

Good will hunting and cognitive therapy



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Cognitive-Behavior Therapy: The Process Of Dealing With Painful Realities

The basis of cognitive therapy Cognitive-behavior therapy is a therapy that tries to find solution to behavior problems by understanding and changing the cognitive structure of human being. The main assumption of cognitive-behavior therapy is that the events in the environment and man's emotional reaction to those events determine his cognitive structure (Wright, Basco & Thae, 2006, p. 4). Hence, if a person experiences negative events in life, he develops a negative attitude towards life and develops fears. The past experience makes the person to avoid the situations which he fears will cause him the same pain (Wright, Basco & Thae, 2006, p. 4). This avoidance again reinforces his negative thinking and strengthens his fears, and eventually the fear becomes a permanent part of his thoughts, emotions and behavior which increases his social and personal problems (Wright, Basco & Thae, 2006, p. 4). The movie ' Good Will Hunting' is about a young man, who, because of his painful and lonely past, refuses to face the fears which are buried deep inside him, and how a psychology professor, Sean, helps him to deal with his fears by revealing his fears which are hidden under the mask of confident personality.

Cognitive approach examples from the movie ' Good Will Hunting'

1) Professor Sean takes Will to a park and talks about Will's behavior pattern. He says that by portraying a confident, knowledgeable and strong personality, he stops others from looking deep into the ' real' person. He tells Will that his lonely life and painful past affects him and the inferior complex that he has about his personal life keeps him from making new friends. Sean says that the fear of new life and social challenges has kept him from going out of Boston. However, to hide this fear and inferior complex, he uses his

<https://assignbuster.com/good-will-hunting-and-cognitive-therapy/>

intellectual abilities to impress people and tries to show as if he does not think that people are capable of understanding him.

2) In one of the sessions, Will tells Sean that he is dating a girl. When asked if he called her again, Will tells Sean that he is in no hurry as he thinks that she is interesting as long he does not get close to her. He assumes that she might not be as smart as he is and hence, does not want to get disappointed by knowing her. However, Sean makes Will realize that the reverse is the case. Sean says that Will is avoiding getting close to the girl not because he thinks the girl is boring but because he thinks that if she gets close to him, she will come to know the 'real' him and also about his personal life. She will get disappointed and will find him boring. Hence, he is trying to avoid meeting her again and is trying to suppress his fear by avoiding the interaction with the girl. Sean reveals Will's defensive behavior pattern. He explains him that he is trying to hide his imperfections from people by remaining emotionally distant from them.

3) Will does not want anyone to know that he is lonely, has fears and is a vulnerable guy. He tells Sean that he broke with his girl friend. Will realizes that he is afraid of being abandoned. He is an orphan and fears that everyone he gets into a relationship is going to leave him. So, to avoid the pain of getting abandoned, he himself ends the relationship before it gets serious. He has a fear of losing and this fear keeps him from having a long lasting and trustful relationship. Sean makes Will realize that it is not his fault. He helps him change his perception about life and makes him to confront his fears rather than run away from them and lead a lonely life.

References:

Wright, J. H., Basco, M. R & Thase, M. E. (2006). Learning Cognitive-Behavior Therapy: An Illustrated Guide. VA: American Psychiatric Publishing, Inc.

Bender, L. & Mosier, S. (Producers). Sant, G. V. (Director). (1997). Good Will Hunting.[Motion Picture]. United States: Miramax Films.