AN EXISTENTIAL APPROACH TO COMMUNITY SUPERVISION USING HUMANISTIC PRACTICES: DISCOVERING WHAT REALLY MATTERS IN LIFE

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Throughout history mankind has been challenged to live in harmony with one another. Adhering to an antithesis belief system, offenders lose privileges of liberty and struggle to coexist with society – challenging the criminal justice system.

Approaches

- Criminology
- Research
- Psychology
- World History
- Philosophy
- Literary arts
- Multi-medium techniques
Objectives

• Acquire the ability to be an Agent of Change through powerful, evidence-based practices.
• Further develop leadership skills and our role in serving offenders
• Learn to facilitate meaning discovery in ourselves and offenders
• Understand what motivates people as human beings
• Encourage meaning fulfillment over immediate gratification
• Understand how to self-transcend through serving offenders in the criminal justice system.
• By facilitating meaning discovery and purposeful living, acquired knowledge and skills will inspire inner motivation and resiliency in offenders, encouraging humanistic defiance as opposed to social deviance.
Overview of Logotherapy

- Developed by Viktor Emil Frankl (1905-1997), psychiatrist and neurologist.
- Theory first published in 1938.
- Logotherapy/Existential Analysis, the "Third Viennese School of Psychotherapy", is an internationally acknowledged and empirically based meaning-centered approach to psychotherapy.
- The search for a meaning in life is identified as the primary motivational force in human beings.
- Assist individual in detecting their specific and individual meaning
Overview of Logotherapy

- Greek word "logos" is used in the sense of "meaning"
- Psychological-anthropological model
  - Psychological being the mind and emotions
  - Anthropological being the origin, the behavior, and the physical, social, and cultural development of humans
- Based on three philosophical and psychological concepts:
  - Freedom of Will
  - Will to Meaning
  - Meaning in Life
- Based on three avenues to arrive at meaning in life:
  - Creative
  - Experiential
  - Attitudinal – when first two are removed, 3rd always remains
Efficacy of Logotherapy in Criminal Justice


Viktor Emil Frankl (1905-1997)
Tragic and Neurotic Triads

**People in DESPONDENCY**

Guilt  Suffering

*The Tragic Triad*

Death

**People in DESPAIR**

Aggression  Depression

*The Neurotic Triad*

Addiction
Folsum State Prison: Use of Logotherapy in Re-Entry Program

Intensive Journal Method and Logotherapy

- Hass (n.d., para.26) recommended be the key instruments in focusing on rehabilitation
- Outcomes resulted in treating Frankl’s neurotic triad symptoms of depression, aggression and addiction
- Some people no longer require pharmacological treatment for depression.
- Men demonstrated less aggression and less sanction for behavior.
- Cost effective for “addressing addiction, aggression and depression that lead to addiction”
- “…the most viable method to rehabilitate incarcerated men, women and juvenile delinquents” (Hass, n.d., para. 20).
Human Suffering

Access to the *noetic* dimension is blocked

Resulting in: *Existential Vacuum*

**Manifestations**
doubt, inner emptiness, boredom, apathy, nameless dread, lack of initiative, conformism, fatalistic thinking, and meaningless existence
Existential Vacuum

“Existential frustration or, to use another logotherapeutic term, *existential vacuum*, has increased rapidly during the past decades, and the problem of apparent meaninglessness of life has affected the populations of our day. The sufferers are by no means always poor, old, sick or lonely. They often live in affluence and suffer from doubts and feelings of meaninglessness. They are taken care of without doing much in return, their needs are met, they have social security.”

“Nothing is wrong with affluence but there is ample evidence that they may result in mass neurosis and an alarming increase in psychopathological illness as evidence in drug abuse, suicides, and criminality.”

~Elisabeth Lukas
The most important motivation of people's lives is the **WILL TO MEANING**. He gives solid proofs of that thesis; the most convincing of them are based on his experience as a Nazi death camp survivor. A society becomes severely ill when the will to meaning in people's lives becomes frustrated.

“What threatens contemporary man is the alleged meaninglessness of his life, or as I call it, the existential vacuum within him. And when does this vacuum open up, when does this so often latent vacuum become manifest? **In the state of boredom.**”

“For too long we have been dreaming a dream from which we are now waking up: the dream that if we just improve the socioeconomic situation of people, everything will be okay, people will become happy. The truth is that as the **struggle for survival** has subsided, the question has emerged: **survival for what?** Ever more people today have the means to live, but no meaning to live for.”
Freedom and Responsibility

With liberty comes responsibility.

"Freedom, however, is not the last word. Freedom is only part of the story and half of the truth. Freedom is but the negative aspect of the whole phenomenon whose positive aspect is responsibleness. In fact, freedom is in danger of degenerating into mere arbitrariness unless it is lived in terms of responsibleness. That is why I recommend that the Statue of Liberty on the East Coast be supplemented by a Statue of Responsibility on the West Coast."

~Frankl
# Schools of Criminology

## Classical Criminology
- Traditional model used by criminal justice agencies
- Emphasized negative behaviors and criminogenic tendencies
- “Let the punishment fit the crime”
- Emphasizes free will

## Positive Criminology
- Emphasizes and integrates positive experiences to facilitate a change in behavior away from former criminality
- “Treat the individual not the crime”
- De-emphasize the self-centeredness which results in a sense of existential separation often prevalent among criminal engagement
Positive Criminology

• Follows positive psychology, humanistic and existential theoretical models
• Encourages meaningful and purposeful approaches to promoting behavioral change
• Promotes a “responsive community” by balancing individual and community needs in striving for social order by incorporating humanistic, positive thinking into community approaches
• Researchers of positive criminology propose such positive experiences can encourage an individual to refrain from criminal conduct by ascribing a positive meaning to criminal abstinence, thus providing a value-laden basis
• Holistic model including individual, group, social and spiritual forces through a gradual process of resolving behavior problems by means of addressing physical, emotional, spiritual, relational, and occupational health
Character Develops Principles

The Six Pillars of Character

- Citizenship
- Responsibility
- Fairness
- Caring
- Trustworthiness
- Respect

**Integrity**
- Competencies:
  - Acting consistently with principles, values, and beliefs (walking your talk)
  - Telling the truth
  - Standing up for what is right
  - Keeping Promises
- Results in: Trust

**Responsibility**
- Competencies:
  - Taking responsibility for personal choices
  - Admitting mistakes and failures
  - Embracing responsibility for serving others—“leave the world a better place”
- Results in: Inspiration

**Forgiveness**
- Competencies:
  - Ability to let go of one’s mistakes
  - Ability to let go of others’ mistakes
- Results in: Innovation

**Compassion**
- Competencies:
  - Actively caring for others
- Results in: Retention
Moral Compass

Moral Compass
- Principles
- Values
- Beliefs

Goals
- Purpose
- Goals
- Wants

Behaviors
- Thoughts
- Emotions
- Actions

Living in Alignment
Moral Compass

Moral Intelligence
Moral Competence
Emotional Competence

Alignment
Misalignment

Moral Compass
Principles
Values
Beliefs

Goals
Purpose
Goals
Wants

Behaviors
Thoughts
Emotions
Actions

Moral Viruses
Destructive
Emotions
Living in Alignment

Moral Compass
- Principles
- Values
- Beliefs

Direction
- Needs
- Desires
- Goals

MEANING AND PURPOSE

Results
- Thoughts
- Emotions
- Actions
Logotherapeutic Interventions

Encourage the search for meaning and purpose through:

- Dereflection
- Active listening
- Unconditional positive regard
- Explore creative, experiential and attitudinal values
- Identify breakdown in hierarchy of needs
- Identify and unblock access to noetic dimension
- Socratic Dialogue/Maieutic Method

Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs
Mind Mapping - “Joy Map”

“Man only likes to count his troubles, but he does not count his joys.”

~Fyoder Dostoyevsky
Responsibility

3 Levels of Responsibility

1. The responsibility to do no harm
2. The responsibility to add to current value
3. The responsibility to add to future value
“Learn how to see. Realize that everything connects to everything else.”

- Leonardo da Vinci
There's A Hole In My Sidewalk

Chapter One
I walk down the street.
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.
I fall in.
I am lost... I am helpless.
It isn't my fault.
It takes forever to find my way out.

Chapter Two
I walk down the street.
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.
I pretend that I don't see it.
I can't believe I am in this same place.
But it isn't my fault.
It still takes a long time to get out.

Chapter Three
I walk down the same street.
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.
I see it is there.
I still fall in... it's a habit... but,
My eyes are open.
I know where I am.
It is my fault.
I get out immediately.

Chapter Four
I walk down the same street.
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.
I walk around it.

Chapter Five
I walk down another street.
Tools and Techniques

Socratic Dialogue/Maieutic Questioning

Affirmations

Facilitate direction and encourage action

Set goals when defendant begins probation

- Why are you participating in probation?
- In your mind, what is the purpose of attending the probation?
- What do you want to gain from attending and participating in probation?
- Do you see probation as an opportunity? Explain.

Goals
- Short term
- Middle term
- Long term

De-reflection

Identify breakdown in hierarchy of needs

Are my present behaviors aligned with my goals?
Leading in Criminal Justice

- Change what you can
- Advocate as needed
- Accept and work on yourself
- Attitude is always within your control
- Lead by example
- “Walk the Walk”
How to Win Friends & Influence People by Dale Carnegie

**Six ways to make people like you**

- Become interested in other people
- Smile
  - Remember person's name, since it is the most important sound for the person in any language
  - Be a good listener, encourage others to talk about themselves
  - Talk in terms of the other person's interests
  - Make the other person feel important (sincerely)

**How to win people into your way of thinking**

- Fundamenta techniques in handling people
  - Don't criticize, condemn or complain
  - Give honest and sincere appreciation
  - Admire the person, even if you don't agree with them
  - Let other person save face
  - Praise the slightest improvement
  - Make the other person happy about doing the thing you suggest
  - Give the other person a fine reputation to live up to

**Be a Leader: How to change people without giving offence or arousing resentment**

- Begin with praise and honest appreciation
- Call attention to people's mistakes indirectly
  - Talk about own mistakes before criticizing other person
  - Ask questions instead of giving direct orders
    - Let other person save face
    - Praise the slightest improvement
  - Make the other person happy about doing the thing you suggest
  - Give the other person a fine reputation to live up to

The only way to get the best of an argument is to avoid it

- Show respect to the other person's opinions. Never say you are wrong.
- If you are wrong, admit it quickly and emphatically.
- Begin a friendly way
- Get the other person saying "yes, yes" immediately.
- Let the other person do a great deal of the talking.
- Let the other person feel that idea is his/hers.
- Try honestly to see things from the other person's point of view.
- Be sympathetic with the other person's ideas and desires.
- Appeal to nobler motives.
- Dramatize your ideas.
- Throw down a challenge.
Self-Transcendence

- The human capacity to reach out beyond oneself, toward meanings to fulfill, people to love, causes to serve

- The human being is not considered a closed system but as being directed and pointing to something, or someone, other than self

- Self-transcendence is the basis for the technique of dereflection.

- Involves a choice and an action to promote the welfare of another person, expecting nothing in return

- The self is “overlooked” - involves reaching out beyond oneself, transcending towards another human being

- Increases the meaning potential for both the one who is loved (being lead) and the one who loves (leader)

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Power is of two kinds. One is obtained by the fear of punishment and the other by acts of love.

Power based on love is a thousand times more effective and permanent then the one derived from fear of punishment.

~ Mahatma Gandhi
Self-Transcendence: Optional or Necessity?

- Human existence is not authentic unless lived in terms of self-transcendence
- Leadership = value → promotes meaning
- Self-detachment allows freedom to shape one’s character.
- Man is responsible for what he makes of himself
- This capacity to take a stand is what makes us human beings
Noetic Dimension = Spirituality (Noos)

- Man’s heart is restless unless he has found - and fulfilled - meaning and purpose in life
- Noogenic dimension – man’s concern with, and search for, ultimate meaning, the spiritual dimension
- Freedom to choose one’s attitude allows one to rise above and grow beyond oneself
The Freedom to Choose

Our greatest freedom is the freedom to choose our attitude.
~Frankl
Everyone has his own specific vocation or mission in life; everyone must carry out a concrete assignment that demands fulfillment. Therein he cannot be replaced, nor can his life be repeated, thus, everyone's task is unique as his specific opportunity to implement it.

~Viktor E. Frankl

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