

Ordinary People: Reality Therapy

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The reality therapist functions as a teacher, a mentor, and a model, confronting clients in ways that will help them evaluate what they are doing and whether their behavior is fulfilling their basic needs without harming themselves or others. The goal of reality therapy is to help clients learn how to make better and more effective choices that would enable them to gain more self-control. Reality therapists believe in the notion that people take charge of their lives rather than being the victims of circumstances beyond their control. Therapists focus on what clients are capable of doing and their willingness to do so in the present. In an attempt to change their faulty behavior.

For reality therapy to be effective, the counseling environment must be conducive to the therapeutic process and specific procedures that lead to changes in behavior must be intact. This in turn enables clients to move in the direction of getting what they want. The necessary goals of reality therapy include behavioral change, better decision making, improved significant relationships, enhanced living, and more effective satisfaction of all psychological needs.

In the film *Ordinary People*, Conrad struggled with being present in the here and now. He struggled with taking charge of his life and became victimized due to his current circumstances of losing his brother and having to face the reality of creating a new normal. He blamed the lack of love from his mother and the oblivious nature of his father for his inability to move forward in a positive direction. He also put a lot of the blame for his inability to move forward on the isolation and the unfinished business he had as a result of his upbringing. Conrad initially approached Dr. Berger with the idea that he had absolutely no control over his circumstances and that his current circumstances drove his current behavior and attitudes that he had about himself and the people around him.

The first technique that I would implement in treating Conrad would be to explore the practice of reality therapy. The first component of this practice would be to create the counseling environment making it conducive to the overall effectiveness of the therapeutic relationship. The second component to this practice would be the implementation of specific procedures that would lead to Conrad's behavioral changes. By creating a working relationship with Conrad and helping him to explore his wants, needs and perceptions he should then be able to make his own evaluation of how effective He is in getting his wants and desires met. If Conrad then decides to make changes to his behavior and if he sets a plan in motion for those changes to occur , then I will follow up with him to see how he is doing and offer further consultation if needed.

The second technique that I would utilize for Conrad's treatment is the WDEP System as this would help him explore his wants. This will also give him insight into the possible things he can do in his present circumstances and provide opportunities for him to be able to self-evaluate his behavior and circumstances so that he can make plans for self-improvement. Implementing this method would encourage Conrad to act by changing what he is doing and thinking. Through skillful questioning I would be able to help Conrad determine if what he is doing is helping him.

I believe that this approach would be helpful for Conrad because it would be helpful for his overall treatment if he is able to discuss the overall direction of his life including where he intends to go and determining what behavior he needs to implement in order to get there. This would be possible because reality therapy focuses on gaining awareness of and changing current total behavior. Rather than Conrad focusing on his feelings, this approach would encourage him to act by changing what he is doing and thinking. A change in behavior will allow him to fulfill his basic needs without feeling the need to harm himself or others to get the results he desires.

References

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