

Feminist Therapy: Ordinary People

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Feminist Therapy is based on the premise that in order to help a client, it is important to understand their social, cultural and political context from their perspective. The therapeutic orientation calls for change not only for the individual client, but within a larger context of social justice.

The feminist perspective brings to light the socialized roles that men and women, as well as marginalized groups have come to accept, and challenges the imbalance of power which is usually favored towards the dominant group (i.e. whites, males, heterosexual, Christians etc.). The perspective takes a stance that rather than looking inward to find the source of unhappiness in a client, the focus should be on understanding the outside world toward forces that oppress them. The perspective takes a stance against diagnosing and reframes symptoms as coping mechanisms within unjust systems.

Feminist therapies additionally hold that "direct action for social change is one of the responsibilities of the therapists". (Corey, 2015). Counselors work to educate and facilitate change through social justice work. The main goal with feminist therapy is to empower the client to be agents of change.

Although I don't think the Feminist Therapy approach would be the most beneficial for Conrad, there are certain elements of the feminist perspective which would be valuable to consider and bring into our sessions. I would consider the socialization of Conrad, and the gender-role expectations put on him as a white male from an upper middle class influence.

Conrad's environment, though containing privilege socio-economically, is also filled with his mother's disapproval of him attending therapy despite his trauma and suicide attempt, as well as his coach dismissing his emotional state, which speaks to the oppression Conrad feels about the inability of expressing his emotions.

I would work with Conrad to challenge the status quo to shove down his feelings because he is male, and accept his own complex range of emotions and vulnerability as a

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human being. I would work with him to help him embrace his full experience of emotions and learn to move towards positive relationships and connectedness in his life.

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References

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