Cognitive Errors Relevant to School Psychologists

Class

Institution

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Cognitive errors are referred to as errors in perception that might hinder our ability to think rationally and make decisions accordingly (Coon, 2005). This paper is aimed at presenting three of the cognitive errors experienced by a school psychologist along with daily life examples and their prospective solutions. These cognitive errors are presented below:

**Confirmation Bias**

**Definition:** confirmation bias is referred to as a tendency of individuals to leave no stone unturned when it comes to gather evidence to support their belief and deny, exclude and negate any belief or evidence that is contradictory to theirs (Arkes, 1991).

**Example:** Once, a school psychologist accidently met a student who was quite restless and inattentive towards teacher’s instructions. He developed an expression of student having Attention Deficit Hyperactive tendencies. He discussed it with student’s class teacher who said that he does not think this way because instead of being ADHD child, he might not seem interested or attentive in the classroom due to family issues or boring lecture. The school psychologist—under his rigid belief—denied his estimations and gathered some bunch of teachers that inspected restless and inattentive behavior of student for past few weeks. Instead of acknowledging the other possibility, he seemed rigid about his beliefs.

**Ways to minimize it:** in this scenario, the school psychologist must consider executing standardized testing overtime. In addition to execute psychometric testing at multiple times, he must also administer various tests measuring similar attributes (Arkes, 1991). Hence, consistent results from all the sources at different times strongly confirm one’s views.

**Hindsight Bias**

**Definition:** a cognitive error in which past knowledge—either verified or unverified—is used to draw conclusions in the present or interpret any situation happening in the present (Faust et. al., 1988).

**Example:** In the staff room, a school psychologist listened to other teachers talking about a deadly fight happened in the school ground yesterday in which one child was beaten badly by the other. After some days, same student come to the school psychologist over his consecutive failure in examination. Under the influence of “I already knew it,” he might conclude that this particular student have anti-social tendencies as he is more involved in beating and aggression and pays less attention to his studies. He will completely ignore the fact that this fight happened just because someone bullied him, hit him or stole his precious thing; not because he have anti-social tendencies or personality issues.

**Ways to minimize it:** it can be reduced when school psychologist will determine the frequency of his fight outside the school and underlying reasons that provoked him to do so; having multiple evidence about single issue can help minimizing this effect (Faust et. al., 1988).

**Group Think**

**Definition:** an erroneous thinking pattern developed when a person belongs to a group and most of his group members are agreed on one conclusion—regardless of the credibility of the evidence (Coon, 2005).

**Example:** a child consults a team of school psychologists over following symptoms; disrupted classroom behavior, restlessness, talkativeness, and lack of interest in the classroom activities. Most of the school psychologists are in view that child is having these problems due to Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and they all are very sure about it. I, being a school psychologist, would agree with my group members without considering that the student might exhibit these disrupted symptoms due to anxiety issues or mood disturbances.

**Ways to minimize it:** in order to avoid conformity and group think influence, a neutral person can be hired to assist with finding other possibilities that might cause certain symptoms. In this way group members find an opportunity to reconsider their opinions in the most balanced way (Coon, 2005).

References

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