

Problem - Solving through Counselling

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One of the biggest misconceptions in counselling is that people believe counselors can provide the answer to every issue. This frequent misconception is what often limits the counsellor more than the individual seeking help. Ultimately, while counselling is something that everyone can do, not everyone can counsel effectively. Part of the reason behind this is due to the fact that the word "counselling" is often commercially overused.

There have been many cases, during my experience, in which the false stereotypes and prejudices surrounding counseling, prevents parents and children seek help from such professionals. This perception on counselling has not only become a problem for people in need of counselling, but has spiraled into a crisis for a few individuals. Without counsellors to provide the tools and assist individuals in addressing issues in particular areas of their lives, people may never obtain the ability to cope with their personal crises with suffering and the daily stressors of life

Often times, individuals seek doctors for prescribed medications to improve a particular illness or ability while working alongside counsellors. Despite the invisibility of the role that counselling plays in immediately improving the mood or feelings of such individuals in need, counselling is still very much crucial to an individual's healing and resilience. The effectivity behind counselling lies in the learned problem solving skills that a service user develops throughout their time spent with the counsellor. Counseling is about addressing the issue and finding effective solutions for progress. Counselling does not relieve symptoms or immediate pains; instead it seeks to provide individuals with long term changes through the development of coping mechanisms and problem solving abilities.

However, in spite of the benefits that counselling provides and its availability to those in need, people who are often shrouded with misconceptions of its purpose and use either forego counselling altogether, or begrudgingly seek counsellors, all the while resenting their time and therefore, hindering their own personal progress. This is a dilemma that professional counselors can no longer continue to bear.

Therefore, specialized counsellors have gathered in their field to create an overall solution for the provision of treatment services. In the case of long-term progress, what counselors can do alone for treatment is extremely limited. Sometimes, it requires psychiatrists,

social workers, religious leaders, nurses, psychotherapists, or even family members need to be involved in order to progress from an individual's identified issue. For example, mental illnesses such as depression, personality disorders, dementia, and eating disorders tend to co-occur with other mental illnesses. Therefore, when the mental illness has progressed to a certain extent, the individual might suffer a long and difficult fight with sufferings. Also, experiencing a traumatic event such as attempting suicide, divorce, and the loss of a loved one is most often effectively dealt with counselling in collaboration with another treatment. Much like ensuring a car's condition, where the fuel must not be empty, the oil must be changed consistently, and parts of the engine must be maintained simultaneously, counselling addresses one aspect of a person's overall system and must be done so in collaboration of other treatments in order to ensure one's healthy and proper functioning.

Just like how the spring loses its tension when too much force is acting upon it for long a period of time, there is a point in which the window of opportunity for a psychological issue to be cured of closes.

As a professional counselor, I believe that counselling is better suited as a preventative measure for those experiencing any emotional and/or psychological crises, rather than a last resort. Unlike majority of the Korean community, Canadians are less ashamed, in comparison, of receiving counselling and investing on their overall health and wellbeing through the help of counsellors and specialists.

In Canada, counselling is more institutionalized and routine practice. People who see counsellors often do so out of a discomfort in speaking with family members and close friends about their personal issues, or simply due to an inability to do so.

I do not know how much pain or how many years it will take before the Korean - Canadian community will accept the help that is made available by counsellors. I must remain hopeful that one day, all cultures, including the Korean - Canadian community, will see past the stigma that has tinted counselling and grow to trust the work of counsellors.

A man is the wisest if he can choose a road that does not reach a state of despair, such as asking which way is right and what he cannot solve alone.