

Chapter 12

Counseling for Caregivers for Children and Adolescents With Developmental Language Disorders

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ABSTRACT

Caregivers are individuals who provide comprehensive care to those facing challenges and who are unable to manage daily demands independently. Due to the practical and emotional demands they face on a daily basis, it is crucial for them to prioritize self-care to effectively fulfill their caregiving role. Counseling plays a pivotal role in helping caregivers navigate the psychological impact of developmental disorders while also discovering purpose in their caregiving role. This chapter aims to explore the significance and benefits of counseling for parents caring for children with developmental language disorders. Counseling plays a pivotal role in supporting parent caregivers of children and adolescents with language developmental language disorders.

CAREGIVERS AND COUNSELING

The role of caregivers for children and adolescents with developmental language disorders is multifaceted, as outlined by Koch et al. (2021). In addition to their primary role as parents, caregivers also take on the responsibilities of a helper, a guide, and a friend. They bear full responsibility for the emotional,

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psychological, practical, and financial aspects of caring for these children. Furthermore, caregivers act as mediators between the children, adolescents, and other professionals, including teachers, psychologists, speech therapists, and doctors. They embrace this role from the moment of diagnosis, and it continues to evolve over time, adapting to the different phases of the child's and adolescent's life and their changing needs (Koch et al., 2021).

Due to the intense workload that caregivers shoulder, it is crucial for them to integrate counseling into their lives, as highlighted by Carter (2023). Through counseling, caregivers gain a crucial understanding that their role in providing care should not be static or permanent. Instead, they learn to assess each situation based on the individual's needs and collaborate with professionals (Lafrance et al., 2020). This approach allows the care provided to be adjusted and adapted over time, ensuring that it remains effective and beneficial (Sullivan & Miller, 2015). In particular, Streisand et al. (2008) argue that parents should seek the support of a mental health professional from the moment of diagnosis, in order to manage the anxiety, depression, lack of self-efficacy, and pediatric parenting stress that they may face. By implementing counseling and seeking professional support, caregivers can better cope with the challenges they encounter and provide more effective care for children and adolescents with developmental language disorders. This support allows them to navigate the dynamic nature of their role and continue to provide the best possible care as the needs of the child or adolescent change over time.

Carl Rogers, often considered the father of counseling, defined counseling as a process in which the counselee takes an active role. With the help of the counselor and various techniques, the counselee is guided to search for solutions, self-awareness, and personal development with the aim of achieving positive changes in their life (Rogers, 1942). In counseling, the counselee bears the responsibility of finding a solution to their problem, as the counselor does not provide advice. However, the counselor may express an opinion within permissible limits without guiding the counselee. For counseling to be effective, establishing a good communication and therapeutic relationship is paramount. The counselee must feel safe and calm within the counseling framework to freely express their feelings, thoughts, concerns, and difficulties they face. On the other hand, the counselor, through an authentic and genuine attitude, unconditional acceptance, and empathy, helps the counselee in the search for their own reality (Corey, 2012). Counseling has been proven to help individuals manage everyday problems and difficulties. It aids the counselee in better managing anxiety and other negative emotions, and dealing with phobias, thus enabling them to build a life that aligns with their ideal standards (Thompson, 2015). Furthermore, counseling provides benefits in managing interpersonal relationship difficulties, leading to their improvement. The process also helps the person recognize and cultivate their strengths and skills, which in turn allows them to better manage difficulties, solve problems, and make wise decisions. Self-awareness and self-discovery are promoted through counseling, and the relationship built between the counselor and the counselee in a context of freedom and security serves as a positive and healthy relationship model (Sommers-Flanagan, J., & Sommers-Flanagan, R., 2018).

There are various types of counseling in which the counselor is trained to provide knowledge and assistance to individuals facing different challenges. People who encounter difficulties in their professional or educational field (Corey, 2012), social and emotional challenges, internal conflicts, or difficulties arising from their interactions with the environment (Thompson, 2015) are often referred for counseling. In counseling, the focus is not solely on the individual but also on how they interact with their environment (Thompson, 2015). One specific category of counseling is parent counseling. The primary goal of parent counseling is to support parents in their role by addressing challenges related to their interactions with their children and the issues they face. Parent counseling concentrates on three main aspects: knowledge, skills,

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