

Experiential Exercises-Existential Approaches

[Name of the Writer]

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The Existential approach in counseling functions on the belief that “*people are free to make choices and hence should be held accountable for them*” (Corey, 2012). In this paper, a counseling session would be conducted with a client. The purpose is to follow the existential approach to counseling in therapy. In order to adequately counsel the client and to gain vital insight on the client’s mental health and issues; a series of questions would be asked following an existential approach to ascertain the client’s true state and feelings.

Client Information

Name: Jessica Prince

Age: 17

Gender: Female

Occupation: High School Student

Exercise

After a thorough introduction with the client (Jessica); she was informed about the purpose of the session. Every attempt was made to develop a good rapport with the client so that honest and rich information can be obtained. The client was briefed about the structure of the counseling session and ample time was given for her to respond to the questions.

Isolation/Aloneness**How comfortable are you with Isolation?**

When I am alone, I get a chance to take a closer look at my life. Although, due to my hectic class schedule, I do not get much free time. But, whenever I do, I think about my life's issues and my future plans. Often, I feel feelings of despair and helplessness.

Last Sunday, I woke up quite early and was lying in my bed. Everyone at my home was asleep. Being alone, I became really depressed and I did not like where my life stood at that point in time. Being alone that day did not make me feel good and made me sad.

What do you Do while Alone?

I stay quiet and I think. Often, I get depressed because I do not have answers to a lot of issues in my life.

Do you seek companionship because you are lonely?

Yes, being around people takes my mind off the life's issues.

Values**What do you do with your extra money?**

I usually take out time and buy something for myself.

What do you do with your spare time?

I try to do things which relax me like listening to music, watching a movie etc.

What do you choose to do?

Fun activities.

What do you give up or let go in order to do these things?

I do not try to go out of the way to make things happen. But, I have avoided family gatherings in the past to watch movies, go out with friends etc.

If you were given a million dollars to spend, what would you do with the money?

I would certainly get a chance to plan my life. Besides spending on myself, things I always wanted, I would invest in some business to gain financial independence and stability.

What specific things do you value?

I do value my relationships i.e. with my parents, siblings and friends. But, I do realize that I do not put in efforts to maintain and improve my relationships.

What would your life be like without them?

I would miss them and feel their absence in times of trouble.

What gives your life a sense of meaning and purpose?

I have not really thought about my purpose or future seriously. At the time I am not sure.

Freedom & Responsibility

What does personal freedom mean to you?

To me, personal freedom is the ability to do whatever I want whenever I want without having to think about the consequences.

Do you believe you are what you are now largely as a result of your choices, or do you believe you are a product of your circumstances?

I certainly am a product of my circumstances. I have gone through emotional trauma due to my family issues and troubled relationships with them in the past.

As you reflect on some critical turning points in your life, what decisions appear to have been crucial to your present development?

I think staying in a troubled relationship with my boyfriend was not a good decision. Being with him induced feelings of anxiety and low self esteem.

Are you able to accept and exercise your own freedom and make significant decisions alone?

It depends. I usually do not consult anything with my parents. I can if I want to. But, I think I have developed a habit of taking decisions on my own.

Do you attempt to escape from freedom and responsibility? If so, How.

I have issues being responsible. I have a strong tendency to avoid responsibility. I do not want to be in a situation where I am answerable.

Are you Inclined to give up some of your autonomy for the security of being taken care of by others? If so, what is this like for you?

It depends on the type of freedom I would have to live without. I do want people to take care of me and acknowledge my needs.

Freedom & Responsibility

Change does not occur in one's life until a person is able to accept responsibility. It continues to serve as a major determinant of one's cognitive growth. In order to mature, an individual must feel responsible for their actions.

Application as a Counselor

In my session using existential approaches to therapy with Jessica, I managed to gain an insight on the client's cognition and mental state. The existential approach allowed me to look within the client and ascertain the cause of issues in her life. The series of questions asked in the session revealed her attitude. She is a normal teenager who has experienced issues in her life. A bad relationship with her boyfriend has made her question everything i.e. the role of people in her life etc. She needs to find inner peace to be actually happy.

References

Corey, G. (2012). Gerald Corey and the Existential approach. *PSY 2013*. <http://pscycy2013.com/2012/05/existential-therapy.html>