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Introduction

This book is about integrating career and personal counseling. Its focus is on how helpers view clients from a “whole-person” perspective of concerns that clients bring to counseling. Helpers address not just career concerns or personal ones, but both, as well as how they interrelate. A holistic philosophy of counseling suggests that client concerns are inseparable and intertwined. Helpers do not limit their ability to understand that a client’s belief systems and interests are interrelated. Helpers are alert to personal concerns that might interfere with a client’s ability to adequately process information and make optimal decisions and/or a worker’s ability to perform at work; helpers also address how reactions to work stressors can limit a client’s ability to function in other life roles. The relationships between career and mental health concerns suggest that these concerns should be addressed by intervention strategies in an integrative counseling approach. Throughout this book, the following terms are used interchangeably: *counselor* and *helper*, and *counseling* and *helping*.

Some Perspectives of Personal and Career Development Counseling

In most contemporary books that address the counseling profession one can usually find an excellent introduction to this field. Theories of counseling and psychotherapy are the centerpiece for addressing personal concerns. Books devoted to personal counseling as well as career development generally present a number of counseling approaches that have been developed over time. What stands out is the diversity of approaches that have been developed in the counseling profession to address all clients’ concerns. One can conclude that there are many reasons for different counseling approaches, including basic research that has enlightened our knowledge of human behavior as well as the increased diversity of concerns clients bring to counseling. One would suspect that even more theories of counseling will come forth in the future, theories that are designed to meet the needs of an

ever-changing society. One life role that has maintained prominence, however, is the work role.

What is most significant in current counseling practices is the recognition of multiple influences that drive behavior. That in itself is not necessarily a new position, but a reciprocal interrelationship between influences has provided additional opportunities for establishing counseling goals. The three domains of biological, psychological, and social/cultural influences on behavior present new challenges to helpers. Viewed from this position, the helper's perspective of behavior is that it is indeed multidimensional. The three domains of influence are labeled as an *integrative approach* in the counseling process. The integrative approach to understanding behavior also provides the tools to evaluate causes of behavior from several dimensions that have been supported by extensive research (Barlow & Durand, 2005).

An integrative approach views the development of behavior as consisting of biological, psychological, and social/cultural influences; thus, multiple influences are the key to understanding behavior: It is not one dimensional. The integrative approach comprises a much broader concept of behavior that includes one's genetics, chemical imbalances, a wide range of psychological influences, and unique experiences from the total ecological environment. What is most interesting is the reciprocal relationship between influences—for example, counseling that includes psychological interventions can positively affect the functioning of the client's immune system. The integrative approach to understanding behavior also provides the tools to evaluate causes of behavior from several dimensions that have been supported by extensive research (Barlow & Durand, 2005). I illustrate the integrative approach in several of the chapters that follow.

Personal and career counseling have generally been viewed as separate entities in both training and practice. Theories of career development have primarily addressed the processes involved in making an optimal career choice. There are similarities between career and personal counseling in the way helpers address client concerns. The goals of career and personal counseling, however, are determined by sets of client needs. What I emphasize in this book are the interrelationships among needs. In practice, career counselors devote their skills to helping clients in the decision process, whereas in personal counseling a variety of personal concerns are addressed. Career choice and development traditionally have been viewed as distinct and separate from personal counseling. In the last several decades, however, the focus of career counseling has been extended to include personal concerns that interfere with the choice process. In addition, there has been a growing interest in addressing concerns of adults who have experienced outsourcing and workplace changes. Adults in career transition can present multiple concerns that helpers need to address by observing the interrelationship of concerns. Some concerns may be career specific, whereas other, more personal ones are interrelated to all life roles. Depression, for example, is indiscriminate in that it can affect all life roles. Faulty beliefs cannot be ignored in

career development or in personal counseling. Symptoms of mental health problems clearly point out the need to address all concerns clients bring to counseling. What I am suggesting is that helpers need to focus on identifying and addressing the interrelationship of concerns as in a whole-person approach to counseling.

An overview of development of the counseling profession also provides a very instructive perspective. The concept of person-in-environment has become a major focus of helpers. Behavioral influences that are internalized through socialization have been of most interest to helpers who offer personal and career counseling. Over time, there has been a shift from an emphasis of intrapsychic explanations of behavior to the impact of self-in-situation (Gelso & Fretz, 2001). What is important here is the belief that there are both internal and external explanations of behavior that need to be incorporated in the helping process. Cognitive-behavioral techniques have grown in popularity as helpers deal with the here and now rather than uncovering past events and experiences that lead to awareness and insight.

What is not lost in these latest developments is the spillover effect of personal problems. Super (1984) made the relevant point that what happens in one life role can influence what happens in other life roles. Work-family conflict is a good example to illustrate this point. Work stress and subsequent problems in relationships at work can lead to conflicts in the home and with other relationships. The spillover affect studied by Zedeck (1992), which I discuss in a later chapter, underscores the assumption that personal and career/work problems are interrelated. In the case of spillover affect, career, work, and mental health have a connectedness that should be addressed. The same would be true for a client who is presenting paranoid symptoms. Helpers would address irrational and distorted thinking triggered by cognitive schemas that need to be unlearned and/or moderated. Helpers would direct a client's attention toward how faulty thinking can affect all life roles. The major message here and throughout this book is the position that career, work, and mental health are intertwined.

A holistic perspective of helping is particularly relevant for clients who present a combination of career concerns and symptoms of psychological disorders. For example, clients with a mood disorder, personality disorder, or both would likely experience serious functional problems in all life roles. Thus, mental health concerns of a personal nature present potential problems for clients in the initial career decision-making process and the processes that follow as well as in interpersonal interactions in the workplace and the ability to perform appropriately. On the other hand, workers who experience job loss likely will also present work-family conflicts and other relationship problems. Counseling progress for clients with both career and personal concerns may be limited unless helpers address the interrelationship of concerns: Clients appraise life situations in similar ways; that is, they can overgeneralize negative feelings to most life situations. This chapter includes an introduction to some basic issues that provide clarity to the role

of the helper who assumes a whole-person approach to helping, not necessarily in order of importance: Multidimensional Influences Shape Behavior, Focusing on Multiple Life Roles, The Pervasive Nature of Psychological Disorders, The Pervasive Nature of Work Stress, The Case for Each Client's Cognitive Schemas, Recognizing and Uncovering Constraints of Career Choice, and Cultural Diversity and Acculturation.

Multidimensional Influences Shape Behavior

Perspectives of counseling from a whole-person point of view are grounded in an integrative interactive approach to causes of psychological problems from three dimensions: biological, psychological, and social/cultural. Influences that can lead to symptoms of psychological disorders are indeed multidimensional, suggesting that the uniqueness of each individual is the key to finding pathways to building tailored interventions. In the whole-person counseling approach helpers are to focus on all life roles; the spillover affect from one life role can negatively affect other life roles. This important principle suggests that psychological disorders can negatively affect the work role, although they do not always do so. In some cases, however, such as when a client has faulty beliefs, one may find major problems in career choice and development as well as with other life roles (Mitchell & Krumboltz, 1996).

The important point emphasized by this basic issue is that behavior is influenced by multidimensional forces, suggesting that helpers are to adopt a whole-person perspective for determining diagnostic procedures and tailored interventions. Thus, one is not to conceptualize influences that shape behavior as being one-dimensional; on the contrary, one looks for interactive reciprocating influences. From this perspective, helpers recognize the importance and relevance of the case for the individual and support the position that the uniqueness of each client provides direction to the process of establishing counseling goals.

Focusing on Multiple Life Roles

Life roles and developmental stages are major topics of interest in developmental psychology as well as career development theories. Super (1984) created a *life-career rainbow*, for instance, in which life roles designated as child, student, "leisurite," citizen, worker, and homemaker are assumed by individuals as they progress through life stages. Of interest to helpers are the following two suggestions: (1) Because people are involved in several roles simultaneously, success in one role facilitates success in another, and (2) life roles are not mutually exclusive; they affect each other in a wide variety of events, experiences, and circumstances. What is made clear here, however, is

the relevance of the interrelationships of life roles in the counseling process. Helpers have long touted the benefits of a balanced lifestyle.

It is important for helpers to recognize that the value individuals give to life roles can vary during different life stages and ages as well as by gender and culture. Work, for instance, may be valued differently by people of different ages and across different cultures. As I discuss in Chapter 4, one also would likely find that the work role is valued differently within social classes. The important concept of life roles is addressed in most of the chapters in this book. Of particular interest is the spillover effect of one life role to another and the significance of addressing the interrelationship of all life roles.

The Pervasive Nature of Psychological Disorders

Mental health professionals have worked tirelessly to reach a consensus for symptoms of mental illness that can be used in the diagnosis and treatment of psychological disorders. The *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Health Disorders*, fourth edition, text revision (American Psychiatric Association, 2000), contains the current standard categories of disorders and symptoms.

Counseling psychologists, licensed professional counselors, and social workers, for example, have unified their counseling efforts to meet the concerns of the intact “normal” person as opposed to one who is profoundly disturbed (Gelso & Fretz, 2001). Nevertheless, there are indications that this trend has been changing over time, partly because helpers function in a variety of counseling centers that expose them to people who have been diagnosed with one or more psychological disorders (Corazzini, 1997).

The components of psychological disorders, according to Barlow and Durand (2005), are psychological dysfunction, distress or impairment, and atypical response. *Psychological dysfunction* is observed in individuals who are no longer “intact” but have a breakdown in behavioral functioning that involves cognitive and emotional factors. *Distress* reactions are often very severe: A person may be extremely upset to the point that he or she no longer meets daily obligations, and social functioning is also *impaired*.

As the name implies, *atypical responses* are behaviors that appear to be odd or eccentric but in essence violate traditional norms. Be aware that some professionals do not use the term *psychological disorders* but prefer *mental disorders*, *mental illness*, or even *mental dysfunctions*. The preferred term in this book is *psychological disorders* because of the well-defined components provided by Barlow and Durand (2005). Also be aware that norms of behavior vary from culture to culture, and what may appear to be abnormal in one culture may be acceptable or expected behavior in another (see Chapter 8). In this book, examples of psychological disorders are discussed with an emphasis on how their symptoms impact all life roles. Helpers usually are involved with clients who have been diagnosed as having full-blown

psychological disorders as well as with clients who have symptoms of certain disorders but do not meet all the criteria of a particular disorder. In both of these circumstances, helpers evaluate the relationships between what may be labeled as *personal problems* and an individual's ability to fulfill the requirements of a work role and maintain career development.

The Pervasive Nature of Work Stress

Stress reactions to daily life by adults and stress experienced in the workplace have become major topics of interest among the helping professions, including members of medical professions and management professionals in industrial organizations, among other groups. Stress reactions are common daily occurrences for many people, and most of them have developed unique coping methods that can diminish the negative consequences of stress. For some people, stressful life events and constant oppression have conditioned them to develop coping techniques that moderate effects of stressful events and situations. Others will need assistance in learning to effectively use coping strategies. The point is that reactions to stress are an individual matter that can be a very pervasive lifestyle issue; the effects of stress are not limited to any one life role but may negatively affect all of them. Chapter 11 is devoted to the discussion of work stress; also included are psychological symptoms that underscore the pervasive nature of stress.

The *diathesis-stress model* can assist helpers in developing a better understanding of the stress process. According to this model, some people inherit tendencies to express certain behaviors that are activated by stress. Each inherited tendency is considered to be a *diathesis*, or a condition that is necessary for the development of a psychological disorder. More specifically, a diathesis can be a genetic predisposition or vulnerability to illness, including mental illness. The precipitating force that triggers the vulnerability depends on the amount of stress an individual experiences and her or his coping ability. Further discussions on the subject of work stress will include its causes, consequences, and suggested interventions. A model of stress reactivity is also presented in Chapter 11.

The Case for Each Client's Cognitive Schemas

The growing interest in faulty beliefs is well documented in the career development literature as well as in published materials involving general counseling concerns and clinical psychology. This growing interest has been touted by cognitive-behavioral oriented helpers and major career development theorists (Mitchell & Krumboltz, 1996; Trull, 2005). The focus has been on the content of negative beliefs rather than how they were developed. Some researchers, however, have suggested that cognitive schemas developed through

the socialization process trigger autonomic responses to events, situations, and even people (Castillo, 1997; Doyle, 1998). How a client interprets events, situations, and the actions of others can lead to a better understanding of his or her reactions to other personal interactions with others, including work associates. Thus, cognitive schemas have much to do with one's belief system. The rationale is that if one falsely believes that he or she cannot adequately perform in the workplace, then his or her ability is indeed diminished. On the other hand, if one is bolstered by feelings of self-efficacy and a sense of well-being, chances are that person's performance will be satisfactory. Clearly, interventions that encourage the learning of more positive self-thoughts and self-talk are essential ingredients for better mental health as well as for the ability to effectively evaluate future career prospects. Cognitive schemas are discussed in several chapters of this book, and the significance of cultural cognitive schemas is discussed in Chapter 8.

Recognizing and Uncovering Constraints of Career Choice

The American dream includes the belief that each person has the right to choose a career that will meet his or her financial needs and provide him or her with a work identity. Is this American dream achievable for everyone, including members of the poor and working class? Are those hard-working people who have achieved social mobility from working class to upper class the exception to the rule? The consensus is that most people remain in their social class of origin (Andersen & Taylor, 2006; Gilbert, 2003). The issues involved in constraints of career choice involve much more than a dream that did not come true. There appear to be both internal and external factors that contribute to what are known as *constraints* in the career choice process. Some people are of the opinion that getting a job is a matter of luck or fate. Those who have internalized these beliefs do not endorse the concept of self-determination; thus, they believe that their career prospects are very limited. Others who do endorse the idea that hard work and persistence will pay off with a job that offers numerous opportunities are usually not constrained when choosing a career. How these two different points of view evolve is a most relevant question.

Social/cultural influences that contribute to one's reluctance to make a choice include social class, environmental experiences that discourage feelings of self-efficacy, and the assumption that self-determination does not matter. Contextual interactions can greatly influence how each individual views his or her future lifestyle, including options for careers. It appears that class and race differences in perceptions of life and work are a reality. An additional reality is the changing nature of work and the disappearance of internal ladders in organizations that provided, among other things, job security and feelings of well-being. The rapidly changing workforce can be

very intimidating to prospective employees. Some career barriers that are discussed in Chapters 4 and 5 include contextual experiences, external market forces, mental health issues, and negative cognitions.

Cultural Diversity and Acculturation

People are not to be stereotyped because of their cultural background; on the contrary, there is recognition that each person is biologically, socially, and psychologically unique. Helpers should uncover each client's unique qualities; this is especially true for members of culturally diverse populations. A major focus of helping is centered around the worldview of culturally different people. The rationale for this focus is that each cultural group has developed unique traditions, rituals, and ways of thinking; cultural norms, values, attitudes, and beliefs have been shaped by specific cultural contexts. Several dimensions of worldviews include the meaning of family, cooperation and competition, communication styles, and locus of control (Gelso & Fretz, 2001). In many non-Western societies the extended family traditionally asserts significant influence and control over individual opportunities of family members. A consensus of opinion about one's career choice, for instance, is highly sought after in families. Under these conditions, children are conditioned to think of their future in terms of how they can best meet the needs of their family rather than their individual aspirations. Feelings of connectedness formed in family relationships carry over to community relationships, where again, important decisions may be based on the approval of community as well as family. Under these circumstances, individual goals are thought to be selfish and inconsiderate of the group's welfare. Thus, the intention of some clients of other cultures may be misinterpreted. Other cultural considerations include styles of communication with another person that are influenced by perceived status differences. One may be reluctant to speak out for fear of being judged as outspoken or to talk about one's accomplishments for fear of being perceived as selfish. Some culturally diverse individuals believe that their future is determined by fate or the gods rather than through individual efforts. These examples and more are discussed in Chapter 8. Finally, one should be reminded that the context in which one is reared can have a tremendous influence on the development of life roles; contextual experiences influence the development of one's worldview.

The term *acculturation* refers to the adoption of beliefs, values, and practices of the host culture (Comas-Diaz & Grenier, 1998). Acculturation is considered to be important in discussions of cultural norms of behavior that may be different from those of the dominant culture. Behavior that is considered normal in one culture may not be judged that way in Western societies. For example, in chapter 8 I discuss some behaviors that may seem odd, eccentric, and quite strange but that in some remote places in the world could be judged as normal behavior that is associated with reactions to distress or loss

of honor. Acculturation is a process in which people from other cultures who live in the United States for long periods of time adopt the norms of behavior of the host country. Therefore, traditional ways of behavior within the contexts of their culture of origin may have been significantly modified. A list of acculturation scales is provided in Appendix A.

Cross-culture studies continue to point out, however, that there are some universal norms of behavior and some behaviors that are considered to be culture specific in origin (Matsumoto & Juang, 2004). Acculturation, universal, and culture-specific behaviors can be important keys to a client's perception of the work role, relationships, and a way of life. An understanding and awareness of culture-specific beliefs, attitudes, and values is essential in the helping process, which is devoted to finding client uniqueness. It should not surprise anyone that the development of emotional problems is significantly influenced by an individual's perception of racial discrimination (Paniagua, 2005).

The whole-person approach to counseling introduced in this book is very inclusive and individually oriented. This broad-perspective approach suggests that the uniqueness of each client is supported to the point that helping is in essence a client-centered endeavor. The focus on client uniqueness suggests that helpers search for individuality from biological, psychological, and social/cultural perspectives, as in an integrative approach to personal and career counseling. Multidimensional influences on behavior present the opportunity to observe relationships between personal and career concerns. What is likely to be observed are both career-specific and personal-specific concerns that can be addressed separately while some concerns are addressed simultaneously. The whole-person perspective is, as the name implies, a position that encourages helpers to address concerns that can affect all life roles.

This book includes chapters that introduce psychological disorders with an emphasis on causes uncovered from biological, psychological, and social/cultural dimensions. The pervasive nature of psychological disorders must be recognized and addressed by valid interventions. Some suggestions for effective interventions are contained within several chapters. Chapter 12, however, is completely devoted to examples of interventions and case studies designed to address personal problems that can affect all life roles. The consequences of dysfunctional behavior are a major concern of helpers; therefore, the focus of helping is on solutions rather than on diagnostic labeling. On the other hand, symptoms of psychological disorders contained in the diagnostic process are most helpful in finding specific information that can be used in interventions. A clerk who has recently experienced episodes of depression, for instance, may not be diagnosed as having full-blown depression but can manage to cope with negative thoughts through cognitive restructuring and eventually return to work. In this case, cognitive restructuring can address symptoms of depression as well as the goal of moderating work role problems. In the next section, I provide an overview of the development of career counseling that will be used as a backdrop for the Part I of this book.

The Practice of Career Counseling: An Overview

The career counseling movement has a long and interesting history. Most researchers have focused on rise of the Industrial Revolution in the late 1800s. The beginnings of career counseling are traced back to the need of placement services in urban areas as a result of the Industrial Revolution. This was followed by a growth of guidance programs in public schools circa 1920–1940. The pace of the movement increased with the growing number of students attending colleges and universities beginning in the 1940s. The focus on the career development of employees by industrial organizations significantly expanded the role and scope of career counseling during the 1960s and beyond. Accompanying this spurt of growth, work itself was viewed as a very pervasive life role; the work role was considered to be a most important part of one's life story. Changes in the nature of work continued to move rapidly with the introduction of information technology and other technological advances. Organizations established outplacement services as workers were outsourced. In the 1990s, multicultural counseling called attention to the need of addressing diversity issues in all counseling programs, including the practice of career development. The call to address mental health issues in the career counseling process was also issued in the 1990s. Now, at the beginning of the 21st century, workers have voiced their complaints about how the changing nature of work does not offer them the opportunity of a lifetime job. Many have viewed the changing rules of working as a broken promise and a breach of contract that lessens their chance of achieving the American dream. The issues that adults must confront during the process of career transition represent a significant challenge to helpers in the practice of career development. Helpers can expect to find that the needs of adults in career transition have a connectedness with all life roles.

In the meantime, the practice of career development is also growing internationally. There are comprehensive school-to-work programs in England. Personal study programs for vocational training have been created in Finland. A very extensive job network has been developed in Australia. Denmark has developed one-stop centers that are referred to as *counseling houses*. Career education and guidance are mandatory in The Netherlands. Japan has a network of public employment security offices. Canada has developed a national career development policy that encourages more career counseling services. Finally, in Hong Kong, career services focus on career-related workshops (Herr, Cramer, & Niles, 2004).

What is most significant here are stages of changes that have evolved from ever-changing global networks of societies. The chronology of the career counseling movement in the United States does indeed reflect influences from social, political, economic, and other changes in the United States as well as in other nations around the world. We can expect to experience more stages of growth and significant changes in the career counseling movement as our nation continues to be transformed.

How This Book Is Organized

This book is divided into two parts. Part I is entitled “Career Counseling Perspectives.” The major purpose of the five chapters contained in this part is to provide an overview of some selected career development theories followed by examples of current practices in career counseling. Two chapters are devoted to addressing current constraints on the career choice process. The rationale for this part of the book is that career development theories, current counseling practices, and an update on constraints of career choice provide the reader with background and reference sources as well as examples of the practice of career development. A philosophical, theoretical, and practical focus is introduced.

Part II, entitled “Mental Health Issues and Solutions,” contains seven chapters that introduce you to a number of mental health concerns identified by symptoms and labels as well as how these concerns can affect one’s ability to function in all life roles. A major focus, however, involves how the symptoms of psychological disorders can affect a client’s ability to make career choices and/or maintain a work role. The interrelationship of concerns is the focus of interventions that address clients’ needs from a whole-person perspective. One complete chapter is devoted to intervention strategies, and another is devoted to diversity issues. At the end of each chapter are supplementary learning exercises in the form of questions developed from the chapter content.

Summary

Integrating career and personal concerns is the major premise of this book. The relationship between career and mental health concerns are addressed through an integrative counseling approach. Personal and career counseling have traditionally been viewed as separate entities. The focus of this book is to address the interrelationships of client concerns.

Career counseling has a long history, beginning in the 1800s. There have been stages of growth in the career counseling movement that have addressed emerging needs of a changing society. The practice of career development is also growing internationally.

Supplementary Learning Exercises

1. Briefly describe a whole-person approach to counseling. Near the end of the semester, describe factors you would add to your earlier description.
2. Debate the pros and cons of career counseling as a separate entity.
3. Describe how you would use symptoms of a psychological disorder to choose intervention strategies. Give examples.

4. Which of the basic issues discussed in this chapter do you consider to be the most important? Rank order them and defend your rankings.
5. Describe the importance of acculturation when counseling clients from different cultural backgrounds.