

UNIT 1: ASSIGNMENT 2

The Integrative Model

2 Understand what is meant by the integrative model

2.1 Explain the concept of the integrative model

2.2 Assess the advantages and disadvantages of the integrative model

Students should write an essay explaining the concept of integrative model, and assessing its advantages and disadvantages.

Word count: 600 minimum.

The integrative model is an approach to counselling which draws upon a myriad of different theoretical practices, dependent upon the appropriate response to the individual client's unique case.

The integrative model views the client holistically, and combines different techniques within their counselling journey. The online Counselling Directory suggests that the integrative approach is a conglomeration of "affective, behavioural, cognitive, and physiological systems... as well as addressing social and spiritual aspects" (Counselling Directory, no date). By combining different elements, the client's health (physical, emotional and mental) is expanded to its fullest potential; the integrative model assumes that there should be a more idiosyncratic response to clients.

The integrative approach encourages the client to react spontaneously and authentically to different moments, without the persuasion of preconceptions or pre-considered responses. This openness allows the client the opportunity to recognise thought patterns, behaviours or triggers which may be detrimental to their health. By taking this holistic view, integrative therapy encourages a healthy relationship between the client's body and mind and empowers the client to work towards goals which will drive them towards greater fulfilment in different facets of their life.

Fundamental to the integrative approach is the premise that there are a myriad of ways in which the human condition can be understood; thus, the integration of ideas can operate through different therapeutic approaches such as humanistic, psychoanalytic and cognitive behavioural therapies (CBT). For example, if an integrative therapist works with a client who suffers from panic attacks, they may want to encourage the client to recognise the thought patterns which might be informing the adrenal response which is an element of CBT. Once the client begins to consciously replace negative automatic thoughts with positive thoughts, the therapist may then begin to employ psychoanalytic techniques to consider whether there was an overarching trigger for anxiety within the client's past.

Like person-centred therapy, integrative therapy values the client and the counsellor as equals, which empowers the client to be the expert and take a guiding role in exploring their own thought processes and behaviours.

The biggest advantage of integrative therapy is its holistic view of the whole individual. It has been recognised as being particularly effective for those who want to overcome patterns of thoughts which are triggering behavioural responses: anxieties, phobias, depression e.t.c. Integrative therapy has also been recognised to help children with autism and other learning difficulties.

The idiosyncratic nature of integrative therapy is also advantageous for those who wish to receive a more in-depth counselling experience. As a result of the multi-faceted approach to the individual, integrative therapies typically require a big time commitment from the client which will not be appropriate for those seeking a 'quick fix'. However, it must be noted that the length of the therapy depends entirely on the client, the material they are raising and the goals that are being set.

Rory Lees-Oakes, after discussing the benefits of the integrative model, also draws awareness to how the integrative model can appear to the client if not blended with the appropriate thoughtfulness: 'eclectic' and 'confusing' (Lees-Oakes, 2017). CPD opportunities are available for those wishing to understand the dangers of the 'pick'n'mix' effect which becomes apparent when a counsellor is not aware of the implications of drawing upon different therapeutic approaches without the appropriate blending (MM, 2014). Rather than subject the client to a myriad of confusing and potentially conflicting approaches, it is advisable that the counsellor bases their approach within one modality (such as person-centred) and then draws upon other elements (Anon, 2013). By being grounded in this way, ideas communicated to the client should seem more directed, considered and balanced.

References

Anon. (2013) 'An Evaluation of Counselling Theories' Accessed at: <http://expertresearchers.blogspot.co.uk/2013/08/an-evaluation-of-counseling-theories.html> Accessed on: 09.03.18

Counselling Directory (no date), 'Integrative Therapy', Accessed at: <https://www.counselling-directory.org.uk/integrative-therapy.html> Accessed on: 09.03.18

Lees-Oakes, Rory (March 2017) Podcast: '039 – First Sessions with Clients – Integrative versus Eclectic Therapy – Measuring Client Progress' Accessed at: <https://counsellingtutor.com/039-first-sessions-clients-integrative-versus-eclectic-therapy/> Accessed on: 09.03.18

MM (2014) 'The Dangers and Disadvantages of an Integrative Approach' Accessed at: <http://integra-cpd.co.uk/event/20150215-the-dangers-and-disadvantages-of-an-integrative-approach/> Accessed on: 09.03.18