

Interview practice using role reversal

Psychodrama is an action method often used as a psychotherapy, in which clients use spontaneous dramatization, role playing, and dramatic self-presentation to investigate and gain insight into their lives. Developed by Jacob L. Moreno, it includes elements of theater conducted in a space that serves as a stage area. Psychodrama offers a creative way for an individual or group to explore and solve personal challenges. It is most often used in a group setting in which the members of the group serve as therapeutic agents for one another in the enacted drama. It is an individual therapy executed within a group with the "side-benefits" that the other group members may experience.

In a session of psychodrama, one client of the group becomes the protagonist, and focuses on a particular problematic situation to enact. These scenes either approximate real-life situations or are externalizations of inner mental processes. Other members of the group become auxiliaries, and support the protagonist by playing other significant roles in the scene. They may also step in, as a "double" who plays the role of the protagonist.

A core tenet of psychodrama is Moreno's theory of "spontaneity-creativity", a readiness to improvise and respond in the moment, to begin to discover new solutions to a given challenge. Moreno's focus on spontaneous action within the psychodrama was developed in his Theatre of Spontaneity, which he directed in Vienna in the early 1920s.

The client and the coach play through the situation, exchanging roles.

Mirroring: The client is asked to act out an experience. He/She then steps out of the scene and watches as another actor steps into their role and portrays or "doubles" them in the scene.

Doubling: The "double" aims to truly and fully reflect the client for the client's benefit. He/she gives form to the material. The person being doubled has the full right to disown any of the "double's" statements and to correct them as necessary. In this way, doubling itself can never be wrong.

Role reversal: The client portrays another person while a second actor portrays the client in the particular scene. The client experiences the role of the other, and also sees him/herself through the eyes of the other. This has some of the benefits of mirroring.

Instructions:

Trios: Scientist, coach, observer

The scientist and his/her coach practice an interview situation.

The roles of "Interviewer" and "scientist" are assigned to specific chairs.

The scientist reverses roles, and begins by taking the role of the interviewer and asks an interview question.

Then they switch chairs. The coach slips into the role of the interviewer, and asks the scientist the question.

The scientist, sitting in the scientist chair, answers.

Scientist and coach switch chairs.

The coach then repeats ("mirrors") the scientist's answer word for word to the best of his ability.

The scientist listens closely.

Remaining in the role of the interviewer, he/she then asks a follow-up question.

They again switch roles and continue.

The scientist, the coach and the observer can interrupt the process at any time for feedback and clarification.

The whole exchange should be followed by feedback and reflection.