

Theories in Counseling

What are they, and why bother?

What is a theory?

- A belief or principle that guides action or assists comprehension or judgment
- The branch of a science or art consisting of its explanatory statements, accepted principles, and methods of analysis
- A set of statements or principles devised to explain a group of facts or phenomena, especially one that has been repeatedly tested or is widely accepted and can be used to make predictions about natural phenomena.
- $E=MC^2$ (Energy = Mass X Constant (Lightspeed))
 - Theory allows us to explain and understand natural phenomena (such as the relationship between energy and matter or human behavior)
- The best theories should be measurable. Many in our field are not, but still provide valuable conceptual models for understanding.

Why have theories in counseling?

- Counseling is a process by which we effect change in human behavior (thoughts, Feelings, and behaviors).
- Counseling and psychotherapy are treatments used to help those with mental illness.
- Theories guide us in our understanding of
 - human behavior
 - human development
 - change
- In the absence of theory to guide us, we lack purpose.
 - All we can claim to be doing is talking with people about problems.
 - We can't claim to be effective or helping as we have no basis on which to judge or measure.

Approaches to theories of human behavior

● Developmental

- Freud (psychosexual stages)
- Piaget
- Kolberg (moral development)
- Erikson (8 stages)
- Kublar-Ross (Stages of Dying and Grief)

● Personality

- Freud (Id, Ego, Superego - Drive Theory)
- Maslow (Hierarchy of needs)
- Object Relations
- Jung (Type Theory)

Approaches to theories of human behavior

● Change

- Rogers (Person Centered)
- Ellis (REBT)
- Glasser (Choice Theory)

● Systems

- Object Relations
- Structural Family Therapy
- The Milan Model
- Post Modernism
