

Address to QU students:

I find myself inclined to use Cheston's Ways Paradigm as it provided a more dialectic approach; *my way of being* to be Humanistic/Existential, *my way of understanding* would be Psychodynamic/Existential, and *my way of intervening* would be a combination of Positive Psychology, Psychodynamic and Cognitive Behavioral Therapy CBT. Having said that, I believe my career preference in positive, and existential psychology would highlight my counseling and training approach.

I see myself as an analytical and creative person who sometimes over-generates ideas, and who enjoys reflection, art, nature, and music. My upbringing and being raised in different cultures allowed the openness to diverse cultures. I have no doubt that my multicultural background would be an asset in working with people of different ethnic groups, cultures, and diverse religious faiths. My upbringing in different settings from a refined compound in Saudi Arabia with an international community, to visiting my grandparents at the village in Sudan, to living at the American University hostel in Egypt, and working with the United Nations Mission in Sudan would certainly entertain in-depth understanding of diverse socioeconomic groups, religions, age groups, gender, and sexual orientation.

I believe in the authenticity of any relationship, the uniqueness of one's individual experiences, and in human agency and choice. I feel that I have enough genuineness to provide the empathy, listening ear, and safe, trusting environment that is valued in any human encounter, let alone when it is much needed to establish a therapeutic alliance with students. Adopting Carl Roger's optimistic, holistic view of humanity, seeking fulfillment in personal growth, and focusing on positive psychology, I believe in Gestalt

motto that said, “You don’t have to be sick to get better”. I adopt the existential view that every human being is a fully functioning, self-transcendent person who is continually reflecting, discerning meaning in his life, seeking true intimate encounters, and discovering himself beyond material possessions; believing that all the time new horizons, new challenges, and new possibilities would appear.

In working with students, from a psychodynamic approach, we are to be aware of the unexpected material surfacing from the unconscious. By identifying self-defense mechanisms and being mindful about its patterns, we would guard the student’s ego strength, in an attempt to enhance it at the intervention phase bringing him to an “insight”. I’m also lately becoming more interested in object relations, as a way to understand Attachment Theories. I also consider the psychodynamic ways of understanding encompasses the religious and cultural dimensions which are central in therapy. Jung’s insight of the presence of God makes God’s presence a reality throughout a journey of human pain and a search for meaning for the ultimate existential questioning. Psychodynamic would require more time, and pacing to cover the content of bargaining the psychoanalytical role of the unconscious: understanding the role of unconscious motivations: fantasies, wishes, and dreams, and understanding childhood crisis, Adler’s life style assessment, basic mistakes and early recollection, assessment of family dynamics and constellations, evaluating of ego strength, identification of self - defense mechanisms, and exploring archetypes, especially the shadow.

My assumptions would be to continue adopting Yalom’s existential relationship, *like a loving friendship*. I would provide the empathy, sensitivity, and close connection to build a relationship in which the student is *the principal active agent*. I might be *the*

catalyst who may trigger a reaction but should then get out of the way. I would sit with the student with emphasis on the *here and now* experiences as Gestalt suggested, trusting one's own sensory experience as Roger believed, embracing the Mystery to be lived as Yalom trusted, and believing in the power of spirituality as Frankl proposed. Being greatly influenced by Frankl's logotherapy. I would say that it is through loving myself, and nurturing that love, that I would sit with the student, extending my love to my inner self, assuming the consequences of love, would be a decision based on love.

Through love, one is able to see the essential traits and features in the beloved person; and even more, one sees that which is potential in the other, which is not yet actualized, yet ought to be actualized. Furthermore, through this love, the loving person enables the beloved to actualize these potentialities (Eliason,

G. T., Samide, J. L., Williams, G., & Lepore, M. F., P. 91)

Through these spiritual realizations, I hope I will always be aware of the mystery in the counseling room. I will be the channel to provide hope, empowerment, and healing. His Merciful Grace is modeled through me, holding the student's pain, and modeling unconditional positive regard. It will matter to students to understand the depth in my understanding of "so what," and "what next"!

To give you a brief about Positive Psychology:

Positive Psychology is based on Humanistic psychology, which focuses mainly on happiness and fulfillment. Building on Martin Seligman Wellbeing Theory; either in my counselling sessions or through my training workshops with QU students we focus on: Positive Emotions, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning and Accomplishments, PERMA. One of my main goals in working with students includes processing gratitude

and appreciation in their personal lives. We focus on their “personal growth” journey. Guiding them through happy, engaged and meaningful lives. I process with my students their values in life, their strengths, and how we can foster that sense of flow in their tasks, accomplishments and talents. Working to redirect their personal thoughts instilling hope, sense of control, and adaptability.

Our focus as a center is on the students’ emotional, psychological, and social wellbeing. We work on their self-efficacy; their beliefs that they are able to do a certain task. We work through their resilience, fostering their existing positive strategies, coaching them through new ones and building resources that will buffer future challenges. We coach them through stress management and mindfulness techniques and staying the in the present moment. We guide them through recalling there positive past experience to alleviate their moods. Our aim is a Pleasant Life, Good Life, and Meaningful Life for all!

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