



Multitheoretical Conceptualization

Summarized from Chapters Four through Ten
Integrative Multitheoretical Psychotherapy
Jeff E. Brooks-Harris (2008) Boston: Houghton-Mifflin
www.multitheoretical.com

1. Cognitive Conceptualization

- Identify specific thoughts or beliefs that mediate the relationship between activating events and consequences, including both feelings and actions.
- Distinguish between automatic thoughts that occur in specific situations and the intermediate and core beliefs that often generate automatic thoughts.
- Consider functional thoughts that might help the client.

2. Behavioral Conceptualization

- Identify specific actions that a client wants to increase or decrease.
- Look for relevant patterns of reinforcement and punishment.
- Recognize maladaptive responses paired with conditioned stimuli.
- Generate ideas about effective actions that might help the client.

3. Experiential Conceptualization

- Identify specific feelings that a client is experiencing.
- Classify emotions as primary, secondary, or instrumental.
- Recognize adaptive or maladaptive role of primary emotions.
- Hypothesize about primary adaptive emotions that might help the client.

4. Biopsychosocial Conceptualization

- Recognize the ways that physical health is impacting psychological functioning.
- Identify physical symptoms associated with psychological distress.
- Look at the way biological health may be impacting social relationships.
- Explore ways that sociocultural contexts shape actions and perceptions related to health.
- Consider health practices that could enhance mind-body wellness.

5. Psychodynamic-Interpersonal Conceptualization

- Look for repetitive themes in relationship episodes.
- Identify wishes, responses of others, and responses of self.
- Explore the origins of these core conflictual relationship themes.
- Think about functional relationship patterns that might help the client.

6. Systemic-Constructivist Conceptualization

- Describe past or present family structures, roles, or patterns.
- Identify salient features in the family belief system.
- Recognize how social systems have shaped the construction of personal meaning.
- Consider personal narratives that might support positive change.

7. Multicultural Conceptualization

- Identify cultural messages received from different cultural contexts related to a client's presenting concern.
- Explore identity development and acculturation experiences.
- Seek an understanding of the client's current worldview, including cultural values related to psychological concerns.
- Generate ideas about cultural values and practices that can be used to support therapeutic goals.