

**Film Ordinary People with Feminist Therapy Applied**

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Feminist theory is a multidisciplinary perspective that seeks to understand and challenge the social, political, and economic inequalities between genders. It encompasses a diverse range of theories, but generally emphasizes the importance of gender as a fundamental social category that intersects with other forms of oppression such as race, class, sexual orientation, and disability. Feminist theories often critique traditional gender roles and norms, examining how they shape and limit human behavior. They highlight the impact of patriarchal socialization on personality development, arguing that traditional gender expectations can lead to internalized oppression, particularly for women and gender minorities. Feminist theories address mental health and mental disorders, critiquing how social, cultural, and structural factors contribute to gendered patterns of mental health and illness.

Feminist theory would highlight how Conrad's behavior and reactions could be influenced by societal expectations of masculinity. Men are often socialized to suppress their emotions and vulnerabilities, which could explain Conrad's initial attempts to conform to traditional gender norms by trying to "act normal" and hide his pain. He may feel shame or guilt for struggling with his mental health, believing that it goes against the masculine ideal of being "strong" and "in control", as he mentioned in the movie that he wants things in control. This internalized oppression may manifest as self-blame, self-doubt, or a sense of inadequacy, which could exacerbate his symptoms and hinder his ability to seek help. Feminist theory could explore how Conrad's experiences are shaped by multiple forms of oppression beyond gender. For example, his race, class, and privilege as a white, upper-middle-class teenager could intersect with his gender to shape his experiences and access to resources for mental health support. This

could also highlight potential power dynamics within his family, community, and therapy sessions that may impact his recovery process.

I would also utilize gender-role or social identity analysis in my treatment approach with Conrad. This technique involves exploring how Conrad's understanding of his gender identity and social identity may impact his mental health symptoms and condition. I would encourage Conrad to reflect on how societal expectations of masculinity, as well as other social identities he holds (such as race, class, and privilege), may influence his beliefs, behaviors, and emotions related to his mental health. I would also incorporate reframing and relabeling techniques in my treatment approach with Conrad. Reframing involves changing the way Conrad perceives and interprets his thoughts, emotions, and behaviors in a more positive and constructive manner. Relabeling involves using different, more neutral or empowering language to describe his experiences. For example, if Conrad tends to blame himself for his mental health struggles, I would help him reframe his self-blame as a coping mechanism that may have served him in the past, but may not be helpful in the present. I would encourage him to develop more self-compassion and self-acceptance, and help him relabel his thoughts and emotions in a more empowering and positive way.

In summary, feminist therapy can be helpful in Conrad's treatment by addressing societal factors, promoting empowerment and autonomy, and fostering inclusivity and social justice. It can provide a supportive and empowering framework for Conrad to explore and challenge societal norms, develop a more positive sense of self, and make informed choices about his mental health and well-being.

## References

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