

ON THE MEANING AND INTEGRITY OF CAREER AND PERSONAL COUNSELING

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ÖZET : Bu makalede, mesleki ve kişisel sorunların birbirinden ayrılamayacak kadar iç içe bulunduğu ve bu nedenle ayrı ayrı ele alınamayacağı gerçeğine ağırlık verilerek mesleki ve kişisel danışma'nın anlamı ve bütünlüğü tartışılmıştır. Mesleki ve kişisel danışma sürecinin birçok ortak yönü bulunmaktadır. Danışmanın çok çeşitli kuram ve tekniklerden yararlanabilme özgürlüğünden ötürü, mesleki danışmada eklektik model kullanılabilir. Makalede danışmanların eğitilmesi ve mesleki danışma'nın uygulanması ile ilgili doğrular tartışılmıştır.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Mesleki danışma, kişisel danışma, anlamı, bütünlüğü.

ABSTRACT: In this paper the meaning and integrity of career and personal counseling is discussed emphasizing the fact that career and personal problems are inextricably intertwined and therefore should not be dealt with separately. The processes of career and personal counseling have much in common. An eclectic career counseling model may be useful because the counselor is free to choose from a wide variety of theories and techniques. Implications for training the counselors and practicing career counseling are also discussed.

KEY WORDS: Career counseling ,personal counseling, meaning, integrity.

Many counselors view career counseling, as separate and distinct from personal counseling, regarding career counseling as consisting mainly of providing testing and information giving [1,2] requiring little time and intensity. Career counseling has usually been conceptualized as an intellectual exercise while personal counseling is regarded as an involvement in treating emotional problems like phobias, stress, anxiety and so on. This means ignoring a long traditional fact in the career development field that has consistently recognized the importance of personality factors in career choice and maintenance [3, 4, 5, 6].

According to Lucas and Epperson [7] such a short-term rational counseling process consisting only of test interpretation and information gathering will not

be sufficient for career clients who are struggling with complex issues related to locus of control, autonomy and identity formation.

Traditionally, counselors have attempted to separate career and personal counseling depending on the idea that a certain level of mental health is required before the client can proceed with career counseling. Some of the leading vocational psychologists including Crites [5] and Super [3] state that when a client presenting some psychological symptoms like depression and psychosomatic illness he/she is referred to personal counseling so that the causes underlying these symptoms such as feelings of inferiority, distortions of self - concept, irrational beliefs or thoughts can be solved and that career counseling should not be used with such clients until they acquire good mental health. On the other hand, some other well-known vocational psychologists including Brammer and Shostrom [8] demonstrated that this sort of stereotypical view of the relationship of career counseling to personal counseling may not be appropriate because signs of psychological symptoms which can be seen among workers may sometimes not be real mental health problems causing psychological deficit but may be created by unsuitable work environments. Many studies have demonstrated that there is a relationship between the quality of some work environment and the manifestation of psychological symptoms such as depressions and psychosomatic complaints among workers [9,10,11,12]. Crites [5] has suggested that as insights from client-centered and psychodynamic approaches have been applied to career counseling, choice problems are viewed as essentially personality problems. Therefore the assumptions that guide the provision of career counseling need to be considered in relation to personal adjustment counseling or psychotherapy. As to Crites, vocational and personal problems are different but they do interact. Thus, career counseling often embraces personal counseling but it goes beyond this, to explore and replicate the clients' role in the main area of life-the world of work. Brown [13] goes even deeper than Crites in explaining the interaction of career and personal counseling. Brown points out that for many clients an unsuitable environment

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alone can produce symptoms indicating severe psychological disorder. He also points out that since there is an interaction between a person's work and other areas of his life, stress in any area may affect his career work to the extent that career counseling is needed.

Zunker [14] tends to take a broader view of the processes included in career counseling than do Crites [5] and Brown[13]. In his view career counseling tends to include components or strategies that differ for diverse populations. For example; according to Zunker career counseling for adults in career transition would include seven components or strategies : Experience identification, skill identification, education and training, planning, occupational planning, development of a life learning plan. His attempt to wed the special characteristics of different populations to the treatments they receive , counts to be a useful perspective.

Krumboltz [15] argues that, by using the term "career counseling" and separating it from "personal counseling" a problem can be created because these two different terms may imply that there are important distinctions between them rather than integration. Krumboltz concludes that career problems are inextricably intertwined with personal problems. Therefore it is almost impossible to categorize the problems as "career" or "personal". He gives some real life problems indicating this integration. For example, if some one is depressed because of losing his job and thinks that he will not be able to find another one can his problem be regarded as a career problem or a personal depression problem? Krumboltz [15] believes that if such problems are classified as "career" or "personal" it becomes more difficult to help people because this type of problems involve elements of both. For the same reason Richardson [16] prefers not to use the word "career" and instead talk about the "role of work in a person's life". Richardson argues that we need to move beyond career development to a broader emphasis on fostering the development of individuals considered as whole persons in relation to the work in their lives. Metz [17] also has shown that work and family factors are combined in some complex ways to influence both job and marital satisfaction and that career and personal counseling are inextricably intertwined.

According to Belkin [18] the focus of career counseling is more on total person in the process of choosing a career rather than a single choice itself. When we view an individual's career as an integral part of his or her life-style, we can easily understand why appropriate career counseling interventions have ramifications in other areas of functioning.

Tolbert [19] defining career counseling in its contemporary meaning states that "career counseling" is really much the same as other types of counseling except that it focuses on planning and making decisions about occupations and education. As in all counseling, the personal relationship is critical. It includes exploration of values and attitudes but information and factual data about the client's resources, such as finances for training, are more significant than in personal counseling. Yet it is impossible to help some one with a vocationl problem without recognizing such aspects of his life as needs, conflicts, and relations with others. Tolbert [20] defines the scope of career education as covering the entire life-span from preschool years and includes acquiring values and competencies and setting goals for both in and out of school experiences. This is not to minimize the role of information but rather to emphasize the host of other significant factors that play a vital role in it.

Similarities of Career and Personal Counseling Process

An examination of the central features of career and personal counseling shows that they are essentially the same. Walsh [21] notes that the process in career counseling is primarily concerned with the interaction between the counselor and the client, and that the stages of career counseling tend to be problem solving oriented in nature, and that the counseling relationship and communications are the key ingredients in the counseling process in all kinds of approaches to career counseling. Therefore; the facilitative core conditions (empathy, genuineness, positive regard and concreteness) are basic to career counseling as they are to all other forms of personal counseling. Consequently career counselors too, should use extensively such counseling skills as reflection of feeling, paraphrasing , open questioning, summarization, which are effective in communicating the facilitative conditions. Career counselors like personal counselors must develop rapport, communicate acceptance, and promote exploration and skillful decision making. In accomplishing these, as Patterson [4] adds,"it is important that clients do engage in self - exploration in a spontaneous way, at their own rate, in their own way, without being constricted and forced to limit or explain themselves in the words of the counselor". So these conditions which are important in any kind of counseling relationship are important in career counseling as well.

Counseling procedures or behaviors ought to vary according to the needs of the clients. Zunker [14] explains career counseling in relation to applied concepts of life span as including all counseling activities associated with career choices over a life -

span. In the career counseling process, all aspects of individual needs including family, work, and leisure are recognized as integral parts of career decision making and planning. This means that career and personal counselors should choose their counseling approaches according to the needs of their clients. Career counselors tend to involve a fairly predictable cycle of client-centered and directive counseling approaches. Super's [22] model exemplifies the balance between client-centered and directive counseling which must be maintained by the counselor. The difficulty in this issue may be the contradictory nature of the facilitative and exploratory role of personal counselor and the active directive role of career counselor, and in addition, the amount of world of work information and skills required to do a comprehensive career counseling. Patterson in an interview with Freeman [23] referred to the difficulty of this role change for both counselor and client. The counselor in the same interview sometimes has to move from the more active role of the career counselor to the facilitative role of the therapist. Although Patterson [23] thinks it might be better for a client to have two counselors, one for career and the other for personal problems, he admits that this is not always possible. Some clients may not understand this separation and may not want to separate the functions. In order to be successful in this role change Dorn [24] suggested that the clinicians are in need of more information and better training in methods of career counseling.

Although the process of career counseling is a rational approach to the problem of choosing a career, making a satisfactory choice is not only an intellectual task but also an emotional, cognitive and psychological process involving the whole-person including the environment. If we argue about this subject according to the viewpoint of holistic philosophy underlying the principles of counseling, we come to the conclusion that career and personal counseling are inseparable; because holistic philosophy is related to the importance and function of the "whole-person" [25]. Erikson [26] wrote about the need of human beings for love and work. According to these writers, human beings need both love and work in order to be mentally healthy and fulfilled as people. Super's work is a good example of the holistic approach within counseling [27,28] and the work of some other developmentally oriented theorists [29,30]. Super [28] in a review related to the basic elements of his evolving theories of career development, describes the integration of his developmental life stages and multiple role concepts in his "life-career rainbow". The notion of life-space is the most important issue in this topic. That is the constellation of positions occupied and roles played by the in-

dividual over the life-span. The salience of these multiple roles as well as the nature of self-concepts associated with these multiple roles, are part of Super's developmental assessment model of career assessment. This represents the holistic model in which career issues play an integral part. Crites [5] states that "career counseling often embraces personal counseling" and Brown and Brooks [31] view career counseling as "a viable intervention with clients having rather severe emotional problems". All these show that it is no longer possible to view career counselor in isolation from the total counseling process that integrates the sum of therapeutic, educational and growth facilitating experiences under a single classification.

Therefore, it may be useful to frame career counseling as an eclectic counseling intervention in which the counselor is free to choose from a wide variety of theories and techniques. Whereas one client may need a short term intervention such as gathering information or learning to be assertive on job interviews, another client may need to address basic issues on self-esteem rooted in the past and affect career development in the present. Within this framework, assessment is critical to determine the depth and direction of the counseling. It is clear that clients who seek help in career related problems need more than just a "test and tell" approach [5].

Implications

As this study indicates, career and personal problems are integrated. It is very difficult to distinguish between a problem which is intrapsychic in nature and that which is created by a non-supportive, stress-producing work environment. If the counselor decides that the problem of the client is related to personality or behavioral problems, personal counseling will be needed. If on the other hand, the counselor concludes that client's problems are related to his working environment then, career counseling may be used as a means to minimize the bad effects by changing the environment or helping the client to change his environment if possible.

Distinguishing between career and personal counseling is not always possible because individuals may have psychological issues interfering with their career exploration and decision making [32,33]; and that there are interconnections between work roles and other life roles [28,33]. Individuals don't separate their personal issues from their career lives. In one interview the client may focus on a personal problem, in the next one he may start talking about a career problem. This means that a counselor has to deal with different types of problems. This anyhow seems to be a more convenient way than using two differ-

ent counselors. Therefore all counselors should be experts in such areas as communication skills and human development. The career counselor, in addition, must be an expert on assessment procedures, sources of career information , labor market trends, educational requirements and career development.

In addition to demonstrated knowledge and skills in personal counseling, a career counselor should be prepared to use the necessary assessment instruments.Although vocational psychologists are emphasizing the inseparability of career and personal counseling, they still believe in the importance and usefulness of career assessment instruments in career counseling [35,36].

Career counselors should also be able to conduct adequate assessments of interactions producing stress and psychological distress and either to provide services that go beyond traditional career counseling (e.g. stress management and building support services) or to make appropriate referrals to counselors who are qualified to do so.

According to American National Career Development Association-NCDA [37] in order to be able to work as a professional in career counseling one must demonstrate minimum competencies in 10 designated areas: 1. Career development theory, 2. Individual and group counseling skills, 3. Individual and group assessment, 4. Information and resources, 5. Program management and implementation, 6. Consultation, 7. Special populations, 8. Supervision, 9. Ethical and legal issues and 10. Research and evaluation.

As has been realized, counselors need more information and better training in methods of career counseling so that they can integrate career and personal counseling leading to better results for clients. Phillips, Friedlander, Kost, Specterman and Robbins [38] stated that ,” Career counseling should be undertaken by more experienced counselors if client satisfaction is to be achieved. Strict adherence to vocational content such as might be found in counseling that follows the trait- factor approach apparently facilitates the practitioner's perception of positive outcome but does not seem to have a greater impact on the client's perspective”. An eclectic approach which presents a more comprehensive way of dealing with different problems, can be a more useful way in career counseling because eclectic counseling model embraces both personality and career development theories. The counselor can move back and forth between the active and directive role of the career counselor and the facilitative and exploratory role of the personal counselor, as the problems of the client necessitate.

Another important thing to be mentioned is that

since career and work has a vital importance in person's happiness, welfare and even in his or her self-actualization in life, career counseling should be available in a broader range. In addition to schools and universities, career counseling should be available in hospitals, big working centers, labor exchange departments and industrial organizations.

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