

Ordinary People Paper

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Abstract

This paper addressed 12 theories based on framework of movie, ordinary people if this counselor meet and counsel Conrad using those 12 theories. 12 Theories are including Psychoanalysis Therapy, Jungian Therapy, Adlerian Therapy, Behavior Therapy, CBT&REBT Therapies, Reality Therapy, Family Systems Therapy, Christian Approaches, Existential Therapy, Person-Centered Therapy, Gestalt Therapy. The 12 therapeutic approaches showed how this author applicates each theory to the case of Conrad in the movie. In this counselor's view, Conrad's psychological status will be analyzed and perspective to therapy approaches. This counselor will also carefully deal with the technique and intervention from the theories and will use it to Conrad. This counselor anticipates how Conrad will respond and will assess what Conrad has stated in response to the questions posed by the counselor. The process of engaging in psychotherapy is a procedure that takes place between two people, and it is a collaborative process that engages both the client and the therapist in co-constructing solutions about the challenges that they face in life (Corey, 2021). This counselor might anticipate the collaborative relationship with the client that can be achieved through psychotherapy by applying the 12 theories that are based on the film Ordinary People.

Summary of Ordinary People

Guest(2015) stated the following about the movie's summary of ordinary people: Conrad, a 17-year-old teenager, attempted suicide and was subsequently institutionalized. Conrad is uncomfortable socially and he begins counseling with Dr. Berger. At the first session, he discusses the death of his brother in a boating accident, admits to an earlier suicide attempt involving razor blades, and declares his desire to have better emotional and behavioral control of his life. Conrad visits his old acquaintance Karen at the mental institution and discovers that she is thoroughly enjoying herself at her new school, which is light years away from his own strangeness and unease. Conrad tells Dr. Berger about how much he hates being on the swim team, and Berger tells him to listen to and act on his gut. Conrad quits the swim quietly, which leads to a heated argument with his mother, who found out about his decision through a friend and lashes out at him. Conrad lashes out at his mother, accusing her of not caring about him, and blames his father for failing to recognize the tension between his mother and himself.

Discussion

Psychoanalysis Therapy

If this author were a psychoanalyst counselor, I would have focused on early development, psychosocial stage, unconscious, anxiety, and ego defense mechanism, as follows:

- When Conrad's problem is not properly addressed, "the three early stages of development Freud proposed—the oral, anal, and phallic stages—often prompt people to seek counseling" (Corey, 2021, p.63). This counselor might ask a question such as "Do you trust your mom?" Perhaps Conrad would have discussed his unease or distrust of Mom as a child. This counselor probably suspects that he was rejected by his mom in early childhood or that his mother's discipline was too harsh for him, so he was negative toward women.
- To understand Conrad's stage of development in the view of Erickson, the counselor may ask, "Tell me about your school life." Conrad may have explained that his school life included the unlikeliness of going to school, feeling like a person who is out of school, not completing school assignments, and developing relationships with his peer groups. In the view of Erickson's psychosocial stage, Conrad is in the period of adolescence, "that identity versus role confusion of a time of transition between childhood and adulthood" (Corey, 2021, p.65). Conrad struggled in school and had conflicts with his peers, so this author may surmise that his identity is not clear because he has low self-esteem and has failed to transition from childhood to adulthood.
- This counselor would get to know about his unconscious by asking the following questions, "How was your dream yesterday?" and following up with, "How's you're feeling today?" Conrad is most likely unaware of his unconscious, but by becoming aware of it, he

will be able to confront his memories and repressed feelings and learn how to control his emotions without becoming frustrated or discouraged. Through the resolution of transference distortions, the client's need to cling to previous patterns must be addressed (Corey, 2021, p.61).

- This counselor would have inquired about Conrad's anxiety, the source of his rage, and any emotional wounds or relationship issues in his family and friends. Anxiety is a fearful feeling caused by repressed feelings, memories, desires, and experiences that rise to the surface of awareness (Corey, 2021, p.61). Conrad may be suffering from neurotic anxiety, according to his past experience, he only survived in the submerged boat while his brother drowned. The death of a brother can also increase his feeling of moral guilt, which is also related to moral anxiety.
- Conrad may have used the ego defense mechanism to deal with his anxiety and avoid facing the truth. This counselor can interpret his defense mechanisms, including repression, denial, reaction formation, projection, displacement, rationalization, sublimation, regression, introjection, identification, and compensation (Corey, 2021, p.62-63). He might use repression, to avoid the feeling of anxiety after his brother's death and use displacement with his friends, fighting with them as he is looking for someone who can ventilate his anxiety.

Jungian Therapy

If this author were a counselor using Jung's theory and therapy approach, she would have focused on Conrad's dreams, religion, personality, personal development, achieving individuation, the dark side of emotions, universal experiences, past events, and future desires, future desire, realization self as follows:

- To understand Conrad's personality and personal development, particularly any specific event in the past may effect on current anxiety and depression and the future desire so counselor may have asked, "Tell me about your past event which affect your life in you mostly" Perhaps Conrad would have discussed his brother, died in a boat accident and the problem in current situation that he hated mom and felt along or outside of the group. Conrad expressed his attempting, suicide which is affecting by his brother's death. It would have quickly surfaced that his perspective was feeling wanted to love by mother, but he mentioned that his mom loved his brother but not himself, Conrad. And he felt it was like a rejection from his mom as his mom's attitude changed after his brother's death.
- Because of Conrad's intense anxiety, the counselor would have questioned him about his suicide attempt and pointed out that he wasn't really experiencing much affection from his mother after the death of his brother. And then they asked, "How has your brother's death affected your life? How have your relationships with your mother changed as a result of your brother's death?" The therapist might have come to the conclusion that Conrad suffered from depression and unchecked anxiety as a result of his brother's death and his misperception that his mother might no longer love him.

- The counselor would have asked Conrad about his relationship with his mom to after his brother's death, and the root of his depression and suicidal attempt was the broken relationship with his mom. "Jung maintained that we are not merely shaped by past events, but that we are influenced by our future as well as our past" (Corey, 2021, p.78) The counselor might conclude that Conrad has no hope to get reconnected with mom after his brother, Buck died in the boat. And the hopelessness, which is influenced by predictable unchanged broken relationship with mom affects his anxiety, fear and suicidal attempts.

Adlerian Therapy

If this author were an Adlerian Therapist, I would have focused on the following topics: social interest, lifestyle, birth order, sibling relationship, and life tasks:

- To know about Conrad's social interests, the counselor may have asked, "Tell me about your interests in school?". Conrad may tell the counselor that he is interested in singing and swimming, as he has been a member of the choir and trained to be a swimmer in the pool. According to Corey (2021), Adler said that Humans are more motivated by social consciousness than by unconsciousness. This counselor understands that his inferiority feeling can motivate him to succeed in the swim, as competition is unavoidable with another students in swimming race. This counselor also finds out his motivations from his social interest by applying Adlerian theory.
- This counselor would have asked Conrad the following questions to learn about his lifestyle: "tell me about your lifestyle? Tell me about your routine life." Conrad could explain how his life has recently changed since he stopped swimming in the movie. People's fundamental assumptions and ideas direct their course through life and structure their reality (Corey,

2021). Conrad's lifestyle choices, such as singing in public and swimming often, should accord with his personality and core values. The fact is that his decision to stop swimming indicates that he was discouraged and affected by other beliefs, and his counselor should be an encourager who may inspire him to remain optimistic and continue swimming in his life. Although not deterministic, birth order does raise a person's likelihood of encountering a particular set of circumstances (Corey, 2021). Because Conrad was the second child, it is highly likely that his older brother gained an advantage over his parents while forming a relationship with his family when he was young. This indicates that competition will be unavoidable as he grows older. This counselor may ask Conrad a question such as, "How is your relationship with your brother as you become older?" and may hear Conrad complain or indicate that he didn't have an advantage over his older brother when he was younger. Adler stated that the second child should share parental attention with another child, and that this would affect the child's behavior in competitions and later in life (Corey, 2021). This counselor may conclude that Conrad's relationship with his older brother was competitive during his early childhood, and that the Conrad's sibling and family relationships were possibly tense.

- According to Adler, three universal life tasks—establishing intimacy, building friendships, and contributing to society—must all be accomplished (Corey, 2021). This counselor may ask, "How's your relationship with your friends?" Conrad may respond that he tried to build a relationship with Karen but felt that he got a different vibe from her. Conrad was shocked at the end of the movie when Karen, who seemed to be in good health, chose to kill herself. This counselor may conclude that Karen was one of his best friends, and her decision, as well as his brother's death, made him appear to be a failure in terms of friendship and intimacy.

Conclusion

References

Corey, G. (2021). *Theory and practice of counseling and psychotherapy*. (10th ed.). United States:Brooks/Cole.

Guest. (2015, May 6). [Ordinary People]. Retrieved February 13, 2023, from <https://www.enotes.com/topics/ordinary-people>