IMPORTANCE OF COUNSELING
• Counseling can be a confusing term- it often has different meanings for different people.

• The Concise Oxford Dictionary (9th Edition) gives at least two definitions of counseling, which appear to be conflicting, adding to potential confusion.

• “give advice to (a person) on social and personal problems, specially professionally”

• and
“the process of assisting and guiding clients, especially by a trained person in a professional basis, to resolve especially personal, social, or psychological problems and difficulties.”

Counseling is:

The process that occurs when a client and counselor set aside time in order to explore difficulties which may include the stressful or emotional feelings of the client.
• The act of helping the client to see things more clearly, possibly from a different viewpoint. This can enable the client to focus on feelings, expression or behavior, with a goal to facilitating positive change.

• A relationship of trust. Confidentially is paramount to successful counseling. Professional counselors will usually explain their policy on confidentially, they may, however, be required by law to disclose information if they believe that there is a risk to life.
• Counseling is not:

• Giving advice.

• Judgmental.

• Attempting to sort out the problems of the client.

• Getting emotionally involved with the client.

• Looking at a client’s problems from your own perspective based on your own value system.
According to the American Counseling Association,

“Counseling is professional relationship that empowers diverse individuals, families and groups to accomplish mental health, wellness, education and career goals.”

Our world is increasingly becoming more interrelated. The globalization highlights the need for highly trained mental health professionals to address trauma, addiction, academic and career concerns in clinics, hospitals, schools, and universities.
• Counseling provide by trained professionals can make a profound impact on the lives of individuals, families and communities.

• This service helps people navigate difficult life situations, such as the death of loved one, divorce, natural disasters, school stress and the loss of job. It provides the tools and insights to manage mental health issues, such as anxiety and depression.

• Ultimately counseling empowers people to lead healthy and fulfilling lives.
Human beings have always had the need to relate themselves to others. They have always wanted to share their experiences and problems. In some informal and non-technical way counseling has existed ever since human awareness has existed.

It may have informal shape like a friend listening to your sorrows or a kind elderly person permitting you to unburden yourself, we all have our moments in life when we are in some trouble and need help— it may be some financial stress, some family conflict,
some emotional upheaval, some feeling of guilt and inadequacy, sense of being alienated, addiction to some intoxicant like alcohol or drugs, having done some wrong and many such-like.

Often when we are passing through such a stress we need help but that help is not available to us, or even if there is some appearance of help it is more in the nature of advice “do like this” or “do not like this” or “You should have done this” or “you should not have acted this way”.
All such remarks and pieces of which you unwillingly receive when you are already in trouble. You do not require judgments or code of ethics at such moments.

- What you need is a sympathetic person who can listen to you and then help you in reorganizing your life. This task is very delicate and a sophisticatedly trained person is needed to handle it.
NEED FOR COUNSELLING

With the present increase in anxiety level, complexities in daily living and, more impersonal attitude of people, the need for some formal counselling or formal help.

There have been some specific factors we would like to understand.
(A) COMPLEXITIES IN EVERY DAY LIFE

Living in the 21st century is indeed living in a very complex era. Life has become so much governed by technical advancement.

Urban area is full of complex gadgets, rush of work, distances to be covered, tension and open to more hazards, may be accidents or may be crime.
In such complex and strenuous living an individual is more likely to break down with stress. People have lesser time for others and even the intentions to be helpful to others are fast dwindling.

In such circumstances one needs formal help which can be had through counselling.
(B) UNCERTAINITIES

When people were living in a rural background and in more or less joint family, there was a greater economic security and social support.

Nowadays there are nuclear families living in big towns; when both the husband and wife go to work, their children face a lot of insecurity.
• Even husband and wife do not have that type of mutual tolerance, understanding and accord with which is essential for a long term adjustment. Besides, divorce has become legally so easy that even for minor reasons there may be a break-up in the family. This leads to further uncertainty of living.

• Specially the children have to face a lot of troubles due to these uncertainties of living. Again formal counseling can be helpful in preventing a home from breaking up.
(C) INCREASE IN ANXIETY

With increasing complexities and uncertainties, anxiety is bound to be there. There is a limit up to which one can tolerate anxiety and stress beyond which breakdown is possible.

The fast tempo of living, the rat-race for material possessions and accelerated achievement, cut-throat competition, more and more impersonal and selfishness in relationship, are all facilities to anxiety.
A counsellor can help professionally in setting of goals, meaning of life and reduction of anxiety.

(D) LACK OF RELIGIOUS ANCHORAGE

The advancement in science and technology has made man more skeptical about his faith in religion, god and rituals, etc.

For an average man religion used to be quite an anchorage for daily living.
Any religion—be it Christianity, Hinduism, Islam or Buddhism used to give a code of ethics and conduct for an average man. The rituals used to bind one to certain routine type of living and at the same time giving fear of punishment so that people would remain within bounds.

But with the questioning era, these codes of conduct—whether good or bad were questioned for their logic.
Of course this did help in getting rid of superstitious beliefs and conduct based on it but it did not fill the vacuum thus created.

As a result an average man started groping in dark and developing more identity crisis and anxiety.

Counseling would thus come again handy in helping such people to re-define their goals of living and make life more meaningful.
In days gone by, occupation of an individual was by and large inherited from his forefathers. The skills required could be taught by the parent to the child and thus could be passed on.

But in the present era each occupation has become so complex and specialized due to the rapid advancement in science and technology that the son cannot inherit for example flying of an aircraft from his father,
A proper training leading to some degree or diploma is required to be professionally suited for some job. Besides training one should have the ability in terms of intelligence and aptitude also apart from the right personality make up interest and motivation which could be matched to the job requirements.

Again a formally trained counsellor can help in matching one’s potential to the job Requirements.
Educational Growth

Education has grown in it's height, breath and depth.

More and more people are going in for higher studies devoting 10 to 16 years of their most dynamic years of life to this cause.

Proper guidance is therefore a must at the right age so education has also spread in breath with the slogan “Education for all.”
Problems of school adjustment are bound to occur with this expansion in educational opportunity.

Guidance is required for the proper placement and adjustment in classroom.

Therefore, counselling may again be needed in such cases.
DEFINITION OF COUNSELLING

_Pepinsky and Pepinsky_ (1954): counselling is that interaction which:

(1) occur between two individuals called counsellor and client.

(2) takes place in a professional setting.

(3) is initiated and maintained to facilitate changes in the behavior of client.
Hahn and MacLean (1955):

define it as “a process which takes place in a one-to-one relationship between an individual beset by problems with which he cannot cope alone and a professional worker whose training and experience have qualified him to help others reach solutions to various types of personal difficulties.”
Smith (1955) : 

defines counsellor as “ a process in which the counsellor assists the counselee to make interpretations of facts relating to a choice, plan or adjustment which he needs to make.”
Gusted (1953) :

gives a very comprehensive definition when he says “counselling is a learning oriented process, carried on in a simple, one-to-one social environment, in which the counsellor, professionally competent in relevant psychological skills and knowledge, seeks to assist the client by methods appropriate to the latter's needs put such understanding into effect in relation to more clearly perceived, realistically defined goals to the end that the client may become a happier and more productive member of society.”
Bloker (1966) explains counselling as “helping an individual become aware of himself and the ways in which he is reacting to the behavioral influences of his environment. It further helps him to establish some personal meaning for this behavior and to develop and clarify a set up of goals and values for future behavior.”
TO SUM IT ALL ONE MAY SAY THAT COUNSELLING IS:

I. a process - a relationship between, a trained and skilled in psychological principles; counsellor and the client who has some problem or need of help.

II. it is essentially a help or assistance and not advice-giving nor solution of other’s problems.
III. its objective is to make the counsellee self-aware of the true nature of his problem, of the causes of reasons, and in the light of these, help him to plan a cause of action which may be a change of his attitude or mode of behavior or learning of new human relation skills.

IV. the ultimate outcome should be client’s better adjustment to himself and others and usefulness to society.

THE END