

Behavior Therapy and Ordinary People

Geraldine Javier

Alliance University

Dr. Ramos

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Behavior therapy is a psychological approach used to treat various behavioral and psychological issues. Behavior Therapy developed in the 1900s and became established as a

psychological approach in the 1950s and 1950s. Behavior therapy is rooted in the principles of behaviorism and focuses on the idea that people learn from their environment. John B. Watson was an American psychologist and regarded as the father of behaviorism. He developed his theories from the discoveries of Ivan Pavlov's classical conditioning. He used Pavlov's classical conditioning to emphasize that all behavior is learned. Other psychologists such as Burrhus F. Skinner discovered that the recurrence of behavior depended on the events that follow behavior, called operant conditioning. Albert Bandura developed the social learning theory by applying the principles of classical and operant conditioning. Social learning approach emphasizes that people learn through the observation of others behavior and modeling. Cognitive behavior therapy is a type of behavior therapy that focuses on cognitive therapy, social skills training, stress management, training, mindfulness and acceptance based practices. Behavior therapy focuses on the client's current problems and assesses behavior through self-monitoring and observation. Behavior therapists are action oriented and help teach clients self-management skills. Behavior therapists believe that clients can achieve change without seeking insight into underlying issues or symptoms. Behavior therapy focuses on behavior modification by reinforcing adaptive behaviors and eliminating unwanted behaviors. Behavioral therapy is a therapeutic technique that uses principles of learning and behavioral change to alleviate the negative symptoms that accompany various types of psychological disorders. The goal of Behavior therapy is to increase clients' personal choice and to create new conditions for learning. This approach involves techniques that focus on the behavior of the client, unlike CBT which focuses on how the clients think about their behavior or issues. Behavioral therapy is more concerned about what is observable behavior, whereas CBT is focused on how the mind processes information that influences a person's behavior. One of the models used in behavior therapy is the ABC

(antecedents, behavior, consequences) model. This is used to change irrational beliefs into rational ones. The ABC model doesn't necessarily help a client change their situation in order to feel better but it helps clients understand that they can change their reaction to their situation. The goal of ABC is to help clients view negative emotions in a rational, healthier way. The techniques used in behavior therapy are based on classical and operant conditioning. Systematic desensitization is a process that helps clients become less sensitive to specific triggers. Progressive muscle relaxation helps clients cope with the stressors of daily life. Other techniques include ABA (applied behavior analysis), used are social skills training and exposure therapies. Behavior therapy is used for a wide range of mental issues. Behavior therapy can be effective in helping those with bipolar disorder, anxiety, depression, ADHD, Borderline personality disorder, phobias, eating disorders, etc.

In the film, *Ordinary people*, Conrad was diagnosed with depression. Behavior therapy can be effective regarding this specific issue. Though the ABA model, Conrad can understand what are the triggers of his emotions/behavior and realize that he can't control what happens but only how he responds to it. Conrad could also benefit from this therapy as it focuses less on thought and more on what he is doing. Although Conrad can benefit from the ABA model, I believe that behavior therapy is not the appropriate approach for Conrad. Behavior therapy does not address the whole picture. This approach does not account for the underlying issues a client might have. This form of therapy is centered around clients changing their behavior but does not address how situations can contribute to a client's issues. Conrad's current behavior is linked not only to his current situation but his past as well. I believe that in order for Conrad to achieve healing and wholeness, he would need to do more than just modify his behavior. Conrad needs to revisit his past and contemplate on his family upbringing.

References:

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