

## **Ordinary People: Reality Theory**

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Behavior theory (BT) focuses on what is happening, why it is happening, and learning to engage in what promotes change. The counselor makes sure to fit the treatment to the individual. Progress is constantly monitored and assessed. Behavioral therapy has successfully treated a broad spectrum of ills, some of which are beyond psychological. These include, “anxiety disorders, depression, posttraumatic stress disorder, substance abuse, eating and weight disorders, sexual problems, pain management, and hypertension” (Corey, 2021, p. 233).

According to BT, one can develop four major areas: classical conditioning, operant conditioning, social-cognitive theory, and increasing attention to the cognitive factors influencing behavior. The client and the counselor must partner in setting goals at the beginning of the sessions. The client will assess what they want to change the counselor will then guide the client with various techniques toward meeting those goals. Techniques might include mindfulness, homework, and social skills training (Corey, 2021).

Through the lens of BT Conrad may be in distress due to modeling. It is possible that his responses were unconsciously learned by observing those around him. Perhaps he observed maladaptive ways of coping with stress throughout his life and has continued in that pattern of functioning. The focus of BT would be to retrain his thought pattern to cope with these stresses more healthily.

Progressive muscle relaxation (PMR) may be a technique that Conrad can use. Rarely does he seem relaxed. He is constantly tense and anxious regarding all his issues. He seems to always be on the verge of “losing it” and even has a few bizarre outbursts. PMR may help him to remember what relaxation feels like and give him a way to achieve it on his own during his most stressful and tense times. It may also help him achieve the sense of control he longs for.

Eye movement desensitization and reprocessing (EMDR) would help Conrad to process his posttraumatic stress symptoms. He is suffering from flashbacks, recurrent dreams, and irritability due to his memories of the boating accident that took Buck’s life. EMDR would help him to reprocess the trauma. This would require imaginal flooding where he would have to

revisit the place where he was affected, and the therapist would guide him through rebuilding his thoughts of the event.

I believe that BT would be very helpful for Conrad due to how effective in treating posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). He exhibits some classic PTSD symptoms. Reframing the experience through some BT techniques would be helpful to him. Conrad seems to be seeking a deep relationship and so a good therapeutic alliance would be essential to his success as he will likely do as the counselor tells him to do.

### References

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