

Ordinary People: Reality Therapy

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Reality Therapy is a model originated by William Glasser to help clients create satisfying relationships and foster better behaviors to experience happiness. Reality therapy suggest that the unhappiness client experience is due to their lack of meaningful connections with other people and their behavior that create their problems.

The reality therapy approach is a therapeutic process that stems from choice theory. Choice theory suggest that we were created as social beings with five needs that influences our total behavior. Those genetically innate needs are survival, power, freedom, fun and love and belonging which is the primary need. When ever we are feeling unhappiness or dissatisfied it is because one of the five needs are not being met.

From birth, we unconsciously create our quality world based on anything that makes us feel happiness. The quality world consists of experiences and situations that fulfill our innate needs and creates a picture album of wants that satisfies us. This total behavior is an attempt to control our lives and maximize happiness.

The role of the therapist is to provide clarity to what makes up our picture album. Because reality therapy focuses on unsatisfying relationships, the therapist assists clients with their thought patterns and actions by helping clients realize that they are responsible for their choices. Counselors assist clients with realizing that what they are experiencing is a result of their own actions and behaviors by avoiding transference, keeping the client focused on the present and tactic for self-evaluation.

In the case of Conrad, as a therapist I would try to keep him focused on present situations that he is experiencing. My goal would be to help him make meaningful connections with the

people around him, especially his mother. When he begins to discuss his past experiences with losing his brother, I would let him express himself but redirect him back to the present day. I would discuss his relationship with mother and provide resources to help him evaluate his behaviors that may impact their connections. I would try to avoid making him feel as if I was blaming him for her behaviors but reinforce that his behaviors can also impact their connections.

I believe this can be a beneficial therapeutic process for Conrad especially when he was admitted into the hospital. I believe if this model was applied to Conrad as a patient, his integration back into school and home would have looked different. In the movie, it seemed as if he was trying to find where he belonged. He tried rejoining the swimming team and choir but realized it was not for him. I think reality therapy would have provided him with sort of clarity needed to be successful during his first few weeks home.

References

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