Title page

Counselling theories

Behavioural theory and cognitive theory are common theories of counselling. Behaviourism emphasizes the study of behaviour and factors leading to those behaviours. Behaviourism and cognitivism reflect the permanent changes occurring in the mind of the individual that can be voluntary or involuntary. Experiences lead to a permanent change in individuals making some behaviours part of their personalities while eliminating some behaviours. The cognitive approach explains leaning taking place within individuals. Psychologists associate learning with modification of knowledge, skills, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours. Behaviourists like Skinner and Pavlov believes that environments lead to an exhibition of certain behaviours. The behavioural theory assumes the outcome of learning influencing behaviours. Some cases eliminate the free will of individuals while the environment becomes the reason for those behaviours. Pavlov emphasized more on the past sequence of learning and its relation to the formation of behaviours. Skinner associates personal experiences with the behaviours of individuals. Cognitive theory is more relates to the inner functioning of mind and inner activities. Cognitivism conveys the idea that what people learn remains in their memory becoming part of their knowledge. Language, environment, and events play a significant role in building certain attitudes and become part of human learning.

B.F. Skinner is more famous for his theories related to human behaviours and their psychology. Theory of behaviourism presented by B.F Skinner builds a relationship between actions and incentives. The psychologist identifies reward and punishment as the two most effective incentives capable of controlling the behaviour of individuals. He presents a real-life scenario considering the relationship between parents and children. The reward from parents will encourage the child to continue certain actions. The theory suggests that the child takes pleasure when the parents reward him, so he continues his behaviour. Similarly, he explains that if parents punish a child for certain actions, it will discourage him to repeat the same actions. Punishment becomes the feeling of dissatisfaction and pain thus encouraging him to give up his behaviour. Skinner promoted the idea that the behaviour of individuals depends on their personal and past experiences. He rejects the role of mental events in explaining human behaviour. Operant conditioning is another aspect explained by Skinner in 1938 and becoming visible in the situation where the child is living with the parents. His operant conditioning explains the real-life situation when the parents are concerned to teach a child the difference between right and wrong. Operant conditioning explains humans behaviour according to responses of neutral operant, reinforces, and punishers (Davis, Campbell, Hildon, Hobbs, & Michie, 2015).

Theory of behaviourism involves channelling that allow clients to eliminate negative behaviours and promote positive behaviours. He defines punishment as reinforcement that parents adapt to control their children. Punishment reinforces the child to give up on particular kind of actions or behaviours. Punishment leads to unpleasant experiences motivating child not to repeat it. He imprints the experience in his mind the actions that lead to punishments. The common example is when a parent spanks a child for damaging the painting he will store the event in his memory. The punishment becomes part of the child's personal experience thus remaining him not to repeat it in future. Punishment is also a negative reinforcement that decreases the probability of its occurrence again in future. Skinner also identifies punishment as response cost that eliminates negative or unwanted behaviours in children (Vargas, 2017). Response cost explains that the punishment does not add but removes the action. Another example of negative reinforcement is replacing the playtime with a timeout that will against lead to an unpleasant experience. The negative outcome of the event will influence the child to avoid the same negative actions again.

Cognitive theory is one of the widely recognized theories adopted for treating clients who are undergoing psychological issues. The theory stresses on building problem-solving attitude among clients. It was developed by a psychotherapist Aaron Beck in the 1960s. his central idea of creating the counselling theory was to help clients in changing their thoughts and overcoming negative feelings. The central idea is to replace negative thought patterns with positive ones and making an individual a better person. This theory stresses on problem-solving and the therapist stresses on the current situation of the person for identifying problems (Choudhury, Blakemore, & Charman1, 2006). This is a practical tool used by psychologists for assisting clients in dealing with anxiety, stress, personality disorder and an eating disorder. cognitive theory is used by therapists for explaining that human behaviours can be understood by thought processes. The basic idea is to help clients in identifying their maladaptive thought patterns and adopting ways for transforming them into constructive ones (Malone, Liu, Vaillant, & Dorene M. Rentz, 2016).

 The primary assumption of cognitive theory is that behaviours and emotions and the product of thoughts. Information processing is a description used for comparing brain functions and determining the problems. Cognitive behaviour theory presents many tools that are adapted for removing unwanted thought patterns. It is defined as, "cognitive processes, in the form of meanings, judgments, appraisals, and assumptions associated with specific life events, are the primary determinants of one’s feelings and actions in response to life events and thus either facilitate or hinder the process of adaptation” (Ringel & Brandell, 2011). The therapist who relies on this theory believes that the problematic thoughts of an individual are the result of preconceived assumptions. In counselling, the goals are to help him in understanding those assumptions and getting rid of them. The focus of the theory is on modifying the behaviour of individuals emotions. This allows patients to control the aspects around them by helping them in managing thoughts. This allows them to interpret the things of the surroundings in a positive manner.

The therapist who adopts cognitive behaviour theory suggests on transforming automatic negative thoughts. This is due to the fact that negative thoughts exacerbate and causes emotional difficulties for the clients that are visible in the form of depression, worthlessness and anxiety. These patterns of thinking are also expected to have adverse impacts on the moods of individuals. The counsellor stresses bringing the client to a point where he encounters his negative thoughts and decides to accept or reject them (Steinberg & Morris, 2001). when people become aware of their negative thoughts they dampen their moods and starts behaving oddly. The technique thus stresses on helping the client in creating possibilities for replacing negative thoughts with the positive ones.

Behavioural and cognitive theory are two commonly utilized theories for counselling. Both theories stress on transforming the behaviours of clients who are undergoing mental complications. However, the theories suggest different methods for attaining similar results. The emphasize in behavioural theory is on changing the behaviour by adopting the principle of reinforcement. It is based on the assumption that reinforcement encourages or discourage an individual to adopt or reject certain behaviours. On contrary cognitive theory stresses on moulding the thinking patterns of the client. It relies on the idea that negative thought promotes negative emotions and behaviours. The central idea is to replace negative thought patterns with the positive ones and contributing to the overall wellbeing.

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