Behavioral versus Developmental Practice

NACCW Biennial Conference 2017, Kimberly

Behavioral Ideas

► Behavior can be increased or decreased through reinforcement and punishment.

► Behavior will gradually become self-reinforcing when its usefulness is acknowledged.

► External control attempts should be focused on target behaviors that need to change.

► The external control agents should be consistent and predictable.

Behavioral Focus

► Typically, youths arrive at the treatment program with specific problem behaviors.

► These behaviors are identified as needing to be changed or reduced.

► External control, in the form of reinforcements and punishments, will be applied to the target behaviors.

► Strengths to be increased and problems to be decreased are highlighted in the treatment plan.

► Strengths are behaviors, often determined by the program staff.

Behavior Change

▶ Behavioral approach states that as your behavior changes, you will gradually change your attitude and beliefs.

▶ External control needs to be reduced so that the behavior can become self reinforcing.

▶ The logical and natural consequences of the changed behavior will reinforce it.

▶ Changing attitudes and beliefs will affect other behaviors positively.

Developmental Ideas

- Development occurs in stages that are predictable and sequential.
- Successfully mastering each stage in order creates more complexity and maturity in the person.
- Less complex persons are more ego-centric and rigid.
- Maturity involves increasing "other–awareness" and flexibility.
- Development includes physical, cognitive, moral and social areas.
- People continue to develop throughout life.

Cognitive Ideas

▶ Until a person reaches 25, their thinking is more rigid and ego-centric than someone older (Piaget).

▶ Even as an adult, your thinking stages continue to develop (Kegan).

▶ There are limitations and logical misconceptions that are unique to each stage.

▶ Under 7 years, 7 -12 years, teens, young adults.

Moral Thinking

▶ Abuse and neglect seriously limit moral reasoning.

▶ Good and bad determined by punishment and reward.

▶ Social awareness limitations impede learning the Golden Rule.

▶ Morally correct behavior is different at various levels of development.

Personal Maturity

- Social awareness and maturity change as you age.

- Erikson starts with trust, then power, self-control, competence, identity, etc.

- A method to assess both internal and external logic about reality. Both what is important and how I understand it.

- The stages occur in order and cannot be skipped.

Vygotsky

- Learning occurs through social influence.

- When I am willing to be influenced by others and learn from them, then the MKO (more knowledgeable other) is useful.

- When I feel safe enough to risk trying new things, then I am able to benefit from the ZPD (zone of proximal development).

Logical Reasoning

- My development limits my logical thinking.
- Early developmental stages are ego-centric, no awareness of others' needs.
- I can act differently, but I do not have a good reason to do so.
- I am also afraid to ask for help, too vulnerable.

Relational Practice

- Creating a safe relationship, slowly and carefully, will begin the process of "other-awareness" which unlocks the room the other person is stuck in.

- When I can see the logic in caring about other people, all my developmental dynamics start to improve.

- My ability to be a MKO and use the ZPD rests on having a safe relationship with you.

No Relationship, No Development

- I can get you to act differently by using external control, but there is little developmental change.

- A developmental lens helps me to connect with you (have a mutual respectful relationship).

- I can avoid doing things that push us apart by knowing your logic.

Developmental and Relational CYC Practice

▶ Accurate empathy is essential to creating a safe relationship.

▶ Developmentally accurate understanding of the other person creates this empathy.

▶ A person's logic, which is controlled by developmental issues, determines what is true for him.

▶ Nobody behaves in an illogical manner voluntarily.

▶ CYC practice involves influencing the other person through relational dynamics.

▶ Respect for what is true and logical for both the practitioner and the youth or family member must exist or no influence will occur.