

d. Description of Counselling

Definition

Counselling is the generic term¹ for the counselling process shaped according to methodological points of view in a non-work-related context. It supports a person's own efforts in further developing their patterns of behavior and experience and to improve their personal emotional states of being, the interaction with the relationships in the world around them and their efforts to cope with the daily tasks they have to face in life.

Its foci are:

- Promoting development
- Helping people to cope with various situations
- Information and transfer of knowledge
- Prevention

Counselling is thus an agreed support of people in a clearly defined context.

Tasks and objectives

Based on conceptual and ethical principles, counseling offers professional support in various developmental and problem solving processes. Its purpose is an autonomous, self-determined as well as community-oriented way of thinking, feeling and acting of a person.

Counselling approaches a person maintaining and building up her/his resources. It provides support in decision-making and change processes, in situations of dealing with crises, resolving conflicts, in dealing with feelings and sentiments, in thinking and perceiving and in promoting awareness and the ability to have relationships.

Mandate

Counselling operates on a contractual basis. Contract partners are individuals, couples, families.

Counselling addresses clearly defined problems in the here and now of everyday life. In contrast to psychotherapy, pathological disorders are not within their sphere of competence. Counsellors should have enough knowledge about disease patterns to define the limits of their competence and to refer clients to other specialists when needed.

Counselling distinguishes itself from other professional kinds of intervention such as providing legal advice or information and case management.

¹ The term counselling is translated into German as Beratung im psychosozialen Bereich

Working procedures and setting

The counselling process is based on a clarification of the task. The contract partners agree on the general conditions, duration of the process, objectives and clarify the methodological procedures.

In a dialogue with a client

- achievable objectives are defined and decisions are taken after ample reflection,
- plans of action are developed in agreement with the client's needs, interests and capabilities,
- the resources of both the individual and his/her environment are identified and utilized to achieve self-defined objectives or to be able to deal with tasks,
- a sensible way of dealing with stress situations that cannot be removed or resolved is developed,
- the counselling process is evaluated.

The counsellor shapes the process in a methodical manner according to her/his approach, evaluates and documents it.

The counselling process takes place, in either an individual or a group setting as required and according to the issues addressed.

The basis for the effectiveness of counselling is the counselling relationship. Counsellors are obliged to carefully deal with dependencies that develop during the counselling relationship. The continual reflection on relationships, ways of behavior and interactions during the counselling process are an essential part of the counselling process.

(cf. code of ethics for active members of the SGfB)