

An Empty Chair Technique to Finalize Prisoners' Unfinished Business in Malang Correctional Institution

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ABSTRACT

The client was a 26 years old male who had a past orientation. He felt guilty because he had been experiencing unfinished business with his father. The assessment was employed interview, observation, psychology test (graphic, SSCT, and TAT), and Guilt Sensitivity Scale in order to reveal the problems. The assessment's result showed that the client had unfinished business problems which were preventing his creativity to prosper during his life in the Correctional Institute. Moreover, it made him frequently sad, guilty, and less involved in communicating with his friends. In accomplishing these issues, an empty chair was used in 7 sections as an intervention to expose the hidden problems of the client, thereby, the outcome presents that empty chair technique helps the client to finalize unfinished business which have occurred in the late 1 year. The development of this intervention can be seen in the result of The Guilt Sensitivity Scale (GGS) that declines.

Keywords: *Unfinished Business, Guilty, and Empty Chair*

A correctional institution originally is built to contribute a service, a treatment, a coaching, and a guideline for the prisoners. Every individual who convicted as a law breaker encounters something called a status shift. This transposition and their lifestyle are definitely different before entering into the correctional institution. Moreover, life is not always as good as the written plan. Unconsciously, the present of another person in the correctional institution, which contains many divergent problems and often come to an end as a failure, is a challenging thing.

A capacity in dealing with defiance is correlated with an accomplishment in living a hard life. According to Gestalt, the actualization of someone's bad attitude is their limitation in working with the issues, so that they are likely to hide. In the development of the presence problem, individuals build many different ways to ignore their problems, therefore, facing dead end in their personal growth (Saadati, Shoae, Alkasir, & Lashani, 2014).

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An unfinished business is apprehensions that cannot be declared to, such as pain, guilt, anger, and etc. Even though these feelings have not been expressed, but they relate to memories and fantasies. It is because they have been saved and generating distraction to individuals' present life continuously. Consequently, it creates a problem for individuals in making an authentic interaction with others. An unfinished business has a guilt effect for the client so as to bother a person if he or she thinks about it until their daily activities mess up (Corey, 2013).

A guilty is a part of individuals' normal feelings and this feeling afflicts their life or their daily activities by causing a failure of the client and that is called a maladaptive guilt (Dost & Yagmurlu, 2008). When people always think about their guilty, it makes a negative impact of their psychology. As a result, they are susceptible of stress and even depression (Flynn & Schaumberg, 2012).

One of the applying interventions was to externalize the client's introjection by using Gestalt counseling, through an empty chair technique. In this case, two chairs were placed in the middle of the room, the counselor asked the counselee to sit in a chair and act as a top dog (authoritarian or stronger one who was projected as his father), and then moving to the other chair as an underdog (weak and helpless one who was projected as himself). Besides, the client played a role as his father and himself by using dialogues (Long, Sakauye, Chisty, & Upton, 2016).

At the moment, the problem that was experienced by the client was still not able to speak honestly about his feeling, so that the client was often daydreaming and unable to maximize his potential. An empty chair technique can be used to complete an unfinished business in order to express the client's feelings that have been suppressed for years about his father. As a consequence, this condition made the client feeling so guilty, empty, and causing avoidance to make an interaction with his friends.

METHODOLOGY

There were psychological assessments to express the client's issues, which were interview, observation, and psychological test. Besides, the psychological test exemplified as below.

1. Intelligence Test of Standard Progressive Matrices (SPM), applied to measure the level of intelligence;
2. Graphic tests, employed to see the client personality (BAUM, DAP, and HTP);
3. Thematic Apperception Test (TAT) is to reveal personality dynamics in interpersonal relationship, emotional booster, and the client's dominant personal conflict;
4. Sack Sentence Completion Test (SSCT) aims to recognize areas of conflict that indicate the existence of the client's problems;
5. The Guilt Sensitivity Scale (GGS) is used as a pre-test and post-test (Cosentino, Faraci, Gragnia, Salianni, & Macini, 2015).

Diagnosis

Based on the description of the case, the results of the assessment and reference in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorder Fifth Edition (APA, 2013), it could be diagnosed that the client met the adult problems' criteria, which was Other Personal Risk Factor V15.89 (Z63.8). This risk factor was an unfinished business with his father.

According to Baumeister, Stillwell, & Heatherton (1994), the client accomplished the criteria of guilt, such as 1) there was a deeply sense of remorse, 2) the client's awareness to be

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responsible for his mistakes, and 3) the context or cultural values related to the society's norms and rules (Baumeister et al., 1994).

Intervention

In this case, gestalt counseling was employed as type of the intervention by using an empty chair technique. The main focus of gestalt counseling is on what and how behavior and on the role of unfinished business happened in the past, which prevented an individual ability to work effectively (Fogarty, Bhar, Theiler, & Shea, 2016).

The main concepts in the empty chair includes an acceptance of personal responsibility, a present life, a direct experience is the opposite of abstract experiences talk, an avoidance, an unfinished business, and a breaking dead end (Greenberg & Malcolm, 2002a). The conducted research by Greenberg & Malcolm (2002b) explained that Gestalt counseling by using a technique of empty chair was able to complete an unfinished business, thereby reducing individual's guilt.

The reason that a gestalt intervention therapy had been selected for the client was because it was suitable with the client's condition and necessary. The client had feelings, which had been hidden for years without any confirmation towards his father. Moreover, the client chose to repress the problems so as to cause feelings of regret, disappointment, sadness, and anger that made him considered as silent person, aloof, and empty. As a result, it took the client into an unfinished business affair. This can hinder creativity and spontaneity of the client. The client had hidden feelings that it caused unnecessary emotional and disrupt an awareness in the present time (Corey, 2013).

This therapy had a purpose to face and express the client's hidden feelings and help him to have awareness of himself, so that he can come to a realization of his ability to do things more than he thought. By maximizing the potential that the client's own, he might be able to live his life at the moment and could have more responsible of his thoughts, feelings, and especially behavior (Wagner-moore, 2004). The empty chair technique was conducted in 7 sessions, as follow.

1. Identification of the problem, the client was able to identify the problems related to his unfinished business.
2. Relaxation, this technique taught the client to keep calm when he faced a situation that made him not comfortable, which could show a deep feeling of guilt.
3. Clearing the ground, the client was able to reveal his expressions, experiences, and emotions that are related to the emergence of unfinished business.
4. The existential encounter, the client was able to feel the existence conflicts and present them into the current situation, so that the client could carry out the dialogue until he found a point from his unfinished business.
5. Integration, the client was able to receive fears, anxiety, and uncertainty. The client also could accept responsibility for the guilt that he felt.
6. Evaluation, the client was able to realize and accept his current condition.
7. Termination, ending the course of the intervention.

RESULTS

Before intervention was conducted, the client had feelings that had been pressed for years without any disclose to his father. He chose to repress the problems, which was causing feelings of regret, sadness, and disappointment that made him considered as silent person,

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aloof, and empty, thereby costing him into an unfinished business. When passing through the intervention process, the client began to confess his hidden feelings by acting a role as himself and his father. In clearing ground session, the client started to express all the emotions that he had been buried for a late year. Although in this session had to administrate in several trials, it is because at the beginning the client felt unable to imagine the presence of his father figure in front of him.

Furthermore, the client came into an existential encounter session, which makes the client felt his real conflict. The client also was able to make a dialogue up to the resolution stage in order to resolve the unfinished business and face his hidden fears of uncertainty. The last session was called Integration, in this session the client could acknowledge a new understanding and help himself to personalize his feelings and behavior. Thus, he can take responsibility for his own live. It means the client responsible and recognizes his potential, so that he does not drag into an unfinished business condition.

During the evaluation process, the client explained that he relieved after the intervention process. In addition, there are transformations from the client because he can accept his current condition and he is able to do the activities in correctional institution. Therefore, he does not dissolve in his feelings of regret and sadness.

The result of The Guilty Sensitivity Scale (GSS) pre-test and post-test indicates two aspects of assessment, which are factor assessment 1 (3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10 items) and factor assessment 2 (1, 2, 6, 9 items). Factor 1 measured how much the consequence that is being experienced due to the negative emotions. On the other hand, the factor 2 measured how big the fear of guilt and when the client was being warned. The results of pre-test and post-test scale from both assessment factors are displayed as below.

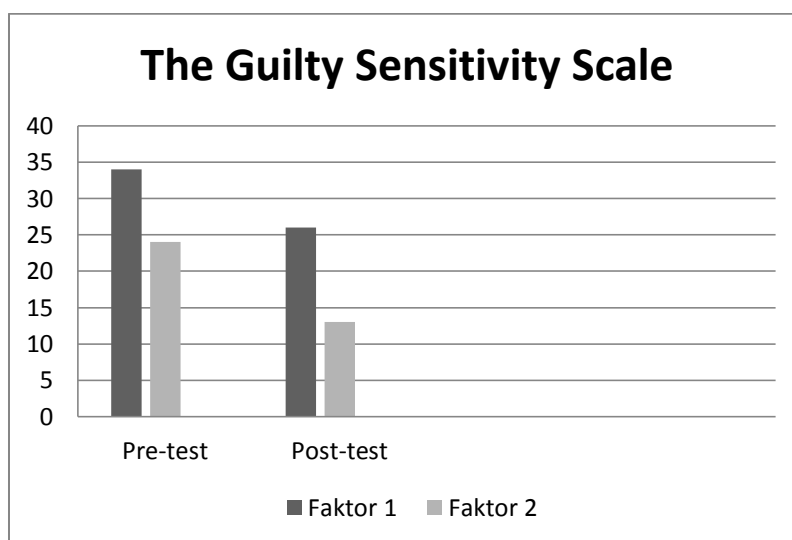


Figure 2. The Graphic of The Guilty Sensitivity Scale assessment

This graphic figure describes about the assessment of factor 1 and factor 2. Factor 1 explains the consequences of the client's negative emotions. In addition, factor 2 states the feelings of fear, guilt and reprimand. The results of factor 1 and 2 assessment show that the client has experienced degradation score that it can be seen in the pre-test and post-test results. It makes the client feel quite relieved, calm, and more responsible of his mistakes.

DISCUSSION

The conducted intervention is based on the target. Corey (2013) conveys an empty chair technique is a way to engage the client in order to externalize his introspective. Basically an empty chair technique is a role play technique that the whole actors are played by the client himself. This technique helps the client to get in touch with his feelings or another side of himself that he wanted to be by intensifying and fully experiencing his opposite feelings rather than just talking about it.

The client's activities in the past that violate norms and rules in the society and the conscience cause the feeling of guilt growing inside him. The application of this empty chair technique is useful to bring the figure of the client's father that activates his feeling of guilt (Flynn & Schaumberg, 2012). Based on Gestalt, the appearance of problematic behavior in an individual is inability of a person in solving his problem, which is tended to perform avoidance behavior. In the development of the presence problem, individuals build many different ways to ignore their problems, therefore, facing dead end in their personal growth (Saadati, Shoaee, Alkasir, & Lashani, 2014).

Gestalt counseling is given to reach the client's consciousness, which means it can maximize his potential to live his current life and help the client to realize a lot of things that he can do. Furthermore, supporting the client to be responsible for himself especially is aware towards his thoughts, feelings, and behavior (Sharf, 2012).

The reducing of guilt within the subject makes him better because the client has already taken responsibility of his mistakes. Besides, the willingness of the client to convey his feelings to his father makes him more relieved, calm, and improvises his performances and responsibilities during his present in the correctional institution. The subject is able to attend in more valuable activities, does not feel long term sad, and able to concentrate in completing his task (The et al., 2010).

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Conflict of Interest

The authors carefully declare this paper to bear not conflict of interests

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