ANALYSIS OF THE GESTALT APPROACH IN GROUP COUNSELING

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Abstrak

This article discusses the analysis of the gestalt approach in group counseling using references from relevant literature studies, the gestalt approach has several main concepts of counseling that are specific, namely: (1) views about humans, (2) orientation to life now and here, (3) awareness and responsibility, (4) contact, (5) unfinished business, (6) figure and ground. Gestalt counseling aims to help individuals have an understanding and awareness of their feelings, thoughts, actions, and experiences, their environmental situation and their position in that environment so that they have a sense of responsibility for themselves and their environment.

Keyword: Gestalt Approach, Group Counseling, Literature

1. Introduction

In the world of education, especially in schools, many problems that arise are experienced by students, for example problems in the field of learning, personal, social, and psychological problems of students. This creates several problems that can interfere with the educational process itself. In addition, if the problem cannot be handled properly, correctly and appropriately by a counselor, it can hinder the development of the student's KES itself. Various ways can be done to overcome the problems that arise experienced by students, one of which is to find and provide solutions to the students themselves. The problems in the education of each school and even each child are different, therefore different solutions are needed. So that several approaches to this counseling emerged.

Counselors in dealing with a problem, will not be separated from the approaches or techniques used in the counseling process. Without being supported by an adequate mastery of approaches in counseling, the assistance provided by the counselor to the counselee will not work effectively because it does not have clear directions and goals. This counseling approach emerged along with the development of an increasingly complex, busy, and constantly changing life. This creates several problems, especially in the world of education.

One approach that is very concerned with the ability of organisms to develop and determine their goals is the Gestalt approach. The gestalt approach places more emphasis on what is happening in the here-and-now, and the processes that take place, not on the past or the future. What is important in this approach is awareness of the moment in one's experience.

The founder of Gestalt psychotherapy was Frederick (Fritz) Perls and it began to develop in the early 1940s. The Gestalt approach focuses on the present and requires awareness in the moment. Consciousness is characterized by contact, sensing, and arousal. Contact can occur without consciousness, but consciousness cannot be separated from contact. Geralt Corey in his book (Theory and Practice of Counseling and Psychotherapy, p. 118) says that

Gestalt therapy developed by Frederick Perls is a form of therapy that requires individuals to find their own path and accept personal responsibility if they hope to reach maturity.

2. Method

This article discusses the analysis of the gestalt approach in group counseling. The type of this research method is a literature review analysis (literature research). This article will describe the analysis of scientific journals that are relevant to the discussion that has been selected, the main material in the analysis of this literature review is about the basic concepts of the gestalt approach, the purpose of gestalt group counseling, the principles of the theory of the gestalt approach. , roles and functions of group leaders in the gestalt approach, stages of gestalt group counseling, application: counseling techniques and procedures, application of gestalt group counseling in schools, application of the gestalt approach in groups in multicultural populations.

3. Result and Discussion

A. Basic Concepts of the Gestalt Approach

Gestalt therapy was developed by Fritz Perls and his wife, Laura, in the 1940s. The basic assumption of this therapy is that we are best understood in the context of our environment. Gestalt therapy is existential because it is based on the here and now and emphasizes existential dialogue. Awareness, choice, and responsibility are the cornerstones of practice. This approach is phenomenological because it emphasizes how we see the world, how we contribute to creating our experiences, and how we organize our world and ourselves. Gestalt therapy is also an experiential approach, and group members can understand what and how they think, feel, and do as they interact with others in the group. Members are encouraged and guided in experimenting with new behaviors as a way of increasing self-understanding. As clients gain a present-centered awareness and clearer perception of the limitations of their interpersonal

relationship style, important unfinished business emerges. To live more fully in the present, clients need to identify and deal with anything from the past that is interfering with current functioning. By re-experiencing past conflicts as if they were happening in the present, clients expand their level of consciousness and are able to integrate the denied and fragmented parts of themselves, so that they become one and whole.

Gestalt therapy developed by Frederick Perls is a form of existential therapy that rests on the premise that individuals must find their own way in life, and accept personal responsibility if they hope to reach maturity. Because its main work is on the principle of awareness, Gestalt therapy focuses on the what and how of behavior and experiences in the here and now by integrating (integrating) the solved and unknown parts of the personality (Rasimin & Hamdi, 2018: 96).

The basic Gestalt assumption is that individuals are able to deal with life's problems effectively on their own. The main task of the counselor is to help the counselee to fully understand his existence in the here and now, by being aware of his actions that prevent himself from feeling and experiencing it in the present moment. Therefore, the Gestalt counselor is essentially non-interpretative and wherever possible, the counselee administers therapy on his own. They make their own interpretations, create their own statements, and find their own meanings. Finally, the counselee is encouraged to directly understand the struggle here and now against unfinished business in the past. By experiencing conflicts, even if they only talk about them, the counselee can gradually expand his awareness (Surtini, 2020: 17).

Each individual has the ability to accept personal responsibility, has the drive to develop an awareness that will lead to the formation of personal integrity or wholeness. So, human nature according to this counseling approach is:

a. Incomprehensible, except in the overall context;

b. It is part of its environment and can only be understood in relation to that environment;

c. Actor is not a reactor;

d. Potential to be fully aware of his sensations, emotions, perceptions and thoughts;

e. Can choose consciously and responsibly, and

f. Able to organize and direct his life effectively.

B. Goals of Gestalt Group Counseling

The basic goal of Gestalt therapy is to increase awareness, which in itself is seen as curative or growth-producing. Awareness requires self-knowledge, responsibility for choices, contact with the environment, immersion in current experiences, self-acceptance, and the ability to make contact (Yontef & Jacobs, 2011). With awareness, clients have the capacity to find within themselves the resources needed to solve their problems and to find conditions that allow change. Without awareness, they do not have the tools to change personality. Gestalt therapy aims not at analysis but at the integration of conflicting dimensions within the individual. This step-by-step process involves "getting back" the parts of the self that have been disowned and then putting these disparate parts together into a coherent whole. As clients become more fully aware, they can continue their own personal growth, make informed choices, and live meaningful lives.

The main goal of Gestalt therapy is to help clients to be able to develop their personality as a whole and have the ability to solve their own problems. With the formation of the client's personality as a whole, the client can fully realize his strengths and weaknesses so that the client will no longer depend on others, but he can stand alone and make his own choices while being able to take responsibility. This will help the client to determine center of himself (Namorah, :163).

Nurjanis (2014: 27) the main purpose of Gestalt counseling is to help clients to be brave to face various challenges and realities that must be faced. This goal implies that the client must be able to change from dependence on the environment or other people to believe in himself, can do more to increase the meaning of his life. More specifically, the goals of Gestalt counseling are as follows:

a. Helping clients to gain self-awareness, understand reality or realistic, and can gain full insight.

b. Helping clients towards achieving personal integrity

c. Release the client from a condition that depends on the considerations of others to self-regulate (to be true to himself).

d. Increase individual awareness so that clients can behave according to Gestalt principles, all problematic situations (unfinished businesses) that arise and will always arise can be handled properly.

Similar to Sutja, A (2016: 217) that Gestalt counseling aims to help individuals have an understanding and awareness of their feelings, thoughts, actions, and experiences, their environmental situation and their position in that environment so that they have a sense of responsibility for themselves and their environment. environment.

C. Principles of the Gestalt Approach

A number of basic principles underlie Gestalt therapy theory. namely, as follows:

1) Emphasis on Client Responsibility, the counselor emphasizes that the counselor is willing to help the client but will not be able to change the client, the counselor emphasizes that the client takes responsibility for his behavior.

2) Here and Now Orientation, in the counseling process the counselor does not reconstruct the past or unconscious motives, but focuses on the present. This is not to say that the past is unimportant. The past is only

in relation to the present state. In this regard, the counselor never asks "why".

3) Experiential Orientation, the counselor increases the client's awareness of himself and his problems, so that the client reintegrates himself: (a) the client uses personal pronouns the client changes the question sentence into a statement; (b) the client takes on roles and responsibilities; (c) the client realizes that there are positive and/or negative things about himself or his behavior

According to Sutja, A (2016:209) Some of the main concepts of gestalt counseling are related to:

a. Views about humans

b. Orientation to life here and now

c. Awareness and responsibility

d. Contact (Contact)

e. Unfinished Business

f. Figure and ground

D. **Roles and Functions of Group Leaders in the Gestalt Approach**

The counselor's role in the Gestalt approach is essentially that of an expert who works to eliminate displeasure or conflict, using a variety of techniques and procedures. Different techniques and procedures make the therapist's job different. There are 5 basic tasks of the Gestalt group counselor, namely: a) patterning (making patterns); b) control (control); c) humanness (humanity); d) catalysts (accelerate); and e) commitment (agreement) (Rasimin and Hamdi, 2017:100).

Gestalt leaders focus on awareness, contact, and experimentation. The therapist models the process of beneficial interaction by expressing his or her own awareness and experiences (Yontef & Jacobs, 2011). Leaders actively engage with group members and can use self-disclosure as a way to improve relationships and create a sense of community within the group. Leaders can share a lot about themselves by sticking to what they are currently experiencing

in the group, without revealing much about themselves outside the group. When leaders share their personal reactions to what is happening in the group, including how they were influenced by what they hear and observe, it can be very helpful. Disclosure of personal or life problems outside the group should be deliberate and cater to the needs of the group. Group therapists, functioning like an artist, create experiments with clients to increase their range of behavior.

The function of the leader is to create an atmosphere and structure in which the creativity and creativity of the group itself can emerge (Zinker, 1978). Here the main task of the leader is to set this theme by connecting members with one another and finding ways to involve the group as a whole in exploring loneliness. Gestalt therapists take an active role using various interventions and experiments to help group members gain awareness and experience their internal and interpersonal conflicts fully. Gestalt therapy uses a supportive therapeutic relationship and active methods to help members discover how they are blocking awareness and personal functioning them (Yontef & Jacobs, 2011).

E. Stages of Gestalt Group Counseling

One way to conceptualize the role of the Gestalt group leader is to consider the stage of group development. Kepner notes that Gestalt group therapy can accentuate one of three boundaries of contact: (1) intrapsychic or intrapersonal (individual or group thoughts, sensations, and feelings), or (3) group level (a process involving the whole group). He argues that the choice of boundary emphasis is often dictated by the choice of the leader's role: therapist for the intrapersonal dimension, facilitator of interpersonal interaction, process, and consultant for the group as a whole. In writing about the Gestalt group process, Kepner emphasizes that leaders are committed to working with individuals and groups for the improvement of both. He described the various leader roles in the Gestalt process group using a three-stage model.

1) **First Stage**

In the first stage (early stage) of a group, the main characteristics are identity and dependence. Each member of the group depends on the way he is perceived and responded to by other members and the leader. The leader, functioning as a therapist, helps individuals explore members' questions about their identity in the group. The leader's activities are geared towards providing a climate of trust that will support risk taking and making connections between individuals. Once members find their similarities with one another, the group is ready to work on differentiation.

2) Second Stage

In the second stage (which is similar to the transition stage) the key characteristics are influence and counter-dependence. During this transition period, the group grapples with issues of influence, authority, and control. The leader's job is to work to increase differentiation, divergence, and role flexibility among members. The leader acts as a facilitator to help members work through the reactions they experience to what is happening in the group. Some of these facilitative activities include raising awareness of the prevailing norms in the group, encouraging members to challenge norms and openly express differences and dissatisfaction, and differentiate the roles of people.

3) Third Stage

In the third stage (which is similar to the work stage) intimacy and interdependence are key themes. At this stage of group development, real contact occurs within and between group members. Now that members have worked their way through issues of influence, power, and authority, they are ready for deeper levels of work, both individually and with the group as a whole. During this stage a high degree of cohesiveness encourages members to take risks by engaging in experiments for the sake of new learning. "Experiments modify group members' perceptions of their own inner lives as well as the lives of others" (Zinker, 2008, p.107). The leader helps the group to arrive at closure and also assists members in identifying unfinished business that has not been done in the group. Kepner's (2008) model

explains the fact that the roles and functions of group leaders are rooted in three types of processes that occur simultaneously in groups: intrapersonal, interpersonal, and the group as a system. Gestalt leaders have the advantage of being able to intervene at all three of these levels: the intrapersonal level is aimed at raising awareness, the interpersonal level is primarily used to promote interpersonal contact, and the group level is intended to support and illuminate the group's journey through developmental stages (Jon Frew, personal communication, 19). February 2009).

F. Application: Counseling Techniques and Procedures

1) **Empty Chair Technique,** this technique is intended to deal with clients who have problems or conflicts of thoughts, emotions, attitudes or inauthentic contacts. The empty chair technique was originally developed by Perls as a role-playing technique that involves the client and the imaginary. The client sits across from an empty (imaginary) chair and plays a specific role.

2) **Here and Now Exercise**, To train the client to talk about the present here and now, Perls provides an exercise by asking the client to express himself by including in his sentence the words "Now I..." "Okay now..." "At this time...". The client is declared to have full self-awareness if his speech has focused on the present and present conditions and is free from the past and future expectations.

3) **Dialogue Games**, this technique is done by conditioned clients to dialogue between two conflicting tendencies, namely top dog tendencies and under dog tendencies, for example: (a) parental tendencies versus children's tendencies; (b) responsible tendencies versus indifference; (c) "good boy" tendencies versus "stupid kid" tendencies (d) autonomous tendencies versus dependent tendencies; (e) strong or strong tendencies versus weak tendencies. Through this contradictory dialogue, according to the Gestalt view, the client will eventually direct himself to a position where he dares

to take risks. The application of this dialogue game can be carried out using the "empty chair" technique.

4) **My Responsible Practice,** is a technique intended to help clients acknowledge and accept their feelings rather than projecting their feelings onto others. In this technique the counselor asks the client to make a statement and then the client adds in that statement the sentence: "…and I am responsible for it". For example: "I feel bored, and I am responsible for that boredom", "I don't know what to say now, and I am responsible for that ignorance", "I am lazy, and I am responsible for that laziness". Although it seems mechanical, according to Gestalt it will help increase the client's awareness of feelings that may have been denied so far.

5) **Play Projection**, Projection means reflecting to others feelings that he himself does not want to see or accept. Denying one's own feelings by reflecting them on others. Often, the feelings that are reflected on others are attributes that they possess. In the projection play technique, the counselor asks the client to try out or do things that are projected onto other people.

6) **Reversal Techniques** Certain symptoms and behaviors often represent a reversal of the underlying drives. In this technique the counselor asks the client to play the opposite role of the feelings he is complaining about. For example: the counselor gives the client the opportunity to play the role of "exhibitionist" for an excessively shy client.

7) **Stick with Feelings**, Techniques can be used for clients who show unpleasant feelings or moods or he really wants to avoid them. The counselor encourages the client to stick with the feeling he wants to avoid. Most clients want to escape the frightening stimulus and avoid the unpleasant feeling. In this case the counselor continues to encourage the client to endure the fear or pain he is experiencing now and encourage the client to dive deeper into the behaviors and feelings he wants to avoid. To open up and make way for the development of a newer sense of feeling is not enough just to confront and confront the feelings he wants to avoid but

requires courage and experience to endure the pain of the feelings he wants to avoid.

G. Application of Gestalt Group Counseling in Schools

Windows to Our Children, Oaklander (1988) describes various Gestalt techniques for children that can be adapted to group work. She describes the creative activities she uses that aim to help children experience their feelings, their relationships with the people in their environment, and approaches to helping children develop a sense of responsibility for their actions. Oaklander sees value in projection through art and storytelling to increase a child's self-awareness. Like Lederman, Oaklander often uses the empty chair technique as a way to help children understand and deal with frustration, anger, resentment, and other unfinished business.

According to Coker (2004), Gestalt counseling, although not generally viewed as a school-based counseling approach, has many developmentally appropriate techniques that work effectively with children and adolescents in the context of brief counseling. Specific applications of Gestalt intervention with children can be seen in the work of Lambert (2003), Lederman (1969), Oaklander (1988), and Owmby (1983). In his book, Anger in the Rocking Chair, Lederman (1969) described his Gestalt awareness work with children by asking them to place people in rocking chairs and express their feelings. Not only can children experience catharsis if they have feelings of resentment, though Lederman applies Gestalt techniques with children in special education settings, the Gestalt awareness interventions he describes can be productively adapted to work with children and youth in other school settings as well.

H. Application of the Gestalt Approach in Groups in Multicultural Populations

There are certain advantages to using the Gestalt approach with a culturally diverse client population. Gestalt therapy pays attention to how clients perceive their world, and therapists pay attention to what is figural for members from their diverse backgrounds. Because Gestalt therapy is practiced in a phenomenological manner, therapists are less likely to impose their own cultural values and standards on their clients. Frew (2008) notes that Gestalt therapy can be a useful and effective approach with clients from various backgrounds because it takes into account the client's context.

4. Conclusion

The Gestalt approach is existential because it is based on the here and now and emphasizes existential dialogue. Awareness, choice, and responsibility are the cornerstones of practice. The counselor seeks to increase the client's awareness of himself and his problems, so that the client can reintegrate himself. Gestalt counseling approach holds that humans in their lives are always active as a whole. Each individual is not merely a sum of parts of organs such as the heart, heart, brain, and so on, but is a coordination of all these parts. Active humans are driven towards the whole and the integration of their thoughts, feelings, and behavior.

Each individual has the ability to accept personal responsibility, has the drive to develop an awareness that will lead to the formation of personal integrity or wholeness. So the nature of humans according to this counseling approach are: (1) cannot be understood, except in the whole context, (2) are part of their environment and can only be understood in relation to their environment, (3) actors are not reactors, (4) have the potential to fully aware of his sensations, emotions, perceptions, and thoughts, (5) able to choose consciously and responsibly, (6) able to organize and direct his life effectively.

The main goal of Gestalt therapy is to help clients to be able to develop their personality as a whole and have the ability to solve their own problems. In relation to the journey of human life, the Gestalt Counseling approach views that nothing "is" except "now". The past has gone and the future has not been lived, therefore what determines human life is the present. In this approach to Gestalt Counseling, anxiety is seen as "the gap between the present and the future". If individuals deviate from the present and become too fixated on the future, then they experience anxiety.

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