Argumentative essay on personal theories psychology essay

Personal theory of counseling has been an important element of psychotherapy since the past few decades. These theories have adopted an optimistic view of the human mind and some theories imply that human mind is adaptive to certain forms of interventions. Most theories in personal counseling rely on the proposition that every human being aims to improve his behavior. The battle for behavioral perfection is less than perfect but it permits an individual to bring about a positive change in his behavior through guidance. This form of guidance is available through psychotherapy and counseling when applicable.

To justify the value of personal counseling psychologists claim that human beings are social animals. This means that humans in general prefer to be part of a community and integrate into their surroundings instead of remaining isolated. Every individual has deep emotional attachment towards some people who play an important role in his life. Some people relate more strongly to their family members and others to their friends. However, there are individuals who lack the required amount of social balance.

Individuals could remain isolated in instances when they do not find a desirable company. It could also be a result of certain experiences which have had a deep impact on their thinking and mental development. Isolation therefore takes the form of an illness according to the personal counseling theories. An individual is cured through the process of therapy and guidance provided by a professional psychologist to help him attain a more desirable balance within his surroundings. This treatment certainly encourages an isolated individual to become a better member of his environment or to help him react properly to difficult situations.

Various researchers are debating the idea that an individual learned to understand his surroundings better through therapy and counseling. A critical factor that forces us to rethink our position regarding this theory is the belief that not always the individual needs to learn from the society; the society might require a change. A community itself is stuck with its presumptions about individual behavior that it might not change its status quo.

Psychologists have two unique and distinct views on this debate. The common refutation to this argument is that counseling does not always intend to achieve conformity to surroundings but rather it motivates the individual to face the society in his true form. An individual through therapy can gain confidence in his initial beliefs and ideas that might not confirm to the norms of the society. In this case, counseling helps in clearing the doubts of the individual about the way he perceives his surroundings.

This approach could motivate the individual, but it can also lead to direct confrontation. Such behavior can result in excessive emotional chaos and can instead do more harm to the concerned individual. This is why a psychologist strives to maintain a balance between the individualistic personality characteristics of an individual and his emotions. Once this balance develops, the individual's treatment is complete and his issues are resolved. This is a very debatable issue and most people have different views regarding how its implementation.

Freud is the founder of psychoanalysis; according to him, religion is the universal obsession of neurosis of humanity. Therefore, he believed that the

primary factor determining human behavior is its sole source of motivation is religion and individual beliefs. In addition, he believed that sexual desires are another primary source of motivation for man and mental activity is essentially unconscious. Therefore, the hidden desires of the unconscious buried deep inside the mind determine human behavior. His research can be applicable to those cultures that have strong religious influence over them. However, a significant population of the world today does not identify having strong religious backgrounds. His theory provides a strong base for research and for understanding human behavior but it certainly does not fully satisfy modern theory.

Alfred Adler, the founder of individual psychology, believed humans had an innate tendency to strive for perfection and that this determination was the most important motivator of behavior for an individual. He shifted the motivational emphasis from biological instincts to social relationships. The idea is better understood through the universal need of children to be dependent upon parents or guardians. Such dependency produces feelings of inadequacy, which an individual strives to overcome throughout his life.

Carl Rogers, the founder of person-centered therapy, had the opinion that living beings strive to maximize the organism and avoid experiences that are harmful to them. Therefore, the person-centered theorists have a different opinion regarding the source of motivation for people. They believe that the only motivation of human behavior is the tendency to grow to full potential in an obvious manner. Person-centered counseling involves a non-directive role of the counselor in the therapy sessions. The client is in charge of the situation since he has an innate tendency to find the optimum solution to his

own problems. This theory seems to present us to a world of utopia where everything is perfect, or at least strives to be perfect. It is noticeable that human beings continue to commit to certain mistakes even when they know the consequences.

Jung is a dissident of Freud's school who does not believe that sex plays any major role in personality development. He also disagreed on the importance of dealing with an individual's past or background in therapy. He agreed that man's religious, aesthetic, and other needs are important for positive results in personal therapy. Thus, in Jung we see the seeds of modern day existentialism. He first tackled the concepts of archetypes such as introvert and extrovert personalities and suggested how they need a different treatment in therapy.

Horney is the first person to talk about a self-concept. Problems stem from a " basic anxiety" that may be produced in individuals if they are not reared in a tolerant environment. To develop this theory a step ahead, Sullivan coined the term " interpersonal anxiety" to describe that a man's greatest need is for satisfactory relationships with others.

Another similar solution is the Gestalt therapy that implies that human beings have an innate desire to meet their needs. This desire serves as the main motivating factor; however, the therapy is only successful if the results are in harmony with the personal surroundings of the individual. Therefore, the therapist creates a balance between the individual needs and the environment in which he fulfills his desires.

Every individual reacts to situations in different ways and it is impossible to make such an obvious generalization regarding human behavior. A critical analysis of the propositions made by the person-centric theorist reveals that the idea that humans have an innate tendency to strive to correct their behavior can be helpful in order to motivate their responses. At the same time, we must keep in mind that each individual has a unique personality and generalization of behavior is not possible.

If one examines the variety of counseling interventions that have been described in the professional literature, they tend to fall into four broad categories: interventions that produce affective change; interventions that produce cognitive change; interventions that produce behavioral change; and interventions that produce social system change. The primary goal of an affective intervention is to help a client express his feelings, to identify or discriminate between feelings, or to alter or accept feelings.

Cognitive interventions intend to reduce emotional stress and corresponding maladaptive behavioral patterns by altering or correcting errors in thoughts, perceptions and beliefs. The overall goal of behavioral interventions is to help clients develop adaptive and encouraging behavior to situations. Finally, the goal of systemic interventions is to change the individual's social environment or system, thus changing the patterns of that resulted in the problems.

Personal counseling is a slow and gradual progression that intends to motivate human behavior through different stages involved in the counseling process. The first step involves developing a connection with clients. In this

part of the process, the counselor and the client develop a connection, which would determine the success of the whole therapy in the due course. In the early phase, the client tends to be defensive and requires assurance. A relationship of trust has to evolve in order to help the therapist fully understand the client. The counselor must show empathy to the client and at the same time, it is important to help him understand that the issues need to be resolved as soon as possible.

Once the defensive wall has been broken, the therapist can use cognitive behavioral techniques to discuss and solve the problems of the patient. Problem solving techniques involve creating a behavioral plan for the individual intended to restrict irrational behavior before the patient's problems are resolved. The client develops an understanding of the difference between perception and reality; faulty beliefs of the client begin to change and action to help the client understand situations in a precise way initiates. Another approach is to face each problem one by one and discuss the implications separately. This method helps the client rationalize behavior, through discussing his past behavior, his regrets and his achievements.

The third step is to resolve an underlying dichotomy. In many cases, clients have conflicting goals in their lives that need a harmonized balance. For example, an individual suffering from abuse from a stepparent might want to keep his family intact because she loves her original parent and at the same time, she wants to avoid the abuse. In such instances, the individual could go through excessive emotional shocks, as she cannot make a clear decision about how to tackle the situation. To resolve this situation the individual

would have to be motivated to confront the issue directly instead of continuing to suffer the abuse.

These opposing perspectives need integration into a single one, in order to resolve the issues. Gestalt therapy aims to resolve such issues through integration of the problems. However, it is not usually possible to create harmony between conflicting goals and as the issues addressed by the therapy at not always concrete. Once integration of conflicting goals becomes possible, the therapist can return to the preceding stage of the process and address problem solution.

At this stage of the process, the client is ready to undergo more technical and complete therapy. Intense cognitive therapies apply once basic issues and dichotomies have been resolved. During the final stage of the therapeutic treatment, the client is may be invited to sessions including more than one person. This also helps the therapist conclude the results of therapy.

The role that theory plays in the course and outcome of counseling has been a subject of dialogue, and intense debate, for almost as long as counseling has been a profession. However, the most appealing forms of therapy that I would consider as very important is the, rational emotive behavior therapy (REBT), which states, " Human beings develop because of innate biological and psychological tendencies that interact with social influences". According to this theory, there is a certain influence on human development of his surroundings. A person develops his ideas and personality by learning from his family, friends and partners. Therefore, I believe individual personality is

a combination of learned family influences, as well as other significant individuals in a person's life, and innate qualities that influence personal development.

Most theories of counseling mirror the time in which they came into being, especially the earlier theories such as psychotherapy and individual psychology. These theories exhibit conservative elements and did not accept revolutionary thinking. Both Sigmund Freud, founder of psychoanalysis, and Adler called homosexuality a " perversion".

Feminist therapy developed out of profound discontent with customary approaches to psychotherapy. This kind of therapy includes an analysis of power and its relationship to the multiple ways women have been subject of oppression. After an analysis of feminist theories, I believe the basic idea is to create equality and not to result in dis-equilibrium. Like solution-focused therapy, feminist therapy's primary focus is on strengths, rather than deficits, and is committed to social change that supports equality. My personal theory of counseling would be a rational emotive behavior therapy and will include a feminist perspective to therapy.

A personal counseling technique needs to keep its focus on the individual. It is possible to define an individual with certain dominant characteristics, however at the same time we must understand that every individual is unique and the prescribed treatment needs to be different. It is also important to understand that each theory presents some central ideas and at the same time, each theory of personal counseling has limitations. To be better able to cater to the needs of the client a counselor must keep his

individual personality in mind and use a blend of all different available

techniques to achieve the desired results.