

Intervention strategy

Business



Zayed University| Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy | The A-B-C-D-E Model in the Treatment of Stress| Aalia AlFalasi 5/8/2013 | Psychological therapies are based on different psychological theories where different approaches are exercised and practiced to achieve the best results in treating clients. One of the most widely spread psychological therapies is the Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy (REBT) as one of cognitive behavior therapies.

Like other cognitive behavior therapies that focus on the clients' thoughts as a reason of psychological or physical problems, REBT stresses that clients' perception of things is mostly irrational and “catastrophized” (Abrams & Ellis, 1994).

The core idea of REBT is that people adapt irrational beliefs consciously or unconsciously toward specific events or people in their lives in which those beliefs cause them one or several emotional or behavioral disturbance (Abrams & Ellis, 1994). In crisis situations, people can take control if they change those irrational beliefs that they have and their way of thinking (James, 2008).

REBT was created by Albert Ellis who believed that people are the reason behind their own problems in the way they view events or people around them (Corey, 2009). He emphasized that our emotions and behaviors are interrelated and they come out as a result of our inner thoughts, beliefs and values. The main aim of REBT therapists is to challenge their clients' irrational beliefs making them aware of their consequences and teach them how to dispute them with as less stressful thoughts as possible.

This is practiced through several “ emotive-evocative, dramatic” techniques and strategies such as rational emotive imagery, shame-attacking exercise, disputing irrational beliefs, doing cognitive homework, bibliotherapy, changing one’s language, role playing and using A-B-C-D-E framework (Corey, 2009).

REBT is used as a treatment for various problems, situations as well as in treating stress. In clinical psychology, stress means “ pressures and strains of living that reduce the quality of life, and require changes in the individual to restore homeostasis” (Abrams & Ellis, 1994).

According to Abrams and Ellis stress is caused by numerous “ dysfunctional or irrational thinking”. They emphasize that stress in itself is a creation of the individual rather it is being a real thing in life. This self-created stress result in several disorders.

People who are stressed experience physiological symptoms and their stress is usually caused by a “ catastrophic event or group of events” (Abrams & Ellis, 1994). They believe that those events or people are causing them emotional disturbance rather than their way of thinking or the way they perceive the world around them.

Those physiological symptoms become very painful and people who experience them usually do not link them to their stress, which is a result of the way of their thinking. As mentioned earlier, REBT is used as a treatment for stress. In particular, REBT therapists use the A-B-C-D-E framework to confront their clients with their dysfunctional and irrational beliefs.

Clients then, dispute their negative and self-defeating thoughts to more positive and empowering ones. In the A-B-C-D-E model, A refers to the event that triggers the client's negative thoughts and creates his or her irrational beliefs, which is referred to as B. While C is the "disturbed consequence" of A and B, D is the stage of disputing the irrational beliefs and negative thoughts (Abrams ; Ellis, 1994). After disputing thoughts that are responsible for the disturbed consequences, E is the effective new philosophy of life that clients adapt (Abrams ; Ellis, 1994). Applying this model on treating clients with stress, therapists ask their clients to identify the event that triggers their emotional disturbance.

Then therapists work with clients to find the irrational belief that is attached to the events that they identified as stressful.

The next step demands that therapists work with their clients to recognize the attached feelings and emotions to the stress. Then, therapists carefully dispute their clients' dysfunctional thoughts and irrational beliefs and make them aware that events or people look very terrible and awful only in their mind than they truly are. After that, therapists help their clients adapt new effective beliefs and self-enhancing thoughts about themselves, other people or events, to better cope with difficult situations.

Because the A-B-C-D-E model deals with the client's own beliefs and thoughts, the treatment works among different cultures as the work of Albert Ellis proves.

In one of his treatment of stress, Ellis worked with an Italian client who suffered from a pain in his jaw and neck muscles. The client was married to

an American woman who was a very independent and challenging personality, which conflicted with the client's cultural conservative values and beliefs. He started to view his wife as the bad person in their relationship but he couldn't file for divorce to avoid losing their house that he inherited from his father.

Trapped in this situation, he began expressing his inner conflict through the pain in his jaw and neck muscles. During therapy sessions he recognized that the situation is much less complicated than what he perceived it to be.

After realizing this, the client was advised to change his dysfunctional thoughts by communicating with his wife and consulting a lawyer. At the end the man got divorced but managed to keep his house that he feared to lose, and at the same time, his symptoms of pain started to fade away (Abrams ; Ellis, 1994).

Thus, dysfunctional thoughts and irrational beliefs are not fixed to certain cultures or societies. Rather, its application on different individuals from “ diverse cultures, ethnic and racial backgrounds” works to relief stress and other emotional disturbance (Corey, 2009). Bibliography Abrams, M. , ; Ellis, A.

(1994, February). rational emotive behavior therapy in the treatment of stress, 22(1), 12. Corey, G. (2009). theory and practice of counseling and psychotherapy. Belmont, California: Brooks/Cole.

James, R. (2008). Crisis intervention strategies (6 ed.). Belmont, CA: Brook/Cole.