

Theoretical Approaches to Counseling

Psychotherapists with many years of experience usually have been trained in several different approaches so that they are able to bring their training and experience to bear on the problem presented by the patient. The providers at Enrichment Counseling and Assessment use strategies from three major approaches in treatment:

The psychodynamic approach focuses on the way in which the patient organizes his/her internal world. It examines early childhood experiences, issues of self-esteem, intimacy, how one feels about oneself, relationships with others, painful memories and experiences. This form of treatment examines the complexities of interpersonal relationships, including the developing relationship with the therapist. The relationship with the psychotherapist is very important for it serves as a vehicle for understanding how the patient relates to others, past and present, in his world.

The humanistic-existential approach focuses on understanding the patient's view of the world in the here-and-now and how s/he experiences his or her world. The emphasis is on current life situations, transitions, dilemmas, relationships, and how a particular world view affects one's perception of the world. This approach assumes that each person has a unique potential for growth and the task of psychotherapy is to facilitate the fulfillment of that human potential.

The cognitive-behavioral approach examines the patient's beliefs and behaviors. Individuals hold beliefs about themselves and relationships that affect behavior. Negative beliefs lead to maladaptive behaviors. By examining and challenging these beliefs with new information, subsequent new behaviors can change. This approach also examines behaviors directly so that new, more adaptive behaviors can be developed. This approach is especially beneficial for changing habits, learned behavioral patterns, phobias, and many forms of depression.

These approaches may be used interactively with the same patient depending on the issue that is under examination. Psychotherapy is a collaborative enterprise, with both the patient and the psychotherapist actively involved in the treatment. During the initial consultation, we will engage in an exploration of your goals for therapy and determine which treatment approach best meets your needs.