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Comparison and Contrast between behavioral and psychotherapy

Behavioral therapy is a treatment that uses the principles of learning to change behavior and thinking. Behavioral therapy is one of the leading directions of modern psychotherapy. If at the stage of development of behavioral psychotherapy its definition was too narrow, and only techniques based on classical and operant conditioning were included in behavioral psychotherapy, then recently there is a risk of losing the specific meaning of the term due to its too broad understanding.

Behavioral psychotherapy should reduce human suffering and ability limitations to actions. Behavioral psychotherapy includes restructuring environment and social interaction and to a lesser extent the modification of somatic processes - with the help new biological interventions. Its purpose is mainly to build and strengthen the ability to act, to acquire techniques to improve self-control.

If at the early stages of its development, the term "behavior" in behavioral psychotherapy was understood everything, what has externally observable characteristics, now this concept includes emotional-subjective, motivational-affective, cognitive and verbal-cognitive manifestations. Thus, we can single out a narrower understanding of behavioral psychotherapy, based on the unity of theoretical positions and methodologically defined interventions resulting from them, and an extended interpretation, in which such a connection is noticeably lost.

Behavioral therapy is characterized by two main points that distinguish it from other therapeutic approaches. The first position: the basis of behavioral therapy is the model of learning - the psychological model, which is fundamentally different from the psychodynamic, quasi-psychological, model of mental illness. The second position: commitment to the scientific method.

Cognitive behavioral therapy is based on a cognitive model. This means that the focus is not on the subconscious, but on the patient’s mind, his thoughts and fantasies, which, unlike subconscious images, can be controlled. This is the main difference between cognitive-behavioral therapy and psychoanalysis. Our emotional state depends on how we perceive circumstances. The same events cause different reactions in different people. This means that the events themselves often have an impact on our lives, but the way we treat them. When a person experiences stress or other psychological disorders, he is inclined to see the situation in a darker tone. Cognitive-behavioral therapy helps people in time to pay attention to negative thoughts and assess how they relate to reality (David, Daniel, Ioana Cristea, and Stefan).

The next stage is the change of these thoughts and the improvement of the emotional state. Understanding these processes allows people suffering from depression, phobias or disorders to change their behavior and get rid of psychological problems. In accordance with the general orientation of the behavioral concept, the main goal of corrective actions is to provide new conditions for learning, i.e. development of new adaptive behavior or overcoming behavior that has become maladaptive. The goals of corrective actions in behavioral psych correction are formulated either as teaching new adaptive forms of behavior or as extinction and inhibition of the maladaptive forms of behavior available to the subject. Private goals may include the formation of new social skills, mastering the psychological methods of self-regulation, overcoming bad habits, relieving stress, getting rid of emotional trauma, etc (Dobson, Keith and David).

In the behavioral psycho-correction, the psychologist plays the role of a clearly defined teacher, mentor, or doctor. In accordance with the fixed role, he must be ready to take on the burden of the socio-psychological model, the role model he is acting in the eyes of the client, and also be aware of the specifics of the protective identification mechanism that plays an important role for the client in behavioral psycho-correction. The role of the psychologist is clearly fixed.

To conclude, the most important moment is the development of readiness to use new forms of behavior. Since the behavior of the applicant is mainly subject to correction, the task of correctional activity is the formation of optimal behavioral skills. And mental disorders of various types are considered as forms of non-adaptive behavior.

Works Cited

Dobson, Keith S., and David JA Dozois, eds. Handbook of cognitive-behavioral therapies. Guilford Publications, (2019).

David, Daniel, Ioana Cristea, and Stefan G. Hofmann. "Why cognitive behavioral therapy is the current gold standard of psychotherapy." Frontiers in psychiatry 9 (2018): 4.