
UNDERSTANDING DYNAMICS CONTRIBUTIONS OF COUNSELOR'S ON
DISASTER MANAGEMENT IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Disaster incidences have posed a threat to human security in the contemporary world, going by its adverse consequences on human lives. This paper examine disaster management in Nigeria from the perspective of counseling. Certain concepts such as, concept of disaster management in Nigeria, concept of counseling, and concept of counseling and disaster management in Nigeria, counselors and disaster victims were examined. Methodologies used are primary and secondary data. In this paper, instances of challenge or effect faced by the causalities were cited, such as psychological effect, mental health condition, life style factors which lead to emotional disturbances, such as excessive fear, anxiety and equally traumatic experiences were given attention . This was necessitated by the concern to highlight the contribution of counseling as a pivotal of genuine management of disaster in Nigeria. The paper anchored the theoretical framework on cognitive- behavior therapy (CBT), Ration-Emotive therapy (RET) Humanistic and logo therapy theories. The paper proffered some preventive measures and psychothepeatic interventions to assist in the challenges faced during disaster fatalities.

Keyword: Dynamic, contribution, counselor, disaster, management

Introduction

Over the years, it was perceived that counseling services are only required by individuals who have unusual problems which require special attention. However, recent trend has shown that counseling is becoming increasingly important for all categories of people irrespective of their socio-cultural orientation. Among those who require counseling in order to maximize their present condition are those victims of disaster Mitchell, Jones, Lovell, and Comba (2013) joined others researchers to opined that disaster incidence have posed a threat to human security in the contemporary world, going by its adverse consequences on human lives. Disaster have been identified as one of the biggest challenges of sustainable development and security of nations. According to W.H.O: (2002) Disaster is defined as situation which implies unforeseen, serious and immediate threat to human life or any

occurrence that would lead to damage, loss of human life, economic destruction, deterioration of health and educational services on a scale that require assistance from outside.

In Nigeria, the incidence of disaster, much as their impacts has been rather threatening in recent years, this has recommended disaster management as a crucial issues in Nigeria's development and security strategies, unfortunately the issue of disaster management in Nigeria has not been properly situated and prioritized to include contributions of counselors such as handling of post traumatic counseling which is as a result of combination of death, injuries, illness, loss of properties and damages cannot be effectively managed with routine procedures or resources (Vanguard 2012). These events can be natural or equipment malfunction, human error or biological hazards, disaster and diseases. In this regard counsellors perspectives must be concerned about the universal risk for disaster across the nation at large and the likely increase of actual and potentials effects of different forms of disaster. Mikaye (2012) was of the opinion that one of basis for counsellor was to support those who have challenge or the other to focuses on how those victims can be emotionally balance and also get assistance from those around their environment. This is very vital in their adjustment process. The disaster casualties must have their minds prepared on how to access support in their adjustment process and also ensure that this support is mutual. Counseling services is therefore important in this area as this will help to educate these victims on how they can receive assistance without feeling intimidated or offended. Which helps to simplify the adjustment process of disaster victims. It is against this background that the researcher sought to examine the contribution of counselors on disaster management as well as psychology well-being of the affected person or individuals.

Literature Review

Concept of Disaster

Disasters are veritable existential mishaps, often referred to as emergencies, they have always seemed bound to occur, as a matter of eventuality. As Ndace (2008:7) rightly points out, as long as man lives there will surely be one form of disaster or the other, over the years, Nigeria has experienced different forms and dimension of disaster, ranging from natural disaster, man – made disaster, environmental disaster, complex disaster, pandemic disaster and negligence disaster among others.

- (1) *Natural Disaster*:- This include floods, hurricanes, earthquakes and volcano eruption that have immediate impacts on human health, causing death and suffering for example flood, landslides, fires, Tsunamis climate event, hail and wild fire. However, the top 10 natural disasters in Nigeria between 1980 - 2011 show that they are mainly made up of draught,

flood and epidemic, while draught affected 3,000 people, flood in undated areas that led to the evacuation of 3,014, 265 people and epidemic affected 80,000. In all, the ten top natural disasters affected 6,094 265. Among the ten top natural disasters that affected Nigeria flood has highest frequency and affected more people. All the major floods that led to the displacement of people in Nigeria occurred between 1980 and 2020 (Odjugo, 2012) This period coincided with the period when rainfall become more erratic with higher intensity due to intensifying impacts of climate change (Odjugo 2005, 2012). In 2009 and 2010, Nigeria ranked 12th and 11th amongst countries with highest reported levels of displacement by sudden - on set disasters world wide. According to IDMCS global data flooding and soil erosion in state along the Niger river and its tributaries, River Katsina Ala and river Benue regularly cause internal displacement about a million living in the low -lying plains of the rivers Niger are considered risk (Chinedu 2008, U . S . D O S) . According to the national Emergency Management Agency Nigeria where all notably flood which was triggered by the opening of flood gates on the Chalawa and Jiga dams authorities following heavy rains (BBC 24 Sept.2017) that displaced 140,000 people in 2013. The affected states included Zamfara, Kaduna, Niger, Benue Adamawa , Nassarawa, Sokoto, Jigawa, and Abuja. The worst hit states were Kogi, Benue, Taraba, Anamabra, Niger delta communities recently Nigeria witnessed a spate of flood with bursting of the banks of the River Niger and Benue down to the south in to the Niger delta, destroying lives and properties worth billions within the drainage basin of the two rivers. Several hectares of farms, livestock, homes and infrastructures were destroyed.

- (2) *Man-made Disaster*:- This forms of disaster causes directly and principally by one or more identifiable deliberate or negligent of human actions, it could be haunted by images of injury or by the massive nature of the destruction such as civil war, conflicts, epidemics as we witness fire out break, road, rail, and air crashes Nigeria vulnerable to many hazards and disaster impacts because of high population densities in urban areas (50%) of Nigeria's live in urban areas (Nwaka 2005) an inability to integrate risk reduction measures in to national development and plans programs (Abang 2005) and poverty (NDMF 2010) . In addition an international medical humanitarian organization (2020) reports on a "catastrophe" and health crisis in Nigeria such as Diarrhea, Maltrition , and severe starvation kill at least people on a daily basis children in these areas are increasingly at risk to man- made disaster. The deadliest of the epidemics is the bacterial infection disease (Cholera) which started 6th may 1991. It affected 10,000 people and killed 7,289 people in Bauch and Kaduna state. At the summit, it was reported 10 out of 20 children in

Africa are living in conflict affected settings and exposed to numerous risk with Nigeria as a case study of banditry, kidnapping, young girls rape and sexual assault which could lead to different sexually transmitted infection and trauma herdsman, Boko Haram sect, ISWAP and host of others posing most of the danger leading to internally displacement of people in different part of the country especially in the North East, North West, North central and other geographical zones in the country, schooling has been deeply affected in these areas perpetrating violence and conflict against the members of the community threatening the peace of the nation at large.

- (3) *Environmental Disaster*:- This type of disaster includes technological fire out breaks or industrial accident usually involving in the production or use of hazardous materials where these materials are produced or that results from global warming, through the emission of green house gases and other related factors this form of disaster is currently ravaging the Niger Delta people of Nigeria due to gas flaring activities of the multinational oil companies in the area. The cases of mutation of gene and pandemic epidemic disease out breaks have been reported like increase of atmosphere temperatures as causative agent if not properly managed result in colossal loss of life.
- (4) *Complex Disaster*:- This involving in break down of authority, looting and attacks on strategy installation including conflicts situations according to British council (2004) the International Federation of social workers (FNW) (2016) & Ejo (2016) identify complex disaster such as communal clashes, ethno-religious crises protest as we witness end wars and war, many people die due to complex disaster for example terrorism, banditry cattle rustler kidnapping killing people indiscriminately & bomb blast which destroying many communities, people are running for their life not minding their properties, money, building, businesses and rest of others thereby making them to migrate to another place for settlement they began a fresh life children's education are altered as such.
- (5) *Pandemic Disaster*:- This also involve a sudden onset of contagious disease that affects health, disrupts services and business bringing economic and social life as we witness Ebola, Cholera, Covid-19 outbreak currently facing the world at large that making life capable of losing many life.
- (6) *Negligence Disaster*;- This could be as a result of ignorance, timidity, un mindfulness, and sometimes will full act. Nigeria was witnessed several fire disaster due to smokers that throw remains of cigarettes into the bush during dry season some often forms of negligent disasters comprises

including on water channel, oil spill, use of chemicals for fishing, explosions during war incessant falling of trees, repeated farming, overgrazing, violence ozone layer depletion factory fires and dams construction, mining, and often industrial factories have been reported having some volatile substances capable of explosion or collapses leading to loss of life and potentials environmental damages.

Concept of Counseling

Counseling as an area of applied psychology whose activities are to measure and describe behavior to predict and control behavior and to understand and explain behavior. It is a discipline that focus on the study of man and his environment to help those who are challenged and to make rightful decisions so as to improve their situations. However counseling has been seen by different researchers in different ways depending on their interest and professional bodies, counseling is the process of helping an individual who is in distress particularly disaster incidence arising from any activity that may have made him / her depressed. According to Oviogbodu (2015) counseling is been defined as a number of procedures in assisting an individual to solve his/her problems. Counseling is more involved emotionally in the affective realm personalized learning, that is emotional and feelings value & attitudes. Thus counseling services are therefore required for individuals having developmental problems because of the handicap they suffer in any area of emotion either because of hereditary factors or environmental conditions.

The counselors has some goals in training and attained feat of assisting the individuals Okobia and Okorodudu (2004) state the following goals to be achieved.

- (i) Improving relationship
- (ii) Enhancing coping skills
- (iii) Facilitating behavior change
- (iv) Identification of role problem
- (v) Facilitating Client potentials

In this regard, this specific goal would enable the individual to attained the prerequisite in helping the causalities of disaster eventually counsel. The contribution of counselors is purely humanitarian assistance in rehabilitating /helping people to forget their emotion or physical problems. Counseling for disaster management involves other issues like curbing with stress, anxieties, trauma, shocks, feeling of insecurity, post traumatic stress, mental health and host of others.

Concept of Disaster Management in Nigeria

In 1999, National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) was established to

replace NERA and manage disasters in Nigeria it was designed to minimize loss and damages there by removing people & property from threatened location & by facilitating timely and effective rescue, relief and rehabilitation which are usually co-ordinated by multi-agency response to reduce the impact of disaster. It is a long term result relief activities such as ; providing shelter, food, water, preventing disease and repairing vital services which includes rebuilding infrastructure , health care services & rehabilitation. However any effort at managing disaster must apply prevention strategies to reduce the impact of natural & man – made disasters we cannot decide how many storms will strike , nor how fiercely the winds will blow or the waters will rage but we can decide - we must decide together, that require collective approach by all stakeholders that call upon the role councilors can play on disaster management. Due to fact that, the psycho-social needs of the victims of the disaster continue to remain unmet due to the instability of the situation, direct exposure to violence and family separation turning life in to a living hell for millions of people in the sense that crimes are committed against their dignity and liberty by the armed forces officials and even humanitarian aid givers sexually exploit them (Tambuwal, Abubakar & Goni, 2017).

Effect of Disaster

1. Psychological effect of disaster when an individual survive massive disaster, it could result to the following:-
 - i. Post traumatic stress:- extreme stress is common in the aftermath of a storm the British council (2004) also reported that four (4) most common psychological reaction are found with the victims to include post
 - Traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) depression, summarization and existential dilemmas. Stalwart (2001) also stated that the traumatic events is persistently re- experienced in a variety of ways such as recurrent and intrusive, stressing recollection of event sudden acting or feeling as if the traumatic event that symbolized or resemble an aspect of the traumatic events Stalwart added that symptoms may persist and may show as difficulty falling or staying as sleep, irritability or outburst of anger difficulty in concentrating, being ever on the alert, being easily started and anxiety. These experiences undoubtedly put these victims emotionally and psychologically off balance.
 - (ii) *Mental Health Condition*:- For people already experiencing a mental illness, a traumatic event can symptoms can be worse and for others, a natural disaster can spark depression , extreme stress, generalized anxiety obsessive compulsion and host of others problems sometimes these issues arise as a result of a person's attempt to control the environment after a storm takes away control while, working with individuals diagnosed with PTSD, counselors are often expected to target decreasing the severity of recurrent and intrusive distressing memories of the

traumatic event, emotional avoidance, and heightened physiological arousal (Makinson & Young, 2012). The outcomes may include decreasing aggressive outbursts hyper vigilance and sleep disturbance that appeared or increased in intensity after exposure to the traumatic event (APA, 2013 & Seligman & Reichenberg, 2021).

(iii) *Shock*:- immediate aftermath of a natural disaster, the first reaction is often a combination of shock denial, shock tend to give way to much stronger feelings, which can hit days, weeks or months after disaster strikes. The core components of exposure programmes for PTSD are imagine exposure, revisiting the traumatic memory repeated recounting it loud and processing the revisiting experience, and in viva exposure, the repeated confrontations with situations and objects that cause distress but are not inherently dangerous.

(iv) *Health*:- heat waves/temperature-related illness, severe storms, air pollution and diseases linked to climate change threaten people's health in many part of the country. Some people will be particularly at risk, especially those who are poor, very young or elderly or disable or those who live in coastal areas or big cities as such it can cause illness like cramps, heat stroke and even death.

(v) *Effect To First Responders*:- In this case people who are on the scene at the time of the storm or who witness the immediate aftermath like fire fighters, police as well as media-men can also experiences psychological symptoms they could be haunted by people, they were unable to save by images of injuring people or by the massive nature of the destruction, some witnesses may even feel guilt that someone else home or life was destroyed for witness and first responders are often the same including PTSD, depression and other mental health conditions and people who are present in the aftermath of the storm may need as much and support as the victims themselves.

However, the following have been identified as some common features of the casualties of the disaster:-

Personality characteristic are intrinsically built in and manifest when one is facing certain challenges in life which can leads to low self-esteem and self –efficacy, alienation, withdrawn, distrustful, or pessimistic, anxious, impulsive, inattentive, hyperactive, or distractible, passive – aggressive, and dependent.

Differential thinking skills on tasks that require convergent thinking style, lack insight and critical ability, and lack goal-directed behavior.

Maladaptive strategies, posses poor self-regulation strategies, lack of perseverance, lack of self-control, and antisocial or rebellion.

Thus, various personality traits, behaviours and emotional reactions have been linked to victim of disaster in research and observational studies. These include any of the following:- insecurity, conflict, depression negativism and excessive fear and anxiety

Counseling and Disaster Management in Nigeria

The concept of counseling was detailed by Tuchili and Ndhlovu (2016:15) that counseling is a curative exercise which aims at helping an individual to accept a problematic situation which he / she is faced with by way of helping him / her make an informed decision from any available choices. It can therefore be deduced that counseling is a problem solving exercise aimed at helping individual out of an unpleasant situation by helping him / her make the best available choice among the existing alternatives. Mabula and Edna (2015) revealed that through counseling the victims of the disaster are expected to have access to information that can help direct their regular life plans and also help them make progress in our society it also go along way in affecting and shaping individual life in general.

Roy (2014) expressed that behavioural counseling is provided by professional for those who are undergoing a problem and require professional assistance to overcome such problems. The affected victims of disaster who have problem of negativism, trauma as well as those who have depression and excessive fear and anxiety or anti social / rebellion as a result of a behavioural problem will need behavioural counseling to develop acceptable behaviours needed for effective life style and productivity.

Mcfield (2009) pointed out that in the process of behavioural counseling for adjustment among people of the disaster victim, the counselor or behavior therapists needs to help clients to develop desired behavior by first extinguishing unwanted behaviours using the principles of reinforcement before developing the right behavior. It is during this counseling service that unacceptable behaviours are dropped and new and expectable one's are developed and this is the beginning of the adjustment process which is fundamental to their contributing meaningfully and cordially to the development of the society. According to Dwived & Misra opined that the victim of disaster also require educational counseling especially those with insufficient education in either to equip them with the right skill and knowledge that will help them become more productive in whatever area of responsibility that is assigned to them, emphasis is made on personal, social, career and mental development of beneficiaries. This is very important for those individuals as such knowledge help them to become efficient workers and even self – reliant in most cases.

Andronic and Tatua (2013:125) emphasized that in an effort to improve on educational counseling especially among the disaster victims, centre and office of counseling activities should centre in the following: Advising individuals parents on issue concerning enlightenment programmes so as to have self knowledge, enlightenment programmes and also providing support counseling for the victims they must have their minds prepared on how to access support in their adjustment

process and to also ensure that this supports is mutual, when this is done, it makes it easier for these to live a meaningful life which is free from challenges. Counseling services is therefore important in this area as this will help to educate and simplify the adjustment process of such kinds.

Counselor and Disasters Victims

Counseling is a service for crises intervention and treatment for the handicapped as well as a service for the normal people experiencing relatively regular or normal problems (Denga, 2013). Assent that the counselor require special training and competence to counsel the victims to accept their position and their potential and to do those things that they can do to relief them of fear, anxiety and depression. Rational Emotive counseling technique can assist each one of them to engage in rational self-analysis by working with the counselor, can guarantee the success of the session. Individualized counseling is also essential since there are varying degrees of cases. Frustration and anger are other traits of the victims frustration leads to a feeling of anger and a sense of inadequacy. Cognitive based approaches, such as Albert Ellis Rational Emotive therapy can deal with or help the individual with anger that results from frustration or depression. The counselor must show love, recognition of assets in the client, Empathy and motivate him/her up feel positive and act positively in their areas of challenges.

Njama-abang (2015) noted that counseling the victims is predicated on the belief that they should counsel on vocational guidance that will enable them survive in life and forget about the incidence. Thus, the counselors should learn to become engaged in modifying vocational educational programmes that include a provision to test their skills and discover the realities of the world of work are essential.

Asuqu (2010) enumerated the following competences that are required of a professional counselor in handling the clients.

- Becoming strong advocate of employment

- Developing and utilizing community resources which bear on vocational development

- Conducting individual and group counseling for vocational placement and consolidation.

- Organizing visits, lectures casual talk aimed at furnishing them with information on jobs to facilitate appropriate decision making

- They can be trained to carry out jobs in stores, bakeries, beauty shops and sheltered workshops.

- Designing competent- based educational programmes

In addition, Asuqu (2010) further pointed out the following counseling strategies for the victims of disaster.

Reality counseling:- It help them to accept reality and the absence of power to alter it. This process will help the victims to accept what is, rather than doing battle with windmills in the hope that reality will change. Rational counseling will also help them to be less judgmental and personally grow.

Talking Away The Mental Pain:- intense feelings of hurt and shame live with the victims as they look at themselves very low in the society. The counsellor's role is to take the pain away. An empathic counselor reassures such clients that entering the territory of pain is a normal thing in life and that he knows how to support them in their journey through the territory.

Methodology

This study adopted primary and secondary data from other journals and articles so as to determines the effectiveness of dynamic contributions of counselors on disaster management in Nigeria.

Theoretical Framework

This study adopt rational emotional therapy (RET) theory of personality was developed by Albert Ellis, a clinical psychologists in the 1950s. The theory rests on the assumption that faulty cognitions like maladaptive beliefs, expectations, and ways of thinking are the cause of abnormal behaviour. The relevance of the theory to this study is to bluntly, confront people with their irrational beliefs and provide "psycho-education or re-education on ways to change. Behavior therapy is concerned with changing learned behavior while cognitive behavior therapy is combative in changing the negative internalized thought of the victims , which makes them think awful about himself/herself in self-condemnation hence sees nothing wrong committing or breaking the law. It is the therapy's view that anxiety, depression and other Emotional disorders spring from the way we think hence the goal is for the individual to open his / her mind challenge his resumption and think about the old problem in new ways. The therapist act like a partner, friend and teacher, all rolled into the (Kassin 1995, in Iwandu 2015) . This is what is called "cognitive restructuring".

Other psychotherapeutic theories interventions to support the treatment of victims of disaster Behaviour are:-

- Cognitive-behaviour therapy (CBT): was originated in the cognitive emphasis of social learning theories by (Bandura, 1977) is the treatment approach that involves identifying and altering negative thinking styles related to psychological disorders such as depression and anxiety and replacing them with more positive beliefs and attitudes and ultimately more adaptive behavior and coping styles

(Durand and Barlow, 1997).

- The client centre approach developed by Carl Rogers (1951) the assumption of the theory was base on the beliefs that problems originated from emotional blocks or conflicts and that people already have the necessary objectives knowledge for deciding what should be done about their problems. The humanistic existential view is that human being are capable of living rich, fulfilling lives, relatively free of urges towards unhappiness and destruction, towards one's important role in the society. The relevance of this theory to this study is that the client centre counselor is to establish the proper condition whereby the normal development patterns of the individual can be brought back into play. In Roger's view the goal of the counseling is to make the client become more mature and channel the process towards self actualization and free the clients behaviours that are faulty and that hinder his innate tendency towards self actualization. The therapy is equally referred to as "nondirective" and "person - centered" therapy and even sometimes as self concept theory because of the assumption that man's inferiority complex, depression, anxiety , frustration and other crises in life push an individual to misdemeanor mean or undesirable acts. All these are caused by self- perceived poor image or self concept (Kassin, 1995 in Iwundu 2015). The beliefs of the client centered therapist is that , as successful treatment progresses, clients become more self – confident more aware of their feelings more accepting of themselves, more comfortable and genuine with other people, more reliant on self- evaluation than on the judgments of others and more effective and relaxed (Iwundu, 2015).

Specific approaches are relied upon by the Client – centered Therapist such as :-

Unconditional Positive regard:- The attitude of the therapist is that of warmth, total acceptance of the client irrespective of his age, gender, socio-economic background, race or ethnicity etc. The therapist respects the worth and dignity of the client without being biased or discriminate.

Empathic:-The therapist tries to appreciate how the world looks from the clients view –point by entering into his frame of reference using "third ear ("mind interpretation of the clients feeling), putting himself/ herself into the client's shoes.

Genuineness: The therapist must be transparent and sincere in his dealings with the client. The quality of being candid or showing candor makes their client develop confidence in himself/ herself and also in the therapist.

Concreteness:- If the therapist must earn the respect he deserve he must be firm in what he say and does, as every client is very sensitive . if the

therapist is not firm, the client will not take him / her serious and may discontinue with therapy.

Congruence:- Counseling is not for trivialities. The Therapist must be consistence by ensuring he does not allow the client to digress from what initially formed the basis for counseling , directly or indirectly, because counseling is a serious business that demands concentration and focus.

Reflection :- This is a paraphrased summary of the client's words and feelings that appears to accompany them. Reflection confirms communication, shows the therapist interest and helps the client in perceive thought and feelings , (Bennsten & Colleagues,1994 in Iwundu 2015)

Existential Therapy :- Similar to Regerian therapy except that it emphasized the idea of Freewil and meaningful living, as it tries to restore the individual's courage so that he can make a choice for himself and feel in control of the environment rather that controlled by its (Dworezky,1994) A typical example of existential therapy is Viktor Frankl's Logotherapy. Logotherapy is therapy of meaning or therapy through meaning. It is a meaning oriented therapy premised on the ground that despair, despondency, boredom, lack meaning in life, precipitate radical taking of one's life aggressive or violence unleashed on property or on an innocent person, the mental anguish is called "psychogenic neurosis" which means anxiety neurosis which manifest itself in all kinds of phobia, compulsion and obsession, later styled " obsessive- compulsive neurosis " which gives birth to despair, meaningless or existential vacuum. It is the latter that make people seem to have written off themselves to the point of indulgence in sex abuse substance abuse and infringing rights.

Conclusion

Having discussed extensively on the nature and forms of disasters in Nigeria, disaster preparedness effect of disaster and some concern features of casualties of disaster. However, the issue of disaster management among individuals in Nigeria today is a serious concern to the stake holders particularly educational counselors and the world in general . The challenge has impede the psychological and emotional effect for the victims in an attempt to live a meaningful life are often in terrible conditions and hardly find the basic need met which result to post - traumatic stress disorder (PTSA) depression, antisocial or rebellion and existential dilemmas. Counselors role and effective counseling will help alleviate the pains and raise hopes of these causalities to have stable balance of life, counseling and psychotherapy are the sure ways of addressing the psychological needs of these people in their stressful and frustrating condition.

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