

Ordinary People Application Paper: Reality Therapy

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William Glasser was a psychiatrist who rejected the Freudian model and instead put together ideas that would become reality therapy. Reality therapy is based on Choice theory, which explains why and how we function. Reality therapy helps clients effectively control their lives by making more helpful choices as they relate with people. (Corey, 2017). Some characteristics of reality therapy are:

1. Emphasize choice and responsibility
2. Reject transference
3. Keep therapy in the present
4. Avoid focusing on symptoms
5. Challenge traditional views on mental illness (Corey, 2017, p. 316-318)

Conrad's symptoms show a detached manner of relating to the activities and people around him. Choice theory states that we are not born blank slates but are born with "five genetically encoded needs that drive us all our lives: survival, love and belonging, power, freedom, and fun" (Corey, 2017, p.314). Therefore, Conrad's symptoms stem from a need to survive and belong, which inhibits him from exercising his power, freedom, and ability to have fun.

As Dr. Berger, I would begin using some of the WDEP system: exploring what Conrad WANTS and possible things he can DO in the present. But, first, asking Conrad, "What do you want?" and helping him discover his wants and hopes rather than choosing his desires based on his parents or friends will help him make better choices. He has much more control than he perceives, so exploring will help him move "from a sense of external control to a sense of internal control" (Corey, 2017, p.322).

Next, I would ask, "What are you doing?" and "What do you see for yourself now and in the future?" to help Conrad think about his present choices or plan for the future. I would choose these two techniques to help Conrad gain better awareness of and his ability to change his behavior towards more satisfying outcomes for himself. His feelings matter, but only if attached to an action he can take to make more satisfying choices.

This approach would benefit Conrad so that he can examine his behaviors and see if they need to change to increase his happiness, his sense of inner control over his life, and be more of his authentic self with the relationships in his life. Reality therapy would help Conrad have a healthier congruence between his choices and wants. As he makes more authentic choices for himself, his symptoms will decrease.

References

- Corey, G. (2017). *Theory and Practice of Counseling and Psychotherapy* (10th ed.). Cengage Learning.
- Redford, R., Sargent, A., Schwary, R. L., Kanew, J., Hamlich, M., Pollack, B., Bennett, P., & Riva, J. M. (1980). *Ordinary People*.