

Counseling Theories Chart

Theory Name	Key Concepts	Techniques	Applications
Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)	Focuses on thoughts, emotions, and behaviors and their interconnectedness. Emphasizes identifying and challenging irrational beliefs.	Cognitive restructuring, behavior modification, exposure therapy.	Anxiety, depression, phobias, PTSD, OCD.
Psychoanalytic Theory	Explores unconscious conflicts, childhood experiences, and defense mechanisms. Highlights the role of the therapist-client relationship.	Free association, dream analysis, transference interpretation.	Long-standing psychological issues, personality disorders, unresolved trauma.
Humanistic Therapy	Stresses self-actualization, empathy, and unconditional positive regard. Emphasizes client's capacity for growth and self-awareness.	Active listening, reflective responses, empathetic understanding.	Self-esteem issues, identity exploration, personal growth, relationship difficulties.
Gestalt Therapy	Focuses on the present moment, awareness, and personal responsibility. Encourages integration of fragmented aspects of the self.	Empty chair technique, role-playing, focusing on body sensations.	Emotional blocks, unresolved past experiences, self-awareness, interpersonal conflicts.

Existential Therapy	Addresses existential concerns such as freedom, meaning, and mortality. Encourages clients to confront life's ultimate questions and take responsibility for their choices.	Philosophical exploration, confronting existential anxiety, embracing authenticity.	Existential crises, feelings of meaninglessness, identity exploration, end-of-life issues.
Family Systems Therapy	Views individuals within the context of their family systems and social networks. Examines patterns of interaction and communication.	Genogram construction, reframing, boundary setting, structural interventions.	Family conflicts, communication breakdowns, relationship issues, intergenerational trauma.

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