make ob-



jective observations, relatively free from personal bias and prejudice and interpretation.

Third, we hope to develop increased self-understanding - an ability on the part of the counselor to be counseled, to learn to know himself better and to reckon with himself as he affects the counseling relationships which he attempts to set up with other people.

Fourth, we hope to find practical and effective methods for the development of skills - for helping the counselor to communicate effectively with the counselee.

Fifth, we hope to build up an integrated concept of the counseling function and the counselor's role within Western Electric Company, and the relation of the counseling program to the total organization.

## I. INTRODUCTION

### A. What do we mean by the word "counseling"?

1. May be regarded as a particular kind of communication that takes place between two individuals.
2. Process is basic to growth and development of individuals and to understanding between individuals.
3. Experiences of this kind found in varying degrees in everyday life.
4. "Counseling" involves formalized, conscious development and application of skill in order to stimulate and promote understanding and growth of individuals.

### B. How do we propose to study counseling theory and practice?

1. Review of the dynamic processes involved in human behavior, as we understand it today.
2. Application of these principles to the talking process, viewed as a form of behavior.
3. Observation of communication process as we see it in face-to-face relationships.
4. Consideration of the attitudes and total inner "set" of the counselor as factors in freeing an individual's verbal expression.
5. Study of methods for development of skills that will help make more effective the listener's verbal interaction in face-to-face relationships.
6. Examination of the role of the counselor in Western Electric Company.

### C. What do we expect to accomplish in this unit of study?

1. Growing appreciation for dynamic and purposeful character of human behavior.
2. Increased skill in making alert, objective, sensitive observations of human behavior, especially verbal.

3. Increased self-understanding and awareness of part which own attitudes play in relationships with other people.
4. Improved grasp of tools for development of skills in counseling.
5. Integrated concept of counselor's role in Western Electric Company.



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## II SOME BASIC ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT THE INDIVIDUAL

A. Everything a person does is directed toward fulfilling a need that he feels.

1. Physical needs

a. Hunger

b. Rest

c. Sex

B. Individual's behavior constitutes more or less direct means of satisfying needs.

1. Physical needs gratified by relatively simple behavior.

2. Psychological need gratification may cause complex behavior.

a. Psychological need and overt behavior may not be understood or predicted by observer. (Example: Observation of individual behavior in group working under a group piece work plan.)

C. Individual constantly in process of balancing needs.

1. Individual "ill at ease" when needs felt seem to call for behavior that is not acceptable to other felt needs.

2. Individual may be unable to discern "real need."

3. We as individuals are striving for a state of "well being."

a. This need of "well being" is the source of power that causes individuals to strive to reach it.

D. Importance of self.

1. We are much more "selfish" and "egocentric" than we like to think we are.

2. Social conditioning determines degree of self-expression.

E. Semantics tells us we think in terms of our language symbols.

1. No thought without words.
2. Words we use have individual meanings for us.

F. Verbalization makes possible the individual's modification and change through changing the context of inner feeling or attitude.

1. Symbols as a part of our total experience that influences our thinking.
2. Subtlety of inner attitude and feeling makes possible the use of expression through counseling regardless of degree of so-called "adjustment."

G. We each know our own feelings and reactions and have the right to feel and react as we do.

1. The democratic way of life emulated in counseling.
2. Each individual has the ability and right to manage his own life.
3. Due to need involvement, he is the only one who can control or really understand his thought and feeling life.

H. All of above facts present in "all of us."

1. "All of us" comes to work or is interrelated with all experience.
2. "Bill Parker" (G.M. film) - an example of inter-related experience.

I. Counseling so directed or structured as to let above outlined forces work through the counselee.

J. One law of life seems to be that all things shall change.

1. On physical level.
2. On social and psychological level.

3. Accepting consequences of change.

- K. Adjustment, in final analysis, involves the acceptance of change in life and the ability to accept the implications of that fact in our individual experiences.





### III TALKING AS A FORM OF BEHAVIOR

#### A. Talking as a part of total behavior.

1. Every living organism is a complex system of inter-reacting processes.
2. Talking needs to be understood not as a separate, isolated process, but as an integral part of the whole person.
3. Implications for counseling.

#### B. Talking as learned behavior.

1. Learning to talk is not simply a process of mastering language.
2. Each individual, through individual experience and social conditioning, develops habits of self-expression.
3. Talking, like other learned behavior, is not direct, spontaneous activity and represents a distortion of what the individual is thinking and feeling.
4. Implications for counseling.

#### C. Talking as growth experience.

1. Talking is not only a response which the individual makes to certain needs as he feels them, but it is at the same time an experience to which the individual responds.
2. Like any other experience, talking contributes to the continual change that is taking place within the living, growing individual.
3. Implications for counseling.



#### IV COMMUNICATION IN FACE-TO-FACE RELATIONSHIPS

##### A. Observations of face-to-face meetings between two individuals

1. Focus on interaction process - how individuals affect one another
2. Analysis of kind of communication that takes place between two individuals
3. Kinds of meaning which these face-to-face relationships have for the participants
4. Factors which appear to limit the effectiveness of communication process and the personal satisfactions of the participants in these face-to-face relationships

##### B. Possibilities for the development and application of skill in face-to-face relationships

1. Scientific method applied to human relations
2. "Awareness" the keynote of learning new skills
3. Usefulness of increased understanding and skills in inter-personal relationships



V THE COUNSELOR'S INNER "SET" FOR FREEING VERBAL EXPRESSION

A. Counselor's Awareness of Self

1. Habits of introspection and self-analysis
2. Feelings toward self.
3. Goals and ambitions
4. Self-direction
5. "Sharing" self with others
6. Spontaneity
7. Flexibility
8. Feelings of "belonging" - identification with some group or groups

B. Counselor's Awareness of Others

1. Attitudes toward deviations from and/or similarities to own "way of life"
2. Feelings of "responsibility" for other people
3. "Outgoing" feelings; "reaching out" impulses; feelings of "warmth."
4. Degrees of sensitivity to others' feelings
5. Experiences in empathy ("Feeling with" instead of "feeling for")
6. Degrees of objectivity toward others

C. Counselor's Awareness of Own Attitudes toward Social-Industrial Environment

1. Attitudes toward authority
2. Attitudes toward "regimentation"
3. Attitudes toward management
4. Attitudes toward unionism

5. Attitudes toward social responsibility
6. Attitudes toward "social justice"
7. Attitudes toward competition



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## VI THE COUNSELOR'S VERBAL INTERACTION

### A. Need for skill in communicating.

1. Counselee's behavior in this face-to-face meeting not predetermined; will be affected by what the counselor communicates (as that is understood by the counselee).
2. Counselor can discover from own experience that he is not always successful in communicating the attitudes, ideas, etc., which he wants to get across to counselee.

### B. Extent of counselor's personal involvement in this relationship.

1. Bases for judgment and discrimination in counselor's engaging in talk related to himself.
2. Counselor's feelings toward expression of personal attitudes.

### C. Discriminating between "levels" of talk.

1. Respecting counselee's apparent choice of levels.
2. Responding to counselee's apparent desire to change levels.

### D. Basis for judgment as to kind of response which may be appropriate for a given situation.

1. Clear understanding of what it is hoped will be achieved by counselor's response.
2. Ability to respond naturally and quickly.

### E. Analysis of certain methods of response.

1. Simple pause.
2. Nod or acknowledgment by facial expression.
3. Statement of simple acceptance.
4. Trial re-phrasing.



5. Expression of incomplete understanding;  
request for further elaboration.
6. Questions.
7. Summarization.
8. Information.
9. Structuring.

F. Practice.



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## VII THE ROLE OF COUNSELOR IN WESTERN ELECTRIC COMPANY

### A. Orientation in terms of the individual

1. Nature of counselor's interest in and obligation to each individual
2. Awareness of external demands upon the individual, as he sees them
3. Appreciation of internal demands within the individual, as he feels them
4. Function of the counselor in relation to the continuing process of integration taking place within each individual

### B. Orientation in terms of the group

1. Nature of counselor's interest in and responsibility for group interrelationships
2. "Group membership" arising out of similarities in status, grade, service, age, sex, etc. - implications for counselor
3. "Group membership" arising out of formal structure of work group - implications for counselor
4. "Group membership" arising out of informal relationships - implications for counselor

### C. Relation of counselor role to leader role

1. Attitudes of the counselor toward his role
2. Attitudes of others toward the counselor's role

### D. Orientation in terms of management

1. Counseling as a supplementary function
2. Effect upon counselor of management-sponsorship
3. Communication with management

### E. The counselor as an effective force in industry

1. Significance of counselor's function
2. Contributions of the counselor

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