“Affective” Advising: Building Relationships Using a Student-Centered Approach

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Julie O’Brien, Western Illinois University
Niall Hartnett, Western Illinois University
Advising Students in Academic Difficulty

- Learn how to evoke positive feelings in students through:
  - Respect
  - Encouragement
  - Authentic empathy

- Foster the personal growth of students in their academic performance
Carl Rogers “concluded the only thing anyone really needs is a good friend. Students probably need a human being who is a good friend, good teacher, and good advisor who is willing to listen as a responsible person who provides an ear and a compass to assist in making informed decisions about academic goals.” (Wade, 2007)
Case Studies...

- Scenario Role-plays for students in academic difficulty
- Advise the students how you would normally in this situation:

  - CHARLIE – How would you approach this situation?
  - ANNA – How would you help her?
Case Studies Follow Up

- What techniques would you use to advise a student in this situation?
- Do you find yourself using respect, encouragement and empathy when you are faced with a student who has this type of a problem?
- Do you ever find yourself judging why a student is in this type of situation?
Similar Approaches...

- Reality Therapy – focuses initially on the relationship between client and therapist which fosters mutual positive regard and openness but then looks at control and solution generation grounded in cognitive restructuring principles.
Similar Approaches Continued…

- Appreciative Advising – the intentional collaborative practice of asking positive, open-ended questions that help students optimize their educational experiences and achieve their dreams, goals, and potentials
  - Discovery
  - Dream
  - Design
  - Destiny or Delivery
Carl Rogers Person-Centered Therapy

- Theme – Client’s ability to move forward in a constructive manner if conditions fostering growth are present
- Views people as capable and autonomous with the ability to resolve their difficulties, realize their potential and change their lives in positive ways
Principles...

- Congruence – authenticity of advisor – be genuine (appropriate self-disclosure is necessary), do not “act”
- Unconditional Positive Regard – Accept the student as he/she is without judgment, disapproval or approval
- Accurate Empathetic Understanding – See the student’s point of view and understand the meaning and feeling of what he/she is experiencing
Goals of a Student Centered Approach...

- Focus on greater independence of the student — trust in themselves
- Help the student become the agent for self-change — openness of experience — they make the decisions
- Help the student self-assess his/her behavior — internal sources of evaluation — looking inward
- Focus on the growth, not the problems — willingness to continue growing — seeking out information or talking to their advisor
Advisors must be present and accessible and “real” with the students

Advisors must have an attitude of general caring, respect, acceptance, and understanding – help students loosen defenses

Incongruence can occur between a student’s self perception and his/her experience in reality
How to put this Theory to Practice…

- **Congruence**
  - Advisor points out how both the advisor and the student have been similarly affected by such issues at some time.

- **Unconditional Positive Regard**
  - Body Language
  - Speaking Style

- **Accurate Empathetic Understanding**
  - Rephrase the words of the student and repeat them back to him or her.
Simulation Video...
Simulation Follow Up

- Congruence is a key principle of this approach. Do you think this a technique that you can employ comfortably?
- What if anything might get in your way either with the student or yourself in establishing a relationship where respect, encouragement and authentic empathy are present?
- Do you think that advisors have the ability to foster these relationships with the amount of time they have with students?
Limitations...

- The advisor has his/her own goal for the student – increased academic performance, support of the university mission and values
- The advisor is not supposed to choose the goal for the student
- The student needs to come to this conclusion on his/her own
Limitations Continued…

- **Non-Directive Advising Approach?**
  - Listen and ask questions first in a non-judgmental manner before tendering advice.
  - Re-state issues or questions emphasizing main concerns to validate the student’s perspective.
  - Validate the university policies and their function in supporting the student’s progress with the advisor as their representative.
  - Devise a course of action based on common valid ground. Thus the advisor can still be in control of the session with a structured approach, yet not be authoritative or adversarial to the student.
Limitations Continued…

- Advisors need to invest in the process — have to show genuineness without appearing fake
- Advisors may find it hard to self-disclose
  - Have one or two anecdotes that you use repeatedly and that you feel comfortable sharing
- Advisors MUST remember that students are unique individuals and must be treated as such. Each situation is different. The student should feel valued.
Advantages...

- Academic advisors, regularly see students to help them pick classes and learn about requirements. Person centered therapy techniques can be used to aid students in the initial process helping them feel comfortable and connected.

- With counseling, a student must be the one to seek out therapy after feeling helpless or powerless or an inability to make decisions. Many don’t want to seek that help. This is why an advisor who utilizes these techniques can really aid a student in a subtle manner and then refer them if needed.*
Moving towards Student-Centered Advising

- Advising can no longer be just passing on information and advice.
- Help students with the development of attitudes, skills, and behaviors as a learner, decision maker and community participant.
- Melander (2002) describes functions of the expanded role of the student centered advisor.
Using this Approach We Can….

- **Establish and sustain a relationship with each student**— help inspire, motivate, and guide advisees as they enter the university; identify learning and development goals and plans.
- **Manage that relationship**— keep rosters, send out announcements and reminders, and request appointments.
- **Pass on and point to sources of information** about programs, courses, careers, and extracurricular activities.
Using this Approach We Can….

- **Monitor and provide feedback to students** regarding academic plans or results of past performances – unconditional positive regard
- **Conduct one-on-one chat sessions** with individual advisees or use a social networking site such as Facebook – congruence and accurate empathetic understanding
- **Receive and respond to advisee requests** – students can self-evaluate what they need
- **Conduct surveys and analyses to assess effectiveness** of advising policies and practices. Use the results of evaluations given by students.
Questions/Discussion...

- Do you see yourself utilizing these kinds of strategies without even realizing it?
- Is Affective Advising a realistic approach or too good to be true?
- Any questions?!
Resources...


Resources Continued…


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