

Counsellors' Corner Article
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March 5, 2005

CHANGE

Counselling is about change. It's not about *making* people do things that they are not ready for or even want. People, including students, need to want to make changes. They need to understand that the power to make changes is inside of themselves and the role of the counsellor is to facilitate the change. An effective counsellor will utilize techniques and strategies that have been proven to move clients to change. An effective counsellor will confront clients when they are saying one thing, but doing another and an effective counsellor will attempt to show clients the pros and cons of changes. But just like the saying you can lead a horse to water, but you can't make him drink, the same is true for counselling. You can lead a client to the change, but you can't make him change.

Noted physician and psychologist William Glasser once said "we only change our behavior when we believe it is not taking us in the desired direction" and I'd like to add we change our behavior when the change is more desired than our current state of being, feeling and doing. In my practice clients are guided to a place where they focus on what they have control over – themselves and their actions. A lot of the misbehavior, low motivation and inconsistency we see in our students are their fight to exert some kind of control over their lives. The adults in their lives, especially at school, need to be able to understand the reason for students' behavior and intervene appropriately. Some of our students have medical imbalances, some have serious psychological problems that cannot be remedied by a school counsellor nor school consequences. However, the majority of our students, given the correct interventions, can succeed.

One such intervention can be the use of *Reality Therapy*. Dr. Glasser is the founder of *Reality Therapy* and the founder and president of the *William Glasser Institute*. Reality Therapy (RT) has at its roots the belief that human beings are responsible for their behavior and that motivation stems from human needs and that whatever humans do is to fulfill current wants and needs. There are five principles of RT as they relate to counseling practice:

- Human beings are motivated to fulfill wants and needs. Wants are unique to each individual and needs are common to all people.
- The difference between what human beings want and what they perceive they are getting from their environment produces specific behaviours.
- Human behaviour is purposeful. The behaviour is to close the gap between what the person wants and what the person thinks he or she is getting.
- Doing, thinking and feeling are inseparable aspects of behaviour and are generated from within and not from the outside.

- Human beings see the world through two general levels of perception: low and high. The low level of perception implies knowledge of events or situations. A high level of perception gives values to those events or situations.

The practice of RT is delivered by establishing an environment which promotes change and teaching the WDEP system (a problem-solving method that asks what do you **want**, how hard do you **want** to work to get what you want, what they are **doing** currently- **evaluation**- and what the new **plan** will look like). Interweaving the principles of RT with the WDEP system provides clients with an opportunity to work towards change.

Change is good. Change is hard. Change can be necessary. If you feel that you need any help with making changes, do not hesitate to visit a professional counsellor.

If we don't take care of ourselves, who will?

Professional Problems Associated With Burnout:

- Role Conflict – Many responsibilities and no priorities, or priorities that are changed frequently.
- Role Ambiguity – Unclear expectations and no acknowledgment of accomplishments or worth
- Role Overload – Too many responsibilities to experience achievement in any of them
- Extreme Responsibility – Feeling solely responsible for others' safety, health and welfare

Are you experiencing any of the above? Do not ignore the symptoms, feelings or thoughts. You are too precious and your role too important to allow yourself to burn out.

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