

UNIT 1

Analyse Logotherapy in Therapeutic Practice

An Introduction to Logotherapy

SECTION 1

Overview

Course Notes

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Life Change Therapies

Colour your life

Logotherapy – Section 1

The text for this course is either Frankl, V. (2004). *Man's search for meaning: the classic tribute to hope from the holocaust*. Great Britain, Rider, or Frankl, V. (1959/2006). *Man's search for meaning*. Boston, MA. Beacon Press. Both are page referenced in these notes and will be referred to as the Rider or Beacon editions.

Welcome to Logotherapy. This course will introduce you to the concepts of Viktor Frankl's psychotherapy, which might well be named "meaning centred" therapy. You will be introduced to the concept that there are three tiers in Logotherapy.

First, it is a philosophy of life. Every therapeutic intervention begins by making assumptions about the human being. Logotherapy begins by providing a particular philosophy of life which provides the basis for a theory of psychology and finally a theory of psychotherapy. The skills of logotherapy are not simply applied by the therapist in working with particular clients but are part of the therapist's personal approach to life.

Viktor Frankl invented the term "Logotherapy" himself. In the Greek *logos* is often translated as "word". However, its meaning was much deeper than that. For instance John's gospel ends with the statement "in the beginning was the **word** (*logos*) and the Word was with God, and the Word was God". (John 1:1). There is no suitable and reasonably easy English word to translate the concept. In the Greek *logos* really referred to concepts rather than being a single word. It referred to concepts such as language, talk, conversation and story; but also to principles such as thought, reason, and even meaning and wisdom.

Frankl coined the term "existential analysis" to describe the work he wanted to do with Logotherapy. He did not regard it as a stand-alone therapy. In fact Frankl was a medical doctor and psychiatrist first and foremost. However, he was also convinced that medicine, by working with the body to a large extent and psychology, working and with the mind or *psyche* was not addressing the full extent of what it means to be a human being.

The existential approach is first and foremost philosophical. It is concerned with understanding of the person's situation in the world and with the clarification of how an individual constructs meaning in his or her life. It focuses on the relation of an individual with their own mortality, their personal identity, their social relationships, their understanding of the natural world and their spirituality – what they in their deepest heart believe to be important.

The existential approach regards human nature as open ended, flexible, and capable of an enormous range of experience. In this approach the assumption is that we each have the potential to create our lives with our wide range of free attitudes and behaviours.

It is important to understand that existential analysis, another name for Logotherapy, is not intended to be religiously based. Frankl intended it to be a secular therapy. However, it does challenge both therapist and client to think deeply about life and its purpose. What was meant or intended for **your** life? In what do you find meaning?

Before proceeding, take the opportunity to examine your own approach to life.

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Personal and Group Reflections: Worksheet 1.1.1

Before proceeding, complete Worksheet 1.

If you are working with a group, share your responses.

If working on-line, send them to your course supervisor by uploading them to the LMS

An Introduction to Franklian Psychology

Franklian Psychology has been called the Third Viennese School of Psychotherapy. The first such school is psychoanalysis founded by Sigmund Freud, M.D., who around the turn of the century discovered an important human dimension that was a new consideration in the medical world: the human *psyche*. He discovered that certain physical sicknesses can originate in the psychological dimension, especially in situations where our will to pleasure—particularly sexual pleasure—is repressed into the unconscious where it can cause neuroses, hysteria, and physical illness. The classical case is that of the young woman who suddenly found her legs paralyzed, with no detectable physical cause. The psycho-physiological cause was identified by Freud as conversion hysteria. By probing her unconscious, Freud found that she had been sexually attracted to her sister's husband; when her sister was critically ill, the woman wished her sister to die so she could have the husband. The sister did die but the woman repressed her wish and became unable to walk until Freud helped her to bring her wish to consciousness.

One of Freud's favorite colleagues was Alfred Adler, who agreed with Freud's premise that sickness can be caused by psychological repressions. Adler eventually maintained that neuroses and sickness may be caused not only by a repressed will to pleasure but also by a repressed will to power. Just as Freud hypothesized that every child has sexual attractions and hostilities toward the parents, so Adler hypothesized that all children have power struggles with their parents and other adults who play important roles in their childhoods. The repressed will to power may result in inferiority complexes, which can lead to a low self-image or to overcompensation and a "power trip." To cure such inferiority-caused sickness, Adler developed his own school of psychotherapy, calling it **Individual Psychology**.

This is, of course, a vast oversimplification of Freud's and Adler's theories and is intended only to identify one important aspect in the historical development that led from Freud to Adler to Frankl. While Adler was, at one time, a favorite colleague of Freud, Adler ultimately went beyond his mentor. Likewise, Frankl was a favorite student of Adler, and Frankl, too, went beyond his mentor.

Frankl hypothesized that not only a repressed will to find pleasure or achieve power can lead to sickness, but so can a repressed will to find meaning. In fact, he placed the will to find meaning at a higher level than the other two. **"Pleasure," Frankl said, "is not an end in itself but only a by-product of having found meaning and having done something meaningful."** And **power**, too, Frankl insisted, is not an end in itself but only a means to an end, namely to find meaning or to be able to do something that is meaningful. **Meaning**, in Frankl's view, is neither a by-product nor

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a mere means to an end. The human being is basically a meaning-seeking animal—in fact, the only meaning-seeking animal.

Frank had the unique opportunity to test his theories when he was committed to the concentration camps of Nazi Germany in World War II. It was this experience that led him to write what has become his best known work, “*Man’s search for meaning*.”

Reading 1.1.1 – The Story of a Bestseller

Access reading 1 by Leslie (1990)

The text book for this course is “*Man’s Search for Meaning*” which has been chosen first because it is the most well-known and widely published of Frankl’s works. Later editions also contain an extra section in which Frankl gives a succinct overview of logotherapy.

During this course you will be guided through the whole book. Indeed many have found that they have read it in one sitting, as they simply could not put it down. However, for now we will focus on the introduction to the book and invite your own further reflections about meaning in life. Worksheet 2 will ask you to read the original preface to the English edition of *Man’s search for meaning* by Gordon Allport who was largely responsible for inviting Frankl to the United States and hence for making his work known in English. Allport was Professor of Psychology at Harvard at the time he wrote the preface to the first English language edition.

Later in this course you will be asked to read various sections of the text, beginning from page 32 onwards. However, it would be useful before going further to read your text, including the Introduction to this edition and Frankl’s introduction at least as far as page 32. Like many others you may find it too compelling to stop there, but at least go as far as this page before moving on from here.

Pre-reading exercise

Read your text *Man’s search for meaning* at least as far as page 32 of the Rider edition or page 20 of the Beacon Press edition. (to the paragraph that begins “I think it was Lessing....”

Personal and Group Reflections: Worksheet 1.1.2

Before proceeding, complete Worksheet 2.

If you are working with a group, share your responses.

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History of Franklian Psychology.

The result of a repressed will to find meaning, Frankl found, is an inner emptiness which he called an “existential vacuum.” It is remarkable that Frankl identified the phenomenon of the existential vacuum in the late nineteen-twenties and early nineteen-thirties, when the Victorian ethic was still a strong influence in suppressing sexual expression and activities, and when the Depression made obvious the power struggle and the suffering from inferiority complexes. Very few people in the Vienna of 1930 were concerned with the meaning of life.

Frankl had been concerned with that question since early childhood. Even during his teens Frankl read philosophers who struggled with the question of meaning. During his university years, while he was studying medicine, he was attracted first to Freud’s ideas, then Adler’s ideas, and finally developed his own ideas, which led to his exclusion from Adler’s Society for Individual Psychology. Frankl started suicide prevention centers for high school children who had failed, or who were afraid to fail, in the very important graduation tests. By focusing their attention to life goals and future achievement and **dereflecting** their minds from present failures, Frankl prevented suicides and fear of failure as well. He became active in the youth movement of the Social Democratic party of Vienna. During the Depression he found that the unemployed suffered not so much from having no income as they did from feeling useless. By giving them volunteer work in the youth movement, Frankl provided meaning, which helped them survive even though their financial status had not changed. During the nineteen-thirties, Frankl worked in mental hospitals where he tested his concepts on the patients and developed some of the methods that made Logotherapy a practical therapy.

Then came a crucial period that distinguished Logotherapy from all other therapies. No other theory of psychotherapy has been tested by life under such severe conditions. For two years and ten months, Frankl spent his life in German concentration camps. Did life have meaning even there? Did it make a difference to the mental health and survival of a person to see meaning even in hopeless circumstances? The answer that Frankl found to these questions was an unequivocal YES. Out of this situation of meaninglessness, Frankl emerged with a strengthened and tested belief in **therapy through meaning**. If it worked in Nazi concentration camps, it would work anywhere.

It is a myth that Frankl developed his theories as a result of his concentration camp experiences. In fact he wrote the draft of his first book *The doctor and the soul* before the war, but had it taken from him when he went to the camps. While there he re-wrote it and sewed the pages into the lining of his coat.

Video 1.1.1 – The story of logotherapy

Before proceeding access Video 1 in which Frankl tells his own story of the development of his theories.

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/tbmk7rv2x6n5oqu/Video%201.1.1%20Frankl%20on%20Development%20of%20Logotherapy.avi?dl=0>

The next fifteen years were the most creative years in Frankl’s life. He wrote more than twenty books and practiced what he taught as the head of the neurological department of the Poliklinik Hospital in Vienna.

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About 1960 the structure of Franklian Psychology was complete with respect to its philosophy and its practical applications, or at least, it was complete as far as Frankl was concerned. During the following fifteen years, Frankl spread his message, mostly by means of lectures that took him all over the world but primarily to the United States. It was mainly a one-man operation. Frankl himself never established an institute, a society, or a professional journal. He did teach a class of Logotherapy at the University of Vienna, and for seven years, a winter quarter each year at the United States International University in San Diego. He never made the attempt to gather around himself a group of disciples who would carry on his teachings. Franklian Psychology was Frankl, and Frankl was Franklian Psychology (Logotherapy).

Surprisingly, and almost in spite of Frankl, his ideas grew. People picked up ideas from his books and his lectures. Some came to Vienna to take informal training with Frankl, but most people who wrote dissertations about Logotherapy or who practiced Logotherapy met Frankl only incidentally and much later—if at all.

Most methods that are so closely tied to only one person tend to die with their founder. Franklian Psychology is so much an idea whose time has come that it will survive Frankl. This method of survival has advantages and disadvantages. The advantage is the complete freedom with which people are developing the basic ideas in ways Frankl never expected, not only in medicine and counseling, but also in areas he had not thought about, such as addiction, education, and corporate management. The disadvantages are that many take his ideas without giving him credit for them, while others misinterpret his ideas into directions of which he disapproved. The establishment of the Institute of Logotherapy, now, the Viktor Frankl Institute of Logotherapy, in Berkeley in 1977 and the publication of the *International Forum for Logotherapy* are recent attempts to disseminate Frankl's basic ideas as well as the ideas of those who develop them in directions that seem compatible with his basic philosophy and to train professionals to practice Logotherapy that is neither falsified nor compromised. An attempt is being made herein to offer Frankl's ideas and the expanding ideas of his students and disciples who remain true to the tried and tested Logotherapy. Logotherapy translates as "therapy through meaning," **or, perhaps a better way of stating its intent, is "health through meaning" or "growth through meaning."**

Reading 1.1.2 – A Brief History of Logotherapy

Before proceeding access reading 2 by Kalmar (1982) before completing the assessment for this Unit.

Unit 1 Section 1 Assessment 1:

Access Assessment 1, the **Reflective Writing Assignment**

When completed upload your assignment to the LMS.

If you are doing this course in a group your supervisor will negotiate submission of your assignment with the group.

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References:

- Frankl, V. (1959/2006). *Man's search for meaning*. Boston, MA. Beacon Press.
- Frankl, V. (2008). *Man's search for meaning: the classic tribute to hope from the holocaust*. Great Britain, Rider.
- Leslie, R.C. (1990) The story of a bestseller. *International forum for logotherapy*, 13,1.
- Kalmur, S. (1982). A brief history of Logotherapy. (pp. xv-xxiv) In *Analecta Frankliana: The Proceeding of the First World Congress of Logotherapy*. 1980. Berkeley, CA: Institute of Logotherapy Press.