

“Ordinary People”

Cognitive Therapy and REBT Approach to Counseling Conrad Jarret

Karlene N. Francis

Alliance Graduate School of Counseling: Alliance University

GCN502: Theories and Foundation: OA

Professor Dr. Jr. George James Ramos

April 4, 2023

Conrad Jarret is a teenager suffering from depression and suicidal ideation, which resulted from the death of his brother Buck. Conrad assumes tremendous guilt believing that somehow, he is responsible for Buck's death. To help Conrad understand that these beliefs are irrational and need to be replaced with more realistic beliefs, as his therapist, I will be using Cognitive therapy and Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy.

Cognitive Therapy was founded by Aaron Beck, who believed that our thought process played a significant role in our day-to-day life. Beck viewed our thoughts or cognitions as indicative of our lived experiences, shaping our world perception. These adverse life experiences create a negative narrative that could lead to depression and anxiety. From these narratives, schemas are derived which dictate the quality of our life in many ways. Beck's theory primarily comprises the cognitive triad of an interrelationship between negative self-image, negative world image, and negative future. This triad operates as a vicious cycle leaving the individual trapped (Corey, 2015).

Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy (REBT) is a form of cognitive therapy founded by Albert Ellis, who theorized that we all have a set of assumptions about ourselves and the world. These assumptions direct us through life and govern our reactions to situations and experiences. However, Ellis believes that for many, these assumptions are largely irrational and compromise the individual's chances of responding to situations appropriately and their overall happiness (Corey, 2015). REBT focuses on resolving emotional and behavioral problems by changing irrational beliefs to more rational ones (Corey, 2015).

According to Cognitive therapy and REBT, Conrad's battle with depression results from irrational and illogical thoughts that influence his emotions and behavior (Corey, 2015). Conrad needs to understand how he contributes to his psychological problem. His thoughts about the accident are irrational—he did not cause his brother's death and should not feel guilty for surviving. It is this negative cognitive processing that he associates with the death of his brother that causes him to feel guilt and thus illicit feelings of depression and suicidal ideation (Corey, 2015), which is Conrad's way of trying to punish himself for his brother's death.

Conrad has fostered a lot of self-defeating beliefs and thoughts that need to be corrected. He must understand that he continues to experience depression because of his wrong way of thinking. He is responsible for his irrational way of thinking and must take action to stop feeling that he has no control over his life. Once Conrad's perspective is adjusted, it will influence his emotions and reduce his depressive feelings and subsequently change his behavior (Corey, 2015). Conrad must also learn to accept the death of his brother and live in the present. He must replace dysfunctional thoughts and emotions with healthy ones.

I will employ the Disputing Irrational Beliefs technique to change Conrad's negative beliefs. During our sessions, I will actively challenge Conrad's irrational beliefs until he no longer holds that belief as his truth. I will also help him change his language patterns from being self-defeating to developing new self-statements to help transform his thinking and beliefs Corey, (2015). Conrad will understand the links between his thoughts and his emotions. He will learn practical skills that he can use to make changes in his thoughts, behaviors, and emotions and how to maintain these changes over time through homework assignments. He will develop

conrad will gain relief from psychological distress and greater control over his life by controlling his reactions from the new coping skills he will acquire.

Reference

Corey, G. (2015). *Theory and Practice of Counseling and Psychotherapy, Enhanced*

10th Edition. Cengage Learning

Redford, R. (Director). (1980). *Ordinary People*. Wildwood Enterprises Production.