

Ordinary People Paper

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### Abstract

If this counselor does wind up meeting with Conrad, this paper will employ 12 different hypotheses based on a film about ordinary people. These 12 theories include Psychoanalytic Therapy, Jungian Therapy, Adlerian Therapy, Behavior Therapy, CBT&REBT Therapies, Reality Therapy, Family Systems Therapy, Christian Approaches, Existential Therapy, Person-Centered Therapy, and Gestalt Therapy. Psychoanalytic Therapy, Jungian Therapy, Adlerian Therapy, Behavior Therapy, CBT&REBT Therapies, Reality Therapy, Family Systems Therapy, and Gestalt Therapy are also included. The twelve distinct therapeutic approaches reveal how the author applies each theory to the scenario that is depicted in the movie concerning Conrad. As the therapist gets closer to beginning therapy with Conrad, the counselor takes a deeper look at Conrad's mental health from his perspective and analyzes it from that angle. This therapist gives careful consideration to the theories used with Conrad, as well as the method and intervention that results from those theories. This counselor first assesses how Conrad will react to the inquiries that are directed against him, and then analyzes what Conrad has to say in answer to the questions that have been given to him. Conrad's mental state may be effectively addressed by the 12 theories, and the theories' ensuing application to queries about his mental state and behavior issues may be useful.

### Summary of Ordinary People

Guest (2015) said the following about the summary of ordinary people in the movie: Conrad, a 17-year-old, tried to kill himself and was then put in an institution. Conrad feels awkward in social situations, so he starts seeing Dr. Berger for counseling. At the first session, he talks about how his brother died in a boating accident, admits that he tried to kill himself before with razor blades, and says that he wants to be more in control of his emotions and actions. Conrad goes to see his old friend Karen in the mental hospital. He finds out that she is having a great time at her new school, which is a world away from his own strangeness and unease. Conrad tells Dr. Berger how much he hates being on the swim team, and Berger tells him to listen to his gut and act on it. Conrad quits swimming without telling anyone, which causes a big fight with his mother, who found out from a friend and yelled at him. Conrad gets angry at his mother and says she doesn't care about him. He also blames his father for not noticing 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, and unconscious as follows:

- 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. 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).

### *Jungian Therapy*

If this author were a counselor using Jung's theory and therapy approach, she would have focused on Conrad's personality, personal development, suicidal attempt and past events, as follows:

- This counselor would have asked Conrad, "Tell me about the most important thing that happened to you in the past that has had the most impact on your life." After the boating accident, Conrad might have talked to his mother about his relationship. It would have been easy to see that from his point of view, his mother wanted to love him, but he said in the movie that his mother loved his brother more than she loved him. This counselor might conclude that he felt like his mom turned her back on him and that his brother's death hurt his personality and development.
- 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 I would like to ask, "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 concluded that Conrad suffered from depression and unchecked anxiety caused his suicidal attempt as a result of his brother's death and his misperception that his mother might no longer love him.

### *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. 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 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. 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 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.
- 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.

*Cognitive Behavioral Therapy*

If this author were a counselor who used cognitive behavioral therapy, I would have focused on Conrad's low self-esteem, guilt feelings, provoking negative thoughts, trauma, and beliefs as follows:

- To understand his trauma, and any guilt felt for past his life, the counselor would have asked, "Tell me about any trauma or accident in your life." Conrad may have answered that his brother died in a boating accident. The counselor might conclude that Conrad felt guilty because he was rescued from the boating accident, but his brother lost his life.
- This counselor would have asked Conrad about his low self-esteem and why he thought he was dumb and less critical than other people. The counselor might conclude that Conrad exaggerates himself as inferior to others with faulty information procession. Faulty information processing is a prime cause of exaggerations in adaptive emotional and behavioral reactions (Corey, 2013, p. 283)
- This counselor would have asked Conrad what made him hostile around himself and followed up with a question, "Tell me about your honest feeling yourself," and the next question stating, "You are negative to yourself and how're your negative thoughts arose from?" The counselor may conclude that his provoking negative thoughts influenced his perception which led to his depression and decision to quit swimming.
- To know his beliefs, the counselor may have asked, "Tell me about your beliefs for your life experiences" and followed up with, "how have your life experiences affected your beliefs". The counselor may have concluded that his beliefs have highly personal meaning, as he may have answered negatively by comparing himself often with others.

*Behavior Therapy*

If this author were a behavior therapy counselor, I would have focused on Conrad's behavior problems, including environmental conditions, stress management, anxiety, and phobias.

- To understand Conrad's environmental conditions that contribute to his problems, the counselor would have discussed school life and family. Perhaps Conrad would have told his unfair experiences and dissatisfaction with his school and the family around him. His family, school, and surroundings may have contributed to his behavioral issues, the counselor may have determined.
- This counselor would have asked Conrad about stress management and how he handles his stress and acknowledged that he didn't have any specific plan to cope with stress. The counselor may have concluded that Conrad is vulnerable to managing or controlling his stress.
- This counselor would have probed Conrad about his anxiety about his mom as he may have expressed his anger of disconnection with his mom. The counselor may have concluded that he experienced rejection anxiety from his mother, as well as disconnected emotions from his mother's relationship.
- To know of anxiety-arousing situations, the counselor may have asked, "tell me about your phobia or anxiety-arousing situations. Perhaps Conrad would have answered specific phobia to remember a boating accident, that caused his brother's death. This counselor may have concluded that his anxiety got worse when he thought about the boating accident and his brother's death.

If this author were a counselor using Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy, she would have focused on Conrad's shameful experiences, anxiety, self-defeating thoughts, and depression.

- This counselor would have inquired about the client's feelings of shame in relation to a particular circumstance or event. Conrad would have talked about the shame that was bothering him in the movie. This counselor may have concluded the humiliation that was arising from the fact that he was falling short of his mother's expectations for him in the movie.
- This counselor would have questioned Conrad about his anxiety, and Conrad would have discussed how he wanted to manage his distress and anxiety following the boating accident. The fact that, from his point of view, remembering the boating tragedy always fills him with dread would have been easy to deduce.
- The counselor may question Conrad about any negative thoughts that may be circulating around him in order to bring his attention to self-defeating thoughts. Conrad's response would have that he believed he was less capable than other individuals and had no relationship with other people. It's possible that the counselor will conclude that Conrad has negative views about other people and himself.
- This counselor would have questioned Conrad in order to determine the extent of his depression. It's possible that Conrad would have brought up the fact that ever since his brother went away, and this counselor may have concluded that Conrad has been suffering from depression ever since his brother passed away.





Conclusion

References

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