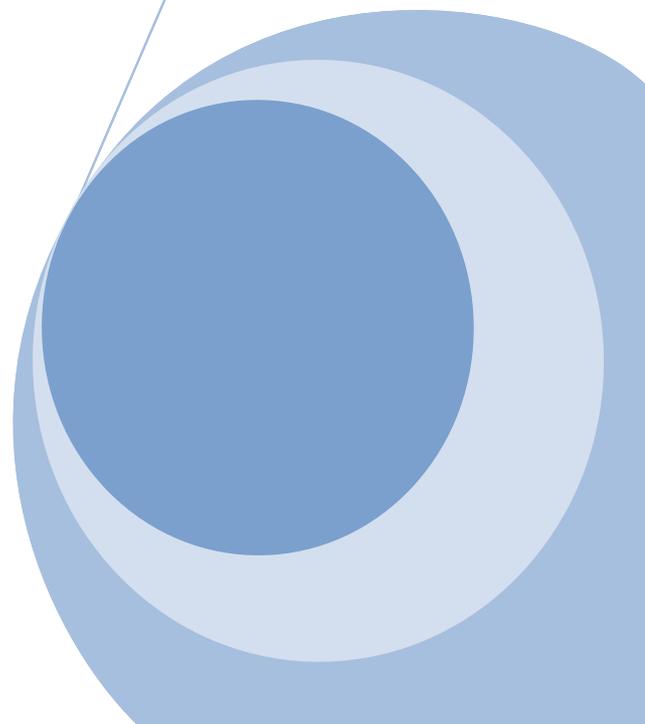


ADULT LITERACY

FROM CREATING JOYFUL LEARNING
EXPERIENCE INTO ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP

Trainer's Toolkit –
Methods for Joyful Teaching
Counseling



1. Counseling

1. Description

The term “counseling” indicates a professional activity which tends to guide, support and develop the client's potentialities, by encouraging active and purposeful attitudes and by stimulating the capability to choose.

Counseling faces some specific issues, either of an individual, of a couple, or even of a group, through listening, support and orientation, but it doesn't deal with pathological ones, i.e., problems which have to do with mental or behavioural disorders.

Counseling allows both the operator and the immigrant, in our case, to have a more close and deep relationship, in that, the individuals' diversity is forced to come out and so we also have to deal with our inner diversities.

By asking them about their cultural back-grounds, we become more aware of a new cultural system, but we also come to be more aware about our own, and through narrating their own experiences our interlocutor can try to accept and re-elaborate his own bad experiences.

Counseling is not a one way experience, it's a trip towards the other and with the other, which is characterized by active listening to the interlocutor's point of view, to their historical memory, to their sources, their narrations and to their expectations from the future.

Another very interesting aspect of the active listening is that of sensing and recording untold messages, along with what is said, in other words, a good counselor need to possess a good empathy degree. In this way, the more the conversation will go on, the more confident about his interlocutor the client will be, and he will be also ensured his issues and feelings are taken seriously in consideration.

And last but not the least, when you listen to somebody, you can figure out a general profile in which the person listened to will be put.

The Systemic-relational counseling methodology is based on two main theories:

The individual experience is elaborated on two accessory aspects;

The relationship and the individual processes and those of self-empowerment.

In both fields one can experience difficulties and issues of any sort, which might waste the individuals' abilities.

One of the fundamental counseling strategies is self-observation by the counselor, the confidence about his own representations, and the feelings they bring about, the relational mechanisms they produce has to accompany him in every situation.

The counselor shall supervise his ideas, his preconceptions, observing how they affect himself, the other, the relationship and how himself and the client can cooperate to build up realities they didn't even wish for.

Another speech strategy is verification and feedback; the other thing to do constantly is that of verifying that the client is doing fine and that his advices and explanations are taken.

2. Practical exercises / How did you use it for the adult literacy project?

During the experience within the S.P.R.A.R. Project our beneficiaries were offered the possibility of being helped by a psychologist and by a law consultant, along with the possibility of taking part to a literacy course.

As our guests had very hard life conditions, back in their country, it sometimes has been very hard to deal with them, because of their total lack of trust in the people they had in front.

Mostly in the case of psychological counseling and that of teaching we used "empathy" as keyword.

The first thing to do is to be always ready to listen and do all of our best not to feel them judged or pitied.

Another very important thing to do is not to ask questions in a direct, outright way, not at the beginning ,at least. Some of the people we are sheltering have gone through very tough experiences and being asked questions might annoy them, or just making them feeling unease, feeling as the object of our curiosities. Respecting their silences and their will not to talk to us is also essential.

As far as our experience concerns, we have noticed that, if the people we are helping feel they can trust and rely on us it's easier to get into their past lives and also to catch their attention and interest about what we have to tell and teach them, apart from the literacy course.

1 EXERCISE: THE IMPORTANCE OF THE GAME IN THE LEARNING PROCESS

The efficiency of the "formative game" is given by the possibility of those taking part to it to live an educational, non-organised experience, beyond one's own organizational context, by living a metaphor which has all the variables and criticalities in it.

Dramatizing fosters the awerness of interpersonal relationships, an improvement of the listening and communication skills; it doesn't only allow to learn, but also to enhance the capability to express one's own feelings, and emotions.

I will now ask you to form a few small groups, to read the script excerpts. I will give you and you will also have to assign yourselves some roles and then give us a short performance. You have twenty minutes to get things sorted out.

This activity allows to relate a relationship between people who don't know, putting them into play. We introduced this activity in English, so that all participants had the opportunity to learn a different language. This activity put in contact the participants who appear to join in the organizing the representation of the scene. In this way they put up relationship, emotions and personal skills.

2 EXERCISE: THE CONFIDENCE...ALL IN A ROW

Purpose of this exercise is to get in contact with the confidence within us, staying focused on present. Sometimes we live moment without confidence and we have doubts, anxiety and troubles. In those moments is important to think about operate in our life.

In this exercise we use writing because it involves the senses and it can stimulate an emotional response of the body. We want to include in the list all people, things and situation in which we trust.

- I trust my family
- I trust in love
- I trust my intuition

It doesn't matter the length of the list, it could also be just a word. It's possible to note everything, even we consider trivial.

- I trust that the sun will rise again tomorrow

This list give us access to the trust already present within us. This exercise is important especially with people who have left their country, their family and they are facing (?) a radical change of their life. This exercise can be helpful to think about positive aspects of this change.

3. Lessons we learned / Recommendations

Dealing with people with a totally different background is not always easy. Sometimes the immigrants don't show they feel at our ease with us, and they don't do it outright. They seem to keep wondering who we are, and what we want from them: there are apparently any particular issues, nor from the one side, neither from the other.

Immigrants bring some difficulties along with them, which they often keep hidden, until they don't perceive a sort of complicity with the mediator.

Counseling is for sure an innovative vehicle to tackle the disadvantage, a support to help out people to re-find their own identities.

We carry out interviews with the aim of exploring the immigrants disadvantage, both under the outer point of view (economical and working field) and the inner one (psychological disadvantage) .

With the aim of reducing this disadvantage, we have been offering our beneficiaries psychological assistance and support in the search of a job, and helping, in this way, our immigrants to get included in the job field on our territory.

CREATIVE TOOLKIT

Counseling

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