

Topic ▶ Introduction to Counselling

1

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this topic, you should be able to:

1. Define what is counselling;
2. Compare counselling with guidance and psychotherapy;
3. Discuss the contribution of individuals in the emergence of counselling;
4. Identify the events influencing the emergence of counselling as a profession; and
5. Trace the evolution of counselling from vocational guidance to the current meaning of counselling.

▶ INTRODUCTION

There is growing realisation that counselling is an important profession as society becomes more modern and urbanised. Over the last decade, interest in counselling has grown in many countries including Malaysia. This is reflected in the importance given to counselling in workplaces, in homes, in health care and of course, in schools. Realising the importance of counselling services, the Ministry of Education Malaysia has placed counsellors in most secondary schools to provide professional help for students.

The increasing interest in counselling may be attributed to the psychological and social ills arising from the stress of modern living and demands of society. Everyday life can be challenging and stressful for even the most resilient of children. Competition, bullying, racism, family crises, academic underachievement, peer pressure, substance abuse, gangs, suicide and violence are but a few of the problems faced by students. To cope with these problems, individuals have turned to counsellors and psychologists. Counselling as a profession is now better managed and regulated and there is an improved understanding of the benefits and limits of counselling practice.

1.1

THE EMERGENCE OF COUNSELLING

Before the 1900s, most counselling was in the form of advice or information. In the United States, counselling developed out of a humanitarian concern to improve the lives of those affected by the Industrial Revolution in the 1850s to around the early 1900 (Figure 1.1). The social welfare reform movement, women's right to vote, the spread of public education, and various changes in the population makeup (such as the large entrance of immigrants) also influenced the growth of counselling as a profession.



Figure 1.1: Industrial revolution

1.1.1 Pioneers of Counselling

Counselling gradually grew in the early 1900s; and three individuals credited as pioneers in counselling emerged and they are: Frank Parsons, Jesse B. Davis and Clifford Beers. These three personalities identified themselves as teachers and social reformers. They focused on helping children and young adults learn about themselves, about others, and the world of work. Their work was built on the idea of moral instruction, on being good and doing right, as well as dealing with

intrapersonal and interpersonal relations. These were turbulent times and they saw that American society needed help and took steps to do something.

(a) **Frank Parsons (1854–1908)**

Frank Parsons is often considered as the “Father of Guidance”. He was trained in multiple disciplines, being a lawyer, an engineer, a college teacher, and a social worker before becoming a social reformer and working with youth. He was characterised as a broad scholar, a persuasive writer and a tireless activist. He is best known for founding the Boston Vocational Bureau in 1908, a major step in the institutionalisation of vocational guidance.

At the Bureau, he worked with young people who were making decisions about their career. In his book, *Choosing a Vocation*, which was published in 1909 (one year after his death), he developed a framework to help individuals decide on a career, as outlined below:

Frank Parsons' Steps for Choosing a Career

1. First, the person should have a clear understanding of his or her aptitudes, abilities, interests and limitations (Self-Assessment).
2. Next, the person should be aware of available job opportunities, the requirements and demands of the work, the compensations given and prospects of the job (Study of Options).
3. Finally, match or establish a relationship between these two bodies of information, for example, the abilities of the person and characteristics of the job (Careful Reasoning).



ACTIVITY 1.1

The questions below were asked by Parsons in the 1900s:

- Are your manners quiet, noisy, boisterous, deferential, or self-assertive? Are you thoughtful of the comfort of others?
- Do you smile naturally and easily, or is your face ordinarily expressionless?
- Are you frank, kindly, cordial, respectful, courteous in words and actions?

- What are your powers of attention, observation, memory, reason, imagination, inventiveness, thoughtfulness, receptiveness, quickness, analytical power, constructiveness, breadth, grasp?
 - Can you manage people well?
 - Do you know a fine picture when you see one?
 - Is your will weak, yielding, vacillating, or firm, strong, stubborn?
 - Do you like to be with people and do they like to be with you?
1. Comment on the questions asked by Parsons in attempting to gain information about the individual's abilities and personality.
 2. Did you choose your career based on Parsons' steps? Elaborate.

According to Parsons, an ideal career choice should be based on matching personal traits such as abilities and personality, with job characteristics such as wages, requirements, prospects and so forth, through true reasoning. This is more likely to ensure vocational success. His framework later became the popular "Trait-Factor Theory" in career guidance (which is still used today). Parsons created procedures to help his clients learn more about themselves and the world of work. He designed an extensive questionnaire that asked about clients' experiences, preferences and moral values.

The idea of having vocational counsellors was implemented in many primary and secondary schools in the Boston area and it gradually spread to other major cities in the United States. By 1910, 35 cities had followed Boston's lead. According to Samuel Gladding, President of the American Counselling Association, besides his theory:

"Parsons might best be remembered for emphasising that in life we have choices. If we wish, we may cower and resign ourselves to fate. An approach of this type might be justified given the world in which we live. However, Parsons not only highlighted the importance of choice, but called attention to the significance of meaningfulness in life. It was Parsons who stressed that it is better to find something to do that is meaningful than to entrust your life to the whims of chance and the will of others."

– Samuel Gladding

Source: American Counselling Association, 2002

(b) **Jesse B. Davis**

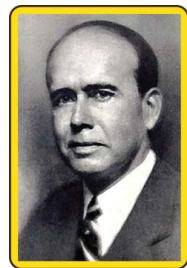
Jesse B. Davis was the first person to set up a systematic guidance programme in public schools. Being the superintendent of Grand Rapids Michigan school system, Davis suggested teachers of English composition include topics on career guidance in their lessons once a week, with the purpose of building character to lessen student problems. Davis believed that proper guidance would help cure the ills of American society due to rapid urbanisation and industrialisation. What he and other progressive educators advocated was not counselling as known today, but more of the beginning of counselling called school guidance, which refers to a preventive educational means of teaching students how to deal effectively with life.

Counselling was conceived as a tool or technique to assist in the guidance programme. Between 1914 and 1918, school guidance programmes were initiated in several large cities around the United States.

Davis highlighted prevention and preparation for life and services were provided to both males and females and people from all backgrounds (Remember, this is America in the 1900s where equal rights was still a nascent idea). From this initiative by Davis, guidance programmes grew in American schools which later evolved into comprehensive school counselling programmes that addressed three basic areas, namely: academic development, career development, and personal/social development.

(c) **Clifford Beers**

Clifford Beers, a former Yale student suffered from severe depression and paranoia several times during his life. After a failed attempt at suicide, he was committed to an institute for the insane, and remained in such asylums for three years. He found conditions in mental institutions deplorable and exposed them in his book, *A Mind That Found Itself* in 1908. The book became an instant best seller.



Cliff Beers

Beers used the book as a platform to advocate for better mental health facilities and reform in the treatment of the mentally ill by making friends with and soliciting funds from influential people of his day, such as the Fords and the Rockefellers. Beers' work had an especially powerful influence on the field of psychiatry and clinical psychology. Beers' work engineered the mental health movement in the United States, as well as advocacy groups that exist today including the National Mental Health Association and the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill. His work was also a forerunner of mental health counselling.



SELF-CHECK 1.1

Explain the contributions of Parsons, Davis and Beers in the development of the counselling profession.

1.1.2 Events that Influenced the Development of Counselling (1900-1930s)

Besides the three pioneers in counselling, the first decade of the 1900s also saw certain events that had a significant impact on the development of counselling; namely, the founding of the National Vocational Guidance Association in 1913, the Congressional passage of the Smith-Hughes Act in 1917 and World War I.

(a) **National Vocational Guidance Association**

The National Vocational Guidance Association (NVGA) was founded in 1913 and began publishing the National Vocational Guidance Bulletin which was later renamed the National Vocational Guidance Magazine in 1924 and the Vocational Guidance Journal in 1952. In 1984 it was renamed the Journal of Counselling and Development. Note how the emphasis shifted from “vocational guidance” towards “counselling”. This was due to the growing complexities of modern living in urbanised environments which prompted the realisation that the role of counsellors should go beyond just providing vocational guidance.

(b) **The Smith-Hughes Act of 1917**

The second event was the passing of the Smith-Hughes Act by Congress in 1917. This act provided funding for public schools to support vocational education. This signifies the importance attached to counselling in American schools.

(c) **World War I**

The third important event contributing to the development of counselling was World War I. During the war, counselling was used in testing and placement for great numbers of military personnel. In this process, the Army commissioned the development of numerous psychological instruments including the Army Alpha and Army Beta intelligence tests. Various screening devices were employed and psychological testing became a popular movement and early foundation on which counselling was based.



SELF-CHECK 1.2

Trace the events that had a significant impact on the development of counselling.

Education, Certification and Instruments

The 1920s was a period of consolidation for the counselling profession. Education courses were initiated in Harvard University in 1911, emphasising vocational guidance. The dominant influences were the progressive theories of education and the federal government's use of guidance services with war veterans. Counsellors in Boston and New York were given certification. Another significant event was the development of the first standards for the preparation and evaluation of occupational materials. These were supplemented with the publication of new psychological instruments such as the Edward Strong's Strong Vocational Interest Inventory (SVII) in 1927, which became a foundation for the use of assessment in counselling.

Two years later, the first marriage and counselling centre was established in New York City by Abraham and Hannah Stone. This was soon followed by the setting up of such centres across the country. This marked the beginning of marriage and family counselling as a specialisation of counselling. While the guidance movement gained acceptance by American society, the movement's narrow emphasis on vocational interests began to be challenged. Counsellors were broadening their focus to include issues relating to marriage and family.

First Theory of Counselling

The 1930s was the era of the Great Depression. This raised the need for helping strategies and counselling methods related to employment. The first theory of counselling was formulated by E. G. Williamson and his colleagues at the University of Minnesota. Williamson modified Parsons' theory and used it to work with students and the unemployed. His emphasis on a direct counsellor-centred approach became known as the Minnesota point of view and sometimes referred to as the trait-factor counselling. His pragmatic approach emphasised the counsellor's teaching, mentoring and influencing skills.

Williamson proposed that all individuals have traits such as aptitudes, interests, personalities and achievements that could be integrated in a variety of ways to form factors (a group of individual characteristics). Counselling was based on scientific, problem-solving, empirical method that was individually tailored to each client to help him or help stop non-productive thinking or behaviour, thus becoming an effective decision maker. Williamson believed that the job of the

counsellor was to ascertain a lacking in the client, and then prescribe a procedure to rectify the problem. Williamson continued to write about his theory until the 1970s.

Every teacher should be a counsellor and guidance should focus on preparing students to live outside the school environment.

– John Brewer, 1932

Another significant development in the 1930s was the broadening of counselling beyond occupational concerns. Back in the 1920s, Edward Thorndike and other psychologists began to challenge the vocational orientation of the guidance movement. John Brewer continued the emphasis on extending counselling to other specialties when he published a book in 1932 titled *Education as Guidance*. Brewer proposed that every teacher should be a counsellor and guidance should focus on preparing students to live outside the school environment. This emphasis made counsellors see vocational decisions as part of their responsibilities.

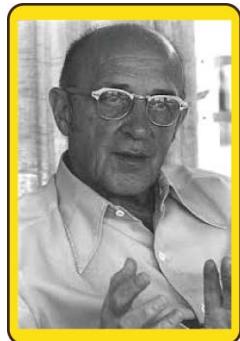
The American government also became more involved in guidance and counselling. Congress passed the George-Dean Act in 1938 that created the Vocational Education Division of the U.S. Office of Education. State supervisors of guidance positions in state departments of education were elected throughout the country. Therefore, school guidance became a national phenomenon. The government also established the U.S. Employment Service in the 1930s, which published the first edition of the *Dictionary of Occupational Titles* (DOT) in 1939. The DOT became a major source of career information for guidance specialists working with students and the unemployed which described known occupations in the United States and coded them according to job titles.

1.1.3 Counselling in the 1940s

Three major events in the 1940s radically shaped the practice of counselling. The first event was the practice of counselling by Carl Rogers who published his book *Counselling and Psychotherapy* in 1942.

(a) **Carl Rogers**

Rogers challenged Williamson's counsellor-centred approach as well as the theory of Sigmund Freud who proposed the psychoanalysis approach. Rogers believed in non-directive approach to counselling, emphasising the responsibility of the client for growth and choice (we will explore this theory in Topic 3: Counselling Theories).



Carl Rogers
1902–1987

He believed that if clients were accepted and listened to, they would begin to know themselves better and become genuinely in harmony. He pictured the role of the counsellor as being non-judgemental and accepting. The counsellor should act as a mirror, reflecting the verbal and emotional concerns of clients. Before Carl Rogers, the counselling emphasis was on vocational guidance, psychometric testing, and orientation procedures. Rogers introduced a new emphasis on techniques and methods of counselling itself, research, and refinement of counselling techniques, selection and training of future counsellors, and goals and objectives of counselling. Guidance suddenly disappeared from counselling and was replaced by full concentration on counselling.

(b) **World War II**

The second event was World War II during which the U.S. government needed counsellors and psychologists to help select and train specialists for military and industry. Many women started to work outside the home as men went to war. Traditional occupational sex roles began to change and greater emphasis was put on personal and gender freedom.

(c) **Involvement of the American Government**

The third impetus for the development of counselling was the American government's involvement in counselling after the war. The government further promoted counselling when it passed the George-Barden Act in 1946, which provided vocational education funds through the U.S. Office of Education for counsellor training. The Veterans Administration (VA) also granted stipends and paid internships for students engaged in graduate study. The VA rewrote specifications for vocational counsellors and coined the term "counselling psychologist". The funds greatly influenced teaching professionals in graduate education to define their curriculum offerings more precisely. Counselling psychology as a profession began to move further away from its historical alliance with vocational guidance.



SELF-CHECK 1.3

1. What was Carl Rogers' argument?
2. How did government involvement impact the development of counselling in the 1940s?

1.1.4 Counselling in the 1950s

The 1950s saw dramatic changes to counselling. The Council of Guidance and Personnel Associations (CGPA) which operated from 1934 to 1951 was renamed The American Personnel and Guidance Association (APGA) in 1952. The Association was formed with the purpose of formally organising groups interested in guidance, counselling, and personnel matters. About 6000 associations registered with the APGA, which early in its history was an interest group rather than a professional organisation since it did not originate or enforce standards for membership.

Another development was the establishment of the Division of Counselling Psychology (Division 17) within the American Psychological Association (APA) in 1952. This division dropped the term guidance from its formal name. The idea emerged from APA members who wanted to work with a more "normal" population than the one seen by clinical psychologists. Super (1955) argued that counselling psychology was more concerned with normal human growth and development. Despite Super's work, counselling psychology had a difficult time establishing a clear identity within the APA, yet its existence had a major impact on the growth and development of counselling as a profession.

The 1950s saw the passing of the National Defence Education Act (1958) which aimed to identify and develop scientifically and academically talented students. It also saw the establishment of counselling and guidance institutes to train counsellors. In 1952, the field of school counselling attained the status of a profession with the formation of the American School Counsellor Association. The '50s also witnessed the introduction of new theories on guidance and counselling. Before 1950, four major theories influenced the work of counsellors:

- (a) Psychoanalysis and insight theory,
- (b) Trait-factor or directive theories,
- (c) Humanistic and client-centred theories, and
- (d) Behavioural theories.

Aubrey argued that counselling should be organised and implemented in a developmental fashion. Teachers alone could not provide the necessary experiences required for optimal development of students, and guidance programmes were the most critical educational factor in enhancing student development (as cited in Bauman et. al., 2003).

Counsellors often debated whether to use directive (proposed by E. G. Williamson) or non-directive approach (proposed by Carl Rogers) in counselling. However, almost all counsellors agreed that certain assumptions of psychoanalysis were acceptable. Gradually, the debate shifted as new theories emerged. For example, applied behavioural theory, rational-emotive therapy, transactional analysis and research in career development and developmental psychology, contributed tremendously to the expansion of counselling in terms of its resources of theories and approaches.



SELF-CHECK 1.4

What was the main argument for setting up the *Division of Counselling Psychology* within the American Psychology Association?

1.1.5 Counselling in the 1960s

In his book *Revolution in Counselling*, published in 1962, John Krumboltz emphasised behavioural counselling which emerged as a strong counselling theory. He also promoted learning as the agent of change. These were turbulent times during which the civil rights movement, women's rights movement and protests against the Vietnam War were most active (see Figure 1.2). These issues led to a shift in the focus of counselling from a developmental approach towards addressing social crisis issues. More community mental health centres were established all over the United States. Counselling began to spread to involve alcohol abuse counselling, addiction counselling, and family counselling. Also, during this decade, group counselling began to gain popularity as a way of resolving personal issues.



Figure 1.2: Protest during the 1960s

In 1961, American Personnel and Guidance Association published its first code of ethics. The role definitions and training standards for school counsellors were further clarified. Also, a definition of counselling psychology agreed upon by the American Psychology Association followed by the publication of The Counselling Psychologist Journal with Gilbert Wrenn as its first editor in 1964. In 1966, ERIC Clearinghouse on Counselling and Personnel Services (CAPS) at the University of Michigan was founded. It was responsible for building a database of research in counselling. It has become one of the largest and most used resources on counselling activities and trends in the United States and throughout the world.

1.1.6 Counselling in the 1970s and 1980s

The 1970s saw the field of counselling extending its specialties outside the educational settings. As more counsellors graduated from colleges and universities, competition grew. Specialised training began to be offered in counsellor education programmes. New concepts of counselling were introduced. In 1977, Lewis and Lewis coined the term community counsellor to describe a counsellor who could function in various roles regardless of where he or she works. In 1976, the American Mental Health Counselling Association was formed and became one of the largest divisions within the American Personnel and Guidance Association. The Association started its own method of licensing counselling graduates which led towards standardised training and certification and the formation of the Council for Accreditation of Counselling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) in 1981.

This council standardised counsellor education programmes for masters and doctoral programmes in the areas of school, community, mental health, family and marriage counselling.

In 1983, the National Board of Certified Counsellors (NBCC) was established in order to certify counsellors at a national level. It developed a standardised test

and determined eight areas for counsellors to be proficient in: human growth and development, social and cultural foundations, helping relationships, groups, lifestyle and career development, appraisal, research and evaluation, and professional orientation. Besides passing the test, candidates had to meet experiential and character reference qualifications. There was a growing awareness among APGA leaders regarding the inappropriate usage of the term personnel and guidance as the counselling profession had developed beyond its original focus. Thus, in 1983, the APGA changed its name to the American Association for Counselling and Development (AACD).



SELF-CHECK 1.5

What were the developments in the 70s and 80s that contributed towards making counselling more of a profession?

1.1.7 Counselling in the 1990s and Onwards

In 1992 the AACD changed its name to the American Counselling Association (ACA). During that year, counselling was put on par with other mental health specialties such as psychology, social work, and psychiatry. The field of counselling addressed topics such as spiritual issues, multicultural counselling and family influences more openly. The 1990s saw an increase in the number of programmes in counsellor education and counselling psychology at both doctoral and master levels, as well as an increase in the number of professional publications on counselling.

The 21st century saw a new emphasis on counsellors dealing with crises, trauma, and tragedies as a result of heightened violence in schools, abuse, natural disasters and terrorist attacks. The focus of counselling shifted to the effects and treatment of stress. Another emphasis is the promotion of wellness in physical, intellectual, social, psychological, emotional and environmental life of the individuals. Counselling has even extended its services over the Internet as evidenced with the availability of on-line counselling websites. Counsellors in the United States today identify more with the American Counseling Association as their professional organisation.

Summing Up

The purpose of tracing the counselling movement in the United States is to show how the field of counselling has evolved over the last century. It began as “giving advice”, moving towards “vocational guidance” and finally as “counselling”. In Malaysia, it began as the Malaysian Vocational Guidance Association

(MAVOGA) which later evolved into the Malaysian National Counselling Association.

1.2 WHAT IS COUNSELLING?

Advertisement in a Newspaper

Due to our expansion, we invite dynamic and highly motivated individuals to fill the following position:

Sales Counsellor

- Good communication and interpersonal skills
- Able to work flexible hours including weekends

While there is increasing acceptance of counselling, there is also misuse and overuse of the term, as exemplified in the newspaper advertisement above. Certain individuals are calling themselves “counsellors” and certain groups and organisations are labelling their services as “a counselling service”. To protect the integrity of the profession, there is a need to correct misconceptions and minimise misuse of the term among members of the public. In this course you will learn what counselling is, counselling theories, the counselling process, the skills of the counsellor and the issue of ethics, but, you cannot claim to be a professional counsellor. You need much more knowledge about the profession and have a great deal of practical experience. However, as an educationist it is necessary that you are equipped with the basics of counselling. Many a time as an educator, you deal with students encountering various kinds of mental health related problems. If you do “fall in love” with the profession after this course, you can work towards becoming a professional counsellor by taking more courses in the field and doing internships.



ACTIVITY 1.2

Look for newspapers articles, magazines and posters that have used the term counsellor.

What do they mean by counsellor in these instances?

The word counselling stems from the verb “to counsel” which has always meant “to advise”. So it is not surprising that some people still have this misconception

of counselling. Although some forms of counselling may contain some advice-giving components, counselling is mostly dedicated to restoring a client's self-understanding, decision-making resources, risk-taking and personal growth. Telling people what to do can be a counterproductive remedy. Basically, counselling is a short-term, theory-based, non-directive, non-judgemental process. During this process, a psychologically healthy person called the **client**, is facing an adjustment in dealing with a developmental or situational problem. The client wants to gain an awareness of himself or herself and to make decisions through the support and assistance offered by another person called the **counsellor**.

Bor et. al. (2002) emphasise that counselling is not a process of "doing something to someone", thus:

Counselling is an interaction in a therapeutic setting, focusing primarily on a conversation about relationships, beliefs, and behaviour (including feelings), through which the client's perceived problem is elucidated and framed or reframed in a fitting or useful way, and in which new solutions are generated and the problem takes on a new meaning (p. 19).

This definition has many aspects to it. First, it describes counselling as an "**interaction in a therapeutic setting**". The dictionary meaning of "therapeutic" is healing, curative, beneficial or remedial. Second, it is described as a "**conversation about relationships**" in which clients can be helped to feel understood and better about themselves and their problem. Third, it is not about finding solutions to the client's problems but rather "new solutions are generated". Fourth, the relationship between the counsellor and the client is a collaborative one rather than that of a superior and subordinate. Fifth, it assumes that the counsellor is a specialist in therapeutic skills and clients also have some expertise in the issues and problems that concern them.

A professional body representing a large number of counsellors, the American Counseling Association defined counselling as:

The application of mental health, psychological or human development principles through cognitive, affective, behavioural or systematic intervention strategies that address wellness, personal growth or career development, as well as pathology.

Similar to the earlier definition, this definition also contains a number of important points about counselling which are slightly different.

- (a) “**The application of mental health, psychological or human development principles...**” refers to the fact that counselling can be conducted with various levels of clients in terms of the seriousness of problems. Counsellors could be dealing with normal, well-adjusted individuals or even seriously problematic clients, although some restrictions do apply when counsellors attempt to help individuals with extreme psychological problems.
- (b) “**...address wellness, personal growth or career development, as well as pathology**” points to the fact that counsellors work in various settings that involve relationships. The counselling relationship can deal with wellness, personal growth, career and pathological concerns.
- (c) “**...through cognitive, affective, behavioural or systematic interventions, strategies**” means that the counselling process is theory based. Counsellors draw upon a number of theoretical approaches to guide how they can help clients deal with their problems.
- (d) “**The application of mental health, psychological or human development principles...**” also means that counselling is a process that may be developmental or intervening. Developmental refers to goals such as making the right choice or understanding personal belief or emotional growth. Intervention includes making changes in the ways one think, feel or behave.

According to Feltham (2000), counselling is generally characterised by an explicit agreement between a counsellor and client to meet in a certain private setting, at agreed times and under disciplined conditions of confidentiality, with ethical parameters, protected time and specified aims. It is widely accepted that counselling may be a more suitable form of help for a variety of personal problems or concerns, the most common being depression, anxiety, bereavement, relationship difficulties, life crisis and traumas, addictions, confusion and other negative conditions or it may be more proactively and educationally to learn for example how to relax, be more assertive, deal with stress and lead a more fulfilling life.

There are many types of counselling depending on the issue to be dealt with and the desired achievement. These include supportive counselling, educational counselling, career counselling, management counselling, family counselling, marriage counselling, counselling in medical settings, rehabilitative and mental health counselling and many new types are constantly emerging.

1.3

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN COUNSELLING, GUIDANCE AND PSYCHIATRY

You should not confuse counselling with guidance. **Guidance** is the process of helping people make important choices that affect their lives, such as choosing which career to pursue or what line of studies to embark on. Specifically, guidance refers to an expert giving advices and providing information and knowledge to the person who seeks help in making the right choice. Many early works in guidance happened in schools and career centres where an adult would help a student make decisions on subject or career choice. The relationship is between two individuals of different status: the adult as the know-all person, and the student as the inexperienced person. The relationship is often short-term, involving only one meeting or several meetings until the person who seeks guidance feels satisfied with the information given and is more confident in making the right choice. In order to understand what counselling is, it is easier to compare what it is not by looking at the definitions of terms such as guidance and psychiatry.

You should also not confuse counselling with psychiatry. is often associated with mental illness, extreme emotional problems and serious personal issues. Psychiatry has its roots in the medical and psychological fields that see patients who seek professional help as being mentally ill or sick. The psychiatry process prefers to delve into the patient's past in order to gain insight into the actual cause of the problems. The psychiatrist is the expert while the patient is the mentally or emotionally sick person.

Psychiatry is often associated with a long-term relationship extending from months to even years, using therapies as well as medicine in order to cure the patient's sickness or at least bringing it under control. Psychiatrists commonly work in inpatient settings such as mental hospitals or psychiatric residential homes.

Counselling in Malaysia

Counselling is one of the least understood or most understood field in Malaysia. Most people cannot tell the difference between counselling, psychology and psychiatry. It is these misunderstandings that give the field of counselling a negative image among Malaysians, and consequently discourage people who may need help from seeking it. Psychology is basically the science of the human mind; how we think and react to situations. Psychiatry is part of the medical field, except it specifically focuses on the treatment of mental disorder. Psychiatry focuses on people with abnormal mental problems. Counsellors work with normal people who have emotional and psychological problems, but are still mentally competent to make sound decisions. Counsellors treat patients by discussing and listening so that patients may see things in a new light and able to think clearly and positively.

For instance, a person who is suffering from a mental problem by walking naked in public, would be best treated by a psychiatrist, while a normal person who, for example is having difficulty dealing with death of a loved one or a severe case of shyness, would best be treated by a counsellor. A counsellor is a qualified professional who needs adequate training in psychology and knowledge of the methods of counselling. With such an assurance, people will be less hesitant to seek professional help.

Source: Suradi Salim, 2004



SELF-CHECK 1.6

List the main differences between guidance, psychiatry and counselling.



ACTIVITY 1.3

If this is your first course in counselling, state your opinion about the counselling profession.

SUMMARY

- There is growing realisation that counselling is an important profession as society becomes more modern and urbanised.
- The Ministry of Education Malaysia has placed counsellors in most secondary schools to provide professional help for students.
- Before the 1900s, most counselling was in the form of advice or information.
- Counselling gradually grew in the early 1900s; and three persons credited as the pioneers in counselling emerged: Frank Parsons, Jesse B. Davis and Clifford Beers.
- Frank Parsons is often considered as the "*Father of Guidance*".
- According to Parsons, an ideal career choice should be based on matching personal traits with job characteristics through true reasoning.
- Jesse B. Davis was the first person to set up a systematic guidance programme in the public schools.
- Clifford Beers' work influenced the field of psychiatry and clinical psychology; and the forerunner of mental health counselling.
- E.G. Williamson formulated the first theory of counselling which emphasised a direct counsellor-centred approach. The approach emphasised the counsellor's teaching, mentoring and influencing skills.
- Rogers believed in non-directive approach to counselling, emphasising the responsibility of the client for growth and choice.
- American Personnel and Guidance Association (APGA) introduced the first code of ethics for the counselling profession.
- Counselling is an interactive process of a unique relationship between counsellor and client that leads to the client changing his or her cognition (belief), affection (emotion) or behaviour.
- There are differences between counselling, guidance and psychotherapy.

KEY TERMS

American Personnel and Guidance Association	Father of counselling
American Psychological Association	Frank Parsons
Career guidance	Guidance
Clifford Beers	Psychiatry
Counselling	



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