

Ordinary People Paper: Feminist Therapy

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Feminist therapy is a multidimensional approach to psychotherapy that has a framework based on the integration of feminist, multicultural, and social justice concepts (Corey, 2016, p.239). In addition, this theoretical framework for therapy examines the stressors that women experience due to biases, discrimination, and other areas that may affect their mental health (Cherry, 2021). According to (website) this model of psychotherapy was developed in response to the historically male-dominated field of psychology so that women could have a therapeutic environment free from the misogyny and sexism common in the field until then. Furthermore, this approach to therapy is both crucial and necessary being that statistically speaking the majority of clients in counseling are women, as well as the majority of psycho-therapy practitioners at the master's level, are also women (Corey, 2016, p.340). Ultimately the goals of feminist therapy include empowerment, valuing and affirming diversity, striving for change rather than adjustment, equality, balancing independence and interdependence, social change, and self-nurturance. The therapist is to assist individuals in viewing themselves as active agents on their own behalf and on behalf of others (Corey, 2016, p.345). In terms of how mental health disorders, feminist therapy appears to be effective in treating conditions such as complex trauma, post-traumatic stress disorder, schizophrenia, schizoaffective disorder, bipolar disorder, and personality disorder (Cherry, 2021).

As the therapeutic alliance begins to form, feminist therapists may integrate several techniques such as bibliotherapy, viewing symptoms as communication, power analysis, assertiveness training, reframing, and analysis of viewing symptoms as communication. In my opinion, I believe that as I begin to practice in the field, the technique of bibliotherapy can be

effective. This technique provides the therapist the opportunity to give the client suggestions on a range of psychoeducation, that individuals may like to read pertaining to issues such as gender inequality, how gender roles are perpetuated, and power differentials between different genders. Another technique I find effective as a future practitioner is power analysis. This technique allows the therapist and client to analyze the areas where genders have different powers and how that contribute to a lack of power in non-male genders. In other words, learning about its role in things out of your power (Cherry, 2021).

As I examined the main character Conrad in the film *Ordinary People*, he appeared to be a high school kid that continued to display ongoing symptoms of anxiety, low- self-esteem, worry, agitation, and disturbance when around people. These symptoms were highlighted in his hostility, inattention, aggression, and self-harming practices throughout the film. The film was able to capture these symptoms and behaviors in several instances toward his mother, swim teammates, father, and psychiatrist. After identifying those cumulative symptoms, I would consider the application of the technique of bibliotherapy. As Conrad's mental health practitioner, I believe that this technique allows Conrad to consider the dynamic between the gender roles of his parents and how it is impacting his relationship and behavior towards both parents.

During another session, Conrad also expressed having memories in the form of dreams that were unpleasant in multiple sessions. He continued to express how his memories of his brother's death caused his distress and intrusive thoughts. In addition, Conrad verbalizes how his brother was "screwing around in the thunderstorm" (Redford, 1980, 1:38:59). As his mental health practitioner applying this type of therapy, I would utilize the technique of power analysis.

Though the foundation of this therapy targets women, I believe that this technique has the potential to assist Conrad in looking at the power dynamic he had during the boat accident. This could provide Conrad with insight into the lack of overall power he had to prevent the death of his older brother.

In my opinion, the application of feminist therapeutic practices may not be effective when I become a mental health practitioner. My goal is to gain insight into an individual's behaviors, problematic issues, and mental conditions, by analyzing the pathological perspective of treatment. In the case of this type of therapy, those areas are not concerning or targeted factors in treatment.

Reference

1. Cherry, K. (2021, October 22). *What is Feminist Therapy?* Very Well Mind.
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2. Corey, G. (2016). *Theory and Practice of Counseling and Psychotherapy*. 10th ed. Boston, MA: Cengage Learning US.
3. Redford, R. (1980). *Ordinary People*. Wildwood Enterprise.