

The Role of Counselling in Management of Coronavirus

AUTHOR(S): Prof. OSAKINLE, Eunice Olufunmilayo (Ph.D),
Prof. BABATUNDE Joseph Ojo (Ph.D), Dr. IBIMILUYI, Francis Olu (Ph.D),
Dr. AYODELE Christian Junior (Ph.D), Dr. Rev. Sr. OGUNKORODE, Agatha
(Ph.D) AND
GBENGA-EPEBINU Mary Ayodeji (RN, RM, RPHN, BNSc, M.Sc. Nursing)

Abstract

The first COVID-19 case in Africa, reaching the continent through travellers returning from Asia, Europe and the United States, was reported in Egypt on 14 February, 2020. There have been over 4 million confirmed cases, over 3 million recoveries and 108,064 deaths. Having the right knowledge of self-medicating during the COVID-19 pandemic and responsible self-medicating practices is important which could be achieved through counselling. Counselling is the process which helps individuals to know their abilities, interest and a capacity that will help in the encounter of problems faced by them. Counselling is pertinent to COVID- 19 because of the fact that it has no treatment yet but can be restrained via non pharmacological measures. This study therefore discussed the role of counselling in management of COVID-19.

IJARBAS

Accepted 15 June 2021
Published 22 June 2021
DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.5186475

Keywords: Role, Counselling, Management, Coronavirus,

About Author

Author(s): Prof. OSAKINLE, Eunice Olufunmilayo (Ph.D)

Department of Guidance and Counselling,
Faculty of Education,
Ekiti State University, Ado – Ekiti, Ekiti State, Nigeria

Prof. BABATUNDE Joseph Ojo (Ph.D)

Department of Guidance and Counselling,
Faculty of Education,
Ekiti State University, Ado – Ekiti, Ekiti State, Nigeria

Dr. IBIMILUYI, Francis Olu (Ph.D)

Department of Guidance and Counselling,
Ekiti State University, Ado Ekiti, Ekiti State
olu.ibimiluyi@eksu.edu.ng

Dr. AYODELE Christian Junior (Ph.D)

Department of Guidance and Counselling,
Faculty of Education,
Ekiti State University, Ado – Ekiti, Ekiti State, Nigeria

Dr. Rev. Sr. OGUNKORODE, Agatha (Ph.D)

Department of Nursing,
College of Medicine and Health Sciences,
Afe Babalola University, Ado – Ekiti,
Km 8.5 Afe Babalola way, Ado – Ekiti, Nigeria
And

GBENGA-EPEBINU Mary Ayodeji (RN, RM, RPHN, BNSc, M.Sc. Nursing)

Department of Nursing,
Faculty of Basic Medical Sciences,
College of Medicine,
Ekiti State University, Ado – Ekiti, Nigeria.

Introduction

The newness of Coronavirus infection makes it a bane that is sweeping across continent growing frequency of zoonotic spillovers leading to human infections and transmission. Coronavirus also known as COVID-19 fit in to the same family of viruses answerable for severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) and Middle East respiratory syndrome for which zoonotic and individual- to-individual transmission have been confirmed (WHO, 2020a).

Coronavirus generally known as Covid-19 was first stated in China, precisely in the city of Wuhan in late December 2019. World Health Organization (WHO) and Chinese authorities operated hand-in-hand and the etiological agent was proven to be a new virus and was named Novel Corona Virus (2019-nCoV). China broadcasted its first coronavirus related death of a 61-year-old man on 11th January (WHO, 2020a). The infection spread across the world in quick pace over a period of few weeks (WHO, 2020b).

History of COVID- 19

The new Corona virus originated from the human seafood market at Wuhan, China where dogs, bats, raccoon, snakes, and other animals are sold, and speedily spread to 109 countries. The zoonotic source of SARS-Cov-2 is not confirmed, however sequence based analysis proposed bats as key reservoir of COVID-19. Bhagavathula and Shehab (2020) submitted that COVID-19 is among the deadliest infectious diseases to have arisen in current history, like other pandemics, the mechanism of its emergence remains unknown. Nonetheless, a large body of epidemiologic, veterinary virologic, and ecologic data confirms that the new virus, SARS-Cov-2 evolved directly or indirectly from a Beta-Corona virus in the Sarbecovirus group (SARS like virus) group that obviously infects bats and pangolins in Asia and South –East Asia. Scientists have warned for decades that the Sarbeco viruses are dignified to arise again and again identified risk factors and reasoned for greater pandemic prevention and control efforts. Inopportunately, few of such self-justifying actions were taken leading to the latest emergence noticed in late 2019 which rapidly spread pandemically.

The jeopardy of similar corona virus outbreak in future remains in elevation, adding to the controlling of COVID -19 pandemic, we must commence vigorous scientific public health and societal movements including significantly increased funding for basic and applied research addressing disease emergence to avert this disastrous history from repeating itself

Why is it named COVID-19

Authorized names have been broadcasted for the virus answerable for COVID-19 (previously known as 2019 novel Corona virus) and the disease it causes (WHO, 2020a). The official name is COVID-19 caused by SARS-Cov 2. The aim for the name of the virus is that the virus is genetically linked to the corona virus responsible for the SARS outbreak in 2003, though the two viruses are different.

Mode of spread

During scientific brief of WHO in March, mode of contact of COVID-19 was elucidated; respiratory infections can be transmitted through droplets of different sizes; when the drop particles are less than 5 micrometer in diameter, they are referred to as droplet nuclei, but when greater than 5 micrometer, they are referred to as respiratory droplets. Recent evidence showed it can be transmitted through contacts and respiratory droplets (WHO 2020a)

Droplets contact happens when a person is in close contact (within 1 metre) with somebody who has respiratory signs (e.g coughing and sneezing) and is therefore at danger of having his or her mucosae (mouth and nose) or conjunctiva (eyes) wide-open potentially to

respiratory droplets, also through fomites in instant environment of the infected individual (Thomas, 2020). Direct contact with infected individual or indirect contact with substances used by the infected person can also be a mode of transmission. Airborne transmission of nuclei can happen in settings where procedures that support aerosols are performed like endo-tracheal intubation, tracheostomy, cardio pulmonary respiration among others.

Coronavirus is a respiratory virus known to lead to illness such as headache, common cold, breathing problem and severe acute respiratory. Coronavirus can be spread from animal-to-human and human-to-human. The coronavirus is spread from human to human through feco-oral, droplets and direct contact with an incubation period of 2-14 days (Baud, et al, 2020). So far, no vaccine has been recommended clearly for coronavirus. Application of the defensive measure to regulate coronavirus is the paramount critical intervention.

Why is it a Pandemic?

With every natural outbreak, words like epidemic, pandemic, endemic are commonly used appropriately or inappropriately. When referring to an infectious disease, an outbreak is a sudden rise in cases especially when it is only or so far affecting a localized area. "Demic" are used for disease outburst but the prefixes are not exactly the same, though comparisons exist among them, the main difference however is in the scale. A widespread disease is the one affecting many persons at the same time and spreading from an individual to an individual in a locality where the disease is not prevalent before. WHO stipulates the disease occurring at level of a locality or a community or in a region.

Pandemic disease is an epidemic that has spread over a large area; it is predominant throughout the entire country, continent or the whole world. WHO says it is a global spread of a new disease. On March 11, WHO officially declared the COVID-19 outburst as a pandemic due to global spread and severity of the disease. Pandemic can be used for a disease that has spread across the entire country or a huge land mass, continents or the entire world. Endemic is used to describe a disease that is restricted to a particular location, region or population e. g malaria is said to be endemic in tropical regions.

Concept of Counselling

Counselling is the practice of helping individuals discover and grow their vocational, educational, and psychological potentialities and thereby to attain an optimal level of personal happiness and social usefulness. Counselling is the process which helps individuals to know their abilities, interest and a capacity that will help in the encounter of problems faced by them (Gustad, 1953). Counselling is a learning-oriented process, passed on in a simple, person to person social environment in which a counsellor skillfully competent in appropriate psychological abilities and knowledge seeks to assist the client by methods suitable to the latter's needs and within the context of the total personnel program, to learn more about himself and to accept himself, to learn how to put such understanding into effect in relation to more clearly apparent realistically defined goals to the end that the customer may become happier and be a more useful member of his society (American Psychological Association, 2020).

Counselling is the process of helping a person face their problem and overcome it, (Ndhlovu, 2015). Counsellors are people who carry out counselling process. Counselling is a service rendered by the trained, experts, in giving advice, direction, encouragement and other supportive and life-changing actions to the clients. Put otherwise, it can be described as an interpersonal cordial relationship between a counsellor and the counselee, who is in misperception in a certain condition(s) (Gibson & Mitchell 2007). Every counselling service is problem-focused i.e. providing likely ways to solving exact problems.

Counselling is a specialized field which has a comprehensive range of activities, programmes and services geared toward supporting individuals to comprehend themselves, their problems, their environment and their domain and also to develop adequate capacity for making wise choices and decisions.

Counselling can be of different types;

- Directive counselling
- Client centered counselling
- Short term counselling
- Long term counselling
- Psychological counselling
- Clinical counselling
- Student counselling
- Placement counselling

The objectives of counselling are to:

- to understand one's own problems clearly;
- to realize what he or she is able to do and what he should do this means to accept weakness and abilities;
- to develop insight and understanding in relation to self and environment, opportunities open to improve in respect to his potentials and goals he has chosen;
- to decide a course of action by making his own decision;

Relevance of Counselling to COVID-19

Counselling is pertinent to COVID- 19 because of the fact that it has no treatment yet but can be restrained via non pharmacological measures, so that health of individuals, families and communities will be sustained. The groups at danger are the ageing because of low immunity and the frontline workers (doctors, nurses, ambulance workers and others). They are likely to experience downheartedness, stigmatization and anxiety. A National Health Commission of China back in January 2020 identified five additional groups which are targets: confirmed patients, individuals suspected of having COVID 19 and awaiting test result, persons who have been in contact with COVID 19, sick people who decline to pursue health care and susceptible members of the general public.

The counsellor-counselee rapport may be one on one/in groups or at community level depending on the goal. Skills of counselling are as follows; silence, reflecting attending, and paraphrasing, clarifying and use of questions, focusing, building understanding and summarizing.

Dos and Don'ts in Counselling

A good counsellor should develop good relationship with counselee

- Develop mutual understanding, respect for counselee
- Be patient
- Listen to the grievances carefully
- Develop cooperative attitude
- Be simple and have sympathy with counselee
- Do make attempts to know the background of worries, threats and anxieties
- Make himself available to help the counselee
- Be friendly with counselee and be frank

The counsellor should avoid the following;

- Developing conflict with the counselee

- Do not have vested interest in the counselee
- Do not be angry with the counselee
- Don't resist
- Avoid been impartial
- Do not exploit the employee for self interest
- Do not use pressure tactics

The Counsellor-Counselee's Problem Solving Path

Assessment

The counsellor using the abilities of counselling identifies the harms of the individual, this may be that the person has been tested positive of COVID-19, or have samples already referred to the lab expecting COVID-19 result, or has a relation who has it or has a family member who just died from it or has just been sacked due to low economic performance of the company he or she works in. It may also be approximations of confirmed and mortality cases from ministry of health or news headlines drains the strong point of the individual, or the stay home policy, social distancing and no gathering makes the person sick.

It may be the health worker who is passionately exhausted from stress of work, insufficient personal protective tools and high mortality rate experienced at work and the incapability to bond at home for fear shown by immediate family members of contracting the disease. It may be the student who is in departure class and desired to go back to school, it may be the father who is emotionally exhausted from downscaling which affected his salaries or strained relationships between partners pointing to a need for separation or meeting a marriage therapist. It may be a psychiatric patient who is not in his right mind to understand the necessity for complying with precautionary measures. This may be the communal the individual lives have a high mortality rate than nearby communities.

Diagnosis Phase

After recognizing the problem, the counsellor uses his or her skills to make a diagnosis viz anxiety related to covid-19 diagnosis, grieving in relation to loss of a loved one to COVID-19, anxiety related to lockdown, inability to cope with stress at work as a front-liner among others.

Planning

What does this outbreak mean to our clients as counsellors (Sperandio & Moh 2020)? The more we recognize the consequence of this pandemic, the more ready we are to provide optimal care for our clients. Clients with racialism and genocide history may experience a lack of safety and trauma. Clients may even purposely quarantine themselves with the mistrust they are infected already.

The pressure on employers of labour and shutting on private firms is a lot of stress too; the approach is distinctive to aim perseverance and wellbeing throughout the scourge.

The group of clients in under industrialized nation who has no health insurance poses a danger too. Indecision about what might happen next, the growing confirmed and casualty cases, financial restraints and loss of job and lack of social backing. The lockdown also led to gap in social contacts and interaction that aids succor stress earlier among individuals before the global Coronavirus pandemic.

The pre-pandemic regularity has been lost, only counsellors in teamwork with health workers will bring it back.

Action Needed

The counsellors assist client to know their worries and write them down. The client is aided to identify factors he can control and cannot control. With this the effect of the anxiety will be lessened. The clients should workout more; meet with friend via zoom, calls, video calls, personal hygiene and avoiding overcrowded places. Adaptive coping skills are to be recognized by the counsellor in conjunction with the client on issues that can be well-ordered; likewise adherence to precautionary measure is suitable.

Information giving; only sites with reliable information amount COVID-19 should be visited, that has reader friendly info graphics and videos pertaining to defending oneself, protecting other and remaining safe during travelling. Culturally consistent practice by health workers and counsellors by safeguarding ethics of the profession; which are veracity, non-maleficence, autonomy, justice fidelity, and beneficence while working with clients. Sufficient psycho-education must be provided to the person and community at large. It must be recalled that some clients are more worried than others; hence counsellors should advocate and offer a voice for persons who may be marginalized and burdened.

Implementation

The counsellor should

- i. Remind the client the situation is temporary: The situation is temporary and it cannot last forever; the mortality rates of COVID-19, the waiting for the COVID-19 test result which may come out positive or negative, the lockdown, the dwindling economy as a result of the pandemic, the social isolation, and unemployment high rates among other (Blue 2020).
- ii. Cleaning up the mind from the problems identified and then distancing oneself from it: This disable the stressor from eating deep into the client. Harris (2009) termed this identifying-misidentifying process and its effect on the client is that the problem gets farther from impacting negatively on them.
- iii. Solution focused therapy: As its name implies, the counsellor helps the client to focus on likely solution to the current problem which is COVID-19. Though no cure yet, prevention is key and clinical trials are ongoing. The use of facemasks, respiratory etiquette, social distancing of 2 metres, avoiding crowded places, avoiding poking noses, touching mucosa or eye and mouth, proper hand washing with soap and water over 20-30 seconds are the only non-pharmacological measure in place. For the student, he may join online classes, the laid off worker may try to be creative and channel his strength to his untapped talents, the lonely individual may go into cycling, gardening, trekking, among others. The drained front-liner may return back to self-love, meditation, require off-days for rest and exercise at home.
- iv. The grieving individual may move from denial to acceptance phase so the grieving process would not last long. The aged who derives pleasure from travelling to see grandkids, religious gatherings and tourist sites now locked at home should fantasize; see the nature of the sky and the vegetations.

Individuals who find meaning, purpose and values in life in spite of this pandemic are able to be resilient, able to lessen grief and be beacons of light to others in this united fight against the pandemic spread. Looking for meaning, purpose and value (MVP) is a powerful remedy to virus of fear and panic sweeping across the world (Thomas, 2020). A checklist according to Thomas (2020) is outlined below intended at upholding self care

- i. Right fuel; adequate eating of balanced diet, taking enough rests and break.
- ii. Right rest; mental breaks for body and mind when exhaustion is perceived.

- iii. Right connections; it may not be possible to control who one spend with at work, but at work one can control it. Using the drains and radiators analogy, don't be somebody's drain but spend time more with people that nurture and make you feel good by yourself.
- iv. Right energy; it is important to switch off and recharge so bad energy will be released.
- v. Right focus; Excessive alcohol, junks, bad thoughts are unhelpful coping habits and must be avoided .Then asking for help from dedicated support groups.

Evaluation

At the end of the counselling process which may have taken more or less than the time allotted, the client will verbalize coping or displaying coping measure against the ravaging pandemic. Conclusively, prevention is one of the philosophical cornerstones of the counselling profession.

Conclusion

Counselling is pertinent to COVID- 19 because of the fact that it has no treatment yet but can be restrained via non pharmacological measures. Having the right knowledge of self-medicating through proper counselling could go a long way to manage COVID-19 pandemic. It is important to fight against the misinformation concerning COVID-19 management through counselling.

References

- Baud, D., Qi, X., Nielsen-Saines, K., Musso, D., Pomar, L. & Favre, G., (2020). Real estimates of mortality following COVID-19 infection. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S1473-3099\(20\)30195-X](https://doi.org/10.1016/S1473-3099(20)30195-X). (Accessed 25/04/2020)
- Bhagavathula, A.S. & Shehab, A. (2020). The story of mysterious pneumonia and the response to deadly novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV): So far! *Emirates Medical Journal*, 1, 7-10.
- Blue, B. (2020) Looking after your mental health during the coronavirus outbreak [https://counsellingtutor.com.basic-counselling skills](https://counsellingtutor.com.basic-counselling-skills)
- Brooks, S.K., Webster, R.K., & Smith, L.E. (2020). The psychological impact of quarantine and how to reduce it: rapid review of the evidence. *The Lancet*, 395(10227) 912-920
- Dong, L & Bouey, J. (2020). Public mental health crisis during COVID-19 pandemic in China. *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)*, 26(7), 197-209
- Gibson, R. L. and Mitchell, M. H. (2007). *Introduction to Guidance and Counselling*. 7th ed. New York: Macmillan
- Gustad, A. (1953). The definition of counselling. In R.F Berdie (Ed), *Roles and relationships in counselling* (Pp 3-19). Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press.
- Harris, R. (2009). Mindfulness without meditation. *Counselling and Psychology Journal*. 7(1), 21-24

- Ndhlovu, D. (2015). *Theory and Practice of Guidance and Counselling for Schools and Colleges*. Lusaka: University of Zambia Press.
- Sperandio, K. & Moh, S.Y. (2020). Coping with the (ongoing) stress of COVID 19. *Counselling Today*, 6(2), 58 – 72
- Thomas, Z. (2020) Misinformation on coronavirus causing 'infodemic'.
<https://www.bbc.com/news/technology-51497800> (Accessed 23/04/2020)
- World Health Organisation (WHO) (2020a). Pneumonia of Unknown Cause – China. URL
<https://www.who.int/csr/don/05-january-2020-pneumonia-of-unknown-cause-china/en/> (Accessed 27/04/2020).
- World Health Organisation (WHO) (2020b). Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Situation Report – 46. URL https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/situation-reports/20200306-sitrep-46-covid-19.pdf?sfvrsn=96b04adf_2 (Accessed 27/04/2020).

Cite this article:

Author(s), Prof. OSAKINLE, Eunice Olufunmilayo (Ph.D), Prof. BABATUNDE Joseph Ojo (Ph.D), Dr. IBIMILUYI, Francis Olu (Ph.D), Dr. AYODELE Christian Junior (Ph.D), Dr. Rev. Sr. OGUNKORODE, Agatha (Ph.D) AND GBENGA-EPEBINU Mary Ayodeji (RN, RM, RPHN, BNSc, M.Sc. Nursing), (2021). “The Role of Counselling in Management of Coronavirus”. **Name of the Journal**: International Journal of Academic Research in Business, Arts and Science, (IJARBAS.COM), P, 100-108. DOI: <http://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.5186475>, Special Issue: 6, Vol.: 3, Article: 8, Month: June, Year: 2021. Retrieved from <https://www.ijarbas.com/all-issues/>

Published by



AND

ThoughtWares Consulting & Multi Services International (TWCMSI)

