

Ordinary People – Behavior Therapy

Lauren R. Mangiaracina

AGSC, Alliance University

GCN 502: Theories and Foundations of Counseling

Professor George J. Ramos

March 28th, 2023

According to Corey (2017), behavior therapy has a primary focus of the client and their current problem, as well as on assessing behavior through observation or self-monitoring. There are four areas of development when it comes to behavior therapy. These include classical conditioning, operant conditioning, social-learning approach and cognitive behavioral therapy. The purpose of this form of therapy is so that the therapist/counselor can teach their client how to manage their thoughts and behaviors in a healthier manner. Most, if not all behaviors are learned, and it is important to help the client to realize and be mindful of why these behaviors are coming to light. These behaviors, whether negative or positive, are learned due to the possibility of certain consequences. Many people think of therapy as a tool to decrease certain behaviors (positive and negative punishment), but it can also help clients to increase certain behaviors (positive and negative reinforcement).

In the movie, *Ordinary People*, Conrad would benefit greatly from behavior therapy. I believe this is true because knowing his symptoms to be linked to anxiety and depression, behavior therapy can be used in order to help Conrad and to teach him how to be more mindful of his thoughts and his behaviors. The ABC model and operant conditioning could be administered hand-in-hand to help Conrad with his feelings of suicide and self-harming thoughts. Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) can be used in order to help Conrad with his sleep problems, flashbacks, as well as his general anxiety and depression. These are the techniques I would use if I were Dr. Berger and was needed in order to help Conrad on his journey to a healthier mindset.

Reference

Corey, G. (2017). *Theory and practice of counseling and psychotherapy (10th ed.)*. Cengage Learning.

Redford, R. (Director). (1980). *Ordinary People* (Film). Paramount Pictures.