

GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After completing this section the learner will be able to:

- understand the significance and scope of guidance and counselling
- explain the basic concepts in guidance and counselling
- have basic understanding and knowledge required for guidance and counselling

SIGNIFICANCE

Every human being comes across challenges and stress that must be faced. Sometimes, we feel the need for assistance and support to manage the problems and find solutions. Traditionally, in India, such support was readily and easily available through the family, particularly the joint or extended family, and the strong social network. Besides these, moral and emotional support was also available from teachers, friends and spiritual/religious mentors. In the present, particularly urban, context there is an increasing speed in the pace of life, fragmentation of family and socio-religious support systems, and competitiveness. All such factors have led to a greater need for assistance to help individuals cope with their problems. Consequently, the field of guidance and counselling has evolved into a professional area.

You may reflect that when you last experienced a problem, if you were able to speak about it with someone whom you trusted, you felt better. The person whom you confided in may have suggested certain steps to handle the problem, which you may not have thought of. Sometimes the listener is able to guide you to look inwards and find solutions. In this manner, sharing one's troubles with a trusted person can help the individual feel more capable of facing a situation. This is because seeking guidance from others enables a person to examine the situation from various perspectives and find appropriate solutions.

You may have seen or heard of people facing different types of challenging situations. A friend may be upset with her poor grades in examinations, a youth may be disturbed because his parents often quarrel with each other, another person may be having difficulty with friends, some one else may have financial problems. Many students on the threshold of college may be confused about choices to be made for further studies and such other issues. They are perhaps in situations which they are unable to deal with by themselves. Here they would benefit from professional guidance and counselling. These are processes that help people when they feel that they are in a challenging situation and cannot find a way to cope with it.

Sandeep has appeared for the medical entrance examinations for the last two years. He feels that if he doesn't become a doctor, life isn't worth living. He has an artistic bent of mind, can paint very well and is very creative. He could do well in a field which involves creative and artistic/aesthetic activity. But in the medical exams he faces repeated failure, experiences lack of confidence and a feeling of inferiority.

Radha is a resident of a village. Despite the larger family's disapproval, her father sent her for senior secondary schooling to an adjacent village. The young man to whom she is engaged has a shop in the village. He often comes to visit her. Of late he has been insisting that she goes out with him to a park. Radha is in two minds. She likes the young man but is afraid of what people would say. Her mind is in turmoil and there is no one to whom she can turn for advice.

The above two instances depict the kind of challenges that young people may face. In a survey conducted by the All India Educational and Vocational Guidance Association for assessing college students' needs, major problems reported by 50 per cent of the respondents were:

- gap between expectations and performance,
- lack of knowledge regarding careers and professions,
- anxiety regarding the future,
- lack of concentration,
- inability to make friends or deal with members of the opposite sex,
- lack of knowledge regarding sexual matters,
- lack of information regarding one's strengths and weakness,
- lack of knowledge regarding one's aptitude and abilities,
- lack of resources,
- lack of knowledge of effective learning strategies,
- inability to forgive oneself for past mistakes.

The findings clearly indicate the need for professionals in the field of guidance and counselling.

ACTIVITY 1

Make a list of problems you have faced recently, where you would have felt much better after speaking with somebody about it. From the list, categorise the problems in following categories. Personal/ Social/ Academic, You need not disclose or share the problems with others if you do not wish to.

Note to the teacher: Please ensure that students do not feel compelled to share intimate difficulties, other wise it can create more problems for students among the peer group.

Let us examine the duties and roles of professionals in Guidance and Counselling.

BASIC CONCEPTS

Guidance can be explained as assistance made available by competent counsellors to an individual of any group to help him/her direct the life course, develop a point of view, make decisions and be better adjusted. Guidance does not mean giving directions, nor is it an imposition of one's point of view on another person. The person, who is guiding another does not take the onus (responsibility) of making decisions on behalf of the client. We can see that guidance is more about assisting people to find their way rather than giving instructions or ready made solutions.

Counselling is an interactive learning process in which the counsellor (sometimes termed therapist), helps the counselees (be they individuals, families, groups or institutions) to understand the cause(s) of difficulties and guides them to sort out issues and reach decisions. The approach in counselling is holistic, addressing social, cultural, economic and emotional issues. Counselling can be sought at any time in life, although many people reach out only in times of change or crisis. The qualified professional counsellor speaks with the counsellee in a way to help that person solve a problem or helps to create conditions that will cause the person to understand and improve life circumstances.

Counselling may be concerned with addressing and resolving specific problems, making decisions, coping with crisis, improving relationships and developing personal awareness. It also involves working with feelings, thoughts, perceptions and conflicts. The overall aim is to provide counselees with opportunities to work in positive ways so as to live with essence of well being as individuals and as members of the larger society.

ACTIVITY 2

Refer Boxes given on page 157 where the two young persons' problems are described.

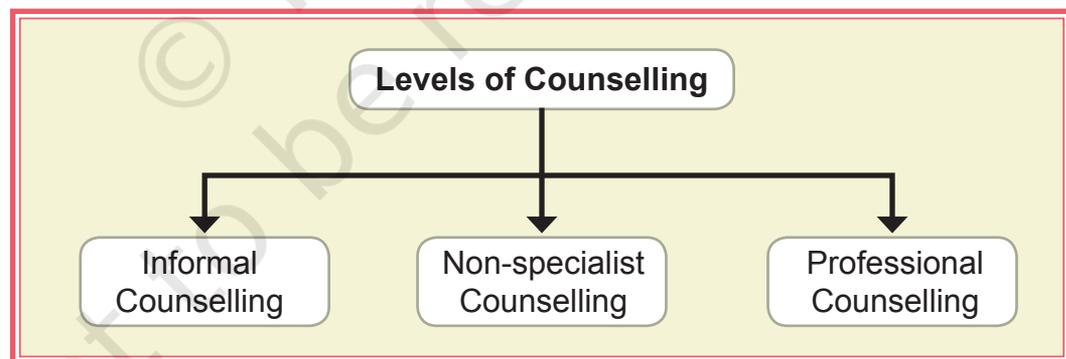
Discuss with your classmates the nature of their problems. Enumerate the solutions that you think would be best for them.

Counselling is a process involving responsibility and confidentiality. Therefore, guidance and counselling experts have to follow certain ethical principles. Counsellors must:

- Act with care and respect for individual and cultural differences and the diversity of human experiences,
- Must never take any step which is likely to harm the counsellee in any way,
- Respect the confidence with which the counsellee places trust in them by not talking about their issues with other people,
- Encourage the counsellee to increase self understanding,
- Help the counsellee to increase and discover a range of choices and alternatives for handling the crisis situations effectively
- Practice within the scope of their competence and refer cases that may need more intensive therapy to experts who are trained to deal with these
- Be aware of all the services available for people in difficult circumstances so that adequate guidance can be provided in case further referral is required.

Levels of Counselling: In day-to-day life you may have noticed that the term counselling is being used informally to refer to any kind of information-seeking interaction including appraisal of a person for careers. It may be useful to understand that there are different levels of counselling as shown in the box given below.

Informal Counselling: It is generally rendered by a person who may be approachable and understanding, but may not be professionally qualified. This empathetic person could be an aunt, uncle, friend or colleague.



Non Specialist Counselling: It is the help provided by specialists of other areas like teachers, doctors, lawyers, religious preachers who, along with their respective specialisation, also wish to handle psychological problems. They try to provide alternative ways of dealing with the problems of people they come across in their daily interactions at work.

Professional Counselling: Professional counsellors are the ones who have received special training in counselling and have the required

qualifications. These counsellors deal with the person's social, emotional and personal problems. In the counselling process, the professional counsellor may use different techniques. Let us briefly discuss three techniques.

How the counsellor deals with the counsellee is based on the mode of approach and the techniques the counsellor uses. These are divided into:

- *Directive, counsellor-centred counselling:* Here the counsellor plays a major role and does all that is possible to get the counsellee to make decisions in keeping with diagnosis of the problem.
- *Non-Directive or permissive or client-centred counselling:* Here the counsellor's role is comparatively passive. The counsellee takes an active part in the process of therapy. The person seeking help is encouraged to gain insight into the problem with the help of the counsellor. The counsellee takes the final decisions. Thus, this counselling process turns out to be a growth experience for the person.
- *Eclectic counselling:* Counsellors who advocate using this type of counselling are of the view that directed or non-directed counselling are at two ends of continuum. And counsellors should incorporate suitable techniques from both the types of counselling mentioned above as and when required, depending on the situation, the problem and the temperament of the client.

PREPARING FOR A CAREER

If you recall the times when you received help and guidance you may have noticed that the listeners, whether they were teachers, friends or another adult, had certain qualities in them that made you approach them easily.

Qualities of counsellor:

1. Sensitive to human problems
2. Empathy
3. Respect for individual variations
4. Being non-judgemental
5. Maintain confidentiality
6. Being approachable
7. Being firm yet friendly
8. Pleasant disposition
9. Understanding values and relationships

These qualities have to be combined with specific skills that the profession demands. These are listening skills, analytical skills and good observation skills. A counsellor must possess the skill of working with individuals as well as groups.

The fact that counselling is basically meant for people with some sort of difficulty, makes it essential for the counsellor to have a disposition as well as empathy towards people apart from being professionally qualified.

Having these qualities alone is not sufficient to become a professional counsellor. One must undergo special training to acquire the necessary skills. Professional counsellors usually hold a masters' degree in Human Development or Child Development/ Psychology of Education, along with at least a post graduate diploma/degree in Counselling. During the course, the trainees receive supervised practical training under trained Psychologists or Counsellors as practical training is essential for developing the skills of a counsellor. In India many reputed Universities and Institutes offer these diplomas. After M.A. or M.Sc. one could also undertake further research and obtain a Ph.D. degree. Professional counsellors hold a certificate and are registered with a professional body which grants licences for practising.

ACTIVITY 3

Match the phrases in column B with counsellors, qualities in column A and enter the correct combination in column C

A	B	C
1. Sensitivity to human problems	a. I agree with you, but please do not hit your child again.	
2. Empathy	b. Just because he is poor it does not mean Ravi would have stolen the money.	
3. Respect for individual variations	c. It is normal of people to have personal problems.	
4. Being non-judgemental	d. She seems to be cheating on her parents but I must keep it to myself.	4b
5. Maintain confidentiality	e. When I heard her story my eyes filled with tears.	
6. Being approachable	f. Hello, how are you? Would you like to talk to me about something?	
7. Being firm yet friendly	g. Different people respond differently to similar problems in their life.	

SCOPE

In your Class XI textbook of HEFS you had studied about life span development. You must have noticed how at each stage there are challenges that an individual must meet and resolve. Each stage of development has specific characteristics as well as certain developmental tasks to be achieved. Assistance and guidance can be a requirement at any stage. For this purpose, it is required for counsellors to be specially trained in the developmental needs and characteristics of individuals at a particular age.

CAREER AVENUES

Career Counsellors: Some counsellors work with people of all ages for vocational and career counselling.

School Counsellors: Schooling can also bring about adjustment problems for children. A child may have problems with academic achievement, with peers or with parents. Counsellors who deal with such difficulties are called school counsellors.

Family Counsellors: They are specialists who work with parents, children and other family members. They deal with specific issues that arise due to conflicts between family members or between generations. They also deal with behaviour problems of individual family members.

Marriage Counsellors: They deal with different issues or problems related to marriage, counselling for marital and before marriage issues, or for personal compatibility, close relationships and counselling for couples.

Life Skills Trainer: These days many people may need assistance in the course of everyday life on account of stress at home or the workplace. For instance, a well adjusted young person may want to become proactive to optimise his or her potential.

Counsellors for Child Guidance: Some counsellors work with children and are called child guidance counsellors.

KEY TERMS

Guidance, counselling, counsellee, counsellor, stress, coping strategies.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What do you understand by the term counselling?
2. What are some of the important principles of counselling?
3. What are some of the common difficulties that students of your age can have?
4. What are the different types of counselling?
5. How can one prepare for a career in counselling and guidance?

PRACTICAL 1

Theme: Conducting mock sessions in Guidance and Counselling

- Tasks:**
1. Preparing students for role play
 2. Role-play as counsellor and counsellee
 3. Discussion of qualities of counsellor

Purpose: You have learnt about principles of guidance and counselling in this chapter. This practical will give you the experience of being in the seat of a counsellor and the person who receives assistance (counsellee).

Conducting the Practical

Students should form pairs and take the role of either a counsellee or a counsellor after selecting any one issue. They should enact a mock (imaginary) session while teacher and other classmates are observing. The session should be discussed keeping in mind what you have learnt about qualities of a counsellor.

- (a) Career Guidance: A Class X boy wants to take commerce stream but his parents insist on his taking up the science stream. The student has come for help from you.
- (b) Nutrition Counselling: Parents complain to you that their 5-year-old child does not eat anything other than maggi noodles.
- (c) Personal Counselling: A 14-year-old comes for advice about the inability to make friends with other people.