

Unit - 5

Theories of Counselling

Nature of Cognitive Behavior Therapy

Cognitions are thoughts like beliefs, assumptions, attributions, and attitudes. Cognitive-behavioral therapy refers to treatments that change cognitions (thoughts, beliefs) that are causing psychological problems. In cognitive-behavior therapy, clients' cognitions are modified in two ways: cognitively and behaviorally. Cognitions are modified directly by teaching clients to change their maladaptive thoughts and indirectly by helping clients change their overt actions. A common practice in attitude change is to change what people do overtly in order to change what they think. There are two models of Cognitive-behavioral therapy. They are cognitive restructuring therapy and cognitive-behavioral coping skills therapy. Cognitive restructuring therapy involves recognizing maladaptive cognitions that are maintaining problem behaviors in the clients and teaching them to substitute more adaptive cognitions. Cognitive restructuring is used when clients' problems are maintained by an excess of maladaptive thoughts. Cognitive behavioral coping skill therapy teaches clients adaptive responses to deal effectively with difficult situations. Adaptive responses include both cognitive and overt behavior. This model is used for problems that occur due to deficit in adaptive cognitions.

To treat ~ Excess of maladaptive cognitions ~ Deficit of adaptive cognitions Goal ~ Substituting adaptive cognitions ~ Using cognitive-behavioral coping skills for maladaptive cognitions

Examples of ~ Rational Emotive Behavior ~ Self-instructional training therapies therapy

Cognitive therapy ~ -Stress inoculation training

Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy (Rebt)

Development of REBT

Rational emotive behavior therapy (REBT) was found in 1955 by Albert Ellis, an American clinical psychologist. Ellis began practicing in the areas of marriage, family, and sex therapy. He practiced classical psychoanalysis and analytically oriented psychotherapy for about six years. Disillusioned by psychoanalysis (viewed it as a relatively superficial and unscientific form of treatment) he experimented with several other systems. He was inspired by the work of Epictetus, a Roman philosopher. Epictetus had said "People are disturbed not by things, but by the views which they take of them". In other words, emotional disturbance such as anger, anxiety or depression is mainly a product of how individuals perceive and evaluate events in their lives. Ellis combined humanistic, philosophical, and behavioral therapy to form rational emotive behavior therapy (REBT). Ellis is rightly known as grandfather of cognitive behavior therapy. A basic assumption is that our emotions stem mainly from our beliefs, evaluations, interpretations, and reactions to situations. Through the therapeutic process, clients learn skills that give them the tools to identify and dispute irrational beliefs that have been learned and self-constructed and are now maintained by self-indoctrination. They learn how to replace ineffective ways of thinking with effective and rational cognition. This brings about change in their emotional reactions to situations. The therapeutic process allows clients to apply REBT principles of change not only to a particular presenting problem but also to many other problems in life. The focus is on working with thinking and acting rather than primarily with expressing.

Basic Concepts and Principles.

Rational-emotive behavior therapy is based on the assumption that human beings are born with a potential for both rational, or straight, thinking and irrational, or crooked thinking. People have predispositions for self-preservation, happiness, thinking and verbalizing, loving, communion with others, and growth and self-actualization. They also have propensities for self-destruction, avoidance of thought, procrastination, endless repetition of mistakes, superstition, intolerance, perfectionism and self-blame, and avoidance of actualizing growth potentials. REBT attempts to help them accept themselves as creatures that will continue to make mistakes yet at the same time learn to live more at peace with themselves.

Humans, according to Ellis are self-talking, self-evaluating, and self-sustaining. They develop emotional and behavioral difficulties when they mistake simple preferences like desires for love, approval, success, for dire needs. However, Ellis views humans as possessing inborn tendencies toward growth and actualization.

Two types of disturbances

REBT recognizes two types of emotional disturbances: ego disturbance and discomfort disturbance. Here, emotional disturbance refers to neurotic problems, i.e. those that do not involve loss of contact with reality or not caused by physical disease. ego disturbance is said to occur when a person makes demands upon him or herself, others or the world. When these demands are not met he or she engages in some form of self-depreciation, such as, "As I'm not a good public speaker, who I must be, then I'm totally incompetent." Discomfort disturbance occurs when a person makes demands upon him or herself, others or the world that comfortable life conditions must exist and when they do not he or she usually displays low frustration tolerance, such as, "I cannot stand any longer this turmoil in life. It should not be this way!"

Though ego and discomfort disturbance are separate categories, they often overlap in emotional distress. An example of such an overlap is when a woman condemns herself as weak (ego) for not being able to cope with a hectic home and work schedule (discomfort).

Causes of emotional disturbance

Ellis says we all learn irrational beliefs while growing up. We learn them during childhood from significant people around us. Later we create irrational beliefs ourselves. These are self-defeating beliefs and are reinstalled by the processes of autosuggestion and self-repetition.

According to REBT, emotional disturbances are caused when individuals blame themselves and others. Unrealistic and illogical ideas take the form of "musts", "shoulds", "oughts", and demand on the self. Such absolutistic cognitions are at the core of human misery. Accepting ourselves despite imperfections is the basis for recovering from a neurosis or a personality disorder.

REBT contend that people do not need to be accepted and loved even though it may be highly desirable. The therapist teaches clients how to feel undepressed even when they are unaccepted and unloved by significant others.

Cognitive therapy is the automatic thoughts. Though individuals may not be aware of them, they make up their belief systems called cognitive schemas. In the therapeutic approach the therapist and the client work together to assess and change behaviors. Therapeutic change occurs along cognitive, behavioral and affective channels. Therapist helps the client to identify maladaptive beliefs and develop insights into their beliefs. Homework assignments are given to the client. Such assignments are examined in the next therapeutic sessions. Besides using behavioral and affective approaches like social skills training, cognitive therapists make use of techniques such as challenging absolutes, labeling of distortions and decatastrophizing. Cognitive therapy has identified particular distorted beliefs that are typical of each of several psychological disorder has been proved.

Major Differences Between Rebt And Cbt

Beck's Cognitive therapy and Ellis's REBT share the same goal of helping clients to recognize and change negative thoughts and maladaptive beliefs. However there are some important differences between them in terms of therapeutic methods and style.

They are mentioned below-

REBT is highly directive, persuasive, and confrontive. In contrast, Beck asks open-ended questions to the clients in order to examine their personal issues and arrive at their own conclusions. Beck emphasizes more on helping clients to discover their misconceptions by themselves. Ellis on the other hand emphasizes on playing the role of a teacher. Clients are persuaded that certain of their beliefs are irrational.

Through a process of rational disputation, clients are shown that such beliefs do not work.

According to Beck, telling clients that they are "thinking irrationally" can be detrimental.

Clients may believe that they are

"seeing things as they really are. Therefore, Beck views dysfunctional beliefs as being problematic

because they interfere with normal cognitive processing, not because they are irrational.

Another main difference is in the client-therapist relationship. REBT does not emphasize on warm

personal relationship between client and therapist. On the other hand Beck considers the

therapeutic relationship essential for successful counseling. Some of the characteristics of

therapists considered desirable are genuine warmth, accurate empathy, and nonjudgmental acceptance and the ability to establish trust and rapport with clients.

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