

Ordinary People Reality **Theory**

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Reality Therapy was developed out of the work of William Glasser. Glasser believes people are responsible for their behavior. Glasser began his study on this topic through control therapy and by expanding on its premises over a ten-year period, choice therapy was developed. According to the object of reality therapy, a person ultimately is their actions are based on their needs and wants which is reflected in the behavior. Reality therapy believes that a person is motivated by the relationships they have in their lives with other people. When a person is not satisfied within their relationships, it leaves them unfulfilled and that causes them to exhibit that unhappiness in their behavior. A person's behavior is a choice they have made in their frustration with how their relationships have no connections. Author Gerald Corey (2021) differentiates the choice theory from reality theory as, "Choice theory is the theoretical basis for reality therapy; it explains why and how we function. Reality therapy provides a delivery system for helping individuals take more effective control of their lives." (314) The basis for the therapy is helping a person make better decisions in how they deal with the relationships in their lives. Reality therapy deals with the basic needs of a human being which are survival, love & belonging, inner control or power, freedom, and fun.

This therapy would help the character Conrad in *Ordinary People* examine the choices he has made in the relationships with the people in his life. Therapists of reality therapy do not dwell on the past mistakes but focus on what can we do now to change the pattern of behavior. Conrad's relationships with his friends came to an end based on his choice. His relationship with his mother was strained. Reality therapy would help Conrad in changing how he deals with these relationships by reflecting and changing the choices he has made. It is about changing how a person thinks which is reflected in their behavior.

The two procedures I would use in treating Conrad would be self-evaluation and planning and action. Self-evaluation is good for anyone who is not happy with the choices they have made or the direction their life is taking. Corey (2021) explains self-evaluation as, “the client examining behavioral direction, specific actions, wants, perceptions, new directions, and plan” (323). evaluation would allow Conrad to reflex on how his relationships have not satisfied his basic needs either through his behavior or the behavior of others. By examining the different aspects of the relationship, he then explores ways in which to change the negative behavior into positive behavior that could lead to a more fulfilling relationship.

Once a self-evaluation has been completed, it allows a person to now look at ways implement the changes necessary for moving forward. As the therapist my job is not to tell Conrad what he should do but to mentor and evaluate him in developing and implementing his plan of action for the change behavior. The plan is to help Conrad is based on his motivation for change. I the therapist will not always be with Conrad, so it is important that the plan is simple and realistic in meeting the goals Conrad desire for himself.

A shortcoming to treating Conrad would be in expecting too much too soon. If a person is set in their ways it may take some time to help a person change how they think. A therapist using reality therapy cannot force a person to change, it is something the person must want for themselves. Another drawback is in dealing with diverse cultural background. Some people will struggle with change if the therapist is not familiar with the cultural background that a person comes from. Some relationships are the way they are based on the environment, racial, sex, gender, and social climax that they have been associated with. All things must be considered in order for a person to feel comfortable about changing behaviors and thought patterns that they have been accustomed.

References

Corey, Gerald. (2021). THEORY AND PRACTICE OF COUNSELING AND PSYCHOTHERAPY. *Updated Tenth Edition*. CENGAGE. www.cengage.com.

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