

Application of Counselling Services in Advocating Positive Parenting for Good Mental Health Development to Promote National Security in Nigeria

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Abstract

This paper, observed the insecurity challenges that is escalating and intimidating human life as well as affecting national economy and development in all ramifications. Counselling services through it advocacy of positive parenting has been established to be a tool of curbing the menace of insecurity in Nigeria. The paper explicitly explained the concept of parenting in developing good mental health among individuals, to enhance adequate behaviour development such as; tranquility, unity, respect and harmony. This constituted national security and development. The purpose of this paper is to foster counselling services to advocate good parenting for adequate behaviour change among people to alleviate insecurity challenges in Nigeria. The paper further discussed the principles of parenting, dual dimensional effects of poor parenting on a child's development and relationship with larger society. Recommendations were made that; counsellors should as a matter of fact advocate for positive parenting at all levels of development. It should be adequately organized and presented by professional counsellors to the parents, teachers and community leaders. It was concluded that, the basis for insecurity challenges were as a result of nonchalant attitude in providing positive parenting at the stages of child development. With the positive parenting the society will breed dynamic and egalitarian citizens who can be patriotic and contribute to the national economic development to build a peaceful nation.

Keywords: Counseling services, Parenting, and Insecurity challenges

Introduction

Behaviour has been perceived as bases for any meaningful living and peaceful co-existence among families, neighbours, peers, friends, leaders, colleagues and societies for any sustainable development and adequate security to be achieved (Sandra, 2012). Most children exhibit streak of negative behaviours which have become one of the biggest dreadful to parents and the society at large. Thus, children need to be accomplished with good mental health developmental tips through positive parenting in all aspects of their lives. Ultimately, no or very few elements of our lives escape the impact of parenting, even though, we may not consciously connect our difficulties, dysfunctions, and issues with our good mental health development (upbringing), but actually it is the fact. This is a well-established fact by the writer that a good number of the parents themselves are victims of negative parenting with erroneous cultural beliefs. Hence, children from such strain family

are the perpetual of deviant behaviour rooting insecurity challenge.

Parenting is an essential guide from the beginning of the infancy to adulthood and offers a secured attachment between caregivers and children resulting to positive developmental outcomes like; patriotism, tolerance, trust, empathy, self-esteem, competency and confidence (Ruchele, 2020). Thus, parenting supposed to commence early at infancy stage which is the basis of rational behind this paper to stimulate counsellors to gear up through counselling services and educate parents in order to spark on positive parenting for building a dynamic, egalitarian and patriotic citizens who can change our society for peaceful coexistence and national economic development.

Objectives

To enable the entire society to link behaviour development to insecurity challenges and

support programmes of behaviour training both formal and informal. Parents should be able to focus and re-emphasized on mandatory behaviour training of their children/wards.

Concept Counseling

Counselling is the process of psychological empowerment and encouragement of individuals to confront issues and problems (Anna, 2017). Kolo (2013) opined that counselling is the relationship that is qualitative enough to change or affect people's life positively and such involves repertoire of skills to establish and maintain that relationship. Kolo further expounded that "Counselling is about helping people to help themselves to live their lives more effectively". This is in congruence with the assertion of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004) which stated that in view of the apparent ignorance of many young people about career prospects and in view of personality maladjustment among school children, career officers and counsellors will be appointed in schools.

Professional counselling is a safe and confidential collaboration between qualified counsellors and clients to promote mental health and wellbeing, enhancement of self-understanding, and to resolve identified fretfulness. *It is a professional relationship that empowers diverse individuals, families, and groups to accomplish mental health, wellness, education, and career goals.* It also provides a genuine, caring and empathic response to the problems. Professional counselling is conducted by professional counsellors who are trained with tools and techniques that are counseling evidence based. They use these tools to support and help through the difficult situations, problems, feelings, behaviours, thoughts or situation that are terror. They may be, however, required by law to disclose information if they believe that there is a risk to life.

The Role of Counselors in Advocating Parenting

The counsellors need to collaborate with the teachers, administrators and parents to present counselling services regarding parenting, and to adequately demonstrate the skills of training

in parenting. They are to provide parental education regarding parenting in their homes, which may serve as a coordinator, mediator and consultant between the children and all the stakeholders of parenting. The counsellors are to ensure and facilitate effective rehabilitative counselling to the parents or guardians who have already engage in negative parenting.

Concept of Parenting

Parenting is the act of accomplishing the role of a parent in nurturance and protection of the child by a natural or substitute parent. It is the responsibilities of all stakeholders to nurture, love and to contribute to the development of the child to create a united positive loving relationship with the members of the family and outside the family context (Ruchele, 2020). Parenting promotes and supports the physical, emotional, social, and intellectual development of a child from infancy to adulthood. Parenting refers to the intricacies of raising a child and not exclusively by biological relationship (Wikipedia, 2020). Parenting does not always mean pampering and loving the children all the time; it involves using a firm tone and technique whenever necessary. But it is always necessary to raise voice or impose an opinion on a child for trivial issues (Wikipedia, 2020). Parenting differs from child rearing, in child rearing the emphasis is on the act of training or bringing up the children and the interaction between the parent and child, while parenting emphasizes on the responsibilities and qualities of exemplary behaviour of the parent (Wikipedia, 2020).

Purpose of Parenting

Primary purpose of parenting was highlighted by Ruchele (2020), as to raise fully functional adults who can take care of themselves and make a positive contribution to the society. Parenting practices around the world share three major purposes which include: ensuring children's mental health and safety, preparing children for life as productive adults, and transmitting right cultural values. Other purposes of parenting include:

To build strong ethical values that might inculcate understanding the significance of ethics, norms and values in every aspect of

child's life. For each of these basic values, a child should be duly aware why these guidelines are in place and its consequences when deviated. To enhance the positive self-care, through inculcating proper management and coping mechanisms for dealing with the difficulties of the life. A good number of children experience at least one major crisis, trauma, abuse, death, or accident during their childhood. How these incidents are handled by the guardians or parent greatly determines the lessons the child learns about intense emotions such as anger, anxiety, depression, guilt, shame, and inferiority.

To develop the child spiritually, that is, training of the children about knowledge of faith, distinguishing between right and wrong and be well acquainted about each as well as having respect for others faith. Respect and agreement are two different matters. A person can respect the opinion of someone else without agreeing with them. Parenting does have a unique position to positively encourage spiritual growth without forcing it on the child and become a patriotic citizen. Enrich the child good home economic by teaching proper daily living skills most especially mechanisms how to acquire and spend money wisely and judiciously.

The purpose is also to provide the child the history of the family, which extremely helpful in establishing a sense of belonging. For every family, there are cultural or historical aspects that define the family for the better or the worst. Trying to protect a child from the bad aspects such as; divorce, addiction, or events of the family trait which does not help them. The purpose explain the positive aspects of the family such as; courage, faith, determination, perseverance, commitment and loyalty. Valuing hard work, the purpose is to develop in children dedication, devotion, determination and perseverance throughout the handicapping condition of a task to its successful completion or achievement.

Principles of Parenting

The **foundation of positive parenting** rests on five basic principles which are: attachment, respect, proactive parenting, empathetic leadership, and positive discipline. These five

principles aids in building a strong self-esteem and confidence in children. Proactive parenting addresses potential problem behaviour at the first sign before it becomes a serious problem. By putting in extra time in teaching and building upright relationship will frankly avert many problems that could have arisen from lack of knowledge and instruction. Proactive parenting also means that caregivers respond to the children's behaviour immediately and take appropriate action.

Empathetic principle of parenting develops a child to understand the needs of others and relate to them in a way that helps them feel relieved while still holding the boundaries that have been set up. The goal of discipline is to teach children to learn new skills of control impulses and behaviours to fix mistakes and find solutions.

Parenting methods focus entirely to shape not only in moments of admonition and correction but by the moments of tears, successes, failures, encouragement, discouragement, laughter, sorrow, acceptance, denial, disconnects and reconnects that make up their life endeavour.

Two Major Types of Parenting are: Strengthening and Damaging Parenting

Strengthening parenting is the positive parenting which is all upright training without any physical action towards the bad behaviour of a child. Research indicates that children below one year are highly benefited with a positive parenting approach such as; fast responses to infants' cries, physical contact and affection, breastfeeding, and co-sleeping all help children grow up to become adults with mature moral development, including a developed sense of empathy and moral sensitivity to others. While, damaging parenting is the negative parenting Mariaanna (2015).

Positive parenting is based on the principles of how to develop self-confidence in children and focuses on raising them to become self-reliance and responsible individuals who can treat others with compassion, respect and gratitude. Positive parenting is as a results of secure parent-child relationship such as; kindness, love, sympathy, tolerance, unity and peaceful coexistence. Positive parenting does not merely

mean being nice to children even when they don't deserve it (Ruchele, 2020).

Attachment bond theory, pioneered by British psychologist John Bowlby (1969), is an emotional relationship with another person and supported parenting. John believed that the earliest bond formed by the children with their caregivers have tremendous impact that continues throughout life. This means that any behaviour that a child develops with may have tendency of exhibiting it even at adulthood and old age. He suggested that attachment also serves to keep the infant close to the mother, thus improving the child's chances of healthy survival. This is an indication that a child who lacks attachment may likely grow and develop poor mental health which might also lead to deviant behaviours. He lamented that caregiver is responsible for shaping all future relationships of the child; by strengthening the ability of the child to be focus, partake conscious feeling and calmness.

Bowlby perceived that nurturance and responsiveness were the primary determinants of attachment. He further postulated that attachment behaviour are instinctive and will be activated by any condition that deem for achievement of such behaviour, it could be in form of separation, fear and insecurity. For a child who was raised without partaking any conscious feeling and calmness may use separation, violence and conflicts as a coping mechanism. Research also discovered that children who fail to develop a secure attachment in the early years often have behavioral problems and relationship troubles later in life (Kendra, 2023).

In parenting theory, developed by Diana Baumrind advocated that positive parenting is focused on the understanding that children come into the world primed with tools and capacities to follow a path of optimal growth and development. Diana who described that children's behaviour can be attributed to the specific parenting style they experienced in their home. Her emphasis was on authoritative parenting. This style of parenting involves parents who provides structured environment with clearly defined rules and boundaries. They discipline their children but not by using harsh measures. The expectations placed on children

are reasonable and parents are available to their children and respond to their needs in a warm and caring manner. These parents are often able to control themselves and balance giving their children independency and guidance (Diana, 2022).

Some Significance of Positive Parenting Approach

The stronger bond between the parents and children helps to increase the trust between parents and children. This is because the children will have positive conversations more frequently with their parents as a result of positive parenting. These positive affirmations, along with an optimistic outlook attribute towards a stronger relationship. Children encounter more complex social-life problems and share their experiences with their right caregivers. It encourages children to involve in discussing their problems and prospects with right caregivers. High self-esteem, happiness, positive actions, mutual trust, and effective communication of positive parenting certainly result in a happy and pleasant environment at home and thereby boost self-esteem of the children and less stress for parents, children and society.

Better and effective flow of communication is an inevitable aspect of a positive parenting approach. The main principle of the positive parenting approach is to encourage a positive and pleasant conversation with children as against harsh and negative way. It promotes an open talk about their thoughts, beliefs and feelings as well as guiding them on good behaviour choices. It makes parents to share their experiences and feelings with children on a regular basis. Set up an inspiring and decent role model for children through examples displayed by their right caregivers. Caregivers who have a gentle approach towards most complicated issues will have similar children with mild and friendly approach towards life. Positive parenting often struggled to get away with the children irrational behaviour while avoiding negative consequences (Wikipedia 2020).

Influence of Negative Parenting on Children and Society

Marianna (2015), lamented that children with negative parenting are more at risk for their own relationship troubles, depression, anxiety, and aggression leading to their life setback and becoming nuisance in the society. Below is the influence of ongoing patterns of negative parenting towards various aspect of life:

Intelligence and education it affects the growth of children's brains, as well as their ability to learn. Research has documented that, children who receive corporal punishment score lower on IQ tests and other tests of cognitive ability. A child who is subject to any level of abuse, mistreatment or neglect often grow up with lower intelligence level and cognitive strength, which obviously have a detrimental effect on the child's education. Childhood trauma also impacts social and emotional intelligence, thus leading to relationship problems that additionally limit educational advancement and successes. Children raised under unsupportive parents engaged in obvious or restrained put-downs, or modeled destructive relationship and communication patterns, these issues will become wired into the brain circuitry during development. This can lead to lack of respect for and from others, negative relationships, and other sabotaging problems.

Nonchalant attitude of parent or guardian on moral values and norms, make children to grow up to be immoral individuals and become deviant persons such as; truant, disobedient to the well-established rules and regulation governing organizations and become isolates from rightly guided persons. When such children are realized, they become rejected and automatically converted to critical deviant adults. Most of their actions are based on personal interest, or decision from clubs and societies which lack religious compliances. In that regard, there will be frequent violence, conflicts, suicidal plan when their aims and objectives are not achieved.

When a child is parented with conflict, neural connections form an unhealthy manner. Conflict parenting certainly generates severe trauma, drug abuse, bullying and other related criminal behaviours. The fact is that the child's brain becomes overwhelmed with faulty stress,

contributing to irrational thinking and behaviours such as; intimidation of innocent persons. Brain scan studies revealed that trauma during child development stunts the growth of the child's brain in various ways, which can lead to violent behaviour due to limited cognitive abilities and difficulty in controlling aggression in a healthy manner (Marrianna, 2015).

Negative parenting causes childhood trauma leading to a host of mental health dysfunctions. Many studies have shown a significant link between childhood trauma and mental illness. Childhood trauma has been linked specifically to psychological disordered patterns such as; developmental delay, inappropriate response to interaction in social situations and deviant behaviours during adolescence period. Childhood trauma can also lead to anxiety and depression. All these psychological issues have tragic impacts on destruction of national economy, individual's life and society.

Children of substance abusers themselves replay their caregivers' patterns. Substance abuse often leads to serious lifelong problems that impact individuals and society as a whole. These problems include; inability to respond to family obligations, destroyed relationship, destruction of life and properties, lack of productivity and personal and national financial issues. Infants and small children need to experience love and positive attachment behaviours from their primary caregivers in order to conduct relationships optimally throughout life. If these things are not present, children may grow up to be too needy or attached, withdrawn, unreliable and inconsiderate.

Childhood trauma is proven to cause numerous physical illnesses and disorders including cancer, severe obesity, heart disease, chronic lung disease, skeletal fractures, and liver disease. It can lead to accelerated aging and inflammation, and has also been linked to chemical sensitivities and allergies. Unfortunately, these links are not noticeable to many parents and general public. Children whose parents are strict about money and anxious about not having enough (whether because of actual circumstances or due to fear-driven thriftiness) grow up in an environment

of limitation and stress, which may impact the child's status with peers, in ability to concentrate on studies, and feelings of anxiety.

Violence stemming from childhood trauma leads to increased rates of incarceration, and thus rising rates of prison spending. Research has linked child abuse with measurably higher healthcare costs in individuals. Those financial percentages could have been spent on other needs and initiatives.

Nature of Mental Health

Mental health refers to cognitive, behavioral, and emotional well-being of an individual at all stages of human development. It is all about how people think, feel, and behave. Good mental health preserves a person's ability to enjoy life. Doing this involves balancing life activities, responsibilities, and efforts to achieve psychological resilience. Understanding factors that connect people's lives, such as; interpersonal connections, and physical factors, stress, depression, and anxiety can all affect mental health and disrupt a person's routine. Mental ill health can affect daily living, relationships, education and physical health (Adam & Rachel, 2022).

National Security and Parenting

National security is the requirement to maintain the survival of the state through the utilization of economic power, diplomacy, power projection and political power. As such for a country to survive, it demands adequate security while to achieve sufficient security there must be peaceful co-existence among the citizens. Sandra E. (2013). refers to national security as absence of threats to acquire values and absence of fear that such values will be attacked. Today a lot of people are in state of phobia in attack of human life and economic values through; banditry, kidnapping, bomb blast, genocide, that claim many lives and properties as a result of conflict or crisis practiced in every part of the country. Major security challenges in Nigeria are;

Corruption, boko haram insurgency, Niger Delta militancy, social injustice, theft, armed robbery, kidnapping, assassination, murder, banditry, drug abuse, bullying, cybercrime, herders and farmers-conflicts, adverse use of social media etc. All these criminal acts are as a result of inappropriate parenting.

Conclusion

Hence, counselling is a safe and confidential collaboration between qualified counsellors and clients to promote mental health and wellbeing, enhancement of self-understanding, and to resolve identified insecurity challenges, and the primary purpose of parenting is to raise fully functional adults who can take care of themselves and make a positive contribution to the society. It can be concluded that, the basis of identified problems of insecurity challenges is as a result of nonchalant attitude in providing positive parenting and can be resolved through professional counselling. With propagation of right parenting, the society will breed dynamic and egalitarian citizens who can be patriotic and gradually curb the insecurity challenges.

Suggestions

- Empirical study of this topic should be carried out to ascertain the effectiveness and government should fund it for longtime and to monitor the leadership of such children for comparison.
- Efficient counselling services should be organized and presented to the stakeholders by professional counsellors through sensitization, seminars, conferences, social media and must especially the use of Parent Teacher Association (PTA) forum.
- Government should as a matter of fact fund and support counsellors in propagation of positive parenting for secure society.
- Counsellors should sensitize all stakeholders that parenting is the responsibility of every custodian of the child at that moment.

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