

Gestalt Therapy – Ordinary People Paper

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Gestalt therapy is considered a humanistic approach that does not focus on the client's past but rather on the client's present condition and environment. Fritz Perls believes that individuals can thrive to achieve personal balance, and growth through awareness, self-direction, and freedom.

Gestalt theory focuses on unconditional acceptance and empathy of the clients involved; the process, rather than the content, without judgment, without analyzing, and without interpreting, while concurrently concentrating on the individual's presence. This allows the client to feel important, and significant during the therapeutic process.

Field Theory affirmed that a person must be seen in his or her environment or in their circumstances as part of the constantly changing field. Gestalt theory pays attention to and explores what is constantly occurring at the boundary between the person and the environment. Emphasis may be on a particular thing or a particular person. In Conrad's situation at home, it was his mother who was constantly confrontational, impatient, resistant, and unsupportive. At school, it was the body of water that he had to immerse himself in each evening during his swimming lessons. Dr. Berger, discovering that his swimming lessons were a barrier to his healing, during his first therapy session, Conrad found the courage and made the decision to remove himself from that environment, and the figure (water) by quitting the swimming lessons. At home, his mother's silent treatment, hostility, lack of love, and her tone made it difficult for him to move forward. Her behavior towards him was a constant reminder that he was responsible for his brother's death, and his mother's reaction toward him. It was Dr. Berger who assist him in understanding the limitation and the capacity of his mother's ability to love him.

Organism Self-Regulation is a process by which equilibrium is disturbed by the emergence of a need, a sensation, or an interest. The person will do his or her best to regulate themselves, based on their own capabilities, awareness, and the resources from their environments. As a result of Conrad's capabilities, and the resources he had from his father, he became aware through the therapy sessions with Dr. Berger, that the power to make those changes, was within reach, was within him. Conrad was able to rise to those occasions and made the changes that mentally removed him from that consequential environment.

Field therapy and Organism Self-Regulation used by Dr. Berger were extremely helpful to Conrad's success in therapy. Dr. Berger was quick in identifying the cause, and effect of Conrad's figures, and organisms which caused him to spiral out of control. Dr. Berger also realized that Conrad could not change his environment because he was a young dependent adult, but simply making him aware of them, allowed him to make the change, despite the figure, and the person.

Field therapy made sense in Conrad's situation and would really work in situations where a child or a person is being abused or witnessed abuse. Removing them from the environment, and the abuser will certainly help them to begin the healing process. In Conrad's environment, he could not change his mother's behavior, but he was very much aware of it. He endured her silent treatment, her resentment, and reluctance to try, to understand, and to listen to anyone but herself. On the other hand, he was able to remove himself from the water that caused him so much pain, regret, and despair.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, Gestalt therapy is very simple but powerful. Anyone with an awareness of it can use it as an everyday tool whether at work, school, or at home to combat their everyday issues and concerns. The emphasis on meeting people where they are, and working to improve on who they are, rather than trying to become like others, speaks volumes. These are some of the advice lots of parents have given to their children for decades. Unfortunately, not every heed to it. With such great advice, so many people could have avoided the unnecessary pitfalls of life.

References

Corey, G. (2018). *Theory and practice of counseling and psychotherapy*, (10th ed., pp. 95-128). Cengage Learning.

Ordinary People, released September 19<sup>th</sup>, 1980 (USA)

Directed: Robert Redford

Award: Academy Award for Best Picture, Academy Award for Directing, More

Language: English

Music composed by: Marvin Hamlisch

Watched on Pluto