

Ordinary People Feminist **Theory**

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Feminist Therapy was not created by one pioneering therapist who came up with the concept. Feminist Therapy was developed using several different therapeutic practices. Conrad describes Feminist counseling as a “premise that is essential to consider the social, cultural, and political context that contributes to a person’s problems in order to understand the problem” (339). It is about understanding the plight of women’s struggles that have kept them in a state of oppression until recently because of patriarchal principles that the United States was based on. Feminist therapy helps a woman to look into the problems that she may be facing through several different aspects of her life in order that she may reclaim and redefine the power towards her self-worth.

The two techniques I would use for the character Conrad in *Ordinary People* would be relabeling and reframing. Author Corey states, “Female counselors who work with male clients have an opportunity to create an accepting, authentic, and safe climate in which men can reflect on their needs, choices, past and present pain, and hopes for their future” (353). Conrad could benefit from counseling from Feminist therapy.

Conrad has internalized a demeaning self-worth for himself based on past experience. His relationship with his mother has not helped Conrad’s self-esteem and has hindered him in moving forward in his life. How Conrad views himself has caused him to become stagnant and to distance himself from people, places, and things, relabeling would help Conrad to redefine how he sees himself. Self-talk would be used for Conrad to use positive affirmations about how he sees himself. Conrad would be able to take negative statements that he uses to talk about himself with positive ones. Relabeling would help Conrad not to define himself from others’ viewpoint but to how he can see himself by changing the language he uses to describe himself. Conrad would be given homework to see every day as a new day to encourage himself with words that are encouraging and nurturing for himself.

Reframing would help Conrad stop being the victim and placing the blame where it belongs. In the process Conrad would see the blame he has placed on himself for his brother's death was not his fault and that he is not a victim but a survivor of a terrible tragedy. Reframing would also help Conrad see that the unconscious guilt his mother has placed on him due to the social climate of the time regarding a person not seeking help for their problems and keeping the problem within the home, is not Conrad's problem but is due his mother's societal expectations. The attitude of his mother is not Conrad's problem to bear.

The reason that the Feminist Therapy may not work for Conrad is if the therapist does not take into consideration the cultural aspect. As Conrad states, "if therapists do not fully understand and respect the cultural values of the clients from diverse groups, they run the risk of imposing their own values. When a therapist is working with someone like Conrad it would be important to take into consideration of the time period, how woman was viewed (i.e., mother), societal pressure to fit, and how those factors impact how they view Conrad's treatment. What may not work for Conrad because of those factors may work for someone who has more of marginalized position in society.

References

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