

Guide to Counseling Rape Victims

Seven Components to Trauma Therapy

1. An emphasis on the development of self-capacities.
2. The therapist must be genuine and present emotionally.
3. A primary focus on the development of the therapeutic relationship, rather than on transference alone.
4. The therapist must recognize that the management of transference differs somewhat in therapies with survivors of severe abuse from that with other clients.
5. The therapist must understand the role of dissociation in trauma response.
6. Psychoeducation and research on the normal reactions to rape.
7. Frame and boundary negotiation in the therapeutic relationship.

Reality Therapy

Group setting where they receive a non-punishing, warm, and supportive atmosphere.

Advocates increasing self-esteem, resolving guilt and shame, rebuilding trusting relationships, and renewing self-worth.

Required to be involved with the other group members, helping them will help themselves.

Helps members regain control of their behavior.

Group confronts passivity, does not allow isolation or acting out.

Attitudes Toward Rape

Who is to blame?

Society's impact: it's the girl's fault for dressing as she does, women can prevent rape, and men have a drive for sex and can't help their behavior.

Factors that relate to their coping behavior: How many times have they been raped? How much force was used? Did she know the person? If so, how well?

Need to find meaning in the traumatic event. Desire to answer the WHY? question.

Issues of Transference

The therapeutic relationship becomes a forum for:

Identifying relational losses,

Practicing relationships skills,

Experiencing rewarding relationships that can offset despair learned long ago.

Ultimately, the client must know that whatever has happened to her DOES NOT affect her VALUE!

Resources

Harris, M.K. (2000). *Rape, Incest, Battery: Women writing out the pain*. T.C.U. Press: Fort Worth, TX.

This book is a collection of stories from women that have dealt with rape, incest or other kinds of abuse. I would recommend this book to the therapist only as the stories are graphic and difficult to read which may re-trigger an unwanted emotionally experience in the client. This book will help the therapist gain understanding of what is going on in the mind of the victim and how some other women have learned to deal with their reality.

Parrott, L. (1997). *Counseling and psychotherapy*. The McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc.: San Francisco, CA.

This book is an excellent counseling tool with only a few pages that directly deal with how to treat a victim of rape. Les Parrott III is an advocate of group therapy with rape victims and gives a wonderful synopsis of reality therapy and it's advantages over individual therapy. This is a good resource for support groups or small groups in churches or for those who feel like they will be doing group therapy in the future.

Pearlman, L.A. & Saakvitne, K.W. (1995). *Trauma and the therapist*. W.W. Norton & Company: New York, NY.

Transference is a major issue in treating victims of rape. This book is a wonderful resource for counselors because it gives a dense outlook on how to effectively use transference and countertransference and how to limit them with these clients. The authors seem to take a client-centered approach and include a conglomeration of other therapeutic techniques in their theory of treatment. They encourage a deep understanding of personality in trauma therapy and list seven components of trauma therapy. An excellent resource I highly recommend.

Ward, C. (1995). *Attitudes toward rape*. Sage Publication Ltd.: London, England.

This book gives a feminist perspective of rape as well as the psychological perspective. The author dedicates a lot of effort in understanding the research that has gone into rape and the implications that peoples' attitudes have on the rape victim. This is a helpful tool in seeing where our prejudices fall and how we can be sure that as therapists we help them combat maladaptive behavior. This book brings light to the social perspective of rape and the perspective of the self.

Rape, abuse, and incest national network. Retrieved October 20, 2001, from <http://www.rainn.org>

RAINN (Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network) is a great website for a client who is looking for universality in her pain. She is given a number of resources and is given opportunities to talk to other people through this site. It provides statistics, guide to where she can go for counseling, as well as online counseling. There are numerous links provided as well.

Hope for healing. Retrieved on October 22, 2001, from <http://www.hopeforhealing.org>

This website is probably the best website for any rape victim to run to immediately. It provided answers to virtually every question that the victim would be afraid to ask and questions they didn't know to ask. It gives information on those who are pregnant by rape, date rape/campus rape, rape at work, stories and poems written by victims, finding support, P.T.S.D., self injury, and much more.