ELEMENTS OF PSYCHOTHERAPY AND PSYCHOLOGICAL COUNSELLING IN STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

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Abstract
Over time the problem of the needs of students with disabilities was raised. Of course, multiple fields of activity that could support this category of students, were highlited. Only we see though that from the multiple domains to rehabilitate these students, there is the lack of an absence meant to support under another form, the student with special needs. In terms of the services meant to support people with special needs, psychological counselling and psychotherapy appear quite recently in the field of support of these people. The rehabilitation field of psychotherapy and of psychological counselling refers to the mental health plan. The present work wishes to hilight, from a theoretical point of view, the special needs of students with disabilities in the sense of passing from the utilization of the diagnostic labels of stigmatization which can lead to segregation, to practices based on the quality of human life and on supporting the independence of every student through their own particularities.

Keywords: students; psychological counselling; psychotherapy; disability; development

Introduction

The different perspectives upon disabilities lead to some incidents that raise different problems. In this sense, in the USA it was noticed that 2 out of 10 clients present some form of a disability (Beecher, Rabe, & Wilder, 2004).

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Throughout time there were different miths conveyed regarding the efficiency of the mental health services over the people with disabilities and learning difficulties. It was said about this cathegory of people that they can not have mental ilnesses, or that they would not have the same feelings as other people, etc. The intellectual disability represents a pretty obvious feature, which sometimes triggers the ignorance of the emotional distress signs (Whitehouse, Tudway, Look, & Kroese, 2006).

Lately the students, children and adults with learning difficulties have been exhibiting a significant increase in the severity of emotional problems. Many times these emotional problems are considered to be the integrating part of the main diagnosis. The factors of social nature to which these students with disabilities or learning difficulties are exposed, through certain negative attitudes at the level of comunity, have a negative impact over the social, personal and attachment relationships. These lead to what we name mental health problems expressed through behaviour. In other words, the intervention in the mental health sphere promotes a healthy lifestyle that supports mental health (Costea-Bărluțiu, 2015).

Psychological counselling and psychotherapy, as a service of intervention, assumes a similarity, although they have different features of intervention. The two types of intervention are based on a professional relationship between the counselor / psychotherapist and the client. Both counselors and psychotherapists represent professionalism in the work with people with disabilities. The two are working in collaboration with specialists from various fields in order to respond to the needs of the requests of the people concerned. It is important to establish a relationship based on collaboration both between the psychotherapist / counselor and the professionals in the fields, and between the students with disabilities/their tutors and the counselor / psychotherapist.

The counselling process of the people with intellectual disability can be influenced by a series of factors (Raffensperger, 2009):
– Client related factors (the severity of the disorders, the capacity of personal resources, age, gender, economic status, etc.);
– Factors related to the process of counselling (the therapeutic relationship, the features of the counselor, communication, attitude, experience, etc.);
– Enviromental factors (social stigmatization, social support, events, living conditions, income, etc.).

The psychological counselling of the students with disabilities

In the process of psychological counselling, the counselor needs to take into account the discrimination to which the students with disabilities are subjected. In these conditions, the psychological counselling services not only have to take into account the needs of students with disabilities, but also to focus their attention on other's attitudes following topics such as (Lawrence, 2004):
- Social and interpersonal power;
- Self-determination (self-regulation, autonomy, updating);
- Stories with reference to disability (in a family, social, and individual context);
- Morality (ethics);
- Differences and diversity.

Psychological counselling represents multiple facets, and Băban (2001) addresses it from a humanistic perspective. The author considers that the problems need to be addressed under the aspect of self-knowledge, the strengthening of the Self, the personal development and adaptation.

The objectives of psychological counselling are (Băban, 2001):
- Promoting the person's health (state of wellness);
- Personal development (self-knowledge, the ability to make decisions, stress control, the optimization of learning, etc.);
- Prevention of the negative mood (self-doubt, learning difficulties, maladjustment, psychosomatic disorders, etc.).

Regarding the counselling of people with disabilities, the psychological counselling cosniders aspects like (Raffensperger, 2009):
- Development of the coping strategy when it comes to emotional problems targeted by disability ;
- The development of self-determination;
- Personal development (self-knowledge);
- Addressing behavioral problems;
- Addressing certain losses (mourning);
- Addressing the disability adaptation issues (social, physical, emotional, etc.);
- Promoting the quality of life (state of wellness).

It is possible to take part in or benefit from psychological counselling for people with disabilities such as (Kanellakis, 2010):
- Mental health problems or physical disability;
- Temporary disability;

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- Disability that arises following the avoidance of certain situations;
- Disability with effect on daily necessities (reading, writing, getting dressed, etc.);
- Disability existing in the individual's historic record;
- Disability that appears because of the family relationship.

The psychological counselor is involved in nontherapeutical activities such as:
- Supervision activities;
- Training;
- Research;
- Management and marketing.

Throughout time, psychological counselling has proven its efficiency for the general population, but in terms of psychological counselling of the people with intellectual disabilities especially, there are skeptical opinions regarding their efficiency (Raffensperger, 2009).

The psychotherapeutic intervention for the students with disabilities

Psychotherapy targets the treatment of psyhological or adaptation disorders through a technique specific to the theory that it bases, and has as general purposes (Costea-Bărluțiu, 2015):
- Eliminating or modifying the existing symptoms;
- Mediation of the problematic behavioral patterns;
- Stimulating the development of personality.

The psychotherapeutic intervention for the students with disabilitiesis is an increasingly recommended and increasingly used measure. The targetted aspects of the therapeutic intervention, in the case of students with disabilities are (Costea-Bărluțiu, 2015):
- Difficulties in maintaining the therapeutic alliance (disinterest, ADHD, the imposibility of respecting the scheduled appointments, frequent health problems);
- Learned helplessness (the person has repeated experiences, that lead to the conclusion that no matter how much he/she tries, he/she will not have success, so it is not worth trying anymore);
- Lack of a constant and consistency (it is due to health and behavioral issues and can jeopardize the relationship with other people);

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- Lack of validation (stems from social isolation; "therapy targets the understanding of the person's frustration, as a natural reaction to rejection and isolation, overcoming the social difficulties specific to disability and the understanding of the discomfort specific to the situation of life in which the person finds themselves, for example, stress at school" (Costea-Bărluțiu, 2015, p. 529);
- Lack of responsibility regarding the expression of personal needs;
- Unrealistic goals (after finishing school, the person with disabilities faces challenges to which the coping strategies are no longer effective, because they were developed in a protective enviroment, thus it is important for the person to establish certain realistic goals in developing compensatory strategies);
- The inability of accessing resources (it is due to the lack of responsibility in getting the help that the person needs, for instance, sustainment benefits, social benefits, etc.).

Between the two ways of intervention (psychological counselling and psychotherapy) there is a series of similarities (resemblanes). They respect the ethical principles within the process:

a) Confidentiality
- Represents the feature which facilitates the client's self-disclosure;
- Works on a profund level with the intimate aspects of the person;
- It is advised for the therapist to work with people that he does not know from other contexts.

b) Avoiding multiple roles
- The therapist does not have multiple roles in relation to the client during the therapeutic process.

c) Competence and the informed consent
- The therapist must have professional training in the form of the therapy that he practices (for example, cognitive behavioral therapy, eriksonian therapy, etc.);
- The client has the right of knowing the methods which the therapist will use in the therapeutic process.

Regarding the differences between the two ways of intervention (psychological counselling and psychotherapy), these exist at the level of emotinal intensity of the process:

The severity of the approached problems
- Psychological counselling refers to problems related to personal development, taking certain decisions, everyday life problems;

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– Psychotherapy addresses the problem in the sphere of psychopathology.

Duration in time of the problems and their origins

– Psychological counselling manages the problems from the recent past and present of the person;
– Psychotherapy manages both the problems from the recent past, and the problems from the distant past of the person.

The nature of the problems

– Psychological counselling targets clearly circumcised problems;
– Psichotherapy targets unclear and general problems.

The implemented model

– Within psychological counselling there is an educational model, of development;
– Within psychotherapy the implemented model is a clinical one, curative in psychotherapy.

The change that occured

– Following the counselling process we obtain ability;
– Following the psychotherapy process, we obtain facilitation, reconstruction.

The duration of the therapeutic process

– In psychotherapy there is a longer process in comparison to psychological counselling.

Duration of the therapist's training

– In psychothetapy the duration is longer in comparison to psychological counselling.

Regarding the students with disabilities , they are exposed to abuse, harassment, lack of respect (humiliation), which can affect the trust of the individual in professionals. In these situations, the therapist must pay attention to securing the therapeutic relationship. In the relatioship with people with disabilities it is important for the therapist to have the skills meant to produce an adequate interaction, given that it is more difficult for the students with learning difficulties and intellectual disability to verbally communicate their feelings. In this regard an important role is possessed by the game, visual contact, drawing, the tone of voice, the bodily movements. These can provide he therapist with information regarding the inner world of the client (Hodges, 2003).

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Conclusions

People with disabilities express physical needs (mobility), psychological needs (anger management, tolerance to frustration, etc), social needs (interpersonal communication), vocational needs (skills carried out at work), financial needs (social benefits, general maintenance benefits, etc), recreational needs (leisure activities). These needs are managd by educational groups, social support groups, psychotherapeutic and coping skills development groups.

Under the conditions of respecting the fundamental principles, the therapeutic relationship favors a positive aspect of therapy, especially when an adequate relationship is established from the beginning. The therapeutic relationship, as we saw, presents a series of common elements, which is based on trust and has as a goal the assistance and help provided to the client.

Different forms of intervention, both through counselling and psychotherapy, have adopted specific forms of approaching people with disabilities. Specialised training of mental health professionals is important, and for quality work, the therapists must have knowledge in the field of disabilities.

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