

Ordinary People: Rational Emotive Therapy & Cognitive Therapy

Christina T. Escanio

Alliance University

GCN 502 Theories and Foundations of Counseling

Dr. George Ramos

April 4, 2023

Rational emotive behavior therapy (REBT) is a thorough approach that combines elements of multiple theoretic models. It assumes that thoughts, emotions, and behavior are all connected. The client works to identify their maladaptive cognitions or actions and counter the thoughts that cause them. The therapist uses active and directive techniques to counter self-defeating beliefs reinforced by the client's self-indoctrination. The counselor also equips the client with ways to dispute self-defeating thoughts or actions that can happen in the future. The emphasis of REBT is that there is a benefit in taking action based on the insight gained in therapy (Corey, 2021).

Similarly, cognitive therapy (CT) is an integrative approach that helps clients learn to identify the connections between cognitions, feelings, actions, physiology, and their circumstances. In CT the therapist and client have a limited time together in which they work. The client and counselor are partners and the counselor directs and is actively involved. Therapy is typically structured and follows an agenda that guides each session. Meetings are typically psychoeducational teaching the client new ways to think and new skills to generalize once the session is over (Corey, 2021).

Both CT and REBT could be applied to Conrad when considering his feelings over the death of his brother, Buck. Much of his angst comes from feelings of guilt for not being able to rescue or save his brother. He often replays the situation in his head surmising what he could have done differently, trying to figure out how he could have changed things, and then blaming himself for not doing it. He lives with feelings of guilt that are reinforced by what he perceives to be his mother's resentment toward him for being the one to survive.

The therapist may use techniques such as persuasion with Conrad. He may need to be persuaded that the accident was not his fault. This may require some meteorological study of the weather. It could show Conrad that the weather was the contributing factor to their accident. He would have to be reminded that he is not in control of the weather or its effects. He can then

combat the intensity of his guilt with the more rational thought of him not being able to control the weather.

Conrad's counselor may also use stress inoculation training (SIT) to treat him. His counselor could invest a great deal in building the therapeutic alliance. He could then teach Conrad cognitive and behavioral skills to apply to his situation and even some relaxation techniques to use when he becomes anxious and distressed. He could then have Conrad use these skills in predictable environments such as school and report back regarding his outcome.

This rational emotive behavior therapy and cognitive therapy could potentially be quite effective with Conrad as he is struggling greatly to cope with the return to "normal" life after his hospitalization. It could help him reestablish friendships that previously included his brother. He also might be able to find the pleasure he previously had on his swim team.

References

Corey, G. (2021). *Theory and practice of counseling and psychotherapy* (10th ed.). Cengage.

Redford, R. (Director). (1980). *Ordinary people* [Film]. Paramount.