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THE EFFECT OF THE SEX OF THE COUNSELOR  
ON THE COUNSELING RELATIONSHIP

by

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A professional paper submitted to the Graduate Faculty in  
partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

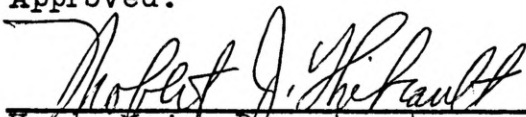
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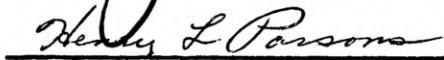
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## ABSTRACT

This study investigated the effects the sex of the counselor has on the counseling relationship. Its purpose was to acquaint the reader with the effects cultural sexual stereotypes of behavior have on interpersonal relationships such as counseling. The procedure followed for the investigation was to review the literature in the areas of (1) cultural stereotypes of human behavior and their effect on concepts of women, and (2) the effect of the stereotypes, represented by the sex of the counselor, on various facets of counseling.

The literature reviewed indicated that existing cultural stereotypes are based on real biological differences between the sexes. However, since it is very difficult to perceive the dividing line between biological determinants of behavior and cultural determinants, many investigators felt that society has determined much of the behavioral differences between the sexes. It was noted that cultural stereotypes permeate every aspect of our concepts of human behavior, often with a very limiting effect on the development of individual potential. The counseling relationship was found to be affected by stereotypes from the beginning of the relationship through its completion. Clients were seen to prefer male counselors for vocational and educational counseling and same sex counselors for personal counseling, due to the fact that they expected these types of counselors to be more skillful in dealing with those particular problems. Female counselors were found to be more conducive to expressions of feeling within the counseling interviews, than were males. In vocational counseling male counselors were found to be more effective in prompting information-seeking behavior by their clients. Clients' satisfaction with counseling seemed to depend on the counselor being of the same sex as the client, as long as the counselor had resolved his own personal difficulties. Regardless of the sex of the counselor, increased understanding of the client in his terms, positive caring for the client by the counselor, and the existence of a model for imitative behavior by the client all seemed to be positively connected with the success of counseling.

The investigator recommended that it would be helpful to counselors seeking to understand the dynamics of personal relationships, if future research included an account of the possible effect sex might have on the counseling relationship.

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The counseling relationship implies a specific set of role expectancies which must be met in order to fulfill the goals of counseling. The primary goal of counseling is to help the client gain personal insight. With new insight the individual becomes more psychologically and emotionally mature, and is better able to function effectively in society.

Previous studies have investigated the personality traits of "helping persons" in general (parents, counselors, and doctors) that were most beneficial to the personal development of helped individuals. Three studies in particular (2:4; and 38) indicated that the most beneficial qualities a counselor, or any other helping person, could possess were: emotional warmth, acceptance of and respect for another person's individuality, sensitivity to another's feelings, and trust. In addition, it was found that the client's ability to accept and trust the counselor was also very important.

A more recent study conducted by E. W. McClain (28) indicated that counselors possess qualities that are culturally defined as masculine or feminine. The male counselors studied possessed a greater degree of feminine

characteristics (warmth, tenderness, and trust) than the male population in general (28:446). The female counselors possessed a greater degree of the male personality traits of assertiveness, venturesomeness, and practicality than women in general (28:447). Both groups were characterized as possessing greater degrees of personality strengths of emotional stability, tranquility, adequacy, and experimentation (28:448).

Within the last decade, interest in the part sex differences play in the lives of men and women has been renewed. It cannot be denied that such differences do exist. For centuries most men have grounded their societal roles upon the biological differences which exist between men and women (39:661). Women bear the children, and care for and raise them; while women are occupied with the children, men have traditionally gone out of the home to provide the family with the wherewithal to exist. Women have been pictured as being passive, nurturant, person-oriented, expressive creatures, while men have been characterized as aggressive, dominating, rather stoic providers.

However, with the increase of industrialization in our society, the traditional roles of men and women are beginning to change. Women are increasingly moving out of

the home into the world of work. Reports by the Bureau of Labor Statistics indicate that the presence of women in the labor force has increased by 13 percent between 1947 and 1970, and that 57 percent of working women are married (14:795). Even the roles for those women staying within the home are changing. Labor saving devices have reduced the amount of work required to complete household duties; caring for the children has become the major duty of most women. However, with smaller families coming into vogue a woman finds that she still has a larger amount of free time during the few years she is occupied with the children (14:796). Once the children start to school, and finally leave home, a woman's free time becomes even greater. In order to make use of this time many women are furthering their education and looking for jobs outside the home.

The decision to become a working mother is a very great one to make. Though Farmer (14:796) feels that the previous taboos against women and mothers working has depreciated since World War II, the actual decision to combine a career and homemaking is a serious one to make. Many times women feel that the qualities required to be successful in their job opposes their ideal of themselves as women. (19:29, 14:799). Once the decision to combine the two roles

of career and homemaker is made, women oftentimes encounter prejudice from men in attempting to prepare for their chosen career or making progress in their career once they have gained entry (39:662).

Arguments used against women working are based on the differences in their personalities from men. Women are not aggressive enough to compete with men or women are not as serious about their jobs as men (their duties in the home will require them to be absent from work more than men) (13:26).

The feminist movement is waging a campaign to eradicate these sex-role biases from our culture. They claim that many of the differences between men and women are not the result of biological differences but rather societal training. Researchers in the biological, sociological, and psychological sciences have taken up the idea and are attempting to discover where men and women really are biologically different. Once they can begin to discover the biological differences, they can begin to understand the societal differences and hopefully women and men will be treated on the basis of real differences and not societal ones. The hoped for result of all this is the achievement

of a meaningful life for both men and women that will also enrich our industrial life to the fullest (1:6).

#### STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This study investigated the effect the sex of the counselor has on the counseling relationship. Particular emphasis was placed on counseling by women and with women in an attempt to discover how much influence sex-role bias has on the actual personal interactions between men and women within the counseling relationship.

The following questions are considered in Chapters II and III.

What effects, if any does sex have on the role of a counselor in the counseling relationship?

Does the sex of the counselor affect the kinds of clients with which he becomes involved?

Does the sex of the counselor affect the degree of acceptance and trust that is present in the relationship?

Does the sex of the counselor affect the types of problems clients are willing to discuss with the counselor?

Does the sex of the counselor affect the outcome of the counseling relationship in terms of either behavior change or client satisfaction with the counseling?



Secondary questions which the investigator hoped to illuminate were: how has sex-role bias affected women in psychological professions? How has the current feminist movement affected the professions of counseling and psychotherapy?

#### PROCEDURE

This study consisted of a review of the professional journals of counseling and psychotherapy and other related fields. In the preparation of the manuscript an occasional book was utilized to fill in the gaps which seemed to exist in the literature. Books were found to be particularly helpful for providing background information about the topics of biological differences between men and women and the societal stereotypes of the male and female roles.

#### LIMITATIONS

The investigation was limited to a review of the professional journals in counseling and psychotherapy and other related fields. The bulk of the literature reviewed was published since 1960. However, the major articles which occurred earlier than 1960 and pertinent material in two books were also included in the review. Unpublished dissertations were not utilized, therefore, the investigator

may have not included all the relevant research in this area. As a result of the selected literature, the reader is not guaranteed a thorough investigation of all the available literature concerning this topic, however, it is hoped that most of the major works were included in the review.

#### DEFINITION OF TERMS

There is a great deal of disagreement among members of the fields of counseling and psychotherapy about the difference between counseling and psychotherapy. It is generally felt that psychotherapy deals with the most severe cases of mental disorganization. The purpose of both is to help the client gain personal insight and thus become more psychologically and emotionally stable, and better able to function effectively in society. Since the aims and oftentimes the techniques of counseling and psychotherapy are generally the same, for the purposes of this paper they were considered to be parts of the same field of helping relationships.

The terms client, counselee, and patient were used interchangeably to designate the person who was seeking help.

The terms counselor, therapist, and psychotherapist were used interchangeably to refer to the professional



person who was attempting to give assistance in the solution of personal, vocational, and educational problems.

Since a great deal of emotional involvement and biasing of descriptive definitions is characteristic of reform movements, the investigator also felt that it was necessary to define feminist. According to Joann Gardner (18:705):

A feminist is a person who advocates such social and legal changes as will result in political, social, and economic equality between the sexes. This definition does not specify the sex of the person who advocates change, and, even more importantly, it does not suggest that the present power relations be reversed.

#### SUMMARY

The counseling relationship is based on the goal of helping the client achieve emotional and psychological stability. In order to achieve this goal, the presence of both feminine and masculine personality traits in the counselor are most beneficial. It is important for the counselor to recognize the existence of any sex-role bias which may hamper his clients in achieving their goal. Consequently the investigator examined the effect the sex of the counselor had on the counseling relationship, placing particular emphasis on the influence sex-role bias had on the personal

interactions between men and women within the counseling relationship.

Further explanation of the topic of this investigation included a discussion of the questions the investigator considered in this review of literature. The procedure for conducting the review, the limitations of the investigation and a definition of terms were also presented.

## CHAPTER II

### SOME PERTINENT LITERATURE

#### INTRODUCTION

The following is a review of the literature pertaining to the effect the sex of the counselor has on the counseling relationship. It consists of two major sections:

(1) a discussion of the behavioral differences between males and females and (2) the effects of these sex differences on the counseling relationship.

In exploring the behavioral differences between males and females, the investigator will first show that counselors and the process of counseling are sometimes viewed in terms of masculine and feminine behaviors. The discussion will then branch off into a review of the literature which investigated specific male and female behavioral differences, with particular attention paid to the biological bases of the differences and their effect on the manner in which men and women were seen to differ in their interpersonal relationships. Cultural attitudes which cause behavioral differences will also be considered. The following topic will be the resulting stereotypes of appropriate behavior for males and females and how these stereotypes affect (1) the concepts employers and counselors have of women, and (2) the

concepts women have of themselves. Finally, the conflict which results as women attempt to resolve their desire for fulfillment through a career and the demands of homemaking will be considered.

The second section of this chapter will be addressed to the effect the sex differences of the counselor have on various aspects of the counseling relationship. Literature will be reviewed concerning the direction vocational counseling of women needs to take, with recent ideas on the career development of women being considered. The effect the sex of the counselor has on the relationship will be considered in relation to (1) the preferences clients have for male and female counselors, (2) the content of the counseling sessions, and (3) the outcome of counseling.

#### BEHAVIORAL DIFFERENCES OF SEXES

A general agreement exists among many members of the counseling profession about the personality characteristics which are desirable in a counselor. According to Rogers (33) the attitudes of the counselor toward people are of particular importance. Genuineness, respect for clients as the persons they actually are, and a constant desire to understand another's real feelings are of crucial importance

to a counselor's success (33:200). Cottle, in his review of literature on this subject, expanded these attributes to include a deep and abiding interest in people, which helps the counselor to be patient and sensitive with the "attitudes and actions of others." He also includes the quality of emotional stability which Rogers expressed as self-understanding (12:38).

In 1954 Richard E. Farson advanced a relatively new description of counselor characteristics. Based on the cultural demands of behavior from each sex, Farson described the successful counselor as possessing personal characteristics which society usually reserved for women (15:221). It was his contention that in order to provide the most facilitative atmosphere for personal growth, counselors needed to feel comfortable in allowing their clients to express feelings which would be opposed to the cultural stereotypes of appropriate feelings for their sex. Farson felt that if a counselor could allow himself to feel the feminine qualities of tenderness, gentleness, lovingness, and an interest in persons and interpersonal relationships, then he would be able to provide an atmosphere which would allow for the most interpersonal growth (5:222). He recognized that going against the societal mores by allowing one's self to

express feelings which were inappropriate for one's sex was a difficult task. However, the acceptance of such expression is based on learning to believe that being feminine in the sense that one allows oneself to express feelings of tenderness and love, does not necessarily mean that one is weak. In fact it probably takes great amounts of the masculine qualities of strength, courage, and resourcefulness to let feminine feelings flow (5:223).

The dearth of reactions to this attitude expressed by Farson leads one to speculate that most counselors agreed with the idea, or had more important aspects of the counseling relationship to investigate. However, in 1968 (just as the current feminist movement began to gather steam) E. W. McClain published the results of a study conducted to measure the extent to which counselors of both sexes possessed both feminine and masculine personality traits. Based on Farson's definitions of femininity and masculinity traits, McClain identified the feminine behavior as "loving receptivity" (28:444). The personality characteristics included in this category were: an interest in people rather than objects, warmth, friendliness, altruism, an interest in social service, interpersonal sensitivity, passivity, conformity, and flexibility or absence of dogma. The

masculine behaviors, basically characterized as "actively potent", included: emotional stability, self-confidence, self-control, intelligence, and a greater involvement with reality and problem-solving than with one's own needs (28:444).

By using the Sixteen Personality Factor test, McClain was able to determine the degree to which male and female counselors differed from their noncounselor sample counterparts. He found that female counselors were more trusting, venturesome, and practical than other women. They also scored higher on brightness, ego strength, adequacy, and experimentation (to name a few), traits that were defined as typically masculine (28:447). The male counselors had greater tendencies toward the feminine traits of warmth, tender-mindedness, and trust than other men of the sample population. They also showed more brightness, ego strength, adequacy, tranquility, etc., than the male population as a whole (28:446).

In a later article, R. R. Carkhuff and B. G. Berenson described the ideal counselor personality as consisting of three interdependent parts whose existence in the counselor was crucial to the success of the counseling (8:27). These three parts were said to dominate one another at varying



stages of the counseling relationship. The first of these parts, the feminine traits of empathy, respect, warmth, and trust was defined as "counselor responsiveness"; that is, the counselor responds to the client as the client expresses his reason for entering into the relationship (8:25). Sensitive response to the client and the client's description of his situation helps the counselor become more aware of the reality of the client's situation. This provides the client with the unique experience of evoking a sensitive awareness of his situation in another person. Finally, continued counselor responsiveness helps prepare the client for the next step of the counseling relationship, counselor initiated communication and interaction (8:25).

The second phase, action-oriented behavior of the counselor, was described as being essentially masculine in character; possessing traits of counselor honesty and self-disclosure, confrontation, and immediacy (8:25). By observing someone else acting within his world in a positive manner, the client becomes equipped with a model of effective behavior which provides him with the experiences necessary for dealing with the problem that brought him to counseling in the first place (8:25).

The final stage of counseling consisted of the



problem-solving dimension of the relationship. By becoming involved with the realities of his environment within the confines of an accepting atmosphere, the client becomes able to handle the situations in which he finds himself, and thus is more able to function effectively in society in a positive manner (8:26).

The above discussion of the male and female factors which exist within the personalities of counselors raises the question of just what is naturally male and what is naturally female. Society defines the terms of masculine and feminine on the basis of physical differences, but in the previous discussion it was seen that counselors possess characteristics that are assigned to both sexes. Perhaps it would be easier to express oneself completely if one were not bound by naive cultural stereotypes of appropriate behavior.

A review of the recent literature reveals essentially one thing. Outside of the most obvious physical characteristics, we are not really sure of what is naturally feminine or masculine. In a lecture given at the third symposium Man and Civilization, held at the University of California, San Francisco Medical Center, in 1963, Edmund Overstreet discussed the physical differences between men and women

and how they might produce different behaviors of men and women (31:13). The most obvious difference in women is their genetic makeup and lack of external genitals. However, from birth up until puberty there is little other difference between small children. Aside from the difference of girls maturing at a faster rate than boys, their glandular functioning and physical strength are the same, and yet little girls are generally not as active as their male counterparts. It was Overstreet's contention that since there is no biological basis for this difference in physical activity then the difference must be culturally determined. Overstreet was not sure of the cause here but he suspected that "... the cultural influence of the special tasks and recreations assigned to little girls as compared to little boys gradually produces a difference in muscle strengths and muscle skills (31:15)."

During their life-time women are constantly faced with tremendous changes in bodily functions, which men rarely have to deal with. They are confronted at puberty with the prospect of becoming mothers; at pregnancy they are faced with the obvious physical changes in their bodies which accompany the conception and birth of a child; later in life they must deal with the emotional and physical factors of menopause.

which says to them they can never physically be capable of bearing children again. Although men experience great bodily changes at puberty, outside of accidents, the general physical characteristics of their body remain the same, gradually winding down with age (31:21). The main point of Overstreet's discussion was that it is the abrupt changes that take place with a woman's body and the way society views them that cause women to behave differently than men (31).

At the same symposium, Eleanor Maccoby attempted to describe one major behavioral difference which seems to exist between men and women (26). Based on the fact that women Ph.D's are less productive than men in terms of professional publications and less prominent in scientific and mathematic fields (2:24), Maccoby proposed that most women tend to perceive the world in ways that are less analytical, and more global than men (26:30). In other words, most women tend to be more perceptive of the whole global aspect of a situation - the interrelationship of parts rather than the parts themselves. This would account for the fact that girls seem to have more trouble with analytical subjects in school, such as geometry, and are less prominent in the scientific fields which in general demand an analytical view of things (26).

Dr. Maccoby concluded her discussion of the sexes differing world views by agreeing with Dr. Overstreet that these differences are more a result of cultural training than biological heritage. She noted research that showed that children who view the world in an analytical manner tend to be more assertive and independent than the "global" children (26:34). Furthermore, the mothers of the analytical children encouraged them to be more explorative, assertive and independent (26:35).

Research into the differences between men and women doctorates in various fields supports the conclusion that the behavioral differences between men and women are cultural rather than biological. Three studies published since 1969 indicate that women are less represented in the research (analytic) fields than men (3; 34; 1). In an article published in the American Psychologist in 1970 Louise Bachtold and Emmy Werner compared the personalities of gifted women in psychology with those of (1) the general female population, (2) college women, (3) with the "successful academic men" described by Cattell and Drevdahl (1955), and (4) academic men in psychology (3:235). By using the Sixteen Personality Factor Questionnaire, the investigators obtained a personality profile for their subjects which they then

compared with the profile norms of the other groups which had been previously assessed by Cattell and Eber (10; 11) and Cattell and Drevdahl (9). A comparison of the percentage of women psychologists involved in research with men psychologists involved in research indicated that only 8% of the women were engaged mainly in research, while 49% of the men spent the major portion of their time in research (3:239). This was an interesting result, especially when one considers that the correlation between the personality profiles of men and women psychologists was extremely high ( $r$  of .70)(3:239). In addition, it was found that the women psychologists, as a group, scored "higher than the successful academic men on intelligence, super-ego strength, and unconventionality, and lower than the academic men on self-sentiment." Also the significant women contributors, distinguished by the numbers of publications they had, were found to be "more socially aloof and exacting" than their male counterparts (3:242).

In an article titled "The Woman Industrial Psychologist: Illusion or Reality?" Virginia Schein points out that of the articles published between 1965 and 1970 in the Journal of Applied Psychology and Personnel Psychology, only "4% of the articles were written by women alone or had women as senior authors, and 6.6% of the articles had women listed

as junior authors (34:709)." In discussing the obstacles women doctorates face in their career development, Helen Astin commented that research positions often remain unfilled seemingly "because the employer ignores women applicants and continues to search for a man... (1:106)."

The authors of these articles (3; 34; and 1) were of the unanimous opinion that the fewer number of women researchers was due to cultural stereotypes of the roles of women, often manifested by employer discrimination. Astin, in particular, pointed out the discrimination aspect of sex-role stereotypes. She reported that the main evidence of discrimination against women is in the salary differences between men and women, tenure and promotion policies, and, to a lesser degree, employment practices (1:105-106). She further pointed out that the women who reported the discrimination were not the professionally unsuccessful attempting to rationalize their lack of achievement (1:106-107). On the contrary, those women who reported experiences with sex discrimination were characterized as having more publications to their credit and having been awarded more professional honors for achievement than other women in their field (1:107).

Schein (34) concluded that the relative absence of



women in the field of industrial psychology is the result of discrimination based on the idea that since men are the principal members of the labor force, men would be better qualified to study men in the labor force. Today, despite the fact that women compose 38% of the labor force, the percentage of women members listed as Fellows, Members, and Associates of Division 14, the division of Industrial and Organizational Psychology, of the APA is relatively small when compared to the total number of members; 3.22% of the Fellows are women, 3.88% of the Members are women, and 7.27% of the Associates are women (34:708).

Employers are not the only people who are affected by sex-role stereotypes: there is evidence that counselors also are affected. In 1970 Broverman, et al. published the results of an investigation of the degree to which the clinician's concepts of mental health varied with the sex of the person judged (6:1). Seventy-nine clinically-trained psychologists, psychiatrists, and social workers were asked to describe via a questionnaire one of three mentally healthy persons: a male, a female or an adult of non-specific sex. The questionnaire consisted of 122 bipolar items each of which described a particular behavior trait or characteristic; one pole could be described as masculine and the other



feminine (6:2). The instructions for the male description stated "think of normal, adult men and then indicate on each item the pole to which a mature, healthy, socially competent adult man would be closer (6:2)." Similar instructions were given for the female and adult descriptions.

The results indicated that there was a definite relation between the sex of the person judged and the concept of mental health judged appropriate for them. The concepts of mental health for men and adults of an unspecified sex did not differ; however, the concept of a mentally healthy woman was significantly different. According to an analysis of the results "clinicians are more likely to suggest that healthy women differ from healthy men by being more submissive, less independent, less adventurous, more easily influenced, less aggressive, less competitive, more excitable in minor crises, having their feelings more easily hurt, being more emotional, more conceited about their appearance, less objective, and disliking math and science (6:5)." It seemed to the authors of the article that this was a "most unusual way of describing any mature, healthy individual (6:5)."

In addition to being judged by others on the basis of sex-role stereotypes, women also judge themselves on this

basis, which causes a great deal of conflict and ambivalence over sexual identity and adequacy when considering a vocational choice (19:29). A study conducted by Steinmann, et al. (36) indicated that the concept of the ideal women held by women consisted of a somewhat assertive and very active woman (36:372). A comparison of their self-concept with their concept of the ideal women showed that women tend to see themselves as possessing fairly equal amounts of active and passive elements. However, when women were asked what concept they thought men had of the ideal woman, they described a woman of a more passive nature who often denied her own fulfillment, possibly through a career, in favor of her domestic duties (36:372).

Further evidence of this interaction between women's self-concept and what they think men think of them is presented by Esther Matthews and David V. Tiedeman in a report of an investigation into the interrelationship between women's attitudes toward career and marriage and the development of their life style. The results of this study seemed to indicate that the subjects structured their lives on the idea that men look with disfavor upon women who use their intellectual facilities, and that if one wishes to marry then she had better not be too clever (27:382). Whether men

actually feel this way has yet to be assessed. The authors suggested that this could result in some women adopting a role of homemaking as a defensive measure to ease their feelings of intellectual inferiority (27:382). The investigators also discovered that there is a drop in career commitment in the transition from junior high school girls to senior high school girls, presumably when girls become more conscious of the possibility and desirability of marriage (27:382-383).

In a study designed to assess the degree to which women's perceptions of men's concepts of appropriate feminine behavior affected their career choices, Peggy Hawley found that the occupation in which a woman was engaged and her marital status were related to her perceptions of men's concepts of women (21:193). She found evidence of two models of feminine behavior in existence; one was a "dichotomous" model which depicted feminine behavior as being sex-based, "for instance, women are intuitive, men are analytical (21:198)." The other model was described as "androgynous" in that human behavior is not sex differentiated. Women who did not work outside the home and those who combined homemaking with a typically feminine career, i.e. those positions which are "traditionally considered appropriate for women

and in which women are well represented" (21:194), viewed men as adhering to the dichotomous concept of human behavior (21:195). Women who were not married also perceived men's concepts of human behavior in this manner (21:198).

The suggestion by Matthews and Tiedeman that women who choose a career do so as a defensive measure against feeling intellectually inferior seems to be supported, because women in feminine careers saw men as conceiving human behavior as being determined by sex.

The study by Matthews and Tiedman (27) also indicated that when attempting to decide whether or not to enter into a career, women are faced with a conflict between fulfilling their feminine duties in the home and their proposed careers (14:798). This was demonstrated by the attitudes senior high adolescents had toward career choice. They did not feel as strongly as the junior high girls that women are denied the right to engage in a career, however, they were concerned about the possible denial of the feminine role if a career was chosen (27:380).

Guring et al. (17) noted a decreased effectiveness with women desiring vocational counseling. According to them, women genuinely concerned about their vocational choice seemed to present two attitudes toward their interest in a

vocation, both of which seemed defensive. On one hand, the women presented their interest only in terms of a temporary situation - an insurance policy - or sought interest in areas associated with maternal roles. The other side of the defensive picture were those women who saw themselves as willing to give up the maternal, feminine aspects of their life for the masculine label that went along with a career; such women were seen as usually aggressive and openly defensive about their choice. In addition, there was a third attitude connected with these two; it was an attitude of hopelessness in attempting to resolve their conflicting desires (19:30).

#### EFFECT OF SEX DIFFERENCES ON COUNSELING

According to Gurin, et al., the sex of the counselor affects the extent to which the client's expressions of her feelings are inhibited (19:30). If working with a male counselor, a woman could be so aware of her femininity that she is reluctant to express her opinions and fears in as aggressive a manner as she would like. On the other hand, a woman counselor, if viewed as successfully involved in her career, might inhibit her client's expressions of ambivalence or doubt about her vocational aspirations (19:31).

The investigators went on to point out that:

To the extent that they (the counselors) themselves accept the stereotypes of the "feminine non-intellectual" and the "masculine intellectual woman," as mutually exclusive alternatives, and to the extent that they concur with the greater positive evaluation which society accords to the "feminine non-intellectual" choice, there will be corresponding distortion on the part of both male and female counselors (19:31).

Male counselors could discourage interest in masculine vocations by encouraging feminine choices or labeling masculine choices as neurotic. Women could also discourage masculine choices by identifying or sympathizing too easily with their client's fears and ambivalency regarding masculine careers (19:32-33). It is appropriate to note here, however, that the same sort of encouragement could operate in favor of the masculine career choice if it were viewed as being the more favorable by the counselor. The authors concluded that the influence of social context and stereotypes could cause the counselor to unconsciously accept the client only in a partial manner and thus sabotage his work with her (19:34).

Evidence exists that such bias does function in the vocational counseling of women. Lorraine Eyde (13) cited a study conducted by Pietrofesa and Schlossberg (32) which investigated the existence of counselor bias in the counseling of women (13:26). When counseling with a woman who was attempting to decide to enter the masculine career of



engineering or the feminine career of education, both male and female counselors showed bias in that they rejected their client's interest in engineering in favor of education (13:27). It is obvious that in order to help women clients gain the insight necessary to achieve a fulfilling life, both male and female counselors need to be willing to accept expressions of interest in traditionally non-feminine roles as well as the more culturally feminine ones.

The investigator reviewed three articles which had suggestions for counselors dealing with women and the home-career conflict. Lorraine Eyde (13) suggested that it would be helpful if counselors were aware of the research conducted in the area of the employment of women. For instance the research conducted by Helen Astin (1) concerning women doctorates in America, their origins, career, and family, indicated that most women doctorates come from upper middle class families. This suggested to Ms. Eyde that these girls could benefit from vocational counseling that would make them aware of the possibilities for a fulfilling career (13:25). By taking into consideration the finding by Matthews and Tiedeman (27) that junior high girls are more interested in careers than senior high girls, counselors might think of more extensive career exploration with girls of this age



group, instead of waiting until high school (13:25). Also, counselors should take into account that many low-income mothers find it necessary to expand their skills after they have become involved with the duties of raising a family; counselors could be of great assistance if they were aware of existing programs in vocational re-education (13:25). Finally, when helping girls reach a decision regarding a career, the counselor should mention family size, if for no other reason than to make the girl aware of the fact that the larger the family she has the less likely she will be able to participate in a career (13:27).

Supporting the viewpoint of Eyde, Helen Farmer (14) recommended that counselors need to take girls' interest in choosing a vocation seriously, carefully clarifying the factors involved in reaching a vocational decision, especially when those factors differ from the factors involved in boys' decisions (14:795). Nothing is less helpful to a girl's decision than a counselor who does not take her seriously, except maybe a counselor who believes that women "can do anything men can do" (14:795).

The factors involved in the career development of women were considered very seriously by Donald Zytowski in 1969 (39). After carefully appraising the differences in

the vocational lives of men and women, developmental stages peculiar to women, patterns of women's participation in the work force, and the possible determinants of these patterns, Zytowski formulated a theory of career development for women (39:660). Based on the fact that women have the very distinct capacity to bear children, Zytowski described women's lives as being characteristically involved with nurturance and support, all the while making clear that this does not necessarily mean that they will forever be confined to the home. Due to the progress of science, the role of women will always be dynamic and constantly changing (39:661).

Despite the fluctuations in the role of women, presently there exists a fairly stable pattern of stages in the lives of women, some of which present more opportunity for employment outside the home than others (39:662). Those stages more favorable to work outside the home are the ones which present the least possible amount of conflict between the mutually exclusive aspects of the vocational and home-maker roles (39:662). The patterns of vocational participation differ among women; however, Zytowski described roughly three levels of vocational patterns distinguished by the differing ages of entry, span of participation, and degree of participation of the women involved. A mild vocational

pattern was characterized as an "early or late entry, a relatively brief span, and a low degree of participation"; a moderate vocational pattern consisted of an "early entry, lengthy span, and low degree, or multiple entries and a higher degree (of participation) (such as a teacher who worked before marriage and after children) (39:663)." Finally, an unusual vocational pattern was described as an "early entry, a lengthy or uninterrupted span, and high degree, such as a woman scientist who does not marry or marries and has no children (39:663)."

In discussing the determinants of the patterns of vocational patterns, Zytowski considered research by Emprey (1958), Matthews and Tiedeman (1964), and Bordin, Nachman, and Segal (1957) which indicated that the various patterns are internally determined by motivational factors. Furthermore, external factors such as situation, environment, and genetic heritage are also important determinants to be considered (39:663-664). The author concluded his exposition of a new theory of career development by pointing out that it needed to be expanded by further research and careful consideration of the dynamic qualities of vocational roles (39:664).

Concerning the manner in which psychologists

describe women, David McClelland agreed with Zytowski that women needed to be considered in a separate light from men (29). According to McClelland, psychological studies have taken the wrong tact by characterizing women as polar opposites of men, when in actual fact women cannot be adequately described in masculine terms. Women are a species possessing distinct qualities all their own, which when considered together can be described as interdependence, Maccoby's idea of global view of the world (26). "They pay more attention (than men) to what goes on around them and modify their behavior accordingly (29:176)."

The quality of interdependence accounts for greater feminine interests in people and interpersonal relationships. It allows them to be more accepting and open in interpersonal areas in terms of their own interests and those of other people as well. Their opinions and actions are more readily changed because they can more readily comprehend the interdynamic qualities in relationships (29). It leads them more readily into fields of human relations where give and take between people is quite prevalent. It also accounts for the fact that so many women can combine effectively a career and a home life as mother and wife, because women have more varied interests and can generally do more things well (29).

Although such ideas need to be supported by research, they could prove important in helping women reach a vocational choice. If women can do more things well, then perhaps society is doing them a great disservice by insisting that their principal occupation in life be home-bound.

Vocational counseling is not the only area in which stereotypes enter into the counseling process. Often before the actual counseling ever begins, stereotypes come to bear on the preferences prospective clients have for their counselors. The nature of the client's difficulty determines the sex of the counselor with whom he prefers to discuss his problem. In investigating the preferences of college students for male and female counselors, Frances Fuller (17) found that both male and female students generally preferred male counselors over female counselors regardless of the presenting problem (17:446-467). However, in a later study conducted by Boulware and Holmes, the investigators found that female subjects preferred an older female therapist for consultation concerning a personal problem (5:276). The study further indicated that cultural stereotypes of the superiority of men over women had an effect on the preferences college students had for their counselors.

The research by Boulware and Holmes was designed to investigate the types of therapists preferred by college

students and the expectancies the students associated with each type of therapist (5:270). Sixty male and sixty female students were asked to evaluate one of two sets of pictures of potential male and female therapists. They were first asked to indicate which therapist they would like to talk with concerning a personal and vocational problem. They were then asked how they felt the pictured individual would act in a discussion of their problem and what they would be like as a person (5). In all but one instance the students preferred older male therapists; the exception was that female students preferred an older female therapist for consultation concerning a personal problem (5:276). An investigation of the expectancies associated with each type of therapist (older male, younger male, older female, younger female), indicated that the expectancies concerning the ability of the therapist to understand their problem and offer the type of help expected, influenced the preferences (5:276). The investigators concluded that the results seemed to reflect "the popular notions that males know more about vocational matters because they are involved in them and that people of the same sex better understand personal problems since they have been through the same thing themselves (5:272)."



Buford Stefflre and Frederick Leafgreen designed a study to investigate preferences for counselors based on the idea of counselor-client similarity (35). They asked prospective school counselors who had been working with each other for some time, to rank each member of the group according to the ones they would be most likely to go for counseling and those they would be least likely to choose for counseling (35:460). They then paired the choices into three categories: mutual choice, non-mutual, and mutual rejection (35:461). Upon examining the results, the investigators found little evidence of a clear pattern of similarity-dissimilarity (35:461). They concluded that "choice of a counselor did not follow friendship lines, but was determined by notions of professional skill (35:462)." The idea of skill being the determinant of preference was reiterated by the study conducted by Boulware and Holmes which has been previously discussed (pages 35-36).

Some evidence has been found that the content or process of counseling also is affected by the sex of the counselor. In 1963 Frances Fuller conducted a study to investigate the effect of the sex of the counselor and the client had on the client's expressions of feeling in the counseling interview (16:34). The statements made by college



students as clients in counseling interviews were judged for feeling expressed through the use of the Kelly and Fiske Relationship Index. The judgements were checked for bias through the experience and non-experience of the counselors. The Strong Vocational Interest Blank for men was administered to all the clients to check for the possibility that the amount of feeling expressed might be positively related to femininity (16:36).

The results were analyzed by calculating the means and standard deviations of the scores of the feeling expressed during the intake interview and the first counseling interview. An analysis of the variance of the difference between scores for the intake and counseling interviews was also calculated (16:37). The results indicated that in counseling dyads that included at least one female member, regardless of her position, more feeling was expressed, and the expression of feeling increased more in these dyads than they did in all male dyads (16:39). It was also noted that when opposite sex preferences were eliminated, the amount of feeling expressed after the shift from the intake interview to the counseling interview, depended upon the counselor's experience alone. However, when opposite sex preference assignments were included in the analysis, the counselor's

experience and sex influenced the expression of feeling; if the counselor was of the preferred sex then the expression of feeling increased (16:39).

In the book Impact and Change: A Study of Counseling Relationships, Kell and Mueller asserted that the sex of the counselor in relation to the sex of the client affects the content of the counseling interview to a great degree, especially when the material under discussion is of a sexual nature (24). They felt that in cases where the content of the counseling sessions is of a sexual nature, the male counselor could experience a threat against which the counselor might attempt to defend, thus damaging the counseling relationship and preventing a therapeutic process (24:74). If the client arouses erotic responses in the counselor about which he is ambivalent, then the counselor could be distracted enough to attempt to control the client's behavior instead of investigating the basic emotional dynamics causing the problem. Or the counselor could interpret the client's feelings prematurely, thus losing the impact of them (24:74).

If the client were sexually mature, the counselor might defend himself by allowing the client to relate to him only as a small child. A relationship constructed in this manner would place a great deal of strain on the client upon

whom the burden of maintaining the relationship is placed. A more obvious defense is to "masculinize" the client by conversing in commonly masculine phrases. By using such phrases as "batting a thousand" or "hitting on the line" to describe the successful encounters of the client, the counselor would be denying the femininity of a female client and lessening the sexual threat (24:76).

Actions by the counselor, such as those described in the preceding paragraph, are most threatening for the client and could probably cause her to determinedly reaffirm her feminine personality in any convenient manner. She could identify a connection with a male image outside the relationship which would relieve the pressure on the counselor, and allow the relationship to continue to meet her emotional needs. On the other hand the client could also become more sexually aggressive. At any rate, having learned early that her femininity could be used to find satisfaction for her emotional needs, she would be behaving in the only manner she knew (24:78).

The authors concluded that relationships of this type were doomed unless the counselor could honestly explore his own feelings and behavior. By constantly defending himself, the counselor could reaffirm the client's

realization that "her feelings are powerful enough to overwhelm someone who the client must certainly feel ought to be less vulnerable to the effect of her behavior (24:75)." Causing the client to suppress or intensify her actions not only would restrict change, but could also damage the client's emotional development (24:76). Unfortunately, the authors did not explore the dynamics of a relationship of this sort between a female counselor and a male client, or same sex pairs either.

The final aspect of counseling which has been investigated with respect to the effect of the sex of the counselor was the outcome of counseling. In each of the articles the description of the outcome of the counseling was based on the particular client behaviors which the investigators expected to take place.

Rosalind Cartwright and Barbara Lerner designed a two-part study to investigate the relation between the therapist's empathy, the client's need to change, and the client's improvement with psychotherapy with respect to the sex of the client and the therapist (7:138). Although the second part of the study is the one which directly concerns this paper, the results of the first part of the study will be briefly described for the sake of continuity.

The results of the first part of the study indicated that the client's need to change and the increase of the therapist's empathetic understanding had a direct positive relationship to the client's improvement in psychotherapy (7:139-141). The authors investigated the possibility that the client's improvement was due to the client coming to view himself in accordance with the therapist's conception of him. However, they found that it was the therapist's conception of the client that changed and not vice versa (7:140). The possibility that the client's improvement was related to the number of interviews between client and therapist was also investigated. Cartwright and Lerner found that actually those clients who improved the most had fewer interviews than those who had improved the least (7:140). Improvement was defined on the basis of four factors: (1) the change between the degree of pre- and post-therapy integration of the client, (2) the client's pre- and post-therapy degree of defensiveness, (3) the client's life adjustment at the time of the conclusion of the investigation, and (4) the therapist's final rating of the outcome of the therapy (7:139).

Upon reanalysis of the original data (part II), the investigators found a direct relationship between the

improvement of the client and the sex of both client and counselor. This relationship was based on the amount of distancing between client and therapist (the degree to which the counselor saw the client as similar to himself), and the experience of the therapist. The improved clients who were the same sex as the therapist were seen by the therapist to be very much like him, while for the improved clients whose sex was the opposite of the therapist the reverse was true (7:143). For same-sex therapist-client combinations, the more experienced therapists with whom the psychological distance was close early in the relationship were the most successful. For opposite-sex combinations, increased psychological distance by the inexperienced therapists seemed to result in client improvement (7:141). The authors interpreted these results on the basis of the defensiveness of the inexperienced therapist:

It would seem that the inexperienced therapist is the more open to threat in this situation than is the experienced therapist, and, in truth, it is he who tends to increase the distance with his patients. This in effect denies some of the similarity between himself and his patients which can be interpreted as a defensive maneuver to reduce his threat. The distancing might well be experienced by his patients as a message to the effect that "you are really very different from me." Such a message would probably raise the threat level of the same-sex patients but reduce it for opposite-sex patients. The experienced therapist who has less personal threat decreases



distance between himself and his same-sex patients and conveys by this, "you are really much more like me than you think you are." This message from a prestigious person of the same sex probably reduces the patient's threat level (7:144).

Howard, Orlinsky, and Hill conducted an investigation of the patient's satisfactions in psychotherapy as a function of patient-therapist pairing in an attempt to discover the extent to which the personal characteristics of the client and therapist influenced the reported client satisfaction with therapy (23:130). All the clients were female with a median age of 26, most single and employed, with 88% having a high school education. The therapists were both male and female, a median age of 36, median years of experience of six years (23:130). After each therapy session, each client and therapist completed a structured response questionnaire which was a section of the Therapy Session Report designed by Orlinsky and Howard in 1966 (23:130).

A factor analysis of various types of scores obtained on the questionnaire revealed a definite relationship between the personal characteristics of the client and therapist and the client's reported satisfaction with the counseling (23:133). In some cases, clients reported more



satisfaction with therapists whose characteristics were most unlike theirs. For instance, single girls (18-22, unmarried) reported being most satisfied with counseling by therapists who were young family men; young family women (22-35, married, mothers) were most satisfied with therapists described as bachelors or unmarried women; young divorced mothers did best with unmarried women therapists; young divorcees favored young family men; and mature family women found the greatest satisfaction with mature family men (23:132-134). On the other hand, there were a number of instances in which the client reported the greatest satisfaction with therapy when their therapists were like them. Young single women (23-28, unmarried) did well with family women and unmarried women as therapists; independent women (29 or older, unmarried) seem to do well with bachelors of the opposite sex (23:132-134).

The investigators concluded that the following four factors seemed to be functioning with regard to the client-therapist pairing and the clients reported satisfaction with counseling. First of all, in the cases in which the therapist's life situation appeared similar to the client and the therapist seemed to have adapted well to it, the investigators felt that perhaps a modeling or identification process was taking place. Secondly, therapeutic satisfaction was

thought to be a result of "fantasied or wished-for need fulfillment" in instances where the personal life situation of the therapist seemed to compliment that of the client. Also personal detachment by the therapist from the client's personal problems was concluded to be facilitative, due to the fact that clients reported frustrating experiences with therapists who had similar life problems of their own. Finally, the success of therapy when the therapist respected or admired the life situation of the client, suggested to the investigators that the therapist's positive regard was also involved (23:134).

In the instances in which the success of the counseling was measured by the information-seeking behavior of clients, the results of two studies conducted by Krumboltz, Thoreson, and Varenhorst (25, 37) indicated that the sex of the counselor and counseling model used affected the outcome of the counseling. In both cases counselors used counseling models in which the model client discussed his or her problem with a counselor. During the model session the client was instructed to seek information regarding his vocational concern outside of the actual counseling situation.

The subjects of the first study to be reviewed consisted of ninety-six eleventh grade students, half of whom

were male and half female. Two male and two female graduate students in counseling practicum were the counselors. The purpose of this study was to investigate the following factors in counseling: (1) the effect male and female counselors had on the information-seeking behavior of male and female clients, and (2) the effectiveness of male and female counselor-student models on the behavior of the clients (37:503).

At the beginning of the counseling interview each student was asked to listen to a tape recording of an interview between one of four possible combinations of student and counselor sex. After listening to the tape the interview continued with the counselor reinforcing information-seeking behavior by the client. After a three week interval, the clients were interviewed by a different counselor to determine how much information-seeking behavior in which the clients had engaged between interviews (37:504-506).

The results indicated that male subjects interviewed by male counselors using male student models participated in more information-seeking behavior between interviews than those exposed to combinations of females. For female subjects interviewed by a male counselor, the combination of a male counselor with models in which the sex of the counselor

and client were the same proved more conducive to information-seeking behavior. Female counselors had little success with the clients (37:506-507).

The investigators concluded that males were seen to be more competent and possessing more prestige as a counselor in vocational and educational areas. It was also postulated that women might be more effective in areas in which they were seen to be more experienced, such as problems in "dating and etiquette (37:508)!" For the investigators to have concluded or at least implied that female counselors were not seen by the subjects to be experienced in areas other than dating and etiquette indicates that cultural stereotypes were functioning when their conclusions were being formulated. Actually, when one considers the results of the studies investigating client preferences for counselors, this does not seem to be such a preposterous notion. However, the investigators made a very poor choice of words.

The same team of investigators reported the results of a similar study conducted to investigate the nonverbal factors in the effectiveness of models in counseling (25:413). In this study, however, all subjects were female. Seven female graduate students in counseling practicum replicated the experimental procedures in seven schools.

Subjects were shown one of two video taped interviews of a female student seeking information about future plans from a female counselor. In one of the films the counselor exhibited attentive and warm behavior, while in the other film she was very inattentive and abrupt. The films were introduced in one of two ways, the counselor was described as a successful counselor who was generally sought out by the students in her school, or she was described as a beginning counselor still learning to counsel students (25:413-414). A third treatment group was initiated by talking about the existence of the film and the behavior expected by the girl. After two weeks the subjects were seen by another counselor. During the interview the counselor interviewed the client in an attempt to "elicit counselee self-reports of occupational and educational information-seeking behaviors (25:415)."

The results of this study indicated that the use of an appropriate counseling model increased the degree of information-seeking behavior of the female clients (25:417). There did not seem to be any difference in behavior related to the difference in the behavior or prestige of the counselor in the model (25:417). The investigators concluded that: "It appears quite plausible that the prestige and attentiveness of a counselor are major variables in his

effectiveness, but future investigation needs to focus on the specific factors which cause some counselors to be more influential than others in modifying client behavior (25:417)."

It seems appropriate to note that a previous experiment using male counselor and client, social models did not have any effect upon female clients (25:412). Evidently, the sex of the counselor and client is related to the effectiveness of the counselor.

#### SUMMARY

Cultural stereotypes of the appropriate behavior of men and women are suspected to be significant determinants of actual behavior. These stereotypes indicate that the major role of women in our society is that of nurturant homemaker and supporter of the male as he attempts to provide a living for the family. Women are seen as rather passive, warm, nurturing, responsive creatures with very little in the way of active assertiveness composing a part of their nature. Sexual stereotypes have their bases in the very acute biological differences which exist between men and women. The fact that women can bear children, and during their reproductive years undergo periodically acute hormonal changes, does indeed affect the behavior of women. However, it is not known to what degree the behavioral differences which exist between



the sexes are of cultural origin rather than the result of biological differences. It is hard to tell where one ends and the other begins. With the increasing demands of our continually developing industrial society it is becoming necessary to investigate this very thing, in an attempt to allow for the full development of every person's potential, regardless of their sex.

Even in counseling and psychotherapy, a profession which is concerned with the full development of a person's potential, cultural stereotypes are very much a part of the picture. The most desirable personality characteristics in counselors are described as both masculine and feminine. The feminine characteristics considered desirable in a counselor are a warm, nurturant responsiveness to the client's feelings about himself and a caring for the person as he is and not as he should be. The masculine characteristics are described as action-oriented (14) activities consisting of honesty and self-disclosure and a spontaneous response to the client as a real person. These two facets, in addition to a third of problem-solving, were seen to be essential ingredients of a successful counseling relationship.

Society is becoming increasingly aware that stereotypes are becoming very limiting when it comes to the



attempts of women to develop their full potential in roles that are contrary to the typical homemaker role thought to be appropriate for them. Employers are reluctant to hire women because they feel that women employees will not be as serious about their jobs as men. Once women are hired, often times their salaries are lower than those of men doing the same kind of work. Many times women are found to be eliminated from the field before they even enter, due to the effect the cultural stereotypes have on their self-concept and the concept of them by other people.

Although many women felt that they have the potential for a fairly active and assertive life, many hold themselves back from fulfillment for fear that men do not approve such behavior in a woman and their chances for marriage will be damaged. It was found that those women who decide to embark on a career were very defensive about their choice; they either proposed that it was only a temporary measure or an insurance policy, or that they were willing to forego the domestic pleasures of homemaking and marriage in order to participate actively in a career.

The mutually exclusive qualities of homemaking and participation in a career cause a great deal of conflict in women attempting to seriously reach a decision concerning

their future. For many women the conflict is so great that it results in an involvement in vocational counseling. Thus, the cultural stereotypes have become an important concern of counselors, as well.

In order to be of assistance to their female clients, counselors need to be aware of the factors which enter into the vocational choice of women. They have to be aware of the fact that the determinants of a woman's vocational choice are not the same as those of men. For instance, girls seem to be more interested in a possible career when they are in junior high school; by the time they have reached senior high school, they have become increasingly aware of the desirability of marriage, and the possible conflict inherent in opting for a career. Also influencing a woman's choice of a career is the fact that women at first feel a threat to their femininity if they choose a career and decide to wait a while before getting married; they fear that their chances for marriage will be damaged. Counselors should also be aware of the fact that the number of children a woman has will affect her chances of being involved in a career, that female members of the upper middle socioeconomic groups can benefit from a little encouragement to consider a career, since many of the women in careers demanding extensive training are from that

economic bracket. Finally, low income mothers often find it necessary to complete their training after they have already become considerably involved in homemaking.

Sex differences not only affect the direction which vocational counseling needs to take, but it also affects other aspects of the counseling relationship as well. It was found that most clients preferred male counselors when their presenting problem was of a vocational or educational nature; the one exception was women clients who preferred female counselors when their problems were personal. Much of this seemed to be a function of the client's expectancies of the counselor to understand his problems. If one were at all affected by stereotypes, he would probably assume that a male counselor might not be able to understand the personal problems of a woman, or vice versa. Also it is relatively easy to understand how male counselors would be expected to be more helpful than female counselors in vocational areas, since men are typically more associated with the world of work.

Other studies indicated that the actual process of counseling was affected by the sex of the counselor and client. In counseling dyads consisting of at least one female, more expressions of an emotional nature took place.

It was also suggested that in counseling dyads of a mixed nature it might be more difficult for both counselor and client to handle matters of a sexual nature.

The final aspect of the counseling relationship which was investigated was the effect sex differences had on the counseling outcome. The outcome of these investigations seemed to be largely determined by the type of counseling which was involved. In counseling of a personal nature, two effects were seen to be operating. In some instances, same-sex counselor-client pairs tentatively proved to be the most helpful to the client. In other instances, the opposite seemed to be the case. A great deal seemed to depend upon the degree to which the same-sex counselors had resolved their own personal difficulties. Also the positive caring for the client and the imitative behavior prompted by the relationship was thought to be a factor.

In counseling of an educational-vocational nature, male counselors proved to be the most conducive to information-seeking behavior on the part of the client, as long as the sex of the counselor and client in the models used in the interviews were the same.

### CHAPTER III

#### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

##### SUMMARY

This study investigated the effects the sex of the counselor has on the counseling relationship. Its purpose was to acquaint the reader with the effects cultural stereotypes of behavior have on interpersonal relationships such as counseling. The procedure followed for investigating this phenomenon was to review the literature in the areas of cultural stereotypes of human behavior, its effect on concepts of women, and its effect on various facets of counseling. The investigation was mainly limited to a review of professional journals since 1960.

Biological differences are the basis for existing cultural stereotypes of appropriate behavior for the sexes. However, since the actual extent of these differences are not known beyond the most obvious ones, it is felt that society has extrapolated a great deal beyond the realm of natural differences. In doing so unnatural limits have been placed upon the fulfillment of their potential by the members of our society, particularly in the case of women. The concept of women and their potential, as held by society in general and women, themselves, has been colored by the

demands of the societal stereotypes. The demands of our expanding industrialization are beginning to bring to our attention the limiting nature of these stereotypes. It has become important for all members of our society to be able to use their abilities as completely as possible. Since counseling is concerned with the full development of human potential, it is necessary for members of the profession to be aware of sexual stereotypes, how they affect the development of human potential, and how they affect the counseling relationship.

The literature reviewed indicated that at least four aspects of the counseling relationship are affected by cultural stereotypes. First of all, an awareness of the stereotypes has caused the direction of vocational counseling to take a new turn. New theories of career development for women are being formulated, with particular attention being paid to the factors in the career decisions of women which differ from those of men. Secondly, it was pointed out that clients' preferences for male and female counselors are possibly a function of the clients' expectations of counselor ability to understand the particular problem they are presenting. Male counselors are expected to be more skillful in dealing with educational and vocational problems,



and the personal problems of boys, while female counselors are favored by the girls for discussion of personal problems only. Thirdly, it was suggested that the actual content of the counseling interviews is determined in part by the sex of the counselor. In counseling pairs consisting of at least one female member, the emotional content of the counseling is greater than for pairs consisting of only male members. Finally, the outcome of the counseling, defined as client satisfaction with counseling or the degree of information-seeking behavior engaged in by the client between interviews, is also suspected of being affected by the sex of the client and counselor involved. In some instances counselors of the same sex are found to be more effective, while in other cases, counselors of the opposite sex are more effective.

### CONCLUSIONS

Cultural stereotypes of the appropriate behaviors for the sexes are seen to permeate every facet of our daily lives. Although, they are based on actual biological differences between the sexes, much of the suspected differences between the sexes may be based more on cultural ideas of what the differences should be rather than what those



differences actually are. However, if we are to provide for the fullest development of individual potential, it is essential that we at least become aware of the stereotypes that do exist and their affect on our lives.

Much of the research in counseling has been concerned with the factors which contribute to successful counseling. The characteristics of counselors, the characteristics of clients, the characteristics of the counseling relationship, and the content of the interviews have been investigated in an attempt to discover just what factors are most conducive to a successful counseling encounter. However, in some instances the sex of the counselor was not considered, and it is just possible that the outcome of the research would have been different had this been so. A multivariate study of the interaction between client and counselors revealed that the behavior of the therapist was determined in a large degree by the particular therapist, patient and patient-therapist interaction (30:123). It was also found that the behavior of the patient depended mainly on the particular patient involved and the patient-therapist interaction; there was little variation in patient behavior relative to the particular therapist involved (30:123). However, little description of the differences between sexes

was presented due to the fact that all the therapists were male and all the patients were female. It is quite possible that had the sexes of the clients and counselors been mixed, the outcome of the research would have been different. The investigators concluded that the interactions between therapist and clients were mainly determined by the actual situation and the patient involved (30:127). To the extent that both patient and therapist have a sexual character, the sex of the two may affect the situation.

The same is true of another study which investigated the personality differences between male and female clients who terminated counseling early (22). The author concluded that the client who conformed most closely to the masculine and feminine stereotypes tended to terminate early (22:33). The female clients who continued counseling tended to be more masculine, the males more feminine. Based upon the facts that (1) the counseling philosophy of the counselors placed much responsibility upon the client for the work in counseling, and (2) the counselors themselves were male, the investigator offered the following explanation for the outcome of the investigation. The more feminine, dependent female was less willing or able to accept the responsibility for self-analysis, while the more masculine, independent male

was unable to accept the reduced status implied by the role of a client unable to cope with personal problems. It was also suggested that possibly the successful male clients identified early with the more feminine aspects of the male counselor (22:34). Perhaps if the female clients had had a role with which to identify it would have been more possible for them to have undertaken the responsibility necessary to continue in the counseling.

In 1971 Sandra Harris conducted an investigation of the extent to which experimenters failed to control for the interaction between examiner and subject sex in their studies. She surveyed volumes 72 and 73 of the Journal of Abnormal Psychology and volumes 31 and 32 of the Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology. She found that 10% to 14% of the authors did not specify the sex of the subject, while 85% neglected to indicate the sex of the examiner. She recommended that experimenters be aware of the potential affects the sex of the subjects and examiners may have on the outcome of the investigation (20:292-293). It seems important therefore for researchers and counselors alike to be aware of the possible impact sex has on the relationships of people. We are all aware that such impact exist, but the exact nature of them is not clear.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

It is obvious that there are some instances in which the sex of the counselor and client are not relevant to the investigation taking place. However, there are many instances in which sex is important, for it does affect many aspects of the relationships and interactions between people. It is important for counselors to be aware of these instances, if for no other reason than to be aware of their existence so as to better understand the client's self-concept and his position in his perceived world. In order (for counselors) to extend their awareness of these factors and provide for the full development of the potential of clients, it would be helpful to include in future research an accounting of the possible effect of sex on the outcome of the counseling. Even if the account were no more than a sentence or two which indicated that sex did not seem to have any effect and the reasons for this, such information would still be a helpful indication of possible areas for future investigation.

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