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The Traditional Therapist

The Christian Therapist

The Muslim Therapist

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THE IMPORTANCE OF LOGOTHERAPY IN AFRICAN CULTURE

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ABSTRACT

From literature review, Logotherapy is less utilized in Nigeria. Despite of the brevity of the therapy, many Nigerian psychotherapists are yet to imbibe it in their practice. In demonstrating the effectiveness of Logotherapy in African culture, specifically Nigerian culture, the paper briefly examines the history of psychotherapy and highlights what logotherapy is about along with illustrations on how its holistic form of therapy is very useful in Nigerian culture.

In conclusion, some justifications for using logotherapy are provided in order to guide African psychotherapists in their decision making.

INTRODUCTION

The number of ethnic groups in Africa is so many that it is difficult to pinpoint what African culture actually is. Since culture comprises different ways of life of a people in a particular place or region, it is apt here to adopt Peltzer (1989)'s description of African culture, though his study was based in Malawi. The justification for the adoption is because, like Malawi, almost all African countries also experienced colonialism and acculturation.

Therefore, Africans could be grouped into three categories. The first category is the traditional people who predominantly live in rural area. They belong to the low socio-economical class. The second category is the "Western personhood." Members of this group predominantly live in urban areas. They practise only Western culture, although they are Africans. They belong to the upper class that has lost touch with traditional culture. The third category of people is the "transitional" people. They belong to the middle class. At times, their behavior reflects traditional culture, and at other times, it reflects western culture. Although they live in urban area,

they still have connection with the rural area. In other words, they are in the process of becoming completely westernized. They still practise both traditional and western cultures together.

In using any type of psychotherapy, it is necessary to take cognizance of the above named categories of people in Africa in order to be able to effectively implement any intervention. Logotherapy is a culture-free psychotherapy that is based on the totality of man. That is, man consists of body, psyche and spirit. All these must be taken into consideration when dealing with man. This is the reason why logotherapy is suitable for those three categories.

Therefore, logotherapy fits into African culture because Africans are spiritual people. For instance, Africans hardly do anything without prayer in their daily lives right from naming ceremony to performance of the 'rite de passage', marriage, house warming to even burial ceremony. All these ceremonies require prayers in Africa. The prayers have to be made by traditional Priest, Pastor or Imam, depending on people's religious beliefs. Despite the awareness of logotherapy over two decades in Nigeria, many Nigerian psychotherapists are yet to utilize it in their practices. A lot of studies have proved logotherapy to be effective and economical and as well very suitable to our culture. Africans do not have time to be visiting psychotherapy like it is done in Western culture. Therefore, the paper briefly examines the history of Logotherapy and highlights it with some illustrations in order to make logotherapy more understandable. The study concludes with some justifications for using logotherapy in Nigerian cultural context.

II. BRIEF HISTORY OF LOGOTHERAPY

Logotherapy is a term derived from the word existential analysis by Frankl in the 1930s in order to differentiate his own definition from many existentialists at that time. Therefore, Frankl used the words logotherapy and existential analysis interchangeably in all his writings throughout his lifetime.

The "Logo" in the logotherapy comes from the Greek words "Logos" which means "word" or "meaning". Logotherapy, therefore, can be termed "therapy through meaning" (Asagba 2002 and 2006, Fabry & Frank 1967 & 1988).

Frankl believes that the motivation of man in life is to search for meaning. He makes us understand that we cannot give meaning to people. Man must find it by himself. However, he gives three

avenues that could lead to meaning. They are (1) Creative value (what we give to the world) (2) Experiential value (what we take from the world) (3) Attitudinal value (our attitude toward the unavoidable condition that we may be facing in life such as guilty, suffering and death).

Frankl is popularly known as the third Viennese psychotherapist. In this case, Sigmund Freud was known as the first Viennese Psychotherapist while Alfred Adler was known as the second.

History has it that the idea came to Frankl when he was in high school. It happened during one of his science classes when his teacher was quoted to have said that "life in the last analysis was nothing but a process of combustion." Then, it dawned on him that he had to think over it. So, he asked himself that "If that is so, then what meaning does life have?" (Frankl, 1987; Fabry, 1987 and Asagba, 2011). Before he finished high school, he was already in contact with Freud by writing. Even Frankl wrote an article in his (Freud's) Journal of Psychoanalysis. When Frankl became a Medical student in the same university, he automatically became a member of Freud's Society of Psychoanalysts. It was when Frankl discovered that Freud's pleasure's principles could not help all patients that he had to introduce his own meaning of life's principle.

Therefore, he left Freud for Adler. After joining Adler, he discovered that Adler's principle alone also could not help his patients without his meaning of life's principle. Finally, he formulated his theory of logotherapy which is therapy through meaning, but unfortunately the holocaust disrupted his logotherapy practice. He had to survive the hardship of three different concentration camps, yet he did not give up.

After his release, he later discovered that all his family members perished except his sister whom he later discovered in Australia. He was lucky to be able to further develop his theory despite all what he had lost. Fortunately, he discovered only one manuscript he published as "the Doctor and the Soul." He later published the account of his concentration camp experience which he wanted to publish anonymously but he was later persuaded by Allport in Harvard to publish it with his name. The book with the title "Man Search for Meaning" later became the book of the year in 1970s in America. He continued to practise as the director of the Vienna Neurological Policlinic. Also, he travelled worldwide because he became visiting professor to many universities in America and many other countries. He wrote many articles in Journals and books in

different languages. He was not well known in English communities on time because all his books were written in German until in the 1970s when some of the books were translated into English and other languages. He has not only Ph.D in Psychiatry and Neurology but also in philosophy. He lectured till his death in Sept. 1997 at the age of 92. Frankl has been known to be logotherapy and logotherapy to be Frankl by all his colleagues.

III. LOGOTHERAPY WITH SOME ILLUSTRATIONS

These illustrations were put together during the World Congress in Dallas Texas, 2011. I would like to share them with you here. The figure one and two are derived from Frankl (1988) and my 2002 and 2006/7's books. As shown in figures one & two, the line indicates the "pursue" of happiness towards happiness and another line the "will to meaning" pointing first towards "A reason to be happy", before it leads to "happiness". This indicates that seeking happiness should not be made a primary goal in life because the more one seeks it, the more one misses it. Frankl considered it a "self-defeating" goal in life, unless one has a reason to be happy.

Likewise, figure two shows the line of power as means to the end which is the meaning that further points as pleasure as effect. This proves that power is just a means to the end of the goal which results in pleasure as the effect. That is, meaning in life is a by-product. That is the end result of striving. One could see that "both happiness and success are mere substitutes for fulfillment and that is why the "pleasure principle" as well as "will to power" are mere derivatives of the "will to meaning."

Figure three gives a true picture of the totality of a person. It presents an analogical view of a person which comprises the spiritual, the psychological and the biological dimensions.

Figure four gives an overview of the total person from the view of different professions.

In the Somatic, biological dimension, All Health Care Providers (HCP) are more concerned with this dimension in time of both good and ill health conditions. A person must adhere to the principles of a healthy lifestyle such as having well balanced nutrition and daily physical exercise for prevention of diseases. In sickness he must consult his relevant Health Care Providers (HCP) and adhere to all prescriptions given by them.

In the Psychological dimension, people who are more concerned here are Psychiatrists, psychologists and practitioners of other

relevant professions. Individuals must be able to interact with his or her family as well as be in good relationship with people around such as in the work place. Therefore, he or she must be mentally balanced by relaxing and must be able to cope with many life-stressors that he or she faces day- to-day. Whenever he notices otherwise, he or she must be able to see the relevant consultants such as counselor, psychotherapist and psychiatrist.

Next is the spiritual dimension which is taken care of by Pastor, Reverend, Imam, traditional priest and all other religious priests. This spiritual dimension is left with individuals' beliefs. It is believed to be a personal issue. That is, it is a person's personal relationship with God or whatever he r she believes in that matters to him or her. That is, his or her personal communication with his or her ultimate God or whatever the person believes in.

It shows here that one cannot really see the reality or truth in this dimension; but what one can see is the reflection of what one believes in. Therefore, it is necessary for an individual to be able to maintain spiritual constancy with his or her ultimate God. This is done by praying daily and by giving the body spiritual nourishment in line with what one believes. The most important thing here is that we must take good care of all the three dimension both in good health condition and in sickness. (Asagba 2006/7; 2008 ; 2011 and Lukas 1987).

Figure five shows that finding meaning is a daily issue. That means the search continues till our last breath on earth. It indicates also how the freedom of will is inside us. The analogical explanation puts our freedom of will in our hearts and connects it to a battery that can be charged with all available meaning potentials in life outside of man. As shown in figure five, all of these possibilities in the environment are known as "meaning of moments" which are able to charge the battery anytime. Also, it shows how the ultimate meaning is far for any man to be able to reach in life. Therefore, one has to continue searching for the ultimate meaning in life as long as one is on the earth.

Figure six indicates that man's freedom is not without limitation but that man is still free to make choice in whatever condition or situation he or she finds him/herself in life. It gives an analogy of people stranded in a desert with only one possibility a train to carry them to the ultimate meaning. However, the ultimate meaning is a goal that is endless and cannot be reached. Therefore, the train is only available in desert where many people are stranded.

The train has to make stops in many different situations. Some people stay in the desert without food or water, complaining and doing nothing, yet the same people stay near the train but could not make a decision to board. Others board the train but refuse to alight and remain in the train. But yet others stop at stations one, two, three and so on. This indicates that there is a situation in which we find ourselves in which we will not be able to have the freedom to make choice despite that the choice is always available.

Figure seven uses Lukas (1987)'s demonstration on how man is in search of meaning. The search of meaning is also adapted in my books Asagba 2006/7 & 2009. It indicates how many people in search of meaning are grouped into two categories. Those in the first category have found meaning while those in the second category are still searching for meaning. The first group was further divided into two: the people who have "pyramid value" and those have "parallel value". Whenever there is a storm in lives of those who have "pyramid value", they could run into trouble with psychological maladjustment. As soon as their top priority value collapses, they do not have other similar value to replace them. Whereas in those who have parallel values, if any of the other parallel value collapses, they would be able to find other ones in parallel values to replace the one that is missing or is destroyed. Also, they are well adjusted than their counterpart.

The second group is also divided into two categories: those that are still searching for meaning and those that get trapped in the search. While those who found meaning are in good mental health, those ones that got trapped are not. It is believed that those who get trapped in the search and those people who find meaning in pyramid value are those candidates for counseling or psychotherapy.

IV. SOME JUSTIFICATIONS FOR USING LOGOTHERAPY IN AFRICA

Sixteen justifications are discussed in my 2006's book, some of which will be discussed here to buttress this paper. They are as follows:-

1. Logotherapy will be justified to be used in Africa because eclectic psychotherapy has advantage over just one therapy. Logotherapy is culture free because of its phenomenological nature. It will be very useful in Africa. Its non-rigid nature allows other therapies to be utilized as well.

2. Logotherapy is a short therapy and this makes it suitable for Africans. This is because African culture does not favour long term therapy. My personal experience in the practice is a proof of this issue.
3. Logotherapy is suitable for both religious and non-religious individuals because of the spiritual dimension in the concept. This makes it unique and different from other psycho-therapies. This will help address outbreak of religious violence in Africa.
4. Logotherapy emphasizes human dimension. We are all aware of the importance of patient-doctor relationship or clients-therapist relationship.
5. Logotherapy also is known as agent of unification. This could be seen in Frankl's two laws of dimensional ontology that help to promote multi-dimensional aetiology and diagnosis.
6. Logotherapy is a unifying agent. In this case, it can be used alone or it can be used as a complimentary therapy or theory. That is because it is not rigid in its techniques (it allows flexibilities).
7. Logotherapy is an agent of reconciliation as Lukas has demonstrated. It unites all disciplines together so that they can be able to work as a team and rule out doubts or suspicion among practitioners of different professions.
8. Logotherapy is known as logophilosophy that provides ethical codes for every profession. These codes are very important not only in Africa but all over the world.
9. Logotherapy could be used to solve world problems such as violence and addiction that are now prominent in Africa.
10. Logotherapy could be used to promote aging education so that we would be able to better manage our aging population.
11. Logotherapy is very relevant as a form of bibliotherapy because many of its books are well known for that. Patients could read some of the logotherapy literature and get relieved. For instance, the book "Man Search for Meaning" is well known for such power to relieve patients. I'm a living proof of this experience.
12. Logotherapy could be very useful in sports management. If our sportsmen and women are trained with logotherapy's principles, it would reduce what Frankl called "hyper intention" and

hyper reflection's syndromes that our sport people are facing in Africa or Nigerian.

13. According to Asagba (2006/7), "Prof. Frankl was an experimenter and at the same time a subject in the concentration camp". He was know to be his human laboratory "He is an inventor whose model or theory he did not only invented but also practised"

14. Logotherapy is the only therapy that is suitable for all the types of ethnic groups in Peltzer's description: traditional, transitional and those who have become completely westernized. This is made possible by the humanness of logotherapy.

V. CONCLUSION

The paper has highlighted briefly the African Culture and discussed briefly the history of logotherapy. It then presents seven illustrations on how man searches for meaning in life with some justifications on how logotherapy is very suitable for Africans, specifically, Nigerian's. I hope you would find the information meaningful and useful.

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