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Humans are complicated individuals who sometimes behave in ways that even they may struggle to understand. Throughout life, I have endured experiences that impacted everything from my self-image to how I relate to others outside myself. Knowing that life experiences happen to everyone, I understand that how we process those experiences will vary. Unfortunately, some life-changing experiences are not positive or easy to forget. Revisiting childhood experiences enables us to better understand ourselves, our thought processes, and our behaviors. Early childhood experiences are an excellent predicate for uncovering the development of our character. Some individuals suffer from mental health conditions they have inherited. Yet others suffered childhood traumas that remained undiagnosed and carried into their adulthood. Of the theories I have studied in this class, I would have to incorporate aspects of different approaches as needed.

My view of human nature may be biased because of my traumas. I do not believe that people are good or evil; they are motivated by needs and wants. More than a few of those needs and wants are of a selfish nature. I have had a difficult life, and find myself intrigued by how people think; every mind is a wonder. To get people to reveal the why of their behaviors, and have them reflect on it, is fascinating. Many people manage to navigate through life without addressing past traumas or grief. They find themselves holding on to feelings like anger, bitterness, and resentment, which often manifests as depression and anxiety. Disrupting their lives in different ways. Many turn to alcohol and/or drugs to cope. Some escalate to committing criminal acts. Integrating elements from the Psychoanalytic, REBT, Adlerian, Jungian and

Person-centered approaches would help these individuals discover the catalyst for their disruptions, and how to work through them. I would engage the client in conversation to conduct an MI and get them to open up about the reason for their visit. Encouraging the client to revisit the moment they recognize as the root of their problem. Dream analysis can provide insight into the client's unconscious, possibly revealing repressed memories. It would be a useful tool, if the client expresses having nightmares. Educating clients on how their thoughts, feelings, and behaviors interchange helps them feel less "crazy".

In the event of a genetic predisposition to a mental health disorder, I may refer them to another psychotherapist or psychiatrist who can prescribe psychotropic medication if needed. I prefer to focus on helping individuals learn psychoeducation, that could reinforce the positive changes they make. There are individuals who will act on their primordial feelings to hurt others how they've been hurt. It is important to determine if the client's condition is genetic or environmental. Genetic predisposition, for me, equates with a chemical imbalance in the brain. It is not my area of expertise, therefore a recommendation will be made to an external provider.

One's physical and social environments influence the evolution of one's personality. We learn from watching our parents and others we are regularly exposed to during early childhood. As we grow and develop, we continue to adopt ideas and behaviors from cultural and societal norms. I would integrate some elements of the Adlerian and Jungian therapies to ensure the client can understand how their environment affects their self-image. The client's perception of self relative to those in their environment can cause distress. Factors like their birth order, and family constellation, are very impactful. In larger families, the oldest child is usually the center of attention.

Younger siblings tend to develop feelings of inferiority, which affects their interpersonal abilities. There is also something to be said about those who find themselves in the middle.

In my family, however, there was a problem with the behaviors my siblings and I displayed. I am the eldest sibling and only female of four children in one household. But from the ages of 3-10 years, I lived with my maternal grandmother. My late brother struggled with my presence in the home. He had lived with my mother, behaving as the older sibling. Meanwhile I was emotionally detached from everyone in the home. The third in line, a half-brother, had enjoyed preferential treatment, except from us. The youngest suffered, feeling unloved and abused by his father. As adults, we all suffered from varying undiagnosed mental health disorders that stemmed from childhood traumas. We had managed to stop fighting each other by the time the youngest reached adolescence, to now protect ourselves from the world. I believe that if we were capable of shifting our view of our environment, others possess the same capability. They only need some guidance to shift perspectives.

To change my circumstances, I practiced some strategies consistent with those found in the Existential approach. I often thought of my situation and observed those around me. I thought about things like where I was in life, where I'd like to be, what kind of person I wanted to be, and what I would like to be known for. This of course, would occur when I was not struggling with depression and suicidal ideations. I paid attention to and observed people's lifestyles, thought processes, and behaviors. I would ask questions about whatever aspects of their person that I found appealing. I considered how I would apply it to achieve my goals. Staying motivated and pacing myself I was able to do

abundantly greater than I could have thought of or imagined. I thank Jesus for having taught me how to begin to process my hurts, and how He's helped me. Because of those experiences, I have been able to overcome the suicidal ideations. In the wake of the passing of my brother, my husband and others in the last four years, I have accepted and continue with therapy.

Mental health encompasses our emotional and psycho-social well-being. It impacts cognition, emotions, and behaviors, determining how stress and interpersonal relationships are handled and healthy choices are made. I would employ Person-Centered therapy to help clients attain self-actualization. The four phases of Adlerian therapy would ensure the client becomes self-aware, promoting lifestyle changes and healthy relationships. Behavior therapy can address the client's behavior by helping them understand how their environment influenced their thought processes.

It is our human nature to want to develop and grow in all aspects of life. The manner in which we choose to go about it, however, is what sets us apart as individuals. I have found myself as the person people usually go to when they need advice. I am known for being a good listener, observant even of body language, and giving tough love. I do not allow my friends to make excuses for themselves when they are in the wrong, and even when they don't wish to hear it, I will speak truths about who God said they are before walking away. Not all my friends are believers, but it does not deter me from sprinkling some Jesus in our conversations. I praise God for every time they have come back to tell me that something I said stuck with them. It opens the door for me to reveal who my Source is.

References

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- Tan, S-Y. (2011). *Counseling and psychotherapy: A Christian perspective*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker.