

RESILIENT LEADERSHIP AND QUALITY OF LIFE FROM COUNSELING: AN ANALYTIC REVIEW

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Abstract

This article analyzes the contribution of resilient leadership in times of crisis from the praxis of the Counsellor to the improvement of the quality of life, as well as the conceptual and theoretical aspects that determine its importance with the work of the Counselor in the promotion and development of human potential. The methodology was based on literature review: refereed papers published in scientific journals and queries of texts concerned to the area under research were considered to carry it on. Findings from authors like Seligman (2005) Garassini y Camelli (2012), Pérez (2012), Gómez y Leal (2010), Labourdette y Scaricabarozzi (2010), Castejón y Zamora (2002), Fung (2014), Martínez and García (2012) were analyzed from their theoretical and conceptual approaches and their contributions to the area. The conclusions show resilient leadership development in the work of the Counsellor, because he/she influences over an adverse situation turning it into a positive way through the praxis, generating a process of a successful adaptation to the difficulties or threats being experienced by the ones who are cared by the professional of Psychosocial health. Finally, it is suggested further research on resilient leadership in the work of the Counsellor since there are few studies from a specific methodology showing unquestionable results on the matter.

Key words: Resilient leadership, counselling, strengths, difficulties, quality of life.

INTRODUCTION

In this article, it is made an analytical review regarding resilience, a journey made through different definitions where the human capacity is set to overcome adversities, eventually, transcending them to be placed above those circumstances. In the case of counsellors, the resilience is implemented in the development of human processes, where it is necessary to strengthen the potentialities through leadership of those who request the services of the Counsellor.

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In addition, it is relevant to point out that the constant demands and conditions of postmodern societies show different social and economic scenarios full of adversities that influence the quality of life of people. These realities result in pessimism, violence, increasing crime and other problems that seem to prevent a possible way out to the crisis generated by these living conditions.

Therefore, the work of the Counsellor is shown as a discipline that facilitates an effective and sensitive leadership to the values and needs of people, demonstrating trust and competence to encourage motivation in the achievement of objectives and goals, through intelligent decision-makings. (Chemers 2002).

Accordingly, the objective of this work is to generate an analytical review on the way to contextualize resilient leadership from the work of the Counsellor on how to improve the quality of life, an issue little discussed either in the existing literature or in research.

Therefore, this work is justified since it contemplates a different way of approaching the leadership from the groups assisted by this professional.

The following study focuses on the recognition of the characteristics of leadership from resilience in the strengthening of human potential, with the purpose of highlighting the strengths and positive aspects above the negative and the external difficulties that surround the psychosocial context where people develop.

CONCEPTUALIZATION OF RESILIENCE

The concept of resilience began to be developed in the United States, extending to Europe: France, Germany and Spain, finally reached Latin America where there have been countless research projects and papers. Originally, the term originated from Physics to describe the ability of some materials to return to their original shape after deformation. (Sambrano 2010).

On the other hand, it is important to note that this term also used in the social sciences is defined as “the ability to succeed and excel to live and develop positively in a socially acceptable way, despite the fatigue and adversity that may involve a serious risk of negative outcome” (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

From a psychosocial perspective, resilience is considered as a process of balance between the influences of the environment and the personal characteristics, which allow the individual to adapt to unexpected situations of life. (Lynch & Cicchetti, 1998, Sameroff, 1997). In addition, resilience could be shown as a key resource in favor of adaptation and well-being, since the person acts by generating positive emotions to cope with stressful situations (Meneghel, Salanova and Martinez, 2013).

RESILIENT LEADERSHIP

Referring to resilience, it is possible to get to know that resilience, as a concept, has been studied in different fields, becoming a transdisciplinary construct where

different knowledge develops from disciplines such as psychology, sociology, anthropology, law, education sciences, economics, health sciences and social work. Among them, there are intervening factors from three different levels: I have (social), I can (abilities), I am (internal strengths) (Rodríguez 2009, Grotberg 1995).

The reasons that motivate to investigate this construct have to do with its importance in the development of the behavior of the human groups, from couples' relationships, family, associations, to institutions and organizations of different types (Labourdette and Scaricabarozzi 2010).

Theoretically, it is based on three approaches: the North American one, behaviorist, pragmatic focused on the individual; the European one with a psychoanalytic approach and the Latin American community focused on the social matter, thus responding to the problems of the context. (Rodríguez 2009). Another approach that can also be introduced is the positive psychology, in which Martin Seligman (2005) presents important contributions with the scientific study of "optimal human functioning". It represents a change of focus of psychology, which seeks to explain scientifically how to build welfare or happiness in people (Garassini and Camelli 2012).

Scholars from different areas show an obvious interest in resilience, which allows us to address the constant personal, family and work demands that people present in different life contexts.

On the subject of resilient leadership authors such as García Sáiz, (2010), Gil, Alcover, Rico and Sánchez (2011) argue that there is a need to explore new leadership modalities to allow responding effectively to the complexity and uncertainty resulting from continuous changes in the economic matter and the social environment. In such a scenario, leadership requires attributes to contribute to adaptation and changes in social environments. That is how resilient leadership is referred about; it is the leader who has the purpose of contributing to the personal and social growth of human groups.

It is said that in opposition to the traditional models of leadership arise different conceptions that pose a more humanistic vision in the development of the people. In this regard, Sambrano (2010) explains that the appropriate leadership is one in which people are motivated to perform their tasks, stimulate cooperation and high team performance. It also represents a positive attitude and potential energy to turn out responsible and resilient citizens.

So it can be considered that this type of leadership manages to maintain the balance in difficult situations, the leaders face, handle the positive and negative events of life and organizations: they persevere in presence of obstacles accepting circumstances that can not change; they have self-confidence, self-esteem, emotion management, ability to imagine and make others imagine as well (Peréz 2012).

In addition, González (2010) says that in this new paradigm called resilient leadership, the new leader has the ability to overcome adversity and to project in the future a set of responses or behaviors of overcoming and/or coping capacities. The leader has characteristics such as strategic thinking, motivation to succeed, positive

attitude, bouncing back adversity, mobilization capacity, influence capacity, self-improvement and empathy.

Similarly, Gómez and Leal (2010) emphasize that resilient leaders have a set of skills that allow them to show themselves being positive, and confident in achieving success with a favorable disposition in the application of effective response strategies regarding circumstantial events. From this perspective, it is understood that the practice of this type of leadership allows applying tools to overcome serious situations, reacting adequately to the demands of the environment.

On the basis of above, it can be inferred that this form of leadership is based on the positive attitude and the ability of the leader to adapt to the critical surrounding circumstances, creating a balance between his/her abilities and the environment challenges.

THE RESILIENT LEADERSHIP CONCEPT, HOW HAS IT BEEN DEVELOPED IN THE FIELD OF THE COUNSELLING?

After an extensive documentary review on the subject, it was found that there are few scientific studies about the Counsellor as a resilient leader. However, the bibliographic and electronic search, as well as the study of significant experiences in the development of human processes made possible to understand how the characteristics that define resilient leadership can be incorporated into the work of the Counsellor. In view of the fact that the purpose of his/her functions and tasks is to generate the development of the potential of people in any field of action and guide them in their process of psychosocial adaptation in regard the evolutionary changes and unforeseen events. (Castejón and Zamora 2002: 17).

Applying such functions, the counselor facilitates and stimulates healthy and productive behaviors through individual and group counseling within the development of positive attitudes, values, decision-making, empathy, emotional stability, effective interpersonal relationships, as well as self-awareness of the surrounding reality. All of that enable him/her to order his/her inner world by means of a conscious relationship with others and the environment, emphasizing his/her life skills to face successfully the challenges of his/her existence. (Castejón and Zamora 2002: 33, WHO: 1993).

Fung (2014) presents other characteristics about the Counselor as a resilient leader, pointing out that they are conciliatory, inspiring and highly credible people. In their leadership, they do not try to maximize success, but rather try to maximize learning from failure, emphasizing how important it is not to let the obstacles stop you. Among the techniques used by the Counselor as leaders as posed by Castro and Núñez (2014) are the cognitive restructuring of irrational beliefs, necessary to make aware of the personal abilities before the negative thoughts that people manage.

Complementing the above, here are presented the considerations of Pérez de Matarano, Yáñez de Urrutia and Peñaloza (2014) who published an article highlighting the relationship between counselling and resilience. They explained that both occur

naturally and that it is a theoretical construct that can be transformed into a strategy to approach with a positive vision of the adversity or situation of life stress.

Regarding the just pointed out idea, García_Vesga and Domínguez de la Ossa (2013) present the characteristics of the “Resilience Tutor” who has a presence in front of the subject, unconditional love, encouragement and affective gratification for the achievements, creativity, initiative, humor; as well as the ability to assimilate new experiences and help solve problems without replacing the person.

From this perspective, all the aspects previously mentioned can be established in the functions that the Counsellor fulfills since they clearly identify the actions developed as a resilient leader. Therefore, to this professional is given challenges permanently which must be addressed from his/her theoretical and practical knowledge to contribute to the psychosocial balance of individuals, at giving them tools for their positive adaptation and confrontation to adversity despite the factors of poverty, scarcity and other limitations, to overcome them and maintain a productive life.

RELEVANT CONTRIBUTIONS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE WORK OF COUNSELLORS IN IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF LIFE

Having investigated the different characteristics that define resilient leadership, it is important to consider that Counselling, as a discipline, draws on several areas of knowledge, such as education, sociology and psychology; taking from the latter the approaches and theories that describe and explain the personality, assuming them from the educational and sociological perspective. (Castejón and Zamora 2002: 16).

It is important to point out that these areas of knowledge on which the Counselor draws on provide him/her the tools to apply different strategies and techniques under the perspectives of the phenomenological or the positivist research. They are related to these methods and procedures to design programs and services in favor of the philosophical principles of well-being for man and society.

In this way the objectives of Counselling can be directed according to the planned processes and based on the different theoretical references, however, Adames et al. (2010) proposes the following objectives:

- Developing the personality as much as possible.
- Achieving self-counselling.
- Getting self-understanding and self-acceptance.
- Achieving maturity for decision-making.
- Achieving adaptation and adjustment.

In this regard, Shillingford and Lambie (2010) point out that school counselors have the responsibility to recognize the importance of leadership practice in the delivery of their services. Similarly, Stone & Clark (2001) explain that knowledge and skills, when counselling, should not only be given to the students but also to their families, teachers and community by those skillful practitioners, the new generation of school counselors.

On the other hand, Martínez de Mandojano (2014: 211) refers that from the positive psychology and resilience open a world of possibilities to recover the balance from those capacities, potentialities that we all have and that will be the departing point that will push us toward confidence for the flourishing of new and more favorable scenarios.

From the foregoing discussion, it is understood that the Counsellor is trained in the management of skills to carry out procedures that facilitate the development of psychosocial competences by encouraging reflection and appreciation of the potential of the person.

In relation to the previous conception, the work of the Counsellor is justified as a resilient leader since during his/her performance has the capacity to generate changes, encouraging the person to self-knowledge of the owned abilities to become aware of the potentialities, paying more attention to the internal strengths and the virtues to defeat adversities and external difficulties. The counsellor incorporate all of these aspects to develop positive behaviors by means of putting the resilient leadership into practice with individuals and groups.

QUALITY OF LIFE

A comprehensive review of a country's productivity indicators provides relevant data and information on the conditions in which the inhabitants live. These indicators can be the result of political and economic policies resulting in satisfaction or dissatisfaction of meeting the demands in health, education, food, employment, housing and security of a society.

In the case of Venezuelans, we are immersed in a quality of life that translates into a crisis, because of instability in economic measures, low production unable to meet the demands, and faults in the public services.

However, as a result of this political, economic and social environment, the purchasing power of the population has decreased in an accelerated way, impacting how to meet the most basic necessities such as the acquisition of food and medicines. This has generated tension and a crisis of values, especially in those people who, in the midst of these circumstances, neither find the way out nor visualize opportunities for development and well-being for themselves and their families.

On this issue, Rodríguez and García (2005) consider that welfare, satisfaction of needs, economic growth, conservation of resources, ecological and psychological, emotional and spiritual balance is what is translated as quality of life. Another element that authors attribute to the concept of quality of life is the subjective perception, it plays an important role in the way people think and feel about the situation they are living and the way it is affecting them.

On the other hand, Ibarra and García (2011) claim that quality of life is an essentially multidisciplinary and multireferential expression, which relates different dimensions such as well-being, opportunity to enjoy all available goods and services, impro-

vement of habitable infrastructure and satisfaction of basic needs, in accordance with values, aspirations and experiences both individual and social groups.

These conceptions allow us to reflect on the role the person has in improving his/her quality of life, it is not a question of denying the reality that is lived, but the search for well-being and balance which must begin with the person. This introspection exercise will allow you to self-know your abilities from your personal assessment to continue building a different reality from the challenges of everyday life.

From the field of resilient leadership the Counsellor is an essential professional in the educational process, with interdisciplinary tools focused on the process to address and enhance personal and social growth, taking into account the present reality in the human being. This intervention is aimed at achieving the adjustment and recognition of the strengths, virtues and values for accomplishing the transformation from doing, optimism, creativity, self-management and willingness to face adversities in life.

CONCLUSION

Given the importance of the concept of resilient leadership as a competence in the job performance of the Counsellor to improve the quality of life, the main conclusion of this document is that this professional is skillful in planning and approaching processes of personal, Social, family, community and organizational development. That allows counselling people in different contexts and psychosocial aspects of their lives, in order for the individual to recognize his/her own abilities and strengths to flourish in the face of the difficulties before him/her.

Thus, resilience constitutes an essential competence in the work of the Counsellor, since he/she integrates cognitive, affective and behavioral processes that enables his/her performance in the prevention and intervention of human processes.

Therefore, these factors of personal development added to the theoretical management will allow the Counsellor to carry out programs to enhance meaningful positive and relevant aspects to his life. These actions are necessary especially in difficult times like the present ones where we have to overcome so many complex situations and to make a commitment taking on self-management, the values and the competences, elements developed in the work of the Counsellor.

However, to conclude, it is important to point out that the analysis carried out in the development of this paper requires more systematic and specific concepts about the study of "resilient leadership in the work of the Counsellor" since there is little information on this subject. This deep search would allow establishing more quickly which ones are the aspects of analogy related to the resilience and performance of the Counsellor, for that reason it is considered that there are elements that require further development and research. It is therefore, that future investigations are proposed to confirm the questions that from the empirical study has encouraged us to study resilience and Counselling.