

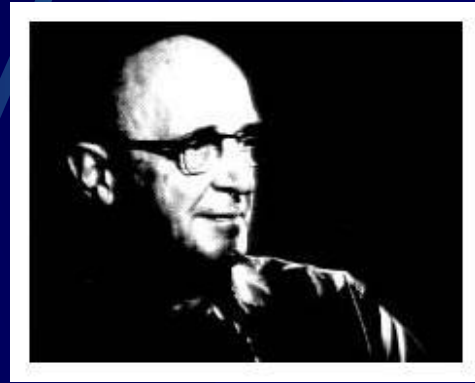
Using Christ-Centered Emotion-Focused Therapy with Trauma

Techniques for Getting to the
Heart of Change

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Origins of Secular Emotion-Focused Therapy

- Freud's focus on transference and "working through"
- Humanistic psychotherapy
 1. Carl Roger's Person-centered therapy



Origins of Secular Emotion-Focused Therapy

- Fritz Perl's Gestalt Therapy



- These origins should caution Christians, since humanistic psychotherapy is explicitly autocentric

Origins of Secular Emotion-Focused Therapy

- Outcome-based psychotherapy research

- Leslie Greenberg, Major researcher



<http://www.emotionfocusedtherapy.org>

- Susan M. Johnson, Marital therapy



A Christian Rationale for Taking Emotions Seriously

- God reveals himself as emotional; we're made in his image
- God created human emotions, so they belong to him
- Emotions communicate significance; they are important for proper human functioning
- Christianity is a religion of the heart, so emotions are central to the salvation (or soul-healing) process

What is the heart?

According to the Bible and lay psychology: the heart is deepest part of a person

It is the focus of Christian salvation

It includes our emotions and motivations



What are emotions?



An emotion is a sign

But what is a sign?

A sign is anything
that points to
something else.

Emotions convey information

About...

- Good and bad (they are *bivalent*)
- One's *perceptions* about good and bad
- Beauty and ugliness

Emotions are motivational

- E-motions can direct or hinder action
- Emotions are usually related to goals, perceived needs, and concerns in life

Emotions can be stored
in memory...
in the brain.





Conclusion:
Emotions are *always*
meaningful

A Redemptive-Historical Model of the Emotions

Creation

- Emotions are good
- The emotion-system develops

Fall

- Emotions are autocentric
- The emotion-system can be damaged

Redemption

- Emotions can be theocentric
- The emotion-system can be healed by Christ

Why Negative Emotions?

Creation

- God created negative emotions to be stored in memory
- Adult emotion tendencies are a record of the fallenness to which we have been exposed
- People feel negative emotions for *good* reasons

Fall

- Because of their own evil, humans experience corresponding emotions of guilt and shame
- Because of the world's evil, humans experience emotions of anger, fear, and sadness

Why Negative Emotions?

Major negative emotions

- Anger: Injustice/unfairness and frustration of goals
- Fear/Anxiety: Danger, possible harm to body or soul
- Sadness: Loss of something valued
- Shame: There is something wrong with me
- Guilt: I have done something wrong

The Redemption of Emotions

Christians by faith were united to Christ's life, death, and resurrection.

On the cross, Christ absorbed and resolved our objective shame and guilt.

In Christ, God's emotions towards humanity changed. On the cross, rejection, abandonment, sadness, anxiety, and injustice are mysteriously mixed together with divine love, forgiveness, and infinite compassion and empathy.

The Redemption of Emotions


Believers enter into union with Christ by faith

Union with Christ leads to three sides of salvation:

1. Declarative: “You are just, holy, and beloved in my Son.”
2. Experiential: experiencing these gifts
3. Christiformative: resulting long-term change

The Redemption of Emotions

A primary goal of Christian salvation is having properly functioning emotions.



Strategic Principles in Christian Carditive Therapy

Strategic Principles in Christian Carditive Therapy

We may need to teach that emotions are created good and meaningful.

1. Consider the book of Job.
2. Consider the book of Psalms.
3. Consider God revealed through the prophets.
4. Consider Christ (before Lazarus was raised, at Gethsemene, on the cross).
5. God prizes honesty and transparency (“Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees”).

Strategic Principles in Christian Carditive Therapy

The goal is to reorganize one's emotions in redemptive ways. This involves...

1. Differentiate one's emotions from one another
2. Pick an emotion & re-experience it in the present
3. Objectify/mentalize it, without repression
4. Bring in other healing considerations to the emotion

Strategic Principles in Christian Carditive Therapy

Help counselees differentiate and
experience their true emotions

1. Role model tolerating the counselee's emotions. Be a "holding environment."
2. Train counselees to be alert for signs of emotion.
3. Train counselees to distinguish emotions from each other.
4. Train counselees to value the revelation of bad emotions. Seek to normalize them (given their story).
5. Explore places where emotion would be expected, but is absent. Seek to uncover the layers of emotion, including the inhibiting emotion (usually anxiety).

Strategic Principles in Christian Carditive Therapy

Promote authentic emotional expression

1. Everything can/should be expressed to God.
2. Some emotions need to be shared with other humans.
This must be weighed carefully.
 - a. Close trusted friends
 - b. Regarding those who have wronged the counselee:
 - * If it is best for the other, and they can benefit from it.
We have no license to share our emotions with people who cannot handle it. It ought not be motivated by revenge.
 - * Some things ought to be shared with perpetrators, whether or not they can benefit from it at the time. But the counselee needs to be ready for this.

Strategic Principles in Christian Carditive Therapy

Promote emotion regulation

1. By doing emotion work with the person, you are training how to keep emotions engaged, without becoming overwhelmed (seek to promote a “safe emergency”)
2. Emotion regulation allows the person to process the emotion in a healthy, mature way that makes it productive: leading to self-awareness, action, God, psychospiritual growth, repentance, and so on.

Strategic Principles in Christian Carditive Therapy

Emotion Differentiation

Help counselee distinguish between good created/redeemed emotions and sinful or damaged emotions.

For example...

1. Emotions from creation (e.g., anger at perpetrator)
2. Emotions that flow mostly from sin (e.g., anger at God for the difficulties in one's life).
3. Emotions that are better understood as a result of damaged creation structures (e.g., intense anxiety in the face of someone who's angry.
4. Emotions that flow from redemption (e.g., love of God).

Strategic Principles in Christian Carditive Therapy

Emotion Integration

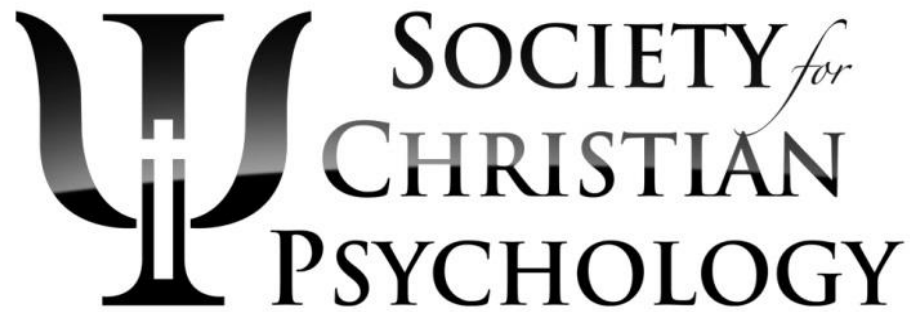
Combine healing emotions with negative emotions

1. Tie it into the glory of God: “My life is contributing to the glory of God.”
2. Tie it into God’s story: “My story is becoming part of God’s story of healing and glory.”
3. Take it to the cross: “My anxiety was nailed to the cross. I nail it there by faith and let it go.”
4. Discuss how Christ was affected emotionally by the sufferings of others. Encourage the recognition that Christ was affected “in your case.”

Summary of Christian Carditive Therapy

LOVERS

1. Lift up your heart to the Lord Lamentations 2:19
2. Open up your heart to him, knowing he loves you in Christ.
3. Verbalize your feelings to him (lament if it's legitimate) and confession if it is sinful) (it can be both). If possible, express to appropriate person.
4. Empty your heart of the feeling, surrender if legitimate, repentance if sin.
5. Receive a new creation emotion from God: Let him raise your heart from the dead.
6. Serve others in the love of Christ.



www.Christianpsych.org

Specific In-Session Strategies

1. Gently pursue emotions: asking questions that help the counselee explore his or her emotions, like “What is the worst thing about that memory?” Eventually, try to bring redemptive considerations into it.
2. Empty-chair technique: Counselee telling people in past what he or she needed to say in the past but couldn't (or telling people in the present what they would like to, but can't), because it would be inappropriate to say it to the person). (or telling the therapist, as a substitute for that person)

Specific In-Session Strategies

3. 2-Chair technique: Old self and new self having an emotional conversation.
4. Take counselee back to a traumatic event and invite Jesus into that event, to bring about a resolution.
5. Use guided imagery to symbolize negative emotions or sinful emotions and redemptive resolutions.
6. Counselee prayer to God, expressing emotions to God.

Out-of-Session Strategies

1. Promote private and public worship of God
2. Assign homework and practice for during the week
 - a. Identification of emotions
 - b. Journal about one's emotional experiences (past/present)
 - c. When negative emotions arise, practice taking them to God and expressing them to God in prayer
 - d. Monitor emotions during emotional episodes
 - e. Practicing meditation and guided imagery that activates and processes emotions redemptively; the deeper, the better. Practice the "Death/Resurrection emotions shift":
Activation of neg. emotion => taken to the cross
Experience of pos. emotion in its place =>
the fruit of resurrection