

The Healing Process of Psychotherapy

BY TRINE PLESS-RASMUSSEN

Is psychotherapy only for crazy people? We all have issues or have faced difficult situations in life. As a therapist, what I first experience when I meet with a new client is respect. Respect for the fact that they have the courage to disclose and discover themselves.

In Chinese, the word “crisis” translates to “danger and opportunity.” Crisis is merely one of many topics that can be dealt with in a psychotherapeutic process. Other topics might include: adapting to new situations, depression, anxiety, loneliness, stress, abuse, sexual dysfunction, relational complications, and the loss of a loved one.

Psychotherapy is referred to as a process because the habits, thoughts, and emotions we have developed over a lifetime cannot be changed overnight. Many people, who have spent lots of time and energy pushing away potential sources of their stress, experience a feeling of relief after only their first session. The first session can be seen as the beginning of a journey – a journey of exploration into one’s inner life in the past and present - to become better equipped for the future.

It is impossible to explain the complex human structure by one single component, and therapeutic approaches should be used in a flexible manner – according to the needs of each individual. This approach is founded on the assumption that our basic structure was developed in the past; thus, looking back can release an individual from his or her “fixations” or feelings of being stuck. A person may have felt sad for a long time without being able to address the source of his or her sadness. In therapy, connections and associations can dissipate the blurred “porridge” of sadness by linking specific past events to current feelings. Understanding is the first step on the path to change.

Acknowledging the intent to change may seem very abstract, and some clients feel the urge to “do something.” Helpful techniques, such as Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), offer structured and concrete tools to work with. These tools might include homework exercises, hierarchies, coping scripts, communication skills, thinking skills, or behavioral skills.

Sensitive topics require a respectful, non-judgmental, and professional environment. This is where the Humanistic Approach comes into the picture. Carl Rogers, a leader in

this field, believed each individual to be the expert in his or her own life. The therapist’s role is to create a safe therapy environment, using his or her knowledge and training to support the client in their process.

Finally, it is important to remember that psychotherapy is more than pain and pathology. It is also about offering acceptance, exploring resources, gaining skills, providing motivation, and helping to nurture pleasure in life.

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Do you think that you have tried everything to relieve yourself from your headaches, back or neck pain? Have you ever considered an osteopathy treatment as a medical alternative?

Marshall Gabin recently joined the team of Body & Soul Medical Clinics. As a registered (NZ) osteopath with more than 18 years experience in employing manual therapies, he is promoting the healthy functioning in a person by correcting mechanical and structural imbalances in the body.

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