

Second Edition

# COUNSELING AND PSYCHOTHERAPY THEORIES

IN CONTEXT AND PRACTICE

#### STUDY GUIDE

JOHN SOMMERS-FLANAGAN
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# STUDY GUIDE FOR COUNSELING AND PSYCHOTHERAPY THEORIES IN CONTEXT AND PRACTICE

SKILLS, STRATEGIES, AND TECHNIQUES, SECOND EDITION

JOHN SOMMERS-FLANAGAN RITA SOMMERS-FLANAGAN



This study guide is dedicated to all the students who feel pulled forward or driven to learn about counseling and psychotherapy. We love the fact that you're dedicated to learning something that, consistent with Geimeinschaftguful, is all about helping others and making the world a better place. Good luck . . . and may the great internal force for positive change be with you.

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Producing a written document of any kind always requires teamwork and we'd like to acknowledge and thank the many contributors who helped us complete this study guide. To add a personal touch to this study guide, we asked a wide range of students in counseling and psychology and professionals to write first-person essays about their experience choosing a theoretical orientation. These essays are heartfelt, instructive, and inspiring. We offer a big thanks to the essay writers who contributed these personal reflections. These contributors are listed along with their professional affiliations, in the introduction.

As usual, we want to offer a big shout out to the John Wiley & Sons team: Rachel, Sweta, and Amanda, your responsiveness and gentle guidance is very much appreciated.

Finally, we had a small team of contributors who helped with glossary writing, crossword puzzling, and the generation of multiple choice questions (always a labor of love@). These contributors include: Chelsea Bodnar, Ty Bequette, Karla Bird, Sara Polanchek, Jessica Holtzer, Rylee Sommers-Flanagan, Seth Bodnar, Joanna Johnson, and Shannon McNabb.

#### Introduction

When you're initially exposed to all the different counseling and psychotherapy theories, approaches, principles, and practices, learning about these theories and selecting one to call your own can be overwhelming. This study guide is designed to help you understand the theories and feel less overwhelmed and more organized as you begin deciding which approach or approaches are right for you. By using this study guide, you'll deepen your understanding of three key components of counseling and psychotherapy theory and practice:

- Self-awareness—Knowing yourself and your unique biases and beliefs helps you see the various theories and techniques through a clearer lens.
- Knowledge—Organizing and deepening your understanding of counseling and psychotherapy theories helps you make an easier leap from theory to clinical practice.
- Application and skill development—For most students, application and skill development is the whole point of learning theories; this study guide provides practice activities to help you apply the theory-based techniques in real world situations.

At some point, every developing mental health professional is faced with the question of which theory or theories and which specific techniques to learn and practice. This can be a difficult and confusing decision. The need to "choose a theory" is such a consistent and ubiquitous part of becoming a mental health professional that it seems nearly a rite of passage.

As we reflected on this reality, we decided it wasn't enough for us to write this study guide alone; consequently,

because there are so many different ways to think about counseling and psychotherapy theories and so many other counseling and psychology students have faced into making decisions about how to best engage in professional practice, we decided to incorporate other voices into this study guide. In particular, in each chapter we've chosen at least two recent master's or doctoral students and a few seasoned professors, to share their perspectives on choosing a particular theoretical orientation.

We encourage you to take the time to read the essays included in each theory chapter. Below, we've listed the essay writers by chapter—along with their professional affiliations.

We wish you the best as you begin your great adventure into the professions of counseling, psychology, social work, or human services. If you like, please follow the blog at johnsommersflanagan.com for addition information related to the theory and practice of counseling and psychotherapy.

#### **Chapter 1**

My Counseling Adolescence

By Jodi L. Bartley, MA, MEd Student in Clinical Mental Health Counseling, Plymouth State University

Changing You, Changing Me

By Greg Meyer, MA, Doctoral Student, Counselor Education and Supervision, Auburn University

#### **Chapter 2**

Why I Became a Psychoanalyst

By Marianne Spitzform, PhD, Independent Practice, Missoula, MT

The Best Way to Help Clients Change Is Through the Therapy Relationship

By Meredith Edmunds, MA, Doctoral Student, Counselor Education and Supervision, University of Montana

#### **Chapter 3**

Why Adlerian Theory?

By Tamara G. Suttle, MEd, LPC, Independent Practice, Castle Rock, CO.

The Four Directions and Seven Methods of Encouragement

By Daniel Eckstein, PhD, Professor of Medical Psychology, Saba University School of Medicine, Saba, Dutch Caribbean

Why the Adlerian Approach Resonates With Me

By Taushia Brooks, BS, Master's Student, Clinical Mental Health Counseling, Indiana State University

#### **Chapter 4**

Learning to Become a Companion to Clients on Their Existential Journey

By Amanda M. Evans, PhD, Assistant Professor, Mental Health Counseling Program, Auburn University, AL

My Experience of Embracing Existentialism

By Zachery M. Milam, MA, Child Therapist, Hamilton Center, Inc.

#### **Chapter 5**

Embracing Eclecticism from a Foundation of Person-Centered Theory and Motivational Interviewing Practice

By Maegan Hopkins, BA, Master's Student, Department of Counselor Education, University of Montana

Seeking Solutions in Rural Alaska

By Sidney Shaw, MA, Doctoral Student, Counselor Education and Supervision, University of Montana

#### **Chapter 6**

The Experience of Gestalt

By Danielle N. Harrison, BA, Master's Student, Clinical Mental Health Counseling, Indiana State University

My Gestalt Therapy Practice

By Sylvia F. Crocker, MS, PhD, Independent Practice, Laramie, WY

#### **Chapter 7**

The Future (of Behavior Therapy) Is Feedback!

By Scott T. Meier, PhD, Professor and Chair, Department of Counseling, School, and Educational Psychology at the State University of New York at Buffalo

From Theoretical Orientation to Personal Theory: Lessons Learned Along the Way

By Maranda Brown, PhD, ALC, Alabama Department of Mental Health, Adjunct Assistant Professor, Department of Counseling and Psychology, Troy University— Montgomery

#### **Chapter 8**

A Counselor's Reflections on Cognition and Its Role in Counseling Practice

By Richard Halstead, PhD, Professor, Counselor Education, Saint Joseph College; Coauthor of: *Counseling Children: A Core Issues Approach*.

Could It Really Be as Easy as Believing in Myself? My Journey to Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy

By Kaprea F. Johnson, PhD, Assistant Professor, Department of Counseling and Human Services, Old Dominion University, VA

#### **Chapter 9**

Why I Teach and Practice Choice Theory/Reality Therapy
By Thomas K. Burdenski Jr., PhD, Associate Professor,
Department of Psychology and Counseling, Tarleton
State University, TX

Utilizing Reality Therapy in Brief Group Settings With Court Referred Youth

By Chloe Lancaster, PhD, Assistant Professor, Counseling, Educational Psychology, and Research, University of Memphis, TN

#### Chapter 10

Working for Radical Change—Slowly and With Great Patience

By Maryl Baldridge, MA, Independent Practice, Washington, DC

Prevention Through Connection: Relational-Cultural Theory

By Ceymone Dyce, BS, Master's Student, Clinical Mental Health Counseling, Indiana State University

#### **Chapter 11**

All Theories Are Personally Constructed

Catherine B. Jenni, PhD, Professor, Department of Counselor Education, University of Montana

Using Solution-Focused Therapy in a Hospital Setting

By Eric M. Crumley, MEd, Doctoral Student, Counselor Education, Auburn University, AL

#### **Chapter 12**

Encouragement as a Foundation for Working With Parents

By Sara Polanchek, MSW, Doctoral Student, Counselor Education and Supervision, University of Montana

The Power of Working With Family Relationships in the Moment

By Kirsten Murray, PhD, Assistant Professor, Department of Counselor Education, University of Montana

#### Chapter 13

Multicultural and Eclectic: My Journey Toward Finding a Theoretical Approach

By Joyce Mphande-Finn, EdD, Assistant Professor, Counselor Education, Kean University, NJ

Learning Something New Every Day Is the Golden Key to Working Multiculturally

By Sidra Baig, MA, Doctoral Student in Counselor Education and Supervision, University of Montana

#### **Chapter 14**

An Existential, Adlerian, and Feminist Framework for College Student Counseling

By Megan Hyland Tajlili, MEd, Doctoral Student, Counseling and Counselor Education, North Carolina State University.

Therapy Training as a Transformative Process

By Antonio Pascual-Leone, PhD, Associate Professor, Department of Psychology, University of Windsor

#### About the Authors



John Sommers-Flanagan, PhD, is a clinical psychologist and professor of counselor education at the University of Montana. He has been a columnist for the Missoulian newspaper, a local public radio show co-host of "What Is It with Men?" and is coauthor of more than 40 professional publications. John is a long-time member of both the American Counseling Association and the **American** Association Psychological regularly and presents professional workshops at the annual conferences of both these organizations.

Rita Sommers-Flanagan, PhD, has been a professor of counselor education at the University of Montana for the past 21 years. Her favorite teaching and research areas are ethics and women's issues, and she served as the director of Women's Studies at the University of Montana, as well as the acting director of the Practical Ethics Center. She is the author or co-author of more than 40 articles and book chapters, and most recently, authored a chapter entitled "Boundaries, Multiple Roles, and Professional Relationships" in the new *APA Handbook on Ethics in Psychology*. She is

also a clinical psychologist, and has worked with youth, families, and women for many years.

John and Rita work together as the mental health consultants for Trapper Creek Job Corps. They also enjoy providing seminars and professional presentations nationally and internationally.

Together, John and Rita have coauthored nine books, including books aimed at helping mental health professionals work more effectively with their clients. These include:

- How to Listen so Parents Will Talk and Talk so Parents will Listen (John Wiley & Sons)
- Tough Kids, Cool Counseling (American Counseling Association)
- Problem Child or Quirky Kid (Free Spirit Press)
- The Last Best Divorce Book (Families First)
- Don't Divorce Us (American Counseling Association; also available in Turkish, co-authored with Senel Poyralzi),

John and Rita have also written two other textbooks with John Wiley & Sons. These include:

- Clinical Interviewing, 4th Edition
- Becoming an Ethical Helping Professional

John and Rita have two daughters, one son-in-law, twin grandbabies, and can hardly believe their good fortune. They are deeply rooted in Montana, and in the summers alternate writing with irrigating and haying on the family ranch. Both John and Rita enjoy professional speaking, exercising, gardening, exploring alternative energy technologies, and restoring old log cabins, old sheds, and any other old thing that crosses their path—which given the passage of time—now is starting to include each other.

#### CHAPTER 1

# Learning About Psychotherapy and Counseling

Let's begin with an imaginary trip.

Pretend you're about to embark on an interesting journey . . . somewhere. Pick any destination you like. You may need to look at a map to see all your options. The whole world is available to you (that's one nice thing about imaginary trips!). Once you've selected your destination, read on.

Write your destination here:

Now . . . write down at least three to four qualities of the destination that you find attractive. This should be easy:

1	
2.	
3	
4	

Next, make a list of at least three to four things about yourself that make you a good fit for the destination you chose; this might be more difficult. Be sure to focus on your internal (e.g., values, interests, beliefs) qualities.

1	
2.	
3. <sup></sup>	
4. <sup></sup>	

Given that you've already studied counseling, psychology, or social work, you probably already know where we're going with this imaginary trip, but just play along anyway. Take a look at the desirable qualities of your destination and your

list of values and interests. Hopefully, you can detect a match. Trips, whether imaginary or real, are usually more enjoyable and meaningful if your destination includes at least some of your personal values and interests.

If you're reading this study guide, then you're embarking on a different kind of trip. This trip is about your professional future. Like the imaginary trip we just discussed, hopefully the professional domain of counseling and psychotherapy is a good match for your personal values, interests, and beliefs. However, rather than assume there's a good match between you and professional counseling and psychotherapy, let's reflect on whether you possess some of the core values and interests that people who are successful in this professional path typically hold (Norcross, 2002; Skovholt & Jennings, 2004).

- 1. Do you have an interest in helping others?
- 2. Do you find listening to and helping others to be enjoyable or meaningful?
- 3. Do you feel empathy for others—your friends, family, even strangers?
- 4. Are you able to be honest with yourself about your personal limitations?
- 5. Are you able to gently give others feedback about their personal limitations?
- 6. Can you make mistakes, admit them, and then work to avoid them in the future?
- 7. Are you inclined to apologize and take personal responsibility for your mistakes?
- 8. Do you have good interpersonal skills?
- 9. Are you able to establish and maintain healthy boundaries between yourself and others?

10. Are you intrigued—at least a little bit—about what causes people emotional pain and suffering and does the idea of tracking down the origins of personal problems and helping people overcome these challenges pique your interest?

Just like the journey to your imaginary destination, your answers to the preceding 10 questions may not be perfectly clear. You may find yourself wondering if you're able to handle some parts of your upcoming counseling and psychotherapy journey. Our purpose in asking these questions is not to discourage you from pursuing a career in counseling and psychotherapy . . . but instead, to encourage you to proceed with eyes wide open and to regularly check to see if your destination is a good fit for your interests, values, and beliefs.

We hope that counseling or psychotherapy is a good fit for you and that this is the start of an enriching and meaningful life journey. We also hope that you're ready for an excellent adventure.

#### **Getting Ready**

Take a few minutes to complete the counseling and psychotherapy beliefs pretest. This pretest will help you develop greater awareness of your current beliefs about counseling and psychotherapy (and it just happens to include a review of material from Chapter 1 of your accompanying textbook).

A score of 100 could mean you are or will be the perfect fit for a psychotherapy or counseling career. A score of 0 suggests that you should consider immediately closing this book and going to talk with your academic advisor about switching your career path. Seriously, you'd be better off in engineering, landscape design, or joining the professional

bowling tour (although the last of these options might involve too much direct human contact).

#### **Counseling** and **Psychotherapy Beliefs Pretest**

This pretest assesses asychotherapy issue tatements. Then, circular gree or disagree with	s. Read and book to the second statement.	oriefly reflect nat best represe	on the following ents how much you
1. Understanding which them live more sa important profession	itisfying and grat	tifying lives is	a fascinating and
Completely Disagree		Fence	
2. There are many psychotherapy.		hes to conducti	ng counseling and
Completely Disagree	On the f		Completely Agree
3. Although ther psychotherapy met therapists listening i	re are many hods, all approa n an effort to unde	contemporary ches involve c erstand.	counseling and lients talking and
	345-		
Completely Disagree	On the f	ence	Completely Agree
psychotherapy meth teaching and client I	• •	nes involve som	e form of therapist
Completely Disagree	On the f		Completely Agree
5. Counseling/psych very effective; in ot have positive outcor	ther words, most	individuals who ce personal bene	procedures that are come for therapy efits.
Completely Disagree	On the f	Fence	Completely Agree
6. Professional practices general ethical prinction $0 1 2 2$		ethics codes.	
Completely Disagree	On the f	ence	Completely Agree
7. Counselors and p skills, and motivatio diverse characterist transgendered: clien	n for working with ics (e.g., clients v	n ethnic minoriti who are gay, le	es and clients with

0 - - - 1 - - - 2 - - - 3 - - - 4 - - - 5 - - - 6 - - - 7 - - - 8 - - - 9 - - - 10Completely Disagree On the Fence Completely Agree

8. It's always unethical for with their clients.	counselors or psy	chotherapists to have sex		
0123	-456	78910		
Completely Disagree	On the Fence	Completely Agree		
9. Some therapy approaches or procedures can harm clients. $012345678910$				
Completely Disagree	On the Fence	Completely Agree		
10. To become an effective therapist it's important to combine your own personal style with a deep understanding of different theoretical approaches and ethical guidelines governing counseling and psychotherapy practice.				
0123	-456	78910		
Completely Disagree	On the Fence	Completely Agree		

#### **Scoring and Application**

To get your total score, add all circled numbers together. There are 10 statements. The highest possible score is 100. The lowest possible score is 0. Calculate your score now:



Generally, higher scores indicate that your views are compatible with a counseling and psychotherapy career and lower scores indicate that you either don't understand or don't value this particular profession. Of course, this is just a silly self-test and as we'll learn throughout the text and study guide, you're always the best expert on you. Also, your scores may change considerably as you learn more about counseling and psychotherapy. But for now, based on your Counseling and Psychotherapy Beliefs Pretest score, consider the following possibilities:

- If your score is high (75 +), you have a good initial understanding of counseling and psychotherapy and your attitude toward the profession is positive.
- If your score is in the mid-range (50-74), you may need some time and experience to get comfortable with

- this professional journey—partly because your attitude is more skeptical—which may affect your ability to embrace the learning required.
- If your score below the 50 mark, your attitude toward and knowledge of the profession is more in the negative range. This could be for a number of different reasons. For example, you could be in a bad mood, you could be tired, or you could be feeling some mixed feelings about the counseling and psychotherapy professional track. Although we were kidding before when we said perhaps you should immediately close this book, if your views are significantly negative (below 25 or 30) you really may want to talk to your advisor about whether you're on the right professional path. Of course, talking about your career plans with someone you trust is generally a good idea from time to time anyway.

#### **Theory Review**

This review is designed to help you recall the key concepts from Chapter 1 of *Counseling and Psychotherapy Theories in Context and Practice* (J. Sommers-Flanagan & R. Sommers-Flanagan, 2012). We begin with a glossary of key terms and then move toward a more integrative application of those terms.

#### Glossary of Key Introductory Counseling and Psychotherapy Terms

**Beneficence:** An ethical concept that means to strive to benefit or help those with whom you work.

**Biomedical perspective:** One of the four alternative cultural-historical realities or perspectives discussed in

Chapter 1. This perspective focuses on biomedical or biogenetic explanations for and treatment of mental disorders. Examples include: trephining, prefrontal lobotomy, electroconvulsive therapy (ECT), and psychotrophic medications.

**Common therapeutic factors:** These are common factors operating across different therapy approaches. Many researchers and practitioners view them as accounting for positive therapy outcomes. One version of these (Lambert, 1992) includes (a) extratherapeutic change; (b) therapeutic relationship; (c) expectancy; and (d) specific techniques.

**Confidentiality:** The practice of keeping what clients say to you private or in confidence. At the beginning of therapy, therapists inform clients of confidentiality and its limits.

**Context:** The particular set of circumstances or facts surrounding a specific event or situation. Nothing happens without context.

**Dodo bird effect:** A phrase taken from Alice in Wonderland's concept, "Everybody has won and all must have prizes." This phrase refers to the relative equivalency of various therapy approaches and implies that no single therapy approach is more effective than any other approach.

**Effect size:** A statistic used to estimate how much change is produced by a particular intervention. Effect size (ES) is reported as the statistic *d* and represents the difference in efficacy (using standard deviations) between evaluated interventions versus a control or comparison group.

**Effectiveness research:** A research model that uses experimental designs that maximize external validity or the generalizability of research findings.

**Efficacy research:** A research model that uses experimental designs that maximize internal validity, thereby allowing researchers to comment on causal mechanisms.

Empirically supported treatments (ESTs): Psychotherapy or counseling interventions that are manualized and have been shown as superior to placebo treatment in at least two good group design studies (RCTs) or in a series of single case design studies by different investigators.

**Empirically validated treatments (EVTs):** EVT is the phrase initially used to describe ESTs.

**Evidence-based principles:** Practice principles based on empirically supported treatments (ESTs).

**Expectation:** Aka Expectancy. This is one of Lambert's four common factors. Lambert estimated that expectation, hope, and placebo factors account for about 15% of variation in treatment outcomes.

**External validity:** A type of validity that refers to how much findings from a particular research study can be considered valid or generalizable to individuals and situations beyond the research study.

**Extratherapeutic change:** Client factors that contribute treatment outcomes such as severity of disturbance, motivation, capacity to relate to others, ego strength, psychological-mindedness, and the ability to identify a single problem to work on in counseling, as well as help and support from within the client's environment.

**Feminist/multicultural perspective:** One of the four alternative cultural-historical realities or perspectives discussed in Chapter 1. This perspective focuses on cultural and gender-based oppression and other related factors that explain and contribute to the understanding of psychological/emotional problems and specific helping or therapy approaches.

First, do no harm: "Primum non nocere." This concept is derived from medical practice and is related to beneficence

and nonmaleficence. It refers to the ethical principle of being sure to not harm clients or patients.

**Great psychotherapy debate:** This phrase was articulated by Wampold (2001) to describe the conflict over whether specific techniques or common factors are more important contributors to positive therapy outcomes.

**Informed consent:** This ethical concept (and practice) refers to clients' rights to know about and consent to ways you intend to work with them.

**Internal validity:** A type of validity that refers to the control of internal factors within a specific research study. Research with high internal validity allows researchers to comment with confidence about causal mechanisms observed within a research study.

**Meta-analysis:** This statistical procedure pools together data from more than one study and obtains an overall average *effect size* (ES = d).

**Multicultural competencies:** A subset of general competence, multicultural competencies include (a) self-awareness of one's cultural background and attitudes, (b) knowledge about other cultures, and (c) culture-specific skills for counseling or clinical practice.

**Multiple roles:** This is an ethical issue that refers to boundary problems that may arise when therapists have more than one type of relationship with a client. Although multiple relationships can sometimes be beneficial, they are typically complex and must be addressed with great care.

**Negative outcomes:** This refers to the fact that therapy outcomes can be negative or associated with client deterioration.

Nonspecific factors: See common therapeutic factors.

**Ortgeist:** The spirit of the place. **Poltergeist:** A mischievous spirit.

**Potentially harmful therapies:** Potentially harmful therapies (PHTs) refer to specific therapy approaches that consistently produce unacceptable negative effects. A list of PHTs was developed by Lilienfeld (2007).

**Practice-based evidence:** This is a term used to describe when clinicians collect data, sometimes after each session, pertaining to client symptoms and/or client satisfaction. This practice is also referred to as *client informed therapy* (Duncan, Miller, & Sparks, 2004).

**Psychosocial perspective:** One of the four alternative cultural-historical realities or perspectives discussed in Chapter 1. This perspective focuses on psychological and social factors that explain and contribute to the understanding of psychological/emotional problems and specific helping or therapy approaches.

Randomized controlled trials (RCTs): RCTs are considered the "gold standard" of the contemporary, modernist research paradigm. An RCT includes at least two groups, one identified as the treatment group and the other the control group. Participants must be randomly assigned to one of these groups. Standardized outcome measures are employed to determine the differences between treatment and control groups. RCTs have high internal validity (as many extraneous variables as possible are controlled) and so researchers can conclude that differential outcomes were caused by the treatment being tested.

**Religious/spiritual perspective:** One of the four alternative cultural-historical realities or perspectives discussed in Chapter 1. This perspective focuses on religious or spiritual explanations for psychological/emotional problems and specific helping or therapy approaches.

**The talking cure:** The talking cure is the phrase that Anna O (one of Freud's early patients) used to describe psychoanalysis.