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## FEATURES OF THE MECHANISMS OF PSYCHOLOGICAL COUNSELING INDIVIDUALLY AND IN SMALL GROUPS

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### ABSTRACT

Psychological counseling is the process of helping an individual in search of resolution for his difficulties adjust to the demands of life situations and make adequate decisions. Adjustment should be voluntary and painless for the client. Psychological counseling should not be confused with therapeutic intervention, in which the individual is supposed to return to a normal condition after being under stress due to negative changes in his life situation. Instead of changing the condition of the individual, counseling focuses on the efforts to ensure harmonious matching of the individual's level of functioning with age-appropriate requirements. In this sense, counseling is a frontier between psychotherapy and pedagogical intervention. The concept of the counseling mechanism is popular in studies of educational, social, and psychological counseling. It includes features of individuals, conditions, and processes that define the role of counseling in bringing about changes in personal development and behavior. The content of mechanisms reflects the structure and functional aspects of a phenomenon under study, the latter being viewed as a system. Psychological counseling is a complex multi-level system reflecting various social, psychological, and personal relations. In broad terms, it includes a subject, object, conditions, and processes of interaction between the counseling agent and the counseling recipient.

Multiple approaches may be employed to conduct psychological counseling. They will be reviewed and analyzed here in regard to their psychological basis and the features of their application. Three of the most significant approaches



are the psychodynamic, cognitive-behavioral, and humanistic. Significant attention is focused on the first two approaches since they are the most popular in the perspective of the countries of the former Soviet Union.

As a basis of the psychodynamic approach, the role of the unconscious is emphasized, and it utilizes defense mechanisms. Numerous psychotherapeutic techniques are developed, mainly of a verbal nature, designed to bring the unconscious content of conflicts and desires into consciousness. These techniques are used both in monological and dialogical forms. An essential part of the dialogical techniques is free association, and a key monological technique is interpretation. The clinical terminology of the psychodynamic approach is extensive and systematically elaborated, including concepts of conflict, drive, impulse, symptom, resistance, transference, counter-transference, interpretation, regret, and gloom. All these concepts were created on the basis of clinical observations of various forms of behavior of subjects and are logically organized in the theory of personality.

## KEYWORDS

Psychology, psychological counseling, psychotherapy, clinical terminology.

## INTRODUCTION

In terms of cognitive-behavioral psychological counseling, the behaviorist and cognitive approaches are presented together since they are closely connected, and the strict separation of them is not justified. Historically, with the advent of behaviorism, cognitive therapy was also developed that acknowledged the importance of cognition in producing behavioral changes. These approaches might have appeared independently and based on fundamentally different beliefs about the nature of psychological phenomena that constrained the explanation of human behavior. Thus, the behaviorist approach postulated that cognition was not a subject of scientific research and rather treated it as

consequential phenomena. On the other hand, cognitive therapy rested on the assumption that the mind could cause behavior independently and with the creation of internal mediators. An essential part of the cognitive-behavioral therapies is the multi-stage change of one of the three levels of human phenomena: response, cognition, and belief from the simplest to the most complex. Based on the learning theory, the conditioned responses for various stimuli are advocated, followed by psycho-emotional reactions and cognitions explaining these psycho-emotional reactions. Each level aims to demystify and reveal distorted cognitions, followed by cognitive techniques to change distorted cognitions and



resulting emotional and behavioral alterations. An important part of cognitive therapy is cognitive structuring, emphasizing the role of cognitive distortions in the etiology of adult psychiatric disorders.

The psychodynamic approach to psychological counseling is rooted in the belief that behavior is influenced by motivations that operate outside of consciousness. Psychotherapy is a method that enables individuals to express these unconscious motivations in thought and action, and thus become aware of the reasons behind their behavior, enabling them to change. One of the most notable features of the psychodynamic approach to individual counseling is the role that transference plays in the treatment process. Transference describes the development of feelings toward the therapist, usually of a past significant figure, most commonly a parent, that are incongruous to the actual nature of the relationship. This new set of feelings is said to be of a 'displaced' nature, in that they arise from the re-experiencing of previous significant relationships from childhood. In the instance that the client develops positive feelings toward the therapist, this is referred to as 'positive transference', often experienced as feelings of love, dependence, or trust toward the therapist. Conversely, if feelings of hostility or anger toward the therapist develop, the term 'negative transference' is applied. Regardless of the nature of the transference, the

therapist is thought of as a catalyst or trigger for past experiences, feelings, fears, and wishes previously buried in the unconscious. Since these feelings are now projected onto the therapist and experienced in the present moment, they are capable of being made conscious. Ultimately, the goal of therapy is to analyze the transference, making the patient aware of their feelings toward the therapist, in order that its significance can be explored.

Another of the more distinguishing features of the individual psychodynamic approach is the way in which the counseling session is undertaken. Typically, psychodynamic counseling occurs as a one-on-one meeting between the counselor and the client. The majority of classical approaches adopted by psychodynamic therapists direct the client to lie on a couch with the therapist sitting behind, out of the client's view. The way in which the classical techniques are employed by psychodynamic therapists also adds to the uniqueness of this approach. As with preventative methods, one of the most unique features of psychodynamic counseling is the extensive interpretation and analysis of dream material.

The cognitive-behavioral approach is a specific theory of personality, examining the relationship between cognition, emotion, and behavior. Understanding the role of cognitive representations in psychological functioning enables more effective psychotherapy techniques and approaches in psychological



counseling processes. Social learning theory posits that behavior is a consequence of observation, inhibition, and constructive adoption. It describes two types of cognitive representations: cognitive maps, representing external conditions, and schemas or scripts, representing a knowledge build-up about the world. Knowledge, as generalizations about the world, organizes the effect of individual experiences and links them to external conditions. Generalizations vary in scope and influence cognition and behavior. Schemata have an interpretative role, affecting the perception of reality, decision-making, situational assessment, or anticipation. Inappropriate schemata lead to maladaptive thoughts and generate negative feelings and ineffective behavior. Cognitive-behavior therapy addresses thinking, perception, information processing, and their influence on feelings and behavior. It aims to identify, modify, and change maladaptive schemata, with cognitive interventions preceding behavioral changes. Cognitive restructuring influences feelings and subsequent changes in behavior. Counseling tasks depend on the counseling goals. Exploring knowledge representation includes examining schemas, cognitive distortions, cognitive styles, monitoring maladaptive emotions and thoughts, and identifying critical situational issues. Counselor interventions involve reframing, disputing, modification of distorted beliefs, altering cognitive focus, and skill teaching. Cognitive-behavioral techniques and approaches improve the effectiveness

of psychological counseling processes. They can be exclusively cognitive, purely behavioral, or combined.

The humanistic approach to personality offers a different view than psychodynamic and behaviorist approaches, as it focuses on "the bright side of a human being." Adherents of this view try to understand personality mainly in terms of experiences and culture, environmental influences and their interpretation, life goals, and an inner desire for self-actualization and development. The first theorists who can be referred to as humanists are, among others, the psychologists and philosophers.

According to Rogers, people are born good and are capable of changing their lives for the better. People want to keep growing and self-actualize. However, the process of self-actualization cannot be realized without a favorable environment. The environment must be such as to offer support and conditions that encourage growth and development, as well as freedom and liberty. There are inner and outer, social and individual factors that prevent self-actualization. The greater the incongruence between the experienced and ideal self, the more restrictions there are for self-development. The discrepancy should not be larger than some critical measure; that is, conditions of worth must be wider than real conditions. The sense of self-worth can be changed through the process of individuation.





Maslow proposed a pyramid of needs that must be satisfied in order to move to higher levels. These needs are the following: biological, safety, social needs, ego needs, and the need for self-actualization. People who come to a psychologist are usually those from the middle of the pyramid. In order to advance further up the dimensional scale, it is important to satisfy the conditions of self-actualization, where only a small percentage of individuals can be found. Self-actualization is a contact with reality and acceptance of facts about individuals and the world. It includes autonomous growth, synesthetic experiences, deepening of relationships and emotions, and the feeling of the presence of the mysterious. These characteristics of the self-actualized person would prove to be the basis of the characteristics of a healthy personality, and thus, of psychotherapeutic goals.

Active listening is a fundamental technique in psychological counseling that involves fully focusing, understanding, and responding to a client's verbal and non-verbal communication. It is an interactive process in which a counselor engages a client to create a therapeutic connection, promote self-exploration, and encourage deeper analysis of issues. Active listening helps clients feel heard, valued, and accepted, fostering a safe environment for open expression.

The active listening process consists of five stages. First, it entails attending to the client to establish rapport. This can be achieved through non-verbal cues

such as maintaining eye contact, nodding, and facilitating comfortable silence. Verbal techniques include using the client's name, asking open-ended questions, and reflecting feelings without judgment. Attending should occur instantly and in a non-distracting manner. During this stage, the counselor should avoid self-interruption or allowing themselves to be sidetracked by background noise.

The second stage involves observing the client's verbal and non-verbal communication, which can provide insight into the client's overall functioning or behavior and relate it to their words. Verbal communication refers to the use of language, while non-verbal communication includes body movements, gestures, postures, eye contact, facial expressions, tone of voice, physical proximity, attendance, and gestures.

The third stage is interpreting. This step involves decoding and interpreting the content and form of the client's communication. The counselor analyzes the essential thoughts and feelings in the client's words, considering repetition, frankness, tentativeness, omissions, distress signs, grouping, and non-verbal mirroring. The counselor then clarifies these thoughts selectively.

The fourth stage, probing, entails inviting the client to expand or elaborate on a remark and maintain spontaneity and privacy. This can be achieved through open questions, prompting topics, focusing,



encouraging descriptive remarks, and encouraging feelings. The counselor must remain respectful and avoid embarrassment.

The fifth stage is reflecting, a technique that involves summarizing the essence of the last remark and returning it to the client for validation. An accurate reflection will promote comprehension and add depth to the exploration of an issue. Reflections can be simple or complex. This technique allows the client to acknowledge their expression, check its accuracy, and identify their own feelings correctly.

Empathy and rapport-building skills are widely recognized as critical foundations in most, if not all, professional helping relationships. Human beings are social animals, and most people thrive on connecting with others. It is through these connections that they learn about themselves and their environment. People's interests, values, and lives can be explored and understood through the conscious attentiveness of another human being. In this calming, assuring, and respectful social situation, people are free to really be themselves. They dare to reveal their thoughts and feelings in unguarded ways. Even deep or shame-filled secrets can be entrusted to such a safe relationship.

Empathy is so profound that it may allow people to experience the thoughts and feelings of another person as if they were their own. This level of experiencing another human being allows knowledge

to bloom that was never conscious before. Through shared knowing, secrets become not secrets anymore, and the isolation of shame is broken. Empathy takes away the fear of shame and alienation, and it leads to healing action. Empathy is very likely the most potent primary mechanism of treatment for any human difficulties.

In the context of helping and counseling, rapport is understood as the degree of trust or comfort with which the two parties choose to relate to one another. Building rapport or trust with others is a very normal process of getting to know someone. It is characterized by a gradually rising degree of mutual familiarity or shared knowledge about each other. In building rapport, there is generally a shift from impersonal and superficial topics to more intimate concerns. In this gradual development, others respond more positively as they feel more comfortable and confident that they will be accepted, respected, and understood without condemnation or harm.

Historically, the term rapport was first used by British social psychologists in 1936. They suggested that it is a prerequisite of personal influence or leadership. In 1965, the term was used in clinical psychology to describe the establishment of mutual emotion; that is, coordination, attunement, or convergence of feelings and understanding between the person distressed and the professional helper. Since then, that behavioral approach has been largely neglected.



In this mechanistic view, rapport is perceived as a strictly behavioral matter of synchronizing presence, movement, posture, voice, expression, and breathing. Behaviors are interpreted decontextualized, outside of humans acting, in terms of rules for learning or social physiological impacts. Such accounts engender a technical, simplistic, and behavioristic understanding of an intricate empathic bonding and co-experience mechanism. Rapport is understood with a focus either on unity between one or two parties or, more saliently, in terms of degrees of intimate knowledge about another person. Building rapport is linked with specifically social topics of shared expectations and common interests to promote comfort in a professional helping setting. The rapport consideration of cultural differences is related either to unequal access to social estimation or unequal social positions of modeling expectations.

In essence, goal setting and action planning are the most essential components of counseling. They provide a focus for the individual and ensure subsequent work is relevant. These elements are fundamental in individual sessions and in groups, although in groups the procedures may be slightly adjusted. This section describes the goal setting and action planning processes and techniques in individual and small group sessions. During the second session, clients establish realistic goals for the counseling and plan the first steps towards achieving them. Clients

may arrive with a fairly developed goal, or they may need help in defining the goal. In the latter case, some questions are asked to assist in the specification of the goal. To begin with, clients are prompted to identify broad goals. Broad goals may be expressed in one of the following ways: "to feel better; to have a better relationship with people; to stop feeling depressed." Then, clients are asked to make each goal more specific. As a general rule, good goals are those that pass "the who, what, where, when, and how" test. For instance, the broad goal "to stop feeling depressed" may be specified in the following way: "to tell my girlfriend how I feel (what), before the end of the week (when), so that she may understand me better (why)." This specification process is crucial given that goal achievement depends on developing clear goals. In response to some questions, clients are also encouraged to convert indirectly expressed goals into more explicit goals. The procedure used for planning is similar to that used in other counseling techniques. The plan of action is presented in a series of steps and clients are asked questions about each step. Working out an action plan with a client requires consensus regarding (1) the first step towards achieving the goal including details of where and when it will take place; (2) the way the clients will work on it; (3) how clients may know they are progressing towards a goal.

The birth of group counseling as a specialized field within psychology occurred in the 1930s, and its



subsequent development paralleled advancements in the discipline of educational and clinical psychology. Theoretically, this budding field flourished largely due to the work of Kurt Lewin in social psychology with the founding of the Group Dynamics study. Group Dynamics is concerned with the influence of groups on individual behavior in the social as well as mental domains. In 1939, in a newly proposed model for diabetics, Lewin's Homeostasis, the role of the group in maintaining individual equilibrium had been introduced. This perspective was eventually adapted to the realms of interpersonal relations and behavior change. Several factors for the rapid acceptance of counseling groups include: (1) the individual's attachment to and consideration of group values, (2) the group's ability to influence behavior and encourage new concepts, (3) the group's assurance of support and security in response to danger, (4) the social comparison afforded by the group, and (5) the group's being a source of pressure for action change. Subsequent to the formation of small social units and the early action research in group counseling, testimony to the demand for group work in educational institutions is given. There is evidence that continuing professional development for counselors and group leaders is a priority, and further research is necessary to improve counseling outcomes and efficacy, particularly in conducting group counseling worldwide.

The Interpersonal Process Approach for Group Counseling is the most comprehensive perspective yet developed on the dynamics that shape life within groups and their implications for therapeutic change. It is based on a dynamic, relational, and complex systems view of human behavior, and it is supported by various theories. The central concept is that members join groups for different, often conflicting reasons, which leads to a complex set of simultaneous and interrelated dynamics. Understanding and working within this socio-emotional system is necessary for promoting generalization of insights, growing personal understanding, and achieving therapeutic change.

Group dynamics is a term widely used to identify the forces at work within small groups that can affect the behavior of the individuals within the group. When groups of two or more people come together to achieve a common goal, emotional factors rather than rational considerations come into play. Personality characteristics and behaviors of group members, relationships between group members, and the nature of the task combine to exert pressures on individual behavior. As a result, each person's experience in the group differs from her experience outside the group.

Psychological counseling in small groups (up to 8-10 people) has advantages compared to individual work, despite the obvious limitations of confidentiality and attentiveness. The very inclusion of other participants





introduces new ideas, other points of view regarding the client's situation, mutual support, and the possibility of being a helper for someone even in a difficult position. Under certain conditions, small groups can become a source of energy, motivation, and stimulation of change.

Discussion groups and support groups are public or semi-public settings, while therapy groups are a private setting. Therapy groups and task groups often use the term 'group dynamics,' which refers to the interactions between group members and how these interactions can affect individual and group behavior. Group dynamics is a field of study of great importance to those interested in working with groups. Management by groups of processes instead of by individuals can offer new and promising ways of problem-solving. Understanding group dynamics allows the counselor to keep in mind the differences between group work and individual counseling and the unique characteristics of group process that would differ from the process of each person alone with the counselor.

The interpersonal process approach to group counseling is concerned with how the participants interact with each other, or how the "group processes" operate. Group members discuss their thoughts and feelings about others in the group, disclose personal information to group members, react to comments made by others, and hold name-calling or argument accords within the group. Contributing to these

dynamic processes is the basis of the interpersonal process approach. The objectives of group counseling are to enhance self-understanding of participants, increase understanding of others, assist participants in learning and practicing new interpersonal behavior, change behavior that is problematic in the social world outside of the group, and do all of this in a context that is supportive and helps to deal with the anxiety of engaging in an intensive exploration of self and others.

Interpersonal process group counseling can be provided with mixed-gender and same-gender groups. Mixed-gender groups are a chance for participants to observe and experience interpersonal processes across gender. Same-gender groups are a chance for the exploration of issues specific to gender, where participants may experience security in the absence of the "opposite" participant. The effectiveness of interpersonal process group counseling has been supported, particularly for self-understanding. Effects on self-understanding, self-disclosure, perceived levels of group process, and concern over social evaluations were examined.

Interpersonal process group counseling is a planned series of group activities, which can be face-to-face or online, conducted by one or more trained counselors or facilitators with the intention of bringing about change in participants. Participants are usually adults, but interpersonal process groups are also held with older adolescents. Arrangements depend on



participant characteristics, with groups of homogeneous characteristics feared to create a more supportive group context. The main focus of interpersonal process group counseling is on the experience within the group, rather than on the external world situation of participants. Group members are encouraged to focus on their reactions to the comments of others, their thoughts and feelings about others, and the behaviors they observe in others and in themselves during interactions.

Psychological counseling can be carried out at a number of levels. The presentation of the counselor's voice, virtually close to the client's ear, is more personal than situational counseling in public places. Individual and group counseling are the types of counseling most frequently applied. Within the domain of mental health support, it is essential to comprehend how group counseling and individual counseling are both similar and yet distinctive practices. Group counseling comprises a diverse assembly drawn together by a common concern regarding difficult real-life issues, such as grief, divorce, social anxiety, obsessive-compulsive disorder, or addiction. Individual counseling is uniquely focused on the client's experiences, allowing for a comfort zone and a time context dictated by the counseled individual. Furthermore, there are several means and nuances in the research of psychological counseling, both at the

level of the subject and the epistemic and methodological levels of scientific inquiry.

However, group counseling lacks certain nuances inherent in individual counseling. It is impossible to be sure that the attention of the group is drawn to the individual, or that the individual fully succeeds in articulating their concerns. Moreover, in a less compassionate or skillful group, there is the potential danger that everything may seem naive, socially indiscreet, or unreasonable, intensifying the anachronistic experience of being vulnerable and orphaned. It is also important to notice that the peculiarities of the distress under discussion may extend to the group membership and strangle the engagement. Unlike individual counseling, group counseling is open to criticism and questioning from other group members, who have only a limited context for further inquiries. Despite the context offered by other group members, the status and subjective stance of the individual remain as an object of interpretation and assessment for the others, rather than as an equal subject of one and the same valid approach.

In individual counseling, it is ultimately the counseled individual who decides how to make sense of themselves based on the presentation, interpretation, and questioning applied by the counselor. Furthermore, the phenomena of trust, loyalty, disinterest, and defensiveness stand for specific dispositions and modes of agency in a dialogical



exchange and shed light on the differences between the person-to-person and one-to-many forms of caring engagement. Individual psychological counseling can be described as reconstructive activities that take place between two agents.

To be considered valid, each of the approaches used for counseling must have an established degree of efficacy and/or effectiveness. Such a determination is difficult; nevertheless, it is important to consider the different variables involved in counseling and their implications for the consumer. The situations and conditions under which counseling effectiveness is (or is not) considered important are known as counseling efficacy. Counseling effectiveness is concerned with whether the facet of individual and group counseling in question "works" under defined conditions, procedural outlines, and how it is actually practiced.

For the purposes of consumer protection in the mental health field, efficacy studies are particularly helpful in determining what facets of mental health treatment lead to positive outcomes for the client. On the other hand, one particular procedure may vary greatly from therapist to therapist, with the same being true of therapist characteristics and client profiles. Nevertheless, a focus on this area has some value for the general mental health consumer.

There is a great deal of research on the efficacy of individual and group counseling, particularly relevant

to college student populations. Most of the research appears to indicate that individual and group counseling are both effective in helping clients. However, results vary depending on the outcome measures being utilized. For example, clients have been shown to report a greater amount of satisfaction with individual counseling, and in general, individual counseling cases appear to be more severe than counseling group cases. Nevertheless, research studies utilizing the same measures of outcome indicate that the amount of change is comparable between the conditions.

In recent years, a growing interest and demand for counseling and social services are evident in various spheres of everyday life. There are several orientations for solutions to be employed in advisory work; employing an active method of interaction between a specialist and an individual or a group to be counseled is one of the most important ones. Under the guidance of a specialist and at their initiative, individual, family, and group forms of counseling have been successfully implemented in different sectors, institutions, and establishments. Due to taking into consideration the rapidly changing circumstances of life, the constantly emerging problems and life situations, and the needs of each group beforehand, these forms often require the application of modern, active, and sometimes non-standard methods of counseling. Recognizing that there is a growing demand for social services, social



workers have to successfully present their services to different groups of people subject to tension, stress, conflicts, misunderstandings, dissatisfaction with the existing situation, or failed attempts to make a decision. Consequently, there is a need for recognition on the part of professional advisors of the specific features, possibilities, and limitations of their advisory work using such methods as brainstorming or counseling groups, thereby drawing attention to the application of the ethical principles and norms of counselor conduct. Also, the employment of advisory work is based on creating conditions for successful decision-making, acting, and resolving existing problems by increasing self-awareness, awareness of situations or roles in them, and increasing the orientation toward the future that guarantees the maximization of decisions or actions undertaken.

Even though the choice is mostly on the part of individuals, the role of advisors is crucial in every situational and consequential aspect of socially oriented advisory work. Aiming at constructive and creative advisory work, one of the first tasks of a professional counselor is to identify the needs, interests, demands, preferences, fears, hopes, and expectations of clients. The second task is to create a climate of safety and trust through mutual acquaintance, socializing, and team-building exercises. The results of the first interaction can be very diverse; in many cases, taking the next steps is dependent on

mutual knowledge and trust. There are various frameworks for introducing basic ethical issues in group discussion and deliberation with regard to the social influence of professions. The outline of such a framework consists of basic concepts such as 'professional', 'ethics', and 'social responsibility', on the basis of which particular ethical aspects in group deliberation about core competency areas can be discussed. Those areas are professional secrecy, inequality, the professional's social contribution, the social quality of the professional's work, discrimination, and integrity. In the examining group, participants with various professional backgrounds point out a variety of moral challenges that are professionally oriented, dispersively distributed, and not unique. Recently, there is a growing concern for ethical questions in scientific research and a call for public debate about the ethical issues raised by new developments in the life sciences. There is a need for social responsibility and an ethical code of conduct.

In recent years, there has been a growing awareness of the importance of cultural factors in the counseling process. Culture influences individuals' development of frames of reference and worldviews. These variables can impact thoughts, feelings, and behaviors if left unassessed and unaddressed. In a highly diverse society, the unmet needs of culturally different groups are magnified in counseling endeavors. Culturally diverse groups may present completely different





worldviews and experiences, such as different ways of conceptualizing health and illness, time orientation, and the helpers' roles. In order to provide culturally sensitive counseling, counselors need to be aware of their own cultural values and attitudes, and whether they are relevant to those of the culturally different clients. Cultural competence has been proposed as one of the major strategies in addressing the normalization of the culture-bound assumptions, attitudes, beliefs, and values of counselors in professional practices. Cultural competence refers to a set of congruent behaviors, attitudes, and policies that come together in a plan, or system of operations, to enable those in operations to work effectively in cross-cultural situations. Cultural competence requires the integration of four elements: a) awareness of one's own cultural worldview; b) attitudes towards cultural differences; c) knowledge of different cultural practices and worldviews; and d) cross-cultural skills. The literature on multicultural counseling has been largely devoted to providing frameworks for achieving these elements. One-on-one cross-cultural counseling can have serious ramifications if cultural competency is not carefully integrated into the practice. The same is particularly true when a homogeneous group of culturally different individuals is brought together to address their needs or issues. In group settings where members present their worldviews through narratives, cultural worlds are in conflict. One voice may drown out many others if care is not taken to allow different

voices to be heard. When the voices that are heard reflect the dominant culture, participants may begin to think their cultural world is the only one that exists. Under such influence, they might be drawn to adopt beliefs, attitudes, and practices that are consistent with the dominant culture. The group process might cultivate disempowerment, self-doubt, self-disparagement, and cultural confusion among participants. In order to avoid the above-mentioned dangers when conducting a culturally diverse group, it is essential for group leaders to carefully examine potential cultural influences on the themes, dialogues, interactions, group environment, and exercises in the process, and to integrate culturally sensitive features into the proposal, design, or facilitation of the group.

Technology is rapidly transforming both everyday life and professional counseling scenarios. The introduction of innovations allows for the efficiency of knowledge retention, interaction, skill acquisition, and practice. Many educators, psychologists, and economists agree that no matter the level of sophistication in terms of tools and methods, personal communication remains the most effective. In this regard, many psychologists are faced with the question of whether technology has any advantage over the traditional approach to one-on-one interaction. Individual psychological counseling, paired psychological help, and psychological counseling in a small group setting are no longer a novelty, as



illustrated by numerous examples of everyday thoughts and experiences made public. Despite the growth of popularity in group settings, traditional individual psychological counseling is still in demand. Isolation of group attendees, their personal lifestyle, development, skills, and even wealth largely affect the group's efficiency and hence the quality of life of each member in that group. Nevertheless, socializing in protected groups of individuals sharing similar concerns is still the only affordable way of receiving professional counseling for many people. As to the provision of individual psychological help, here too it seems to be impersonal due to the changing role of media in the development of emotions and interaction practices. The growing speed of communication fosters the development of urban life and lifestyle in big cities, which often makes it impossible to conduct eye-to-eye communication with new acquaintances, potential friends, or even family members. Online chatting and dating, social media, and the like, though not universally accepted, have already affected the way people perceive and investigate personalities in both personal and professional dimensions.

Taking into account the diversity of individual counseling methods and means used by different specialists, the present work proposes a classification to establish the range of topics applicable and possibly interesting for future innovations and technological advancement in the domain of individual online

counseling. The classification, however, does not pretend to be exhaustive and is rather an attempt to cover the most significant and common areas of individual psychological problems that can be undertaken by individual counseling or advice. The prospective methods of provision of technological advisory settings that spring from the diversity of individual counseling topics are offered. These methods can be implemented in the early stages of website development. It is believed that though they may be quite challenging to represent technologically, here lies the key for enhancing the new and significant role of the internet in psychological counseling chains.

Although individual one-on-one counseling is, perhaps, the most challenging sphere for the implementation of technology, innovative settings to guarantee that it is still developing as traditionally intended with respect to profession, specialists' personal traits, and recipients' expectations of its provision are proposed. Further discussion of each of the proposed domains and areas of improvement, implementation of technological innovations, or design of online services in the field of work and life counseling is strongly anticipated. Admittedly, the provision of technological advancements in the domain is going to be inevitable, either on the basis of scenarios of changes extrapolated from the existing practices or as a response to the rapid change of circumstances



connected most likely with altered public perception of both cities and human interaction.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this monograph only attempted to summarize the empirical material on some of the most important mechanisms of psychological counseling. The characteristic features of the realization of the mechanisms described should, in principle, be considered universal in the psychological counseling of various goals. The conventionally assumed differences in the goals, subjects, and conditions of the use of counseling seem to lead to different implementations of the same mechanisms.

It should be remembered that the mechanisms of psychological counseling are not this optimistic. Psychological counseling does not provide answers to all questions posed by the client, and it is unlikely that it can effectively answer questions that reduce human existence to the level of animal, species-specific behavior and emotions. The effectiveness of counseling depends on the emotional-receptive and emotional-building prerequisites necessary in the client. Goals, means, time, and results of psychological counseling, as well as its social outcomes, are extremely conditional. Differences in views, goals, and tasks are related to different approaches to human nature, its content, development limits, and possibilities.

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