

Feminist Therapy: of “Ordinary People”

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GCN.OA: Theories and Foundations

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April 18, 2023

Feminist Therapy was formed by various women at different times for the goal of inclusive empowerment of the female and expanding for the individual. Gender unavoidably plays a role in the formation of identity. Unraveling the importance of context, such as social, political, and dominant patriarchal culture in how it shapes one's personality and behavior is both a problem and a solution. Feminist therapists find the DSM classification limiting as it was founded by the white patriarchal society, and it deters the client from choosing their own course of action for change. Feminist therapists emphasize overcoming the roles of the gender influences which cause such binary thinking and bringing together one's interdependence with others and independence.

In the case of Conrad, the Feminist theory would focus on the messages about what it means to be masculine. In contrast to his friends that would catcall out of the car window, Conrad would rather be sensitive and have conversations with females. There is a sense of control that is expected of a man and a level of attainment, especially swimming excellence. Moreover, the upper-class white society that Conrad lives in requires effortless perfection, and weakness, such as mental health, is not condoned and seen as a reflection of the family. The external social and masculine pressure on Conrad imprisoned him into becoming someone he is not which can explain his outbursts. He was not able to properly mourn the death of Bucky which could also explain his helplessness and hopelessness that led to his suicide attempt. Yet during his recovery and after, Conrad yearned for intimate connection and being able to let out his true feelings, even if that meant overcoming the shame of vulnerability.

As Dr. Burger, the initial approach would be based on the relational-cultural theory (RCT) "to lessen the suffering caused by disconnection and isolation, increase clients' capacity for relational resilience, develop mutual empathy and mutual empowerment, and foster social

injustices” (Corey, 2015. P. 343). As an equal partner, Conrad would have authentic warmth and closeness with Dr. Burger which provides a safe space to process. Since feminist therapy requires the client to set treatment goals, the reframing technique is important in having Conrad understand his behavior is a result of the social and gender context.

Overall, feminist therapy is suitable in taking to account the environmental factors that disabled Conrad’s full and complete healthy development. The therapy delves into family relationships, especially the context of how Conrad’s mother and father grew up which could be useful in self-awareness. As Conrad goes through a lot of self-blame, the advantage of being a part of an anti-suicide group or the camaraderie he felt to be real in the hospital could be beneficial. For Conrad specifically, my recommendation would be to provide him with a guidance approach and not merely an egalitarian therapeutic alliance. There is merit in the DSM and discounting the serious symptoms of Conrad’s insomnia could also be harmful in the assessment or treatment process.

References

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