



Reality Therapy: CHOICE THEORY

PICTURES OF REALITY

- The perceptions and images that individuals have of the world around them influences how individuals' needs are met.
- We cannot know reality itself but only our perceptions which we then can compare to others' perceptions of reality.

NEEDS

- To satisfy needs that we have, we develop pictures of our reality.
- These are perceptions of people, objects, or events.
- Glasser believes that the perceptions we use to satisfy our needs are primarily visual.
- The four basic psychological needs according to Glasser are *belonging, power, freedom, and fun*.

Belonging:

- The need to love, to share, and to cooperate with others.



Power:

- The need to control others and be better than others.



Freedom:

- How we wish to live our lives, express ourselves, and worship.
- Included in freedom are also choices about who we associate with, what we wish to read or write, and how we wish to create or behave.

Fun:

- Included are hobbies and things we do for amusement such as sports, reading, collecting, laughing, and joking.



Needs often conflict with each other.

Friendship/belonging vs. fun



CHOICE

- Often choices are made without awareness that we are choosing.
- According to Glasser, we choose to be depressed.
- He prefers to say a person is not *depressed* but *chooses to depress* or is in the act of *depressing*.
- These choices are made without awareness.
- However, Glasser believes individuals can control their choices to depress, to anger, or to be anxious.

BEHAVIOR

- For Glasser, behavior is how we act to deal with ourselves and the world around us.
- Individuals respond in very creative ways, sometimes very positive such as through music or art, and sometimes in negative ways such as through suicide or murder.

Total behavior:

- Refers to four components in reality therapy:

Doing, thinking, feeling, and physiology.

Doing:

- These are active behaviors... such as walking, talking, writing, or eating.

Thinking:

- Voluntary and involuntary thoughts, including daydreams and night dreams, make up this aspect of total behavior.

Feelings:

- Included are emotions such as happiness, sadness, anger, etc.

Physiology:

- Voluntary and involuntary mechanisms such as sweating, fight or flight stress responses, immune responses, etc. make up this aspect of total behavior.
- For Glasser, the key to changing behavior is in changing our doing, in particular, and also our thinking. These will bring about emotional and physiological changes.

CHOOSING BEHAVIOR

- Why would someone choose to depress, to be anxious, or otherwise to be miserable?
 - 1. By choosing to depress or anxietize, individuals can keep angering under control.
 - 2. People may choose to depress or anxietize to get others to help them.
 - 3. Choosing pain and misery can excuse an individual's unwillingness to do something more effective.
 - 4. Choosing to depress or anxietize can help individuals gain power or control over others.

CHOOSING BEHAVIOR

- Glasser sees hallucinations, delusions, and/or active behaviors as creative ones. These are behaviors that individuals choose (without awareness) to deal with various aspects of their lives.

THEORY OF REALITY THERAPY

- Reality therapy puts the responsibility of choosing goals and following through with them on clients.
- A good relationship with clients ensures that clients see that therapists are there to help them make changes which will make positive improvements in their lives.
- Techniques are directed toward changing behaviors and focusing on strengths and accomplishments.

GOALS OF REALITY THERAPY

- The basic goal of reality therapy is to help individuals meet their psychological needs for belonging, power, freedom, and fun.
- These goals are met in such a way that they do not infringe on the needs of others.
- The focus is on responsibility and choices.

ASSESSMENT

- Reality therapists ask their clients what they want, what they “really want.”
- A glib answer is likely to be challenged by reality therapists.
- They would want clients to consider their future.

PROCESS OF REALITY THERAPY

- When changing behavior and making plans to change that behavior, the therapist establishes him or herself as someone wanting to help with that process.
- A friendly approach that shows the counselor is concerned and wants to be helpful continues throughout therapy.
- That provides an opportunity to explore client wants, needs, and perceptions.
- This then further provides an opportunity to examine total behavior, especially doing.
- With that as a basis, plans can be made to improve behavior.
- Then commitment to plans can be obtained.

FRIENDLY INVOLVEMENT

- The therapist is open to talking about anything that the client and the counselor can consider changing.
- There should be an atmosphere of openness, optimism, and honesty.
- There would be more emphasis on what the client is doing rather than what the client is feeling.
- However, counselors do attend to the client's feelings and will not ignore them.
- Friendly involvement builds the relationship and establishes a commitment to counseling and planning.

EXPLORING TOTAL BEHAVIOR

- In exploring Jake's total behavior, which of the following questions are you most likely to ask?
 - 1. What did you do when your teacher asked you to get back into your seat?
 - 2. How did you feel when your teacher asked you to get back in your seat?
 - 3. What did you think when your teacher asked you to get back in your seat?
 - 4. How did you feel physically when your teacher asked you to get back in your seat?
- A reality therapist might ask about doing than thinking, feeling, or a physiological state.

REALITY THERAPY STRATEGIES

- Reality therapists do not emphasize specific techniques.
- However, they are more likely to use some techniques than others.
- Because of the focus on exploring and evaluating behavior, reality therapists are likely to ask many questions.
- They may also listen to client metaphors and make use of them when talking to clients.
- Because much of reality therapy focuses on making plans and commitment to them, using humor and being positive can be helpful in encouraging clients.
- Confrontation helps therapists deal with clients when they do not follow up on plans.
- Paradoxical techniques are ways to help clients when they may be resistant to carrying out plans.

QUESTIONING

- Questions can be used to help clients explore their wants, needs, and perceptions.
- They are also good approaches to understanding how the client thinks, to gather information, to giving information and making sure it's understood, and in helping clients take more effective control.

BEING POSITIVE

- Reality therapists take many opportunities to reinforce the constructive planning of their clients and their success in following through on the plans.
- Reality therapists may turn negative occurrences into positive ones by taking advantage of opportunities to communicate hope to clients.

METAPHORS

- When clients talk, they sometimes use metaphors such as “When I got caught, the whole world fell apart.”
- Therapists listen to those metaphors and respond to the metaphor such as, “What happened when the world fell apart?”

HUMOR

- Because humor is spontaneous and idiosyncratic, it can only occur at the moment so that it can fit in naturally.
- Humor is a part of friendly involvement as therapists can sometimes laugh at themselves which encourages clients to do the same.

CONFRONTATION

- When clients don't follow through on plans, confrontation is unavoidable.
- Not accepting excuses, being positive, and using humor can be ways of confronting clients.

PARADOXICAL TECHNIQUES

- When clients are reluctant to carry out plans or resist making plans, sometimes paradoxical techniques can be used.
- They are among the most difficult techniques for therapists to use because they are counter-intuitive.
- Reframing the way clients think about a topic can help them believe a previously undesirable behavior is desirable.
(like “spitting in the client’s soup”)
- Another paradoxical technique is to prescribe a symptom such as telling an anxious person to schedule times when they are anxious.