

Behavior Therapy

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Theories and Foundation

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Behavior therapy such as CBT and DTB are the most researched types of modalities when it comes to therapy. They are rooted in classical conditioning and operant conditioning. In other words, they focus on the behavior as a symptom and try to change the behavior instead. Cognitive behavior therapy is more of a complete approach because it includes cognitive therapy, stress management and mindfulness with the behavior therapy. This type of modality is good because it can be very systematic. The therapist will teach clients skills that can change outcomes based on behavior. One thing to notice with behavior therapy is that it does not require insight and change can take place without truly understanding why the behavior existed in the first place.

The goal of a behavior therapist is to increase the client's personal choice and to create a new condition of learning. It uses the ABC model as an assessment model. Antecedents, Behavior, Consequences. With this assessment, you can either reinforce a behavior you want to see with positive or negative reinforcements, or you can decrease a behavior by positive and negative reinforcements. You can also use exposure therapies in conjunction with CBT like in vivo or flooding which is when you get the client to imagine a situation that creates anxiety or fear and allow them to sit with that feeling for a while.

Analyzing Conrad's behavior through this theory, we can see how sometimes he did certain things that later he regretted. Example, the way he reacted when he was in the restaurant with the girl and the guys came in. We notice that he was upset at her and when he dropped her off and did not even say bye but the next day was waiting for her in front of her home and apologized. Or when his friends questioned him about quitting the swimming team and he punched one of them in the face. These are behaviors that can be changed by reinforcements. Maybe working with him to process how he reacts when he is around his mother.

If I was Dr. Berger, I can use CBT with Conrad and apply the mindfulness and exposure therapy. A lot of times Conrad was not in the present moment but rather was entertaining other thoughts. With Mindfulness you can ground him and bring him to the present moment so he can be more aware of his behavior. I would also use the intervention of exposure therapy because Conrad still had nightmares and working with him to have him sit with those images and emotions will help him with his behavior when he looks at his mom and thinks of how she loved his brother more than him.

The Behavior therapy approach could be of help to Conrad in the short term, but I do not think it would be the best modality for him in the long term. Conrad issues is mostly rooted in trauma and a limitation that behavior therapy has is that it focuses on the behavior and not the insight. Conrad would benefit from insight into why he feels the way he does and then once that has been processed, we can work with the behavior that relate to the emotions. Maybe a Trauma Focus CBT would be best.

References:

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