# Unit 4: An Introduction to Counselling

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## 4.1 Learning Objectives

After studying this unit, you will be able to:

- Explain the concept of counselling.
- Describe the need for counselling.
- Discuss the objectives, characteristics, and basic principles of counselling.
- Explain the different methods of counselling.

## 4.2 Introduction

We know that whenever people face problems, they usually seek help and advice from others. If we observe carefully and talk to people, we will find that many of them

suffer from mental stress, emotional hurt, family conflicts, and similar difficulties. In such situations, we sometimes need someone who can comfort us, encourage us, give us mental peace, and help us feel happy again.

In today's world, these situations have increased the need for counselling. In the field of education also, students need counselling. In fact, counselling is not only for people who are facing problems. It also helps in human development and in developing the hidden abilities and qualities within individuals in general.

Through this unit, you will learn about the meaning and concept of counselling, its aims and objectives, its principles, and its different methods.

## 4.3 Origin of Counselling: An Overview

The practice of giving advice or guidance probably existed from the beginning of civilization, but it was informal. In the early 1900s, formal counselling was strongly influenced by the work of the famous psychologist **Sigmund Freud**, who explained human behavior through psychoanalysis.

At the beginning of the 20th century, **Frank Parsons** focused his work on school guidance. He is known as the "Father of the Guidance Movement." His work on vocational counselling became very important after the publication of his book *Choosing a Vocation*, which became a landmark in the history of the guidance movement.

In the clinical field, **Clifford W. Beers** wrote a book titled *A Mind That Found Itself*, which became an important starting point for personal counselling.

Later, the publication of **Carl Rogers'** book *Counselling and Psychotherapy* (1942) made a great contribution to establishing counselling as a systematic process.

Today, counselling has entered many areas of human life and is growing rapidly.After learning about the history of counselling, let us now understand its meaning and other important aspects in detail.

## 4.4 Meaning of Counselling

In the school context, counselling can be described as a relationship between a counsellor (or teacher) and a child who is temporarily confused, disturbed, or depressed. Through this relationship, the counsellor helps the student to make decisions independently, solve confusion, and deal with personal sadness or depression in a realistic and meaningful way.

Different writers have explained the term “counselling” in different ways. Some important definitions are given below:

- According to **Carl Rogers**, “Counselling is a series of direct contacts with the individual, aiming to help him change his attitudes and behavior.”
- According to **Humphrey and Traxler**, “Counselling is the use of school or institutional human resources to help individuals solve their problems.”
- **Ruth Strang** wrote, “Counselling is a process of joint exploration. Students try to understand themselves, decide the direction they want to take, and gain confidence to manage problems as they arise. The counsellor’s role is to be ready to help whenever the student needs support. In this way, the counsellor acts like a key that opens new insights.”

The same writer also pointed out that the most important part of counselling is the relationship in which the person receiving counselling feels free to express himself fully. He gains clarity about his goals, confidence in his ability to achieve them, and knowledge of the methods to reach them.

When counselling is done properly, it increases a student’s understanding of himself and reduces anxiety. After making progress, the student becomes able not only to solve problems but also to prevent them in the future.

In short, the above definitions highlight the following important points about counselling:

**Important Points about Counselling**

- Counselling is a process. It is the help given by a professionally trained person to someone who seeks help.
- In schools, counselling is given to a child who accepts that he or she is facing a problem. If the child is forced to receive counselling, he or she may not accept the help. Self-motivation to deal with one’s own problems is very important for a student.
- Counselling is a scientific process that helps a student understand himself or herself better and deal with everyday problems in life.
- As a teacher, your role in counselling is to create an environment where the child can look at situations objectively and face life confidently.
- Counselling requires special training. Therefore, a counsellor must receive proper and formal training before providing help.

## 4.5 Need for Counselling

We know that people often seek advice and guidance from parents, elders in the family, religious leaders, or community leaders. However, professional counselling is a more recent development.

Life has become more complex, and schools and families are not always able to give children and young people the support they need to meet the demands of modern life. Therefore, counselling has become very necessary today.

Some important reasons for the need for counselling in schools are given below:

- When a student needs not only reliable information but also help in understanding and using that information to solve personal problems, counselling is needed.
- When a student needs a wise and experienced listener who has wider experience than the student and with whom the student can share problems and receive advice, counselling is needed.
- When a student is aware of a problem but cannot understand its meaning clearly, counselling is needed.
- When a student is aware of a problem but cannot deal with it wisely because of temporary stress or emotional disturbance, counselling is needed.
- Education and the search for jobs have become more complex, which creates mental stress. In such situations, counselling at the school level becomes very important.
- The rapid development of science and technology has made life more complicated. Globalization has increased competition in money, productivity, and knowledge. This competition creates stress among students in schools.

Considering all these points, counselling is necessary to reduce mental stress and to make life more peaceful and meaningful for people.

## 4.6 Objectives of Counselling

The main goals of counselling are to help a person gain self-awareness, self-acceptance, and self-understanding. To achieve these goals, a student should be helped in the following ways:

(a) Provide a student with important information that is necessary for his or her success.

(b) Help the student understand who he or she is, what he or she can become, and what he or she should do.

(c) Establish mutual understanding between students and teachers.

(d) Strengthen and develop the good qualities of a student.

(e) Help students make plans to solve their problems.

(f) Help students understand their interests, abilities, attitudes, and talents.

(g) Encourage and develop students' special abilities and positive attitudes.

(h) Help students plan their academic and vocational interests.

## 4.7 Characteristics of Counselling

To understand counselling clearly, it is important to know its main characteristics. So far, you have learned about its history, concept, need, and objectives. Now let us briefly look at its main features:

1. For the counsellor, counselling is a purposeful learning experience.
2. It is a personal interview or interaction between the counsellor and the person seeking help.
3. The counsellor must have different skills and techniques.
4. Counselling should be cooperative in nature, and the counsellor should act as a link or point of communication.
5. Counselling should not be based only on psychology. It should also take help from other academic disciplines.
6. Counselling should meet all kinds of needs. It should not be only child-centered, technique-centered, problem-centered, or counsellor-centered. It should consider all aspects.
7. In the whole counselling process, the main focus is on helping the person develop self-direction and self-acceptance.

## W CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

**Question 1:** When did the first concept of counselling appear?

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**Question 2:** Give one definition of counselling.

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**Question 3:** Mention two important objectives of counselling.

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## 4.8 Basic Principles of Counselling

School counselling is based on certain principles that help make the counsellor's work more effective. These principles are given below:

1. The school counselling programme is planned to meet the developmental and adjustment needs of all students.
2. According to this programme, counselling is a continuous process until the goals of personal development are achieved. Therefore, school counselling programmes should be developmental in nature.
3. Trained professional counsellors are very necessary to ensure professional skill, leadership, and proper guidance.
4. The school counselling programme should reflect the specific population it serves and the environment in which the services are provided.
5. Teachers' understanding and support of the school counselling programme are very important for its success.
6. The school counselling programme should recognize students' right and ability to make decisions and plans.
7. The school counselling programme should respect the value and dignity of every student.

## 4.9 Methods of Counselling

There are three most important methods of counselling that can be used in schools. These are discussed below:

1. Directive Counselling
2. Non-Directive Counselling

3. Eclectic Counselling

### 4.9.1 Directive Counselling

Directive counselling expects the counsellor to take a more active role. According to Arbuckle, directive counselling is a way of helping a person to move towards solving his or her problems. In this method, the counsellor plays the main role in starting and guiding the counselling process.

In this method, the counsellor identifies the causes of the problem and decides the activities, plans, or steps that the person should follow to solve the problem. The person receiving counselling works under the guidance of the counsellor and follows the counsellor's instructions.

The main features of this method are:

- In this process, the counsellor is active, and the person receiving counselling is comparatively passive.
- The counsellor takes greater responsibility in collecting, analyzing, interpreting, and solving the problems of the client.
- More importance is given to the problem rather than to the individual. All efforts are focused on solving the problem.
- More importance is given to intellectual aspects than to emotional feelings of the person.
- Since directive counselling is controlled by the counsellor, the methods used are directive, persuasive, and explanatory.
- Through this method, the counsellor mainly looks at the adjustment problems of the person receiving counselling. The counsellor usually tries to solve the problem through interviews and questionnaires from time to time.
- Directive counselling is based on a problem-solving approach, and in this way important problems of children are solved.

E. G. Williamson, who is known as the main supporter of directive counselling, suggested six clear and practical steps of directive counselling. These are given below:

1. **Analysis**: Collecting information about the student from different sources in order to understand the student properly.
2. **Synthesis**: Organizing and summarizing the collected information to understand the student's abilities, responsibilities, adjustment, and

maladjustment.

3. **Diagnosis**: At this stage, a decision is made about the nature and causes of the problem shown by the student.
4. **Prognosis**: In this step, the counsellor predicts the future development of the student's problem.
5. **Counselling**: Here, the counsellor works together with the student to bring about proper adjustment.
6. **Follow-up**: The counsellor checks and evaluates the effectiveness of the advice given to the student.

### 4.9.2 Non-Directive Counselling

Carl R. Rogers developed this method of counselling in which the student receiving counselling is the centre of the counselling process. It is a process in which the person seeking counselling helps himself or herself.

In this method, the student voluntarily approaches the counsellor. The counsellor accepts the student with a friendly and positive attitude and helps in the student's growth and self-direction. Rogers suggested some steps of non-directive counselling, which can be summarized as follows:

1. The person comes seeking help.
2. The counsellor defines the situation and makes it clear that he or she does not have ready-made answers, but can provide a suitable place and environment where the person can think about the solution to the problem.
3. The counsellor is friendly and encourages the person to express feelings freely about the problem.
4. The counsellor tries to understand the person's feelings.
5. The counsellor accepts and recognizes both positive and negative feelings.
6. After free expression of feelings, gradual development of insight takes place.
7. The person recognizes and emotionally as well as intellectually accepts his or her true feelings and desires. At the same time, the person becomes aware of the decisions to be taken and the possible courses of action available.
8. The person begins to take positive steps towards solving the problematic situation.
9. Finally, when the person feels that the need for help has decreased, he or she

decides to stop meeting the counsellor.

### 4.9.3 Eclectic Counselling

In the eclectic method of counselling, the counsellor has the freedom to use whichever method or technique seems most suitable for the person receiving counselling.

Eclectic counselling follows the philosophy of non-directive counselling, which means that the individual has the responsibility to decide his or her own lifestyle and choose personal goals. The counsellor provides an accepting environment where the person feels comfortable discussing problems.

In many cases, it is seen that most young people are not fully ready to take complete responsibility or are not able to solve their problems on their own. In such situations, the counsellor uses the eclectic approach and provides the necessary guidance to help them face difficult situations in life.

**Important Characteristics of Eclectic Counselling**

The important characteristics of eclectic counselling are mentioned below:

1. In this type of counselling, the method of counselling may be different for different individuals. Even for the same person, the method may change from time to time.
2. Flexibility is the main principle of this method.
3. Free expression of views is encouraged in this method. Both the counsellor and the person receiving counselling can openly express their feelings and opinions.
4. In this method, adjustment is made between the person receiving counselling and philosophical principles to achieve the objectives.
5. Mutual trust, confidence, and shared experience are fundamental in this method.
6. Feeling happiness and satisfaction in the counselling process is very important.

## W CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

**Question No. 4:** Mention two main principles of counselling.

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**Question No. 5:** List the different methods of counselling.

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## 2 4.10 Let Us Sum Up

In this unit, we discussed the following topics:

- At the beginning of 1900, the well-known psychologist Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic explanation of personality gave formal inspiration to counselling. In the early twentieth century, Frank Parsons focused his work on school guidance.
- Counselling is a process. It is the help given by a professionally trained person to someone who seeks help.
- There are three most important methods of counselling that can be applied in schools. These have already been discussed in detail. They are:
  (1) Directive Counselling
  (2) Non-directive Counselling
  (3) Eclectic Counselling

## O 4.11 Further Reading

1. Aggarwal, J. C. (1996). *Essentials of Educational Technology*, Vikas Publishing House.
2. *The Counselling Process and Strategies* (2016), NCERT.

## K 4.12 Answers to Check Your Progress

**Answer to Question No. 1:**At the beginning of 1900, the well-known psychologist Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic explanation of personality gave formal inspiration to counselling.

**Answer to Question No. 2:**According to Carl Rogers, "Counselling is a series of direct contacts with the individual which aims to help him change his attitudes and behaviour."

**Answer to Question No. 3:**

(a) A learner should be given information about important matters necessary for his/her success.

(b) A student should be helped to understand what he/she is, what he/she can become, and what he/she should do.

**Answer to Question No. 4:**

(1) School counselling programmes are planned to meet the developmental and adjustment needs of all students.

(2) According to this programme, counselling is a continuous process until the goals of personal development are achieved. Therefore, school counselling programmes should be developmental in nature.

**Answer to Question No. 5:**

There are three most important methods of counselling that can be applied in schools. These have been discussed in detail below. They are:

(1) Directive Counselling

(2) Non-directive Counselling

(3) Eclectic Counselling

## M 4.13 Model Questions

### (a) Short Questions

*(Write the answer within 150 words)*

**Question 1:** Define the meaning of counselling.

**Question 2:** Briefly discuss the origin of the word “counselling.”

### (b) Essay Type Questions

*(Write the answer within 300–500 words)*

**Question 1:** Explain the need for counselling. Describe its main characteristics.

**Question 2:** Explain the meaning and process of directive counselling. In what ways is it different from non-directive counselling?

**Question 3:** Explain in detail the main principles of counselling.

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