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Case Study Analysis: Individual Psychology

Jen is a 19-year-old woman who mistrusts men due to her relationship with her father, who left her and Jen's mother to create a new family with his mistress. Since Jen only began to explore relationships with men and she knows that her mistrust is linked to her childhood, individual psychology is the best-suited method for this patient. This paper will detail the concepts of individual psychology pertaining to Jen's case.

Presenting Concern

One of the week's methods applied to conceptualize Jen's case is Individual Psychology, developed by Adler. According to Robey et al. (2017), this is a short-term goal-oriented method, which is suitable for this case because Jen only has one concern, and she has already identified the potential cause of the issue. Hence, the goal of therapy would be to uncover Jen's attitudes towards men and help her develop a sense of trust. In that way, she will be able to date and communicate with men without fear of being abandoned. Moreover, Robey et al. (2017) state that Adler believed that the individual's happiness is not the result of the unconscious mind or the outside influences because "people have the power to change their own lives" (p. 282). Hence, this method will help Jen take control of her dating life and view her relationship with men constructively.

The client's basic concerns are her relationship with men and her inability to trust them. As Jen identified, due to the fact that her father left them, she has been feeling guilty. Moreover, she has lost a connection with her father. Currently, Jen wants to date men, but she sees her relationship with her father as an issue that does not allow her to experience these relationships fully.

Based on the identified concern, it is best to address Jen's view of herself and the men she dates. Adlerian theory primarily focuses on how a person fits into society and how potential feelings of inferiority or other negative thoughts affect this process (Robey et al., 2017). Hence, the first goal would be to determine if Jen feels inferior to the men she dates and whether her view of relationships can be adjusted to the one that would not obstruct her from dating.

Three Central Concepts

One central concept of the approach is social interest, which is the feeling of community and belonging with others. This theory is rooted in the individual's cooperation with others and their ability to maintain social relations (Robey et al., 2017). Hence, the main idea is to reorient the client's beliefs in a way that benefits their social interest. According to Rhinehart and Gibbons (2017), under this theory, individuals may experience isolation, self-absorption, and withdrawal that hinder their ability to date. Relationships with others are an evident social interest that can be hindered by negative perceptions and ideas.

This concept is relevant to working with Jen and understanding her case because she experiences an evident social struggle, which is communication with men. On the one hand, she wants to date, but on the other, she blames her father for her lack of trust in men. One example of how this theory can help is by reorienting Jen's focus and her belief that she cannot trust men towards a more positive attitude that allows her to communicate with the opposite sex freely.

The second concept of Individual Psychology is goals, which refers to the client's wishes and what they want to achieve through the therapeutic sessions. A common goal of this therapy method is to help clients understand their behavior patterns and thoughts (Yee, 2018). Additionally, this therapy method emphasizes the need to set specific targets that the client wants to achieve over the course of the sessions, which helps the therapist set the structure and focus of the sessions.

The concept of goals is relevant to working with Jen because she has clearly identified a problem that obstructs her from living her life as she wants, which is her mistrust of men. Jen wants to date and experience the interactions with others fully, which can be done by addressing her mistrust. Hence, the concept of setting goals and enhancing her understanding of her thoughts and patterns will help her improve her romantic life.

The final concept of this theory reviewed in this paper is the feeling of inferiority, which is an important element of psychosocial development. According to Rhinehart and Gibbons (2017), unlike Freud, Adler did not focus on the person's psychosexual development; and instead, he emphasized the psychological development of an individual in the context of society and social interactions. Moreover, with this theory, "individuals are not simply a number of parts but holistic beings who create meaning from the social contexts within which they are actively involved" (Rhinehart & Gibbons, 2017, p. 181). Hence, the interaction between a person and their social environment is central under this method, and the feeling of inferiority may obstruct proper communication.

This concept is applicable to Jen's case because her problem is rooted in the barriers she experiences when interacting with romantic partners. Hence, by exploring her feeling of inferiority in this aspect, she can learn to build meaningful relationships with others, regardless of her past negative experiences. Hence, her main struggle is her cooperation and communication with others, and because this method is rooted in the development of a person in the context of society, it is suitable for this client.

Strengths and Limitations

The two strengths of the Individual Psychology for working with Jen are the short-term nature of this method and the goal orientation. Jen only has one central concern that currently affects her life. Hence, she does not need prolonged therapy to improve her well-being. Moreover, goal orientation can help set a target, for example, "to learn to trust men" or "to understand that relationships end." Therefore, after several sessions, Jen will be able to receive the result she wants without having to attend therapy for months.

The two weaknesses of this approach are the lack of in-depth analysis and a need to choose a different method if Jen discovers other issues she wants to work on. Since this is a short-term therapy method, if, over the course of therapy, Jen uncovers other issues that may obstruct her personal life, there

will be a need to change the approach towards a more in-depth analysis of the unconscious mind. For example, Jen may discover that apart from not trusting men, she blames herself for the relationship failure and fears going on dates due to this.

Reflection

I can use the goal-setting method to understand my own relationship patterns and personal life since, through this analysis, I have learned that despite the popularity of psychoanalytic techniques, there are methods that can help rapidly improve one's life and well-being. According to Rhinehart and Gibbons (2017), "romantic separation can negatively affect their emotional state, social relationships, and understanding of personal identity" (p. 181). Prior to this assignment, I was aware that I am cautious about dating, and the cause may be linked to rejections I experienced in the past. However, this approach can help reorient my beliefs and help me feel more comfortable.

One challenge I encountered when trying to apply the goal-setting aspect to my personal life is understanding the most appropriate goal. For example, I want to develop more meaningful relationships with others. However, I think that I would need to consult a specialist to explore better my understanding of the meaningfulness and expectations from relationships. Hence, this theory is an excellent method to analyze one's social interests. However, it is challenging to apply it without the guidance of a specialist.

This approach is culturally responsive since the therapy focuses on the individual's place in society. According to Yee (2018), a sign of a good theory is its applicability across different issues and age groups, as well as its cultural responsiveness. Since this theory explores a person's place within a society, it is natural that Adlerian theory is suitable for working with a set of culturally diverse clients because of its flexibility and orientation on the person's place within a society. Moreover, the client's personal goals matter under this theory as well, which means that the therapist must consider how the individual's culture defines their social interactions.