

*“The Power of a Candy Bowl.”*

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CSA 563: Counseling: The Helping Relationship

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Assignment: Personal Counseling Outline/Chart

## I. Philosophy of Student Development

The two student development theorists that relate to my work with community college students are Schlossberg, Waters, and Goodman's (1995) Transition Theory and Chickering's Theory of Identity Development.

### Schlossberg, Waters and Goodman Transition Theory (1995)

I use Schlossberg, Waters and Goodman Transition Theory (1995) through out my work at Napa Valley Community College. I often notice that Community College students tend to be in constant transition. Schlossberg et al's Transitional Theory (1995) can work as a guide when developing programs and services for community college students. The Schlossberg et al's Transitional Theory (1995) describes transitions having four major sets of factors that can influence a person's ability to deal with the transition (Evans, N. et al. 1998, p.113).

The first factor is known as "Situation". When a student walks on to our campus, the first thought I have is, what is their situation? Students at the community college level often begin their educational journey at different situations in their lives. There are students who situation is to complete their General Education in two years and transfer to a four-year university. Another group of students' situation is they need to receive job training and are returning to school. Then you have the students who situation is they have no idea what their plan is and have decided to take a few classes that sound fun (Evans, N. et al. 1998, pg. 115).

The second factor is known as "Self". When a community college student begins class, often times they are thinking about their personal life, their challenges and if they have and know the resources to help them succeed. Schlossberg et al. encourages Student Affairs professionals to visual the factors that affect a student's self image such as socioeconomic status, gender, age,

stage of life, health and ethnicity. These factors will affect who they are and who they want to become (Evans, N. et al. 1998, pg. 115) .

The third factor is known as “Support”. Schlossberg et al. describes three kinds of support students can receive when going through transitions. One support is a type such as family, friends, institutional. Another support is functions such as aid, honest feedback. The final type of support that could be offered is a measurement such as stable, changing supports. Community college services are designed to provide educational support for the student’s ever changing situations (Evans, N. et al. 1998, pg. 115).

The fourth and final factor is known as “Strategies.” For many community college students, they have chose to go to school close to their community because they have other needs beside school. They have the need to work, to take care of family, and they need more time to discover what area of study best fits them. Often times, staff and faculty can provide students with excellent strategies for balance and success in college (Evans, N. et al. 1998, pg. 115).

#### Chickering Theory of Identity Development (1993)

I see myself using Chickering Theory of Identity Development with my Student Government officers. At Napa Valley College community college, students stay between one to three years. On average, students who serve in student government serve for a year and half. Within that time, I have seen students move through Chickering’s seven vectors. The following are examples where I use Chickering’s Theory of Identity Development (1993).

Vector one Developing Competence occurs when Student Government leaders being the year learning about political organizations, Roberts Rules of Order, shared governance, and leadership styles. The competences are introduced at the summer meetings and at the annual two night fall leadership retreat.

Vector two Managing Emotions occurs right from the beginning and all the way to the end of their term. Since student government is a working team, students are learning weekly how to relate and learn from each other. Emotions begin to fly when students become more comfortable around each other and start to share more about themselves.

Vector three Moving through Autonomy towards Interdependence: Student government leaders develop self assurance and independence through time management and communication. The key to a successful leader is the ability to communicate what they need from others and when they will be available to be there for their family and friends.

Vector four Developing Mature Interpersonal Relationships happens naturally as Student Government gathers diverse students, thoughts and practice. The main growth experience among Student Government leaders is their ability to share and learn from each other.

Vector five Establishing Identity occurs when Student Government provides opportunities for students to test themselves and truly discover who they are as person. Are they a person who is more conservative than liberal? Are they a person who shares a unique family experience than majority of others? They answer these questions about themselves when they create programs and are representing students at campus committee meetings.

Vector six Developing Purpose happens after a few years in Student Government. Students develop a more clear understanding of their strengths and vision. The intention for them is not to find the perfect career, but to discover their personal strengths and purpose.

Vector seven Developing Integrity shines at the end of their experience. Student Government leaders developed respect and the ability to have integrity in the decisions they make and they projects they chose to be part of (Evans, N. et al. 1998, pg. 38).

## II. Personal Background part 1

### “Creating Safe Space”

Victoria Estrella’s Personal Background Counseling Chart.

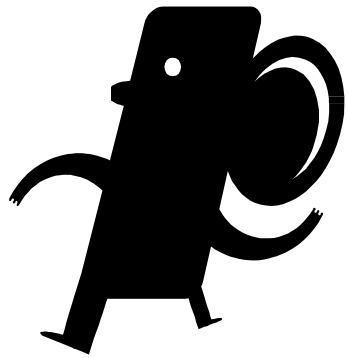


1) A student walks into my office, takes a piece of candy and does not walk out.

2) Stop what I am



3) Ask, “how R U?”



6) Look at the student & listen.

5) Close my office door.



4) Offer them a seat.

## II. Personal background part two:

Preface: I have been serving as the Coordinator of Student Life at Napa Valley College for five and half years. In my role, I advise the student government, manage the ASB Office and coordinate club development. Over the years, I have learned some tricks of the trade to better interact with my students. My number one tool is my candy bowl. For this section, I chosen to develop a personal background counseling chart to show how I identify my style of interacting with students. It also is a tool for creating “safe space” with the intention for students to share their needs and issues.

Step 1) A visit to the candy bowl: My desk faces toward the door. I like to say my office is feng shui well. The candy bowl sits on the edge of my desk, closest to the door. Most of the year, the candy bowl is filled with Laffy Taffy, Hershey’s miniatures, and Tootsie Rolls. My candy bowl has become famous. I know staff, faculty and students who just stop by for a sugar kick. The only time there is no candy in the bowl is during Lent. Instead candy is replaced with small square favors that have a picture on one side and a word on the other. For example, there is a picture of the moon and then the word risk.

The candy bowl will remind me to create conversation. The intention is for fun and to check in. I leave my office door open and face the desk towards the door to create positive flow.

Step 2) Stop Sign “Stop what I am doing”: When I am in my office, I am usually reading or writing an email or organizing a project. About three years ago I learned the importance of being present when a student walks into your office. I am proud to say, I have stopped the habit of looking at email while someone is talking to me or picking up the phone while I am meeting with a student. It has made a difference in my energy and positive attitude among the office. My mantra is the paperwork will always be there, it’s the students who come and go.

The stop sign will remind me to finish the task and look up. The intention of the stop sign symbol is to encourage slowing down and being present.

Step 3) Question Mark “Ask, how R u?” My Student Affairs experience has taught me to see a student as a person rather than their project or position. At the beginning of my career, I was so focused on achieving projects that when a student government officer would walk into my office my first reaction was to ask about their ASB project rather than their classes or their day. At first I thought, “Here is my chance to check in with them. I do not know when they will be by here again this week.” Now, I have a message written in the corner of my white board that says “how R U?”

The question mark will remind me to ask “how R U?” first before anything else. The most important thing in a student/advisor relationship is taking care of each other. A student can only be successful organizing a program or leading group when they feel their life is balanced.

Step 4) Offer them a seat. It is amazing how simply offer someone a seat creates a sense of comfort. When a student comes into my office for a piece of candy, I take a moment to stop what I am doing, ask how they are doing, and pay attention to their body language. If I feel they need more than a piece of candy, I offer them a seat. I have two chairs in front of my desk and one comfy chair next to my desk.

The picture of the seat will remind me to offer them more than just a piece of candy but to offer them the chance to talk. The intention of offering them a seat is to create a sense of comfort and to let them know I have time to talk.

Step 5) Close my office door. I appreciate my office. I feel inspired and honor to have an office where I can close my door. I feel significant. When I close my office door to talk to a

student, staff or faculty, or when I facilitate a meeting between students or a club advisor, I take my responsibility to advice seriously.

The picture of the door will remind me to close the door and be more then a busy bee. The intention of the step to close my office door is to give my full attention and secure a safe space.

Step 6) Look at the student and listen. In my opinion, active listening is the one workshop that should always be offered at professional conferences. It benefits us all when we are reminded how to be an active listener. I included the step to look and listen because I know having that little reminder will make all the difference in the conversation with the student.

The picture of a person listening will remind me to shift my body towards the student, make eye contact and began to listen to their need or issue. The intention is to be an active listener with the hope I can help the student move forward with their need or issue.



### III) Chart for assessing student needs/issues and guided questions

part one:

Close) Solution: "Goal"

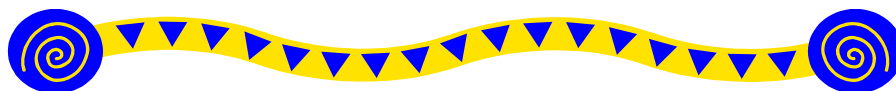


Give a hug, a smile

Offer support

Ask any last questions

Love



Center) Offer "Change"

Can I help you?

Have you been to the ... on campus?

Are you okay?

Needs, what do you need to change?

Growth, where do you see yourself improving?

Explore, have you considered?

Begin) Situation: HALT! "I want to quit..."



Check In

Hungry?—Have you eaten today?

Angry?—Did something happen?

Lonely?—Have you seen a family member or friend lately?

Tired? —Did you sleep well last night?

Preface: I thought a lot of about what kind of chart would guide me to have an effective counseling session with a student. For my personal background, I used visual images as a way to help me create safe space with a student. I am a very visual person and enjoy having fun photos to remind me to shift the energy in a room. For the chart for assessing student needs/issues, I chose to use words and the visual of steps. I chose steps to symbolize moving up and moving forward from the crisis the student is experiencing.

Step One) “Begin) Situation: HALT! “I want to quit”. In the first step I chose to use a set word that would guide me to ask effective questions. The intention is to gather information from the student to find out what is really happening with them. After I have created sacred space with a student, the first step I would take is to do a “Check In” and go through the questions from H.A.L.T. I chose the word H.A.L.T. (Hungry, Angry, Lonely, Tired) because often times the situations I advice relate around the want to quit. Either it is a student who wants to quit student government, or an advisor who is feeling overwhelmed to advise a club or an office assistant who is approaching finals and wants to quit work.

Step Two) Center “Offer Change”. In the second step, I chose to set up a word that would guide me to ask questions to effect change. The intention to assess the student’s needs, issues, and create energy toward change. I chose the word C.H.A.N.G.E and developed questions that trigger the student to think and center themselves. First, I chose the letter “C” to remind me to ask “Can I help you?” because it is important that the student acknowledges with themselves that they are saying yes to help and that I am the person at the moment that can help them. Then I chose the letter “H” to remind me to ask, “Have you been to the..?” because I am not the expert but more of a guide for this student. The places I would ask about are the Student Health Center, Counseling Officers, Financial Aid, whatever office on campus that I could refer the student to

after our talk. The “A” is to remind me to ask “Are you okay?” and to let them be okay or not okay. They need to feel their situation and acknowledge that things are not going the way they want them. I chose the letter “N”, to remind me to ask “What do you need to change?” At that point in the conversation, the student and I will start to brainstorm how they want to change the situation and come up with examples. The final two letters I chose “G” for growth and “E” for exploring. The rest of the session, I would ask the questions, “where do you want to see yourself improving?” and “have you considered..?”. To bring the conversation full circle, I would make the recommendation to visit the particular service on campus where they could go deeper with their situation.

Step Three) Close Situation “Goal”. For the third step, my intention is use the word “goal” to remind me the goal of the session is to begin, stay centered and finish with a goal for that student to walk away with. I chose the letter “G” to stand for Give with the hope it will remind me to give a hug or a smile to reassure the student they are okay. I chose the letter “O” to stand for Offer as a reminder to finish the session with simply offering support and send the energy that I appreciate the student coming to see me. I chose the letter “A” to stand for Ask as a reminder to ask them if they have any questions. The final letter, “L” I chose to stand for Love as a reminder that I love being there for college students and that moments like these with students fuel me. I also want Love to remind me, that even though that student took me away from finishing an email or a project; important work had taken place.

## Work Cited

Evans, N., Forney, D. Guido-DiBrito, F. (1998). Student Development In College Theory, Research and Practice. Jossey-Bass San Francisco.