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# I am because WE are

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Personal Philosophy of Counseling

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## I. Nature of Mankind

Humans are naturally drawn toward a desire for happiness in which they tend to pursue particular paths in search of it. They are attracted to particular people in the hopes of achieving happiness. Aristotle claimed that “nearly everyone would agree that happiness is the end result which meets all these requirements.” Many people pursue money, pleasure, and honor believing that these are source of true happiness, but they realize quickly that true happiness is an end in and of itself. The personality of an individual develops in a series of stages that can encompass the entire lifetime of an individual. Self actualizing is an ongoing process and not a final destination (Maslow, 1970). The personality is formed in the early stages by the daily new and changing experiences that are a part of early life. In Roger’s person-centered approach, the emphasis was on how clients behaved in the world with others. As we encounter and interact with other individuals and even various objects in different settings, these exchanges assist in developing and molding our personalities and our self- identities into the ever evolving humans.

For instance, our values are deeply rooted psychological constructs that are integrated into our personalities and these constructs are dependent upon our individual value orientation that is presented to us in our earliest formative years. Culturally we have an embedded language and typically an embedded perspective on how religion is practiced and perceived within our home setting. There is continuum of human models from which to learn from in everyday life and through the multitude of experiences that children are witness to daily. Typically the full spectrum of right and wrong, and all the colors and shades of judgment, are modeled through experiences that we participate in or witness over the course of a lifetime. From the clothes that we wear to the food that we eat, most choices are as a result of our cultural and value orientation. But it is through these very values that our strongest individual motivation is developed. Humans

have two sets of values: the unconditional values and the flexible values, and each set of values operate under a different set of conditions. Unconditional values are static beliefs in which there is no question of flexibility in the belief. For instance, many hold honesty as an absolute value where HONESTY is the BEST policy in all cases, whereas some hold honesty as more of a flexible value where they feel that expressing complete honesty in all cases may result in hurt feelings or larger disagreements between people.

In accord with our value sets, our motivation can be internal or external, intrinsic or extrinsic, as this motivation can be considered a part of our value system. Intrinsic rewards are value in themselves and extrinsic reward derives its worth or meaning from external and often tangible sources. Human motivation is ultimately determined by intrinsic forces. Deci and Ryan seem to be of the same mind, “organisms have intrinsic needs and physiological drives and these needs provide energy to act on” (1985, pg. 4).

Behaviorally we are also shaped by the same orientations as form our values whereas models of behavior are present that we come to view and accept as these behaviors as normative in the general and specific environments. Behavior is not static and can change over time as a person matures and grows, but our behaviors can also be impacted by factors in the environment and within our interactions with other people.

## II. Nature of Counseling

As I stated, honesty is the best the policy in all cases. Honesty is the essential component of counseling. The client must feel understood, and not judged in order for counseling to be effective. While building trust and a basis for honesty, the counselor must build a strong rapport with the client. Building rapport will not only make the client feel as if they are valued and supported. This is the first step of the client beginning to trust, the counselor. Acknowledging the

compartments of confidentiality is also imperative to the client feeling that the counselor is trustworthy. There has to be a pressing or urgent issue for the client to seek out professional help. Next the counselor must identify why the client, believes they need counseling. Clients must first voice and identify their need or needs for counseling. If the counselor solely, identifies the clients' need or needs, it will remove a crucial part of the counseling process. During this part of the counseling process, the counselor must remain completely objective, in order to be most effective. Collaboratively creating goals and identifying coping mechanism that most beneficial for the client to address and combat their common issue or issues. This is fostered by giving the client homework, requiring the clients to be self-reflective, and lastly brining awareness to how the client's actions, to allow them to see how they affect themselves and others. Lastly the client must become self sufficient. Meaning, they must be able to walk themselves through the different problem solving techniques and practices. This must be done independently of their counselor. If the client is successful at completing these steps, then the client no longer needs the counselor. At that point the counselor has served his or her purpose. This encompasses the entirety of a counseling process.

There are no shades of judgment within the counseling purpose. Counseling was developed to help people explore their feelings, emotions and issues they encounter often. It allows people to discover compartments of their psyche and their emotional state that would have never recognized. A safe legroom is created for the exploration and free of the condemnation of judgments and stenotypes. Those toxic poisons are removed from the environment. This will increase the likelihood that the client would begin to peel back deeper levels of their life experiences and requesting guidance and advisement on how to cope and deal with these larger

and more influential situations within their lives. As professionals counselors are solely fixed to guide individuals to their perception of a better reality.

One of the client's main responsibilities is to request for guidance, and being true to oneself, such as weaknesses and strengths are imperative to the counseling sessions. A client should understand that they have the right and responsibility to say that they do not want to use certain coping mechanisms or practices. The responsibility will shift to holding the counselor accountable for creating or researching other practices that can be used during their sessions.

The counselor's responsibilities are to facilitate the needs of the client. Such as researching best practices that can best help the client resolve conflict, cope, gain self-awareness or simply understand ways to help them maintain a healthy mental state. When the counselor is no longer listening to the client's explicit and implicit needs then the counselor is no longer doing what is best for that client. It is also the counselor's responsibility to make the client feel safe and comfortable during each session. Confidentiality is a crucial responsibility as a counseling professional. Unless the individual has expressed that they intend on hurting themselves or others, then it is important that the counselor maintains confidentiality at all times. The breach of confidentiality will undo any built trust that the client and the counselor once had.

Existential Therapy requires, "Responsibility is based on capacity for awareness and self-reflection." (Corey, 2013) This will require the individuals to truly be able to make decisions and to understand the world better because they understand themselves. The counselor should be able to teach their clients how to reflect on situations and how to become more aware of those behaviors. This is key for allowing the client to accept their reality and understand how to be happy within one's self in spite of the challenges within the reality. "People are best understood

by seeing through the “spectacles” by which they view themselves in relation to the world.”

(Corey 2013) This Adlerian approach would not only help the counselor to be able to better help their clients. It would also be a crucial practice to unveil a perspective to the client, about a particular approach. This approach also encourages clients to embrace their challenges and use those obstacles as stepping stones to success. Parts of the Adlerian approach closely relates to my individual counseling philosophy. “... A collaborative way with clients and this relationship is based on a sense of deep caring, involvement, and friendship.” (Corey, 2009) Collaboration between the client and the counselor is key in order to ensure the success of the counseling process for the client. Using crisis intervention techniques for the clients is crucial. This approach derives from the person centered therapy. Not only will this help the client learn how to deal with current crisis, however it will create a base for the client when other crisis may arise within their life. “Genuine support, caring and non-possessive warmth can go a long way in building bridges that can motivate people to do something to work through and resolve crisis.” (Corey, 2009) Collaboration is not the only component that is needed to ensure that the client is receiving the most out of the intervention process. It is also important to have the support from many different emotional avenues to give the client extrinsic motivation that they will be able to be resilient and make it through the crisis. However in order to get the clients to actually debrief and relax there is a behavioral technique that is important for the evolution of the clients meditation regimen. “Clients assume a passive and relaxed position in a quiet environment while alternatively contracting and relaxing muscles... Clients are instructed to actually feel and experience the tension building up, to notice their muscles getting tighter and study this tension, and to hold and fully experience the tension.” (Corey 2009) Relaxing training not only allows an individual to be able to calm themselves down from high stress, this procedure also teaches and

exemplifies the idea of self-control. This experience will teach the clients that they have control over not only their body but also of their destiny. However the only way to take control is to understand when to release or hold on to the tension within daily life. The combination of different techniques from the approaches cited truly reflect the counseling philosophy, in which I would like to use to help clients resolve the issues in challenges they experience

## **References**

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