Student Counselling: Case Analysis

Student’s Name

Institution

Health among the Aged Population

Any social environment in which the various individuals present have different cultural backgrounds is bound to present intercultural strife as the different people try to understand each other. Teenage pressure to fit in to a particular group amplifies the burden among students in various learning environments, which necessitates the existence of an elaborate guidance and counseling program within the institutions. The program should not merely exist as a formality, but should also be capable of providing the necessary solutions to the issues faced by the students therein. Consequently, as most students do not understand the social and psychological aspects surrounding their predicaments, they will always present their problems to the counseling department, from which the professional counselor would address the issue in the most professional way possible. Janeen’s scenario is a perfect example of the challenges that students who feel different from their colleagues face in the school environment.

**Issues Affecting Janeen**

Firstly, Janeen faces pressure and stigma from her social circles due to her choice of dress code, which threatens her self-esteem. The inference that she “dresses like a guy” indicates that she does not match the expected level of dressing for a young girl her age. Notably, sexuality has been one of the primary social issues affecting teenagers in the modern generation, sparking a conversation on where precisely the society should draw the line on the expectation of children’s dressing choices (Ringrose, 2011). The norms set by social media and other platforms on what would be termed as girly are some of the primary sources of Janeen’s issues.

Secondly, her dropping grades are a cause of concern, which exemplifies to reduced career choices in the event of poor academic performance. Notably, Janeen has “been skipping school, and her grades have been dropping.” In as much as this directly affects her academic and career choices, it would be important to note that doing so has some relation to social issues. Answering the question on where she spends the time when she skips school would be the most appropriate way to understand the social connection between the academics and career issues. If she misses classes and gives some excuse to stay home, then she would be in a safe environment, but in need of more significant attention from the parents. On the other hand, if she skips school and goes to unknown places to pass the time, then such could be a more significant cause for concern.

The social issues affecting Janeen have the potential to influence her academic welfare. Addressing such matters through a precise analysis of the risk factors associated with the problems faced by the student. From such an understanding, it would be possible to determine the potential mitigation measures and the intensity necessary to put such measures into practice.

**Risk Factors for the Student**

Janeen’s family background in Christianity and the position taken by the church on sexuality reduces her ability to talk to her parents about the challenges faced in school because of her dress choices. On the other hand, consistency in putting on clothes that attract the negative criticism infer that she is comfortable with such a dressing, and would prefer if it remained unchanged. Further, the threat from the parents that continued poor performance would see her taken to an out-state boarding school strains the relationship between her and the family to the extent that she would hardly go to the parents for advice. Consequently, with such an amount of pressure and no one to talk to, the environment acts as a high risk factor for Janeen’s vulnerability to depression.

According to research, self-esteem, as is the aspect derailed by Janeen’s environment, is a significant contributor to depression vulnerability (Sowislo & Orth, 2013). Depression is never the final stage whenever an individual faces the challenge as lack of treatment could eventually lead to adversities such as the existence of suicidal thoughts and eventual actualization of such adverse ideas. In the long term, self-esteem ends up being a critical risk factor for suicide.

On the other hand, poor class attendance is a contributor to limited career choices shortly. In most cases, young people choose their career paths while choosing their academic majors, and lack of proper performance in some of the most critical subjects could limit the available choices. Janeen’s parent's emphasis on quality academic performance is intended to stir her into putting the effort in her school work to promote such appropriate academic excellence and increase her choices in potential careers.

**Janeen’s Family Needs**

Firstly, Janeen confirms the level of intolerance in her family by stating that she would not tell her parents about what she feels regarding her gender for she “fears they will disown her.” Being strict and active members of the Baptist Church, Janeen believes that her parents would not understand enough about the issues she faces, which leaves her to think that she is better placed keeping her struggles a secret than talking to her parents about it. From this inference, it becomes clear that a significant gap exists between the parents and Janeen, which makes her unable to fathom the reaction she would get from seeking their input on the challenge she is facing. Consequently, there is a need for the parents to spend more time with their daughter from which they would grow to understand her and possibly know the reason behind her slacking performance in school. Their assumption that the low performance is primarily a result of poor effort in her studies is superficial.

**Case Implications**

Deteriorating academic performance is proof enough that Janeen was once a good student, active in the classroom and never missing classes without a valid reason. However, along the way, several factors, including reduced self-esteem resulted in reduced motivation for involvement in schoolwork, the result of which was a reduction in her academic performance. These were the external signs of the challenges that Janeen faced in her social life in school, based upon which parents intervened with threats about changing transferring her to a different school.

From an ethical perspective, it is essential to look at the case from multiple angles. Firstly, continued poor performance could be Janeen’s way to communicate to her parents that she wishes to be transferred from her current school. Research on academic behavior and school performance indicate that there are always chances of poor performance whenever a student’s attitude towards her school is negative (Green et al., 2012). It is already clear that the student finds it difficult to talk to her parents, which implies that she would be unwilling tobring up the issue about her wish to transfer. Further, the possibility of having to explain the source of her want to move, given her opinion of the possible reaction from her parents, increases the chances of the student communicating her frustrations at the school in an unorthodox way.

On the other hand, the poor academic performance could be a mere consequence of the reduced attention in the classroom and failure to attend classes. Academic achievement is primarily based on the amount of effort that a student puts towards her academic objectives. With Janeen feeling unsettled in her school environment and finding solace in skipping classes, her academic success is put in peril. The parent’s threat to transfer Janeen to another school is based on this assumption, that the low performance is based on the poor effort from their daughter. The two explanations of the issues faced by Janeen require different approaches since in one case, she acts consciously to attract attention, while in the other case the reaction is a result of external factors.

With such an understanding on the approaches to understanding the situation, there is minimal risk of committing an ethical error in which the professional counselor would suggest a solution without proper knowledge of the exact issue at hand. For instance, approaching the social problem as a cause of the reduced performance without the student’s awareness could lead the counselor to support measures that help the student be more attentive in the classroom and reduce chances of absconding classes. Further, a different set of measures would be put as mitigations to the esteem issues faced by the student. If this were not the appropriate solution due to the first case being the prevailing situation, then the resolution offered would be insufficient in reducing the risks faced by the student.

**Therapeutic Relationship**

Having understood the various aspects of the case, the next step for any counseling’s officer is always intervention and interaction with the parties involved in providing a solution to the identified issues. The communication should be focused on getting the parties to find their way towards the resolution, which would ensure their active involvement in alleviating the issues (Campbell & Simmonds, 2011). Nonetheless, irrespective of such efforts by the counselor, there is never guarantee that formation of such a therapeutic relationship.

Firstly, the relation between the parents and the child would adversely affect the ability to build a therapeutic relationship in the case. In the absence of trust for her parent’s reaction, Janeen may be mistrustful of other parties, such as the school counselor, whom she may view as likely to inform the parents of whatever she says. Since she fears her parents finding out about her struggle with gender identity, Janeen is expected to present a challenge in freely talking to the counselor, until she develops some level of trust. However, the necessity of the parent’s participation in the process makes their involvement unavoidable, which ends up complicating the development of a therapeutic relationship.

Further, knowledge of the parents’ religious position is likely to be a source of bias, in which the counselor would view them as being the primary cause of the issue faced by the child. Despite facing difficulties in school, any child should find ease in communicating with his or her parents (Bjarnason & Arnarsson, 2011). However, the parents should ensure that they create an environment in which the child in question would find ease in seeking guidance and solace from interaction with the parents. Consequently, the presentation of the parents in the case is likely to be a source of bias that could influence the therapeutic relationship between the parents, child, and counselor, and ultimately affect the recovery process.

**Possible Interventions**

With the knowledge at hand, the initial intervention plan ought to be communication with Janeen. As earlier indicated, there are two possible approaches to solving the issues involved in the case, and the soundest and ethical solution lies in understanding appropriate view the case. Only through interaction with Janeen would the counselor know whether she is intentionally involved in mischief gain the attention other parents, or the reduced academic performance is a consequence of struggles in her social life.

Collaboration with Janeen’s parents would be an essential part of the intervention process since they are actively involved in the issues faced by the student. Involvement of parents in any counseling program always helps translate the recovery process in the home environment, which ultimately contributes to sustainable improvement in the parties involved (Campbell & Simmonds, 2011).

Primarily, the approach to the intervention process would help build some level of trust with the student before bringing the parents into the healing process. In addition to helping understand the best approach to dealing with Janeen’s issue, it would ensure high chances of recovery as the therapeutic relationship between the student and counselor would already be created. Consequently, the intervention approach herein is best suited for the situation as it not only helps to achieve expected results but also reduces the risks involved in the healing process.

References

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