

Postmodernism and Psychotherapy

This Clinical Update will shed some light on the mystery of what is postmodernism. Postmodernism is the latest buzzword that has forever changed the world and the way we understand it. The reasons why clients seek psychological help and how they understand their life challenges are different than they were in “modern” times. The practice of psychotherapy and counseling needs to change with the times in order to remain relevant; however, many clinicians find postmodernism elusive and difficult to understand.

Quick Look at Postmodernism:

- Postmodernism is not so much a separate theoretical orientation as it is a trend, which can be seen in a number of approaches to psychology.
- Postmodernism impacts the reason why clients enter therapy and counseling as well as how they understand their problems.
- Postmodernism has important relevance for how therapy is developed, practiced and evaluated.
- Postmodernism reflects changes in the way people understand knowledge or truth, including knowledge about psychological health and therapy.
- Postmodernism emphasizes the importance of pluralism and diversity along with the need for dialogue.
- Personal stories, narratives or subjective experiences is valued over objective knowledge in postmodern theory.
- Postmodernism recognizes that what is best or healthiest for one person may not be for another; each person has the right to define what is healthy for him/herself.
- Claims for objective or universal truth are viewed with suspicion in postmodern theory.

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The Post Modern Psychotherapy

What is Postmodern therapy?

Postmodern therapy focuses on deconstructing common beliefs and examining their value in an individual's life. For example, postmodern therapists question the definition of "mental health" as well as commonly held assumptions such as the definition of success and what it means to be an adolescent.

The relationship between patient and therapist is highly collaborative rather than authoritative. Change comes about primarily through open dialogue.

The three main types of postmodern therapy are:

- Narrative Therapy — evaluates a patient's thoughts and behaviors in the context of their culture and the story they have written for themselves
- Solution-Focused Therapy — a short-term approach that focuses on creating solutions to problems rather than evaluating the root causes of those problems
- Collaborative Language Systems — solves problems through talk and collaboration

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF POSTMODERN THERAPY?

Postmodern therapy can help patients manage their mental health disorders and dramatically reduce symptoms.

Patients have reported the following benefits:

- Stress reduction
- Improved insight and understanding
- Conflict resolution
- Greater sense of happiness and well-being

WHAT CONDITIONS/DISORDERS DOES POSTMODERN THERAPY TREAT?

Postmodern therapy has been used to treat a variety of conditions, including:

- Eating Disorders
- Depression
- Addiction
- ADHD
- Schizophrenia