

Ordinary People: Rational Emotive Therapy & Cognitive Behavior Approach

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Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy (REBT) is a comprehensive and integrative approach that emphasizes thinking, assessing, deciding, doing, and compassion. Therapy begins with clients' problematic behaviors and emotions. Therapists teach clients how to dispute the thoughts that create these problematic behaviors and emotions. They work with clients to eliminate any self-defeating thoughts and beliefs through a process called self-indoctrination. EBT therapists encourage clients to replace an irrational belief system with a logical one by using active and directive techniques like teaching, suggestion, persuasion, and homework assignments. Change comes about mainly by practicing new behaviors that replace old and ineffective behaviors.

Cognitive therapists also take an integrative approach to their work, employing a variety of techniques to teach their patients how to connect their ideas, feelings, behaviors, physiology, and environment. The treatment is structured and psychoeducational, and the client participates actively and collaboratively with the therapist. Each session's plan gives it direction; Additionally, the duration of treatment is constrained (Freeman & Freeman, 2016). Clients are helped by the skillful use of a range of cognitive and behavioral interventions and by therapists engaging clients' willingness to perform homework assignments between sessions. All of the cognitive behavioral approaches stress the importance of links between cognitive processes, emotions, and behavior.

In the film *Ordinary People*, Conrad has these false negative cognitions about himself. He expresses to Dr. Burger that he is deemed unlovable in comparison to his brother. Dr. Burger challenges his thought process by bringing up the fact that his dad loves him and therefore his self-defeating statement must not be true. Conrad's rebuttal is that his father had no choice. Conrad was rather depressed and a negative self-efficacy.

In treating Conrad, I would apply cognitive techniques that would focus on identifying and examining his beliefs and explore where his beliefs stem from. This would help to modify them if there is no evidence found to support his beliefs. First, I would ask Conrad to keep a thought record that would help him identify negative automatic thoughts and then test these thoughts. I would then follow it up with an action plan to help him solve this issue rather than ruminate in it.

I would also utilize strength-based CBT to treat Conrad as this approach is a four-step model to build resilience; it provides a template for building positive qualities. Their four steps are to search, construct, apply, and practice. I would inquire about the activities in Conrad's life that are going well and then encourage him to do those activities on a regular basis. I would also keep track of any obstacles he encounters while doing such activities and figure out how he manages these obstacles using a strategy called Personal Model of Resilience (PMR). Eventually Conrad would be able to use PMR to remain resilient in the face of obstacles.

I believe that this approach would be very beneficial in treating Conrad as the techniques in this approach would help challenge some of the cognitive distortions he has. It would help him to eliminate some of the negative self-talk he displays. It would encourage him to place more focus on his strengths rather than his weaknesses with the hopes of using those strengths to improve his self-efficacy. This approach would also lessen Conrad's anxiety in having to keep up with expectations imposed on him by his friends and family. He wouldn't look at the outcome of future life events as a catastrophe. Conrad would develop a more positive outlook on life in general and help him to find his purpose.

References

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