Review of Selected Individual Counselling Theories and Techniques of the Counsellor

Maxwell D. EREMIE, Ed.D & KENNEDY Margaret G, M.Ed

Faculty of Science and Technical Educations
Department of Educational Foundation
Rivers State University of Science And Technology, Port Harcourt, Nigeria

maxwell.eremie@edu.ng & counsellourmeg@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT
Various counselling theories utilized divergent views of techniques in helping clients living desirable lives. Psychoanalysis techniques are to assist clients having awareness/insight to their problems. Adlerian counselling techniques are to assist clients cultivate social interest, correct faulty assumptions of self and others. Existential techniques are to assist clients focus on their responsibilities, clients gain self exploration. Gestalt techniques are to assist clients emphasizing on immediacy of experience – here and now. Rational emotive techniques are to assist rational and productive lives. Transactional Analysis techniques help clients to become more aware, game free and intimate relationships. Behavioral therapy techniques help client to make good adjustment, modify maladaptive behaviours. While, Reality therapy techniques assist individuals psychologically strong and focus on behaviour and the present – eliminating punishment and excuses.

Keywords: Theory, Counselling, technique, counsellor

INTRODUCTION
This review covers the following selected individual counselling theories: Psychoanalytic, Adlerian, Existential, Personal centered, Gestal, Transactional Analysis, Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy, Reality Therapy and Behaviour Therapy.

The purpose of this paper is to clarify counselling techniques and applications in selected individual theories for students, beginning counsellors, teachers, and allied professionals in the field of helping profession. Students and beginning Counsellors do interchange counselling techniques with counselling skills.

Technique is a particular way of doing something in achieving anticipated goal. Counsellors combine different techniques in problem solving in counselling relationships. Corey (1991) indicated that techniques can be useful tools to assist clients to gain awareness, resolve internal conflicts, and discrepancies hindering progress. Technique is the manner and ability a counsellor employs technical skills of counselling in helping client resolve his or her precipitating concerns in the area of personal/social, educational and vocational needs. Techniques are specialized procedures and methods used in counselling. Therefore, techniques in counselling are systematic procedure by which counsellor assists clients in resolving their concerns. While, skills are abilities in carrying out specialized techniques adequately in counselling. Techniques vary from one theoretical perspective to the other.

PSYCHOANALYTIC THERAPY: TECHNIQUES OF THE COUNSELLOR
Sigmund Frued utilized the following most often techniques: Dream analysis, free association, interpretation, analysis of resistance and analysis of transference to help clients to uncover forgotten and unconscious thoughts buried in unconscious mind (Gladding, 2005).
Psychoanalytic counsellors use free association to help clients release repressed feelings and thoughts buried in their unconscious minds. Clients may express unwanted feelings and thoughts in form of jokes of sexual or an overly aggressive nature, or through Freudian slips – that is, slip of the tongue. Client many say “I loathe you” instead of “I love you”. Through relaxation, clients are encouraged to express whatever comes to mind without censoring for its irrational, silly painful, trivial or unimportant it may seem to be (Corey 1991). Counsellors used the expressed feelings to understand some hidden feelings and thoughts of the client. Counselling modalities/plans could be adequately carried out to address issues that have been buried for so long periods in clients life.

**Interpretation**

Psychoanalytic counsellors interpret the meaning for clients thoughts and feelings, behaviour, and dreams to enable clients aware of unconscious desires of the past.

That is, it is a means whereby the trained psychoanalytic counsellor assists the client to gain insight to unconscious events in the past and present (Akinade, 2012).

Eremie and Ubolum (2016, p. 24) wrote “interpretation is a technique used by psychoanalytic counsellor in pointing out, explaining, and to a greater extent, teaching the client the forms and meaning of presenting behaviour in dreams and free association”.

**Dream Analysis:** Counsellor encourages client to remember and regularly record dreams to be discussed in counselling sessions. Freud believed that unconscious mind could be revealed by dreams. He thought that dreams were avenues to expressing childhood unacknowledged sexual desires. (Erford, e-tal 2011).

Dream has two aspects: The manifest and latent. The manifest is the obvious and apparent meaning of intended dreamer; while, latent content depicts the hidden, but true meaning of the intended dreamer. The counsellor helps in interpreting the manifest and latent aspects of the dream.

**Analysis of Transference:** Psychoanalytic counsellor believed that through transference, clients brings feeling from past relationship into the counselling session by transferring buried feelings on the counsellor (singer, 1970). The counsellors analysis of the transference helps the client gaining insight to precipitating emotional problems. Counter-transference is the opposite of transference. In counter-transference, the counsellor is the one transferring feelings from previous relationships on the client.

**Analysis of Resistance:** Clients sometimes hold back feelings during counselling sessions. They do so to lock up their unconscious feelings away from the awareness of the counsellor. Client's resistance is the holding back any idea, attitude, emotions that will give clue to the way of insight and change. Freud viewed resistance as an unconscious act clients use to defend against anxiety provoking impulses that were previously repressed.

**ADLERIAN THERAPY: TECHNIQUES OF THE COUNSELLOR**

Adlerian counsellor utilized several techniques in counselling relationship with clients. That is, Adlerian Counsellor uses the following techniques: lifestyle analysis, encouragement, acting “as if”, pushing the button, asking the question, catching oneself, and spitting in the client’s soup.

**Lifestyle Analysis:** Counsellor uses this technique in interpreting client’s early life memories before the age 10 years on their social relationships with siblings and parents, school, society in general. The Counsellor discusses outcomes of client’s memories in other to plan counselling modalities in helping client to have personal insight and awareness for possible change. (Gladding, 2005).

**Encouragement:** Counsellor utilizes encouragement after going through life style investigation with client. In other words, clients can be encouraged to examine his or her mistaken views of life, and begin to challenge as to reach healthy stances. In this process, counsellor highlights both strengths and weaknesses of the client lifestyle.

**Acting “as if”:** Counsellor encourages client to act as if he or she is the person he or she wanted to become in life. For example, low esteem client may be encouraged to act as if he or she is high esteem.

**Pushing the Button:** Counsellor uses this technique to teach client that he or she plays a key role in maintaining he’s or her problems to a greater extent. That is, counsellor informed client that he or she has control over how he or she perceived events as it happened. Clients are thought to focus on the positive
feelings and be able to associate positive feelings and push the positive push button rather than the negative push button. **Asking the Question:** Counsellor uses this technique to let client understand that he or she has the ability to change life defeating feelings. “How would you like to be different if you were happy with life? That is, a sad client was asked if he or she were happy, how would it look like to be different? **Caching Oneself:** Is a technique adlerian counsellor uses to encourage client to reflect in his or her self defeating behaviours, and learn how such behaviours and thoughts are increasing his or her problems. This technique enables the client gain insight to self defeating irrational thoughts and behaviours. **Spitting in the Client’s Soup:** Adlerian Counsellor utilized this technique tactfully to change unhealthy behaviour pattern. For example, counsellor might say to a client, “I notice that you talk about how great and important your husband, Jack to you, yet you cry for divorces. That is, this technique is used to pointing out discrepancy between client’s words and incompatible action. Spitting in the client’s soup could lead to change in client’s feelings, emotions, and behaviours.

**EXISTENTIAL THERAPY: TECHNIQUES OF THE COUNSELLOR**

Existential counsellors do not use prescribed counselling techniques, rather they draw from various humanistic counselling theories depending on needs of the client (Gladding 2005). Frankl, one of foremost practitioners of existential counselling utilized **paradoxical intention** as technique. For example, if a client complaints about how she cannot stop crying over her lost job, the counsellor encouraged her to try to cry continuously. The existential counsellors do emphasize more on the counselling relationship, rather than prescribed techniques. Gladding (2005) stated that “the emphasis in the relationship is on authenticity, honesty, and spontaneity”. Also, counsellor so use imagery exercises, awareness exercises, including goal setting approaches.

**CLIENT CENTERED THERAPY: TECHNIQUES OF THE COUNSELLOR**

Eremie and Ubolu (2016) opined that “person centered counsellor creates a permissive and non-intervention atmosphere, which encourages client’s self direction with a sense of independence” (p48). Gelso and Carter (1985) indicated that clients centered therapy appears to move away from focusing on techniques than greater emphasis on counsellor’s attitudes and flexibility. Nevertheless, the following techniques are commonly used in counselling: Acceptance clarification, reflection of feeling, empathy and positive regards.

**Acceptance** is done through verbal and non verbal cues of the counsellor’s behaviour telling the client that her or she is being understood and well received. Acceptance encourages the client to be open in expressing self without being threatened. Examples of verbal acceptance, “yes”. I understand, “I see” and so on.

**Clarification** is a statement made by the counsellor during counselling session to enable client see his or herself clearly in terms of feelings and emotions, so that such feelings or emotions can be resolved by the client. For example, a counsellor might say to a client during counselling session, “please help me understand this relation”, or “tell me the connection here”.

**Reflection of feeling** – Carl Rogers (1951) defined reflection of feelings as an attempt “ to understanding” (p.452). Reflection of feeling techniques mostly enable the client to bring his or her problems to awareness, without feeling that the counsellor is pushing for such awareness. Example of reflection of feeling: Client (Mary), I am worried about my mother’s condition at the Teaching Hospital. Counsellor: you have got real deep feeling of caring about her (reflection of feeling).

**Empathy:** Is the ability of the counsellor to feel with the client’s concerns, and to relate this understanding back to the client. Unconditional positive regard, also seen as acceptance, is a deep and genuine caring on the part of the counsellor towards the client.
GESTALT THERAPY: TECHNIQUES OF THE COUNSELLOR
Gestalt counsellors (Gestaltists) utilized several techniques to help clients gain awareness to “unfinished business”. Techniques such as: dialogue exercise “I take responsibility for …”, exaggeration exercise, staying with the feeling, dream work, and empty chair technique (Corey, 1991).

Dialogue Exercise; (empty chair) technique is a means of getting the client acting out the introject – to incorporate attitudes or ideas into one’s personality unconsciously. In this exercise, two empty chairs are used. The counsellor ask the client to seat in one of the chairs representing the “top dog” and the other chair representing the “under dog”, and the counsellor encourages the client to say whatever internalized feelings and thoughts bordering him or she to the mental occupant of the other empty chair. Client rotates the exercise. By so doing, client can experience the conflict fully, and be able to identify unwanted introjects from others.

“I take responsibility for …” the counsellor may ask client to make statement pertaining to his or her perceptions about self and others, and closing each statement with the phrase “I take responsibility for it”. By so doing, client will integrate and own perceptions of feelings, emotions, and behaviours. For an example, client may say in counselling session, “I am feeling depressed this morning, and I take responsibility for feeling depressed “(Perl, 1969).

Exaggeration exercise enables clients become more aware of their subtle underlined signals and cues they are sending through body language that are loaded with feelings, emotions and possible behaviours. For example, a client who continuously making observable movements, postures, and would likely send meanings; nevertheless, the signals may not sum up to the complete intentions. Counsellor asked client to exaggerate the body movement behaviour repeatedly, until feelings connected to the behaviour intensified enough to make inner hidden meaning apparent (Corey, 1991).

Dream work as a technique used by gestalt counsellor is to analyse the present, not the past as practiced by psychoanalytic counsellors. Counsellor ask clients to talk out their missing dreams. That is, dreams are carrier of unfulfilled “business”

TRANSACTIONAL ANALYSIS: TECHNIQUES OF THE COUNSELLOR.
Some of the techniques of the TA, include the following: structural analysis, transactional analysis, game analysis, and script analysis.

Structural Analysis: It is a technique in TA in which counsellor assists clients to gain awareness of the content and functioning of his or her ego states, Parent, Adult, and Child. That is, client understanding his or her ego states through applying structural analysis to unlock areas where client gets stuck.

The structural analysis technique proffer solution to two personality problems: Contamination and exclusion. In some ego states, the Parent contaminating the Adult, the Child contaminating the Adult, while both the parent and the child contaminating the Adult. In the case of exclusion: - the constant Parent exclusion of Adult and Child by Parent; the constant Adult exclusion of Parent and Child by Adult, and the constant child exclusion of the Parent and Adult by Child (Berne, 1964)

Transactional Analysis: It is basically a description of mental emotional communication pattern via intrapersonal and interpersonal stances. Interpersonal is the mental communication within the individual; while interpersonal is the exchange of feelings and emotions between persons. That is, whatever exist between people involves a transaction between their ego states. Counsellor assists client in using transactional analysis to teach client three types of ego transactional states: complementary, crossed, and ulterior. Complementary – when two persons are feeling the same message. Cross is when an unexpected message is received by the other person; while ulterior transactions are complex, involving more than two ego states undisguised messages.

Script Analysis: It is the life pattern a client has followed that has been identified by the counsellor. Script analysis can explain the means whereby the client acquired the script and the way he or she justifies the script behaviours.
RATIONAL EMOTIVE THERAPY: TECHNIQUES OF THE COUNSELLOIR
According to Eremie and Ubulom (2016) “rational emotive counsellors utilize several techniques in helping clients to change their self-defeating behaviours” p.45. They further indicated that some of the technique are “directive, confrontational, philosophical, and action oriented in scope”

Disputing irrational belief: Irrational beliefs are self defeating, and capable of making individual suffer psychological problems. The counsellor disputes the irrational beliefs of the client, so that the client will reach a healthy philosophy E. For example, Eremie and Ubulom (2016), explained ACDE of REBT as thus: “A” stands for the activating event.

“A young lady was engaged to a young medical doctor, but later in the relationship, the younger doctor disappointed her, and got married to another lady-activating event. “B” represents how the individual (the young lady) thinks and feels about the broken engagement-belief system. The young lady could be saying, if she doesn’t get married to the young medical doctor, her life is over. “C” is the emotional consequence the young lady developed clinical depression... After ABC comes “D”. Counsellor helps clients to challenge her irrational beliefs. By client surrendering her irrational beliefs, she arrived at “E”, which is considered an effective rational philosophy, replacing the old self-defeating behaviour”.

Therefore, counsellor utilized disputing irrational beliefs technique in raising the consciousness of clients to rational philosophy, which is considered “E”. That is to eliminate absolutist “must”, “should” or “ought”.

Cognitive home work.
In this technique, counsellor encouraged client to make a list of all internalized self defeating absolutistic beliefs and dispute such self defeating thoughts. Also, the counsellor encourages stage acting to dispute self defeating acts. For example, a client who is afraid of public speaking because of perceived failure will be asked to take a small part of the speech and address a small part of the audience in a stage play. Counsellor encouraged client to replace negative thoughts with positive statements. For example, client will replace “I will fail my presentation” with “I can do my possible best”. (Ellis, 1988).

Rational Emotive Imagery: Counsellor uses this technique to help client establish new emotional patterns. Manlthy (1984) indicated that clients use rational emotive imagery to imagine themselves thinking, feeling and behaving exactly the way he or she would prefer to think, feel and behave in real life engagement. Clients by intensely experiencing their feelings, and changing to an appropriate feelings to reach new philosophy.

BEHAVIOUR THERAPY: TECHNIQUES OF THE COUNSELLOR
Behaviour counsellors utilized diversified techniques to effect behavioural changes in their clients. Selected few are presented here:

Reinforcement
Counsellor used reinforcers to increase the chances of the behaviour recurring in incremental stages. Reinforcer can be positive or negative. Also, reinforcer may be primary or secondary. A positive reinforcer is considered pleasurable by the person affected; while negative reinforcer is an aversive stimulus, and the removal of the aversive stimulus is reinforcing for the client involved in the targeted behaviour. Primary reinforcer, such as food, is valued intrinsically; while secondary reinforcer takes it value or strength through being associated with a primary reinforcer, such as money.

Self Monitoring: It is a process whereby clients learn to understand their behaviours, and be able to monitor. Monitoring is done through self observation, and self recording. In self monitoring, clients are encouraged and taught to record unwanted learned habits. Self monitoring technique helps client to be aware of certain actions, and their occurrences.

Systematic Desensitization: Application of this technique helps client to overcome learned anxiety in certain situations. Client is asked to describe anxiety provoking situation, and rank the severity from low anxiety to high anxiety level, in a way of ranking order of magnitude. To help the client to overcome the precipitating anxiety, the counsellor taught client to relax physically, reviewing the situation from low
anxiety to high anxiety, while client continuously relaxing. The idea is that a person cannot be anxious at the same time, be relaxed (WOLPE, 1958)

**Aversive Techniques:** Behaviourists counsellor recommend that before applying aversive techniques, some other positive techniques be used first. The following are form of aversive techniques: Time Out, Over Correction, and Covert Sensitization. Behaviourist caution that aversive stimuli are not effective in the long run for the following reasons: their emotional effects easily disappear, stimuli may interfere with learning of new behaviour in the future. In addition, there are some ethical and legal concerns associated with aversive techniques (Gladding 1988)

**Modeling:** Behaviourists Counsellors encourage modeling as a technique that involves mental as well as physical action. Modeling is exchangeable with observational learning, imitation, social learning, and vicarious learning (Perry and Furukawa 1980).

**Assertiveness Training:** This technique aides client to express thoughts and feelings without being under undue anxiety.

**REALITY THERAPY: TECHNIQUES OF THE COUNSELLOR**

Techniques are grounded in teaching clients better ways of behaving as to meet their basic psychological needs, which are need to love and be loved by other persons or groups of people; need for power; the need for freedom – independence and relaxation (Corey 1991; and Wallace, 1986). Reality counsellors utilized role playing, humor, confrontation, formulation, role modeling, defining limits to effect changes in thoughts and actions (Glasser (1985)

**CONCLUSIONS**

Various counselling theories utilized divergent views of techniques in helping clients reaching desirable live. Psychoanalysis techniques are to assist clients having awareness/insight to their problems. Adlerian counselling techniques are to assist client cultivate social interest, correct faulty assumptions of self and others.

Existential techniques are to assist clients focus on their responsibilities, clients gain self exploration. Gestalt techniques are to assist clients emphasizing on immediacy of experience – here and now. Rational emotive techniques are to assist rational and productive lives. Transactional Analysis techniques help clients to become more aware, game free and intimate relationships. Behavioral therapy techniques help client to make good adjustment, modify maladaptive behaviours. While, Reality therapy techniques assist individuals psychologically strong and focus on behaviour and the present – eliminating punishment and excuses.

**REFERENCES**


