

CHAPTER 12

Treatment : Individual Psychotherapy

Individual psychotherapy refers to professional efforts to correct mental disorders of the individual in order to rehabilitate him in society. The patient is helped by some professional worker to gain an understanding of his problems and to make an effort to solve them.

The earliest programmes for treating mental disorders were directed only to the most severely disturbed people and the methods of treatment were very crude.

With the development in psychological and biological healing arts, more specifically since the beginning of the present century, more systematic and scientific techniques have been evolved to treat all types of mental disorders ranging from anxiety to psychosis.

The treatment of mental disorders is primarily meant to alleviate suffering, to eliminate symptoms, to increase adjustive effectiveness and to derive maximum satisfaction from life and to develop insight in the patient. This chapter deals with the treatment of mental disorders with the help of different types of psychotherapies.

Definition of Psychotherapy

The term psychotherapy covers a wide range of treatment procedures which have been developed since the last quarter of the 19th century. During this period several techniques such as suggestion, advice, direction, hypnotism, and chemicals, etc. were used to cure mental disorders. The early 1900s witnessed a tremendous expansion of psychoanalysis and by 1940 several variations of psychoanalysis appeared on the scene. In the

Treatment : Individual Psychotherapy

185

Last four decades several methods within the ambit of psychotherapy have been developed for the treatment of mental disorders, e.g., the humanistic-existential approach, behaviour therapy, transactional analysis, etc. The common characteristic of all the methods is that they deal with psychogenic illness by psychological methods. They aim at modifying the patient's personality and changing his social and material environments for proper adjustment in society so that the individual can develop his potentialities maximally and utilize them for his own benefit as well as for that of society. In a basic sense psychotherapy is a process of emotional re-education of the patient.

According to Lazarus, Psychotherapy "is basically a face-to-face situation in which one person agrees to provide assistance to a patient or group of patients who have sought help with their problems of living." Psychotherapy can also be defined as guidance provided by a professionally trained person to a mentally disturbed person or group of persons.

Objectives of Psychotherapy

According to Thorpe and associates, the objectives of psychotherapy can be classified into two categories : immediate and ultimate.

A. Immediate Objectives

These objectives are generally meant to provide immediate relief from the mental disorders and the ultimate objectives are aimed at uprooting their causal factors and to develop insight in the patient to enable him to rehabilitate himself in his environment. Following are the important immediate objectives :

1. Elimination of symptoms

The elimination of symptoms of maladjustment does not mean that the basic cause of maladjustment has been cured but there certain situations where immediate elimination of the symptoms is needed by the patient. For example, a stenographer

who develops a contracture of the left hand, needs immediate removal of the symptoms and an insomniac needs immediate relief from his disease.

2. Release of repression

The second important immediate objective of psychotherapy is to release the repressed emotional feelings of children, adolescents and adults by using vicarious aggressive actions such as use of play materials for children and use of football, bowling, debates, etc. for adolescents and adults.

3. Promotion of efficiency

Maladjusted individuals are not as a rule as efficient in either their social or occupational activities as an evaluation of their potentialities would lead one to expect. It is one of the immediate objectives of psychotherapy to aid them in the release of inhibitions which prevent the use of such capacities.

4. Adaptation to environment

Man has survived because of his unique capacity to modify the environment to suit his needs and also the capacity to adapt himself to the requirements of his environment. Maladjusted people become rigid and prejudiced to make such adaptation but the objective of the psychotherapy is to develop flexibility in the patients so that they may make adjustment to both the material and social demands of the environment. The therapist must develop insight into the patient regarding the nature of social relationship and also intelligent discrimination in dealing with interpersonal problems.

5. Satisfactory physiological functioning

Another important immediate objective of psychotherapy is the attainment of proper physiological functioning by the patient. Many patients suffer from physical dysfunctions such as lack of appetite, insomnia, hypertension, headache, ulcer, chronic fatigue, etc. which need the immediate attention of the psychotherapist.

Treatment : Individual Psychotherapy

B. Ultimate Objectives

1. Removal of causes

The ultimate objective of psychotherapy is to remove the root causes of the mental disorders. The therapist helps the patients by developing feelings of security, personal adequacy and of acceptability in the eyes of the individuals who are important in the eyes of the patient.

2. Development of insight

Development of insight into his problems helps the patient to understand the true nature of his defense mechanisms and makes it possible for him to secure his needed status through more desirable channels.

3. Continuous personal adjustment

Psychotherapy is not meant for the purpose of assisting a patient in solving a particular behaviour problem. It is a life-long process. The objective is to bring about changes in the personality of the individual conducive to the continuous solution of recurring problems of a psychological nature. It does not seek only immediate relief from mental disorder but aims at paving the way for a programme of adaptation to the requirements of both personal needs and the social structure involved which will be as permanent as possible. It is the objective of psychotherapy to relieve the patient permanently of insecurity and inadequacy in favour of desirable activities.

4. Growth in social adjustment

The long term objective of psychotherapy is also to help the individual to adapt to group life by developing in him self-confidence and willingness to work consistently for self-improvement. The patient after cure of mental disorders should improve interpersonal relationships for his social growth by

participating in social activities, games, plays, etc. It is the therapist's aim to enable the patient to make mutually satisfying adjustment to his home, friends and his community.

5. Attainment of personal goals

Psychotherapy promotes the fullest development of the potentialities of the patient. It helps the patient to formulate positive personal goals in accordance with his capabilities in order to help him to adjust adequately in his social environment.

A. The following Psychotherapeutic Methods will be described.

I. Psychodynamic Therapies

II. Behaviour Therapy

III. Humanistic-Existential Psychotherapies

(a) Client-centred therapy

(b) Existential therapy

(c) Gestalt therapy

(d) Transactional analysis

(e) Rational-emotive therapy

(f) Reality therapy.

(I) PSYCHODYNAMIC THERAPIES

Psychodynamic therapies cover a wide range of approaches which emphasize the discovery of various causal factors that impair the proper functioning of the individual to work effectively in his environment. They refer to the forces or influences that account for one's actions and reactions. All psychodynamic therapies share the following major and common unifying and interrelated features :

- (a) All employ talking as the primary instrument of treatment. It is the patient who determines what he wants to talk about.

- (b) The professional attitude of the psychotherapist rather than his personal attitude is important in the treatment of mental disorders.

- (c) Insight is the basic principle of all Freudian therapies. The therapy assumes that the patient has not been able to follow Socrates's injunction "Know Thyself". Aspects of the patient's unconscious childhood life give important clues for treatment.

- (d) Symptoms are secondary surface manifestations of some basic underlying neurotic process. To treat the patient it is important that he must discover the nature of his misconceptions about himself and of the faulty beliefs which guide his life course inappropriately.

- (e) As a patient starts to explore his problems, an outpouring negative pent-up feelings occurs. Freud called this process of outpouring as "Catharsis" which helps in cleaning the inner-self of the patient.

Freudian Psychoanalysis

Sigmund Freud was the first psychoanalyst to develop a method of therapy for the treatment of mental disorders. The basic concepts of Freudian therapy are catharsis, resistance, transference, and re-education which will be briefly described in the subsequent pages.

Psychoanalysis has made several important contributions to the exploration of the personality of an individual. Important among these are : an individual's mental life can be understood and this understanding can be applied to cure human sufferings. Human behaviour is governed by unconscious motivation. Early childhood experiences have a profound effect on later development stages. This theory has provided a meaningful framework for understanding the ways in which an individual attempts to cope with anxiety by postulating defense mechanisms. It offers ways of tapping the uncon-

cious through the analysis of dreams, free association and transference.

Resistance

The first essential step in psychoanalytic therapy is that the patient talks about his problems. The patient will usually begin with a story that he is prepared to tell, one that is coloured by his self deceptions. It often consists of descriptive intellectual statements. It involves a flood of emotions that are forms of resistance.

Resistance is considered to be an inevitable process in psychoanalysis by which patients protect themselves from painful discoveries about the real nature of their problems. The patient is reluctant and seems to resist such help by refusing to expose impulses, attitudes and experiences which are responsible for his problems.

The process of resistance manifests itself in many ways. For example, the patient may protest at a therapist's interpretation to avoid talking about certain matters, leave treatment, or show inability to associate freely. The process of resistance is unconscious. If the resistance is stronger, the wish to remain in treatment decreases and the patient may leave. One of the major tasks of Freudian therapy is to overcome the patient's resistance but this cannot be done by direct attack. The psychoanalyst must be careful in dealing with the patient. He should not press the patient too hard to break his resistance.

Transference

It has been observed that as the therapy proceeds, the patient develops certain emotional attitudes towards the therapist. He or she may show evidence of an emotional attachment or perhaps of hostility toward the psychoanalyst. Patients sometimes express resentment about the time the therapist spends

Treatment : Individual Psychotherapy

with other patients, solicit affection and approval from the therapist, seek more attention, criticize the therapist for indifference or give other evidence of a childish emotional reaction.

Generally Freudians take the view that the patient transfers to the therapist childhood emotions that he has experienced toward his parents.

According to Freud the seeds of neurosis are planted in the very earliest years of childhood. He considered it essential that the pathological emotional relationship of childhood be reenacted via transference in order to be understood and corrected in therapy. It has been established by the treatment of mental disorders that psychoanalysis is suitable only for those neurotic disturbances where the transference neurosis is possible.

The transference relationship may work in both directions. The analyst may develop a counter-transference reaction with the patient. The analyst transfers his emotions to the patient. Counter-transference may interfere with the process of objective analysis of the problems of the patient.

Re-education

Re-education is one further step in which patients are helped to learn new and more adequate ways of dealing with the neurotic conflicts before they can function successfully. They must apply the insight they have gained in a wide variety of situations. The patient learn new ways of behaving. The basic purpose of Freudian Psychoanalysis is to aid the patient in developing general resources with which to solve any emotion-producing problem. The patient's general capacity to make satisfactory adjustment to new as well as to old interpersonal problems must be enhanced.

Techniques of Psychoanalysis

Generally psychoanalysis employs the techniques to explore the unconscious structure of the personality of the patient ; Free Association and Dream Analysis,

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The principal procedure in psychoanalysis is free association. This method is used to explore the content of the unconscious as well as for encouraging resistance and promoting transference. The free association method is employed by having the patient lie on a couch where he cannot see the analyst, relax and tell everything that comes to his mind, no matter how embarrassing or foolish it may be. The relaxation and reclining position tend to minimize the influence of repression and to induce attitudes of submission and dependence. The patient must also be seen frequently if the necessary data for interpretation by the analyst are to be available. The responses of the preceding day should be fresh in the patient's mind as he endeavours to talk freely.

Maslow and Mittelmann commenting on the method say: "The analytic procedure has unique features which are offered in no other situation. The patient learns to behave, speak and think in a way which is possible at no other time—he is encouraged to describe to the analyst, another human being, all his attitudes towards him; he is encouraged to reveal feelings which under ordinary circumstances are conventionally completely hidden; finally, in talking, he has to discard shame, embarrassment and his desire to maintain a good impression. It is due to the uniqueness of procedure which incidentally, the patient learns gradually, that remarkable data are revealed and that the treatment can be so successful."

Psychoanalysts are insistent that in free association everything must be told because one association leads to another and father into the unconscious. These associations are, of course, only disguised expressions of the repressed urges of early childhood.

The analyst must use his imagination in interpreting the associations of the patient. He must penetrate and recognize the repressed complexes that are unintelligible to the patient.

Dream Analysis

The second important technique is dream analysis. According to Freud, dreams manifest our repressed needs and desires. Dreams and their analysis may serve as an important source of valuable information regarding the unconsciousness. The dream content in some instances contains a universal symbol readily recognizable by the analyst. The dream is not, of course, interpreted literally for its associations. The latent content which can be penetrated only by an expert analyst, contains the real meanings needed for the solution of the patient's difficulties.

The analyst's interpretation of the dream thus plays an important part in the free association process and may be considered as part of the therapy. Dream analysis is designed to break down resistance by pointing out to the patient its association with infantile complexes.

The individual is said to be well in the way to adjustment when he understands the infantile nature of the causes of his symptoms.

The theory of dream analysis is based on the assumption that once the libido has been freed, the ego will be sufficiently strong to enable the patient to dispense with his symptoms and to solve his problems.

Steps in Psychoanalysis

Generally, the following steps are followed in psychoanalytic therapy.

(1) Establishing rapport : The psychoanalyst establishes perfect rapport with the patient.

(2) Structuring the situation : After establishing rapport, the psychoanalyst prepares the room, furniture, curtains, etc. where the sessions are to be held.

(3) Explanation of procedure : The psychoanalyst explains clearly what is to be done by the patient. Free association and dream analysis are explained.

(4) Resistance : When the first resistance appears, the analyst helps the patient to overcome it. The patient begins to talk about his problems, a process called catharsis.

(5) Transference : When the patient brings back his repressed childhood emotions that were directed toward his parents and transfers these to the analyst, transfer occurs.

(6) Insight : Gradually, the patient removes the group of emotions and gets insight into his problems.

Neo-Freudian Concepts

Neo-Freudian views have influenced the psychodynamic therapy theory and practice. They have greatly emphasized the importance of social forces that shape the person. Adler who was once an associate of Freud broke with him in 1911. He was critical of Freud's emphasis on sexual drives as the mainspring of neurosis and his emphasis on the discharge and blockage of instinctual drives in the formation of personality.

Adler emphasized the inevitable helplessness of the child and the feelings of inferiority that were fostered by this helplessness. The neurotic solution was to compensate for the inferiority feelings by striving for power. According to Adler, in order to be healthy, the person has to develop the inherent human need to involve oneself unselfishly with others, to identify with the group, and to express a healthy social interest. He believed that a person has the urge to grow and to strive for perfection through social identification. In Adler's psychotherapy more attention is given to the 'persons' conscious intentions and sense of the future than to the past and to unconscious forces. Individuals are encouraged to give up their neurotic style of life.

Carl Jung agreed with Freud that human beings' animal instincts had to be discharged or gratified for psychological health but like Adler he emphasized much more than Freud the struggle of the individual to develop in a positive direction to become self-actualized by which he meant achieving harmo-

Treatment : Individual integration of personality.

Otto Rank, an active striving of order to live in the human life is a struggle on one hand to be in the other hand to be in the struggle between adjustment, and struggle. He is inevitable separation.

Erich Fromm showed role of personality development in social character lives. According to him, the synthesis of the environment with the individuality which they feel isolated and distinctively human is to try to escape and to submit to the environment as largely human needs.

According to him, mental disorder and helplessness in the family relationship disturbs the family relation.

Stack Sullivan the study of human