

Comparison Between Cognitive Behaviour, Rational Emotive Behaviour And Meseron Therapies

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Abstract

Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy [REBT], Cognitive Behaviour Therapy [CBT] and Meseron Therapy are three uniquely and very effective cognitive therapies used in clinical psychology practice. It is essential to clearly spell out the difference in the therapies as some psychologists in the past have experienced difficulty differentiating them. Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy [REBT] was developed by Albert Ellis [1962] based on the rationale that irrational thinking is the root cause of psychological disturbances. Cognitive behaviour therapy [CBT] by Aaron Beck [1976], posits that how individuals view situations may result in psychological disturbances while Meseron Therapy by Alfred Awaritefe [1995] postulates that psychological disturbances arise as a result of faulty speaking as seen in the distortion of our appraisal mechanism, acquiescing to negativity and incongruence of striving and goals. This paper attempts to further explain each therapy in detail.

Key words: *Cognitive Behaviour Therapy, Meseron Therapy, Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy.*

Introduction

Cognitive therapies are the leading therapies today. They are now very famous and accepted worldwide. Three of these therapies are Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy, Cognitive Behaviour Therapy and Meseron Therapy, two of which were developed in Europe and one in Africa. There have been doubts in the minds of many as to the difference and similarities of these widely known therapies.

Meseron Therapy was developed as a call to develop psychological methods, techniques and principles based on the African experience and thus make original contribution to the accumulating pool of knowledge available to humanity. The

approach, however, has not risen from the ordeal of orthodox laboratory, but from accumulated wisdom of African heritage.

Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy [REBT] was developed out of frustration with the ineffectiveness of psychotherapy. It was drawn out from the knowledge of philosophy and psychology to devise a method which was believed to be more direct, effective and efficient.

Cognitive Behaviour Therapy [CBT] was conceived as a result of growing dissatisfaction with traditional analysis and heightened interest in learning theory which led to a notable rise in behaviourally oriented therapies during the 1960s.

In order to be able to effectively use these therapies, this paper further gives a brief history of the therapies, their uses and reasons behind their uses.

OVERVIEW

Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy

Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy [REBT], formerly known as Rational Emotive Therapy is the first form of cognitive behaviour therapy, it was developed by Albert Ellis [between 1957 and 1962] in response to his dissatisfaction with the ineffectiveness and inefficiency of psychoanalysis. Unlike psychoanalysis, REBT places a good deal of its focus on the present psychological issues. The therapy attempts to use reason and rationality to recognize self-defeating cognitive processes. It is derived directly from a theory that assumes that psychological disorders arise from a faulty or irrational patterns of thinking. Often, these irrational attitudes and philosophies take the form of extreme or dogmatic ‘must’, ‘should’ or ‘ought’ which contrast with flexible desires, wishes, preferences and wants.

In other words, unhealthy thoughts are responsible for creating unhealthy emotions and self-sabotaging behaviours. A general goal of REBT is to help clients minimize emotional disturbances, decrease self-defeating behaviours and become happier. REBT provides a variety of methods to help people reformulate their dysfunctional beliefs into more sensible, realistic and helpful ones by employing the technique called ‘disputing’ Ellis believes individuals will have happier lives if they can think rationally and have fewer irrational beliefs. Ellis famously used the ‘ABC’ model to explain his discipline with the

- A - Activating Event
- B - Belief System
- C - Consequences

The A B C model refers to what happens when an activating event [A] leads to emotional behavioural consequences [C]. The emotional and behavioural consequences are not caused by the activating event [A] but by the individual’s belief system [B]. Irrational beliefs occur when one activating event [A] is an unpleasant one. While irrational beliefs [B] result in difficult emotional and behavioural consequences [C].

Ellis believes that it is not activating event [A] that causes positive or negative emotional and behavioural consequences [C] but rather it is the way the individual interprets these events unrealistically that leads to an irrational belief system [B] which in turn causes negative consequences [C]. The real cause of upsets is how individuals interpret what happens to them.

Example:

- A [Activating Event] Drunk people outside making noise
- B [Irrational Belief] They must not make any noise
- C [Consequences] When noisy drunk people pass by in the street late at night and wake me up, I feel angry and it makes me feel bad. I lie awake feeling angry and upset and can’t get back to sleep for a long time.

Ellis famously used the A-B-C-D-E therapeutic approach as a development on the A-B-C model. He was of the opinion that individuals are to:

- D [dispute the irrational beliefs –B by turning them into questions and answers.

For instance.

- Why should they make noise?
- Where is the evidence?

Again, who made me supreme ruler of the universe dictating how other people should or must act?

E [effective new thinking] by substituting something rational with irrational beliefs [B], for instance; drunk people are often noisy but it is no big deal. I don't like it but I sure can deal with what I don't like.

Maybe I will touch base with them in the morning [when they are sober]

OVERVIEW

Cognitive Behaviour Therapy

Cognitive behavioural therapy [CBT] was developed by Aaron T. Beck in the 1960s. CBT is concerned with learning how our thoughts create our moods. It is a form of psychotherapy that treats problems and boosts happiness by modifying dysfunctional emotions, behaviour and thoughts. It is based on the concept that your thoughts, feelings, physical sensations and actions are interconnected and that negative thoughts and feelings can trap you in a vicious cycle. Both Aaron Beck and Albert Ellis drew from the teaching of stoic philosopher, Epic Tetus, who believed that "it is not things that upset us, it's our view of things ". CBT helps individuals make sense of overwhelming problems by breaking them down into smaller parts. This makes it easier to see how they are connected and how they affect the individual. These parts are:

A situation - a problem, event or difficult situation. From this can follow thoughts, emotions, physical feelings and actions.

Each of these areas can affect the other. How you think about a person can affect how you feel physically and emotionally and how you behave.

There are helpful and unhelpful ways of reacting to most situations, depending on how you think about it. The way you think can be helpful or unhelpful. It is important to note that CBT does not remove your problems but teaches you positive ways of dealing with problems, it is centred around developing helpful thought patterns.

Example:

You have had a bad day, feel fed up, so you go out shopping. As you walk down the road, someone you know walks by and apparently ignores you. This starts a cascade of:

	UNHELPFUL	HELPFUL
Thoughts	He/she ignored me, they don't like me	He/she looks a bit wrapped up in themselves, I wonder if there is something wrong.
Emotional feelings	Low, sad and dejected	Concerned for the other person positively
Physical	Stomach cramps, low energy, feel sick	None, feel comfortable
Action	Go home and avoid them	Get in touch with them to make sure they are okay.

Overview

Meseron Therapy

Meseron therapy is an African originated psychological treatment technique developed by Alfred Awaritefe [1995], which stresses the synergy of thoughts, words and actions. It is derived from an Urhobo word which means 'I reject it'. The Urhobos are from Delta State of Nigeria.

Like other cognitive approaches, its aims are directed at the elimination of

undesirable conditions and a change in values which result in maladaptive habits.

The basic assumption of Meseron therapy includes the power of “spoken words” to sensitize to action or inaction. In general, Meseron therapy can be a tool for individuals to imbibe positive thinking, positive speaking and positive actions. Meseron therapy is based on the belief that “what one says of himself is what happens to him”. The biblical account of Job “Thou shall decree a thing and it shall be established unto thee” [Job 22:28] is coherent with the tenets of Meseron therapy. Therefore, it encourages man to say it right, to reject the status quo and strive to accompany it with constructive actions. An overriding principle of Meseron approach is that man has to make effort for man is a striving creature.

The therapy motivates clients to strive while emphasizing that striving takes place at three levels: thoughts, words and actions. It upholds that there must be a thorough focus on human thoughts, words and actions. However, it does not uphold unrealistic optimism nor is it a simple denial or flight from reality. On the contrary, it acknowledges reality and recognizes the potential for growth within every individual.

According to Meseron therapy, it is not enough to repeat words passively; words must be accompanied with positive action. Meseron upholds that words that demand disassociation from the negative can thus serve as a mental ignition for change as well as prepare the individual psychologically for action. Man is endowed with operational facilities to help him pull through life and these facilities must be effectively utilised for man to be able to harness his incredible potentials.

Operational facilities of man are:
 Thoughts - I think that all is well
 Words - I say that all is well

Actions- I act and behave in a way to guarantee that all is well

	INDIVIDUAL	MESERON
Thoughts	I don't have any money in the bank or anywhere; I am broke	I am rich, I am only out of cash at the moment
Words	I am finished	I am rich
Actions	Isolated, worried and depressed	Out to learn a new trade, to start making money off it

Comparative Analysis Of The Therapies

Origin

- Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy [REBT] originated from an attempt to introduce logic and reason into psychotherapy, thus expressing its dissatisfaction with psychoanalysis
- Cognitive Behaviour Therapy [CBT] arose from the integrating of two generations of behavioural therapy as a part of a rebellious movement against prevailing therapeutic concepts [the psychoanalytic and humanistic approaches in particular]
- Meseron therapy originated from an attempt to apply original African concepts for purposes of psychological treatment, deriving from the African culture of rejecting the negative and unwholesome.

Postulations Concerning Causation of Psychological Disturbance

- Rational emotive behavioural therapy [REBT] assumes that behaviour disturbances arise and are maintained by continued illogical thinking.
- Cognitive behavioural therapy [CBT] assumes that psychological difficulties arise from unhelpful ways of reacting to most situations resulting from one's thinking.

- Meseron therapy assumes psychological difficulties arise as a result of faulty speaking as seen in distortion of our appraisal mechanism, acquiescing to negativity as in resignation in the face of difficulties, incongruence of striving and goals as in making inappropriate choices and decisions.
- emotions must be spiked by the restructuring of perception and thinking.
- They are all practical approaches to assist individuals in coping and overcoming adverse conditions and achieve their life goals.
- They all help individuals to develop positive philosophies of life.

Therapeutic Techniques and Procedures

- REBT gets clients to change their thinking and abandon all illogical ideas
- CBT teaches clients to recognize and keep track of their thought and changes unhelpful thinking by teaching positive ways of dealing with problems; it encourages helpful thinking.
- Meseron therapy gets the client to say it right [positively] and synergize his thoughts, words and actions. It grows the possibility thinker by motivating the client to strive.

Goals

- REBT's goal is to forcefully dispute client's irrational beliefs. This involves questioning the evidence for the belief or the utility of holding it.
- The goal of CBT is to breakdown overwhelming problems by breaking them down into smaller parts to make it easier for clients to see how they are connected and how it affects them [that is, situation, thoughts, emotions, physical feelings and actions.
- The goal of Meseron therapy is to motivate clients to strive.

Similarities

- They are all cognitive in orientation
- They all uphold the fact that negative and self-defeating thoughts and

Conclusion

They are all similar in nature but differ in origin, postulation concerning causation of psychological disturbance, therapeutic techniques and procedures and also in goals.

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