

Ordinary People: Existential Approach

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Existential therapists hold on to the notion that everyone can reach self-awareness and that once we reach this level of awareness, we become free beings who are responsible for choosing the way in which we live. They also believe that we influence our own destiny. With this newfound awareness of freedom and responsibility, however, comes existential anxiety, which is just a normal part of the human experience. Existential therapists stand firm on the notion that whether we like it or not, we are free, even though we may seek to avoid reflecting our freedom. They say that we have the ability to choose and that we must choose even if we do not know the outcome of our life situations. This kind of anxiety arises when we reflect on the reality that we are mortal beings. Existential therapists believe that facing the inevitable prospect of death helps us become aware that we do not have an eternity to accomplish all our goals and desires; they believe in living in the present moment having the ability to choose for ourselves.

Existential therapy places prominence on the person-to-person relationship. rather than it being the techniques a therapist uses in the therapeutic process, it is the quality of the client-therapist relationship that leads to a positive outcome. It is vital that therapists also reach a high level of self-awareness and openness So that they can gain insight into the subjective world of their clients without losing their own sense of identity. Being present is both a condition for therapy to occur and the goal of therapy. Existential therapists strive to be as authentic as possible and practice self-disclosure in their work as a therapist.

In the film *Ordinary People*, Conrad felt as though he had no control over his life or his environment. from an early age, he always expressed that he was in the shadows of his late brother Buck. His brother's passing only exacerbated the dysfunctional relationships that he had with his family and his peers. He felt trapped in a world of uncertainty after his brother's passing. Buck's death heightened Conrad's belief that there was no point in anything because death was

inevitable. He didn't see the point in having any goals, ambitions, or interests. Conrad felt guilty and avoided reflecting on his freedom because he felt responsible for his brother's death and could only reflect on the trouble he felt like he caused his parents for being in the psychiatric ward due to his suicide attempt. He was trapped in his guilt and had no sense of direction for his life.

Although the existential approach isn't necessarily technique oriented, I would recommend brief counseling for Conrad as it would help him to focus on significant areas that involve assuming personal responsibility, making a commitment to make his own choices, along with the ability to act on them. This would also expand his awareness of his current situation. It would help him to evaluate the things he has accomplished and shed light on some areas in his life he needs to work on. I would also encourage Conrad to engage in some group counseling. Group counseling under this approach would help facilitate Self-exploration. This would help Conrad to remain accountable for himself and how he responds to his environment. Group counseling would also widen his perspective about himself and the world around him; it would help clarify and bring meaning to his present life into his future life.

I believe this approach would help Conrad come out of the stuck feeling that he has found himself in. This approach would essentially free Conrad from the guilt and anxiety he has developed from surviving the tragic accident that took his brother's life. This approach would allow Conrad to venture into self-exploration to get a sense of who he really is for himself and help him to determine his personal beliefs and values that are not influenced by external factors. This approach would teach him That he is responsible for himself and the choices that he makes for his life going forward despite what he has endured in his past. it would allow him to focus on the here and now essentially freeing him so that he may accomplish his goals and desires.

References

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