

PSY 444

Question 1

The fundamental focus of Existential therapy entails determining individualized meaningfulness in life. This perspective bestows the client the authority to utilize their free will to create or become aware of meaning in their present life. This decision is applied because it is the view of the existential perspective that life is void of meaning. In man's quest to determine given meaningfulness, he encounters life events that provoke and drives him to find meaning in life. A common element that exists in both the existential perspective and Christianity, is the focus on the needs and desires of man which entails justification and fulfillment. They both also presented the free will of man to choose, there is the existence of a limit on the part of the existential perspective. According to biblical belief, there are only two options regarding choice and free will, that is good or evil and regardless of choice, God still has the last say, Proverb 16:9 A man's heart deviseth his way: but the Lord directed his steps. This clearly shows that there is a difference in how and where meaning can be found. Existential perspective also implies the use of self-exploration which entails finding inner meaning, but according to Christian principles, this is the way of searching the heart for elements of sin. Since sin is not an element used from an existential perspective it contradicts confession and repentance which resides strongly in Christianity. Confession of sin leads to spiritual realignment with God, which provides and enriches true meaningfulness in life.

Question 2

The rise of existentialism occurred in the 19th century and became prevalent in various parts in Europe. This philosophical perspective emerged as a result of the post-World War 2 devastations which includes personal challenges such as feeling alone, lack of freedom, and meaninglessness. Soren Kierkegaard, Friedrich Nietzsche, Martin Heidegger, Jean-Paul Sartre and Martin Buber were the main contributors to Existentialism. The premise of their approach implies comprehension in the areas of cultural awareness, philosophical and religious contributions which embodies modern existential psychotherapy. Soren Kierkegaard's contribution consist of the theory of creative anxiety, despair, the existence of guilt and fear and the feeling of nothingness. Friedrich Nietzsche focused death and suicide, while Heidegger wrote on authenticity of the human being, responsibility and isolation. Jean-Paul Sartre dealt on aspects of meaninglessness, responsibility and choice, and Martin Buber contribution consists of interpersonal relationships, self-transcendence and the I/Thou perspective.

Question 12

Authenticity is demonstrated when a person refused to design their life by outside factors but chooses to live their life from the directives of their conscious. the goal is to attain one personal definition of what it means to be real and live a life that allows us to own our freedom and be responsible for the moment-to-moment choices we make for ourselves. Authenticity plays a major role in forming an effective client-therapist relationship and is referred to as the basis on which this relationship is formed. However, it argued that authenticity which is referred to as one of the main components used to accomplish behavioral change is instead used to create behavioral strategies. The egalitarian relationship is highlighted by authenticity which plays a major role in feminist therapy and focuses on the inequality of power-sharing.

Question 13

The main goal of the existential therapy process is to help people realize the possibility of opportunities that are at their disposal. These options/choices serve as answers to questions such as “why am I here”, and the process of determining the same is effective with the use of a therapeutic process. This process commences with the client being guided to the place of being in the “now.” In so doing the individual indulges in self-exploration with the goal of sorting out and identifying the barriers that limit their ability to be fully present. The individual is provoked into embracing authority in the construction of their present lives in order to experience personal meaningfulness. The individual is motivated to expand their options so as to increase their selections of daily living.

Chapter 7

Question 19

Carl Rogers, a humanist, is responsible for establishing Client-Centered Therapy. His approach emphasizes the importance of the client having an active role in his/her treatment process. In so doing the therapist must ensure that the environment is a non-judgmental zone. The client must feel comfortable and allowed to be in control of the discussions relating to their past. The therapist is expected to be receptive to their client's views and offers non-judgmental support.

Carl Rogers developed a non-directive therapeutic approach known as client-centered therapy. Rogers claims that people themselves have the potential to make changes and better their lives, and the necessary resources needed to attain their recovery. There are a few similarities between this perspective and biblical teachings, such as non-judgmental, unconditional positive regard, and empathy, and since this therapeutic approach consists of qualities that God himself portrays and expects us as his children to do the same. We are taught through the word of God that we are not to judge because we also sin in one way or another, thus we are not qualified to judge others. Another quality that we must seek to exercise is compassion, Jesus was moved with compassion when the thief on the cross asked for forgiveness. Unlike the therapist, God is an active listener but because He knows everything, He directs and does the changing of a person's inner mindset. Therefore, this implies that according to biblical principles, God and not a person should be the center of man's life.

Question 22

Carl Rogers believed that in order to achieve the highest level of success in the client-centered approach, the therapist must effectively utilize three basic characteristics, unconditional positive regard, genuineness, and empathy during the therapy sessions. Genuineness requires the therapist to display the true attributes of being their authentic self with the client. This in the view of rogers, helps to create and develop a trustworthy client-therapist relationship which eventually creates an atmosphere in which the client feels comfortable. Unconditional positive regard implies that the therapist will exhibit support and care for the client by accepting them regardless of who they are or what they are experiencing. Maintaining eye contact as well as displaying positive body language are two ways in which unconditional positive regard is portrayed. When expressed effectively unconditional positive regard tends to activate preparation for positive change. In an effort to build rapport, it is essential for the therapist to convey expressions of empathy towards the client. The client feels that the therapist has a clear understanding of his feelings and the message they are trying to convey.

Question 27

Congruence requires a therapist to be honest and transparent with the client throughout the therapy sessions whereas the expectation requires the therapist to model the elements of life which include his personal challenges; therefore the therapist is not allowed to hide his true feelings and thoughts but is done with the sole intention to help the client. This however can become problematic, since the therapist's model of self is not permanent, since we as humans exist in a continuous process of self-construction. This is done in an effort to provide the client with a real example of what life entails. Congruence also plays a vital role in establishing trust and communication. If not applied correctly congruence can lead to divulging too many or too sensitive thoughts and feelings, it also has the potential to create countertransference. There is also the possibility while trying to maintain transparency with a client that a therapist may be forced to share their true feelings and thoughts which may have a negative effect on the client.

Question 21

Both Humanism and existentialism believe that people have the capacity to attain self-awareness and choices. However, while humanism focuses on acceptance and growth, existentialism places emphasis on responsibility and freedom. The humanistic approach views human nature as basically good and humans possess the innate potential to establish and sustain relationships that are healthy and worthwhile, and the interest is more geared toward self and others. Existentialism is more person-oriented and the focus is to satisfy one's own need for being authentic. The humanistic approach is more optimistically oriented while the existentialism approach focuses on death, meaninglessness, and isolation. Existentialism argues that people's struggles and problems stem from the inability to exercise choice and judgment to their full potential and that results in the self-exploration process whereby they are able to create an authentic self for a given time. On the other hand, Humanism focuses on helping humans experience psychological growth and self-actualization.