

1. Details of Module and its structure

Module Detail	
Subject Name	Psychology
Course Name	Psychology 03 (Class XII, Semester - 1)
Module Name/Title	Nature and process of Psychotherapy - Part 1
Module Id	lepy_10501
Pre-requisites	Understanding and knowledge of different approaches to the study of personality and abnormal behaviour
Objectives	After going through this lesson, the learners will be able to understand the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Familiarise yourself with the basic nature and process of psychotherapy,Appreciate that there are different types of therapies for helping people.
Keywords	Psychotherapy, Therapeutic Relationship, Empathy, Unconditional Positive Regard, Professional Relationship, Clinical Formulation

2. Development Team

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In the preceding chapter, you have studied about major psychological disorders and the distress caused by them to the patient and others. In this chapter, you will learn about the various therapeutic methods that are used by psychotherapists to help their patients. There are various types of psychotherapy. Some of them focus on acquiring self-understanding.

Other therapies are more action-oriented.

All approaches hinge on the basic issue of helping the patient overcome her/his debilitating condition. The effectiveness of a therapeutic approach for a patient depends on a number of factors such as severity of the disorder, degree of distress faced by others, and the availability of time, effort and money, among others.

All therapeutic approaches are corrective and helping in nature. All of them involve an interpersonal relationship between the therapist and the client or patient. Some of them are directive in nature, such as psychodynamic, while some are non-directive such as person-centred. In this chapter, we will briefly discuss some of the major forms of psychotherapy.

Case 1 Rakesh, a class eleven student, was perturbed at the thought that his friends were able to study for long durations, thus completing the school syllabus as well as the syllabus taught at the coaching institute. He felt nervous and lacked confidence. Moreover concentrating on studies was difficult. Simple theorems and equations made no sense to him now. He tried to keep himself motivated but the fear of being dropped out of school and not having a good career made him apprehensive and uneasy. He tried to overcome this weak feeling but in vain. He continued to be hopeless and started talking to himself in the classroom. Furthermore, he started avoiding school for fear of being scoffed at. This was when his class teacher intervened and asked him to seek help. He was reluctant to discuss his problem, but finally was convinced by the class teacher to talk to the counsellor in the school. She told him that people with problems like him would feel better after therapy. Rakesh then consulted a therapist and realised that his problem was not as severe as he had warranted.

Yes ! Rakesh realised searching help can bring a change in the way we look at our problems.

Nature and Process of Psychotherapy

Psychotherapy refers to a variety of treatments that can help in alleviating emotional challenges, mental health problems and some psychiatric disorders.

Psychotherapy is a voluntary relationship between the one seeking treatment or the client and the one who treats or the therapist. The purpose of the relationship is to help the client to solve the psychological problems being faced by her / him. The relationship is conducive for building the trust of the client so that problems may be freely discussed. Psychotherapy can provide help with a range of problems from anxiety, depression and low self esteem to substance abuse and family disputes. Combined with medication it can play a role in treating psychotic disorders too. Psychotherapies aim at changing the maladaptive behaviours, decreasing the sense of personal distress and helping the client to adapt better to her/his environment. Inadequate marital, occupational and social adjustment also requires that major changes be made in an individual's personal environment.

All psychotherapeutic approaches have the following characteristics :

- i. There is systematic application of principles underlying the different theories of therapy,
- ii. Persons who have received **practical training** under expert supervision can practise psychotherapy and not everybody. An untrained person may unintentionally cause more harm than any good
- iii. The therapeutic situation involves a therapist and a client who seeks and receives help for her/his emotional problems (this person is the focus of attention in the therapeutic process), and
- iv. The interaction of these two persons — the therapist and the client — results in the consolidation/formation of the therapeutic relationship. This is a **confidential, interpersonal, and dynamic relationship**. This human relationship is central to any sort of psychological therapy and is the vehicle for change.

Case 2 Meena's elderly neighbor was very close to her. The lady would care for her by being very affectionate and even helping her with her homework. She loved going for a walk and knitting sweaters for children in the neighborhood. She even cooked special meals during festivals and other occasions. Everyone was very fond of her. However, for the past few weeks, Meena found that her aunt was absolutely quiet and lay confined to her room. She stopped interacting with the neighborhood children and would not be seen outside. She stopped knitting sweaters and cooking. Meena was concerned when she had not seen the lady aunt for many

days. She was inquisitive when her mother told her that this lady had gone to her native village. However, after several months I came to know that she was undergoing treatment from a therapist as she was suffering from severe depression.

All psychotherapies aim at a few or all of the following goals :

- (i) Reinforcing client's resolve for betterment.
- (ii) Lessening emotional pressure.
- (iii) Unfolding the potential for positive growth.
- (iv) Modifying habits.
- (v) Changing thinking patterns.
- (vi) Increasing self-awareness.
- (vii) Improving interpersonal relations and communication.
- (viii) Facilitating decision-making.
- (ix) Becoming aware of one's choices in life.
- (x) Relating to one's social environment in a more creative and self-aware manner.

Is counselling very different from Psychotherapy? What are the various problems addressed in counselling?

Therapeutic Relationship

The special relationship between the client and the therapist is known as the therapeutic relationship or alliance. It is neither a passing acquaintance, nor a permanent and lasting relationship. There are **two major components of a therapeutic alliance**. The first component is the contractual nature of the relationship in which two willing individuals, the client and the therapist, enter into a partnership which aims at helping the client overcome her/his problems. The second component of therapeutic alliance is the limited duration of the therapy. This alliance lasts until the client becomes able to deal with her/his problems and take control of her/his life.

This relationship has several unique properties.

It is a **trusting and confiding** relationship. The high level of trust enables the client to unburden herself/himself to the therapist and confide her/his psychological and personal problems to the latter. The therapist encourages this by being **accepting, empathic, genuine and warm** to the client. The therapist conveys by her/his words and behaviours that s/he is not

judging the client and will continue to show the same positive feelings towards the client even if the client is rude or confides all the 'wrong' things that s/he may have done or thought about. This is **unconditional positive regard** which the therapist has for the client. The therapist has empathy for the client. **Empathy** is different from sympathy and intellectual understanding of another person's situation. In sympathy, one has compassion and pity towards the suffering of another but is not able to feel like the other person. Intellectual understanding is cold in the sense that the person is unable to feel like the other person and does not feel sympathy either. On the other hand, empathy is present when one is able to understand the plight of another person, and feel like the other person. It means understanding things from the other person's perspective, i.e. putting oneself in the other person's shoes. Empathy enriches the therapeutic relationship and transforms it into a healing relationship.

The therapeutic alliance also requires that the therapist must keep strict confidentiality of the experiences, events, feelings or thoughts disclosed by the client. The therapist must not exploit the trust and the confidence of the client in anyway. Therefore, it is a **professional relationship**, and must remain so.

Activity 1

A classmate or friend of yours or your favourite character in a TV serial may have recently experienced a negative or a traumatic life event (e.g., death of a loved one, break-up of an important friendship or relationship) of which you are aware. Try to put yourself in the other person's shoes, try to experience how that person is feeling, what s/he is thinking and try to take her/his perspective of the entire situation. This will help you to understand better how that person is. The following list can help you identify certain aspects of his/her feelings.
feeling.

Which specialist is right for me ?

When the client searches the Yellow Pages or on Google, he/ she finds a broad array of Mental Health Specialists. It is challenging to find the right specialist to cater to the specific need of the person. These specialists differ in terms of qualifications, skills and training. It will help us to know that the following are various professional groups which cater to the therapeutic needs of a client.

Psychiatrist social worker: has advanced degrees in social work and sometimes have training focused in mental health problems.

Clinical psychologist: has a degree or a Phd in clinical psychology and would have completed training in psychological principles, methods and identification as well as treatment of psychological problems and disorders.

Psychiatrist: has a general medical degree, an MBBS and a training in psychiatry emphasizing treatment of psychological disorders with or without medication.

Psychoanalysts: can be psychiatrist and psychologist, social workers, mental health workers trained in psychoanalysis (as practised by Freud and his followers)

Psychiatric nurses: are nursing specialists employed in psychiatric wards of general hospitals. They are trained to help people with psychological problems.

Counselling psychologists: provide help ranging from specific learning difficulties to family disputes and careers problems.

Type of Therapies

Though all psychotherapies aim at removing human distress and fostering effective behaviour, they differ greatly in concepts, methods, and techniques. Psychotherapies may be classified into three broad groups, viz. the **psychodynamic, behaviour, and existential psychotherapies**. In terms of the chronological order, psychodynamic therapy emerged first followed by behaviour therapy while the existential therapies which are also called the third force, emerged last.

The classification of psychotherapies is based on the following parameters:

1. What is the cause, which has led to the problem?

Psychodynamic therapy is of the view that intrapsychic conflicts, i.e. the conflicts that are present within the psyche of the person, are the source of psychological problems. According to behaviour therapies, psychological problems arise due to faulty learning of behaviours and cognitions. The existential therapies postulate that the questions about the meaning of one's life and existence are the cause of psychological problems.

2. How did the cause come into existence?

In the psychodynamic therapy, unfulfilled desires of childhood and unresolved childhood fears lead to intrapsychic conflicts. The behaviour therapy postulates that faulty conditioning patterns, faulty learning, and faulty thinking and beliefs lead to maladaptive behaviours that, in turn, lead to psychological problems. The existential therapy places importance on the present.

It is the current feelings of loneliness, alienation, sense of futility of one's existence, etc., which cause psychological problems.

3. What is the chief method of treatment?

Psychodynamic therapy uses the methods of free association and reporting of dreams to elicit the thoughts and feelings of the client. This material is interpreted to the client to help her/him to confront and resolve the conflicts and thus overcome problems. Behaviour therapy identifies the faulty conditioning patterns and sets up alternate behavioural contingencies to improve behaviour. The cognitive methods employed in this type of therapy challenge the faulty thinking patterns of the client to help her/him overcome psychological distress. The existential therapy provides a therapeutic environment which is positive, accepting, and non-judgmental. The client is able to talk about the problems and the therapist acts as a facilitator. The client arrives at the solutions through a process of personal growth.

4. What is the nature of the therapeutic relationship between the client and the therapist?

Psychodynamic therapy assumes that the therapist understands the client's intrapsychic conflicts better than the client and hence it is the therapist who interprets the thoughts and feelings of the client to her/him so that s/he gains an understanding of the same. The behaviour therapy assumes that the therapist is able to discern the faulty behaviour and thought patterns of the client. It further assumes that the therapist is capable of finding out the correct behaviour and thought patterns, which would be adaptive for the client. Both the psychodynamic and the behaviour therapies assume that the therapist is capable of arriving at solutions to the client's problems. In contrast to these therapies, the existential therapies emphasise that the therapist merely provides a warm, empathic relationship in which the client feels secure to explore the nature and causes of her/his problems by herself/himself.

5. What is the chief benefit to the client?

Psychodynamic therapy values emotional insight as the important benefit that the client derives from the treatment. Emotional insight is present when the client understands her/his conflicts intellectually; is able to accept the same emotionally; and is able to change her/his emotions towards the conflicts. The client's symptoms and distresses reduce as a consequence of this emotional insight. The behaviour therapy considers changing faulty behaviour and thought patterns to adaptive ones as the chief benefit of the treatment. Instituting adaptive or healthy behaviour and thought patterns ensures reduction of distress and removal of symptoms. The

humanistic therapy values personal growth as the chief benefit. Personal growth is the process of gaining increasing understanding of oneself, and one's aspirations, emotions and motives.

6. What is the duration of treatment?

The duration of classical psychoanalysis may continue for several years. However, several recent versions of psychodynamic therapies are completed in 10–15 sessions. Behaviour and cognitive behaviour therapies as well as existential therapies are shorter and are completed in a few months.

Thus, different types of psychotherapies differ on multiple parameters. However, they all share the common method of providing treatment for psychological distress through psychological means. The therapist, the therapeutic relationship, and the process of therapy become the agents of change in the client leading to the alleviation of psychological distress. The process of psychotherapy begins by formulating the client's problem. Steps involved in the formulation of a client's problem are given in the table below:

Serial Number	Name of Therapy	Cause which led to psychological problem	How did the cause come into existence	Chief method of treatment	Nature of therapeutic relationship	What is the benefit to the client	Duration of treatment
1	Psychodynamic	Intrapsychic conflicts	Unfulfilled desires, aspirations of childhood	Hypnosis, free association, dream analysis	Directive, therapist interprets thoughts and feelings so that the client understands his/her intrapsychic conflict	Emotional insight, understands conflicts intellectually. Thus symptoms and distresses reduce.	10 to 15 sessions to several years
2	Behaviour	Faulty	Faulty	Identify	Directive	Behaviour	Few

	Therapy	learning of behaviours, cognitions	conditioning, faulty thinking, maladaptive behaviour	faulty learning, set up alternative contingencies, replace faulty thinking with rational thought	therapist is able to discern the faulty behaviour patterns and thought processes and finds the correct behaviour and thought for the client	and thought changes from maladaptive to adaptive one. Thus reduces distress and symptoms	month
3	Existential Therapy	Meaning of one's life and existence	Feelings of alienation, sense of futility of one's existence	Provide a non-judgemental, positive environment which is accepting. the therapist is a facilitator	Therapist provides a warm, empathetic relationship in which the client feels secure to explore the nature and causes of his/her psychological problems	Achieve personal growth through understanding of oneself, one's aspirations, emotions and motives	Few month

Steps in the Formulation of a Client's Problem

Clinical formulation refers to formulating the problem of the client in the therapeutic model being used for the treatment. The clinical formulation has the following advantages:

1. Understanding of the problem : The therapist is able to understand the full implications of the distress being experienced by the client.

2. Identification of the areas to be targetted for treatment in psychotherapy : The theoretical formulation clearly identifies the problem areas to be targetted for therapy. Thus, if a client seeks help for inability to hold a job and reports inability to face superiors, the clinical formulation in behaviour therapy would state it as lack of assertiveness skills and anxiety. The target areas have thus been identified as inability to assert oneself and heightened anxiety.

3. Choice of techniques for treatment : The choice of techniques for treatment depends on the therapeutic system in which the therapist has been trained. However, even within this broad domain, the choice of techniques, timing of the techniques, and expectations of outcome of the therapy depend upon the clinical formulation. Many times, the therapist may also use a variety of psychotherapeutic techniques which reflect an eclectic approach.

The clinical formulation is an ongoing process. Formulations may require reformulations as clinical insights are gained in the process of therapy. Usually the first one or two sessions yield enough clinical material for the initial clinical formulation. It is not advisable to start psychotherapy without a clinical formulation.

Activity

Gather information (kind of complaints patients report, age group, gender and socioeconomic status of patients) about some institutions you know which offer psychiatric/psychotherapeutic help.