

Therapeutic Orientation: Modality and Methods

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Theoretical Modality

My theoretical counseling orientation is integrative in its combination of the Psychodynamic theoretical orientation and Psychosocial developmental models of human growth and maturity. Psychodynamic theory describes the primacy of cognitive and interpersonal processes as the building blocks of personality. These include Ego psychology, Object Relations and Self Psychology in which the personality may be understood as developing in identity, intimacy and integrity within the context of relationships through the life span. These are internalized in a psychic structure of images, scripts and schemas having a fundamental relational basis. The personality grows and functions to relate to the environment and may develop healthy identification of oneself that becomes a differentiated and individuated individual capable of interdependent connectedness. An unhealthy environment disrupts or discourages the differentiation and individuation of the person, challenging the individual's development through necessary stages toward identity, an integrated self and ability to relate and facilitate relationships that are mutually and reciprocally beneficial.

The Integrative model of Relationally-Focused Psychotherapy provides the paradigm, approach and techniques for psychological treatment of clients who experience stress, trauma and inter-relational deficits. This modality acknowledges the full functioning of an individual that involves the complex interaction between the person's experiential capacities of cognition, affect, behavior, motivation, spirituality and physiology by which humans develop and function throughout their lives. This model acknowledges the internal world of the client as it is perceived and experienced existentially. The circular causality of these capacities and dimensions help the therapist recognize that contact with one dimension has an effect on the others and will be effected by the others as well.

A critical basis for practicing this integrative mode of psychotherapy is a systemic view of persons in the context of their relationships and inter-relational concepts involving culture, language, values and meaning. In multicultural terms this view acknowledges, values and interacts with the multidimensionality and diversity of a client's background and world-view that allows psychological benefits to diverse ethnic, religio-spiritual and sexual orientations. A major principle that influences this potential includes the responsibility and empowerment of the client to identify and create goals of counseling that are individually significant and personal to his/her life.

Methods and Techniques

The therapeutic interventions associated with my Relationally-Focused Integrative approach to counseling depend on the critical factors of a facilitative and collaborative relationship that removes barriers to contact with the client's internal paradigms and scripts. This relationship strongly supports the goals of therapy of developing a relational context that is therapeutic of itself, but that also models healthy relational boundaries, valuing and communication.

Brief therapeutic interventions assist with developing a rapport and entering into the client's experience through acceptance of their world-view, self-understanding, understanding of problems, and client determined goals. These client-specific goals help reduce resistance to change by focusing in areas valued by the client, that fundamentally promotes small changes which enables greater change according to systemic and change process principles. Verbal communication that explores client meaning and the reconstruction of better coping behaviors and functioning are integral to the Relationally-Focused integrative approach revealing client interpretations and meanings, particularly regarding relationships in familial and social interactions. These interventions help create an environment in which therapy promotes awareness and contact with repressed, unconscious information and experiences. This is the main goal of Relationally-Focused therapy, and the patterns developed in response to stressors and trauma may be challenged and modified through brief therapeutic interventions to achieve behaviors that bring about more positive and healthy experiences.

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Both Family System techniques and Social-Constructive principles are utilized to broach the clients' worldview and reality of meaning that have been nurtured and internalized. Psychodynamic therapeutic techniques assist interpretation of client defense mechanisms and social-reconstruction interventions promote clients to consider and implement new approaches to the challenges, struggles and resolution of dissonance into more functionally beneficial experiences. Family System interventions provide many means for exploring and exposing client scripts and patterns of functioning through trans-generational assessments and evaluation of family structures. Relational interactions in the context of two or more family members may be observed and new methods of communication, relating and conflict resolution taught and modeled. Interventions that are complementary to Relationally-Focused integrative therapy include attention to codification, secrets, enmeshment, boundaries and triangles of interactions. The change process is engaged through individual therapy or family therapy through role-playing, enactments and social-reconstructions.

Counseling Experience:

- Graduate Student Counseling Internship, Denver Rescue Mission, 'The Crossing' rehabilitation program with Denver Rescue Mission. September 2010 thru May 2011.
- Counselor Volunteer, Denver Rescue Mission, 'New Life Program,' June 2011 to January 2014
- Emotionally Focused Couples Therapy Trainings, 2013 thru 2014.
- Trauma Dynamics Levels 1 & 2 Trainings, 2015 thru 2016
- Licensed Professional Counselor, License # LPC.0011861