

Chapter 42

Counseling in an Andragogical Approach

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ABSTRACT

The introduction provides the unique professional preparation of the author in both fields for merging counseling and andragogy – the art and science of helping adults learn. Providing general counseling information, he then gives a sketch and time gaps of publication in adult education and counseling. Next, he presents a chronology of publications merging the two fields. In the future trends section, a comprehensive model for counseling in adult education is constructed, including: an andragogical approach, dimensions of maturation, closely connecting counseling and learning, with life tasks, challenges, and dealing with our human values and priorities within human systems of adult life. Examples are articulated of both the professional and learner implementing the model.

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I am focusing attention on the connection between counseling and (adult education) andragogy – *the art and science of helping and facilitating adults in their learning* – for a very specific reason within a unique context. I am professionally educated and have practiced in both fields. My Master of Theology (Th. M.)

Degree is in pastoral counseling. I engaged in my clinical counseling education internship at Cook County Hospital in Chicago, and used counseling as part of my full and part-time ministry in a local church during four decades. My Doctor of Education (Ed. D.) Degree is in andragogy. I have used my andragogical competencies in my full time university faculty career during four decades. Hence, I have merged the two fields in my professional practice and personal life, and they are part of the ‘warp-and-woof’ of who I am

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-61350-068-2.ch042

as a person. The objectives of this chapter are: 1) to present aspects of both fields; 2) to provide a model of how I have merged counseling with an andragogical approach; and, 3) to suggest to others consideration of employing this model in their practice.

Thus, the counseling I do in andragogy is focused on a growth and forward looking life model. This is in contrast to a problem-solving model that is the hallmark of many other counseling programs.

BACKGROUND AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE COUNSELING CONCEPT

Counseling is conducted by a person (i.e., counselor) in relationship with one who is receiving the reflections and considerations (i.e. counsel) of the other person. *In* this document, the word counseling and counselor will be used along with the word counsel. Counseling is defined as advising, instructing and admonishing. *Counselor* is defined as any person who gives advice or is authorized by natural relationship – birth, office, profession – to advise another in regard to his/her future conduct and measures. This implies that change, growth and development is meant to transpire from the interchange with a counselor. *Counsel* as a noun is defined as advice, opinion, or instruction given upon request or otherwise, for directing the judgment or conduct of another; opinion given upon deliberation or consultation. Counsel as a transitive verb is defined to give advice or deliberate opinion to another for the government of his/her conduct; to advise (Webster, 1996).

If one looks through the eyes of Pitha (1996) at the general field of counseling, the following words and ideas are associated with it: treatment, psychotherapy, advice, advisory, and persuasion. With treatment there are such things as psychiatric care, psychoanalysis, psychotherapy, electroshock and electroconvulsive therapy. The word psycho-

therapy connects with behavior, client-centered, group, family, conjoint, nondirective, supportive, and suggestion therapy; behavior modification; role-playing; the counseling couch; and, hypnotherapy. Advice is characterized by guidance, recommendation, communication, consultation, words and pearls of wisdom, admonition, moralizing, preaching, sermonizing, and precept. As an adjective, advisory is deliberative, encouraging, urging, instructive, prescriptive, admonishing, warning and cautionary. However, persuasion relies on influence, inducement, sway, cajolery, coaxing, inveiglement, convincingness, forcefulness, insistence, pressure, and sweet talking.

- *Counseling competency* is defined as the ability to help individual persons recognize and understand personal needs, values, problems, alternatives, and goals (Reynolds, 1993). A competency is a cluster of knowledges, understandings, skills, attitudes, values, and interests that are required for the performance of a function. In this case the function would be to be competent in counseling adult learners.
- *Maturing* carries with it the ideas of refinement, improvement, finesse, flawlessness, being without reproach, and polish. This comes from being perfected over time or natural growth as reaching near impeccability. Applying counseling competency within the field of adult education focuses on helping the adult mature and look toward the future in every aspect of life.

An Overview Sketch of the Literature on Counseling Adult Learners

There are very few definitions of counseling given in the field of adult education. In the books on adult education there has been a surprisingly spotty coverage of the topic. Houle (1992) indicates that of the 1241 books published from 1814 to 1992 on adult education, there were 12 (less than one

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