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About Presenters:

Swathi Menon has a Masters Degree in Counseling Psychology from Mumbai University and a Post Graduate Diploma in Counseling Psychology from Xavier's Institute of Counseling Psychology. She has been a visiting pre-doctoral fellow in the research project at Early Learning Lab at Northwestern University, (Dept. of Communication Sciences and Disorders) Evanston, IL, Chicago, USA.

She is a counseling psychologist with 12 years experience working in highly reputed institutions in Mumbai. Her primary area of expertise is working with students who have learning problems. Other areas of expertise includes professional development for school staff, individual and family counseling, home intervention services, reporting and assessing student needs, adjusting curriculum to meet the needs of students with learning difficulties, helping students make informed career choices and presentation of workshops on a variety of topics.

Currently Ms Menon is the Director at the Center of Counseling and Academic development (JND EduManagement Services Pvt Ltd, A Universal Education group company, Mumbai). This center is the first of its kind, dealing with a full continuum of services for parents, children, and teachers.

Dr Nirmala Almeida, an Associate Professor and Head of the Department of Human Development, at the College of Home Science, Nirmala Niketan, Mumbai, graduated from St Xavier's College, with a specialisation in Psychology. She did her postgraduation in Clinical Psychology (University of Mumbai), topping the list of candidates specialising in Psychology. She obtained her Doctoral degree in Counselling Psychology. Her research was on "Effectiveness of Rationale-Emotive Behavioural Therapy with Aggressive Children and Youth". She has guided over 50 postgraduate and three doctoral students for their dissertations/thesis. She has to her credit, research publications, research presentations at National and International levels, awards for research papers and membership of the Board of Studies of Mumbai and SNTD Universities. She has conducted workshops with several target groups on a variety of themes (eg.,REBT, Gestalt therapy, Effective Communication, Creative Parenting). Her areas of special interest are Counselling, Health Psychology and Exceptionality.

Title of Paper: Career counsellors: Expectations of students, parents and teachers

Abstract:

Knowledge of the expectations of clients regarding career counsellors is important in a rapidly evolving work culture. At present, there is little known about the expectations that Indian students, parents and teachers have of career counsellors. Hence, the purpose of the current study was to explore the same. The sample consisted of 128 students (grade 10), 122 parents (of grade 9 and 10 students) and 50 teachers. The participants were drawn from five schools in Mumbai (one international, 4 affiliated to the state board). The sampling technique employed was that of convenience sampling and the research design was an exploratory one. The participants completed a 28 item questionnaire formulated by the researchers. This questionnaire was developed after reviewing the literature extensively and examining non-Indian tools assessing the expectations of career counsellors. The items were to be rated on a 4 point Likert type scale where 1 indicated strongly disagrees and 4, strongly agree. Higher scores were indicative of more accurate expectations. The participants were found to show high levels of accuracy for most of the items. To illustrate a few, they were aware that the role of the career counsellor was to administer psychological tests to help understand the client better [students (M=3.63); parents (M=3.35); teachers (3.61)], provide clients with information about careers in the country [students (M=3.66); parents (M= 3.46); teachers (M= 3.57)], provide a broad range of career options [students (M=3.43) ; parents (M= 3.32); teachers (M= 3.54)] and provide information regarding admission criteria in various institutions [students (M=3.50);parents (M= 3.40); teachers (M= 3.45)]. For a few items, the level of accuracy was lower. For example, helps you only when you have decided a major career goal [students (M=2.27); parents (M=2.22); teachers (M=2.73)], gets you admission in a good university [students (M=2.06); parents (M=1.74); teachers (M=2.37)], arranges bank loans and scholarships [students (M=2.49); parents (M=2.00); teachers (M=2.15)]. For one item, the expectation was very inaccurate, that is helps you to find a perfect career [students (M=1.36); parents (M=1.66);teachers (M=2.13)]. ANOVA indicated that there was no differences among the students (M=85.57), parents (M=83.25) and teachers (M=89.12) in their expectations regarding the career counsellor. The chi square test revealed that there was no difference in the expectations of teachers, based on their gender, education background, and number of years of teaching; no differences in the expectations of students based on their gender and prior experience with counselling and no differences in the expectations of parents based on their gender and educational background. Unrealistic expectations can have a detrimental effect on the counselling outcome. Although the participants had accurate expectations for most of the items, there is a need to address the unrealistic expectations, so that the role of the counsellor is fully realized. The focus on all stakeholders makes this study a worthy one.