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SOCIODYNAMIC PHILOSOPHY OF HELPING

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Most counselling theories do not recognize the value of philosophical thinking. Instead counselling methods are typically based on psychological ideas, and, to some extent, ideas from the business world.

SocioDynamic Counselling incorporates a philosophy of helping as an essential conceptual foundation upon which to build counselling practice. An individual seeking help in any aspect of life is asking the question: "How should I live my life?" **This a philosophical question.** How should I interpret my existential situation? What is the right thing to do? What reasons will help me decide how to move forward in life in ways that allow me to achieve my goals and to do so in a way that does not bring harm to others?

The counsellor is unceasingly engaged in ethical decision making and moral reasoning. What is the meaning of "helping" in different cultural and world view contexts? Who is responsible for what? What are the limits to helping? What distinguishes helping from hindering?

Main ideas in SocioDynamic philosophy of helping include:

1. The primary value in the SocioDynamic perspective is respect.
2. In democratic societies, individuals should have an opportunity to learn those capacities that enable them to achieve goals of their own choosing. Personal existence is a three-way tension between individual freedom, social responsibility and constraint.
3. Individuals should be regarded as whole persons and not as objects, labels, classifications, cases, diagnostic categories or segments.
4. Individual development is a self-creation process.
5. Human beings are moral agents and social actors.
6. The ability to self-observe empowers all other capacities.
7. The ability to participate in dialogical communication empowers all other capacities. Communication literacy includes three modes: speech, writing, and visualizing.
8. The primary process for constructing selves, relationships and social relations is symbolic interaction. Humans are meaning-makers.
9. Helping is a culture-sensitive process. Culturally sensitive solutions to problems requires the use of cultural tools for negotiating realities.
10. The preferred method of counsellor self-presentation is "human face".