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FIVE (OR MORE) ASPECTS: Of the theories that you have studied in this class-to-date, what aspects would you like to incorporate into your own personal model of counseling (identify and briefly explain at least 5):

As a Christian multicultural counselor, I would like to incorporate the "aspects of reasoning, decision-making, perception, empathy, congruence, unconditional positive regard, breaking negative thought patterns, and the importance of closure. I believe that all people are valuable and have a sense of who they are or would like to be in life, even in the most difficult experiences, but we all need guidance, wisdom, direction, self-love, faith, and a sense of purpose. The person-centered theory, and the Gestalt theory, give the client the advantage to discover that there's greater in them through telling their stories, being genuine with their hearts, staying in the present, and coming to the realization that they can set positive boundaries for themselves to make their lives better" (Tan, 2011). There must be an understanding that in life closure is necessary to grow into your next and begin the process of acceptance while becoming comfortable with seeking out new possibilities for oneself. Wisdom, guidance, and self-love are necessary so we can learn from our mistakes and forgive ourselves in the process. Rational and intelligent decision-making is vital because our decisions affect everyone connected to us, including the society we partake in; and our perceptions will make the difference between becoming a victim of circumstance or becoming a victor of happenstance.

PART 1 - *Human nature*: Are people essentially good, evil, or neutral? How much of personality is inborn or determined by biological and/or other innate factors? Are there inborn drives, motives, tendencies, or other psychological or behavioral characteristics that all human beings have in common? How much of a person's individuality is determined by heredity or other innate factors?

I am fully persuaded due to my personal, and spiritual conviction from the holy scripture, that "people are flawed and born in iniquity" me included, and that our hearts have both good and evil intentions; that's why we can be double-minded, and sometimes unstable in our thoughts, emotions, intellect, actions, and do unthinkable things that we did not intend to do but do, or believed that we were not able to do, due to a good conscience, but yet we do it anyway ("Psalm 51:5 - Create in Me a Clean Heart, O God," n.d.).

Our personalities are also influenced from the womb to the environment in which we live and experience daily. I believe infants in the womb can be calmed due to the gentle language heard by the parents, or music played in quiet time, and can be born with a very calming temperament; vice versa, if a child is raised in an environment where angry words, discord, and confusion exist daily, that child's temperament can be heavily influenced, and behavior can be altered. "Scientists estimate that 20 to 60 percent of our temperament or personality is determined by genetics" ("Is Temperament Determined by Genetics? MedlinePlus Genetics," n.d.), and with that being the case, then the remainder of our temperament is influenced by life experiences, relationships, and our environment.

All human beings have inborn driven traits that are common to mankind such as "sex, hunger, fear, anger, curiosity, pain avoidance, maternal instinct, the need to procreate, a longing for God or a higher power, and a desire to belong. These inborn drives are focused on the preservation of life, for the individual and mankind. Sigmund Freud stated this thought well, "an individual's personality was a summation of innate instincts and parental influences (nurture and nature) that

work together to form a complete personality" (Tan, 2011). I believe these human drives produce personal strengths, and character, which may lead to increased motivation, workable solutions, and decrease dysfunctional development, psychologically, and emotionally." This may help people to become better human beings with self-awareness of who they are or why they are striving to become what they are not (Tan, 2011).

Culture is defined as it plays a huge role in the personality and customs that become hereditary through our beliefs, traditions, and social norms. These have become strong drives in the making of personality that influence our values, independence, and personal success. My customs and beliefs have helped me to develop certain values in my life as an adult, and in doing so, I understand that "I'm created out of the dust of the earth" ("Genesis 2 ESV," n.d.) but I choose to rise above the dust and take hold of my responsibility, what I value and my worth in this life. That's why I want to incorporate some of the aspects of the Gestalt theory in my counseling; it challenges the client to take responsibility for their actions and ask the hard questions like "where are you experiencing the emotions in your body? Become that part of the body, and give it a name, and own it" in other words, recognize it, and make a decision concerning it, to fully live and be free from it (Tan, 2011., p. 158).

PART 2 - *Role of environment in personality development*: How influential is one's physical and/or social environment in one's personality development, and how does the environment affect personality development?

The physical and social environment is extremely important in the role of one's personality development because one's personality continues to evolve through experiences, judgments, perspectives, and personal morals. We are always learning and testing boundaries to see how far we can go without being corrected. Erik, Erikson states "a person learns to trust or mistrust in the early years, and we continue throughout life experiencing different forms of trust and mistrust depending on the environment, socialization, and relationships we're connected to" (Tan, 2011) because our innocence and ignorance are challenged, we alter ourselves, to fit in or belong according to what's being offered to our desires instead of considering whether we are effectively growing in the wisdom, knowledge, and grace that God offers us; so that we can develop into kingdom people that are genuine, intellectual, prosperous, and equipped with learned skills, education and experiences that can help someone consider a change in their thought patterns, so we can live in the world and not be negatively influenced by it.

In my opinion, we are easily influenced by the concepts of our culture, education, churches, communities, relationships, and even subliminal messages that feed our unconscious instincts and desires through social media, entertainment, our longing to be accepted by the people in our lives that reject us, or the society we want to be a part of so we can appear to be influential or important. Our environment may cause individual differences in our behavior, activities, attitudes, and style of life characteristics. Our ideals and ideas are influenced by the environment and may be subject to change to adjust to a different way of thinking, and feeling, concerning a multitude of aims, abilities, and traits.

As we mature with age and experience, our capacity to adjust to differences starts to slow down because we become settled in our minds and hearts for a simpler life. The teacher adapts to different styles of teaching because the perceptions of the students change with time, and methods like storytelling, project methods, and problem-solving are adjusted due to the influence of the environment in our lives.

PART 3 - *Model of functionality*: What constitutes functionality/mental health or dysfunctionality/mental unhealthy in an individual? How do innate and environmental factors interact in influencing a person's functioning, be it relatively healthy or unhealthy?

Functionality mental health is "consistent with old age or the beginning of old age, and people with this condition are likely to experience cognitive impairment, poor physical health, psychiatric conditions, and social exclusion due to emotional and psychological pressures, reduction in memory, physical weakness, low attention spans, and irritability" ("What Are Some of the Functional Limitations Related to Mental Illness? | DO-IT," n.d.). This is a "psychiatric illness without a diagnosed physical cause, however, there has been evidence of structural neurochemical and neuroendocrine abnormalities of the brain, which present a behavioral, and psychological change in what is considered normal in a patient.

Functional illness consists of "clinical depression, schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, attention deficit, hyperactivity disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder, phobias, and anxiety; the patient may be unable to experience pleasure due to a breakdown in emotion, or an impairment that interferes with the ability to perform important life roles, but patients can function with therapy, medication, and therapeutic techniques" to help enhance their quality of life.

Environmental factors can also "influence the development of our intelligence. Alfred, Binet was the first to design an intelligence test, and he believed that the environment heavily influences intelligence; while genetic factors are producing new formations of neurons, our intelligence can increase and decrease based on our environment; even language can be compromised if children are not exposed to language with a critical period" which could impair the functionality of speech and comprehension ("Environmental Factors in Development," n.d.).

PART 4 - *Personality change*: How does personality change after it is to some extent developed? What conditions are necessary but not alone sufficient for personality change to occur, and what conditions are both necessary and sufficient?

Considering the transition to adulthood, "personality changes occur in the roles of work, sex, love, relationships, and maturity. These changes may be the result of the social environment, where developmental challenges and diversity of experiences are encountered by the age of thirty. During this season of change, there occurs a psychological increase in maturity, self-esteem, and overall well-being" it is noted that this personality trait change is positive, and stable while the negative feelings decline, and while behavioral constraint increases" (Tan, 2011., pgs. 38-42).

According to the "principles of Gestalt therapy, in counseling personality change requires genuine, empathetic, unconditional regard, and acceptance without judgment on behalf of the counselor, and the client is in an anxious or vulnerable state" (Tan, 2011., pgs. 158-159). However, people respond differently to change, and every method is not conducive to every client. "Some clients made need psychoeducation, or desire more challenges, and interpretation; even a person-centered approach, doesn't work with everyone, because clients can also work with non-relational interventions like behavioral activation" (Tan, 2011).

Several ecological contexts limit organizations and have very clear reward structures, "such as the military, which might be powerful for producing personality change. Finding ways to establish self-control, emotional stability, creativity, and an agreeable disposition, could lead to improvements in the characteristics of personality" for the individual, and society because people respond to their environment" (Hopwood et al., 2011).

Our environment can influence our behavior, and motivation to act, as well as facilitate or discourage interactions among people, "for example (rooms with bright natural, and artificial

light, can improve various health outcomes, such as depression, agitation, and effective sleep; and this small act is both necessary and sufficient to produce a sense of relaxation and calm in the body, and mind" ("What Impact Does the Environment Have on Us? | Taking Charge of Your Health & Wellbeing," n.d.). The relaxation of the light therapy reminds me of the Jungian Stages of Therapy. "In the presence of the therapist, there's a confession, a spiritual release from the soul, encouraged in a calm, genuine, and empathetic way; followed by elucidation, so the client and the counselor can share a transference where dreams and fantasies can be explored, and the client is encouraged to engage in socially responsible behaviors that are constructive and positive; to become a more balanced, and unique person" (Tan, 2011., pg. 90).

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