

Ordinary People Psychoanalytic Theory

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Sigmund Freud is considered the father or originator of psychoanalysis. Author Gerald Corey (2021) states the theory purpose is “to make the unconscious conscious and to strengthen the ego so that behavior is based more on reality and less on instinctual cravings and irrational guilt” ( 67). Freud believed that a person behavior or how they act are associated with the influences they receive from their unconscious thoughts. The theory is based on the Freud view of the id, ego, and the superego which a person psych is made up of. The focus of the therapist is to help a patient uncover the unconscious thoughts that may be affecting a person behavior so that the behavior can be changed through conscious awareness.

The psychoanalysis theory has been modernized and modified by other pioneers in the field such as Erik Erikson 8 stages of personality development, Carl Jung focused on the four personalities, dreams, symbolism and , and Margaret Mahler studies was based on the relationship of infants first three years with their mothers. The psychoanalysis theory is centered on the different points of human personality's which are always evolving but with boundaries at different stages of life. The goal for a person suffering from a mental illness is for the therapist to help the patient to find resolution with their conflicts, deal with their anxieties, and in adapting ways that are more affective for their everyday functioning.

**If I was Dr. Burger the two techniques I would use to treat Conrad would be free association and dream analysis. Free association is the main technique that is used in psychoanalytic therapy. Free association allows the patient to talk about any and everything. Author Corey (2021), refers to the process as the, “clients are encouraged to say whatever comes to mind, regardless of how painful, silly, trivial, illogical, or irrelevant it may seem” (Corey, 73). Some people are waiting for the opportunity to express themselves and will keep feelings and emotions bottle up inside of them until the right opportunity presents itself for them to be able unleash those pent-up feelings. Another reason I would use this technique as a option is because in the beginning Conrad is resistant and not**

open to therapy. It would appear that free association and analysis of resistance could work together. The experience with Conrad was so painful he would get angry, talk about other issues, and by allowing Conrad the continued opportunity of free association helps the therapist in interpreting the repressed feelings and/or memories. It would appear that free association lets a therapist meet the client where they are at instead of imposing a structured plan of action of where they should be.

In the movie "Ordinary People", dreams play a major role. The film opens up with Conrad having a vision and his father is continuously making reference to his lack of sleep. It is the unconscious mind that is keeping Conrad from being able to get a good night's rest. I would explore what it is that keeping him from sleeping, what he remembers of his dreams, what are the symbolism of people, places, and things in the dreams. I would want to know how his dreams play a role in his relationship with his family and friends and if they are represented in the dreams. The most important thing I would want to know is how the dreams make him feel in his conscious state of mind and does it affect him and his relationships. Some people would say that dreams are irrelevant, or they go against the principals of the bible but there are instances in the bible where the interpretations of dreams are utilized as a way for God to communicate with a person. I would not discount a person who has been plaque by dreams because it may be a way for the unconscious to communicate an episode in a person life that they have suppressed. A therapist can help a client such as Conrad, "unlock the repression that has kept the material from consciousness and relate new insight to their present struggle. Dreams may serve as pathway to repressed material, but dreams also provide an understanding of client's current functioning" ( Corey, 75).

Since Conrad is a teenager and resistant at first to therapy, I would allow him the space to talk about anything that comes to mind. I would not put a limitation on what he wants to speak about or how he wants to express it. By providing Conrad the opportunity of a safe place to express himself

freely, I would not censor what he wants to say as long as it is not pertaining to harming himself or others. My role as his therapist would be to, “ interpret the material to clients, guiding them toward increased insight” ( Corey, 73). Once Conrad understands that there are no limitations on what he wants to talk about and no condemnation, it would allow him to become more open with me as his therapist in expressing his feelings and emotions. There would be establishment of trust between therapist and client.

These are an example of two techniques I could use that may be helpful but there is always reasons that a technique may not be the best options for the client. The drawback to dreams as author Siang - Yang Tan is the overgeneralization. Author Tan (2011) states, “dreams should be interpreted in the proper context” (49). Dreams should not be the only focus of therapy but only used to help in the process of gaining insight into a clients therapeutic process. Cultural differences can be a hinderance in a person’s psychoanalytic process. How a person was raised, social status, beliefs, and religion may hinder how a person may view how they see a therapy and especially one that is analyzing dreams. A therapist must take into consideration a persons social, environmental, and cultural background without judgement to address the whole person.

**Cites**

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