Micro-Counseling Practice in Acquiring Skills Related to Therapeutic Conditions in Counseling with Individuals Course

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Abstract
This study uses the micro-counseling method to provide therapeutic condition skills to the Department of Guidance and Psychological Counseling students who take the individual counseling course. Groups were formed by determining five volunteer clients and counselors each. Both groups were given a short training on micro-counseling, and the volunteers in the role of the client were explained what they should do. The sessions were recorded. After the implementation, the video recordings were watched with the counselor candidates and the supervisor. Counselor candidates were asked to evaluate their friends and themselves. After determining the mistakes made, second and third sessions and evaluation meetings were held after each session. As a result of these sessions and evaluations determined that the counselor candidates obtained more positive results in transparency and presence skills, micro-counseling was useful, and there was no negativity regarding respect skills. Despite the three sessions, it was determined that the candidates could not reach the desired level regarding empathy skills. Candidates stated they did not feel comfortable because they were interviewed with video recording for the first time but did not pay much attention to the recording in the last session. The increase in the number of sessions increased both the relaxation of the candidates and their focus on the activity.

Keywords: Counselor training, micro-counseling, micro-teaching, video recording

Introduction
Theoretical Foundation
It is a known fact that many professions in the historical process have put forward different solutions to respond to people's needs and make their lives easier. For example, we can list other similar professions, such as housing problems in the field of construction, health problems in the field of medicine, nutritional problems in the field of agriculture, and problems of adaptation to life in the field of education. Like every profession in the field of science, psychological counseling is one field that tries to contribute to people's social and personal problems (Ültanır, 2005). People who are stuck in the tangles of social relations and cannot find solutions to their personal problems seek help. Naturally, the profession that produces rational and professional solutions for solving such problems is the profession of psychological counseling and the help process provided through this profession.

The psychological counseling profession and the assistance process involve identifying the individual's needs and mediating in satisfying these needs, determining appropriate goals in achieving personal goals, making and implementing decisions, and developing personal awareness and development (Schmidt, 1996).

The history of this field of study as a profession, which started with vocational guidance and then took the form of guidance and psychological counseling, has been going on for about a century and a half (Kuzgun, 2019). In this process, the psychological counseling profession constantly develops by dividing into different fields with new approaches according to needs.

In the 21st century, the development of communication systems, developing events in the world and changing technologies directly impact social changes. In today's changing conditions, professional help for solving people's individual, social and educational problems is provided through psychological counselors (Ültanır, 2005). Therefore, individuals who provide services in this field must be professional and competent in the education they receive. However, as a result of a study conducted by Özyürek (2009), it was revealed that the students receiving psychological counseling

and guidance education were not sufficient in their practices. It is seen that psychological counseling and guidance specialists working in the field have a competence problem after graduation, another research result (Tuzgöl et al., 2012). Aladağ (2014) particularly emphasized the competence of psychological counselor candidates in the education process.

All counselor candidates' education and professional development stages are important (Borders & Brown, 2005). It is important to know whether the training process adequately supports or does not support the development of counselor candidates and practitioners, and therefore, it is important to reveal how effective and adequate training can be.

Bek and Hakan (2021) determined and suggested that guidance and counselor candidates were not adequate in the training they received on therapeutic conditions in the individual counseling education process, so they needed micro-counseling training to meet this training need. Therefore, it is important that the professional training received by individuals who provide and receive professional training in this field is qualified. Due to this importance, micro-teaching practice is necessary to increase competence in gaining skills related to therapeutic conditions in individual counseling courses.

Method

Purpose of the Study

This study aims to develop the skills of counselor candidates taking the Counseling with Individuals course, which have been determined by previous studies (Bek & Gülveren, 2021) and which belong to the therapeutic conditions that should be used in the counseling process, by using the micro-counseling method. Concreteness, transparency, empathy, presence and respect were considered sub-skills as therapeutic condition skills.

Method

A multiple-choice test was prepared and applied to determine the cognitive readiness levels of counselor candidates regarding therapeutic condition skills. According to the results obtained, it was determined that the counselor candidates had 85% of the determined behaviors. This situation was interpreted as adequate in the knowledge and comprehension levels of the counselor candidates, and no additional learning activity was required.

Before the micro-teaching activity, the counselor candidates were asked to consult with volunteer students from the lower grades in the client role. These consultations were recorded and evaluated regarding the behaviors to be gained. These recorded videos were then watched and evaluated by three experts. When the experts' evaluations were analyzed in terms of agreement, the Fleiss kappa value (K=0.62) showed moderate agreement, according to McHugh (2012). This shows that the evaluation between the experts is reliable. The deficiencies identified by the experts andfindings close to the results of the study conducted by Bek and Gülveren (2021) were obtained. In micro-teaching activities, emphasis was placed on acquiring these behaviors.

Research Process

- Five volunteer students were selected from the 20 counselor candidates who took the Psychological Counseling with Individuals course.
- Volunteer students were selected from the 3rd year Guidance and Psychological Counseling students to take on the role of 10 clients, five primary and five substitutes.
- Counselor candidates were informed about the purpose of the study and micro-counseling practice.
- Volunteer counselors were given short training on the roles they would assume.
- Texts containing the behaviors that the client should show for the skill planned to be taught were given, and they were provided to practice them.
- In the study group, the evaluation was made with the psychological counseling skills rating form.
- Since there was no special study room for microteaching activities, the researchers' room was organized for microteaching.
- Each counselor candidate in the group had 5-minute micro-counseling sessions with volunteer counselors randomly assigned to them.
- These sessions were video recorded.

- At the end of the session, after the volunteer counselee left the counseling room, the other counselor candidates in the group and the supervisor watched the 5-minute session together, and an evaluation meeting was held.
- The supervisor and other counselee candidates analyzed how successful the candidate was in applying the identified skill, what his/her mistakes were, and how he/she should be. The correct behaviors and expressions were determined. These evaluation meetings lasted approximately 15-20 minutes.
- The supervisor provided Motivation and reinforcement for the counselor trainee to use the skill.
- The counselor candidate had a second session with the same client, and the interview was recorded.
- At the end of the interview, the training was completed by repeating the evaluation meeting held in the first session.
- In order to determine the level of the counselor candidate's demonstration of the relevant skills, a third interview was conducted with the volunteer client and the process was completed.
- Other counselor candidates completed the micro-counseling process with different clients similarly.
- The identified skills were tried to be acquired similarly.
- At the end of the micro-counseling activities, counselor candidates were asked to conduct a full interview with a volunteer client whom they had never counseled before to determine the counselor candidate's development before and after the training and to provide data for the final evaluation.
- Since the micro-counseling sessions for each student were held three times for 5 minutes each, the sessions were planned to be 75 minutes, and the micro-counseling meetings were planned to be 75 minutes, with an average of 15 minutes. With 10-minute breaks in between, the study was planned for 180 minutes.
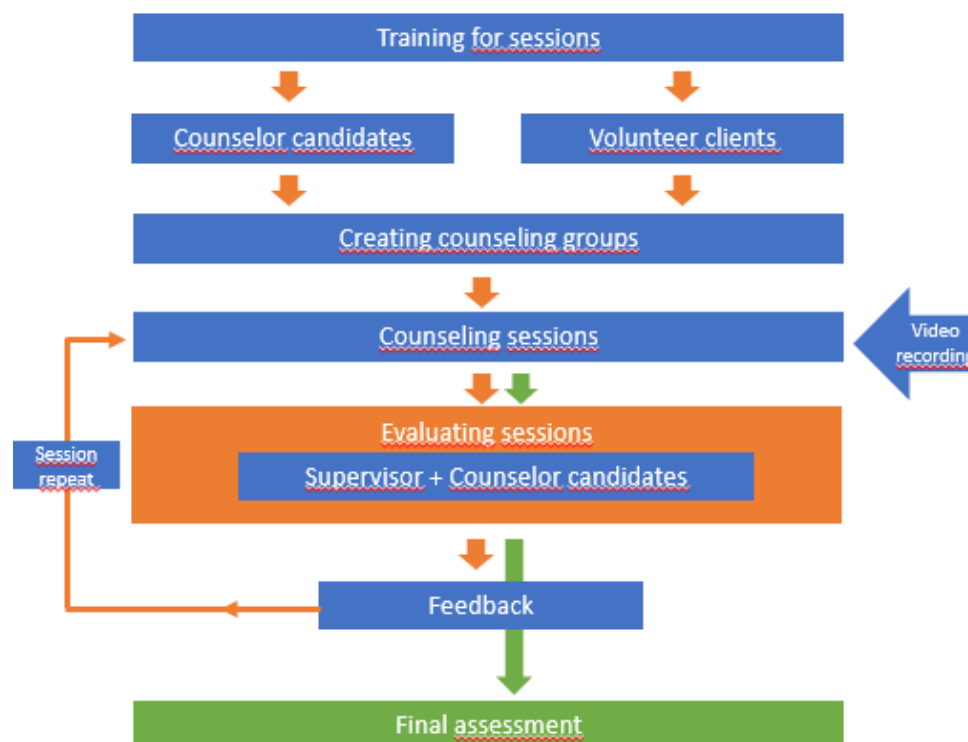- The micro-counseling process is given in Figure 1.

Figure 1 Micro-counseling process

Data Collection

The changes and developments of the counselor candidates during the micro-counseling process were collected with the researchers' Psychological Counseling with Individual Assessment Form-Therapeutic Conditions developed by reviewing the relevant literature. The form includes the skills that the candidates should have. It shows how often these skills are demonstrated during micro-counseling and how many points they get. The scores range between 0-2. If the behavior was not observed, it was scored as 0; if it was observed but not sufficient, it was scored as 1; if it was observed and evaluated as sufficient, it was scored as 2.

Data Analysis

As a result of the sessions conducted by each candidate, the score change was examined by taking into account the evaluations made by the experts. In addition, due to the interviews with the counselor candidates, a judgment was made about the effectiveness of micro-counseling.

Findings

Findings Related to Concreteness Skill

Concreteness is the therapeutic condition created for the counselor to speak more clearly and explicitly about the client's problem instead of speaking in general terms while defining the client's problems and setting goals. Concreteness enables the counselor to understand the client's problems and how they can be solved more clearly. Therefore, concreteness in the counseling process is one of the important skills that counselor candidates should have.

In one of the micro-counseling practices, the client's main problem is exam anxiety. However, the conversation suddenly turned to the anxiety and stress experienced by the client's mother in daily life. When the counselor candidates evaluated the counseling practice, the mistake made by the counselor candidate was determined by the other counselor candidates. The supervisor and the counselor trainees discussed and determined the correct behavior. The counselor trainee counseled the client about exam anxiety.

Can you give an example of someone in your close circle who experiences this anxiety and stress, or can you tell me about someone you think affects you the most??

My mother and my grandmother, when my mother talks on the phone at home, I know something bad is happening from her sudden reactions, and I start to panic at that moment. My grandmother is the same way, and I think I am influenced by them.

The criticism of the micro counseling group in response to this was that yes, there is such a situation in the family members, but do they put pressure on you about the exam? Are there people in your circle of friends who experience exam anxiety intensely and express it frequently? How do they affect you? Therefore, they were criticized for focusing on exam anxiety rather than the anxiety and stress of the mother and grandmother.

It can be said that counselor candidates are relatively adequate regarding concreteness skills. Since the client goes beyond the main problem in the sessions, the counselor can focus the counseling on the main problem with a positive approach.

The main problem of the client is distrust towards others. While the counseling was progressing on this problem, when the client started to talk about his/her friend mentioned his/her personality traits and disrespectfulness, the counselor candidate said, "Let's leave aside his/her friend's behaviors towards others for now and try to understand the main reasons for his/her distrust" and focused on the main problem.

Transparency

The counselor's consistency between his/her feelings, thoughts and behaviors, and reflecting this consistency to the client when necessary, provides transparency in the counseling process. Transparency is important in establishing a reliable relationship between the client and the counselor in the counseling process and forming the basis of effective therapeutic cooperation. At the same time, transparency is also important in facilitating the client's self-expression, understanding and participation in the change process.

Transparency may include communicating the information necessary for the client to understand and contribute to the therapy process clearly and understandably, explaining the aims, methods, expectations and limitations of the therapy process, what kind of support the client will receive,

confidentiality policies, frequency of sessions, estimated duration of the therapy process, etc.Since these issues are included in the structuring dimension of the psychological counseling process and terms of transparency in terms of the issues that counselor candidates do not make mistakes very often when the records were monitored in the micro-counseling process, the most frequently observed mistake was determined by the counselor candidates as **judging the client, not realizing their prejudices and limitations, and not expressing them clearly to the client**. Some of the mistakes identified by the counselor candidates during the evaluation of the sessions;

Don't bring third parties into your relationships; don't make comparisons because they are like this, and we are like that; review your relationship. DA5

There is already a difference between men and women; women are not expected to do this according to what you say. DA3

Men are not emotional; you have to accept that first. DA2

Transparency also requires honesty about the therapist's attitudes, approaches and limitations. Recognizing the therapist's biases and limitations and openly expressing them to the client helps the therapy process proceed in a healthy and trustworthy way.

Empathy

For the counseling process to proceed effectively, the counselor must empathize with the client. Empathy means understanding another person's feelings, sharing his/her point of view and sympathizing with his/her emotional experiences. Empathizing is an important tool to better understand the client's feelings and experiences and can make the client feel more supported. Active listening, understanding emotions, asking the right questions, sharing similar experiences, and emotional validation can be mentioned as ways to empathize. Basic empathic listening skills are questioning, observing, encouraging, paraphrasing, summarizing and reflecting emotions (Gerald, 2023). Accordingly, the candidates identified the following errors in the recordings;

Not focusing on what the client is saying with full attention and understanding, judging what the client is saying. DA1

The question should have been "Do you feel excluded at work?" instead of "Is your working environment comfortable?". DA5

If he had given an example from his own experience instead of saying, "Yes, I understand you," the process would not have been blocked. In the next step, our friend got stuck. DA1

At this point, he should have used a statement that would make the client feel that he accepted the client's feelings and experiences, "crying, laughing, making mistakes, these are human characteristics; we all show similar behaviors in daily life," but he did not DA4.

Empathy is essential to building a relationship of trust with the client, providing emotional support, and enabling the counselor to provide proper guidance.

The here-and-now of the relationship

The here-and-now of the relationship refers to the fact that the client and the counselor have certain behaviors, feelings and thoughts addressed in the counseling process. This expression emphasizes the importance of the moment and space and can be associated with concepts such as mindfulness. While the "now" of the relationship emphasizes the moment's importance, the relationship's " here-ness " refers to focusing on the space. As in empathy, active listening is also important here. In particular, the client should manage the client's silence for a certain period during the session. Some of the mistakes identified by the candidates regarding the here and now of the relationship;

When she was talking about her fellow clients, she paused for a while, especially when the name "Nazlı" was mentioned; in fact, our counselor friend could have asked a question about this immediately, but she did not. DA3

Our counselor should have said, "Your voice got a little harsh when you were talking about your friends in the project group. Did you notice that?" look, the voice is harsh, so there is a problem between them. DA2

Being here and now is realizing the emotions and feelings experienced in the present moment. However, in this case, the past is not completely ignored; a situation, an event or an unfinished work experienced in the past is brought to the here and now (Voltan-Acar&Gülderer, 2006).

Respect

In counseling with individuals, respect means that both the counselor and the client accept themselves realistically with their positive characteristics, love and respect. The main criteria other than non-acceptance or respect behavior can be listed as criticizing, judging, blaming, leaving the client in a difficult situation, not taking into account what the client says, not approving, belittling, seeing the client as worthless, accepting the client as passive and trying to change the behavior only through advice and recommendations.

During the sessions, it was determined that the counselor candidates exhibited no negative behavior toward respect. It can be said that counselor candidates paid particular attention to.

Conclusion Discussion

In counseling with individuals, the micro-counseling technique was used to increase counseling candidates' competencies in therapeutic skills (concreteness, transparency, empathy, here and now, respect). In micro-counseling, counseling candidates and volunteer clients were paired, and the interviews were recorded. The supervisor monitored each recording, and especially mistakes and positive behaviors were identified. The second session and the following third sessions were conducted similarly. As a result of these practices, it was determined that there was progress in terms of concreteness, transparency and henceforthness. Although not in terms of therapeutic skills, Hasna and Suwar (2023) found increased students' knowledge and mastery of opening and closing counseling sessions after micro counseling training.

Schönrock-Adema et al. (2009), in their study comparing the levels of gaining counseling skills between traditional trainer-guided programs and self-instruction training, stated that the integrated structure of the micro-counseling training method, which consists of theoretical teaching, modeling, practice and feedback, is a disadvantage. In this study, in which the acquisition of therapeutic condition skills was discussed, practice and feedback were particularly emphasized. In the in-between interviews with the counselor candidates, they stated that the theoretical knowledge gained was more clearly understood with the micro-counseling practice.

No deficiency was identified in respect, which is one of the skills expected to be gained in the study; on the contrary, it was seen as an issue that the counselor candidates emphasized meticulously. In other words, all kinds of mistakes can be made in counseling, but respect should never be neglected. It can be said that it is important to emphasize "human is valuable" and "respect for human" in the courses they have been taking since the first year.

An important result of this study is that the counselor candidates were able to learn therapeutic condition skills as a group and develop their self-assessment skills almost without the need for a supervisor. It should be noted here that in order to be able to implement such a training program, students should have the theoretical basic knowledge of counseling with individuals. Otherwise, it will not be possible for counselor candidates to evaluate their therapeutic condition skills.

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