

# SURVIVAL THEORY OF PSYCHOTHERAPY

\* Tomas M. Madayag, \*\* Jaideep Herbert, \*\*\* Blessy Antony, \*\*\*\* Anila Gangrade

## Introduction

**Survival Theory of Psychotherapy** attempts to explain some psychological issues from a wide range of reference. Although it is not intended to be an eclectic position, it draws its beliefs from a variety of concepts and theories. The authors, through past involvement and exposure to different modalities of therapies, had conceived these propositions without the use of textbooks for reference. Rather, they relied on their concepts as affected by past learning.

## Assumptions

When man is born, he has the inherent tendency of goodness. He emanates from good, therefore, he is good. Man strives for good, be it physical (physical health), mental (mental health) or spiritual (spiritual health). This goodness is the basis upon which man strives toward full-functioning to continue the process. Only with this forward-striving is man at peace with himself, with others, and with nature. That is why we are concerned with those who actually do not wish to survive because it is inherent nature of man to be self-perpetuating towards good. Those who choose not to survive have not lost their goodness but have misdirected them into a non-productive, non-teleological orientation.

Being an intelligent animal, man also possesses capabilities of choice. He has free will. He chooses his destiny. Despite his inherent drive toward full-functioning, he is left with the decision to attain this goal. Change, therefore, can only occur from within and not from without. What external forces manipulate are not the coping mechanisms, rather it is the demonstration of man's basic

goodness so that an individual who is misdirected could revive his inherent tendency to resurface. The external force (in this discussion refers to the therapist) thus becomes a mirror which will provide for the client an image of his internal environment allowing the client to rediscover his basic move and ability towards fully-functioning.

Man strives to survive to enhance his organism. From conception, man is left with the task to survive. Without defenses being utilized, the organism is left to a non-functioning state. This striving to survive does not imply to be saved but rather to attain the goal of a fully-functioning individual.

Man is a social animal. As a necessity, man needs other people for survival both biologically and emotionally. It is this interaction with others that man is able to develop values. He is able to relate his own individuality with the individuality of his group and his culture. Although not altogether, this socialization of man allows him to be self-fulfilling and active in the process of moving away from a non-functioning state.

The effect of society is variable upon man. Man being a social animal is affected by the interaction with other beings. The effect upon him, however, is dependent upon the movement it takes, whether it is towards a fully-functioning or a non-functioning state. His capacity to choose has a bearing on this assumption.

Although man has inherent tendency towards survival, he is not holistic in the sense that this is the only mode upon which he reaches his goal. Man has learned tendencies which affect his movement either to a non-functioning or a fully-functioning state.

Survival theory believes that man, although not totally

\* EdD, ARNP (Florida, USA), Consultant, Vidyanta Skills Institute, Gurgaon, Haryana, India

\*\*Director Clinical Training & Development, Vidyanta Skills Institute, Gurgaon, Haryana, India

\*\*\* Professor, Choithram College of Nursing, Indore

\*\*\*\* Lecturer, Choithram College of Nursing, Indore