

PROBLEMS IN COUNSELING THE
DISADVANTAGED BLACK

by

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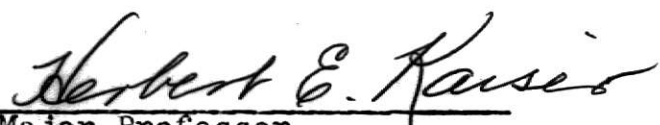
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Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

Before children are products of their culture, they are products of their families. The family is the basic social unit of American life, the crucible in which socialization is forged. The basic tenets of the culture are transmitted by families to their children. The school gives depth and dimension to the transmission but if the family has been ineffective in transmitting the basic tenets, or if they are different from the expectation of the curriculum, then the children have extreme difficulty achieving in school. In addition, many conditions of the family in the black subculture are shown in every index of a family break-down, such as divorce, desertion, separations, matriarchal families, illegitimacy and aid to dependent children.

Since many of the difficulties individuals experience are intricately meshed with their perception of themselves and the perceived expectations of those with whom they interact, social class may be plausible approach to the question of self-esteem and self-concept as they relate to the disadvantaged or deprived black. These include individuals with a slight percentage of intact families, a large number of children, poor housing, low income and little education.

Interaction with numerous combinations of these conditions would seem to significantly influence an individual's perception of himself.

The relationship which the counselor forms with the client is the most significant aspect of the counseling process. It is more important than his knowledge of tests and measurements, the adequacy of his record-keeping, the theories he holds, the accuracy with which he is able to predict future behavior, or the university in which he received his professional training. An effective, growth promoting relationship is characterized by sensitive and accurate empathy on the part of the counselor by a high degree of congruence or genuineness and by regard, respect, and appreciation for the individual.

THE PROBLEM AND DEFINITION OF TERMS

Statement of the Problem

The problem of this report centered upon a review of research on race and ethnic relations dealing with the problems encountered by white/black counselors in counseling the disadvantaged black student.

Need for the Report

To review literature of research findings which stated changes and adjustments of black/white counselors in dealing with the problems encountered in the counseling relationship with disadvantaged blacks, and to focus attention

on a period in which prejudice was the major concern to a period in which political equality is at the center of public attention.

Delimitation

This report was limited to periodicals and reports found in the Kansas State University Library.

Definition of Terms Used

Self-concept--An individual's assessment of himself.

Culturally Different Child--That child that is restricted to the culture of the low socio-economic family.

Desegregation--The process of breaking down a school from a single to a multi-race enrollment.

Stigma--Visible body signs that make an individual different in physical appearance from the "normal" population.

Stereotyped--A projected image given to black people as being the same; shiftless, immoral, inferior, etc.

Ghetto Child--The child that through no fault of his own lives in the lowest socio-economic area of a city.

Chapter II

A REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The word impoverished has been used to describe the experiential background of the disadvantaged child. This word is not entirely accurate. A better word is different; the disadvantaged child probably has had as many experiences as the middle-class child, but his experiences are different. Still, there is some truth in the implication that the experiences of disadvantaged children do not have the kinds of experiences that develop the particular conceptual foundation necessary for school success. The impoverished environment in which they are raised does not provide stimulation to develop the cognitive skills or experiences.

COUNSELING THE MINORITY GROUP STUDENT

Grisspoon (1973) stated that many workshops dealing with minority group counseling have followed an unproductive pattern. Black participants villify white counselors for apparent and sub-conscious racism while whites indulge in self-flagellation, open confession of their own racist proclivities and transfer of blame to their employer institutions. There is a circularity inherent in this cathartic process that is neither effectively tension-reducing nor resultant in significant behavioral change.

White counselors leave these sessions having received little or no didactic feedback from minority groups. Professional Blacks and other minority group professionals are resentful of being "ripped off" for information by whites who do not share their real perceptions and feelings about their minority group counselees. This lack of illumination is heightened upon the counselor's return to campus where he encounters the same level of administrative apathy and insensitivity as before.

The time has come when all participants of workshops must come to grips with realities of cross-cultural counseling. The deplorable fact must be faced that none has escaped untouched by individual and institutional racism, and while counselors indulge in the exorcism of personal demons, minority group students wait in the wings for assistance. (Grisspoon, 1973). In a workshop evaluation, Westbrook (1973) appropriately focused on the position of professional interchange in the helping process.

"We are past the period of history when change in counseling performance can be expected to be the chance for change in counseling performances with minority group students which is to be found in the cognitive recognition of their humanity and their presenting needs."

Grisspoon (1973) stated that counselors are viewed as paid functionaries representing establishment values. Lacking the informational resources available to middle-class whites, minority group students depend heavily on counselors for career, academic, and financial counseling. Therefore,

the student initially regards the counseling relationship from a purely pragmatic point of view. Personal problems are seen as secondary considerations, and minority students, particularly Blacks, are suspicious of white counselors' motives and are loathe to share personal information with them.

Since minority group students consider white counselors "guilty until proven innocent", ultimate trust depends on how well the counselor performs for the students in concrete ways. An administrator urged counselors to "sharpen their professional skills" and to become adept in all areas of financial, academic and career counseling as well as in the interpretation of personal problems through verbal and non-verbal cues. Furthermore, "be an advocate for the students; make sure your institution lives up to its commitments". Westbrook (1973) admonished counselors to do more, do it better and do it now for the minority group student. Only when the material aspects of the student's life are taken care of, will a more in-depth counseling relationship begin to be possible. This included counselors projecting weaknesses as well as strengths and sharing their perceptions and feelings with counselees rather than requiring the student to always be on the giving end of the relationship.

According to Smith (1971), traditionally, guidance counselors have demonstrated their success with children in

the middle and upper-classes. They have helped those youths with educational, vocational, and some social concerns. These are the children which society rewards for conforming to the status quo. These are the children who live well and enjoy many cultural and psychological advantages over pupils from poor environments.

But with lower-class children, among whom most blacks are found, the record of counselors is poor. Evidence from the past shows that counselors have advised blacks not to take part in certain school experiences because they offered them no future; counselors have used test scores to keep blacks out of colleges and special schools; they have maintained and interpreted the records of the many black students who have been sent from the school to the streets. Counselors have used the homogenous grouping scheme to confirm the notion of black pupil's inferiority by keeping them out of advanced and creative school experiences.

School counselors have been noticeably absent from the struggle of black pupils. This means that guidance counselors have been playing major roles in the rape of many black children's rights and opportunities simply because the results of their practices have been indistinguishable from the racist practices of the total society. So consequently, guidance counselors cannot guide what they have rejected and do not wish to know, and they cannot direct where they have not been.

THERAPEUTIC TECHNIQUES WITH BLACK CLIENTS

Action techniques that are task-oriented provide for the black client the experience of his "self" in interaction with objective and subjective reality. Therapy employing sedentary talk between counselor and client is necessarily limited by the extent to which the participants in the dialogue are capable of understanding one another; adjustments in the language of counselor and client are necessary for communication. Some black clients have no wish to engage in the introspective self-analysis which characterizes insight therapy; their problems are frequently more tangible, requiring the exploration and application of alternative solutions. Counseling with black clients ought to literally focus on actual rather than vicarious experiences, utilizing the techniques of group guidance, guided group interaction, interfamily consultation, or sheltered work-study or social functions stated Gordon (1964).

Kvaraceus (1965) pointed out that task-oriented group therapy requires participants to play an active role in planning and conducting the therapy and encourages expressions of initiative and industry. Adults may explore practical solutions to such problems as child-rearing, family budgeting, community leadership, and relations with public agencies. Students may want to deal with parental and

scholastic pressures, the process of applying and being interviewed for jobs, or problems in peer relationships. Group techniques provide opportunity for experimentation with new modes of response in a variety of interpersonal relationships and in a relatively non-threatening atmosphere, serving as an emotionally corrective experience for some members who find substitutes for their present defects in interpersonal communication. Group members learn to give and receive emotional support, thus being therapists and group members at the same time. The role of the therapist will be to maintain an atmosphere of trust and understanding in which group members are safe to examine themselves and others.

Gordon (1964) stated that activity therapy, eliciting individual expressions through play, painting, dancing, drama, and singing serves a therapeutic function by allowing for creative participation and release of tension of group members. Family therapy, sometimes conducted in the home, serves similar functions for family members. Materials such as arts and crafts and simple games are media through which conflicts between family members are revealed and hostilities expressed. The counselor will interpret conflicts that arise, guiding family members in discovering new ways of settling disputes and new patterns for interaction. The white counselor will suggest this technique cautiously with black clients, realizing that it may initially be a threatening experience for family

members, especially for the black male if his position in the family is somewhat tenuous.

Task-oriented role-playing with black youth, encouraging behavior that challenges the stereotype of passivity by focusing on initiative, may foster more assertive behavior in such real-life situations as job interviewing and social interaction with peers and adults reported Kvaraceus (1965). It may foster the development of leadership skills in the school or local community, enabling young people to find themselves or identities that fully express their talents. Role reversal enables youth to try out the roles of those authority figures - parents, teachers, employers - whom they most fear or resent. Role-playing, in developing the skills of verbal facility and more effective interaction, provides black youth with the sense of control over their own environment that is essential to their search for identity.

Counselors working in the black community must understand the special problems of black people in discovering and affirming their identity. Black Power, proclaiming the integrity of the black community, has special relevance for black people in search of an identity stated Kincaid (1969). Counselors cannot ignore the new self-awareness which many black clients bring to counseling. An approach to counseling black clients is suggested and some techniques are reviewed that may facilitate their full freedom. The role of the white

counselor may be one of supervisor of lay therapists in the black community or change-agent and interpreter in the white community. (Kincaid, 1969).

Since counseling ought not to proceed in a vacuum, the counselor must perceive the relation between his client's personality and the social environment. This is especially critical in counseling with black clients.

The black American's struggle for identity must be understood in the light of his tragic history since 1619. The identity and very existence of the black community have been defined by the dominant white majority whose own identity and illusion of superiority was expanded stated Kincaid (1969). The African culture of the black American was rejected and he was forced to adopt a foreign culture of white America. The black man suffered a loss of self-esteem and the destruction of the family with disparagement of the male and enhancement of the female. (Kardiner & Ovesey, 1951).

Present welfare policies continue to aggravate this situation while deprivation in the ghetto accentuates the racial divide. Black identity has been the child of oppression.

The black community attempts to establish and maintain individual and communal identities which can be understood in terms of Erikson's developmental theory of identity crises in the life cycle which must be resolved in the individual's encounter with the social environment in order

to achieve mastery over that environment and unity of personality (Erikson, 1959):

1. Trust versus mistrust
2. Autonomy versus shame and doubt
3. Initiative versus guilt
4. Industry versus inferiority
5. Identity versus identity diffusion
6. Intimacy versus isolation
7. Generality versus self-absorption
8. Integrity versus despair

The individual and communal expression of frustration and despair coming from the black community reflects, in part, unresolved crises in the search for identity.

A child's skill in resolving the crises of basic trust, autonomy, and initiative of basic trust during the first five years of life will determine his ability to face each succeeding identity crisis and to approach the end of life with integrity and affirmation assumed Erikson (1969). The black infant, often experiencing later weaning, more relaxed toilet training, and numerous mothering females, is perhaps able to achieve a better sense of basic trust and autonomy than many white middle-class children (Keil, 1966). On the other hand, many black parents favor their lighter-skinned children, reflecting the realization that whiteness is a major determinant of opportunity in our society. Thus, family acceptance may facilitate a greater sense of trust, autonomy, and initiative in the lighter child than in his darker sibling. Rejected by his family, the darker child is unable to resolve adequately these early crises and is, therefore, burdened by a sense of mistrust, doubt, and shame. His sense of initiative

may be unconsciously suppressed by parents who see that society provides few avenues for the expression of black initiative.

By the age of three, many black children are aware of racial prejudices due to differences in skin color. Results from a test which black children were asked to color a series of drawings revealed that many were unable to select an appropriate color for themselves, indicating emotional anxiety and conflict in regard to their own skin color (Clark, 1955).

COUNSELING BLACKS IN PREDOMINANTLY WHITE SCHOOLS

Coming from a black community the student is thrust into the midst of a majority of whites probably for the first time in his life. The student feels intimidated and is isolated in an educational "gold fish bowl". In addition, he sees fear if any of his group are in positions of power in his institution. This reinforces his fears and defeat and failure become the rule, not the exception in white institutions.

Thus counseling the black student in white schools cannot take place in a vacuum. For counseling to be successful in any meaningful way, faculty and administration must undergo some form of sensitizing experience.

The following concrete suggestions for countering the isolation of the minority group student were offered by Grisspoon (1973):

- 1) Encourage internal structures such as Black Student Unions - help the student organize them; leave leadership roles for the students.
- 2) Conduct group counseling sessions - sharing problems in the group will create a supportive atmosphere which will promote freer expression.
- 3) Urge each institution to hire more minority group counselors and administrators. However, be aware of not hiring just a "house man", someone acceptable to the administration but not to the students.
- 4) Employ outside consultants to conduct counseling groups.
- 5) Take advantage of community resources. For instance, it was suggested that regular scheduled sessions be held for black students in some facility based in the local black community - preferably conducted or assisted by an individual of importance in that community.
- 6) Do not force the issue. Quick transfer to an institution more acceptable to the student might avoid inevitable failure and a deeply ingrained sense of defeat.

The black child discovers a sense of industry as he enters the world. He turns away from family to teachers and peers. He wants to learn how to do things now and to participate in his new social world. The black child, however, is often faced with teachers who do not expect him to learn. They may be middle-class white teachers who assume that he is "culturally deprived" and therefore inferior, or they may be middle-class black teachers who either displaced their self-hatred on him or attempt to remold him in their own image. He reads books that portray a white world or cast black people in stereotyped and inferior roles. His teachers use methods

that require skill in abstract thinking and in responses to oral and written stimuli, often his weakest areas, rather than methods that focus on his physical and visual learning style, and his expressive, problem-centered orientation believed Riessman (1962).

It was further stated by Clark (1955) that the most critical crisis of the black student is during the adolescent period. The young person seeks to define a social role for himself that agrees with his perception of the way others view him; he desires recognition from his community that is in harmony with his emerging self-concept. Directing his interests and skills toward a specific occupation, he is encouraged to experiment with the new roles by an anticipation of achievement and a sense of knowing where he is going. Feeling at home in his body and his community, the adolescent challenges any who would question or undermine his developing identity.

An inability to resolve the adolescent identity crisis results, however, in identity diffusion and role confusion. The black adolescent feels both an urgency to live life and a wish to escape from it. Convinced that he is unable to fulfill adequately the roles projected as desirable by his family and community and school, and opposed to the standardization and conformity of those roles, the black student may withdraw from society or turn toward a

negative group identity. Large numbers of young blacks, victims of economic and social discrimination, turn to criminal activities for the discovery of an identity. For some, this new life may provide the first and only experience of recognition from peers or community. It is, however, a recognition that ultimately leaves the adolescent with feelings of guilt and inferiority rather than the promise of fulfillment.

The youth who does not resolve the adolescent crisis of identity moves into adulthood ill-prepared to meet the three final crises of intimacy, generativity, and integrity. Fearing the commitments and responsibilities of these stages, he may feel inadequate in participating in adult love relationships or in assuming the obligations of parenthood. Unable to defend the dignity of his own life style, he may conclude life with a sense of despair and regret which may be expressed in hostility and contempt for society.

Idealologies provide anchors for young black people seeking identity and recognition during periods of social upheaval said Erikson (1959). At present the most significant idealology to emerge out of the confusion of this decade is Black Power. The central point of Black Power is that "black is beautiful". For the youth in the ghetto this is a positive affirmation of a life they perceived negatively.

The counselor must seek to understand the special relevance of Black Power for his work with black clients.

While not all black clients will be Black Power advocates, many come to counseling with a new self-awareness which the movement encourages and which the counselor cannot ignore. If the goal of counseling is to facilitate the client's acceptance of reality, what do the differing realities of blackness and whiteness say to the counseling relationship? If the therapeutic goal is the development of more positive self-concept in the client, what do the vastly differing histories and life pressures, both personal and communal, of black and white in our society say to the white counselor and black client?

A humanizing process seems necessary because for the first time many white counselors will be faced with a large population of poor black youth, and some black counselors will be exposed to a large segment of middle-class white students. If the big problem for black counselors to overcome is the feeling of inferiority, and the big difficulty for white counselors to overcome is the feeling of superiority, they must give each other help in the attempt to demonstrate that people with different ethnic backgrounds can work, love and live as equals.

IMAGINATIVE COUNSELING

Since the minority group student identifies himself in pre-determined role situations, efforts must be made to break away from the traditional structured counselor/counselee relationship. Several recommendations for alternative counseling structure were offered by Smith (1971):

- 1) De-centralization of Student Personnel Department. Often a department setting intimidates the student's image of counseling as an establishment function.
- 2) Change the counseling routine. Do not get locked into a nine-to-five office routine. One upstate counselor referred to his relationship with a black student who had difficulty getting up in the morning. Until the student established his own routine, the counselor personally awakened the student every morning by knocking on his dormitory door. An act of this nature indicates the counselor really cares and helps to break down negative images of the counseling relationship.
- 3) Self-help and peer counseling.

Smith (1971) listed some components that need attention in the imaginative counseling process. The first component that needs attention is counselors. Do they really know and are they honest with themselves? Are they prejudiced against poor children? Do counselors shower their good intentions upon a few chosen blacks, but for the masses their hate? What help can counselors give black children if they do not understand and feel that blacks grow and develop as a result of environmental manipulations in the same way as white children?

A second factor that needs attention is training. Guidance counselors should reject the sterile training of counselors offered by the colleges and universities. These programs, for the most part, are certification mills designed to handle the interest of youth from the middle-class. They show little imagination in practice or in developing attitudes toward the preparation of guidance specialists to work in inner-city schools. The urban schools are rapidly becoming institutions where the majority of students are black. Yet, the training programs show minor concerns reflecting the life of blacks. Strangely, some of the most important developments for preparing counselors to work with black youth have come from efforts of the Job Corps, Vista, and projects initiated and controlled by minorities in their communities. These developments have been suggestive of concerns based on love, understanding, and humanism.

The third force to consider in altering the counselor's image is cooperation of black and white counselors. The guidance profession should set the pace in showing how a warm human relationship can be structured and maintained. Counselors should be willing to depend upon the subjective factors of man rather than cold objectivity in demonstrating they are for and support each other.

Chapter III

ANALYSIS OF IDENTIFIED DATA

Hesitation to reveal oneself psychologically is another culturally produced blockage to effective counseling. Self-disclosure is the most direct means by which one individual can make himself known to another. In the American culture, it appears that this phenomenon is directly related to how the individual has been treated in society. Individuals who have been treated harshly and have experienced hardships are reluctant to share their hurts with anyone, even their most intimate friends.

BLACK SELF-DISCLOSURE

Black people are now seeking therapy in greater numbers than ever before. But the white-dominated mental health profession continues to build a record of persistent failure with black patients.

It has been shown Blacks prefer therapists of their own race, but there are not nearly enough to go around. In this seller's market, with peace of mind at stake, which clients deserve priority? Disadvantaged or lower-class patients ought to have first claim because they are most likely to draw a blank with white helpers asserted Williams (1973) after a recent study of race and social class as they bear on therapy.

Williams (1973) reported a survey made at the UCLA School of Social Welfare. She, with the aid of two advisers, selected 69 college students to interview and test. Samples of black middle-class, black lower-class and white middle-class were chosen.

Middle-class blacks and whites expressed a similar outlook on therapy, while lower-class blacks took a strikingly negative view compared to the more affluent of both races. But when it comes to self-disclosure--believed crucial for therapy success--an apartheid rooted in the mind turned up. Even with such positive feelings about therapy in the abstract, middle-class blacks proved unwilling to "spill their guts" to the extent that their white classmates did.

Poor blacks are tight-lipped. White middle-class girls tell more about themselves to more people. "Playing it cool" is much more associated with race socialization than with class socialization said Williams (1973).

For those who have been in therapy, the determination not to go back if similar problems recur is surprisingly strong. More than 40 percent of the middle-class blacks said they would not return if further disturbances surfaced, while thirty-eight percent of lower-class blacks vowed they would not go back.

Low black self-disclosure on the personal level across economic lines implied greater need for professional help (Williams, 1973). Whether they would open up even to black therapists is not certain. Yet unhappiness with the prospect of going to white professionals is crystal clear, as three-fourths of lower-class blacks and 70 percent of their middle-class compatriots said they preferred black therapists. The overwhelming desire for counselors of the same race may point to some past bad experiences on the couches of white mental health experts.

White middle-class displays only a "facade of similarity" to middle-class blacks in the perceptions of therapy; this gives them more sophistication in the open mental health market when compared with their lower-class brothers and sisters. The superficial likeness means middle-class blacks have, at least on a cognitive level, accepted the generalized expectations required of a client in psychosocial treatment (Williams, 1973).

CLASS DIFFERENCES

Even if race were not a factor in the consideration of positive regard, class differences would still intrude in any attempt to relate to culturally different individuals in our society. Rosenblum (1959) indicated that prejudice is definitely related to social class identification, i.e., the higher one's social class identification, the more likely

he is to be prejudiced toward ethnic minority groups. To achieve a high degree of positive regard for people who are different, the counselor must learn more about their way of their ethnic and social values and he will have to overcome his own prejudices.

However, positive regard per se is not enough. The counselor does not enjoy his luxury of choosing the clients whom he wishes to accept completely. Middleton (1963) pointed out that alienation is pervasive among the black population in this country, and there is reason to believe that he is right. Many ghetto inhabitants perceive their lives as empty and hopeless; their activities, normless; for many of them, trying to make a living is futile. Thus, they are forced to hustle, to "make it" any way they can.

In our great urban areas counselors find themselves relating to dope addicts, pushers, criminals, and mothers given to serial mating. Those who call themselves counselors are put to the test in accepting such individuals. In fact, a counselor may find his own values being challenged. He may be referred to as "sick", a "square", and the like. Should he write off such people as hopeless, beyond help, send them away from his office or place of work? Of late, some white counselors have indicated harassment not only by their counselees but by their black co-workers as well. Often, their colleagues tell them that they "don't understand" or "can't understand" simply because they are white.

Unfortunately, some white counselors are beginning to believe it. Little do they or their black co-workers realize that if black clients see white counselors as the enemy, they are apt to see black authoritarian figures as something far worse, collaborators with the enemy. Thus, the problems of relating to culturally different blacks are somewhat the same for black counselors as they are for their white counterparts. Assuming that the counselor does exemplify and honestly view his client with all the attitudinal ingredients discussed, there is still the problem of the client's perception of the counselor. It is not enough for the counselor to sit back and declare himself warm, accepting, and sensitive to all people. What he is must be communicated to the clients. How this is done is not clear; however, one thing seems definite. An inner-city person, especially the youngster, can size up a counselor in a very few minutes. If the counselor is a "good guy", the client will know it.

PERCEPTION

Counseling black students present more challenging problems than counseling white students, because of their race, deprivation and lack of academic skills prerequisite to success in schools which are geared in the main to meet the needs of middle-class white students. With the rise of black nationalistic sympathies and allusions, race difference in the counseling dyad may become an obstacle to effective counseling but such an obstruction is not insurmountable.

Essentially, the problem is one of perception; how the counselor perceives the counselee and vice versa. When the counselee senses that the counselor is able despite the obvious racial differences, to understand not only his special circumstances and problems but to identify as well with him in his struggle to meet his emotional and material needs, the counselee, and the counselor can establish positive rapport with which many problems can be solved.

CULTURAL BARRIERS

Counselors are caught up in the current whirlpool of racial attitudes in this country. As an interpersonal relationship, counseling demands that the professional establish rapport with his client before he can begin to apply his skills. This, then, is the most difficult area for the counselor, white or black. In the case of the former, the client's paranoid-like antipathy to all whites does not allow him to evaluate and react to white persons as individuals. Although the counselor may be imbued with empathy, positive regard, unconditions of this regard, and congruence--the psychological ingredients about which Carl Rogers (1962) talked--he is, in spite of himself, rendered professionally impotent if the client rejects him on sight simply because of the fact that he is white.

On the other hand, the black counselor should not become smug, thinking that his blackness will automatically put him in good stead with the client. If the black counselee perceives the white counselor as the enemy, he may see the black authority figure as something far worse--the collaborator with the enemy. This is not to suggest that he will always be perceived as such. In some cases, the black counselor may be accepted completely simply because he is black; but if he is unable to assist the client with the problems he experiences, then his blackness will be of fleeting value. Thus, race and resultant attitudes are initial barriers in the counseling relationship.

The language in a particular culture plays a very significant role. Inability to penetrate the language barrier of poor people renders middle-class professionals helpless to a great extent. Educated people, especially therapeutic personnel, communicate in abstractions and words that not only convey motivations but that transmit, modify and refine feelings as well. In fact, counselors hardly consider their counseling interviews successful unless their feelings are expressed fluently. Unfortunately, such fluency is rare with working-class people, most of whom communicate with great economy of language. Their speech is characterized by a reduction in modifiers, adjectives, and adverbs, especially those which qualify feelings.

Another significant factor is the client's lack of familiarity with counseling. Middle-class people have had from infancy a continuing series of relationships with professionals and friends who assisted them in some way. The doctor, lawyer, and certainly parents and siblings. These contacts are, in the main, verbalizing relationships. The roles of the assisters and the assisted are clearly understood. With the lower-class individuals such roles are not as clear-cut, and therefore, structuring the counseling relationship is more important in counseling them.

Chapter IV

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

SUMMARY

This report has focused on the problems encountered by black and white counselors in counseling the disadvantaged black student.

Clements, Duncan and Taylor (1969) pointed out that often the counselor who holds this stereotyped image enters the counseling relationship with a condescending attitude and with expectations that the counselee must do poorly. The frequent result of this tact is a failure of the counselor and counselee to communicate effectively. It is at these times that the counselor sees himself as the victim of the inevitable failure that awaits those seeking to help those who do not want help.

In many instances, however, failures are blamed on the counselees because of their "lack of motivation to cooperate". Thus, counselors borrow an attitude of the culturally deprived--fatalism. They say, "You are bound to fail", and they justify the failure by placing the blame on someone or something other than themselves. This self-fulfilling prophecy of failure obviously affects the counselor's objective evaluation of the black student.

Clement, Duncan and Taylor (1969) further stated that while it is true that many of the barriers to effective

counseling and evaluation with the disadvantaged black are related to the counselor and his functions; numerous counselee-related obstacles also exist. The primary obstacle related to the counselee in the evaluative process is the counselee's attitude. For example, since these counselees are not usually attracted to the middle-class value of high achievement, they may not give their full cooperation and maximum effort when being evaluated.

Traux, Wargo, and Sibler (1966) found that some counselors did provide low levels of counseling relationships to certain groups of clients against whom they were prejudiced and, therefore, had poor outcomes. They also found that when selected counselors provided high levels of therapeutic conditions such as accurate empathy and non-possessive warmth, then counseling with the disadvantaged black proved significantly effective. Thus, if these prejudices of the evaluative process can be overcome, the possibilities for success in subsequent counseling contacts and functions are greatly enhanced.

Deutsch (1963) noted that differences in language associated with social class tend to increase with the age of the child. As deprived children mature, they fall further behind middle-class children in language variables measured. Consequently, even simple testing instructions become difficult for the disadvantaged counselee to comprehend.

In addition, follow-up test interpretation and counseling sessions are equally difficult to conduct.

CONCLUSIONS

When compared to other ethnic or cultural groups, the black leads in almost every area of social pathology--broken homes, illegitimacy, delinquency, crime, school drop-outs and so on.

Black children will not be able to enjoy the benefits of American society until they are able to satisfy their basic needs of: livable homes, improved learning conditions, better paying jobs and more acceptance into the mainstream of America.

The historical causes of the black's plight have been racism, and its products, social and cultural segregation. They are the forces that have caused them, often legally, to be excluded from full participation in the dominant culture.

Let us not overlook the "black family". The family is the basic social unit of American life, the crucible in which socialization is forged. Many, many black families are in bad shape. What then can the counselor do to help in changing conditions?

As counselor of the disadvantaged youth, he has to be a link to the black child and the dominant culture by communicating the concerns of the child.

The black student really needs counseling. If the white/black counselor meets the black student's needs, then

the white/black counselor can be effective. In general, the black student has no power sophistication and must be directed into meaningful fields which lead into the economic mainstream.

Its a big job! It calls for big people! Big people in terms of love, concern and devotion toward heling others help themselves. Yes, God helps those who help themselves, but some need to see the way first in order to help themselves. Will the counselor be able to show the disadvantaged black the way?

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

In view of the environment in which we live and the rise of black solidarity, a far different guidance model is necessary for effective functioning. The guidance specialist must be the guardian authorized to protect the welfare of students against the forces of dehumanization. This will mean working to protect the right of students to be different, the right of students to participate in all the activities of the school, the right to adequate food, clothing, and shelter, the right to reject adult "phoniness". This guidance counselor must be sensitized to the feelings, attitudes, and life-styles of the students he serves. The nature of this experience demands that it come from community involvement and not from the conventional higher education classrooms. This type of

counselor will not wait for students to come to him, but he will extend help to them. He will be more concerned with guiding toward mutual acceptable goals.

Perhaps the future role of the counselor in the black community will be supervision of nonprofessionals as "lay therapists" who will have the main responsibility for direct contact and immediate service within the community stated Carkhuff and Berenson (1967).

The counselor, whether black or white, must remember that support, respect and freedom are most important in re-establishing the client's feelings of responsibility, optimism, and worth.

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PROBLEMS IN COUNSELING THE
DISADVANTAGED BLACK

by

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AN ABSTRACT OF A MASTER'S REPORT

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requirements for the degree

MASTER OF SCIENCE

College of Education

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
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The purpose of this report was to review literature that focused on the problems encountered in counseling the disadvantaged black.

Teaching and counseling the disadvantaged child is the major challenge in American education today. It is a challenge which must be accepted. Our humanism tells us that the dignity of any human being must not be eroded by ignorance; and education rather than ignorance should guide human behavior.

A review of researched literature has outlined such barriers as language, class differences and the client's unfamiliarity with counseling which must be overcome if the counseling relationship is to be effective.

Counselors working in the black community must understand the special problems of black people in discovering and affirming their identity. Black awareness, proclaiming the integrity of the black community, has special relevance for black people in search of an identity. Counselors cannot ignore the new self-awareness which many black clients bring to counseling.

To white counselors in particular, literature stated that they must determine whether their motives in working with blacks involve "seeking power roles, undertaking the task out of guilt, seeking affection and gratitude, etc." These motives undermine the therapeutic relationship and inhibit the client's growth and freedom. Such counselors ought not work in black

communities.

The black student really needs counseling. In view of the environment in which he lives and the rise of black solidarity, a far different guidance model is necessary for effective functioning. The guidance specialist must be the guardian authorized to protect the welfare of students against the forces of dehumanization. This will mean working to protect the right of students to be different, the right of students to participate in all the activities of the school, the right to adequate food, clothing, and shelter, the right to reject adult "phoniness". This guidance counselor must be sensitized to the feelings, attitudes, and life-styles of the students he serves.