

UNIT - 3

Performance Counseling

Meaning of Performance Counseling:

- Counseling is a dyadic relationship between two persons i.e., a counselor and a counselee. A counselor offers help to the counselee in related issues like problem solving, target achievement etc. Counseling may be formal or informal.
- Formal Counseling is a planned and systematic way of helping the subordinates by experts.
- Informal counseling is concerned with day-to-day relationships with the manager and the subordinate where the help is offered but is not as per a formal plan.

- Performance counseling involves helping an employee to understand his own performance, find his place in relation to others and identify ways to improve upon. It focuses “on analysis of performance of the job and identification of training needs for further improvement”.

- It focuses on the entire performance (tasks and behaviors) during a particular period rather than on a specific problem.

Performance Counseling objectives

- 1. It helps in reviewing the progress made by an employee in concern with his objectives.
- 2. It also helps to develop various plans, which are necessary or required to improve the performance.
- 3. It provides a congenial work climate and healthy working atmosphere.
- 4. It also helps to realize the actual potential of a manager.
- 5. It acts as a base to increase the personal and interpersonal effectiveness by giving regular feedback and judging an individual's interpersonal competence.
- 6. It also encourages to generate alternatives for dealing with various problems.

Constituents of Performance Counseling:

- **The process of counseling involves 3 main sub processes:**
 - i) Communication,
 - ii) Influencing, and
 - iii) Helping.

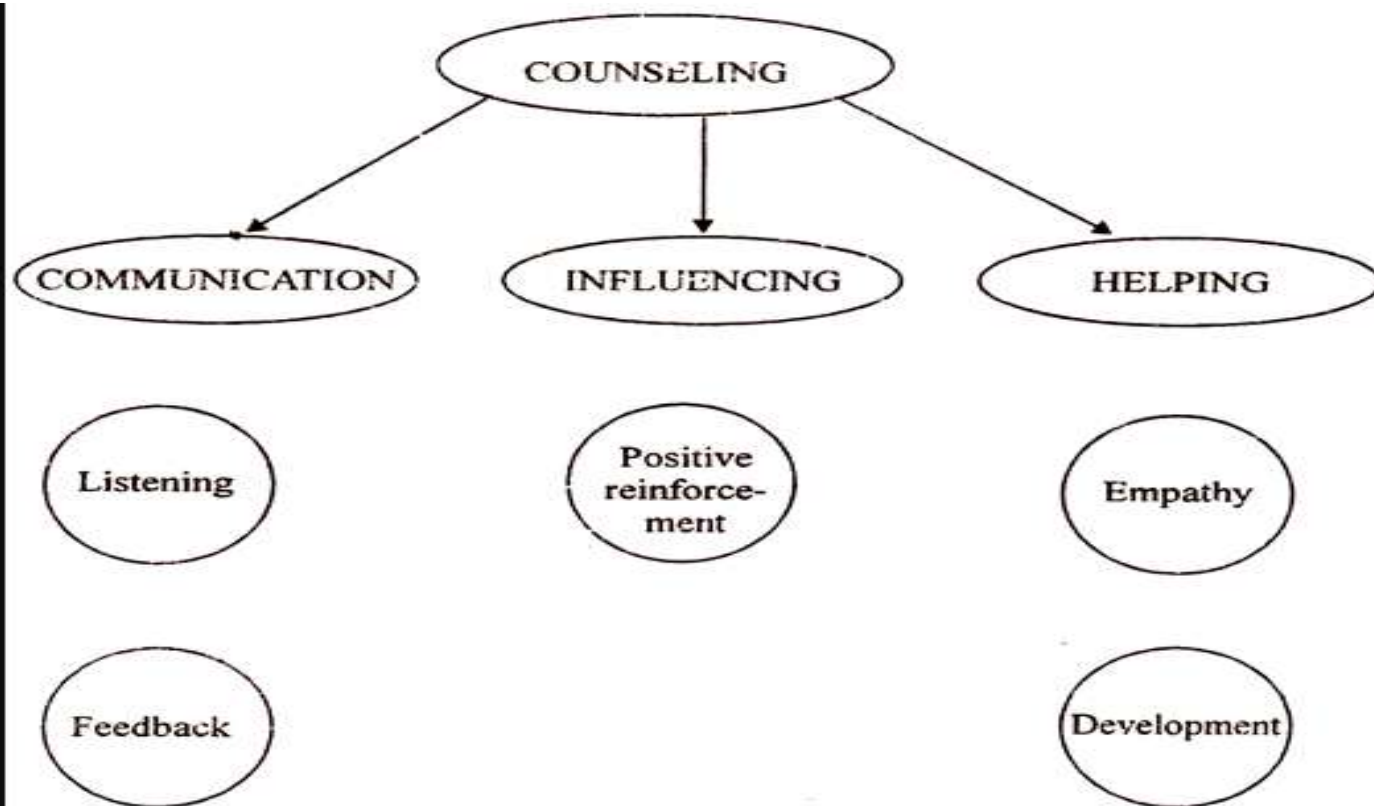


FIG 4.1 : A DIAGRAM SHOWING THE COMPONENTS OF COUNSELING

Communication

- It refers to the interaction between the superior and the subordinate. It may be the conversation in setting the goals of the department or individual goals. It may also include the discussion during performance review or appraisal feedback.
- While communicating to a person or an employee it should be kept in mind that an individual perceives every problem or an issue differently. So, in order to make communication complete it should be clearly understood by the recipient. People speak much more from their body gestures than words, which is a very important part of communication.
- Hearing and listening are two different types of communication, which have varying degree of attentiveness. Listening to feelings and concerns is very important for effective counseling. No process is complete without feedback. Similarly, a communication process also involves feedback to know what the other person has understood.
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Influencing

- It means to make impact on a person in a relationship. This plays an important role in counseling too.
- Flanders (1970) makes distinction between two modes of influences, one called as direct mode of influence and the other as indirect mode of influence.
- The direct mode of influence means restricting the freedom of others like criticism or punishment while indirect mode of influence means to give more freedom to others like praise or recognition.
- Some behavioural scientists say that change in a person can be brought through positive reinforcement and not negative reinforcement. Influencing would involve providing encouragement and reinforcing success so that a person can take initiatives and experiment with his new ideas.

Helping

- In order to help or support a person one should know the need of an individual.
- A boss who shows concern for his employees can gain their support.
- The main purpose of performance counseling is to feel for the subordinate and empathies with him.
- Without such genuine concern, counseling may only degenerate into a ritual or fruitless exercise.
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Process of Performance Counseling

- Step I – Rapport building
- Step-II – Listen with intelligence and understanding
- Step-III – Avoid being judgmental
- Step IV – Define the problem
- Step-V – Plan the action
- Step-VI – Stay alert
- Step-VII – Conclude the meeting

- **(i) Rapport Building:**
- This is essential to make a counseling period effective, it involves generating confidence in an employee so that he opens up and shares his perceptions, feelings, experiences and problems. This is like an initial phase of an interview. Firstly, the counselor should make the person feel comfortable by offering a chair, asking the secretary not to disturb, asking for the employee's choice for tea or coffee etc.
- This makes the employee relaxed. This is also called as creating an acceptable climate. The employee starts feeling that he/she is an important person and the counselor is paying attention to understand him/her.
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- **(ii) Listening with Intelligence and Understanding:**
- Listening is an important part of counseling.
- Some special body gestures like maintaining eye contact during conversation, leaning forward etc., communicate that the person is interested in listening or willing to participate in the communication process.
- The counselor listens to the employee problems patiently. Here the counselor need to revert back and make the employee feel that he has been understood in the same way as desired.
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- **(iii) Avoid being Judgmental:**
- A counseling session helps people to understand better but not to criticize them or tell them that what they have done was literally wrong. This makes people defensive and non receptive. Then the communication ends up being a wasteful exercise.
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- **(iv) Define the Problem:**
- It means to identify the actual problem. A counselor should encourage the employee to define the problem for himself with sympathetic listening and careful questions.
- Eg : Is there anything else you think you want to tell me?
- Are there other factors which preceded the problem?

- **(v) Plan the Action:**
- A counseling session should end up with a specific plan for the development of an employee i.e., identification of training need, job rotation, increased responsibility, etc.
- While planning the future course of action the counselor should encourage the counselee to generate more ideas by brainstorming. After the generation of these alternatives the best one should be selected by assessing the advantages and disadvantages of the various options.

- **(vi) Stay Alert:**
- The meeting ought to be planned and it should be decided how to tackle the cases and change the direction in the light of new ideas and information.
- **(vii) Conclude the Meeting:**
- A counselor should help out the employee in deriving a solution to the problem.
- The solution should be realistic which has practical feasibility. This can be initiated by raising questions like, “What do you think is the best way to deal with situation?”
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