

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE BASIC PRINCIPLES OF RATIONAL EMOTIVE BEHAVIORAL THERAPY IN THE EDUCATIONAL PROCESS

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In the article the principles of rational emotive behavioural therapy are studied. This paper presents analysis of REBT in the educational process. The paper also outlines the peculiarities of ABC theory presented by REBT and shows its importance in developing students' rational thinking and coping strategies with stresses and frustrations. Key words: teacher, student, rational emotive behavioural therapy, rational thinking, ABC theory.

Students often experience numerous stresses and frustrations in their every day life. It is desirable for teachers to be not only the facilitators of the educational process but also the promoters of students' psychological health. We think that only psychologically healthy students are able to perceive the educational material the most effectively. In our opinion, the educational process is closely linked with students' psychological experience.

That's why, the elegant methods of REBT are highly preferable in helping students not only feel better and psychologically comfortable but also get better in a profound philosophic sense. It is hypothesized that an active-directive, Rational Emotive Behavioral approach will help young people make basic personality changes and enhance their tolerance to frustrations more than will any of the other therapeutic approaches. The conception of REBT is represented by such scientists as Albert Ellis, J. Brodie, D. Wilde, W. Knaus, W. Dryden and so on. We would like to analyze this approach more precisely. This complex approach reveals the emotional and behavioral aspects of person's functioning in frustrating circumstances and focuses attention on the importance of mental component in coping with them.

Albert Ellis stated "Emotion, like thinking and sensori-motor processes, we may define as an exceptionally complex state of human reaction which is integrally related to all the other perception and response processes. It is not one thing, but a combination and holistic integration of several seemingly diverse, yet actually closely related, phenomena" [2, p.9].

As a result, the essential premise of rational emotive behavioral therapy is that people cause themselves distress and dysfunction by their habitual irrational beliefs and these maladaptive thinking patterns can be changed, with resultant improvement in emotional states and functioning. So, the mentioned above approach is based on the scientific method. According to this method, thoughts, beliefs and values directly affect our senses and perception [4].

REBT theory stresses that people have almost innumerable Beliefs (B's) (cognitions, thoughts, or ideas about their Activating events (A); and these B's importantly exert strong influences on their cognitive, emotional, and behavioral Consequences (C's). So, it is logical for the majority people to automatically conclude, for the most part, that when an Adversity (A) occurs in their lives and they (usually quickly) experience dysfunctional Consequences (C), that A directly causes C. Perhaps they are biologically prone to do so, because if they make this assumption and quickly try to change, they will save their lives and protect their progeny, that's why, they usually resist making what REBT calls the B→C connection. It means they resist seeing that their Beliefs (B's) importantly accompany the A's they encounter and therefore contribute strongly to their C's. REBT says, somewhat uniquely, that Adversity (A) accompanied by Beliefs (B) about A result in Consequences (C) of emotional-behavioral disturbance [1;2;3;4].

To summarize all mentioned above, we have singled out the most important points:

1. As noted above, B's (individual's Belief Systems), which are heavily stressed in REBT practically always include important aspects of emotions and behaviours.
2. Feelings and behaviors, especially disturbed ones, include A's, B's, and C's. People feel and behave, in the final analysis, the way they perceive and think; but they do so within environmental situations. So they'd better, when they feel and act disturbingly, try to see the situation, see their Beliefs about it (B's), and observe their emotional and action-oriented Consequences (C's).

Thus, people often have secondary A's, B's, and C's. If they feel depressed (C), they make their depression into a secondary A, "I am unfortunately depressed." Then they easily tell themselves at B, "I

must not be depressed! It's awful to be depressed!" and they experience the Consequences (C) of depressing themselves about their original depression. Or, in the case where they become endogenously depressed (C) they can tell themselves at B, "It's terrible that I have to take medication for my depression. I'm a weakling for having to take it!" Then again at C they may depress themselves about their depression.

3. Using REBT, people change their dysfunctional and unhealthy emotions to functional and healthy ones, such as disappointment, sorrow, regret, or annoyance. Besides, they discover what thoughts they used to create the healthy instead of the unhealthy emotion.

4. Humans virtually never experience A without B and C, but they also rarely experience B and C without A.

It is important to analyze human's beliefs as the core element of REBT. We have stressed that B's take many different forms because people have many kinds of cognitions.

In REBT, however, we are mainly interested in their rational Beliefs (RBs), lead to their self-helping behaviors, and in their irrational Beliefs (IBs), which, we theorize, lead to their self-defeating (and societal-defeating) behaviors. We can list some of the main (but not the only) B's as follows :

1. Nonevaluative Observations. Such observations do not go beyond the available data. They are nonevaluative because they are not relevant to our goals. When such observations are relevant to our goals, they become evaluative.

2. Nonevaluative Inferences. Such cognitions are called "inferences" because they go beyond the available data. As such, inferences may be viewed as hypotheses about our observations that may or may not be correct. These inferences are nonevaluative when they are not relevant to our goals. When such inferences are relevant to our goals, they become evaluative. It is helpful to realize, for assessment purposes, that inferences are frequently chained together and that it is often important to find the most relevant inference in the chain, that is, the one that overlaps with the person's "musturbatory" evaluations (i.e., events that are dogmatic in nature and couched in the form of must's, should's, ought's, and have-to's, etc.).

3. Negative Preferential Evaluations. These cognitions are termed "negative preferential evaluations" because, once again, (1) they are flexible and nonabsolute (statements like "but there's no reason why they must not..." are also rarely stated but are again implicit in such Beliefs); and (2) they refer to what the person evaluates as negative—"people disapproving of me." They are also termed "rational" in REBT theory because they tend to aid and abet a person's basic goals and purposes.

4. Negative Musturbatory Evaluations. Such cognitions are termed "negative musturbatory evaluations" because (1) they are absolute and dogmatic and (2) they refer to what the person evaluates as negative in a devout manner. They are further examples of irrational Beliefs in that they tend to impede the achievement of a person's basic goals and purposes [2].

The above mentioned are all examples of negative absolute inferences because (1) they go beyond the data at hand, (2) they tend to sabotage the person's goal, and (3) they are held with absolute conviction. C's (cognitive, affective, and behavioral Consequences) follow from the interaction of A's and B's. We can say, mathematically, that $A \times B = C$, but this formula may actually be too simple, and we may require a more complex one to express the relationship adequately. C is almost always significantly affected or influenced but not exactly "caused" by A, because humans naturally react to some degree to stimuli in their environments. Moreover, when A is powerful (e.g., a set of starvation conditions or an earthquake), it tends to affect C profoundly [2;3].

When C consists of emotional disturbance (e.g., severe feelings of anxiety, depression, hostility, self-deprecation, and self-pity), B usually (but not always) mainly or more directly creates or "causes" C. Emotional disturbance, however, may at times stem from powerful As (for example, from environmental disasters such as floods or wars). Emotional disturbance may also follow from factors in the organism (for example, hormonal, disease, or biochemical factors -that are somewhat independent of, yet may actually "cause" C's. When strong or unusual As significantly contribute to or "cause" C's or when physiological factors "create" C's, they are usually accompanied by contributory B's too. C's usually consist of feelings and behaviors but may also consist of thoughts (e.g., obsessions). C's (Consequences) that follow from A's and B's are virtually never pure or monolithic but also partially include and inevitably interact with A and B [2].

Thus if A is an obnoxious event (e.g., a job refusal) and B is, first, a rational Belief (e.g., "I hope I don't get rejected for this job!") as well as, second, an irrational Belief (e.g., "I must have this job! I'm no good if I don't get it"), C tends to be, first, healthy feelings of frustration and disappointment and, second, unhealthy feelings of severe anxiety, inadequacy, and depression.

So, $A \times B = C$. But people also bring feelings (as well as hopes, goals, and purposes) to A. They would not keep a job unless they desired or favorably evaluated it or unless they enjoyed some aspect of it. Their A therefore partially includes their B and C. The three, from the beginning, are related rather than completely disparate [2].

In the system of education the formation of student's rational thinking on the basis of REBT is the tool that allows to maintain a positive self-concept and enhance adaptive capacity to stresses and frustrations in their age. In a conclusion, we would like to emphasize that the development of rational thinking in the educational process will be the most effective and constructive when taking account all psychological factors and conditions, including the peculiarities of ABC theory presented by REBT:

1. Our attitudes, our belief, our thoughts - the way we think about events and the meanings we give to them - directly affect how we feel and behave. This is common sense to most people, making REBT more user-friendly than other therapies.
2. REBT is also the only cognitive-behavioral therapy that encourages people to examine their philosophy of life – their goals, values, etc. – and how their philosophy affects their self-help efforts.

References

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