

Ordinary People: Feminist Therapy

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Feminist therapy (FT) considers the junction of gender with social identities and location to be at the center of the therapeutic process. Social identities, cultural identities, and the political climate must be considered when assessing contributions to the client's problems. Similar to existential therapy it is philosophical in its approach and integrates different psychological approaches with social justice, multicultural, and feminist concepts. Feminist seeks to understand impositions on a group that has been marginalized. For some women of non-dominant groups ethnicity or race may be more important to their identity than gender. To others, the oppression may be integrated. All of the roles one has to play and all of their social identities affect one's well-being (Corey, 2021).

Most counseling clients are women. Most master's level counselors are women. Most psychological theories were developed by white males from Western cultures. FT is a collective effort by women to encompass the experiences of different voices. It is a response that confronts the assumptions of who a mentally healthy individual is. Modern practice keeps the idea of social roles in the forefront of therapy. Corey quotes the American Psychological Association stating that FT "emphasizes a diverse approach that includes an understanding of multiple oppressions, power, privilege, multicultural competence, social justice, and the oppression of all marginalized people" (2021, p. 340).

I don't believe that this theory is applicable to Conrad as he is not a female nor does he identify as such. I do think that an understanding of the theory, particularly some insight into social identities may help him to understand some of how his mother and the other females in his life navigate the world. It may also help him, if he chooses to take the charge, he can begin to identify and rid institutions of discriminatory practice. An understanding of FT would make Conrad a better ally to women. A gender role or social identity analysis may help him to identify where his gender role socialization has shaped his values, what he thinks about, and how he acts.

References

Corey, G. (2021). *Theory and practice of counseling and psychotherapy* (10th ed.). Cengage.

Redford, R. (Director). (1980). *Ordinary people* [Film]. Paramount.