

Gestalt Theory of Dependent Behaviors

Chapter 19. Dependent Behaviors by Philip Brownell and Peter Schulthess (Kindle Locations 8650-8652)

in Gestalt Therapy in Clinical Practice: From Psychopathology to the Aesthetics of Contact (Gestalt Therapy Book Series 2). Gianni Francesetti, Michela Gecele, Jan Roubal, and Leslie Greenberg

loc: 8,650	19. Dependent Behaviors
loc: 8,652	by Philip Brownell and Peter Schulthess
loc: 8,663	Gestalt Therapy, stated that the classification, description, and analysis of the structures of the self are the subject matter of phenomenology.
loc: 8,664	the experience of self
loc: 8,665	deserves a phenomenological scaffold
loc: 8,665	to hang the features of dependence,
loc: 8,665	addictive and self-medicating process. This chapter
loc: 8,667	provides a Gestalt therapy orientation to the “what” and “how” of dependent behavior
loc: 8,671	1. Definitions and Diagnoses
loc: 8,677	1.1. Tolerance
loc: 8,679	refers to the need for ever-increasing amounts of a substance to achieve the desired effect or to bring about intoxication.
loc: 8,682	1.2. Withdrawal
loc: 8,684	physical symptoms resulting from a decrease in the amount of substance in a person’s system.
loc: 8,687	1.3. Recovery
loc: 8,690	overcoming or healing
loc: 8,691	following an organized program designed to combat the addiction and the tendencies for relapse,
loc: 8,694	1.4. Co-dependence

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loc: 8,696	a disease of lost selfhood»
loc: 8,697	being affected by another person's behavior to the point that one attempts to control that behavior,
loc: 8,698	co-dependency is a learned behavior associated with an excessive focus on the needs of others
loc: 8,699	the attempt to take responsibility for
loc: 8,699	other people,
loc: 8,699	motivated by the need for safety, acceptance and self-worth.
loc: 8,722	1.6. Abstinence and Harm Reduction
loc: 8,724	two significant approaches to recovery
loc: 8,724	abstinence and harm reduction.
loc: 8,726	the goal of abstinence is complete sobriety
loc: 8,726	the goal of harm reduction is to modify in some positive direction the dynamic of addictive and self-medicating behavior.
loc: 8,736	1.7. Phenomenological Concepts Relevant to Dependence and Recovery
loc: 8,741	1.7.1. Attitude
loc: 8,741	Attitude is
loc: 8,743	related to interest.
loc: 8,746	attitude is the atmosphere we breathe;
loc: 8,747	attitude organizes
loc: 8,748	according to a central interest

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loc: 8,750	1.7.2. Horizon
loc: 8,750	Horizon is
loc: 8,752	related to potential:
loc: 8,752	can be thought of as all things held possible for a given world,
loc: 8,753	When one's horizon is closed, not much is believed to be possible,
loc: 8,756	1.7.3. World/Life World
loc: 8,756	World is
loc: 8,758	related to context.
loc: 8,759	It's our physical neighborhood – but more
loc: 8,760	it's the mindscape we inhabit.
loc: 8,796	3. Gestalt Therapy Case Conceptualization and Theory of Dependence
loc: 8,798	various writers have described a Gestalt therapy approach to addiction/dependence
loc: 8,800	there is no explicitly direct treatment of dependent process in Gestalt Therapy.
loc: 8,803	Gestalt
loc: 8,803	speaks about persons in addictive processes instead of addicted persons.
loc: 8,804	this terminology
loc: 8,804	avoids labelling persons with fixed diagnoses.
loc: 8,805	characterises addictive processes as behaviors dependent
loc: 8,805	fixed behavioral patterns.
loc: 8,806	(or basic introject is: "I can't stand life without my drug" (Dreitzel, 2010).

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loc: 8,807	addictive behavior is not always connected to substances.
loc: 8,828	Dependence,
loc: 8,828	never a simple matter of the individual addict,
loc: 8,829	is fostered and supported
loc: 8,830	becomes a fixed pattern of contacting within an increasingly shrunken world.
loc: 8,834	People who develop addictions often grow up
loc: 8,834	where self-medicating is an element in
loc: 8,835	early coping strategy.
loc: 8,836	While it is necessary to understand the individual characteristics of subjective experience,
loc: 8,836	also necessary to grasp the intersubjective and field dynamics that are crucial to treatment and recovery
loc: 8,839	3.2. Intersubjective, Dyadic Relationship
loc: 8,841	There is a non-independent dynamic in dyadic processes.
loc: 8,849	Gestalt therapists have been saying as much for decades,
loc: 8,849	such non-independence as intersubjectivity, using Martin Buber's relational philosophy as a heuristic.
loc: 8,850	people can relate to one another with an I-Thou or an I-It attitude.
loc: 8,853	I-It is the dominant attitude involved in dependent process.
loc: 8,854	people are pawns in
loc: 8,854	self-medicating behaviors.

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loc: 8,856	in co-dependent behavior there is a give-to-get dynamic that makes the security of the relationship the target
loc: 8,857	not intimacy with the other
loc: 8,874	3.3. Subjective, Phenomenal Experience
loc: 8,874	Addictive experience is the retreat from novel stimuli,
loc: 8,876	a desire for repetition of previous experience
loc: 8,877	there is a delusional character to dependence.
loc: 8,879	from a Gestalt perspective.
loc: 8,879	the appetite is usually vague
loc: 8,880	in cases of extreme need,
loc: 8,881	spontaneous appetite may make itself definite, bright, and sharply delineated
loc: 8,881	point of hallucination.
loc: 8,882	it makes an object, largely out of the fragments of memory.
loc: 8,884	This is the spike rather than the sine wave
loc: 8,885	depiction of the addict's cycle of experience.
loc: 8,887	the addict goes from sensation,
loc: 8,888	and
loc: 8,888	"hallucinates", or substitutes an old and fixed Gestalt
loc: 8,888	and goes straight to action.
loc: 8,890	It is the substituting of a previous figure,
loc: 8,891	in the current field

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loc: 8,891	and what Gestalt Therapy referred to as a neurotic hallucination.
loc: 8,891	it does not provide anything new
loc: 8,892	there is no learning from experience. There is simply repetition.
loc: 8,903	Another way of looking at this is that the person,
loc: 8,904	is not growing.
loc: 8,906	An organism preserves itself only by growing.
loc: 8,910	This is ego functioning,
loc: 8,910	specifically, this is the organism identifying figures of interest and choosing to move toward them, to satisfy them.
loc: 8,911	in contrast to the id function in which the addict is stuck.
loc: 8,912	the id's contents are "hallucinatory and the body looms large"
loc: 8,912	there is vague awareness of sensory data,
loc: 8,913	person does not truly pay attention to that
loc: 8,915	There is sensation and neurotic anxiety.
loc: 8,915	a pseudo choice and a delusional ego functioning that "chooses" a fixed Gestalt,
loc: 8,916	first a retroflection and then a confluence
loc: 9,037	5. Gestalt Therapeutic Process in Working with Dependent Clients
loc: 9,039	Gestalt therapeutic process involves the phenomenological, dialogical, field, and experimental elements of the overall Gestalt approach
loc: 9,047	Psychotherapy affects the abilities of the client, as described by Malcolm Parlett (2000):

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loc: 9,049	(1) try new things and to become more creative in meeting his or her needs (referred to as experimenting);
loc: 9,051	(2) develop the ability to be more in touch with his or her body (referred to as embodying) and the senses that inform about contacting in the environment;
loc: 9,053	(3) expand upon abilities to recognize (referred to as self-recognizing) and appreciate his or her experience of self;
loc: 9,055	(4) the capacity for relationship (referred to as inter-relating), and
loc: 9,057	(5) the ability to take responsibility for his or her own experience, including the choices the client makes and the natural consequences of making those choices (referred to as self-responsibility).
loc: 9,059	Research has shown success in the use of motivational interviewing (MI) and mindfulness in dealing with substance dependence
loc: 9,061	MI works in the impasse between the polarity of relapse vs recovery and helps the client resolve that impasse by exploring his or her own subjective experiences and figures of interest
loc: 9,063	that is consilient with a modified phenomenological method and dialogical relationship in Gestalt therapy.
loc: 9,064	the awareness work commonly associated with mindfulness is consilient with Gestalt therapy
loc: 9,065	acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT) should be just as applicable since ACT is consilient with Gestalt therapy's paradoxical theory of change
loc: 9,069	Gestalt process has long been associated with awareness and tracking of the client's phenomenal field, claiming that everything having effect is relevant to the current situation.
loc: 9,071	therapists working with dependent clients need to not only understand field effects, they also need to deliberately and strategically intercede at the level of

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	the field to provide support and influence while working in a multi-systemic fashion
loc: 9,073	and provide multiple pro-recovery resources.
loc: 9,073	they might need to consult with other service providers in order to secure services in the best interest of their clients.
loc: 9,082	Gestalt therapists work to expand the client's lifeworld, and that takes the process beyond the uni-dimensional exploration of the client's subjective experience.
loc: 9,083	Therapy with addicted persons has to be multidimensional and multimodal.
loc: 9,084	therapy of body, soul, spirit and the social environment.
loc: 9,087	also often includes the spiritual dimension of a person's life.
loc: 9,088	Gestalt therapists would do well to consult Gestalt-oriented discussions of spirituality in psychotherapy
loc: 9,090	For many clients this is an essential part of their recovery.
loc: 9,183	6.3. Some Final Clinical Considerations
loc: 9,199	Therapists working with patients that are severely suffering from dependent behaviors have also to learn that there are
loc: 9,200	limits in therapy, that they cannot help or save all patients in getting free of their dependency.
loc: 9,205	As with many issues in current mental health, substance dependence treatment is ruled by the cognitive-behavioral perspective in psychotherapy. It need not be that way. Gestalt therapy is an effective approach that assimilates and organizes nicely many of the salient features in addictions work.
loc: 9,207	This chapter has been offered as an alternative and as a suggestion.

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loc: 9,209	Gestalt therapy is a consistent and satisfying way to work, and it allows for a deepening of the supportive relationship between therapists and clients who struggle while feeling out of control and desperate for change.
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