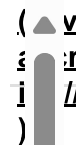




Chapter Preview: Issues in Theory and Practice



Chapter 10: Issues in Theory and Practice: 10-9 Chapter Review
Book Title: Issues and Ethics in the Helping Professions
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10-9 Chapter Review

10-9a Chapter Summary

Issues in theory and practice are necessarily interrelated. From an ethical perspective therapists need to anchor their practices to theory. Without a theoretical foundation, practitioners are left with little rationale to formulate therapeutic goals and develop techniques to accomplish these goals. Practitioners are sometimes impatient when it comes to articulating a theory that guides practice. Some rely on a limited number of techniques to deal with every conceivable problem clients may present. However, a good theory helps clinicians understand what they are doing.

We do not advocate that you subscribe to one established theory. Therapeutic techniques from many theoretical approaches may be useful in your practice. By developing an integrative approach to counseling practice, you can adjust your approach to fit your client's needs. Ideally, your theoretical orientation will serve as a basis for reflecting on matters such as goals in counseling, the division of responsibility between the client and the counselor, meeting these goals, the techniques that are most appropriate with specific clients in resolving a variety of problems, and the approach that will be most beneficial for the client.

The use of assessment and diagnosis and testing in counseling is related to a practitioner's theoretical orientation. Regardless of the theory a therapist employs as a basis for practice, assessment and diagnosis are matters that will need to be addressed. It is important that cultural considerations be attended to in conducting an assessment, in formulating a diagnosis, and in deciding whether specific tests are appropriate.

Practitioners are increasingly being faced with providing services within the framework of evidence-based practice. Broadly interpreted, there are three pillars of evidence-based practice: looking for the best available research, relying on clinical expertise, and taking into consideration the client's characteristics, culture, and preferences. Despite this trend, personal and interpersonal factors remain the most powerful determinants of psychotherapy outcome. Although a therapist's theoretical orientation and use of techniques are important, they have not been shown to be critical to outcome.