

An Analysis of Support Goals: A Perspective from Support Providers

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Abstract

People need support from family and friends to cope with everyday stresses and crises. However, people do not always perceive support as helpful or appropriate. Whether support is viewed as helpful or hurtful may depend on the approach and goals preferred differently by people from different cultures. Giving advice is problematic and difficult for advice providers in the Western cultures because they encounter conflicting goals (Goldsmith, 1992). One goal is to provide helpful advice, whereas another goal is not to threaten advice recipients' self-esteem and autonomy. However, advice may be less threatening in other cultures such as Asian cultures in which high involvement in group or others' lives is valued (Goldsmith & Fitch, 1997). This research project was aimed to answer three questions: (a) what are primary and secondary support goals among Thais?, (b) do Thais tend to use active or passive goals for initiating and providing support?, and (c) are support approach and goals comparable to past research in Western culture?

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