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## Values And Principles Of Mediation, Counselling And Advocacy

This essay will evaluate and highlight the similarities between the values and principles that underpin mediation, counselling and advocacy. It discusses the role of mediation within young people and how it may impact in the case study of Sam. A particular type of advocacy and its impacts will be explored and recommended for Sam.

The principle of voluntary participation in mediation demonstrates the willingness of the party to communicate with each other in order to resolve conflict. The party benefits from remaining in control all the way, participation is freely agreed and is a matter of choice ( ). However, mediation is based on more than one perspective, requiring both parties to agree for mediation in order for negotiation to take place. It is important for each party to recognise that they are in the mediation process out of their own free will to work through the dispute ( ). Mediation becomes difficult if either party is unwilling to co-operate or compromise to come to a solution. Voluntary participation is equally important in mediation and counselling services.

A significant difference in mediation is that mediators need to remain impartial, not taking anyone's side or giving advice ( ). This ensures the parties involved that they are not being judged or blamed. It can become particularly difficult to agree on a solution when both parties believe in the strengths of their own case and not being able to verify the weight of an argument.

One of the core principles relevant to counselling is beneficence. Beneficence is the act of charity, mercy and kindness. A counsellor promotes what is good for the client and strives to provide the best care with the expectation that the client will benefit from counselling ( ). However, counselling is not always the best answer to a problem. The client is weak and vulnerable and need someone to help them decide. The counsellor holds the position of trust, power and authority which comes with high levels of responsibility to ensure these standards are upheld.

Respecting the client's autonomy empowers the client to make their own decisions, enabling the client to deal with the difficulties in a more productive and independent manner. Autonomy helps with independence, to identify personal goals and bring out desired changes for self-realisation in order to find ways to progress ( ). However, one of the common ethical difficulties in counselling may arise when the client's decision conflicts with the counselor's duty of beneficent of looking out for their best interest. For example, if a young person wants to continue to binge drink even when the drinking is causing problems in their relationships, the counsellor will have to respect the young person's decision even while trying to convince the young person otherwise. Autonomy is promoted in counselling, mediation and advocacy services.

Advocacy aims to provide clarity of purpose, their role and responsibilities for acting for the client is made clear which is key for the client to know what to expect. Advocates seeks to ensure the clients voice is heard; they do not make the choices for them even if their ideas differ ( ). Having good knowledge on the laws and rights for the individual can help to protect

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clients and voice their concerns. Communication is important, the advocate needs to fully understand the issue in order to interpret for complexity of the case and produce an effective response (Moss, 2015). A similarity between counselling and advocacy is that they are bias towards their client's needs whereas mediation is an impartial service.

Family relationships often break down in stressful situations to the extent that families feel that living apart is the best option. The involvement of a neutral third party can help support the family to continue to live together through mediation. For a young person life chances are usually better the longer they are living at home. Mediation can provide practical help in dealing with conflicts in family relationships. Learning how to resolve their difficulties and helping the young person to remain in the family home until it is appropriate for them to leave. The National Homelessness Advice Service (NHAS) suggest that mediation can help to avoid family breakdowns through resolving disagreements and conflicts, preventing problems escalating to the point of crisis, improving communication and relationship skills, learning how to compromise through improving and strengthening parent-teenager relationships. Mediation may not be appropriate in all situations such as the young person is suffering from violence or abuse in the family home or if they feel coerced into mediation then it is set up to fail.

Baginsky, 2004 suggests that young people confide in other children rather than adults (Lawrence, 2000). Peer mediation is a process in which students act as mediators to resolve disputes amongst themselves. This is a form of constructive conflict resolution in a non-violent manner based on negotiation and mediation by their peers. With the help of peer mediators' disagreements are openly faced, working towards shared understanding and agreements through careful exploration of the conflict. Mediators work with their peers to help resolve conflicts, disagreements and low-level disciplinary problems such as addressing instances of bullying, spreading rumours and preventing fights. A good mediator would display a range of personal qualities such as communication skills, respect for their peers, self-confidence, empathy, leadership, willingness to receive feedback, ability to speak in front of groups. (Scottish mediation)

Peer mediation for young people can be set up in schools, youth organisations or any other relevant settings. Peer mediation promotes leadership skills, communication, cooperation skills, confidence and tolerance, enhancing strengths and building resilience amongst those involved. Paterson identified how peer mediation consistently helps with friendships, they are honest and willing to help, training is key to successfully lead.

According to Stopbullying.gov (2019) peer mediation is not the appropriate intervention for Sam as bullying is not a conflict but a form of victimization. Mediation can send the out wrong message to students as the process assumes no one is right or wrong. The message for bullies should be that this type of behavior will not be tolerated. The message to Sam should be received as she does not deserve this, she is being fully supported to stand up against bullying. Mediation may upset Sam as facing the bully may make her feel worse.

There are more opportunities for bullies to act in a large secondary high school as hallway supervision, individual monitoring is limited. It is challenging when the youth voice is too timid, too quiet, too distanced, too inexperienced, and too ignorant to have any impact (forward).

Peer advocacy provides the opportunity for students to take a more formal action. Four actions have been identified to have the most potential to improve outcomes for victims of bullies

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through spending time with students who are bullied, trying to get students who are bullied away from the situation, listening to students who are bullied, telling the student that no one deserves to be bullied (Youth Voice Project, 2010).

The peer advocacy process establishes a support system from peers as well as organising the movements for adult supervision and support. Purposeful engagement of peers to intervene in systematic ways is a powerful step to reduce bullying.

Peer advocates are educated, trained, supported and encouraged to safely speak out and take action when they see instances of bullying (peer advocacy guide)

Advocacy requires a person to have the confidence and the capabilities to stand up and stand by another individual. Helping them to have a voice, working to protect them from harm and arranging for resources to meet the individual needs. In times of trouble peer advocates can offer friendship, sympathy and support and bring strength and encouragement to recognise and defend own rights. Advocates risk being antagonised by other peers as they are seen as taking sides. Advocacy involves commitment, time and energy and may damage reputation. (Williams, evans)

Peer advocacy is probably the most suitable type of intervention as it can empower Sam to stand up against the bullies and to enable her to return to school. Sam could do with the support from someone of a similar age who will listen to her and understand her situation through own similar experiences. Shared experiences can lessen the imbalance of power between Sam and the advocate. Peer advocacy can help build/rebuild her self-esteem, confidence and well-being, allowing her to take back control of their own life ( ). A peer advocate appreciates having the opportunity of making a difference in another student's life and can provide practical support and encouragement ( ). Showing Sam that she is not alone in this anti-bullying fight, and that they will always be someone there for her by her side. The advocacy process is centered around the individual which can help Sam to reflect on her personal situation and explore her options. Peer advocates can talk to staff members, email or phone support services which Sam may not feel confident to approach by herself.

Most values and principles interlink between mediation, counselling and advocacy, however there some distinct to one another which supports their different roles. Mediation being an impartial service can help with normal disagreements but as pointed out by Stopbullying.gov (2019) bullying is victimisation which needs to be addressed in a formal disciplinary manner. For Sam, confiding with her peers and receiving their support in voicing her concerns is more likely to help her back into school knowing that support is in place for her.