



Nelson-Jones'

Theory and Practice of

Counselling and Psychotherapy

Sixth Edition

Richard Nelson-Jones



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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Richard Nelson-Jones was born in London in 1936. Having spent five years in California as a Second World War refugee, he returned in the 1960s to obtain a Masters and PhD from Stanford University. In 1970, he was appointed a lecturer in the Department of Education at the University of Aston to establish a Diploma in Counselling in Educational Settings, which started enrolling students in 1971. During the 1970s, he was helped by having three Fulbright Professors from the United States, each for a year, who both taught students and improved his skills. During this period he broadened out from a predominantly client-centred orientation to becoming much more cognitive-behavioural. He also wrote numerous articles and the first edition of what is now *Nelson-Jones' Theory and Practice of Counselling and Psychotherapy*, which was published in 1982. In addition, he chaired the British Psychological Society's Working Party on Counselling and, in 1982, became the first chairperson of the BPS Counselling Psychology Section.

In 1984, Richard took up a position as a counselling and later counselling psychology trainer at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, where he became an Associate Professor. He continued writing research articles, articles on professional issues and books, which were published in London and Sydney. As when he worked at Aston University, he also counselled clients to keep up his skills. In 1997, he retired from RMIT and moved to Chiang Mai in Thailand. There, as well as doing some counselling and teaching, he has continued as an author of counselling and counselling psychology textbooks. A British and Australian citizen, he now divides his time between Chiang Mai and London and regularly spends time in Australia.

PREFACE

Welcome to the sixth edition of *Nelson-Jones' Theory and Practice of Counselling and Psychotherapy*. In this introductory textbook I aim to provide you with clear, concise, easily accessible presentations of the major concepts and practices of many of the main therapeutic approaches used in the helping professions. The focus of this book is on individual therapy. Its purpose is to help you become more aware of both *how* you might counsel or conduct therapy and also of the underlying reasons *why* you might choose to work that way. Furthermore, the relevance of the theoretical positions extends beyond assisting clients in therapy to become happier and more fulfilled to the personal agenda of helping you as well.

INTENDED READERSHIP

This is a basic introductory textbook for undergraduate and postgraduate counselling and psychotherapy courses in counsellor education, psychology, social work, nursing, personnel and human resources management, career development, pastoral care, welfare, teacher training and other areas of helping professions education. Another important readership consists of participants in counselling and therapy courses run by voluntary agencies. In addition, this book can be used as a user-friendly introduction to the theory and practice of counselling and therapy for undergraduate students in the behavioural and social sciences.

CONTENTS

The book is divided into seven parts. Part one, Introduction, contains the first chapter which discusses the structure and functions of theoretical statements, explores the creation of therapeutic approaches, and then looks at how you can develop your own ideas. In Parts Two to Four I review therapeutic approaches selected from each of the three main schools influencing contemporary therapy practice. From the psychodynamic school, I present Freud's psychoanalysis and



INTRODUCTION

Chapter 1, Creating counselling and psychotherapy approaches, starts by examining counselling and psychotherapy and then defines how terms are used in the book. The four approaches – psychodynamic, humanistic-existential, cognitive behaviour, and more recent therapies – covered in this book are introduced. There follows a discussion of what is a counselling and psychotherapy theory. The functions of theories include being conceptual frameworks, languages and research hypotheses. Limitations of theories are also examined.

Origins of counselling and psychotherapy approaches are explored including their historical and cultural contexts, the fact that many theorists were psychologically wounded, their exceptional interest in writing and communicating ideas, their professional experiences and frustrations, among other reasons. The chapter ends with exploring numerous ways in which you can create your own theoretical approach.

1

CREATING COUNSELLING AND PSYCHOTHERAPY APPROACHES

Theoretical approaches to counselling and psychotherapy do not spring fully formed out of the heads of their originators. Rather their creation is a process in which many personal, academic and professional factors interact. Furthermore, the theorists covered in this book tended to refine and rework their ideas. In addition other people have contributed to the development of their theoretical positions. Thus theory creation and development is an intensely human and ongoing process combining both subjective experiencing and objective information.

As a counselling and psychotherapy trainee, you too are engaging in a process of trying to make sense of numerous personal, academic and professional factors to create and develop a way of seeing the therapeutic world that has validity for you and gets results for your clients. Just like the major theorists, you are likely to find yourself continually refining and reworking your ideas. Working with a theoretical approaches text, such as this one, is an early step in the exciting and life-long endeavour of creating, developing and refining your theory and practice.

COUNSELLING AND PSYCHOTHERAPY

The word therapy is derived from the Greek word 'therapeia' meaning healing. Literally psychotherapy means healing the mind or the soul. Nowadays, most commonly the meaning of psychotherapy is broadened to become healing the mind by psychological methods that are applied by suitably trained and qualified practitioners. However, as illustrated in this book, there are different approaches to psychotherapy and, consequently, it is more accurate to speak of the psychotherapies rather than a uniform method of psychotherapy. Moreover, there

are different goals for psychotherapy including dealing with severe mental disorder, addressing specific anxieties and phobias, and helping people find meaning and purpose in their lives. Each of the different therapeutic approaches may be more suitable for attaining some goals than others.

Does counselling differ from psychotherapy? Attempts to differentiate between counselling and psychotherapy are never wholly successful. Both counselling and psychotherapy represent diverse rather than uniform knowledge and activities and both use the same theoretical models. In 2000, the British Association for Counselling acknowledged the similarity between counselling and psychotherapy by becoming the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy. In 1998, the Psychotherapy & Counselling Federation of Australia was established.

Nevertheless, some people such as Corsini (2008) try to distinguish counselling from psychotherapy. For instance, psychotherapists may be more thoroughly trained; psychotherapy may focus more deeply on uncovering unconscious influences and be longer term; and psychotherapy may be more a medical term that characterizes the work of psychiatrists and clinical psychologists, whereas counselling relates more to activities in non-medical settings: for example, college counselling centres. All of these distinctions can be refuted: for example, there are psychodynamic counsellors; both counselling and psychotherapy can be either brief, medium-term or long-term; and much counselling is performed both by medically and non-medically qualified people inside and outside of medical settings.

Though some perceive different shadings of meaning between counselling and psychotherapy, when it comes to the offering of professional as contrasted with voluntary services, similarities outweigh differences. Frequently the terms are used interchangeably and most theorists view their work as applicable to both counselling and psychotherapy, Carl Rogers and Albert Ellis being prime examples.

Counselling and psychotherapy also overlap with coaching. Life coaching involves coaches using their skills to help generally adequately functioning people improve and maintain how they perform and live in different aspects of their lives – personal, relationships, business and sports. Though a relatively recent

phenomenon, coaching is undoubtedly here to stay. In varying degrees, much of this book is relevant to coaching as well as to counselling and psychotherapy.

DEFINING TERMS

Throughout this book, for the sake of consistency, for the most part I use the terms psychotherapy or therapy, therapist and client. Psychotherapy refers both to the theoretical approach and to the process of helping clients. It is notable that the originators of most psychotherapeutic approaches include the word therapy in their approach's title: for instance, person-centred therapy, gestalt therapy, rational emotive behaviour therapy and cognitive therapy. Therapist refers to the providers of therapy services to clients, be they psychoanalysts, psychiatrists, clinical psychologists, counselling psychologists, counsellors, psychotherapists, social workers or other suitably trained and qualified persons. Client refers to the recipient of therapeutic services whether inside or outside of medical settings.

OVERVIEW OF COUNSELLING AND PSYCHOTHERAPY APPROACHES

A useful distinction exists between *schools* of counselling and psychotherapy and *theoretical approaches* to counselling and psychotherapy. A theoretical approach presents a single position regarding the theory and practice of counselling and psychotherapy. A school of counselling and psychotherapy is a grouping of different theoretical approaches that are similar to one another in terms of certain important characteristics that distinguish them from theoretical approaches in other counselling and psychotherapy schools

Probably the three main schools that have influenced contemporary individual counselling and psychotherapy practice are the psychodynamic school, the humanistic school, and the cognitive behaviour school. Sometimes the humanistic school incorporates existential therapeutic approaches and then can get the broader title of the humanistic-existential school. A fourth school, the postmodern school, comprises some more recent approaches. In addition, there are other recent theoretical approaches that do not fit neatly into this school heading, for instance

positive therapy. Be careful not to exaggerate the differences between counselling and psychotherapy schools, since there are similarities as well differences among them. Box 1.1 briefly describes some distinguishing features of the psychodynamic, humanistic-existential, cognitive behaviour and postmodern schools.

BOX 1.1 FOUR COUNSELLING AND PSYCHOTHERAPY SCHOOLS

THE PSYCHODYNAMIC SCHOOL

The term psychodynamic refers to the transfer of **psychic or mental energy** between the different structures and levels of consciousness within people's minds. Psychodynamic approaches emphasize the importance of **unconscious influences** on how people function. Therapy aims to increase clients' abilities to exercise **greater conscious control** over their lives. **Analysis or interpretation of dreams** can be a central part of psychotherapy.

THE HUMANISTIC-EXISTENTIAL SCHOOL

The humanistic school is based on humanism, a system of values and beliefs that emphasizes the better qualities of humankind and people's abilities to develop their **human potential**. Humanistic therapists emphasize enhancing clients' abilities to **experience their feelings** and think and act in harmony with their underlying tendencies to **actualize themselves** as unique individuals. Existential approaches to psychotherapy stress people's capacity to **choose** how they create their existences.

THE COGNITIVE BEHAVIOUR SCHOOL

Traditional behaviour therapy focuses mainly on changing **observable behaviours** by means of providing different or rewarding consequences. The cognitive behaviour school broadens behaviour therapy to incorporate the contribution of **how people think** to creating, sustaining and changing their problems. In cognitive behaviour approaches, therapists **assess** clients and then

intervene to help them to **change specific ways of thinking and behaving** that sustain their problems.

THE POSTMODERN SCHOOL

The postmodern therapies adopt a **social constructionist** viewpoint, assuming that how people process and construct information about themselves and their world is central to their existence. Rather than conceptualizing progress as a departure from and rejection of the past, postmodernism **draws on the past to serve the present**. People's experience of emotions depends on the names that they give to these emotions. People's beliefs about their relationships affect how they interpret the reactions of others and how they respond to them. **Personal behaviour results from** these cognitive processes and is therefore open to change.

Box 1.2 introduces the theoretical approaches, grouped as closely as feasible according to counselling and psychotherapy school, included in this book. The postmodern school therapies have been listed under more recent therapies. So that readers can obtain a sense of the history of the development of ideas within counselling and psychotherapy, I have included the dates of the originators of each approach. The descriptions provided in Box 1.2 reflect the position of the originators of the different positions, rather than developments within a theoretical approach stimulated by others.

BOX 1.2 OVERVIEW OF COUNSELLING AND PSYCHOTHERAPY APPROACHES

PSYCHODYNAMIC SCHOOL

Classical psychoanalysis *Originator: Sigmund Freud (1856–1939)*

Pays great attention to unconscious factors related to infantile sexuality in the development of neurosis. Psychoanalysis, which may last for many years,

emphasizes working through the transference, in which clients perceive their therapists as reincarnations of important figures from their childhoods, and the interpretation of dreams.

Analytical therapy *Originator: Carl Jung (1875–1961)*

Divides the unconscious into the personal unconscious and the collective unconscious, the latter being a storehouse of universal archetypes and primordial images. Psychotherapy includes analysis of the transference, active imagination and dream analysis. Jung was particularly interested in working with clients in the second half of life.

HUMANISTIC-EXISTENTIAL SCHOOL

Person-centred therapy *Originator: Carl Rogers (1902–87)*

Lays great stress on the primacy of subjective experience and how clients can become out of touch with their organismic experiencing through introjecting others' evaluations and treating them as if their own. Psychotherapy emphasizes a relationship characterized by accurate empathy, respect and non-possessive warmth.

Gestalt therapy *Originator: Fritz Perls (1893–1970)*

Individuals become neurotic by losing touch with their senses and interfering with their capacity to make strong contact with their environments. Psychotherapy emphasizes increasing clients' awareness and vitality through awareness techniques, experiments, sympathy and frustration, and dream work.

Transactional analysis *Originator: Eric Berne (1910–70)*

Transactions between people take place between their Parent, Adult and Child ego states. Psychotherapy includes structural analysis of ego states, analysis of specific transactions, analysis of games – series of transactions having ulterior motivations, and analysis of clients' life scripts.

Existential therapy *Originators: Irvin Yalom (1931-) and Rollo May (1909-94)*

Draws on the work of existential philosophers and focuses on helping clients deal with anxieties connected with four main ultimate concerns of human existence: death, freedom, isolation and meaninglessness. Psychotherapy focuses on clients' current situations, with different interventions used according to the nature of clients' enveloping fears.

COGNITIVE BEHAVIOUR SCHOOL

Behaviour therapy *Important figures: theory, Ivan Pavlov (1849-1936) and B. F. Skinner (1904-90); practice, Joseph Wolpe (1915-97)*

Emphasizes the learning of behaviour through classical conditioning, operant conditioning and modelling. Psychotherapy consists of learning adaptive behaviours by methods such as systematic desensitization, reinforcement programmes and behaviour rehearsal.

Rational emotive behaviour therapy *Originator: Albert Ellis (1913-2007)*

Emphasizes clients re-indoctrinating themselves with irrational beliefs that contribute to unwanted feelings and self-defeating actions. Psychotherapy involves disputing clients' irrational beliefs and replacing them with more rational beliefs. Elegant or profound psychotherapy entails changing clients' philosophies of life.

Cognitive therapy *Originator: Aaron Beck (1921-)*

Clients become distressed because they are faulty processors of information with a tendency to jump to unwarranted conclusions. Psychotherapy consists of educating clients in how to test the reality of their thinking by interventions such as Socratic questioning and conducting real-life experiments.

Multimodal therapy *Originator: Arnold Lazarus (1932-2013)*

Clients respond to situations according to their predominant modalities: behaviour, affect, sensation, imagery, cognition, interpersonal and drugs/biology. Based on a multimodal assessment, therapists are technically eclectic, using a range of techniques selected on the basis of empirical evidence and client need.

RECENT THERAPIES

Solution-focused therapy *Originators: Steve de Shazer (1940-2005) and Insoo Kim Berg (1934-2007)*

Theories of causation are irrelevant to the process of achieving goals and resolving problems. The therapist is responsible for directing the conversation towards the client's goals and acknowledging their difficulties. Specific uses of language and styles of questioning are used to encourage creativity and flexible thinking around the relevant issues.

Narrative therapy *Originators: Michael White (1948-2008) and David Epston (1944-)*

Images and concepts of past and present by which people define and give meaning to their lives derive from selective memory strongly influenced by their social, cultural and historical contexts. Psychotherapy principally consists of assisting persons to escape the dominance of 'problem-saturated' self-stories by encouraging them to narrate and discuss the meaning of 'thicker' or 'richer' self-stories more fully representing their concrete experience.

Positive therapy *Originator: Martin Seligmann (1942-)*

As well as leading directly to suffering, emotional distress constrains people's lives, cutting them off from many of the personal and social resources that would help to alleviate their symptoms and to enable them to maintain a good quality of life. Positive therapy focuses on promoting wellbeing, resilience and personal strengths, thus weakening the negative factors that maintain symptoms and distress.

Mindfulness in therapy *Originating with the Buddha (around 2500 BC)*

