

Ordinary People: Gestalt Approach

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Gestalt therapy is an experiential approach that stresses present awareness and the quality of contact between a person in their environment. The major focus of just thought therapy focuses on the clients awareness of how their behaviors that were once part of adjusting to their past environment may be interfering with their daily function in the present. The primary goal of this approach is to gain awareness. Another aim of this approach is to assist clients in exploring how clients interact with certain elements of their environment. Gestalt therapists stress the notion that change occurs through a heightened awareness of “What is.” Gestalt therapists don't believe in resistance the way that other approaches may view resistance simply because they are more focused on the clients present awareness. they are specifically fixated on the here and now of their client. “Awareness is a key requirement for the restoration of self-regulation within the person’s environment” (Resnick, 2015). Gestalt therapists believe that the client is capable of self regulating if they are willing to work through the unfinished business of their circumstances. Gestalt therapists help clients identify the most pressing issues, needs, and interests by designing experiments that would sharpen the figures that are the most salient aspects of the individual-environmental-field As they emerge from the background.

In the film *Ordinary People*, we see how Conrad is focused on the past. He was experiencing what Gestalt therapist would call unfinished business. He was rather fatigued and low of energy, disinterested in daily activities. In the film, Conrad also struggled with maintaining his own individuality. He tried his very best to fill the void that his brother Buck left behind. His behavior was heavily influenced by his environment by friends and familial pressures. This left him disengaged and in a feedback loop of the trauma that resulted from his brother's death.

I would use confrontation to invite Conrad to examine his behaviors, attitudes and thoughts. Using this approach would provide a way for Conrad to deal with certain aspects of himself and his environment that he has been avoiding. It would help to bring him out of the past and bring him in the here-and-now by reframing his thinking. Most people want to escape from fearful stimuli and avoid unpleasant feelings. Therefore, I would encourage Conrad to stay with those unpleasant feelings and dive deeper into the feelings that he may be trying to avoid. By bringing these feelings to the surface, Conrad would be able to work through them and eventually overcome them.

I believe this approach would help Conrad deal with the unfinished business of not just losing his brother but also other aspects of his past that he may not have dealt with as a result of his dysfunctional family structure. This would also help him deal with the present aspects of his current life and how he interacts in his current environment and relationships. This will help bring Conrad in the here-and-now. This approach would also help Conrad deal with some painful feelings that he may be avoiding. This approach would help to invigorate his self-individuality so that he no longer has to live in the shadow of his late brother Buck and help him gain that aspect of himself and his environment that he has been yearning for.

References

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- (1980). *Ordinary People*. USA. Retrieved February 14, 2023.