

# Introduction

- ◎ The humanistic approaches to counseling include the following:
  - > Existential approach – intellectually dense and philosophical in nature
  - > Client-centered approach – unexpressed feelings
  - > Gestalt therapy – primary experience

# Introduction

- These three approaches are humanistic in orientation because of its beliefs in the power of people to heal themselves, especially in the context of a genuine, authentic type of relationship.
- Humanistic practitioner seeks to create a relationship with clients *that is warm, caring, genuine, and engaging.*

# Basic assumptions

- ◎ The primacy of experience
  - > Humanist seeks to understand personal experience in its essence
  - > Every individual is unique
  - > Human experience is irreducible
  - > Subjective, inner state should be honored and respected.

# Basic assumptions

## ◎ Growth orientation

- > Will People have the tendency to grow and actualize their potential.
- > Increased self-awareness and acceptance will help people in their journey toward greater fulfillment and productivity.

# Basic assumptions

- ◉ Free choice
  - > Rather than being deterministic, humanist believe that people can become almost whatever they choose.

# The Healing Relationship

- ◉ *Being in* - In order to experience pure empathy, you must leave your own self-centeredness and enter into the being of another.
- ◉ *Being for* – when times are tough, you are the one person they can count on for support and encouragement.
- ◉ *Being with* – “certainly means listening and hearing the other’s feelings, thoughts, objectives but it also means offering my own perspectives and views” (Moustakas (1986, p. 102))

# EXISTENTIAL THEORY

## ● Introduction

### Existential theory:

- Focuses on exploring themes such as mortality, meaning, freedom, responsibility, anxiety, and aloneness as this relate to a person's current strength
- The goal of existential therapy is to assist clients in their exploration of the existential "givens of life," how these are sometimes ignored or denied and how addressing them can ultimately lead to deeper, more reflective and meaningful existence.
- Clients are invited to reflect on life, to recognize their range of alternatives and to decide among them.

# EXISTENTIAL THEORY

- ◉ Existential therapy is grounded on the assumption that we are free and therefore responsible for our choice and actions.
- ◉ We are the authors of our own lives, and we design the pathway we follow.
- ◉ Basic existential premise: we are not victims of circumstance, to a large extent, we are what we choose to be.
- ◉ Existential movement stands for respect for the person, for exploring new aspects of human behavior, and for divergent methods of understanding people.



# EXISTENTIAL THEORY

- It helps people engage the dilemmas of contemporary life, such as isolation, alienation, and meaninglessness.
- It focuses on the individual's experience of being in the world alone and facing the anxiety of this isolation.

# Figures in Existential Theory

## ROLLO MAY

- He is one of the main proponents of humanistic approaches to psychotherapy
- He viewed that psychotherapy should be aimed at helping people discover the meaning of their lives and should be concerned with problems of being rather than with problem solving.
- He said that the real challenge is for people to be able to live in a world where they are alone and where they will eventually have to face death.

# Figures in Existential Theory

## IRVIN YALOM

- He developed an existential approach to psychotherapy that addresses four “givens of existence,” or ultimate human concerns: freedom and responsibility, existential isolation, meaninglessness, and death.
- He believed that these themes deal with the client’s existence, or being-in-the-world.
- He advocates using the “here and now” of the therapeutic relationship to explore the client’s interpersonal world.
- He believed that the therapist must be transparent, especially regarding his or her experiences.

# Figures in Existential Theory

## VICTOR FRANKL

- He believed that essence of being a human lies in searching for meaning and purpose.
- He believed that love is the highest goal to which human can aspire and that our salvation is through love. We can discover this meaning through our actions and deeds, by experiencing a value (love, achievements through work) and by suffering.
- He developed his own theory and practice of psychotherapy, which emphasized the concepts of freedom, responsibility, meaning, and search for values.

# CONCEPTS

Basic dimensions of human condition according to the existential approach:

## **Proposition 1: The Capacity for Self-Awareness**

- Freedom, choice, and responsibility constitute the foundation of self-awareness. The greater the awareness, the greater our possibilities for freedom. According to Corey (2013) increasing self-awareness is the main goal of counseling that includes awareness of alternatives, motivations, factors influencing the person, and personal goals.

# CONCEPTS

We increase our capacity to live fully as we expand our awareness in the following areas:

- ◉ We are finite and do not have unlimited time to do what we want in life.
- ◉ We have the potential to take action or not to act; inaction is a decision.
- ◉ As we increase our awareness of the choices available to us, we also increase our sense of responsibility for the consequences of these choices.
- ◉ We are basically alone, yet we have an opportunity to relate to other beings.

# CONCEPTS

## Proposition 2: Freedom and Responsibility

- A characteristic existential theme is that people are free to choose among alternatives and therefore lay a large role in shaping their own destiny. **Freedom** implies that we are responsible for our lives, for our actions, and for our failures to take action. While **existential guilt** is being aware of having evaded a commitment, or having not to choose.

# CONCEPTS

## **Proposition 3: Striving for Identity and Relationship to Others**

*The courage to be.* According to May in 1975 (as cited in Corey, 2013) courage entails the will to move forward in spite of anxiety-producing situation such as facing our death.

*The experience of aloneness.* The sense of isolation comes when we recognize that we cannot depend on anyone else for our own confirmation; that is, we alone must give a sense of meaning to life, and we alone must decide how we will live



# CONCEPTS

- *The experience of relatedness.* Humans depend on relationships with others and they want to be significant in another's world and they want to feel that another's presence is important in our world.
- *Struggling with our Identity.* The therapist challenges the client to begin examining the ways in which they have lost touch with their identity especially by letting others design their lives for them.

# CONCEPTS

## Proposition 4: The Search for Meaning

- One of human's distinct characteristics is the struggle for a sense of significance and purpose in life. This therapy can provide a conceptual framework for helping clients challenge the meaning of their lives and it can be done through asking the following questions to the client: "Do you like the direction of your life?" "Are you pleased with what you are now and what you are becoming?" If you are confused about who you are and what you want for yourself, what are you doing to get some clarity?"

# CONCEPTS

- *The problem of discarding old values.* Clients may discard traditional (imposed) values without creating other, suitable ones to replace. They seek new guidelines and values that are appropriate for the newly discovered facets of themselves.
- *Meaninglessness.* When the client perceives that the world they live in is meaningless. They may wonder if it is still worth it to continue struggling or even living. They may ask “is there any point to what I do now, since I will eventually die?” Meaninglessness in life can lead to emptiness and hollowness or a condition that Frankl calls the **existential vacuum**.

# CONCEPTS

- ◉ *Creating new Meaning.* Logotherapy is designed to help clients find meaning in life wherein the role of the therapist is not to tell the client what their particular meaning in life should be but to point out that they can create meaning even in suffering.

# CONCEPTS

## Proposition 5: Anxiety as a Condition Living

- *Existential Anxiety.* It is the unavoidable result of being confronted with the “givens of existence” —death, freedom, choice, isolation, and meaninglessness.. It arises as we recognize the reality of our mortality , our confrontation with pain and suffering, our need to struggle for survival and our basis of fallibility. It is also experienced as we become increasingly aware of our freedom and the consequences of accepting or rejecting that freedom.
- *Normal Anxiety.* It is an appropriate response to an event being faced and does not have to be repressed and can be used as a motivation to change.
- *Neurotic Anxiety.* In contrast with the normal anxiety it is about concrete things that is out of proportion to the situation and typically out of awareness, it can also immobilize the person.