

Dr. Rohrer's Approaches to Psychotherapy

I approach every new client as a person who needs help getting back in balance and back on track. As a new client you probably know your answers, but aren't paying attention to them, or fear or some other emotionally based issue blocks them.

I assume that you want to deal with your issues, find your answers and achieve your goals, even if your behavior doesn't always match that picture. Some people are so uncomfortable that they find excuses not to reach out, or to discontinue after a first or second session; they convince themselves that the issue isn't that bad or will be okay. Acknowledge to yourself that therapy may not be comfortable at first or at various times as you hit on emotionally charged issues. Breathe, relax and take one step at a time until you get resolution and life into balance and on track.

Approaches

I use several approaches -- one may work better than another and, as desirable, we can shift to another strategy. My initial approach is cognitive-behavioral (C-B). It is the most efficient way to get a sense of the way you deal with your issues, problems and concerns. C-B tools offer very effective strategies to help you make progress.

Behavioral: This focuses on positive behaviors that you want to continue or increase, and the negative behaviors that you want to discontinue or decrease. Clarifying your desired behavior, deciding on the best strategy, and then setting yourself up in the correct structure to create it. I find that traditional behavioral tools such as "Reminders" and strategies such as "Setting yourself up to be successful" are very effective.

Cognitive: Cognitive is a psychological word for thinking. Usually what you think causes what you feel. (Sometimes what you feel causes what you think.) If you think inaccurately or negatively, you will feel inappropriate or negative feelings. These inaccurate ways of thinking are called "Cognitive Distortions" and they are the foundation of Cognitive Therapy. If you learn to pay attention to what you are saying to yourself, you can change your negative thinking, and therefore how you feel. Research shows that this approach is successful in reversing depression, anxiety, pessimism, learned helplessness, etc.

Educational: Often there is a missing piece of information that you don't understand. Gaining this insight can be a significant part of what you need to be able to move through an issue. Education is an important part of therapy and I often offer outside resources, books, audiotapes and videotapes.

Positive Psychology: Traditional Psychology focuses on reducing pain and dysfunction and bringing the client up to a functional level. Positive psychology (PP) builds on that tradition and adds helping the functional client to become very functional, happy and successful. The goal is to develop the Full Life: Pleasure, Engagement and Purpose. PP offers many useful tools such as the Signature Strengths, the Gratitude Visit and the Three Blessings. On my “Home” page, under “Articles,” you can read what I have written on Positive Psychology.

Psycho-Spiritual: Spirituality is not about religion; it is about your connection with your Higher Power or God. I support my clients in their belief system and bring it into the work, as desired. For a spiritually grounded or spiritually hungry person this is an important aspect of personal work. The belief that there is a bigger, spiritual reality can help you accept difficult realities and encourages hope and meaning.

Structural Thinking: This approach maintains that your structure determines your outcome. If you are in the wrong structure for what you want to accomplish, no amount of effort, talent or desire will create it on a permanent basis. With the most effective structure, the path you need to take becomes the easiest one. Structural tension is a constant part of life experience. Learning to use Structural Thinking will allow you to be pulled toward your desired outcome.

Therapeutic Tools that I use when appropriate include:

Eye Movement Desensitization & Reprocessing: E.M.D.R. causes your unconscious to effectively process information. This advanced information processing therapy is highly effective, especially for anxiety issues. It has been used extensively for treating trauma. It is also effective in performance work. Along with the actual therapeutic experience, there are structured protocols that are designed to get maximum therapeutic effects. Client readiness assessment, choice of target, and client skill development takes place prior to the start of any actual therapeutic work. I have an introductory video that I loan clients prior to starting EMDR work.

Hypnotherapy: The therapeutic use of hypnosis can be very effective for exploring, processing and integrating information and experiences. It involves the guiding of your natural ability to imagine the past, present or future. Your naturally heightened suggestibility offers the opportunity to rework and reframe memories, as well as present and future experiences. Formal, traditional techniques are unnecessary. You would be asked to close your eyes, and allow yourself to be guided by my voice.

I hope that this has been helpful.

Tom