A REPERTOIRE OF INSTRUMENTS EMPLOYED IN PSYCHOLOGICAL COUNSELING

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According to Carl Rogers and Albert Ellis [1] [2], a new approach to psychological counseling is needed. Consequently, new and practical means to solve problems that ensue as part of the counseling process are required. From this point of view, this article aims at offering a range of alternatives to approach and involve the client (student) in order to achieve the envisaged results of counseling. As such, it offers a concise repertoire of instruments that can be employed in psychological counseling.

Key words: *psychological counseling, student, psychological instruments, counseling portfolio.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The current activities of any psychological counselor must be based on the latter's ability to both communicate and listen in order to solve any issues may arise during the process. Listening in particular is needed in order to understand the message and thus gain: information, knowledge, mutual understanding and cooperation. In this respect, Stanton N. [3] underlines that a counselor should listen to the client in order to: encourage, obtain complete information, smoothen relationships, solve problems, better understand people. Moreover, according to the aforementioned author, there are ten guideline to follow for better listening and these are listed below.

1. be ready to listen, that is try to think more of what the interlocutor wants to say rather than what you want to say.

2. get involved since any message can be interesting.

3. show interest, that is try to pretend you are in the other person's position.

4. keep an open mind without feeling threatened by the messages that contradict your own beliefs, ideas and values. Thus, do not draw hasty conclusions.

5. follow the main ideas since everything depends on the ability to structure the message, the language used and the speaker's tendency to repeat. Thus, ideas may emerge during the talk, so attention is required.

6. apply critical listening, namely be objective so that to be able to carefully weigh the evidence and the logical structure of the message.

7. listen carefully because attention span is limited and selective. In this respect, try not to have your attention distracted from the speaker.

8. take notes while listening.

9. show support to the speaker by discrete gestures that convey a sense of security to the speaker and also show that the message is received.

10. do not interrupt the speaker since listening is about self control and a good listener never attempts to break the communication flow.

Additionally to the above principles, the counselor needs to also be able to structure the interview with the client by observing five essential steps [4]:

1. Spend a time to establish a rapport with the client. The time spent on developing relations impacts the counseling process in a positive manner.

2. Focus on facts, feelings and the manner of presenting the problem. By losing focus of one of these elements, valuable information can be lost.

3. Establish a clear goal for the conversation with the client. The absence of clear-cut objectives may take the counselor astray.

4. Allow the other person to generate their own ideas before giving advice or making suggestions. If their complaints are first listened, they will be able to solve their problems by their own.

5. Suggest specific control actions so that the new ideas are put into practice and not forgotten.

The way the conversation with the client starts and unfolds requires a set of skills like:

1. the ability to allow the clients to tell their story in their own language and from their own perspective. In this way, facts, feelings and the clients' way of organizing the discourse can provide useful information.

2. the ability to generate an infinite number of answers. Thus, instead of searching for the "best", the "most correct" answer, flexibility should prevail.

3. the ability to influence the interview.

4. the ability to conduct a five step interview.

5. The ability to engage the client in an assertive manner.

Listening remains though the fundamental requirement underpinning the client-counselor relation. In this respect, the latter manages to find positive aspects and solutions in the former's story. While listening to the client's story the counselor can read the notes and review the organizational steps of the interview, look for positive aspects that can contribute to solving the client's problems, etc.

Methodologically, the first stage of the listening session focuses on helping the client to separate facts from feelings and to organize these in a significant pattern. In this respect, the counselor uses open and closed questions, minimal encouragement, paraphrasing, feedback on feelings, summarizing.

The second stage consists in relying on the client's competences and positive search for answers. Therefore, making a list of the client's advantages in this respect, can contribute to solving the latter's problems, according to Ivey [4].

All of the above play an important role in the counselor's capacity to communicate and interrelate with the client/student so as to help him/her. In this respect, exercises, short therapeutic games can be used in the work done by psychologist counselors.

2. EFFICIENT AND INEFFICIENT COMMUNICATION

According to Holdevici [6], efficient communication is characterized by the open expression of client's feelings and the latter's ability to to encourage the partner to do the same. Mor precisely, the former says what s/he thinks and feels and tries to understand what the latter's thoughts and feelings are. Moreover, efficient communication involves listening, while inefficient communication is about refusing to share feelings in an open manner and to listen to the other person's opinion.

More often than not, it is efficient communication that gets the attention. However, good knowledge of the missing elements that transforms this type of communication into an inefficient one is important. In this respect, Burns [7] makes a list of the features of inefficient communication and these are:

• I know best –describes a person keen on proving that s/he is right while the other is wrong.

• Blaming- the subject blames others for his/her own mistakes;

• Martyrdom – the subject claims to be an innocent victim.

• Authority undermining –the person states that the other is in the wrong or is a loser because s/he "always" or "never" does things.

• Hopelessness – the subject abandons the dispute claiming that it is worthless trying;

• Vindictiveness – the subject claims that s/he is entitled to better

treatment but refuses to ask for this directly;

• Denial – the person insists not being angry, hurt or depressed event though it is exactly the opposite;

• Passive aggressiveness – the subject withdraws without saying anything or "storms" out of the room slamming the door;

• Self blaming – instead of solving the problem the subject behaves as if s/he was to be blamed;

• Helping at any cost – instead of listening to the other person's problems, the subject tries at any cots to help;

• Sarcasm – the subject's words or tone reflect hostility and tension, even though these are not acknowledged in the open by this;

• Scape goating – the subject pretends that the other person has a problem while s/he is happy, balanced, uninvolved in the conflict;

• Defensiveness – consists in the refusal to admit we are in the wrong or that we are imperfect;

• Counter attack – instead of being aware of the other person's feelings, we reply in kind;

• Diversity – instead of being concerned of the "here and now" moment, one of the partners or both presents lists of previous conflicts or tense situations.

The reasons that prevent people to adequately communicate with one another are also listed by Burns [7]:

• Conflict phobia – similar to the the technique of the ostrich, it shows that the subject is afraid of conflict or of hostile feelings;

• Emotional perfectionism – the subject is convinced that people are to despise him if they know what s/he feels;

• Fear of disapproval and rejection – the subject is afraid that people will not like him/her if s/he expresses ideas and feelings in the open;

• Passive aggressiveness – the subject represses frustration and hostility instead of openly expressing them;

• Hopelessness – the subject tends to think that nothing works, therefore s/he concludes that the situation is truly hopeless;

• Low level of autonomy - the subject believes that s/he is not entitled to express feelings or to ask for things from the others;

• Spontaneity - the subject believes that any change in his personal style is ridiculous and fake;

• "Mind reading" – the subject believes that the others should know what s/he thinks, feels, wants before s/he expresses these in the open;

• The growing up tendency – the subject is afraid to admit that s/he is upset since s/he does not want to give satisfaction to anyone;

• The need to solve the problem – the subject is in a conflict and tries to solve the problem without openly sharing his/her feelings and listening to the other person.

On top of all of the above, Burns [7] also makes a list of the attitudes that prevent us from listening to the others:

• Self righteousness – the subject imagines that he is always right, while the others are always wrong;

• Blaming - the individual is convinced that the problem was generated by other people, and hence s/he is entitled to blaming them;

• The need for victimization – the individual pities her/himself and believes that the others treat her/him unjustly because of their selfishness and sensitivity;

• Unawareness – the individual fails to perceive the consequences of her/his behavior on other people and therefore cannot understand her/his contribution to the ensuing problems;

• Defensiveness – the subject is so afraid of criticism that cannot bear to hear unpleasant or negative things;

• Hypersensitivity to constraints – the person is afraid of being under other people's control;

• Exaggerated requests to the others – the person feels entitled to benefit from a special treatment on behalf of the others and feels frustrated when that does not happen;

• Selfishness – the subject wants a particular thing at a certain moment and gets very angry and disinterested in what other people think or feel;

• Distrust – the individual rejects the others for fear the latter might take advantage of him/her;

• The compulsive need to offer help – the subject needs to help the other even though all the latter need is to be listened to.

3. ASSERTIVE COMMUNICATION

The psychologist counselor needs to also be aware of the role played by assertive communication and behavior. In this context, Holdevici [6] underlines that assertiveness is an attitude and a means of action in the situations when feelings must be expressed, rights need to be claimed or a "no" is required. The assertive behavior is in between aggressiveness and submissiveness. Hence it must be anchored in an individual's belief that s/he is entitled to ask what s/he wants by respecting one's own rights.

By way of contrast, the non assertive or submissive behavior is about looking down on one's own rights and also about the exaggerated submission to others' feelings and needs. Consequently, the other people around the subject cannot possibly know anything about her/his own feelings and needs if s/he does not unveil them and when time comes to ask for something s/he experiences feelings of guilt. Unless s/he is able to associate some right to his request, the others will continue to show disdain. In this respect, Bourne [8] makes a list of an adult's personal rights:

• I am entitled to request what I want.

• I am entitled to refuse the requests I cannot meet.

• I am entitled to express both my positive and negative feelings.

• I am entitled to change my opinion.

• I am entitled to make mistakes and not to be perfect.

• I am entitled to observe my own system of values.

• I am entitled to say "no" to whatever I feel that I am not ready to do, is dangerous or is in conflict with my own system of norms and values.

• I am entitled to establish my own priorities.

• I am entitled not to feel responsible for other people's behavior, actions, feelings and problems.

• I am entitled to require honesty on behalf of others.

• I am entitled to get angry with somebody I care about.

• I am entitled to be myself.

• I am entitled to feel frightened and tell people that.

• I am entitled to say "I do not know".

• I am entitled not to apologize or excuse my behavior.

• I am entitled to make decisions based on my own feelings.

• I am entitled to meet my own needs when and where I deem fit.

• I am entitled to have fun and be frivolous.

• I am entitled to be healthier than the people around me.

• I am entitled to be in a climate in which people do not take advantage of me.

• I am entitled to make friends and feel good around other people.

• I am entitled to change and evolve.

• I am entitled to respect for my own needs and desires on other people's behalf.

• I am entitled to be treated as a person worth of respect.

• I am entitled to happiness.

Based on all of the above, it results that depending on the message to be conveyed about a specific problem can be assertive, passive or aggressive.

Thus, an assertive behavior makes sure that the problem is discussed, the rights are defended, and the individual chooses his /her own activities, trusts oneself and also acknowledges others' rights.

Subjects displaying passive behavior avoid problems, ignore their rights, allow others to make choices for them, are distrustful and perceive others' rights as more important than theirs.

Aggressive behavior is about confronting problems directly, promoting one's own rights with little regard fro others', acting by one's own decision with littke regard for others' opinions, viewing one's own rights as more important than others'.

One game that can be played in relation with these types of behavior is called "The Cutlery". The game participants form pairs and the roles they assume are that of a fork and of a spoon. Each piece of cutlery argues the advantages of its use in an aggressive manner towards the other piece. Afterwards, roles are changed, and an assertive style is practiced. After all pairs play their roles, the assertive and non-assertive behavior of the two pieces of cutlery is discussed.

4. PROBLEM SOLVING

According to Băban A[9], problem solving is one of the most important skills in teenagers' development. This allows them to cope with crises in an adaptive manner, to make responsible decisions, to avoid involvement in risky behaviors. In this respect, it is worth reminding that most of the risky behaviors aim at "solving" emotional problems and conflicts in a non-adaptive manner that predisposes young people to mental and physical issues. The development of problem solving skills is one way of enabling teenagers to solve dilemmas in ways that protect their life quality. Consequently, these abilities underpin the development of a person in terms of self esteem, communication, decision making, life planning, career, as well as prevent risky behaviors like smoking, drinking, doing drugs, acting passively or aggressively, committing suicide.

According to Miclea M.[10], a problem is defined as a gap between a current situation and a desirable situation in the future. This gap cannot be spontaneously bridged since it requires a number of solutions and a decision making process. Thus, any problem is composed of: the current situation, the goal or the desirable situation, the restrictions that guide the decision making process needed to solve the problem.

Problems are an inherent part of social and psychological life and an individual's receptiveness ensures the latter's efficient adaptation. Problem ignoring, avoidance or denial is often associated with adaptation dysfunctions and with performance decrease in various fields. Acknowledging problems as a means of developing specific skills and competences changes the current perspective on problems as negative issues. Thus, a problem should not be viewed as a lack of abilities, but as part of daily life.

In this respect, Proctor R. [11] underlines that a number of steps need to be taken in the process of solving problems, and these are reflected in the attitude towards the problem and in the abilities to solve it as part of a process of social learning.

According to Băban A. [9], the ability to solve problems is a specific operation based on:

• finding alternatives, that is the ability to generate multiple solutions, overcoming stereotypes and the rigid conviction that there is one ideal solution for problems.

• anticipatory thinking, namely the ability to anticipate the consequences of specific actions on short and long term.

• planned thinking, or the ability to plan a series of actions required by the implementation of a solution.

What is really important is that young people perceive themselves as able to solve problems and to take responsibility for solving them. In this respect, Beddell and Lennox list a number of principles that need to be observed [12]:

• Problems are a natural way of life: their existence does not indicate any weaknesses, but rather situations that require the development of a set of skills and knowledge.

• Most problems can be solved: learning problem solving abilities develops the feeling of being competent, self efficient and self trust and hence becomes a way of personal development.

• Take responsibility for problems, which is actually an encouragement for the individual to take hold of his/her own psychological and social maturity.

• Define the problem before acting: this requires acquiring skills for defining, clarifying problems, as well as for identifying their consequences, their priority and for formulating solutions or avoiding them.

• To solve problems is to establish what you can do and NOT what you cannot do: this requires establishing realistic goals and focusing on what s/he already knows and not on the skills or knowledge s/he does not have.

• Solutions must be selected based on personal abilities and knowledge, namely solutions must be selected in accordance with a person's psychological development.

• Solving problems requires respecting others' rights, as well: some attitudes like avoidance, abandoning the quest for solutions, choosing solutions that are unacceptable for the decision maker or for others without minding the others' rights and feelings can have negative consequences on solving them.

The stages required in the problem solving process are:

• Acknowledging the problem;
• Defining the problem;
• Generating alternatives;
• Making decisions;
• Applying the decision made;
• Evaluating the consequences of the chosen solution.

In the counseling process, any psychologist need to follow seven steps in supporting the client to solve his problems. These step require both entities to play specific roles as it is to result from the explanation of the steps provided below.

Step 1. Exploring the problem.
The client explains the problem in general terms. At this stage, the psychologits must rely on empathy, physical ssistance and open ended questions.

Step 2. Understanding the problem.
The client is supported by the counselor in clarifying the problem, his arguments, worries and feelings.

The counselor resorts to physical assistance, empathy, open ended questions, congruence and confrontation.

Step 3. Defining the problem
The current status of the problem is defined by resorting to dates, goals, obtsacles. Moreover, the role of the counselor to sum up helps define the scope of the problem, as well as the expectations of the client.

Step 4. Generating alternatives.
The client proposes course of action that could contribute to solving the problem. The goal of this stage is to identify all imaginable solutions. The techniques used for this are brainstorming and the analysis of alternatives.

The counselor suggests possible aletrnatives and if the client experiences difficulties in formulating these, s/he uses open ended questions.

Step 5. Evaluating the alternatives.
The client evaluates his/her own attitudes and values in order to identify the priorities based on which decisions are to be made. Thus, the advantages and disadvantages of every alternative are analyzed. Moreover, an analysis of the resources required for the implementation of each solution, the benefits, the risks, the consequences and efefcts on short and long term is also undertaken.

The counselor enumerated the values incurred by the problem and underlines the most important ones. Moreover, s/he enumerates the strengths and weaknesses idedinfied by the client for each solution. The tools eemployed at this stage are: empathy, open ended questions and sum up.

Step 6. Choosing the best alternative.
The client chooses the best alternative based on the values underpinning it. The following questions are to be of help in making a decision:

• Do I have all available information?
• Is this a specific alternative?
• Do I believe in this alterrnative?
• Does this alternative match my own values?
• Does this alternative help me develop as a person?
• Does this alternative meet my expectations?

The counselor will take notes on the best alternative and enumerate the values underpinning it. Moreoever, s/he enumerates the strengths of the alternative. With a view to that, s/he asks the client the following questions:

• Is the alternative specific enough?
• Is the alternative a credible one and possible to be applied?

•Does the alternative coincide with your values?

•Does the alternative help you develop as a person?

• Is the alternative something you can control?

• Is the alternative what you want to do?

The instruments that the counselor can rely on at this stage are open ended questions and empathy.

Step 7. Applying the selected alternative.

The client will develop an action plan in order to put the selected alternative into practice. In this respect, the following questions need to be answered:

• What are my goals and how to I prioriteze them to solve my problem?

• What is the first action of my action plan?

• What is the next action of my action plan and what other action could replace it so that I can fulfill my goals?

• What obstacles am I to meet in achieving my goals?

• What resources do I have to remove the obstacles?

• What else do I need to apply the selected alternative?

• How long do I need to reach my goal?

• Where will the actions take place?

• When will I make the first action?

The role of the counselor is to assist the client in applying a reasonable action plan. Therfore, s/he needs to elicit answers to the following questions:

• What goals underpin this alternative?

• What is th first action needed to be included in the action plan?

• What are the next activities in the plan and in what orders do they come to achieve the goals?

• What obstacles can prevent you from achieving your goals?

• What can you use to remove these obstacles?

• What else is there needed to reach the goals?

• How lomg does it take to achieve the goals?

• Where are the actions implemented?

• When will the first action be implemented?

In this context, one of the best strategy suggested for problem solving is the therapeutic story or fairy tale. Depending on the category the client's problem is part of, this instrument helps the client learn to accept, appreciate, understand and be aware of his/her own story. As a result of the constraints imposed by the length of this paper, a further description and exemplification of this instruments is to be provided in a future article.

5. A REPERTOIRE OF GAMES
5.1. ICE BREAKING EXERCISES

According to Ionescu G. [5], the first encounter of a group is marked by awkward silence characterized by the people's inability to communicate and relate since they do not know one another. In order to overcome such situations, specialized literature recommends ice breaking exercises meant to warm up the atmosphere and which are accepted by clients as a result of their pleasant, relaxed approach. Basically, there are several types of icebreaking exercises:

1. Handshaking.

The subjects are asked to shake hands with one another for a few minutes and thus try to get introduced and acknowledge the other group members.

2. Let your hand talk.

The clients are asked to shake hands and while doing that to notice the message conveyed by the grip: determination, hesitation, anger, force, joy, sadness, etc.

3. Hug me.

The participants are asked to hug one another in a friendly manner. In this way, through verbal and non-verbal communication, they convey a positive message. The role of such exercises is to ensure group acceptance and feeling of belonging to it.

4. The prism of knowledge.

Group members are asked to form pairs even though they do not know each other and to make confessions to one another concerning a personal achievement, a professional accomplishment, a secret. Each of

them draws a prism on a piece of paper and when hearing the partner's answers they draw them in the prism. At the end of the exercise the participants need to present their partners' answers. Thus, group members get to know one another.

5. In the circle.

The subjects stand in a circle and say their first name accompanying this with a gesture, a mime, etc.

6. This is what I look like today.

Standing in a circle the participants introduce one another in the following manner: "Hello. My name is….and my funny face for today is this (while saying the name they must also make a funny face)".

7. I give you a smile.

The subjects stand in a circle. One of them gives to someone in the circle a scarf and asks for a smile in return. The latter accepts the scarf, says thank you and gives it to another person asking for a smile. All those who smile when they get the scarf remain in the circle. If there are people who "forget" to smile, the other group members remind them the rule by smiling at them.

8. The spider web.

The game leader holds a rope ball in his hand and everybody forms a circle. He throws the ball to one of the participants and the latter needs to introduce him/herself and name one trait that characterizes him, rolls the rope thread around his pointing finger and then throws the ball to another participant. Thus, a "web" is woven while everybody in the group gets to know one another and respect the others' options.

9. The symbol.

Each subject is asked to write his/her first name on a piece of paper and to add to it a characteristic symbol. They will then wear this as a name tag and explain to the other participants the significance of the symbol.

10. The months of the year.

The group leader announces everybody that they need to form a line or a circle in the order of their birthdates without communicating with one another.

All of the exercises above are meant to support the psychologist counselor in furthering the efforts and goals of the sessions.

In addition to the above games, there are also games aimed at allowing participants to self evaluate, communicate and establish relations, solve problems.

5.2. SELF EVALUATION AND SELF AWARENESS GAMES

Most of the games under this heading focus on self esteem, self perception, self evaluation and they are only one of the first steps in the counseling process. Some of these are as follows.

1. If I was…

This game can be played individually, in pairs, or by choosing a member of a group without nominating him/her. Its goal is to portray the person based on the answers provided to the open ended statements below:

• If I was a season, then I/it would be….

• If I was a musical part, then I/it would be…

• If I was a book, then I/it would be…

• If I was a dish, then I/it would be…

• If I was a drink, then I/it would be…

• If I was a color, then I/it would be…

• If I was a flower, then I/it would be…

• If I was an animal, then I/it would be…

• If I was a tree, then I/it would be…

• If I was the citizen of another country/continent, then I/it would be…

2. How are you today?

It can be played individually and in group. The participants are asked to answer the question by using mimic, gestures or words.

3. This is me.

The group leader asks the participants to continue orally the affirmative sentences s/he utters. The goal of the exercise is to identify positive thinking with participants. The beginning of the statements is:

• I enjoy…

• I'm good at…

• I prefer to…

• It is all right when…

• I'm glad that …

4. Choose.

Participants form a circle and are asked to choose from a nearby table with objects and toys (e.g. shells, pebbles, pencils, money, books, jewellery, toy cars, pens, buttons, flowers, beads, dry branches, food, etc.) what they think represents them. Once everybody chooses, they have to justify their choices. At the end of every justification, the other group members are allowed to ask questions. Thus, the connotations of traditional or subject related symbols can be highlighted. However, the symbols should not be transformed into "labels".

5. Who am I?

The exercise requires participants that individually or in group complete the sentences below:
• The people I most care about are…
  • I feel proud of myself because…
  • The people I most admire are…
  • I like a lot to…
  • I wish…
  • One of the best things I did was…
  • I would like to become…
  • I intend to…
  • I would rather…than…
  • I know I can…

6. How well do I know myself?

The game is based on individual work. The client is asked to imagine a s/he is a garden and to draw it. Will the client recognize him/herself in the image of the garden? This is the question from where the counselor can begin the discussion.

7. What do I do with my values?

The game can be played individually or in a group. The participants are asked to find the right place for the values they upheld in one of the following objects:
• Backpack- a personal storage place that allows me to store my values and resort to them whenever I need.
• Washing machine- the object that helps me "clean" my values in order to use them some other time, as well.
• Dustbin- a disposal recipient where I toss the values I no longer need.

8. Who am I?

Either individually or in a group, the participants are asked to complete the sentences below:
  • I'm a student who…
  • I take pride in…
  • It is hard for me to admit that…
  • One of the nicest things that I would like to mention about me is that…
  • It annoys me to…
  • I feel very well when…
  • It saddens me to…
  • I'm afraid of…
  • I feel alone…
  • I hate…
  • It makes me nervous…

9. Mirror, mirror…

The participants are asked to individually take a test covering the following self awareness issues:
•   Strengths: qualities   that recommend you.
  • Weaknesses: what is to your disadvantage.
  • Opportunities: what supports you.
  • Threats: what stalls you.
The answers provided to all of the above draw a person's objective "image in the mirror".

10. My path.

The game can be played both individually and in group. The participants are asked to imagine a path that goes through places of joy and sorrow for them. At the end of this path there is an object, a person, a phenomenon to which the participants best relate. Once they reach the end of the path, the group members are to justify the difficulty or the feeling of relief they feel upon taking the path and coming to its close.

11. Finish the story.

This is a group game. The group leader suggests a topic for a story that needs to be told together, each participant assuming the role of the character assigned when the story line reaches him/her to be continued. It is very important that each participant gets involved, and the emotional impact of the story on the participants is closely monitored. It is the group leader's task to begin and end the story, as well as to make sure that everybody participates.

12. My business card.

The game is played individually and each participant is asked to make his/her own business card containing a symbol of the person like the name, a graphical representation, a line, a word, etc. Preferably, each participant should be able to present the justification of the choices made for the business card.

13. The palm contour.

Each participant is asked to draw the contour of the palm (left or right) on a board and then write on each finger a characteristic. This is an attempt at getting to know oneself, as well as the others.

14. The envelope with good deeds.

Individually or in group, the participants are asked to write or draw (if it is easier) all the good deeds they make during a week on a piece of paper. At an agreed time, the "good deeds" are taken out of the envelope and analyzed, each participant explaining the attitude shown when making the deed.

15. The white paper.

A white paper is placed in front of the participants. The counselor asks them to tell the others what they can see on the piece of paper (a landscape, people, etc.) and to give arguments for what they describe. This helps the counselor begin the discussion on the subject's self-awareness.

16. The board of crazy ideas.

The participants are asked to write or draw the craziest ideas that come to their mind right then on pieces of paper. These are then pinned on a board and each participant must account and interpret their piece of writing or drawing. A relaxed warm atmosphere is a sign of high self esteem and enables mutual trust.

17. Unlimited possibilities.

The participants are asked to express their ideas as elaborately as possible on one of the following questions:

• What is the most surprising thing you did this week or even today?

• If you were to do something today, what would that be?

• What would you do if you could do anything?

• What was it that you most liked of what you did today or this week?

• If you lived for a year on a deserted island, what would you take with you and why?

• What is the greatest job in the world? Why?

• What is it that you are best at and how do you feel when you do that activity?

18. Today I feel…

Draw the expression of your face reflecting what you are feeling right now.

19. What would my emotions look like if I could see them!

Draw the emotional state you are experiencing at the moment.

20. The rope for "clothes".

The participants line up on a rope for clothes pieces of paper about the most important events of their lives. These pieces can contain poetry, prose, drawings, pictures, photos, etc. that actually answer questions like:

• What are the events that had an impact on you and what events had no impact whatsoever on you?

• What events would you like to relive?

• What would your perfect life be like?

• What events do you remember with joy?

• What events are there that you do not want to remember?

• Do you imagine your future alone or with other people?

• What negative thoughts would you have if you could?

21. The shipwreck.

The game participants are told that they are on a journey by boat at sea. A storm starts and despite the efforts of the crew, the boat shipwrecks on an island. The participants want to survive but there are no objects that they can use for this purpose. They need to answer the question concerning what they would have taken in their baggage to help them. The participants must name at least five objects and to account for their choice.

22. Me, the poet.

In order to get familiar with the client's self perception, the counselor asks the latter to complete the following lines as in a poem:

I am…
I wonder…
I hear…
I want…
I understand…

I say…
I hope…
I am…

I pretend…
I feel…
I touch…
I'm worried…
I cry…
I am…

5.3. GAMES FOR COMMUNICATION AND ESTABLISHING RELATIONS

1. The path of trust.
Participants work in pairs. One of them wears a blindfold and pretends to be blind, while the other stands behind him, places a hand on his shoulder and plays the role of the one who can see. They take a walk and need to go over the hurdles that pop up on their way. After a while they change the roles. At the end, the participants make comments on their experiences and feelings during the game.

2. The tangle.
The participants from a circle and join their hands. In three minutes they, while holding hands they need to get entangled. Then, in three more minutes they need to disentangle without being allowed to talk. The question is: how do they communicate?

3. The twins talk.
The game participants form pairs and hold their hands, being considered "twins". The pairs have to talk to one another by the following rule: one person in the pair of twins utters the first word of a sentence and then the pair picks up and says the second word and so on. At the end of the game, the "twins" are asked whether the task was an easy one or not, whether they managed to communicate and coordinate harmoniously.

4. Do you know the rules of communication?
The counselor presents the group or the individual the possibility of discussing the rules of communication and interaction:
• Every opinion must be listened to;
• Nobody is interrupted;
• All questions have a point;
• Nobody is ridiculed;
• Everyone has the right not to participate actively;
• Nobody is criticized;
• Everyone has the right to be listened;
• Nobody is blamed;
• Nobody is forced to express his/ her opinion;
• Nobody is judged or labeled;
• Nobody monopolizes the discussion.

5. Do you observe the ten commandments?
For an efficient communication, the counselor can present the client a set of rules, principles similar to "the ten commandments of communication":
1. One cannot refrain from communicating;
2. To communicate is about self esteem and self awareness;
3. To communicate is to acknowledge other people's needs;
4. To communicate is to listen;
5. To communicate means understanding messages;
6. To communicate is to give feedback;
7. To communicate is to understand a relationship as a process;
8. To communicate is to express your feelings;
9. To communicate is to accept conflicts;
10. To communicate is to get involved in solving conflicts.

6. The walk.
The subjects walk around a room specially chosen for this game without having met before. At a certain point they stop in front of a person, shake hands, say hello, introduce themselves and then resume walking. Thus, in five minutes the game participants must try and meet as many people as possible without shaking people's hands twice.

7. The pair.
The subjects from the group walk around trying to find their "pair", that is the person whose attention they can get and maintain by telling an interesting story. If the "pair" leaves because of lack of interest in the discussion, then communication gails.

8. Continue.
The group leader emphasizes the importance of non verbal behavior

by asking participants to form a circle. S/He makes a gesture that needs to be replicated and added to by the neighbor from the left. Thus, gestures are repeated and enriched from one person to another until the game reaches the group leader's neighbor to the right.

9. The story in the bag.

The subjects form a circle. The group leader holds a bag with objects and starts telling a story. At a certain moment during the story he hands the bag out to his neighbor to the right who must pick an object. The group leader includes the object extracted in the story. The bag circulates and thus the story is told collectively.

10. Give him your hand. (therapeutic story).

A man had sunk in a swamp in the North of Persia. It was only the head that was above the swamp and he was crying out for help. Soon a lot of people gathered around him. One of them decided to help him. "Give me your hand, he shouts. I'll take you out of the swamp." However, the victim continued crying out fro help without heeding the rescuer's words. "Give me your hand, the rescuer said several times." Nonetheless, the only answer he got was a continuous cry for help. Then somebody came close to him and said: "Don't you see that he will never give reach out to you. You must stretch out your hand and thus you will save him."

6. CONCLUSION

The target of the counseling process is more often than not an "untreaded territory" that do not always react to the first stimulus used by the psychologist. Therefore, worm up exercises and other games are a novel and original means to approach a subject who, at a certain point in his/her life, is confronted with specific problems.

All of the above is nothing but a starting point in acquiring knowledge, shaping attitudes and behavior, getting involved, communicating, relating, participating, accepting, understanding, etc.

It is only by being aware of and accepting psychological support that biological, psychological and social disabilities can be countered. Consequently, both the client's and counselor's activities are framed the following formula:

- There are problems.
- Are there problems?
- There are problems!

Ultimately, it is the counselor's responsibility to provide more or less rhetorical answers.

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