

Analysis on the characters of the movie ordinary people essay



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Amber Rodriguez Stocker Psychology 12/10/2011 My Analysis on the characters of " Ordinary People" In the movie ordinary people our main character is Conrad Jarrett played by actor Timothy Hutton it is displayed that he is ultimately suffering from a case of post-traumatic stress disorder. Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder is a lasting consequence of traumatic ordeals that cause intense fear, helplessness, or horror, such as a sexual or physical assault, the unexpected death of a loved one or accident.

In Conrad's case this diagnosis suits him very well multiple time throughout the movie Conrad display symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. Conrad is struck with guilt throughout the movie he feels as though his brother's death was somehow his fault and another reason I believe Conrad may be suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder also because he shows that these feelings of guilt continue and eventually increase, becoming so strong that they keep Conrad from enduring a normal life. In the movie Conrad also shows that he repeatedly attempts to avoid his friends and also his old way of life.

For example he starts by no longer associating with friends then eventually quitting the swim team all in an effort to avoid the pain involved by remembering his brother and his death. When Conrad makes effort to cope with his feelings he goes to a Psychologist's Dr. Berger played by actor Judd Hirsch he is asked what he is coming to his office for and Conrad says that he wants to get in control of his emotions so that others would not worry. Unfortunately, Conrad does not get what he right off the bat needs because first Dr.

Berger wants to know a little about his past and Conrad snaps back at Dr. Berger a sure fire Defense Mechanism because he did not originally have to admit that he tried to commit suicide and was hospitalized for four months. When Conrad's friend Karen does not pick up the phone he gets worried and then eventually Karen's parents I would assume tells him Karen had committed suicide Conrad makes a big realization that it wasn't his fault Buck died but he should focus on the fact that he lived and survived because he was stronger.

Dr. Berger in the movie seemed to be aggressive and that if Conrad didn't want to feel this way then it would initially be up to him to do so. So being that I would believe that Dr. Berger would be considered a Humanistic Psychologist a Humanistic Psychologist is one that believes that people are responsible for their own behaviors and actions. Though Dr. Berger does also show that he takes on a Psychoanalytic and Sociocultural views because he makes it known that he would like to know how Conrad feels about his parents.

Also, I took note in the movie that the mother and father were the most different because the mother was least accepting to her son's actions and seemed fairly unsupportive about Conrad attending a Psychologist. I assumed this because when Conrad's Father speaks of his well-being and how Conrad is seeing a Psychologist to a mutual friend Conrad's mother becomes angry and upset. While Conrad is attending a session with Dr.

Berger his parents meet to talk and his mother says that she wants to go away for the holidays like they do every year but the father seems resistant

because he does not want to make their son stop going to a therapist when he is doing so well, and that he does not want to leave him behind either. In the movie *Mary Tyler Moore* who plays the role of Conrad's mother shows that she favored Buck Conrad's deceased brother because Conrad begins to have flashbacks where she was happy and attentive to Buck as he tells a story to her and Conrad and also when she speaks with Conrad it's always awkward and fake to say the least.

The only time Conrad's mother Beth pays any attention to Conrad is when she has the chance to yell at him or when she has the chance to be negative. All in all, I think Conrad's mother is in denial of what is going on around her and that she believes everyone must just do as she says or suffer her constant mood swings because she feels the need to be in control of her families every move so that she feels better about herself. When approached by Conrad's Father about possibly seeing a Therapist suggested by Dr.

Berger she gets angry again and takes it out on Conrad's father a clear sign of displacement. Displacement is would be the expression of an unwanted feeling or thought is redirected from a more threatening powerful person to a weaker one. Again, as mentioned in the movie Conrad's Father Calvin Jarrett played by Donald Sutherland is the more lenient supportive parent except the issue with Calvin is he seeks approval and puts aside his emotions for those of his family of Conrad's Mother.

On the day of Buck Conrad's deceased brother's funeral Calvin had put on a shirt and automatically Beth put down Calvin by saying he couldn't wear that shirt because it didn't look right. This bothered Calvin but yet again he put it

away because he felt it would hurt Beth. Calvin has not found a successful way to cope with his stress so instead he turns to repression. Repression is when an individual takes unacceptable or unpleasant impulses are pushed back into the unconscious. He avoids causing a scene would cause him anxiety.

The problem with this is everyone is eventually can feel overwhelmed at one point and will explode like in the movie when Calvin lets loose on Beth about her having him change his shirt and ask why she made him do that and she reverts to being angry and does not answer him not really at least.

Altogether, this movie was interesting and I believe it was the right thing for Calvin Jarrett to do was when he decided he didn't want to be with Beth because all she ever did was bring down the family with her unhealthy way of dealing things. Every member of the family I think would benefit from seeking Psychological help.