

Existential Therapy: Ordinary People

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Existential Therapy is more of a philosophy than it is techniques for therapy. Inspired and developed by various existential thinkers, the concept of this modality deals with what it means to be human. Existential therapy focuses on the tragedy of life as well as the freedom of choices which can help shape people into becoming who they are.

The modality deals with the meaning of living for a person. Rather than having solutions for everyday problems, it digs deeper into the roadblocks for people who are limited from living their most authentic life and becoming the best version of who they can be by evaluating their life's meaning, value, purpose, and goals. (Corey, 2015)

In the movie, *Ordinary People*, the character of Conrad presents with an existential crisis related to his brother's death. He did not understand his place in the world anymore and suffered from the guilt of his actions.

If I were employing existential therapy with Conrad, I would want to increase Conrad's self-awareness to have him realize that he has fixed his identity in the event of his brother's death, as well as his mother's disapproval of him. Though he cannot change past events or his circumstances at the moment, he has the freedom to make choices in his life and shape his future self. I would guide him to confront his pain and guilt, which are blocking him, and point him towards creating meaning in his life even in suffering.

I would explore the concept of death with Conrad, and want him to accept the eventual reality of it for everyone. I would help him to understand that life is full of uncertainties and accepting death as part of life is not something to be feared, but to incorporate as a driver for the choices he can make going forward.

My main goal with the existential therapy with Conrad would be for him to confront his despair, in order to transform his values and live his most authentic life. I would want him to embrace his freedom of choice and choose to experience his life in the fullest way possible. Even while grieving the loss of his brother, he can find meaning and purpose in the life that he is living.

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References

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