Chapter 13

Post Modern Approaches

Constructivist Narrative Perspective (CNP)
- Focuses on the stories people tell about themselves and others about significant events in their lives
- Therapeutic task:
  - Help clients appreciate how they construct their realities and how they author their own stories

Social Constructionism
- The client, not the therapist, is the expert
- Dialogue is used to elicit perspective, resources, and unique client experiences
- Questions empower clients to speak and to express their diverse positions
- The therapist supplies optimism and the process

Therapy Goals
- Generate new meaning in the lives of clients
- Co-develop, with clients, solutions that are unique to the situation
- Enhance awareness of the impact of various aspects of the dominant culture on the individual
- Help people develop alternative ways of being, acting, knowing, and living

Key Concepts of Social Constructionism
- Postmodernists assume there are multiple truths
- Reality is subjective and is based on the use of language
- Postmodernists strive for a collaborative and consultative stance
- Postmodern thought has an impact on the development of many theories

Key Concepts of Solution-Focused Brief Therapy
- Therapy grounded on a positive orientation --- people are healthy and competent
- Past is downplayed, while present and future are highlighted
- Therapy is concerned with looking for what is working
- Therapists assist clients in finding exceptions to their problems
- There is a shift from "problem-orientation" to "solution-focus"
- Emphasis is on constructing solutions rather than problem solving
Basic Assumptions of Solution-Focused Therapy

- People can create their own solutions
- Small changes lead to large changes
- The client is the expert on his or her own life
- The best therapy involves a collaborative partnership
- A therapist’s not knowing afford the client an opportunity to construct a solution

Questions in Solution-Focused Brief Therapy

- Skillful questions allows people to utilize their resources
- Asking “how questions” that imply change can be useful
- Effective questions focus attention on solutions
- Questions can get clients to notice when things were better
- Useful questions assist people in paying attention to what they are doing
- Questions can open up possibilities for clients to do something different

Three Kinds of Relationships in Solution-Focused Therapy

- Customer-type relationship: client and therapist jointly identify a problem and a solution to work toward
- Complainant relationship: a client who describes a problem, but is not able or willing to take an active role in constructing a solution
- Visitors: clients who come to therapy because someone else thinks they have a problem

Techniques Used in Solution-Focused Brief Therapy

- Pre-therapy change
  - (What have you done since you made the appointment that has made a difference in your problem?)
- Exception questions
  - (Direct clients to times in their lives when the problem did not exist)
- Miracle question
  - (If a miracle happened and the problem you have was solved while you were asleep, what would be different in your life?)
- Scaling questions
  - (On a scale of zero to 10, where 0 is the worst you have been and 10 represents the problem being solved, where are you with respect to

Key Concepts of Narrative Therapy

- Listen to clients with an open mind
- Encourage clients to share their stories
- Listen to a problem-saturated story of a client without getting stuck
- Therapists demonstrate respectful curiosity and persistence
- The person is not the problem, but the problem is the problem

The Therapeutic Process in Narrative Therapy

- Collaborate with the client in identifying (naming) the problem
- Separate the person from his or her problem
- Investigate how the problem has been disrupting or dominating the person
- Search for exceptions to the problem
- Ask clients to speculate about what kind of future they could expect from the competent person that is emerging
- Create an audience to support the new story
### The Functions of the Narrative Therapist

- To become active facilitators
- To demonstrate care, interest, respectful curiosity, openness, empathy, contact, and fascination
- To adopt a not-knowing position that allows being guided by the client’s story
- To help clients construct a preferred story line
- To create a collaborative relationship — with the client being the senior partner

### The Role of Questions in Narrative Therapy

- Questions are used as a way to generate experience rather than to gather information
- Questions are always asked from a position of respect, curiosity, and openness
- Therapists ask questions from a not-knowing stance
- By asking questions, therapists assist clients in exploring dimensions of their life situations
- Questions can lead to taking apart problem-saturated stories

### Externalization

- Living life means relating to problems, not being fused with them
- Externalization is a process of separating the person from identifying with the problem
- Externalizing conversations help people in freeing themselves from being identifying with the problem
- Externalizing conversations can lead clients in recognizing times when they have dealt successfully with the problem

### Deconstruction and Creating Alternative Stories

- Problem-saturated stories are deconstructed (taken apart) before new stories are co-created
- The assumption is that people can continually and actively re-author their lives
- Unique possibility questions enable clients to focus on their future
- An appreciative audience helps new stories to take root