

Ordinary People Paper

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Abstract

Counseling is the process by which individuals receive guided support. This entails the employment of systematic, psychological structures carried out in individualized interviews. This format further requires the gathering of historical information, and aptitude assessment, done on the premise of formal theories. This paper reports the assessment of a cinematic psychiatric case, and how a clinical worker utilizes principles of twelve major theories to provide therapeutic support to the end of a cliental self-discovered solution.

Introduction

The motion picture *Ordinary People* features six scenes that entailed therapeutic sessions for a boy who meets professionally with his counselor to seek psychological and emotional healing, as he grapples with the catastrophic loss of his brother. The film also highlights a myriad of issues surrounding ways the tragedy extensively affects the boy's family and introduces relationship strains in multiple directions which include that of the boy towards his parents, his parents towards him, and his parents among themselves.

The movie highlights many therapeutic and psychological themes and proves to be a great source of learning for clinical workers and students in the field. These themes include separation, divorce, relationship disrepair, anger, rage, guilt, death, grief, mental instability, and peer pressure. During the succeeding paragraphs, the writer of this paper will further elaborate on these themes as he interacts with the case of the film, twelve clinical theories.

Psychoanalytic Therapy

Developed by Sigmund Freud, psychoanalytical therapy is a philosophical system that focuses primarily on the unconscious mind as opposed to mindful cognizance. Clinical professionals who utilize this theory believe in its foundational ideas that one's actions or conduct are byproducts of past experiences, wedged in the unconscious mind. Applying this principle in the therapeutic setting helps a clinician to comprehend the factors surrounding clients who suppress adverse abusive, or hostile childhood experiences in fear that surfacing such occurrences will be seriously threatening to their own well-being and to others (Tan, 2011, p. 39). Berger, the counselor in the film, used this theory in his first session with his client, Conrad, while posing the open-ended statement, "people are treating you like a dangerous character." Conrad's repressed experience with his brother's death posed hostility to his friends and a disconnected relationship with his mother.

Conrad, the client was helped by his therapist, as he reacted to the theory's defense mechanism. Sublimation was identified through the client's expression of indulgence in masturbation. With such a declaration, the counselor provided a follow-up response by asking Conrad if that helps. The defense mechanism of realization was also observed. Conrad's counselor helped him to understand that the cause of his brother's death was not his fault. The rewriter of this paper in utilizing the psychoanalytical principles, would, as the counselor of the cinematic feature, employ the use of classical psychoanalysis, by insisting that Conrad the client stays with the process of long-term counseling. The severity of his therapeutic matter regarded longevity in the helping approach. The counselor of the film also helped in this regard, by encouraging Conrad to discontinue swimming classes to focus on his therapeutic treatment.

Jungian Therapy

The paragraphs below outline approaches that would be used by Conrad's counselor, if he were to use the Jungian theory. This approach helps clients to deeply analyze psychological and emotional well-being within the professional environment, guided by the clinical worker. The Jungian theory in its application assists the client to correlate both the conscience and the unconscious state of mind, to heal into an individual who perceives life and situations from a balanced perspective (Tan, 2011, pp. 90-91).

Conrad grapples with the unconscious spaces of his past, nightmares, and feelings of guilt. The major theoretic ideals of Jungian therapy highlight the perspective of human nature, which focuses on one's latent abilities and creativity; personality theory which explains the functionality of one's attitude; and levels of consciousness, which explain the accessibility of one's hidden thoughts and feeling (Tan, 2011, pp. 85-86). Conrad's counselor forges him in the direction of positive thinking. This was seen in his sixth therapeutic session, the therapist emphasizes the fact that bad things happen to good people. This expression aids the client to unveil himself from the unconscious, suppressive mindset to begin to see his life from a positive standpoint. The significance of the session entailed a moment of emotional breakthrough. Conrad the client cried. The writer of this paper, as the clinician in the film, would utilize various aspects of the stages within the Jungian theory. The factor of listening would be employed, creating space for the client to be relaxed and open share from his emotional space. Educating clients is critical. Details of the therapeutic model must be explained. Leading clients to build meaningful relationships outside the therapy room is also understood to be a valuable part of the Jungian therapeutic experience. The film also outlined this factor when the counselor asked Conrad to whom he relates outside the sessions.

Adlerian Therapy

A great source of conducting social justice work, the Adlerian therapy which was developed by Carlson and Englar- Carlson, was identified in the film *Ordinary People* (1980). Although the theory has much to do with addressing the needs of people of various ethnic backgrounds, and the stresses of a wide span of cultures, the context of its address to Western models appeals to the film. Conrad's mother was seen to be overly conservative and was embarrassed by the fact that her son Conrad needed and utilized therapeutic help. This led to the self-pursuit of the client to regroup himself in treatment after an extensive time of hospitalization. It meaningless of the counseling experience from the perspective of Conrad's dad was also observed in the application of the theory to film (Corey 70).

It is important to note, that description of the inferior feeling is the most integral aspect of the Adlerian philosophical framework of thinking (Tan, 2011, p. 65). Conrad in the film was observed as one who viewed himself as one inferior to his mother, father, and deceased brother. Defying this inferior complex. Conrad's counselor in session five, induces positive thinking in Conrad's mind, assuring him that his mother loves him.

The writer of this paper, in his future therapeutic practice, will utilize this theory through the process of motivating clients to strive for levels of excellence. The acts of affirmations will also be critical, as clients must understand the importance of competence and the need to be optimistic in all spheres of life and situation. Conrad was affirmed by his counselor on various levels, to produce a high thinking pattern. The counselor's remark in session two, asserting that Conrad needs a tranquilizer typifies his call for him to have upward thinking which will also reflect on his exterior.

Behavioral Therapy

Using Behavioral Therapy to better understand Conrad's psychological needs, the counselor in the cinematic feature assumes the role of a teacher and coach. In this, he uses a systematic approach to infuse operant conditioning techniques in making **positive and negative reinforcement**. Through the use of these principles, Conrad was enabled to engage positive behavior, and in the same measure, undo that which poses damage to his psychological well-being. In accomplishing positive action, Conrad's counselor in the very first session, after making an inquiry about the reason for his visit, immediately affirms that he is loved. Conrad was reminded that he was worth being worried about and that others, including his estranged mother, is thinking about him.

The counselor in the movie refused to enforce Conrad's recurring self-defeating and self-pity thoughts. These emerged from the circumstances surrounding his brother's death. Conrad believed he was responsible for the fatal accident. Using Behavioral therapy, Conrad's counselor in the film, lead him to the extinction of the negative thought patterns. This therapeutic breakthrough occurred in Conrad's sixth counseling session when his counselor proceeded with a series of rhetorical questions which demanded responses that would ultimately provide psychological freedom. In addition to asking what did he do to his brother to cause his brother's demise, the writer of this paper, if he were Conrad's counselor, would seek other, and similar rhetorical responses to questions such as how will having a culpable mind frame contribute to his needed future happiness.

Learning operant conditioning involves learning processes in which one's behavior is controlled by the consequences that follow set behaviors (Corey, 2013, p. 208). Conrad's dense emotional reactions were modified when he finally began to be able to cry in session six.

Cognitive Behavior Therapy

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) applied to the case of Conrad provides his counselor the opportunity to be more purposeful in his attempt to assist him to modify his tainted thinking of defeat. In Conrad's fifth session with his counselor, it was observed that Conrad refused to accept self-love and that from others. He mentally held to the belief that his mother hated him and also that his brother, while alive, and also his dad has been shown more love by his mother than her love has been shown to him. The counselor in the session insights into the principles of CBT as he recommends that Conrad accept his mother's limitations. An action that will lead him to acknowledge that she loves him more than enough.

The writer of this paper, if he were Conrad's counselor, would gear the therapeutic sessions, leading Conrad to focus on self-reflection and his power to make positive choices. Being crippled by a past horrific situation, Conrad depicts a crippled or restrained attitude to psychologically relieve himself from what was not characterized by intentional activity, but rather, a mere mistake. In his fifth session, Conrad affirms a language of never wanting to forgive himself. Using Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, Conrad would be required guidance into mindfulness techniques and writing self-statements to counteract negative thoughts. These would indeed help to reframe his thought patterns of self-rejection. Conrad would be required to have homework opportunities such as writing a letter, addressed to the night of his brother's death, affirming himself that he was not at fault and that he was retracting to deliver his pain back in time where it belongs.

CBT is premised on relationships. Exemplified by this authentication. Conrad stated unequivocally in his final session that intervention with his psychological needs would not have been possible without his counselor, whom he affirmed to be his friend.

Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy

A counseling session with Conrad governed by the theoretic principles of the Rational Emotive Behavioral Theory (REBT) is one directed from the approach that Conrad's illogical beliefs are the basis of his expressive sensitivities. His display of anger was depicted through his lewd expressions in session four. Conrad's anxiety as seen in session one was also noted to be steaming from his desire of wanting to be in control. These are uncommon byproducts of his negative trailing attitudes.

Conrad's counselor in session five challenged his compact belief that he was unloved by his family. He also adamantly held on to feelings of unforgiveness. The counselor of the session challenged the client not to repeat his act of attempted suicide as a means of escaping his life challenges. REBT differentiates between healthy negative emotions such as sadness and frustration and unhealthy negative emotions such as depression and hostility (Corey, 2013, p. 247). The use of this principle was applied by Conrad's therapist as he encouraged him to persistently flow with his emotions – resulting in a therapeutic breakthrough in the final session.

The strong instructive element of the Rational Emotive Behavioral Theory is considered by the writer of this paper to be the most widely used theory in the counseling approach to Conrad. Although a relational approach is obvious, the counselor's absolute approach in his use of informal language and feverish tones throughout the counseling process was noted. Key examples of the expletive expression were observed in session four.

The writer of this paper if he were Conrad's counselor would apply cognitive behavior adjustment approaches in his therapeutic sessions. In doing this, he would conduct talk therapy and written assignments which would help Conrad to pinpoint the key areas that affect him. This discovery would lead to the formation of the necessary skills to overcome problems.

Conclusion

One is able to learn from various sources of knowledge. A cinematic film though fictional has proven to precisely encapsulate theoretical and practical concepts of the clinical field. Reading is critical to learning, however, it is important to note that another visual – a dramatic source has contributed much to the elucidation of the concepts learned in the course theories of counseling.

References

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