

Title

The helping discussion¹

Short description

Helping discussion with students is one of the key elements of person development process. The main aim to support students individually in finding their own answers to their difficulties in their life and learning. But how will be a discussion helping?

Detailed description of the tool and required materials, attachments

The aim of the helping discussions to support students in evolving their personality, individuality, values, finding their own way of life through their own decisions. Our task is not to change them how we imagine they should to live but to support them to live their own life.

The attitude in a helping discussion:

- our focus must be the person, not the student;
- we take part in this discussion as a person, not as a teacher;
- the question is not our competency in helping discussion but our truthful interest towards the student.

Students have to feel our sincere interest to become opened and honest to us.

We do not know more than students just we know other ways. Our main task during helping discussions to support students to find their own answers for their life questions. We, teachers can support them how they can find these answers. It is important to declare that we do not know the answers for all the questions. It enhances our authenticity.

How become a discussion helping?

There are two participants in a helping discussion: a helper (teacher) and a client (student). Their participation differs only in that the teacher is conscious in the communication. The purpose of the teacher is that the student feels safe emotionally, is able to express him/herself, can talk about anything, and to find

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answers from his/her own to questions arising. Helping discussion is not advising but creating a communication situation in which student is able to think loudly about his/herself, to raise questions and to bring up answers, ideas to go forward in solution of his/her difficulties. The helper (teacher) main task is good questioning.

When shall we talk?

So long trust and helping relationship have not built up among us let's initiate discussion often in all situation when we are together with students. Even lessons can be interrupted for a good discussion when an interesting topic comes up by students. After helping relationship has evolved we can set up a system in which we talk regularly on pre-agreed times.

What shall we talk about?

Let the student initiates any topic, do not reject any issue. His/her topics, stories, questions, ideas, problems are all important whatever they are. It does not need that we are expert in the topic raised. Moreover it is a brilliant relationship building opportunity when students familiarize us to a new topic.

At the same time we can also initiate discussion as common thinking about their learning, behaving, situations in the classroom, etc. Than we can share our own feelings, doubts, problems, ideas about our common work, the happiness and the difficulties of teaching them. Give them also the floor about these issues, listen to them actively and take into consideration their opinions. That is the way how trust is building up among us.

Where shall we discuss?

Discussion is much more important than the place. Any place is good for a helping discussion which is acceptable for both of us. Actually when trust is built up we will see that we can have a deep discussion anywhere. Naturally it is good if we have a calm room for deep face to face discussions but even if we have not such a room it is not worth missing it out.

How long would be a discussion?

It depends on the situation but not the duration is the most important. Neverending discussions are not useful. What is important that teacher (helper) is be aware the goal of the discussion. What he/she would like to achieve or where he/she would like to get at the discussion. Do not want to solve everything in one discussion. Move on

step by step. It's worth to agree with the frames in advance. How much time we give to each other for a discussion. Before closing agree the next discussion time.

How to close a discussion?

It's worth summarizing what happened during the discussion. We can make agreements: tasks, thinking of issues until the next meeting. It is very motivating when we can close the discussion – especially when it was about difficult topics - in a positive, happy atmosphere with a common laughing e.g.

Do we have to give advice?

In the case of lack of information or in a crises we can give advice. In the questions of lifestyle or behaviour never even if the student asks for it. Our advice is about ourselves, our worldview based on our life situation and skills. It is sometimes very far from our students' world. In a helping discussion our intention should be questioning, dropping in ideas to facilitate the student's own decision.

What is the role of the teacher in a helping discussion?

Paying attention, listening, giving feedback, questioning, provoking, systematizing, summarizing. In the case of regular discussions planning.

Whom can I share what I was talking with the student?

We have the obligation of strict confidence. We can share the information, our questions, doubts only with the team working with the student, in case discussions and in a supervision session. If we intend to inform parents we should organize a discussion together with the student and prepare together for this occasion.

User's guide, equipment

Equipment	Quantity
-	-

Level of difficulty (easy, medium, advanced)

Advanced

Tags

intervention on student level, personal development plan, case management

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