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MOOC 1 – Unit 1

History and approaches

Chapter 3

Approaches to Psychological Crisis Intervention

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3.1. Psychodynamic Approach



Crisis is understood as a state associated with trauma. Many authors think that a psychological wound is the result of damage to a certain "protective layer" and it breaches the mental organization of the individual.. The size of the injury depends on: how sudden and unpredictable the event is and how it leads to the accumulation of stress and frustration, and what is the subject's ability to defend oneself.

Emphasis is placed on the crucial importance of intrapsychic and unconscious energy of emotions that arose during trauma (e.g. fear) and some inner conflicts that arise in connection with conflicting motivations present in a crisis situation.

A crisis arising from an extensive break in the boundaries of the self results in a situation in which the body is "flooded" with stimuli from the outside and inside world. These stimuli may evoke an experience that leads to a short-time breakdown of mental life. It could be such a strong increase in arousal that it is impossible to get rid of it or work it out by ordinary means. This sudden increase in arousal is associated on the somatic level with the "shock" experienced by the body, and on the mental level - with fear of the threat to the integrity of the "I" and the fear of annihilation, recognized by Freud as the primary one among the various types of anxiety.

Crisis intervention includes focusing on a central problem (rather than on childhood experiences) and the attitude of the therapist is more directive and interactive compared to normal therapeutic work. Maintaining attention to the central problem requires a more active and less neutral attitude of the therapist (directing the conversation, providing support and advice).



3.2. Cognitive-Behavioural Approach



The essence of the crisis is not the situation, but its interpretation and subjective reaction to it:

- a) cognitive: automatic thoughts, core beliefs, explanations and assumptions
- b) affective: emotions resulting from the cognitive interpretation, such as regret, despair, anger, sadness, shame, helplessness,
- c) behavioural: reactions of a person in crisis including a lack of something (e.g. problems with sleep, lack of appetite), reactions within the body (usually strong agitation and tension), attempts to deal with the crisis.

Crisis intervention in this approach focuses mostly on the cognitive factor. Cognitive crisis response (distorted assessment of events or situations related to the crisis) then affects emotional reaction and behaviour.



3.3. Existential-Humanistic Approach



In this approach, the therapist accepts the world of the patient's experiences, observes them, tries to understand them and adjust the intervention to the individual needs of a person as a unique being.

This approach assumes patient orientation towards the world of values and spirituality, and introducing the meaning of life into the therapeutic dialogue.

It is essential in this approach to provide the patient with unconditional acceptance, empathic understanding and genuineness in the relationship.

Crisis intervention is based on analyzing the patient's attitude and the way they accept their suffering.



3.4. Systemic Approach

The systemic or ecological-social approach covers crisis risk groups and members of social subsystems.

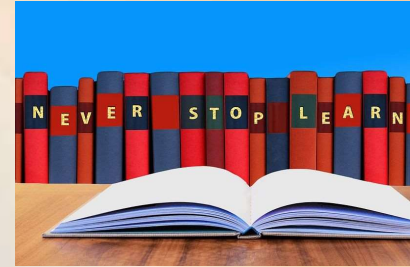
The fundamental role is played by the involvement and cooperation of all subsystems of a given community.

The proposed prevention programs should have financial security - a commitment to the participation of all parties involved, along with the ability to undertake common, compromise solutions.





3.5. Eclectic and Integrative Approach



The basic criterion for the quality of crisis intervention measures is their effectiveness.

Positively understood eclecticism is the preferred approach.

It assumes the intentional and systematic selection and integration of important concepts and strategies derived from all available approaches to helping. It requires knowledge of various valuable systems, and working on integrating the concept into an internally consistent whole.

Experts refer to this approach as a kind of interaction involving skill and intuition to achieve the most effective intervention.



Remember!

Psychodynamic approach

Crisis is understood as a condition associated with trauma that influences the dynamic of inner processes.

Crisis intervention includes focusing on a central problem. The attitude of the therapist is more directive and interactive.

Cognitive-behavioral approach

Crisis intervention in this approach focuses mostly on the cognitive factor. Cognitive crisis response (distorted assessment of events or situations related to the crisis) then affects emotional reaction and behaviour.



Remember!

Existential-humanistic approach

Crisis intervention is based on analyzing the patient's attitude and the way they accept their suffering.

Systemic approach

The systemic or ecological-social approach covers crisis risk groups and members of social subsystems.

The fundamental role is played by the involvement and cooperation of all subsystems of a given community.

Eclectic and integrative approach

It assumes the intentional and systematic selection and integration of important concepts and strategies derived from all available approaches to helping.

References

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Glossary

Adequate functioning - being able to fulfill a need or requirement without being abundant, outstanding etc.

Crisis - perception or experience of an event or situation as an overwhelming difficulty that exceeds the person's current resources and coping mechanisms

Crisis intervention - short-term help to individuals who experience an event that produces emotional, mental, physical and behavioural distress or problems

External conflict - which generally takes place between a person and someone or something else, such as nature, another person or persons, or an event or situation. External conflicts may be character vs. character, character vs. nature, or character vs. society.

Internal conflict - which takes place in a person's mind, for example a struggle to make a decision or overcome a feeling. Internal conflicts are character vs. self.

Macro-level intervention - intervention focused on large numbers of people - local communities, nations or even the world

Micro-level social intervention - intervention focused on small numbers of people - individuals, families and small groups.