



## PSYCHOLOGICAL COUNSELING: THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS, STAGES, AND FACTORS OF EFFECTIVENESS

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**Abstract:** This scientific article provides a comprehensive analysis of the theoretical and methodological foundations of organizing the process of psychological counseling, its structure, stages, and the factors determining its effectiveness. Psychological counseling is considered a professional form of psychological assistance aimed at identifying and overcoming emotional, cognitive, and behavioral problems of an individual. The study analyzes the step-by-step organization of the counseling process, psychological approaches, ethical standards, and modern practices. It also examines internal and external factors influencing the effectiveness of counseling.

**Keywords:** psychological counseling, psychotherapy, psychologist, client, empathy, communication, psychological assistance, psychodiagnostics, ethical principles.

**Introduction.** In modern society, the psychological state of a person is of decisive importance in his social adaptation, professional activity and interpersonal relationships. Global social changes, rapid information flow, increased stress levels and increased social pressures cause various psychological problems in people. In this regard, the psychological consultation system has been formed as an important means of providing psychological assistance to an individual.

Psychological consultation is a specially organized, scientifically based and professional communication process aimed at identifying, analyzing and solving personal problems through interactive cooperation between a psychologist and a client.

The scientific essence of psychological consultation Psychological consultation is one of the important areas of applied psychology, which serves to eliminate imbalances in the internal mental processes and external behavior of a person.

The following main features of psychological consultation are distinguished in the scientific literature:

- problem orientation;
- the principle of voluntariness;
- compliance with confidentiality;
- cooperation between a psychologist and a client;
- short and medium-term impact model.

Psychological consultation, unlike psychotherapy, is based more on advice and guidance, but in some cases also includes therapeutic elements.

Theoretical foundations of the organization of the psychological consultation process

Psychological consultation is formed on the basis of several scientific psychological schools.

**Humanistic approach** According to the theory of Carl Rogers, a person is a being striving for self-development. In the consultation process, the main attention is paid to the subjective experience of the client. Empathy, congruence and unconditional positive regard are the main principles.

**Cognitive approach** According to Aaron Beck, a person's emotional state is directly related to his thinking system. During the consultation process, irrational thoughts are identified and a rational thinking model is formed instead of them.

**Behaviorist approach** According to the concept of B. F. Skinner, human behavior is a set of learned reactions. Therefore, problems can be solved by relearning behavior.

**Psychoanalytic approach.** According to Sigmund Freud's theory, human behavior is based on subconscious processes. During the consultation process, internal conflicts are analyzed.

**Stages of the psychological consultation process** Psychological consultation usually consists of the following stages:

**Preparatory stage.** At this stage, initial contact is established with the client, the problem is generally defined, and the terms of the consultation are agreed upon.

**Diagnostic stage.** The psychologist conducts an in-depth study of the client's psychological state. At this stage, the following methods are used:

- conversation (interview);
- tests;
- observation;
- projective methods.

**Analysis stage** Based on the collected data, the causes of the problem are determined, and a psychological model is developed.

**Intervention stage.** The main psychological impact is carried out. At this stage:

- cognitive restructuring;
- behavioral exercises;
- relaxation techniques;
- counseling methods are used.

**Final stage.** The results are evaluated, the client is given strategies for solving the problem independently.

**Methods used in psychological consultation** The following methods are widely used in the process of psychological consultation:

- clinical interview;
- psychological tests (intelligence, personality traits);
- observation method;
- interview techniques;
- cognitive restructuring;
- role-playing;
- relaxation exercises.

**Effectiveness factors of the consultation process.** Professional competence of the psychologist The psychologist's scientific knowledge, practical experience and communication skills play an important role.

Client motivation. The client's active participation and readiness for change directly affect the result.

Psychological contact (rapport) The formation of a trusting relationship between the psychologist and the client is the basis for success.

Organizational conditions. A confidential, comfortable and safe environment increases the effectiveness of the consultation.

Ethical principles Psychological consultation is based on the following ethical principles:

- confidentiality;
- non-harm;
- respect for the client;
- neutrality;
- maintaining professional boundaries;
- voluntariness.

Trends in modern psychological counseling. Currently, psychological services are undergoing digital transformation:

- online consultations (telepsychology);
- psychological assistance through mobile applications;
- diagnostic systems based on artificial intelligence;
- group online therapy platforms.

These trends are increasing the popularity and convenience of psychological services.

Discussion. Scientific analyses show that the effectiveness of psychological consultation is a multifactorial process. It depends not only on methodological approaches, but also on the personal qualities of the psychologist, the level of empathy and communicative competence. Socio-cultural factors also have a significant impact on the consultation process.

Conclusion. The scientific organization of the psychological consultation process is important for the effective solution of a person's psychological problems. The phased organization of the process, the use of modern psychological approaches and adherence to ethical principles ensure its success. In the future, the digitalization of the psychological services system and the improvement of the skills of specialists will further improve the quality of psychological consultation.

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