

Counseling Delivery Systems: Evolving the Consultation Model

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Counseling is in ever-increasing demand in Hawaii. New efforts to encourage optimum development of the young and the mature have continuing approval in the Island-State. Counseling in schools should see increased demand as the shift in emphasis from exclusively cognitive to a balance with affective learning comes more into school practice. What delivery system will be used to effect the expanded services? Will counselors spend more time in individual interviewing? The evolving model is the subject of a new book by Fullmer and Bernard just published (January, 1972) by Houghton Mifflin, *The School Counselor-Consultant*. The series is edited by C. Gilbert Wrenn, author of a revision of his 1962, *Counselor in a Changing World*, called *The Contemporary Counselor*. The direction given to counseling professional practice by these two books should bring the 1970's into focus as a crucial decade for the helping professions.

B. F. Skinner has published his guide to Utopia, *Beyond Freedom and Dignity*. His contrasting direction would shift counseling efforts from the individual choice concept to the programmed choice concept of manipulating the environment. Those of us who choose to try incorporating the best of both worlds, between naive choosing and abject control by ignorance, awaken to find a "new Utopia of enlightened control" coming from behavioral counseling. For any and all of the varieties of counseling currently on the professional market, the evolving Consultation model speaks to the need for a viable method of influencing an ongoing human organization. The practice of a specialized service requires integration with the basic functions of the human organization.

The following article describes the use of Consultation as a professional role for the counselor as he brings organization and method to the school's Student Per-

sonnel Program. The story is told about the use of management techniques to solve human organization problems. Here, in the hope of having science guide the data gathering and wisdom guide the decision making, we describe an evolving model.

It should be made clear that the Counselor-Consultant is not perceived as an expert who has all the answers to the complex problems of organizations and institutions. He does have some valid perceptions and pertinent insights to specific professional dilemmas. His expertise resides, however, in knowledge about the processes of communication and human valuing. His skill resides in facilitating interpersonal transactions. His role is to see that participants in the consulting process come to feel that they have both power and responsibility. The key to consultation consists of making each participant realize that his presence makes a difference.

Goals of Consultation

School is no longer preparation for anything, except perhaps the next level of schooling. The behavior of a whole system may not be predicted by the way an individual part or sub-division may behave. The human organization is a whole system and similarly cannot be predicted by the principles of behavior based only upon the individual members. This is a fallacy in Skinner's Utopia. He based his projections of group behavior on data taken from individual members. How to organize a group and manage the functioning requires a command of principles derived from group data.

One basic principle is *synergism*, or the cooperative effect of the parts in a whole system which is significantly different from the summation of the effects of the separate parts. The cooperative effect is particularly significant in human groups. An example is easily available. The next time you are with your favorite peer group arrange ahead to have an outsider join you.

The effect on the group will immediately be apparent at several levels. If the extra member stays on, some changes in the group could be predicted to become permanent. The premise in Counselor-Consultant work is that when one person is added to a group, the behavior of members in the group will change. Through the process of adding skills and knowledge derived from psychology about human behavior in groups, it is possible to postulate the direction and nature of the changes. The above statement moves the process away from consultation toward group counseling. However, the free flow of process should not be interrupted for the sake of placing a label on it.

The need for informing the reader is essential to understanding the primary goal of consultation: the creating of improved or enhanced learning environments for children, teachers, parents and administrators. Once enhancement of the learning environment is achieved, the consultation process ends and counseling, instruction, learning or teaching proceed.

A second goal for Counselor-Consultation is to achieve the big change. Counseling has usually depended on change in small increments. The consultation method permits a major shift in the expectations from the counselor's professional practice. Consultation is a method for improving communication among the significant persons in the milieu. Frequently, the big change will happen because open communication explodes the "secrets" barrier in human organizations.

The third goal of consultation is designed to bring together persons of diverse roles and functions to engage in a common task. The task may be in the classroom or in some other significant activity of the school. Children, parents, teachers, and administrators may change their behavior because the relationships change through the group encounter in consultation sessions.

Fourth, the human behavior specialist can extend his expert services through the consultation model. The consultation model becomes a training model when the performance of services is handled by para-professionals under the supervision of the professional practitioner. The training model leads to abandonment of the "waiting list" syndrome. The service is being performed while the practitioner is learning, replacing the "expert" model of having, *a priori*, the certified credentials. The

goal is served when delivery of services occurs under the safeguards and monitoring of qualified professionals.

In-service education is the fifth goal. The rate of change in every developing field of professional service has been a constant force to bring continuing education into practice. Contemporary efforts seem to be in two major directions: (1) on-the-job training in schools, and (2) university extension courses. The intermittent seminar and workshop may be seen as incidental to programmed efforts. More emphasis is placed with what is happening concurrently. Future-oriented planning has begun to give way to here-and-now pragmatism. Futurists tell us the knowledge exists to plan and bring into being any future want. The Counselor-Consultant is expected to be able to respond and produce a delivery system which meets the divergent expectations of both worlds.

The sixth goal of consultation is to help others progress in the process of learning how to learn about behavior. The consulting method has the advantage of including both a process of learning and a vehicle for learning in small groups. Basic to learning how to learn is the culture's patterns of belief. Shared beliefs in a culture lead to universal ideas about a given phenomenon and the behavior appropriate to a given life event. Shared beliefs are what cause self-fulfilling prophecy in a culture's patterns of behavior. That is, the pattern of shared beliefs and behaviors appropriate to use in a given situation leads to predictable sequencing in life events.

Goal seven is to encourage the creation of a good learning environment through improved management of human resources. Because the consultant works with whatever configuration of persons he finds in a life situation, the need to integrate the available human resources requires management skills. The culture programs each of us with a pattern of beliefs and responses. Behavior responses usually reflect an internalized set of values, ideas, and myths. Consultation should try to create a learning environment for enhancing socialization processes in order to modify the existing patterns.

The eighth goal is to develop the self-help model for the human group. Central to the consultation model is the idea that our society will probably never get a sufficient number of professionals. It is speculated that

if society did not get enough specialists, they would not be so effective as are people who help themselves. We are ultimately dependent upon the person or group to heal itself in either individual or group psychotherapy and counseling. Consultation aims to create another big change—from dependence on specialists to dependence on self and others in organized efforts. This is not to say that specialized help is not needed and used by any and all groups. But the essence is in the group's retention of the accountability for how things turn out.

The Rationale:

"Today is yesterday shaking hands with tomorrow."

The borrowing of a senior class motto captures the idea behind the consultation model. Delivery systems are essential to all members of any human group where change brings tomorrow and yesterday into transactions with today. As some Futurists point out, the tomorrow is being planned or not planned by whatever we are doing today and have done yesterday. Where is the point of no return? It is when the counseling service delivered no longer fits the needs. In the words of the poet Lowell, ". . . new demands make ancient truths uncouth." Consultation permits changes to be made immediately because its emphasis is on changing persons. The quality of the professional service available therefore is dependent upon the competence of the human resources available. The consultation model will not deliver more than reality permits. Improved counseling means that needs are more nearly being met. Evaluation of specific programs should reflect the level at which objectives set are met. Objectives to meet needs identified in specific behavioral terms make sense. Data supporting the claims of success must be made available. Thus, the hand that shakes the hand of the man who knows tomorrow, will be expected from counselors. Hopefully, as scientists, we will continue to use probability instead of magic as the basis for future predictions. The counselor is held accountable for the future because effects of his contemporary behavior with a student does have a consequence in the life of another human being. Counselors have typically used avoidance to deal with the complex and usual abstraction of commission and omission in their professional practice. The mysticisms of counseling are facing evaluation by hard data comparable to the performance criteria of instruction. How

may the social consequences reflect, in time, the survival value of a given counseling practice? The delivery system must respond as well as stimulate.

Social Change: A Crisis for Identity

The social change most significant to professional practice is the major shift from the struggle for physical survival to the struggle for psycho-social fulfillment. It is faced as frequently as the Davey Crockett pioneer faced physical survival tests. The learning-how-to-learn concept is a summary of the psycho-social survival knowledge and skill essential to the individual. The person gets an education and masters the social system's physical survival criteria only to face the surprise of an ambiguous identity brought about because of changed conditions which no longer respond favorably to former familiar methods.

Some contemporary authorities summarize the changed priority from physical survival to psycho-social survival by calling attention to youth's identity crisis (Erikson, 1964) or to what Glasser (1970) calls the generation gap. Glasser thinks the older generation is usually *goal-oriented*. The youth are primarily *role-oriented*. The over-simplified descriptions do capture a significant portion of the issue which seems to say that action confirms my being, and interaction seems to confirm my non-being.

Young, under-30, educated persons exhibit a style of life in which physical survival is treated as a fetish, but psycho-social fulfillment or identity seems a central motivation. Should we drive our youth toward more and more creature rewards in a consumer culture? It may lead to self-destruction because of an inherent paradox in the material symbol accumulation (physical survival) and confirmation of a meaningful contribution to the immediate group and community (psycho-social survival). Consultation brings a method for achieving the latter condition through the group process with all significant contributors present (Fullmer, 1971). Confirmation of the meaningful contribution is immediately expressed by other group members. Any activity in counseling needs to achieve the expectation that the counselee is confirmed as a valued member of his group.

Perhaps if the nomenclature could be changed, the significance of the idea would come through to the reader as more nearly an experience in his own behavior.

The objective, whether stated in behavioral terms or in existential jargon, is to achieve a self-competent individual who is capable of relating himself directly to the events he experiences in real life. The problem comes from our middle-class tendency to abstract everything to a safe-objective level before experiencing it. The feeling level becomes a way of saying how much abstraction is taking place in a given life experience or event. The Counseling-Consultation method creates a way of relating reality testing directly to personal experience. Games achieve a similar connection for the participant. However, the game results need to be translated by the participant into real events. Here is where the tendency to be abstract and impersonalize experiences leads astray the best intentions to comply. Abstracting may be one of the major fallacies in the here-and-now technique. The Counseling-Consultation method has in it the potential capacity to transform personal experience into a style of development, and vice versa. The future-oriented objective becomes personal development through systematic stimulation of development which translates into growth and direction. Growth could translate as *freedom* and direction could translate as *responsibility*, if one wished to connect up with academic abstractions. The big change is: a shift from a goal of having every student exceed the 50th percentile on achievement tests, to the stimulation of personal development.

A delivery system in counseling will meet head-on the redoubled efforts of cognitive-oriented curriculum specialists. Their request is for someone to help kids learn subject matter. The teacher will translate into personal experience the knowledge he shares with students. Consultation method is a way of being together with teacher and student in a direct life event where teaching is the stimulation of development and learning is personal development. The artificial division of cognitive and affective learning can be kept in theory for academic discussion but they are combined in practice to facilitate classroom teaching.

Summary

C. Gilbert Wrenn wrote in the introduction to *The School Counselor-Consultant*: "Today's youth are in schools which prepare for the possible future not at all, the present with hesitancy, and the past with assur-

ance." If this statement is accurate, it forms a powerful basis for the Counselor-Consultant model as an in-school delivery system. A parallel condition in business and industry results in continuous re-training of personnel to avoid obsolescence. Some major companies operate the equivalent of technical schools and community colleges to keep employees abreast of new knowledge in relevant fields. Schools may use the consultation model to serve a parallel purpose.

The goals of consultation focus on the creation of improved learning environments for the networks of people connected with each student. The action in groups leads to an enlivened model for learning how to learn.

The rationale for the consultation model includes social change and the crisis for identity among most persons in today's society. The psycho-social fulfillment needs far outstrip the physical survival needs for adult and youth alike. The generation gap and the identity crisis may be linked to the psycho-social survival problems in contemporary society. The school Counselor-Consultant is one possible answer to professional practice in school counseling.

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