

The Integration of Values, Faith, and Empowerment in Counseling

Tara L. Chase

Doctoral Department: Grand Canyon University

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Dr. William Sansing

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Reflection

The successful use of formal language is paramount in academic writing as formal language helps convey ideas with clarity and precision. It minimizes ambiguity and ensures that the message is communicated accurately (Snow & Uccelli, 2009). This is crucial in academic writing, where conveying complex ideas accurately is essential. In an effort to formalize and revise this academic writing, feedback was utilized.

- Recognize that academic writing is a formal genre and is used as such for efficient scholarly communication (Snow & Uccelli, 2009).
- Use formal language to maintain a professional tone and demonstrate respect for the subject matter and audience.
- Contribute to the credibility of the resource and the work of peer reviewed writings (Savage et al., 2007).
- Utilize formal language that encourages an objective and unbiased tone.
- Discourages the use of personal opinions, emotions, or informal expressions that may undermine the objectivity of the academic work.

This is important in maintaining the academic integrity of research and analysis (Savage et al., 2007). Formal language aligns with the principles of academic integrity and emphasizes a commitment to intellectual honesty and the proper attribution of sources (Savage et al., 2007). Using a formal tone signals a serious approach to academic discourse. Formal language also promotes consistency in writing style and structure. In academic writing, adherence to a consistent style is crucial for the ease of reading and comprehension (Snow & Uccelli, 2009). Academic writing is often targeted at a scholarly audience that expects a certain level of formality (APA, 2010).

The Integration of Values, Faith, and Empowerment in Counseling

The counseling profession demands a profound self-awareness encompassing one's biases, strengths, and motivations. The introspective process is indispensable for effective counseling. This task delves into formulating a personal counseling theory, integrating my values, family history, philosophical foundations, and alignment with a major psychological theory.

As a counselor, my approach is grounded in the fundamental belief that every life is significant, and everyone harbors the potential for growth and change. This conviction is influenced by my upbringing, personal encounters, and a synthesis of values derived from a diverse family background. This essay delves into these facets, offering profound insights into my values, familial background, the philosophical framework underpinning my beliefs, and the psychological theory that closely aligns with my counseling philosophy. The exploration will be conducted with a formal and analytical approach, emphasizing the ease of understanding for the reader and highlighting the transformative aspects of the discussed elements.

Personal Values and Convictions

When reflecting on personal values and convictions regarding human beings and life, a foundational belief in the intrinsic worth and dignity of every individual is key. People are inherently resilient, possessing the capacity for growth and positive transformation. Recognizing that this inherent skill has, in many cases, been hindered or overlooked in individuals experiencing mental illness. This optimistic perspective serves as the cornerstone of my counseling philosophy, highlighting the significance of empathy, compassion, and a client-centered approach. A committed to fostering an environment that not only acknowledges

but actively promotes self-exploration, self-acceptance, and personal empowerment (Edelmann et al., 2020).

Family Background and Development

My current beliefs and values are profoundly influenced by my family background and developmental experiences. Growing up in a supportive and nurturing environment has instilled in me a deep appreciation for the significance of interpersonal relationships and the enduring impact of early experiences on individual development. The awareness of cultural and familial influences has contributed to my valuing of diversity and recognizing the unique backgrounds that shape individuals. These aspects, intricately woven into my upbringing, have granted me a profound understanding and connection with others, facilitating a robust foundation for therapeutic rapport.

The trajectory of my family's journey, marked by my father's conversion to Christianity as a Jew for Jesus and my brother's life struggles, has left an indelible mark on my worldview. The challenges my family confronted, particularly my father's battle with cancer, compelled me to cultivate resilience and shoulder responsibilities at a young age. This period of adversity served as a catalyst for personal growth, fostering my belief in the inherent capacity of individuals for transformation even in the face of profound difficulties.

The openness, honesty, and encouragement to inquire demonstrated by my parents empowered me to find my voice and establish a foundation of resilience. Their modeling of values such as communication, perseverance, and effort has significantly influenced my understanding of the importance of these virtues in both personal and professional spheres.

The Power of Empathy and Compassion

Being raised by parents who prioritized their children and fostered open communication, I learned early on that everyone deserves to be heard and valued. This foundational belief was further fortified by an environment that embraced diversity and cultivated in me a respect for different perspectives. I was both shown and taught kindness and acceptance. This combination of nature and nurture shaped an empathic child, capable of viewing the world through a compassionate lens.

My parents, who were often regarded as the outliers in their family during their upbringing, were resolute in providing me with a sense of purpose and inclusion. I gleaned numerous valuable lessons, including the significance of confronting adversity with faith and hope. Observing the strength, the yearning for change, and the way my family united in the face of life's challenges, instilled in me a compassionate understanding of those grappling with similar difficulties. This experience profoundly influenced my dedication to mental health advocacy and counseling.

System of Philosophy

The humanistic-existential approach closely aligns with my values and beliefs. This theory, rooted in the work of Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow, emphasizes the actualization of human potential, self-actualization, and the importance of the therapeutic relationship. I resonate with the client-centered nature of this approach, valuing the therapist's ability to create a nonjudgmental and empathetic space for clients (Heidenreich et al., 2021).

Existentialism emphasizes individual freedom, choice, and responsibility. This philosophy aligns with my conviction that individuals are the architects of their own lives and have the power to create meaning in their experiences. In counseling, this philosophy implies a focus on helping clients explore their values, choices, and the existential aspects of their

existence. It underscores the importance of authenticity, self-awareness, and the pursuit of personal meaning.

Comfort Level With Applying the Theory

Points of Agreement and Disagreement

The humanistic-existential approach focuses on the therapeutic relationship, client autonomy, and personal growth. I acknowledge that certain psychological issues may necessitate interventions that extend beyond the scope of this approach. The incorporation of cognitive-behavioral techniques into my counseling theory could offer a more encompassing framework, addressing both the emotional and cognitive facets of clients' experiences (Robbins, 2021).

Identification of Major Psychological Theory

The psychological theory that closely aligns with my humanistic-existential approach in counseling philosophy is solution-focused therapy (SFT). SFT corresponds with my belief in the significance of empowering individuals to effect positive change in their lives (Corcoran & Pillai, 2009). The emphasis on identifying and building on clients' strengths, setting achievable goals, and concentrating on solutions rather than problems seamlessly aligns with my values.

Considering the inherent societal resistance to change, I believe it is often crucial to encourage clients to step outside their comfort zones to overcome fears, judgments, misconceptions, and biases that impede growth. While aversion therapy, not constituting a comprehensive theory, plays a role in my approach by recognizing the need to address and modify negative behaviors and perceptions, I place my faith in the efficacy of positive

reinforcement and solution-focused interventions to bring about lasting change. Incorporating aversion therapy when necessary is a prudent addition to the overall therapeutic strategy (Fernando, 2023).

Explanation of Integration

In applying the humanistic-existential approach to counseling, I find a seamless integration of development, personality, and learning that aligns with my core beliefs. The nature of the person, according to this approach, is seen as inherently capable of growth and self-actualization. It recognizes innate capacities and capabilities in individuals, emphasizing their potential for positive transformation. The motivation for behavior is rooted in the pursuit of self-awareness, authenticity, and the realization of personal meaning. This alignment is fundamental to my comfort level in using the theory.

Definition of Maladjustment

In the context of my theory, maladjustment is viewed as a divergence from one's authentic self and a hindrance to the realization of personal potential. It is a state where individuals are disconnected from their innate capacities and authentic motivations. Maladjustment manifests as a lack of congruence between one's beliefs and actions, impeding the journey toward self-actualization.

Conditions for Constructive Personality and/or Behavior Change

Constructive personality and behavior change, according to my theory, necessitate an environment that fosters self-exploration, acceptance, and empowerment. The conditions include a nonjudgmental therapeutic relationship, client autonomy, and a focus on the client's strengths. The counselor's role is to create a space where clients feel encouraged to explore their values,

make choices aligned with their authentic selves, and engage in the existential aspects of their existence.

Goal Setting in Counseling

In alignment with my theory, goal setting in counseling involves collaboratively identifying achievable objectives that resonate with the client's values and aspirations. The emphasis is on setting goals that promote personal growth, self-awareness, and the pursuit of meaning. Goals are not merely outcomes but integral components of the client's journey toward positive transformation.

Definition of Client Improvement and Goals for Counseling

Client improvement, as per my theory, is characterized by enhanced self-awareness, increased authenticity, and a stronger connection with personal values. The goals for counseling include empowering clients to navigate their existential journey, fostering resilience, and facilitating positive transformations. Counseling aims to guide individuals toward a more authentic and meaningful existence.

Elements of My Theory Found in Other Theories

While my counseling theory is rooted in humanistic-existential principles, elements of it can be found in other theories. The emphasis on the therapeutic relationship aligns with person-centered therapy, and the focus on strengths and solutions resonates with solution-focused therapy. The integration of cognitive-behavioral techniques, as mentioned earlier, draws from cognitive-behavioral therapy, providing a comprehensive framework for addressing both emotional and cognitive aspects.

Rationales for Major Counseling Techniques

In my counseling practice, I employ major techniques that align with the humanistic-existential approach. Active listening, empathy, and unconditional positive regard are foundational techniques that contribute to the creation of a nonjudgmental and empathetic therapeutic space. These techniques facilitate the exploration of clients' values, choices, and existential aspects of their lives.

Rationales for Specific Techniques with Various Types of Clients

Tailoring techniques to specific client needs is crucial. For substance abusers, a focus on strengths, resilience, and the pursuit of meaning can be instrumental. With spouse/child abusers, exploring the root causes of maladjustment and fostering accountability are essential. Techniques for delinquents may involve guiding them toward positive outlets for their potential, and addressing underlying issues. Depressives benefit from a focus on self-awareness, personal empowerment, and gradual goal setting. Perfectionists may find value in embracing imperfection and redefining success, while clients with eating disorders could benefit from exploring the deeper meaning behind their behaviors.

Rationale for Position on the Use of History Taking, Diagnosis, and Appraisal

In my approach, history taking serves to understand clients' unique narratives and experiences, contributing to the creation of an individualized therapeutic plan. Diagnosis, while not the primary focus, can provide insights into maladjustment patterns. Appraisal is approached with a client-centered lens, emphasizing personal strengths and capacities rather than deficits. These practices align with the overarching philosophy of empowerment and positive transformation.

How My Theory Provides for Culturally/Socioeconomically Different Clients

My theory acknowledges the importance of cultural and socioeconomic factors in shaping individuals' experiences. The emphasis on individual freedom and choice aligns with culturally relevant counseling, recognizing diverse value systems. It encourages counselors to adapt their approaches to honor the uniqueness of each client's cultural background. Socioeconomic differences are considered in goal setting, ensuring that objectives are realistic and attainable within the client's context.

How My Theory Accounts for the Wide Variety of Individual Behavior

The humanistic-existential approach accommodates the wide variety of individual behavior by recognizing the uniqueness of each person's journey. The philosophy of individual freedom allows for a diverse range of choices and experiences. The counseling process involves exploring the authenticity of each individual's behavior, understanding the underlying motivations, and guiding them toward positive transformation in alignment with their values.

Rationale for Acceptance or Rejection of Clients Whose Value Systems Are Opposed

My theory embraces a stance of openness and acceptance. I would accept clients whose value systems are opposed to my own, recognizing the importance of providing support to individuals with diverse perspectives. The therapeutic journey involves exploring the client's values and choices without imposing personal beliefs. This position remains consistent whether dealing with voluntary or involuntary clients, emphasizing the fundamental principle of client autonomy in the counseling process.

Conclusion

Crafting a personal theory of counseling involves a deep exploration of one's values, background, philosophy, and alignment with psychological theories. By acknowledging the influence of personal beliefs and integrating them with established theories, I can develop a

framework that is authentic, effective, and adaptable to diverse client needs. This is an ongoing process of self-reflection and refinement. Counselors need to be committed to providing meaningful support to their clients and contributing positively to their communities.

By integrating humanistic-existential principles with diverse techniques and considering individual differences, my approach aims to empower clients, foster resilience, and guide them on a journey toward positive transformation. As I evolve in my theoretical orientation, I remain committed to providing ethical, culturally relevant counseling in various settings, contributing positively to individuals and communities.

My theory of counseling is drawn through inspiration from my upbringing, family experiences, and a synthesis of existentialism and humanism. The belief that all life is important, coupled with the understanding that everyone can grow and change, forms the foundation of my counseling philosophy. By integrating these values, I aim to empower individuals, foster resilience, and guide them on a journey toward positive transformation (Edelmann et al., 2020).

Resources

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