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**PSYCHOLOGICAL COUNSELING, ADVOCACY, ACCOUNTABILITY
and TECHNOLOGY**

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Our National and International Colleagues and Dear Guests,

First, I would like to welcome you to this wonderful city filled with paradoxes, where the coexistence of the ancient merges with the emergent, creating astounding, and enriching realities. You are also at a university; a bridge between cultural polarities founded by Americans in 1863, which now is a Turkish state university using English as the medium of instruction. This is the setting of the conference. And you as academicians and practitioners are of a helping profession very much needed today, as our world goes through sociological, political, economic, scientific, technological, and natural paradigmatic shifts. Like all transitions at the dawn of important changes, the uncertainties of a new paradigm create for the individual, groups, cultures and national and international entities anxieties as well as hopes for new modalities of co-existence, interaction, and cooperation.

This presentation rests on four points. The first is related to the universal need for the area of counseling psychology in all institutions of human interaction and communication. The second is on the emphasis of advocacy for the disadvantaged silent majority of our world, for whom justice and equity are

not always accessible. The third is meeting the criteria of accountability, while the fourth is related to the utilization of technology for the transparency of and accessibility to the services provided by counseling psychology.

The foundations of the area of guidance, the forerunner of counseling psychology, were laid as a response to an important yet practical problem of enabling individuals to choose a vocation in the United States. Frank Parsons, in his book *Choosing a Vocation* written in 1909, says that the choice of a vocation must be based on knowledge of work, knowledge of self, and the matching of the two through rational thinking and reasoning. Thus, the area of counseling psychology as a field, developed in the United States at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century. It has since acquired a highly interdisciplinary status based on psychology, sociology, philosophy, ethics, history, anthropology, education, medical and biological sciences, economics, and law, unmatched by any discipline or practice except perhaps by some other fields of education.

Fifty years after its development in the US, counseling psychology dates back to 1950s in Turkey under American influence, again initiated by the need for solutions to practical problems. During the first half of the 50s, American counselor educators were invited to Turkey. In 1953, The Ministry of National Education opened the Test and Research Bureau with the aim of standardizing for the Turkish population psychological measurement devices such as I.Q., personality, and achievement tests. Again like the US, one notes an emphasis on human capabilities with the tacit intention of matching these with societal needs. However as opposed to the US, an immediate interest in helping those who were in need of psychological services follows. This is perhaps due to a characteristic of the Turkish and Anatolian culture of helping those who are less fortunate. Thus, the first psychological service center was opened in Ankara in 1955, for

mentally retarded children. In the 60s, the Third Five-Year National Development Plan viewed counseling as a means of matching the skills of students with their choice of educational tracks for a best-fit economic model, optimizing the human-power needs of the country with the knowledge and skills of students in different educational tracks. In 1965, the first department of Educational Psychology and Guidance at the undergraduate level was initiated at Ankara University, while in 1967 the first graduate program in counseling was established at Hacettepe University, again in Ankara. Today there are 76 guidance and psychological counseling programs in Turkish universities at the undergraduate level, 28 at the master's and 19 at the doctorate levels, among a total of 177 Turkish Universities in the country, of which 104 are state and 73 are private institutions. Like the United States, at present, counseling exceeds its psychometric liaison with vocational and educational allocations in Turkey.

In my mind, the future of counseling psychology points to its functionality not just in institutions generally associated with counseling. The contention here is that counseling has to be embedded in every institution of society, so that human relations and interaction can be based on a humane and developmental model. Thus my prediction for the functionality of the area exceeds those listed in journal articles such as education, orientation, risk groups, managed care models involving third parties, medical settings, justice, industry and the military. There is a need for this profession in all settings of human society, anywhere and everywhere on the globe, if the foundation of harmoniously cooperating interactions at all levels is a desired goal for our world. This goal can only be achieved by an area which is based on a trans-disciplinary humane developmental model.

My second point is related to the transition to a new paradigm. That there is a felt need for a new paradigm is hopeful. Undesirable human conditions for

the majority of the world's population permeate individual lives. Poverty as in the case of Africa, pockets of Asia and South America, famine as in the case of Somalia and other pockets of Africa, disease especially in sub-Saharan Africa, lack of educational opportunity, again especially in Africa and southern Asia, and racial, ethnic, and religious discrimination across and within national states independent of developmental levels, define the counters of life for the majority world. In addition to these unacceptable realities, the unilateral power exertions of the stronger states, usually devoid of moral and ethical frames or universally acceptable justifications, threaten the esteemed concepts of equity and justice for all. This situation creates fears at the international, regional, national and individual levels due to the unpredictability of events and loss of control. This state of affairs is pregnant to unforeseen and undesirable events, with fear of terrorism for those who are close to the seat of power on the one hand, and invasion of territories or rights or modalities of life-styles for those who do not have access to the seat of such power. Until the systems developed and devised are based first on the moral frame of human dignity that is the birthright of every person on this planet, and as importantly on equity of the just distribution of world resources, the picture above will be more pervasive than it is today, despite our fears.

Of all the professional areas, counseling psychology has the responsibility to be the voice of the silent majority. The most likely candidate among professions to be the advocate of the disadvantaged, of the marginalized, of those who are unjustly treated, who are confined to risk groups because of barriers that stifle development, and of those who do not have the means to assert the need for equity such as the poverty stricken, the aged, the disabled, the migrant, and the racially, ethnically or religiously diverse, is counseling psychology. These groups are distanced from the power structures of societies.

Issues of diversity require a multicultural perspective as societies become more complex. In fact, meta-analyses of publications in the *Journal of Counseling Psychology* by Buboltz et.al. in 2010, and in the *Journal of Counseling and Development* by Erford et.al. in 2011, show multiculturalism and diversity to be the first ranked category of published articles, followed by professional issues, and testing. Eighty nine percent of counseling psychology programs offers at least one multicultural counseling course.

The reason in assuming the responsibility to be the voice of the silent lies in the definition and historical development of the area of counseling psychology. The well-being of each individual in the context of whatever groups of identification and at whatever level of inclusion from the family, to national, cultural, and international settings, is the domain of effectiveness of counseling psychology. The shift from emphasis on pathology to wellness will be instrumental in understanding and learning from the stories of individuals and groups that are diverse and different from the norms of the majority culture.

To assume such a vast responsibility we are in need of models of accountability, the third point to be presented here. The service that counseling psychology provides is first for those who need help the most. Thus the group for which counseling psychology is primarily accountable is the client population it serves. Then, it is accountable to third parties, governmental or private institutions, which finance services given by the profession. Finally counseling psychology is accountable to its own philosophy, as an area and a profession which renders preventive, developmental, and humane services to those in need of help.

Models of accountability require technical expertise aligned with the most powerful state-of-the-art evaluation methodologies. Generalizability of

outcomes has to be a concern, because we cannot accrue evidence inductively case by case. That would neither be feasible nor economic. Thus, due to economic feasibility, counseling practices have become short-term interactions of 3 to 12 sessions within less than 6 months. Evidence based practices, evidence supported treatments, and empirically supported interventions require sharp methodologies together with criteria of generalizability. Hence, the best practice movement of Hansen, and Kivlighan's research on supported treatments seem to foreshadow the need for future generalizable accountability models, based on sound evaluation research.

My final point deals with the impact of technology as regards the enhancement of transparency on the one hand, and accessibility of services on the other. Technology cannot make decisions; it can only be utilized to facilitate our choices. Transparency of what counseling psychology aims to accomplish, the methodologies proposed to reach set goals, and the outcomes of our activities must be shared within and across cultural settings, so that we can all learn from each other's experiences. Technology is a good modality with immense possibilities of overcoming barriers of time and space in this regard.

In addition to the facilitation of shared developments, solutions, and models, technology can extend services to those who have difficulty in reaching help. Cyber counseling, which includes e-mail, bulletin board, chat room, web-telephone, computer-assisted or simulated counseling, and e-coaching are all modes of increasing the accessibility of services. Some ethical issues can partly be solved by extending the paradigm of the profession to include other world views, cultural experiences, and historical cumulation of diverse perspectives. This is indeed very hopeful in terms of equalizing opportunities of well-being across the world.

In short, I have tried to share with you my views and hopes related to the profession of counseling psychology. As long as our goal is the well-being of every individual on earth aligned with the concepts of human dignity and decency, which are universal birthrights, and as long our efforts are towards modalities of effective and productive communication and cooperation as well as peaceful co-existence between groups at all levels, counseling psychology will be one of the most important fields, having the likelihood of facilitating our hopes.

Once again, I am honored to welcome you to our country, city and university, and wish that all of us participating will be more hopeful and enriched at the end of our encounter.

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