

**EFFECTIVE COUNSELLING STRATEGIES TOWARDS CURBING CRIME AND VIOLENCE TENDENCIES IN NIGERIA****BY****Yusuf Florence Adeoti: Department of Guidance and Counselling,  
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*Peace is prerequisite for stability, growth and sustainable development of any society. Unfortunately, Nigeria has been labeled as a crime ridden and unsafe country. This picture portends a dangerous signal for local and foreign economic activities and overall development of the country. Although, governments have made several efforts to address the prevalent insecurity and crime rate in the country, still not much enduring outcome has been achieved. Relying on the review of secondary data (about crime and violence statistics in Nigeria) and personal experiences of authors, this paper examines the negative impacts of crime and violence tendencies on growth and development of economic activities in Nigeria. The paper proposes proactive solutions, grounded in effective counseling techniques, to address the crime challenges which make Nigerian environment an unsafe haven for local and foreign investors. It is the strong position of this paper that counselling strategies such as rational emotive therapy, assertiveness training skill; and peer modeling technique have the potency to effectively inculcate positive values in youths. The paper suggests, as a matter of policy, that governments should shift attention from crime and punishment syndrome to crime and violence's preventive measures, and make proactive efforts to address the root causes of major crimes through community counselling interventions.*

**Keywords: Crime, Violence, Counselling Strategies, Community Counselling**

**Introduction**

Peace is prerequisite for stability, growth and sustainable development in any human society. Thus, leaders have responsibility to uphold the basic principle of equity, fairness and natural justice must be maintained, in the distribution of available resources among the constituent parts of community in a society. Progress and development in all facets of human existence, social, economic, value system, environmental could then be assured for the common interest of all. Therefore, for any country to have sustainable development and experience national prosperity, there must be a favorable environment for investment to thrive, no investor will take the risk to establish industry in violence ridden society, with high level of crime rate. Unfortunately, Nigeria has been labelled as a crime ridden and unsafe country.

Organized crime and violence tendency among youths is an issue of global concern. For instance, a recent crime report in the United States of America (Federal Bureau of Investigation 'FBI,' 2016) shows an increase in the growing rate of crime compared with the previous years. The report revealed that violent crime rose by 4.1 percent in 2016 compared with 2015, although the property crime reduced by 1.3 percent compared to 2015 figures. Also, the 2016 National Crime Victimization Survey's (NCVS) finding shows that in 2016, among other things, the U.S. residents (12 years or older) experienced a total of 5.7 million violent victimizations; 15.9 million experienced property crimes; 80% experienced motor vehicle theft crimes; while a total of 1.3% of all persons age 12 or older experienced one or more violent victimizations (Rachel & Grace, 2017). High crime rate and

violence activities portends bad omen for the wheel of development and transformation of any society or country (Ayoola, Adeyemi & Jabaru, 2015).

The above scenario is particularly worsened in Nigeria. Both local and foreign media have frequently reported various criminal activities perpetrated in Nigeria including oil theft, organized armed robbery, kidnapping and demand for ransom, assassination, repeated invasion and blockage of business installations, gang-raping, bribery and corruption, ritual killings, to mention a few (Achumba, Ighomereho, & Akpor-Robaro, 2013). The growing rate of crime and violence in Nigeria, in the recent times, is worrisome (Achumba et al., 2013), and this is quite evident in the review of crime statistics spread sheet on offences against persons, property and lawful authority and local acts, carried out in all state commands in 2009 (Johnson & Adeyinka, 2014).

The result showed that in 2008, there were 35,109 offences against persons while in 2009 it was 38,955 (an increase of 3,846 cases). Also, offences against property in 2008 was 47,626 and in 2009 it was 64,286 (an increase of 16,660 cases). Meanwhile, offences against authority in 2008 was found to be 5,938 and in 2009 it was 7,878 (an increase of 1,940 cases). Similarly, offences against local acts in 2008 was estimated at 90,156 and in 2009 it was 1,378 (a decrease of 88,778 cases) (Johnson & Adeyinka, 2014).

In addition, the actual crime experience in Nigeria, as revealed in the National Crime Victimization Survey's report (NCVS) showed that a quarter of the respondents (25%) had been victims of crime during 2012. Enugu State had the highest number of victims of crime (70%), followed by Ekiti and Ebonyi States (65% each). In terms of the Nigeria regions with highest experience of crime, the South East recorded highest (44%), while the North West recorded lowest score (18%).

Furthermore, the Lagos police command alone was able to foil 462 and 418 cases of robbery in 2012 and 2013 respectively. Also, out of the 1448 and 1263 vehicles stolen in Lagos in 2012 and 2013 respectively, 1187 vehicles were recovered in 2012 and only 954 vehicles recovered in 2013, among other findings (Johnson & Adeyinka, 2014). The above mindboggling statistics speak volumes about the rate of criminal tendencies in Nigeria. This ugly trend has led to Nigeria being viewed as a danger-zone among the comity of nations across the globe. It also contributes to why Nigeria is consistently ranked high among the insecure nations of the world, as well as the number one most unsafe nation among the West African countries (Global Peace Index "GPI," 2012).

Although, as noted by Achumba et al. (2013), several steps have been taken by the federal government to deal with the incessant crimes and violence activities across different parts of the country. Some of these steps include criminalization of terrorism by passing the Anti-Terrorism Act in 2011, installation of Computer-based Closed Circuit Television cameras (CCTV) in some parts of the country, enhancement of surveillance as well as investigation of criminal related offences, heightening of physical security measures around the country aimed at deterring or disrupting potential attacks, strengthening of security agencies through the provision of security facilities and the development and broadcast of security tips in mass media. The aforementioned efforts notwithstanding, the spate of criminal activities and insecurity in the country remains unabated. According to Adenuga and Nor Azam (2017), the crime rate in Nigeria increased from 65.93% to 66.28% in 2011 and 2012 respectively and subsequently increased to 66.45% in 2013. The rise in the crime rate was associated with the fall in real economic growth from 5.41% to 4.98% in 2006 and 2010 respectively, and to 2.60% in 2013 (World Bank Indicator, 2016)].

Security challenges occasioned by crimes and violence activities have negative impact for economic growth and attainment of a meaningful sustainable development goal. Hence, this paper is an attempt to examine the negative impacts of crime and violence tendencies on growth and development of

economic activities in Nigeria, and for attainment of sustainable development goals. The paper also aims to propose solutions, grounded in effective community counseling, to address the crime rate towards making Nigerian environment a safe haven for local and foreign investors, and facilitating the thrive of economic activities.

In line with the above highlighted goals, this paper is organized in three sections. The first section examines the meaning, forms and motivations for crime and violence activities based on the previous literature review; the second section lists and synchronizes various ways by which crimes and violence behaviours have constituted clog in the wheel of economic transformation and sustainable development agenda of the country; and the third section focuses on potential of counseling strategies as effective means to reduce crime and violence tendencies among youths, thereby facilitating a meaningful sustainable development of the nation.

### **Meaning, Forms and Motivations for Crime and Violence in Nigeria**

Crime and violence are closely-related terms. The two terms are frequently used together to refer to state of insecurity of live and property in a place or society. According to Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, crime refers to the act of breaking the law, committing an illegal act or activity punishable by law; or doing an immoral thing or making a big mistake. Violence on the other hand is an act or behavior calculated to hurt or kill somebody. The above definition shows that crime is pretty broader in scope than violence. Also, while some criminal activities are usually executed with violence means such as armed robbery, gang-raping, ritual killing, and extortion, others do not necessarily involve violence including bribery and corruption, and bargaining and pact-making between a range of official and unofficial power-holders and their constituencies (Schultze-Kraft, 2016). In this paper, however, the two terms are used synonymously to imply behaviours and activities that heightened state of insecurity of lives and properties and source of threat to sustainable development.

Crime and violence is multi-dimensional in nature. Some dimensions of violent crimes according to Fayeye (2006) include: 1. Direct Violence, which usually involves deliberate injury to the integrity of human life e.g., homicide, murder, and massacre; 2. Brutal Acts against the civil society, usually manifested in the form of torture; rape and maltreatment; 3. Restriction and Physical Constraints, e.g., kidnapping, imprisonment, forced labour; 4. Indirect Violence, this involves showing of unconcerned attitude to fellow human being when in need of help or in danger (especially the vulnerable group like the senior citizens, women, children, physically challenged persons, etc); 5. Mediated Violence, usually caused by dangerous medication of the nature and social environment of the opposing ethnic group; and 6. Repressive Violence – deprivation of the fundamental rights, derail of participation in political activities due to threat of attack and lack of protection of property.

Besides the dimensions highlighted above, crime and violence can be categorized further into three – the political, economic and social crimes. The Political Crime refers to crime/ violent acts motivated by a conscious or unconscious desire to obtain or maintain political power. Examples include: Guerrilla conflict; paramilitary conflict; political assassinations; armed conflict between political parties. The Economic Crime is usually motivated by a conscious or unconscious desire for economic gain or to obtain or maintain economic power e.g., street crime; robbery/theft; drug trafficking; kidnapping; and assaults made during economic crimes. The Social Crimes on the other hand are violent acts usually motivated by a conscious or unconscious desire for social gain or to obtain or maintain social power. Examples include interpersonal violence such as spouse and child abuse; sexual assault of women and children; and arguments that get out of control. All the above forms of crime are present and witness regularly in Nigeria. Data available on crime statistics in Nigeria (between 2000 and 2008) shows that the five most prominent crimes in Nigeria include theft, armed-robbery, kidnapping, assassination, and fraud. Table 1 indicates the frequency of occurrence of each of the crimes and the total of all five crimes committed in each year.

**Table 1: Statistics on Five Major Crimes in Nigeria between 2000 and 2008**

Year	Theft	Armed-Robbery	Kidnapping	Assassination	Fraud	Total
2000	29127	1877	243	1255	7927	40429
2001	40796	2809	349	2120	10234	56308
2002	35231	3889	337	2117	9134	50708
2003	33124	3497	410	2136	9508	48675
2004	37289	3142	349	2550	9532	52862
2005	46111	2074	798	2074	9880	60937
2006	41901	2863	372	2000	6395	53531
2007	21082	2327	277	2007	5860	31553
2008	23927	2340	309	1956	5058	33590

**Source:** National Bureau of Statistics (2016)

It is evidence in Tab. 1 that theft had the highest occurrence across all the years covered in the report, followed by armed robbery and fraud. Kidnapping had the least occurrence, followed by assassination. Interestingly, since almost a decade ago when the above statistics was published, the crime rate in the country has not stopped increasing at alarming rate. According to the report published by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), the total reported criminal cases against persons stood at 45,554, while crime against lawful authority and local Acts recorded the least with 12,144 and 2,695 cases recorded respectively (NBS, 2016). The report further noted that the FCT and Lagos State had the highest number of reported crimes (58,566 together, out of 125,790 cases reported from the 36 states). Ani (2009) noted that the rate of theft, armed robbery especially in the banks, kidnapping and assassination has continued to rise especially in the southern part of the country. Also, Johnson and Adeyinka (2014) in a survey of crime rate in Nigeria found that robbery rate has increased significantly in the past one year. Also the vandalization of business installations in particular, those of GSM operator has been on the increase.

Achumba et al. (2013) noted that the root cause of most criminal activities in Nigeria can be traced to remote and proximate/ immediate factors. Some of the remote factors include systemic failure of government institutions (Fukuyama, 2004) which is usually manifested in government's inability to deliver public services and to provide for basic needs of the masses. The absence of basic necessities in different parts of the country has created a pool of frustrated people who are prone to be ignited by any event to be violent. Also, the sharp inequality and injustice that pervades the national outlook in the country, especially in the sharing of national resources, is a contributory factor (Onuoha, 2011). This has resulted in loss of confidence and hope among Nigerian youths, and constant expression of anger and frustration about the pervasive state of inequality. Another contending factor is the defective security system in the country, which concerns the lack of adequate, well-competent security personnel and quality equipment to handle the security challenges professionally; and the decline in morals/ eroded traditional value system of the Nigerian society such as the endearing culture of collectivism, loyalty to authority and community, truthfulness, honesty, industriousness, tolerance, love for others, peaceful coexistence, hatred for theft, and high value for individual and communal life (Clifford, 2009).

Whereas, the immediate/ proximate factors are traceable to the porous borders, rural-urban drift, unemployment and poverty, terrorism, to mention a few (Hazen & Horner, 2007; Onuoha, 2011; Achumba et al., 2013). Hazen and Horner (2007) observed that Nigeria borders are obviously porous and less secured. Given this problem and the associated weak security system, small arms and light weapons get to Nigeria easily from other countries and have aided criminal groups to have easy access to arms and free influx of illegal migrants from neighbouring countries such as Republic of Niger, Chad and Republic of Benin (Adeola & Oluyemi, 2012). These migrants which are mostly young men

are figured to execute some of the criminal activities in the country. A recent research shows that Nigeria hosts over 70 percent of about 8 million illegal weapons in West Africa (Edeko, 2011),

Another immediate factor is rural-urban migration, which usually involves the migration of jobless youths from rural areas to urban centres in Nigeria (Onuoha, 2011). Most at times, due to large population in the cities, the jobs are scarce and hard to get (Adedjeji & Eziyi, 2010). Out of frustration, these youths are drawn into crime. Also, persistent unemployment and poverty, especially among the youths, is a major immediate cause of crime and violence behaviours in Nigeria. An adage says: “an idle hand is a devil-man’s workshop”. Hence, frustrated unemployed youth are easily lured into violent crimes (Adagba, Ugwu & Eme, 2012).

Yet, emergence of insurgent and terrorist group is another focal point. Onuoha (2011) opined that insurgence/ terrorism is the premeditated use of threat or use of violence by an individual or group to cause fear, destruction or death, especially against unarmed targets, property or infrastructure in a state, usually done to force those in authority to respond to the demands and expectations of the individual or group behind such violent acts. Terrorism in Nigeria is rooted in the activity of Niger-Delta militant and Boko Haram insurgent groups (the militants are found in the Niger-Delta areas of the country, while Boko Haram constitutes a group of misguided Islamic fundamentalist in the northern part of Nigeria who believed that western education and culture has outlived its relevance and purpose in Nigeria and as such, should be denounced and rejected in its totality. Since its inception in 2009 till date, many lives have been lost and several properties damaged.

Having examined the forms, rationales and motivations behind the criminal and violent activities in Nigeria, the subsequent discussion is devoted to the impact of crime rate on business activities on one hand, and its implications for nation’s sustainable development agenda on the other hand.

### **Crime Rate and Business Activities in Nigeria**

Investment in business activities is an essential enabler of economic and human development. Investment creates jobs and boosts the activity of local firms, suppliers and distributors by creating demand and a market for their products and services. It also improves access to and the quality of infrastructure and services critical for the development of entrepreneurship and small businesses, such as banking and finance. Albeit, most investment is undertaken by domestic firms, international investment can bring particular benefits. It can encourage innovation and spur productivity growth by bringing in or generating new information and technologies – such as through knowledge-intensive activities like research and development. It can help to spread new technologies and expertise, for example through the creation of business linkages and by providing improved access to international markets and global value chains.

However, in an atmosphere laden with criminal and violent tendencies, it is extremely difficult for business activities to yield the expected maximum benefits for nation’s development. The prevalence of crime and violence in Nigeria has consistently responsible for the low ranking of the country among the comity of peaceful nations in the world, particularly for being ranked as the least peaceful among the West African countries. Table 2 buttresses the least ranking of Nigeria among West African countries.



**Table 2: GPI Ranking of Nigeria and other West African Countries**

S/no.	Country	GPI Score 2009	GPI Rank 2009	GPI Score 2010	GPI Rank 2010	GPI Score 2011	GPI Rank 2011	GPI Score 2012	GPI Rank 2012
1	Ghana	1.76	52	1.78	48	1.75	42	1.81	50
2	Sierra Leone	-	-	1.82	53	1.90	61	1.86	52
3	Burkina Faso	1.91	71	1.85	57	1.83	51	1.88	56
4	Gambia	-	-	-	-	1.91	62	1.96	74
5	Senegal	1.98	80	2.03	79	2.05	77	1.99	78
6	Guinea	-	-	-	-	2.13	92	2.07	92
7	Guinea Bisau	-	-	-	-	-	-	2.11	95
8	Liberia	-	-	2.15	99	2.86	97	2.13	101
9	Mali	2.09	96	2.24	109	2.19	100	2.13	102
10	Benin	-	-	-	-	-	-	2.23	114
11	Niger	-	-	-	-	2.36	119	2.24	116
12	Mauritania	2.48	124	2.39	123	2.43	130	2.30	125
13	Cot d'Ivoire	2.34	117	2.30	118	2.42	128	2.42	134
14	Nigeria	2.60	129	2.76	137	2.74	142	2.80	146

**Source:** Global Peace Index “GPI” (2008 – 2012)

There is substantial evidence in the literature suggesting that high rate of crime and violence portends serious effect for the growth of business activities in any society. Nigeria case is not an exception. In the views of Onuoha (2011) and Achumba et al. (2013), a pervasive criminal and violent activity in the country is an affront not only to business investment, but the entire business organization or some aspects of its operations which include production, marketing, finance and human resource. The dangerous relationship between crime and violence behaviour on business activities in Nigeria can be appraised from two perspectives: Potential business investor and the existing business investor. Potential business investor refers to individuals who have interest to invest in business but are yet to venture into one. The spate of criminal activities in the country is source of worry and concern to potential business investors.

Prevalent crime and violence discourages investment as it makes investment unattractive to business people. This is because it increases the cost of doing business either through direct loss of goods and properties or the cost of taking precautions against business risks and uncertainty (Johnson & Adeyinka, 2014). In tandem with this view, Ujah and Eboh's (2006) report of a study by World Bank on investment climate in nine African countries found that 29% of business operators in Africa and 36% in Nigeria perceived insecurity as a major constraint on investment. This picture sends a warning signal to potential investors, especially the international community, that Nigeria is not a safe and secure place and as such not suitable for investment and business activities. This is certainly a strong discouragement to business investment as it scares away potential investors. Little wonder then that foreign investors in the Nigerian economy are moving away from starting new companies or production plants and are buying up shares of quoted companies instead (Achumba et al., 2013). Figures from the 2010 Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) annual report show a steep 78.1 percent decline in foreign direct investment.

Existing Business Inventors on the other hand are individuals who have already invested resources in one type of business activity or the other. An atmosphere characterized by crime and violence can, and

in many ways, affects the existing business operations. For instance, criminal activities such as armed robbery, kidnapping, and vandalization of industrial facilities including oil and gas pipelines could lead to outright closure of many enterprises or business initiatives, especially in the zones where criminal incidences occur regularly, so as to safe lives of workers and business property. Consequently, some viable business interests in Nigeria had to relocate to other countries, mostly neighbouring countries (Omomia 2015).

Apart from the human and sociological effect, there is a significant economics cost to the country in which rate of crime and violence are high, such economic effect include increase absenteeism, decrease in labour market participation, reduced productivity that lower earning (Ayoola & Jabaru, 2015). On a generally note, absence of safe and secured environment for business transaction constitutes serious impediment for the growth and survival of any businesses. Hence, in Nigeria today, some businessmen and manufacturing companies have had to relocate particularly from the North in recent time, to other peaceful parts of the country (Nwagbosa, 2012; Omomia, 2015). Some firms may also shift their operations to other countries like Ghana which is deemed to be more peaceful and less threaten in terms of criminal activities (Omomia, 2015).

### **Implications of Incessant Crime/ Violence for Sustainable Development in Nigeria**

Sustainable development has been viewed as the development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (Adedeji & Eziyi, 2010). According to Adedeji and Eziyi (2010), sustainable development is a key concept used in the study of interaction between economy and the biophysical environment, as well as the goal acceptable for environmental policy. It is the transformation of economic system towards sustainability. The aims of sustainable development are to ensure a safe and healthy environment for all and sundry and to maximize simultaneously national goals, organizational goals and individual goals that can persist over generations.

Akpobibibo (2003) noted that the principle behind sustainability is to make life meaningful to all. Development in any society is essentially dependent on the growth and development of economic activities in the society. The level of economic activities, in turn, is enhanced by peaceful coexistence of people. It is people who interact to carry out economic activities through their businesses. Businesses are the vehicle for economic activities, which later translate to national economic development. Thus, businesses play a great role in the process of development. A society that encounters youth unrest, political thuggery, social unrest, poverty and disease will not develop effectively in the long run.

Crime and violence rate in Nigeria is identified as one of the greatest obstacles to meaningful sustainable development (Call, 2000; Ujah & Eboh, 2006; Igbuzor, 2011). Without adequate crime and violence control measures, development cannot be sustained as it destroys economic, human and social capital. It is only under conditions of peace and security that people and government can direct their efforts and resources towards improving human life. Thus, the last section of this paper aims to situate community counseling as an effective tool to combat crime and violence tendency among youth, so as to foster enabling environment for business activity and sustainable development.

### **Counseling Strategies towards curbing crime/ violence tendencies**

Modo, Sanni, Uwah and Mogbo (2013) opined that guidance and counselling techniques are effective to inculcate the spirit of consciousness for peace, conflict resolution and national security among youths. The techniques can aid youths to deal with real life issues threatening their lives and society in general; soften their minds towards spirit of unity, nationality and patriotism; preparing youths for effective adult life that promotes harmonious relationship among members of the society, and inculcating in them values like compassion, integrity, hope, justice, unity, gender fairness, caring for

life, sharing, reconciliation and active non-violence. Oguzie (2014) contended that a decrease in crime rate rekindles hope for social order, and likelihood that businesses will progress well. It also decreases government expenditure on programmes and institutions created to reduce and punish deviant behaviours. It is against this backdrop that guidance and counseling strategies are put forward as veritable tool for preventing violent crimes and inculcating positive value in restive youth.

Guidance counsellors use various techniques and strategies to help inculcate right values and change virulent/ criminal tendencies that constitute menace to peaceful co-existence in the society. The process of creating peace and enabling society needs to begin with resolving intrapersonal conflict in individual and then progress to resolving interpersonal conflicts. Thus, the perspective of guidance counsellors on crime and violence behaviours, national peace and sustainable development becomes imperative (Nwafor, 2013; Oguzie, 2014). There are many counseling strategies to help individual live a happy life and less criminally inclined behaviours. However, for economy of space, this discourse is limited to the application of three cognitive/ behavioural counseling techniques (rational emotive therapy “RET,” assertiveness training skill, and modeling technique) to deal with crime and violence incidences, towards enabling environment for sustainable development in Nigeria.

**Rational Emotive Therapy and Community Counselling:** Rational emotive therapy (RET) is a counseling technique propounded by a renowned psychologist “Allbert Ellis” in 1962, to assist in attacking illogical thoughts capable of causing mal-functioning and mal-adjustment in individuals. Ellis believed that it is by attending to such illogical thoughts that the belief system can be altered. Rational Emotive Therapy (RET) is built on the belief that how we respond emotionally at any moment depends on our interpretations, views, beliefs, and thoughts of the situation. To put in a different way, RET approach suggests that individuals’ demands for unrealistic responses are causes of anxiety, depression and lack of assertiveness. Example of such demand is the “must” action in individuals. For instance, the stance that one “must” do well and get approval, or else he is worthless is enough to cause anxiety and depression in him. In the same vein, that somebody must be loved by everybody in his class at all times is an illogical position that is unrealistically internalized by such a person which is causing him disaffection among his peers. In the absence of the expected love from his mates, he becomes depressed, tensed up, dejected and withdrawn.

**Assertiveness Training Skills:** Since behaviour can be learned and unlearn, assertive skill training will help the youths to unlearn some undesirable behaviours such as violent and aggressive behaviours. Assertiveness is the hub of interpersonal behavior and an important tool of human relations (Lin et al., 2004). Assertiveness is the medium used by individuals to express their positive and negative emotions without infringe the rights of others (Paterson, Green, Basson & Ross, 2002). Assertive people are not scared of expression. Assertive people possess the skills for social influences (Powell & Newgent, 2011). Assertive skill is one of the self- efficacy tools that can be useful for youths to improve their interpersonal skills and sense of self-respect for themselves and others in the society. It is based on the principle that everyone has a right to express their thoughts, feelings, and needs to others in a respectful manner without been aggressive. When individual lack the skills to express themselves openly, they may become depressed, anxious, angry, and loose sense of self-worth.

**Modelling Techniques:** In order to reduce and prevent the rate of violent behaviour among youths the application of peer modeling technique could go a long way to help. In general, affiliations with peer group, family and the types of recreational activities available to young people are the strongest predictors of adolescent substance use and delinquency (Oguzie, 2014; Akinade et al, 2013). Modeling is valuable technique used by behaviour counselors. With this technique, a person models himself after another’s behaviour or actions. It may not be necessary for the youth to perform in any particular way in order to learn from modeling; merely observing the model’s behaviour is often sufficient. According to Akinade et al. (2013), modeling involves the learning of skills through imitating another person such as a parent or therapist who performs the behaviour to be acquired. In the same vein, peer groups have a stronger influence than that of parents. The counselor could expose the youths to behaviours or



roles of peers who acts as assistants to the counselor and then be encouraged to imitate and practice the desired new responses.

### **Implications of the Counselling Techniques in Nigeria**

Nigerian youths need to think more rationally and take wise decisions in such matters as moral and ethical concerns, especially when confronted with crime and violence tempted situations. This calls for the necessity of community counseling at different strategic settings in the society. A community counselling is a form of culturally embedded psychological and social support that is integral to community social responses and it includes a variety of roles and activities that engage with the different levels of the social system: individuals, families and groups, organizations and institutions, specific communities, and society (Lazarus, 2009). As a derivative of community psychology, this approach addresses social factors that have impact on the well-being of individuals and communities (Lazarus, 2009).

To sum up the points, community approach to counseling, through application of RET therapeutic principles, assertiveness training and modelling techniques, can help to fast-track sustainable development of the Nigerian society. By helping restive youth to comprehend the dangers of their illogical and irrational ideas, re-straighten their thinking in a logical manner; cure them of their unreason by reason; and teaching them ways to re-think, challenge and contradict faulty internalized thoughts, a lot of virulent/ violent motivated behaviours can be curbed and controlled. Also, inappropriate, anti-social thinking and behaviours could be substituted with appropriate, altruistic and morally approved behaviours by helping people to understand that two wrongs do not make a right and encourage them to express their thoughts and feelings without hurting another person.

### **Conclusion**

For any community to experience accelerated development and sustainable growth, there must be a policy statement for quality guidance and counseling services. The United States of America is a relevant example in this case, which acknowledged the necessity of quality guidance counseling services in its national development especially when she perceived that Japan was out-performing her in space technology. Today, such a clever step by the US is a success story. It must be emphasized that such policy should be all-encompassing and extending beyond the school to the community.

### **Recommendations**

In order to make counseling more proactive and effective in curbing crime/violence tendencies among youth, the following suggestions need to be given due consideration by all stakeholders in nation's building and community development:

- The governments at all levels, non-governmental agencies, religious bodies, community leaders, should establish Counselling Centers in the communities where youth can seek professional guidance to their concerns and frustrations.
- Professional counsellors should be employed to operate counselling centers in and outside the schools.
- Counsellors should employ strategies such as: jingles on radio and television, post on social media for online counselling, pasting of posters, delivery of talk during religious programmes on the importance of counselling for holistic development etc, to encourage youths to seek for counselling.
- As a matter of policy, governments at all levels need to shift thinking from crime and punishment syndrome to a preventive crime and violence measures and make proactive effort to address the root causes of major crimes among youths through community counselling interventions.
- Counsellor should intensify effort on family counselling to foster peaceful co-existence and healthy family relationship.

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