

Gestalt Theory

BSHS 311

When people think of the Gestalt theory the thought that comes to mind is the first thing that comes to mind. You name something like a sign and simply think the sign when there are other parts that make up the sign like the pole and various other shapes that make the sign evolve. Gestalt's theory is one theory that was perceived as being different and makes you think about the first idea that comes to mind instead of thinking about what comes to mind. Gestalt theory focuses on perception. The perception of

Gestalt Theory

what you sense makes up the theory of the Gestalt theory therefore causing the brain to make direct responses. Being discussed in this essay will be the history of the development of the Gestalt theory, the beliefs on which it is based; philosophers that contributed to the theory, approaches to the theory, problems with the theory, and any other questions about the theory will be answered in this essay.

The history of the Gestalt theory comes from the originators Fritz and Laura Perls. This therapy was originally developed as a form of individual therapy. The Perls trained Freudian analysts and saw their clients one-to-one and trained in Berlin and developed analytic practices in Johannesburg and began an institute for psychoanalysis in South Africa. Gestalt therapy is about human experience and one of the best ways to understand it is by trying it out personally. Gestalt therapy is an approach to practical psychology and has developed over the years. This type of therapy can be carried out one-to-one either with an individual, couples, or small and large groups. This type of therapy was formed to explore how human beings actively construct his or her experiences. Gestalt therapy is a humanistic therapy the technique focuses on awareness of emotions and behaviors in the present. The Perls came up with the first major ideas of Gestalt therapy in the late 1900 and those ideas were ego, hunger, and aggression. Another point in Gestalt therapy draws from awareness in reference to what a person is feeling at the moment this would include emotions, thoughts, motivations, and actions.

The beliefs in which the Gestalt theory is based on lie in the promotion of "awareness". An individual is guided in becoming aware of his or her own behaviors and how he or she may feel. Their effect on the environment in the here and now also

Gestalt Theory

are considered. The way a person seeks to avoid any kind of contact with the present environment may be considered a significant factor when recovering from a psychological disturbance. A person can begin to engage in self-healing by focusing on their own self-awareness as part of present reality.

A key concept in this theory is contact. Contact is where one person meets another person or meets the outside world. "Every organism is capable of effective and fulfilling contact with others in their environment and pursues ways of having contact with others so that the organism can survive and grow maturity. If contact is not interfered with by what Perls-Goodman call disturbances of the contact boundary, the individual can grow, through assimilation of new experiences"

(Psychologistanytimeanywhere.com, 2011).

When a client is in therapy, they are encouraged to experience his or her own feelings and behaviors in the present. Attention is brought on the way contact is interrupted. The way in which he or she interrupts contact with the present environment is considered to be significant in creating and maintaining unhealthy patterns of behavior.

"Some of the contact interruptions occur through projection (seeing outside one's self what belongs to one's self), introjections (swallowing whole instead of assimilating, chewing, digesting); retroflexion (directing impulses towards the self that rightly should be directed to the other, as in anger directed toward self causing depression or psychosomatic symptoms); confluence (dissolving the self-other boundary and merging with the other). By focusing the individual on how contact-making occurs or is disturbed,