

Assessment

- The process of gathering data about a client in order to understand the nature of their problem and determine appropriate interventions.
- Assessment is a critical first step in the counseling process.
 - Effective counseling depends on an understanding of the problem.

Approaches to Assessment

- We use a combination of objective and subjective methods to gather data and draw conclusions.
- An analytic process in which clinical judgement and experience become as important as the data itself.
- The process primarily takes the form of a structured clinical interview
 - Problem is identified; symptoms/effects discussed; psychosocial history gathered; substance use determined, etc.

Methods of Assessment

- Formal testing
 - including objective and subjective
- Observation within the environment
 - How does the individual interact with the environment?
 - May include social, physical, problem solving, etc.
- Interviews with significant others
 - What do parents or spouses say about interactions?

Assessment of Development

- Why?
 - Assessment of child development can be important and useful in understanding
 - cognitive
 - ego
 - interpersonal
 - moral
 - psychosocial
 - Developmental assessment of adults can aid in understanding the relevant issues and most effective approach in counseling **and facilitating growth**
 - For the purpose of identifying needs and determining services

Focus of Developmental Assessment

- Normality in a given domain
 - Domain refers physical development and attained skills that would be normal for a given stage (eg preschool versus high school age)
- Historical factors (positive and negative) that contribute to level of functioning
- Current contextual factors that contribute to level of functioning
 - including health and well-being of individual and family
- Expectations of the client and significant others
- Current needs
- The key element in assessing development is grounding the assessment in the context of the client's universe

Types of Development Assessed

- Language
 - Here the concern is with the placement of an individual's language skills compared with peers
- Cognitive
 - typically concerned with the placement of the individual in a given stage of psychological development (e.g. Piaget)
- Psychosocial
 - Based on Erickson's eight stages of development across the life-span, may assist by identifying major life or psychosocial conflicts (e.g. integrity versus despair)
- Moral (e.g. Kohlberg - Preconventional/conventional, etc)
- Career (e.g. Super's five stages of career devt.)

Assessing Personality

- Objective Tests
- May be diagnostic of psychopathology or simply identify type to assist in self-understanding
 - MMPI
 - MBTI
 - CPI
- Projective
 - facilitate expression of unconscious processes in order to gain understanding about the individual

Rorschach Test



Cognitive Assessment

- Despite controversy...
 - IQ testing continues to be conducted routinely in school settings
 - Used to diagnose Learning Disorders and mental retardation
 - Used to identify gifted children
 - Also routinely used in Vocational Rehabilitation
- Must be used with extreme caution...
