

Unit 5, Chapter 8 - Gestalt Theory - Unfinished Business

Unfinished business from the past can present itself in current feelings of resentment, pain, guilt and/or abandonment. Unfinished business are feelings from the past that were left undone, not completed or resolved.

They are unresolved feelings that are lying in the background of our lives and affect current behavior of connections with oneself or others. These incomplete feelings seek resolution and can make a client pre-occupied and exhibit self-defeating behavior. Unfinished business does not go away until it is dealt with. It usually shows up as a blockage in the body physically. When the client is stuck, they are at an impasse. An impasse is when outside support is unavailable their way of being doesn't work.

An example is when I was 30, I had reached a point in my life where I had gone as far as I could with the information that I had. Everything I knew had brought me to this place and I couldn't move past it. That's when I called a counselor that a friend of mine had suggested several years prior. My goal was to seek additional information from someone who could help me move forward.

As a Gestalt therapist you would provide opportunity for your client to bring the unfinished business from the past into the present moment and act it out or relive it to help resolve the feelings. The therapist may use what's called the "empty chair" technique where they talk out their feelings from each angle like Stan did in the therapy session. When the client fully

experiences and accepts the situation as is, that's when they'll be able to move forward.

Impasse and avoidance are similar in that the client is stuck in a place and can't move forward. The difference is while they are at an impasse, the client is most likely unaware of the blockage or the reason for it. With avoidance, there is an awareness and the issue may be fear related. The therapist would want to find out which it was to know what to do next with the client.