

**Assignment 3.2: Person-Centered Therapy Case Study #1**

Leslie A. Argenta

Department of Counseling, Wake Forest University

CNS 741: Theories and Models of Counseling

Dr. Isabel Farrell

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### **Assignment 3.2: Person-Centered Therapy Case Study #1**

**Counselor's name: Leslie Argenta**

**Setting: outpatient therapy – my office**

**Client's name: Bob, white male**

**Client's age: 26 years old**

**Estimated # of sessions required: 24**

**Theoretical Perspective: Person-Centered Therapy**

#### **Client History:**

Bob is the second of three boys. His father is a surgeon, and his mom stayed home. One brother is a stockbroker, and the other is a graduate student who plans to be a college professor. Bob's brothers would beat him up when he was young. His father was strict, but his mother was supportive. According to Bob, he only sees and contacts his mom. Bob was shy in high school. He was more outgoing in college and had some sexual relationships. Bob currently lives with his first long-term girlfriend, but they are in a cycle: not talk, fight, sex, and repeat. Bob tends to job hop and is currently unemployed.

#### **Presenting concerns:**

Bob stated that he came to therapy because he is currently not working, and he cannot find the motivation to find a new job. Bob wakes up with anxiety attacks at least twice per week, and feels sad or angry most of the time. Bob wants to stay home and be left alone. He believes that his single use of LSD in college (6 years ago) is the cause of his problems.

#### **Actual or core issues:**

Bob appears to have external conditions of worth (Murdock, 2017). He evaluates his experiences based on whether they are valued by his father and brothers, but his father and brothers have different values than Bob. Bob's dad pushed him to study medicine, while his brothers bullied him for being different/weak. Bob's feelings of depression are probably the

result of his negative self-concept which is a consequence of his excess conditions of worth (Murdock, 2017).

My theory is that Bob is an incongruent person. His self perception and his experiences are not aligned (Murdock, 2017). Bob has been trying to seek experiences that are consistent with his conditional self (making his father happy), but this conflicts with what Bob really wants to do. Bob's feelings of anxiety stem from his desire to defend the conditional self which is the self created by Bob's dad and brothers (Murdock, 2017).

### **Course of treatment and interventions utilized:**

I decided to use a person-centered therapy approach with Bob. Bullying contributes to mental health issues in adulthood, and I believe that the bullying Bob experienced from his brothers contributes to his anxiety attacks (Jones, 2020). Person-centered therapy has been successfully used on adults who were bullied in school (Jones, 2020). Although Bob was bullied by his family rather than his classmates, I am comfortable that person-centered therapy will help Bob overcome his family bullying situation as well. Person-centered therapy leaves participants feeling validated which should help Bob feel confident enough to change from an external locus of evaluation to an internal one.

I did not and will not formally diagnose Bob. It is not necessary, and I do not want him to feel judged. Judging someone, morally, diagnostically, or intellectually, is countertherapeutic. (Winslade, 2013). Instead, in our sessions, I am treating Bob with Rogers' core conditions of empathy, congruence, and unconditional positive regard (Kirschenbaum and Jourdan, 2005). I am utilizing these therapeutic conditions because they have been proven effective in therapeutic personality change (Kirschenbaum and Jourdan, 2005). I am offering Bob a safe place to speak about his childhood bullying and his anxiety. I am also withholding judgment of Bob's actions

and thoughts and trying to prize Bob for who he is. I am hoping that these factors will allow him to begin to evaluate himself internally and grow to become more congruent. A few sessions ago Bob expressed that people thought less of him because he was not working. Keeping with my consistent positive regard, I answered him, “I do not think less of you. I accept you ‘as is.’ It sounds to me that you are questioning whether you should think less of yourself for not currently having a job.” I want to free Bob from the threat of external evaluation (which people encounter in every part of their lives...home, school, work) (Winslade, 2013). I think Bob is worried about being judged at work, like he was judged at home. I think the right environment during therapy will help him overcome these external conditions of worth and facilitate his growth into his true authentic self (Winslade, 2013).

Most importantly, I am treating Bob as an equal during our sessions and using a very nondirective approach. I avoid giving advice or making interpretations (Murdock, 2017). For example, at our session yesterday, Bob asked me whether or not he should break up with his live-in girlfriend. I followed in Carl Rogers’ footsteps and answered, “This is the kind of very private thing that I couldn’t possibly answer for you, but I will try to help you work toward your own answer” (Rogers, 1965). I am trying to encourage Bob to take responsibility for himself rather than rely on any outside forces or experts.

**Counseling goals:**

My short term goal for Bob is for him to find the motivation to start looking for a job (and hopefully find one). I am hoping that providing a positive and empathetic therapeutic environment will enable him to increase his confidence in this regard. Once he is financially self-sufficient, he needs to consider his current girlfriend and living arrangement.

My long term goal for Bob is to move from incongruent to congruent. I hope to accomplish this by eliminating his conditions of worth based on his father's values. This would assist him in becoming his more authentic self. I want him to recognize that the center of responsibility lies within himself, not his father.

**Anticipated outcomes of counseling:**

I believe that after therapy, Bob will be more comfortable with himself. I anticipate that he will find a job he actually likes and stick with it for a while. I also hope that he gains the confidence he needs to break up with his girlfriend and find a companion he is truly happy with.

**References:**

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