Review of Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy (REBT) in Counselling

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ABSTRACT
This paper reviewed the following concepts in rational emotive behavior therapy (REBT) in counselling, view of human nature, view of emotional disturbance, the ABCDEs of REBT, goals of REBT counselling, techniques of the counsellor, the role of the counsellor and limitations and criticisms of REBT. Conclusion was also made.

Keywords: self-defeating irrational thinking, rational thinking, counseling, emotional disturbance

INTRODUCTION
Albert Ellis is the founder of Rational Emotive Therapy (RET); later he revise and expand RET to Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy in 1993, during institute sponsored conference entitled “A meeting of the minds”. In that meeting Ellis announced that has been changing the name of Rational Emotive Therapy (RET) to Rational Emotive Bahavior Therapy (REBT) (Kernberg, Ellis, Person, Burns, & Norcross, 1993). Albert Ellis was born 1913. He earned his Ph.D. degree in clinical psychology from Columbia. Before 1957, the advent of RET, he has practiced various forms of psychoanalytic approaches. He became dissatisfied with the effectiveness of classical analysis and psychoanalytic psychotherapy.

View of Human Nature
Albert Ellis based his rational-emotive therapy on the basic assumption that human beings are both “inherently rational and irrational, sensible and crazy” (Weinrach, 1980:154) Similarly, Corey (1991) indicated that human beings are born with a potential for both rational, and straight, thinking and irrational, or crooked, thinking. That, people have genetic predisposition for self-preservation, show happiness, rational thinking and straight verbalizing growth, and self actualization.

Ellis (1979b) summarized some of the key basic assumption of human nature:

1. People conditioned themselves to feel disturbed rather than being conditioned by external sources.
2. People have the biological and cultural tendency for think crookedly and to needlessly disturb themselves.
3. Humans are unique in that they invent disturbing beliefs and keep themselves disturbed about their disturbances.
People have the capacity to change their cognitive, emotive, and behavioral processes; they can chose to react differently from their usual patterns, refuse to allow themselves to become upset, and train themselves so that they can eventually remain minimally disturbed for the rest of their life. Ellis & Dryden (1989) concluded that human beings have inborn capacity toward growth and actualization, but rather controlled by their irrational thinking, based on their faulty belief systems caused emotional disturbances to themselves.

**View of Emotional Disturbance**

Albert Ellis contends that psychological problems are intrapersonal in origins: that is, meaning giving process is internal in the minds of people. Individuals produce emotional problems within themselves by their faulty irrational beliefs. People originally learn irrational beliefs from significant others during growing up in early childhood. That is, humans create irrational dogmas and superstitions by themselves, resulting to emotional disturbances (Ellis, 1989c). REBT contends that blame is the core of most emotional disturbances. The tendency for human to escalate their desires and preferences to dogmatic, “absolutistic”, “should”, “must”, “ought” and forceful command to self and others, generate emotional problems. These are five basic areas, according to Dryden & Ellis (1988) and Ellis (1987b) that outlined internalized self-defeating belief systems that create emotional disturbances. They are as follows:

1. “I must love or approval from all the significant people in my life”.
2. “I must perform important tasks competently and perfectly well”.
3. “Because I strongly desire that people treat me considerately and fairly, they absolutely must do so!”
4. “If I don’t get what I want, it’s terrible, and I can’t stand it”.
5. “It’s easier to avoid facing life’s difficulties and responsibilities than to undertake more rewarding forms of self-discipline”.

Any time people use the words must, should, have to, ought to, they put themselves under great pressure, leading to emotional disturbance. One of the primary goals of REBT is to dispute irrational and self defeating behaviors (Ellis, 1996).

**The ABCDEs of REBT**

The basic tenet of REBT is that emotional disturbances are the product of self defeating irrational thinking “A” stands for the activating event. Example, a young lady was engaged to a young medical doctor, but later in the relationship, the young doctor disappointed her, and got married to another lady-activating event. “B” represents how the individual (the young lady) thinks and feels about the broken engagement-belief system. The young lady could be saying, if she doesn’t get married to the young medical doctor, her life is over. “C” is the emotional consequence – the young lady developed clinical depression. REBT contends that “A”, which is the activating event does not cause “C” rather the young lady’s beliefs about “A” largely causes “C”, the emotional reaction. After ABC comes “D”, disputing. The therapist/counsellor helps clients to challenge their irrational beliefs. By clients surrendering their irrational beliefs, they arrive at “E”, which is considered an effective rational philosophy, replacing the old self-defeating behavior. Once, the client reached effective philosophy, he or she has created a new set of feelings; that is the young lady overcoming her depressive moods.

**Goals of REBT Counselling**

The basic goals of REBT focus on helping clients to be aware that they can live rational and fulfilling lives. REBT counsellors contend that when clients use such self-defeating words as must, ought to, have to and suppose to, they are making irrational demand on themselves. Counsellor focuses to minimize or eradicating client’s emotional disturbances and self defeating behaviors by learning a more realistic approach to life. Also, counsellor focuses on helping clients realize that they can function more rational and productive lifestyle. In addition, counsellors help clients to relearn using irrational words, such as “must”, “should”, “ought”, “have”, and “need to”. Counsellor encourage clients to be more tolerant of themselves and others.
Techniques of the Counsellor
Rational emotive counselors utilize several techniques in helping clients to change their self-defeating behaviors. Some of these methods are directive, confrontational, and philosophical and action oriented in scope. Counsellor uses teaching in disputing irrational and self-defeating thoughts and behaviors by guiding clients to be aware of the anatomy of an emotion that clients’ feelings are a result and not the activating event, but rather self-talk directly or indirectly influences emotions.

Walen, Digiuseppe & Wessler (1980) contend that disputing thoughts and beliefs takes one of the three forms, which are as follows: cognitive, imaginal, and behavioral. But, they suggest that the three components is better to be utilized for best result. Counsellor in using cognitive disputation engages clients by asking direct questions, logical reasoning, and persuasion. Counsellor uses phrases such as, “why must you? And why must that be so?” Counsellors use rational emotive imagery (REI) in counselling clients. This technique may be utilized in one of the two areas; First, the client may be asked to imagine a circumstance whereby he or she is likely upset; by examining his or her self talks during the imagine circumstance. Secondly, the client is asked to imagine a situation where he or she feels differently from some actual circumstances (Gladding, 1988). The third way is the behavioral disputation. It involves client behaving in a way that is directly opposite of the client’s usual way of behaving.

The Role of the Counsellor
Counsellors are very active, directive, and serve as teachers correcting client’s irrational behaviors. Counselors are bright, skillful, knowledgeable, and empathetic in their relationship with clients. Counsellor’s first task is to show clients that they have created many irrational “should”, “ought” and “must”. The counsellor assists clients to learn to redirect self-defeating irrational thinking to rational thinking (Eremie, 2005). In addition, where appropriate, counsellor challenges clients to change self-defeating thoughts and behaviors. Counsellors shows clients how self-defeating thoughts (beliefs) could lead to emotional and behavioral disturbances, if not changed.

Limitations and Criticisms of REBT
The approach denied and ignored listening to clients early childhood history. Counselors do not encourage clients to give narrative of “Long tales of woes” (Corey, 1991). Ellis maintains that personal warmth, liking for the client, or caring are not considered necessary for counselling relationship between counsellor and client (Ellis, 1979).
Corey (1991) contends that confrontation approach of REBT could be intimidating clients, especially before the counsellor/therapist has earned their respect and trust by building a solid relationship. He stated that counsellors who have a large degree of power of persuasion and directiveness could lead to client’s psychological harm. Similarly, Gladding (1988) contended that REBT cannot be utilized effectively with persons with severe thoughts disorders, such as schizophrenic, and other severe mentally impaired.

CONCLUSION
Albert Ellis is the father and founder of rational emotive therapy (RET). He later revised and expanded RET to REBT in 1993. Albert Ellis based his rational emotive therapy on the basic assumption that human beings are both “inherently rational and irrational, sensible and crazy” (Weinrach, 1980:154). He further contends that blame is the core of most emotional disturbances. There is tendency for people to escalate their desires and preferences to dogmatic and absolutistic stand.

The basic tenet of REBT is that emotional disturbances are the product of self-defeating irrational thinking. The basic goals of REBT focus on helping clients to be aware that they can live rational and fulfilling lives. The role of the counsellor is active, directive, and teaching oriented. The counsellor assists clients to learn to redirect self-defeating irrational thinking to rational thinking.

Gladding (1988) and Corey (1991) contend that REBT denied and ignored listening to client’s early childhood history. REBT counsellors do not encourage clients to give narrative of “Long tales of
woes’. Corey contends that confrontation as a technique could be intimidating to clients in counselling relationship.

REFERENCES