

Counseling Theories Comparison Chart

Theory	View of Human Nature	Cause of Problems	Therapeutic Approach
Psychoanalytic	Unconscious conflicts shape personality	Unresolved childhood experiences, defense mechanisms	Dream analysis, free association, exploration of unconscious
Adlerian	Strive for superiority, belonging	Feelings of inferiority, lack of social connection	Encouragement, tasks to build self-esteem & social connection
Existential	Freedom & responsibility in face of absurdity	Anxiety about creating meaning in life	Finding meaning & responsibility in choices
Person-Centered	Inherently good, capable of self-growth	Negative self-image, incongruence between ideal & real self	Unconditional positive regard, empathy, genuineness
Gestalt	Focus on present experience, self-awareness	Unfinished business, blocked emotions	Awareness exercises, integrating unfinished business
Behavior	Learned behaviors influence well-being	Unwanted behaviors reinforced by environment	Conditioning techniques, exposure therapy, skills training
Cognitive Behavior (CBT)	Thoughts, behaviors, emotions interact	Unhealthy thought patterns, learned behaviors	Cognitive restructuring, exposure therapy, behavioral techniques
Reality	Meeting basic needs for mental health	Unmet basic needs, distorted perceptions	Fulfilling basic needs, reality testing
Feminist	Focuses on gender roles & power dynamics	Gender oppression, societal expectations	Empowerment, challenging societal norms
Postmodern	Challenges grand narratives, emphasizes social constructs	Dominant narratives causing distress	Deconstructing narratives, exploring power dynamics
Family Systems	Individuals function within a system	Family dynamics, unhealthy communication patterns	Family therapy techniques to improve communication & interaction

Client Information

Client Name:

Age:

Gender:

Date:

Reason for referral:

Client goals:

Counseling approach:

Reasons for Theory Selection

Alignment with client goals:

Client resonance:

Presenting issue:

Session Planning

Structure each session according to the chosen therapeutic approach, utilizing the appropriate techniques from the chart.

Technique:

Activity:

Expected Outcome:

Session Notes:

Reflection: