



Directive Counseling: Theory and Practice

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The theories we examined in the last chapter could be described as passive and nondirective: the counselor helps offenders to give birth to their own solutions for what ails them. To be sure, intrinsic motivation is better than extrinsic motivation, but as the hangman once said to the condemned as he placed the loop around his neck: “Good luck.” The vast majority of offenders are not capable of arriving at the solutions we want them to arrive at without a great deal of direction. Giving direction is the action phase of the motivational interviewing model.

The theories presented in this chapter are very active, directive, and didactic, with equal involvement of the counselor and the offender. These theories—transactional analysis and reality therapy—were both formulated by traditionally trained psychotherapists who were dissatisfied with the passive methods of traditional psychoanalysis and the extraordinary length of time required for that type of treatment. Both theories were designed to identify and deal with problem areas quickly and are oriented toward cognitive rather than emotional approaches. The creators of the theories realized that most offenders must be actively assisted in their endeavors to become rational, responsible, whole individuals. They do, however, recognize the tremendous importance of the offender/counselor relationship and of the stages of the counseling process as presented in motivational interviewing.

8.1 The Laws of Thermodynamics and Criminal Offenders

Many learn about the first and second laws of thermodynamics in a physics or chemistry class and remember that they have something to do with energy. The first law is the good news, and basically states that energy cannot be created or destroyed, but it can be shifted around from one type to another. When we eat, we are taking in

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chemical energy that is used up by work or exercise, or is stored as fat. If we use up that energy in constructive ways, we become healthy and strong; if we store it as fat, we are in danger of falling afoul to all types of health problems. All life is about finding ways to use energy constructively.

The second law is the bad news. It tells us that in any closed system, everything tends to disorder and that this disorder can only increase with time. Your refrigerator, your car, you yourself, and the entire planet are closed systems that eventually will experience what physicists call entropy (their measure of disorder). If you take an ice cube out of the refrigerator, it becomes disordered as heat flows out. If you want it to become ordered again, you have to apply outside energy to it by putting it back into the freezer. The refrigerator itself becomes disordered when the electricity goes out; your car will not run without its source of energy, neither will you without your source, and neither will the planet without the ultimate source of all energy, the sun. In other words, if you want to defeat the second law of thermodynamics, you have to introduce outside energy into closed systems.

Why are we discussing the laws of thermodynamics in a counseling text?! The answer is that the second law has a little brother called Murphy's Law, which is applicable to all our lives. Murphy's Law states that anything that can go wrong eventually will go wrong, which is the nonscientist's way of saying that everything tends to disorder. Yet, we have seen that we can thwart the second law in the physical world by putting outside energy into closed systems to make them "go right," even though doing so comes with a price. For example, electricity, gasoline, and food cost money, but the price is worth it. The lesson is that to make things "go right" in our lives, we have to put energy into them. If we want our health, career, family, social relationships, automobile, home, or anything else to "go right," they have to be highly ordered. If we do not put constructive energy into them, they will "go wrong" in so many ways.

Think about it: there are always more possible disordered states than ordered states. If we are complacent and irresponsible about our health, marriages, social relationships, careers, and the upkeep of our possessions, they will deteriorate and dissolve. It is only by diligent attention to detail that we can halt the natural descent into chaos and enjoy well-ordered lives.

Offenders need to be aware of and understand Murphy's Law. Offenders need to know that they can either move forward to meet the challenges of the world in healthy and constructive ways or they can sit in a run-down trailer park gulping Budweisers and sucking on Marlboros waiting for "a break." They must come to know that the very laws of nature dictate that things just simply cannot get better unless they put energy into them to make them get better and that they have to make their own breaks. They must come to know that they are the "outside energy" that needs to be plugged into the things in their lives that affect them. You as the correctional counselor also serve as a temporary alternative source of outside energy holding the second law at bay until such time as offenders are able to marshal enough of it for themselves. The skills and techniques are directive counseling, which is your source of outside energy.

Jack Powell (2004) offers a five-stage model to get offenders to take control of their lives:

1. Willingness
2. Responsibility
3. Knowledge
4. Application
5. Maintenance

The first stage is the realization that offenders must be willing to change. Willingness opens the door to change; it is a choice to change the direction of the energy in their closed system rather than to continue to use energy concocting fruitless excuses. Willingness will come about more easily when you guide offenders to recognize the discrepancies and ambivalence in their lives.

The second stage is the acceptance of the fact that changing their lives is their responsibility alone. They must overcome any dependence on others and empower themselves. The correctional counselor helps them to make the initial decision, but it is the offender's life that is to blossom or wither. Here it helps to approach offenders from a strength-based perspective to build their sense of self-efficacy so that they become self-reliant. The operating principle is contained in the old saying: "Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day; teach him how to fish and he'll feed himself for life."

The third stage is knowledge (here is where you teach him or her to fish). Offenders are often woefully unaware of the steps that they must take to lead a responsible life, even if they desperately would like to lead such a life. Even if willing to change and to take responsibility for doing so, if offenders lack the requisite skills and knowledge to do so, they will fail. Counseling is a way to provide the needed skills and knowledge. Here begins the action phase of the motivational interviewing approach in which you guide offenders to the appropriate programs and classes that will provide them with the specific concrete tools for change.

The fourth stage is applying that skill and knowledge. All the knowledge in the world is useless if it is not applied. We probably all can provide countless examples of people who know that they should not smoke or overeat, but do, or know that they should exercise and get physical checkups, but do not. Knowledge must be applied to keep Murphy's Law at bay. Here you supply some of the extrinsic pressures to augment offenders' intrinsic motivation.

The fifth stage is maintenance. This one is difficult! How many dieters, with all the willingness, knowledge, and application in the world, will relapse after some time? This obviously requires long-term commitment. As they say in Alcoholics Anonymous: "Stick with it one day at a time." Responsible life can be achieved; millions of people have done so, and there is no reason that a fair proportion of your offenders cannot do it also with some guidance from you. Here is where we see how good you the counselor are at rolling with resistance, because relapse is a form of resistance. You will roll with it by acknowledging to the offender the difficulty of staying the course and by getting him or her to revisit all of the arguments for change that he or she hopefully voiced previously. We now turn to transactional theory as one means of helping offenders to achieve that goal.

8.2 Transactional Analysis

Transactional analysis (TA) is the brainchild of Eric Berne, a psychiatrist best known for his book, *Games People Play* (Berne, 1964). TA is generally considered the first counseling theory to emphasize the role of interpersonal (as opposed to intrapersonal) factors in mental health (Nystul, 2015). No matter what the origin of a problem disorder may be, it is always expressed interpersonally (Prochaska & Norcross, 2018). The shift in emphasis from intrapersonal dynamics to interpersonal dynamics is the major departure of TA from the parent theory, psychoanalysis. TA stresses the cognitive and behavioral aspects of personality and places very little emphasis on emotions.

If a person gains emotional insight from TA, it is through the process of gaining intellectual insight and/or changing behavior patterns. Individuals achieve any type of insight or change by examining transactions between themselves and others. A transaction is simply the act of two or more people interacting together; analysis refers to the process of exploring and explaining those transactions. TA shares with psychoanalysis the assumption that human behavior is influenced rather profoundly by the events of early childhood, particularly events that told the child that he or she was loved or unloved.

Berne (1966) feels that the greatest strength of transactional analysis lies in its use of colloquial, simple, and direct terms that everyone can easily understand:

Transactional analysis, because of its clear-cut statements rooted in easily accessible material, because of its operational nature, and because of its specialized vocabulary (consisting of only five words: Parent, Adult, Child, Game, and Script), offers an easily learned framework for clarification. (p. 214)

Offenders using transactional analysis soon acquire an easily understood, non-threatening, and jargon-free vocabulary by which they can interact with the counselor to identify problem transactions. As Jacobs and Spadaro (2003, p. 106) put it: “Since many inmates are not very self-aware and have conflicts with other inmates, their family, and friends, TA is an excellent model to teach in a correctional setting.”

8.2.1 Scripts

Scripts are “memory tapes” that we all carry with us in our heads. The most important scripts are recorded in early childhood because children tend to accept messages unquestioningly, lacking the maturity to do otherwise. The messages communicated by our parents during this critical period contribute strongly to future evaluations of ourselves as worthy (“OK”) or unworthy (“not OK”) people. By the time we become mature enough to question verbal and nonverbal messages regarding our OKness, any questioning is strongly directed and influenced by the powerful scripting we received in our most impressionable years. If the preponderance of

messages told us that we were loved, respected, and appreciated, we will see ourselves as OK. If the preponderance of childhood messages were in the opposite direction, we will see ourselves as not OK. These evaluations of OKness tend to persist throughout our lives—regardless of the messages we receive in later life because of the deeply etched early recordings.

Related to these early recordings is the intense human need for what Berne calls strokes. People hunger for strokes, to be touched both physically and emotionally. If they do not receive these strokes, they will not develop into psychologically healthy human beings. According to Berne, we structure much of our time around the pursuit of positive strokes (seeking assurances that we are loved). Positive strokes lead to positive scripting tapes, and negative strokes lead to negative ones. Transactional analysis theorists believe that to change negative scripts into more positive ones, clients require direction from a strong “parent” figure in the form of a counselor.

Four basic life positions result from our scripting and act as backdrops throughout our lives in our interactions with others.

1. **“I’m not OK; you’re OK.”** This is a position commonly found in children. When they are punished for some transgression, they often feel “not OK.” However, their godlike parents, upon whom they depend, are naturally OK in their little minds. You will find this life position in many offenders, especially among substance abusers. They frequently are depressed and will have what Glasser calls in Reality Therapy a failure identity. At least an offender with this life position will consider you OK, so you can concentrate on building up his or her own OKness.
2. **“I’m not OK; you’re not OK.”** This is the typical scripted life position of an abused child who was led to question the OKness of his or her parents rather early in life. A person like this views the world as a hostile and futile place, for the person is unloved and unloving.
3. **“I’m OK; you’re not OK.”** This, too, is the position of abused children who have questioned the OKness of their parents. However, they somehow have come to view themselves as OK from their own circumscribed perspective of OKness. They tend to be loners and to project blame for all their problems and actions onto others. The psychopath and chronic criminals operate from this life position in its extreme.
4. **“I’m OK; you’re OK.”** This is the life position from which correctional workers must operate. To do your job adequately, you must be convinced of your OKness; to do it well, you must strive to generate the offender’s OKness. The goal of transactional analysis is a relationship between counselor and offender with mutual convictions of “I’m OK; you’re OK.” That is, offenders must divest themselves of the negative scripts left over from childhood and find their own power and OKness.

8.2.2 Games

Games are counterproductive social interactions and are the result of individuals interacting with one another from one of the first three life positions. Transactional analysis views games as exchanges of unauthentic strokes because ulterior motives are behind the strokes. The ultimate payoff in a game-playing relationship in which one's energy is structured around getting strokes (or giving them to those in positions of authority) is a storehouse of bad feelings that serve only to reinforce negative life scripts. It is only from an authentic "I'm OK; you're OK" position that individuals can engage in a meaningful, game-free, interpersonal relationship.

Games are very much a part of criminal justice supervision and counseling. You quickly must learn to identify and expose them, for they are dishonest and destructive. You might even find yourself playing games with the offenders. We already have mentioned one that officers might play in their law enforcement role in the section on interrogation ("Now I've got you, you son-of-a-bitch") when they are using offenders for power strokes. Another one often heard is "I'm only trying to help you," used by those gentler souls seeking acceptance strokes. Both of these games, of course, issue from an "I'm OK; you're not OK" position.

Offenders are very good at playing games—they have had lots of practice. You quickly will find out that they are much better at it than you are (take that as a compliment). A real value of transactional analysis for correctional workers is the ability it gives them to expose these games. Games that you will run into with frequency are "Poor me" (reaching for sympathy and "understanding"), "If it wasn't for..." and "Ain't it/I awful" (false remorse). Correctional workers who are acceptance seekers or who are ineffectual will easily fall for KIUD ("Keep it up, doc"). Such workers are suckers for offenders who tell them that they are doing a great job while continuing to behave irresponsibly. The payoff for KIUD offenders is that their counselors probably will let them get away with an awful lot of misbehavior in exchange for their dishonest strokes.

Yet another game, often seen in prison settings, is HDIGO ("How do I get out of here?"). Offenders soon learn to tell counselors just what they think they want to hear. They learn the latest social science explanation for their behavior and spew it back while shaking with "self-understanding" and "remorse." Of course, self-understanding and remorse are very much a part of your goals for each offender in your charge. However, it is imperative that they learn to distinguish the real goods from self-serving manipulation of the counseling setting. It is easy, and very human, to accept the game as the real thing because it gives you a feeling of success and a verification of your effectiveness as a counselor. Do not fudge the data for quick and easy self-strokes. If you accept the game as the real thing, the offender will have won the battle but will lose the war against his or her criminality.

8.2.3 Parent, Adult, Child

Parent (P), Adult (A), and Child (C), or PAC, are ego states: three distinct systems of feelings and thinking related to behavior patterns. Each ego state perceives reality differently: the parent judgmentally, the adult comprehensively, and the child pre-rationally. We all slip into and out of these states as we engage in our various transactions, with one usually being dominant over the others.

The *Parent* is critical, controlling, and moralizing, just like Freud's superego. There is a good side to the Parent, though. The good Parent is the nurturing Parent who reacts to others with care, dignity, and respect and makes demands that are not overbearing. This is the type of parental figure that the transactional analysis counselor is supposed to be. The critical or examining Parent is domineering, self-righteous, and authoritarian. The person who always operates in the parental mode (the constant Parent) excludes the reality of the adult mode and the playfulness of the child. Freud would probably call such a person "neurotic." You probably will not find the Constant Parent represented much among offenders. If you do, they almost inevitably will be sex offenders against children.

The *Adult* is logical, realistic, and objective. The adult is much better able to judge the appropriateness of when to allow their less characteristic ego states to be expressed than the Parent or the Child because of a more comprehensive and realistic integration of experiences. Like the Parent, though, the constant Adult will enjoy little feeling or spontaneity. Almost by definition, you will not find the Adult among criminal justice clientele. You will find many among your colleagues.

The *Child* is spontaneous, fun-loving, and irresponsible. Many offenders will be of this type. It is perfectly OK to be an Adapted Child, one who enjoys fun and laughter in appropriate ways and in appropriate settings. The problem is the Constant Child, one who consistently excludes the Adult and Parent and refuses to grow up and behave responsibly. The exclusion of these restraining influences means the exclusion of conscience, the total absence of which is psychopathy.

One or another of these ego states predominates in each individual. Berne (1964) denies the apparent equivalence of the ego states to the Freudian id (Child), ego (Adult), and superego (Parent). Berne's ego states are aspects of only the Freudian ego. Further, he states that whereas the id, ego, and superego are "theoretical constructs" (inferred entities not amenable to observation), his ego states are "phenomenological realities" (amenable to direct observation). According to Wood and Petriqlieri (2005, p. 34), "Berne's model of ego states is alive in a way that Freud's is not: One can see, feel, and recognize the shifts between ego states." Let us see how we can go about making these direct observations.

8.2.4 Structural Analysis

Structural analysis is the process of making these observations. Transactional analysis counselors use this tool to make offenders aware of the content and functioning of their ego states. A goal of transactional analysis is that all offenders become an

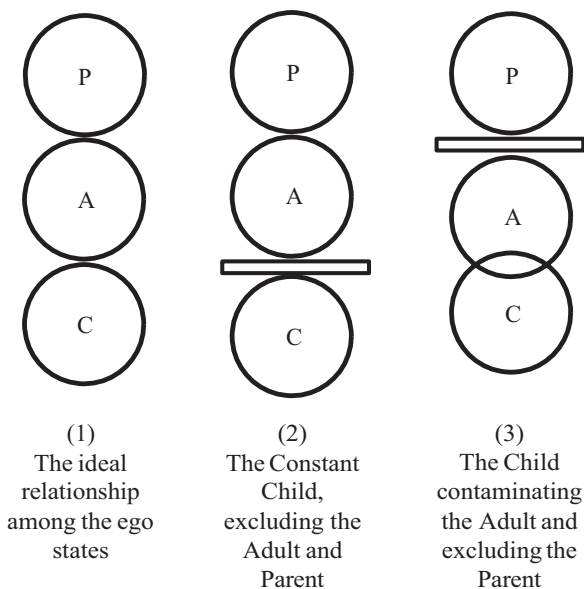
expert in analyzing their own transactions. If offenders become adept at identifying their characteristic ego states, they can understand better their options for change.

Ideally, the Parent, Adult, and Child should be distinctly separate states with clear-cut boundaries, as they are in part 1 of Fig. 8.1. Like the Freudian ego, the Adult holds the executive position but admits the Parent and Child, when appropriate. Two types of problem arise in personality structure as viewed in structural analysis: exclusion and contamination.

Exclusion occurs when ego state boundaries are drawn so rigidly that free movement across them at appropriate times does not occur. The fundamentalist puritan who views all types of sensuous enjoyment as sin, or who lives out his or her life bound by unexamined rules and strictures, is an example of the Constant Parent excluding the Child and the Adult. However, we do not worry much about puritans in our business. We do have to worry about the Child who excludes the Adult and Parent. This type of individual is the complete opposite of the Constant Parent, doing everything that the Constant Parent would not and doing nothing that the Constant Parent does do. Part 2 of Fig. 8.1 illustrates this exclusion.

Contamination occurs when the content of one ego state becomes mixed up with the content of another ego state. We think of contamination in terms of the intrusion of either or both of the Parent or Child states into the rational boundaries defining the Adult state. Contamination of the Adult by the Parent often involves assumptions left over from our early scripting that distort objective thinking. In the chapter on interviewing, this author related how his prejudices regarding proper behavior for women intruded into his Adult when he interviewed the woman charged with sex crimes against children. This contamination ruined the effectiveness of his interview and his subsequent relationship with her. His Child certainly contaminated Bill

Fig. 8.1 Ego states



Bloggs' Adult. He wanted success, Susan, a grandiose wedding, and lots of money. Not too much wrong with that, only Bill wanted it "right now!" The childlike nature of his actions hardly needs belaboring. Contamination is illustrated in part 3 of Fig. 8.1.

8.2.5 Complementary and Crossed Transactions

Transactions between and among individuals can be either complementary or crossed. The ideal transaction is a complementary one. A complementary transaction occurs when a verbal or nonverbal message (the stimulus) sent from a specific ego state is received and reacted to (the response) from the appropriate, or complementary, ego state of the receiver. In TA communication, complementary transactions occur when stimulus and response lines on a PAC diagram are parallel. The lines representing a crossed transaction in a PAC diagram are not parallel.

Crossed transactions occur when a stimulus sent from one ego state meets a response from an ego state other than the expected one. Crossed transactions usually cause trouble in our interpersonal relationships. However, crossed transactions sometimes are called for and are beneficial if the unexpected ego state response leads the stimulus sender to adjust his or her ego state to a more appropriate one.

Figure 8.2 illustrates some complementary and crossed transactions. In part 1 we have Parent-Parent communication. This might be two new probation officers discussing the "ignorance" and "immorality" of "welfare mothers cheating the system." The Adult may never enter into their conversation to explore the whys of the behavior. If one of the officers suddenly shifts into the Adult mode (indicated by the dotted line), the conversation may not be as congenial as when they were transacting at the same level. However, the shift may bring the conversation to a more appropriate Adult-Adult state, at which point the ego states are again complementary. Do not engage in complementary transactions just for the sake of congeniality when you know that some other ego state is more appropriate. As Rogers would say, "be genuine, be yourself."

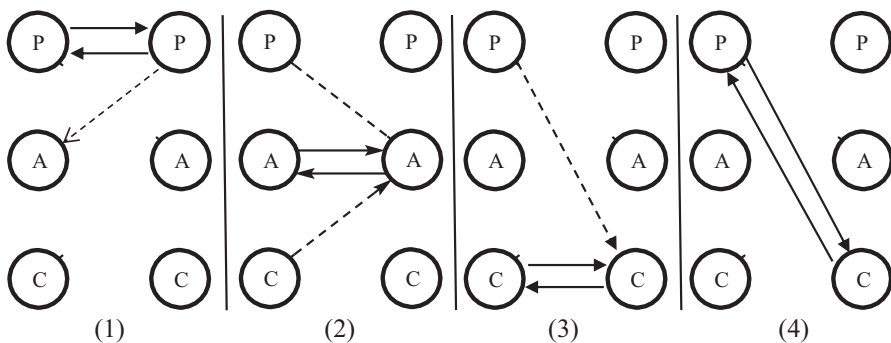


Fig. 8.2 Complementary and crossed transactions

Part 2 represents Adult-Adult communication. This could involve a prison counselor and the offender discussing a problem that the offender may be experiencing from a mutual “I’m OK, you’re OK” position. The counselor does not contaminate the Adult by talking down to the inmate from the Parent ego state nor make light of the problem by joking about it from the Child ego state. The dotted lines indicate these problematic crossed transactions.

Part 3 illustrates a Child-Child transaction. An example of this would be you and your colleagues planning a Christmas party. Obviously, you should never interact with offenders at this level unless the occasion is something innocuous, such as sharing a joke. A crossed transaction in this context could be something like refusing to take part in the office festivities because they are “frivolous,” or responding to the offender’s well-meaning attempt at levity with a cold stare. These responses would both reflect a Critical Parent ego state intruding on what should have been an appropriate Child-Child transaction.

Part 4 illustrates a complementary transaction even though the parties are interacting from different ego states (the lines are still parallel). An example of this type of transaction would be a parole officer chastising an offender about some instance of irresponsible behavior. The officer confronts the offender from a parental ego state, and the offender responds as a child might when caught with a hand in the cookie jar: “You’re always picking on me.” This transaction is complementary because a Parent-Child stimulus has evoked a Child-Parent response. Had the officer confronted the offender from the Adult ego state and asked him or her simply to explain the behavior in question, and had the offender responded from the child state, the transaction would have been crossed.

Remember, any crossed transaction can lead to difficulties in interpersonal relations unless the crossover is purposely designed to shift the transaction to a level that is more appropriate to the immediate situation. In general, crossed transactions usually follow when one party or the other in the transaction operates from one of the first three life positions, which include various combinations of negative “not OK” attributions.

Jacobs and Spadaro (Jacobs & Spadaro, 2003) offer many other examples of transactional analyses and suggest that you go to the transactional analysis website at www.ta-tutor.com for many excellent additional resources relating to the theory

8.2.6 Lessons and Concerns

Transactional analysis simply and effectively illustrates the consequences of feelings one has about the self or about others in everyday transactions. Berne’s genius was his ability to transform complex ideas into colloquial language and easy-to-follow diagrams. Transactional analysis has been accused of being little more than an oversimplification of Freud’s theory (Nystul, 2015), but unlike Freudian concepts, the ideas of transactional analysis can be relayed with relative ease to offenders so that they may analyze their own feelings and behaviors. The emphasis on manipulation and game playing is especially useful for criminal justice workers.

Finally, transactional analysis nicely describes in a neat linear fashion how early deprivation of love leads to a poor self-concept, how a poor self-concept usually leads to a negative image of others, and how these negative feelings lead to poor interpersonal relationships, a common phenomenon among offenders (Andrews & Bonta, 2016).

On the other hand, transactional analysis may possess all the vices of its virtues. There is a danger that an inexperienced counselor simply may see counseling as an intellectual exercise consisting of identifying life positions and doing structural analyses. The very simplicity of the theory invites this type of truncated counseling. It is too easy to hide beneath covers stitched from nifty diagrams and cliché phrases such as “strokes” and “games.” You have to involve the offenders’ emotions and feelings in the counseling process as well as their heads. It is also a theory that makes it easy for manipulative inmates and offenders to con inexperienced (and sometimes even experienced) counselors.

Therefore, use an eclectic approach to counseling. All of the theories have something to offer. Although some offer more than others, none of them offers everything. Used in conjunction with client-centered therapy’s emphasis on the nature of the client/counselor relationship and the other theories we will discuss, transactional analysis could prove to be a powerful counseling tool for you.

8.3 Reality Therapy

Reality therapy, founded by William Glasser (Glasser, 1972; Glasser, 1975; Glasser, 1998), has become a favorite counseling approach among those who work in community and institutional corrections. In fact, Glasser developed the basic ideas of reality therapy in a correctional setting while he was a staff psychiatrist at the Ventura School for Delinquent Girls in California, and it is now practiced in countries around the world (Wubbolding et al., 2004). Thus, unlike other counseling models, it was developed around the realization that corrections workers have a professional responsibility to hold offenders accountable for their irresponsible behavior. Reality therapy also shares with transactional analysis the blissful quality of being relatively easy to understand.

According to Rachin (1974), the principles of reality therapy are common sense interwoven with a firm belief in the dignity of individuals and their ability to improve their lot. Its value is twofold: it is a means by which people can help one another, and it is a treatment technique, applicable regardless of symptomatology. It is simple to learn albeit somewhat difficult for the novice to practice. Experience, not extensive theoretical grooming, is the key to accomplishment.

Reality therapy takes the outstanding features of the other approaches we have examined and integrates them into a single theory that caseworkers and counselors can apply without modification to offenders. Its basic goal is for clients to “get real” and see themselves in charge of their own lives. In agreement with psychoanalysis, reality therapy recognizes that people have basic needs that must be met for healthy

functioning. It also agrees that these basic needs are love and a sense of self-worth.

However, reality therapy does not dwell excessively on these deficiencies. Rather, like cognitive-behavioral therapy (discussed in the next chapter), it moves the offender away from bemoaning past deprivations and concentrates on present self-defeating behavior while teaching the offender how to become a more worthwhile person (Law & Guo, 2015). It is also similar to cognitive-behavioral therapy in that it is didactic, concerned with the present, and action oriented. Unlike cognitive-behavioral therapy, however, it recognizes the problems inherent in calling antisocial behavior “irrational” and substitutes “irresponsible.” This is not just a semantic disagreement. Reality therapy views rationality in terms of positive or negative consequences of individuals’ behavior for themselves. In contrast, reality therapy views responsibility in terms of positive or negative consequences of individuals’ behavior both for themselves and for others.

As we have seen, one can be rational and engage in criminal activity; but one cannot be responsible and do so. The reality counselor will not hesitate, however, to point out self-defeating irrational thinking, just as the cognitive-behavioral counselor will not hesitate to point out irresponsible behavior.

It follows that the reality counselor follows a hard-nosed, no-nonsense approach to offenders: behavior is either responsible or irresponsible, period. However, in common with client-centered counseling, reality counseling recognizes the importance of developing a warm, sensitive, and open relationship with the offender as a prelude to effective counseling. The counselor stresses positive regard (not “unconditional”), genuineness, and empathy without the somewhat syrupy and complex connotations client-centered therapy attaches to them. Reality therapy stresses “a friendly, firm, trusting environment and a series of procedures that lead to change” (Wubbolding, 1995, p. 386).

8.3.1 Theoretical Backdrop

William Glasser believes that those who engage in any type of self-defeating behavior, including criminality, suffer from the inability to fulfill basic needs adequately. If these needs are not met, the person will fail to perceive correctly the reality of his or her world and will act irresponsibly (by “reality” Glasser means that individuals realistically perceive not only the immediate consequences of their behavior but also the remote consequences). To act responsibly, offenders have to be helped to face the reality of the world in which they live, and to face reality, they must be helped to fulfill their basic needs. These basic needs are the need to love and to be loved and the need to feel that we are worthwhile to ourselves and to others. (Glasser later added three other needs to his theory—fun, freedom, and survival—though he still focused on the first two as paramount [Law & Guo, 2015].)

Glasser (1975, p. 11) goes on to describe how these two needs are interrelated: “Although the two needs are separate, a person who loves and is loved will usually feel that he [or she] is a worthwhile person, and one who is worthwhile is usually

someone who is loved and can give love in return.” The person who has these needs met develops a success identity and greater self-efficacy (Law & Guo, 2015). The person who does not have these needs met develops a failure identity, which results in the inevitable descent into disorder.

A failure identity is analogous to what Berne calls an “I’m not OK” life position in transactional analysis, and a success identity is analogous to an “I’m OK” life position. Glasser feels that a person develops his or her basic identity (success or failure) by the age of 4 or 5. If we are loved, and if we are allowed and encouraged to learn, explore, and experience, we will have a success identity. If we are not loved, if we are neglected, and if all our positive efforts are stifled, we will have a failure identity. The whole process of reality therapy can be seen as an effort to help offenders to develop a success identity, to enhance their self-esteem by guiding them from success (however small) to success.

Glasser’s theory nicely ties in at the psychological level with the sociological insights of Hirschi’s (1969) social control theory. The lack of a loving relationship with significant others (attachment) leads to a generalized lack of concern for the expectations and values of the larger society. This unconcern leads to a lack of commitment to a prosocial lifestyle, failure in school and in the job market, and a failure identity. Lacking this commitment, the individual is not involved with enough people with success identities who could model responsible behavior patterns for him or her. Rather, he or she is involved with others with failure identities who justify themselves and their behavior by developing a set of beliefs that are contrary to conventional morality. If early deprivations are severe enough, the individual may develop a psychopathic personality.

Although reality therapy refers to causes of behavior, it stresses that the causal understanding of behavior should not be viewed as excuses for that behavior. Glasser (2004) agrees with the client-centered perspective that individuals are ultimately responsible for their own identity because in all things, “We choose what we do or what we do not do” (p. 340).

Reality therapists fully understand that choices are shaped (limited or expanded) by our genetic makeup and developmental experiences, and by current environmental circumstances, but they insist that only by treating behavior as if it were a free choice makes change possible. Wubbolding and his colleagues (Wubbolding et al., 2004, p. 221) believe that if behavior is a choice, then it is within each person’s ability to change it and that: “This statement can be both frightening and encouraging. It is frightening because if you accept it, you cannot longer blame society for your misery.” Accepting responsibility for one’s own behavior is encouraging and empowering. It enables us to realize that placing the responsibility for behavior on outside circumstances means that one’s being is owned by them and that the only way one can change is if those circumstances change. Offenders must come to reject that notion completely.

Also in common with client-centered therapy, reality therapy asserts that we have a “growth force” within us that strives for a success identity. Reality counseling attempts to activate that force by helping offenders to learn who they are, how to interact with others in a responsible fashion, and how they can be accepted more

fully by others. It charges the counselor to be a continuing model of personal responsibility for the offender. This means, once again, that counselors must work on themselves with the objective of becoming the best kind of person they are capable of becoming.

In an interview with Evans (1982), Glasser enumerates seven steps that the counselor must take to effect meaningful changes in an offender's behavior. We can think of the steps (paraphrased below) as the action phase of motivational interviewing:

1. Get involved with offenders; develop warm rapport; show respect.
2. Understand offenders' personal histories, but deemphasize them in favor of what they are doing now.
3. Assist offenders to evaluate their attitudes and behavior, and help them to discover how they are contributing to their failure identities.
4. Explore with them alternative behaviors that may be more useful in developing a success identity.
5. After the offender has made his or her decisions regarding alternatives, get a commitment in writing to a plan of change.
6. Once the offender makes a commitment, make it clear that excuses for not adhering to it will not be tolerated. Emphasize that it is the offender's responsibility to carry out the plan.
7. Do not be punitive with offenders, but allow them to suffer the natural consequences of their behavior. Attempting to shield offenders from these natural consequences reinforces their irresponsibility and denies the self-directedness of their actions.

8.3.2 The Reluctant/Resistant Offender

The attitudes and techniques of reality therapy are particularly useful in counseling reluctant and/or resistant offenders. Most counseling theories assume a voluntary client who has actively sought out help with various problems, although studies indicate that most clients, even self-referred ones, exhibit some reluctance or resistance at times (Elliott, 2002; Englar-Carlson, Evans, & Duffey, 2014). Some authorities even consider voluntary and welcomed interaction with the counselor as an essential prerequisite to the helping process (Slattery, 2004). Reality therapy makes no such assumption. It recognizes that the majority of offenders are inclined to demonstrate resistance to various degrees, and it hardly needs to be said that none of them is in your office by choice. Consequently, "resistance to counseling by offenders is common" (Shearer & Ogan, 2002, p. 74).

8.3.2.1 Recognizing Reluctance and Resistance

Offender resistance can range from a sullen silence, through game playing by their telling you only what they think you want to know, to outright hostility. Most verbal resistance does not take the form of angry name-calling and challenges. It is more often a series of responses such as "I don't know," "maybe," "I suppose," and "you're the boss." In the vocabulary of transactional analysis, the offender is acting

from a hostile child ego state. Nonverbal resistance can reveal itself in frequent finger and foot tapping, negative nodding, smirky smiles, and arm folding (a gesture of defiance and barrier erection). This type of verbal and nonverbal behavior can be very disconcerting to the beginning counselor who “only wants to help” (transactional analysis’ nurturing parent) and who is desperately trying to be liked.

Since the counselor’s intentions are good, and he or she is doing all the right things learned in Counseling 101 to establish rapport, the counselor finds it very difficult to accept the offender’s reluctance and negativism (the transaction is crossed). All of us enjoy positive feelings, and few of us are very good at dealing with negative feelings, either our own or those of others, because it requires confrontation. Rather than acknowledging and dealing with negative feelings (rolling with them), the beginning counselor often tries to deny, downplay, or redirect them (trying to maintain an inappropriate complementary transaction). The negative feelings must be acknowledged and worked through with the offender (temporarily crossing the transaction so that it can be reinitiated at a more appropriate Adult-Adult level). The process requires extra effort on the counselor’s part; it is all too easy to coast and avoid uncomfortable issues. A counselor with a strong and integrated self-concept is not afraid to encounter negativism and confrontation and will “roll with resistance.”

8.3.2.2 Reasons for Resistance

Why do offenders resist well-meaning attempts to help them? For one thing, they do not come into your office asking themselves what you can do for them. They are much more concerned about what you can do to them. You are a symbol of something that many offenders have spent a good proportion of their lives resisting authority. To cooperate with you may well be an admission of weakness, in their way of thinking, and they are not overly anxious to admit weakness, especially to a representative of “the system.”

Resistance is a form of a defense mechanism designed to protect the ego from the disconcerting feeling of the loss of autonomy (Elliott, 2002). They also may not want to cooperate because what you want and what they want are two very different things. You want them to act responsibly and obey the law; they want to get out of your office and out of your life. The very fact that offenders are in your office involuntarily is enough to generate resistance. The principle of psychological reactance tells us that whenever people’s sense of autonomy is threatened by forcing them in some way to do something, even if they would otherwise have done it voluntarily, their natural inclination is to resist. Finally, you should ask yourself why offenders should want to surrender themselves to a person who they do not yet trust and to a condition they see as manipulative, for purposes with which they do not, at least for the present, agree.

8.3.2.3 Dealing with Resistance

As mentioned in Chap. 7, expect resistance. It may be a signal that you have entered an action phase too soon and that you should return to a more contemplative stage. Nevertheless, the expected has arrived, and you must deal with it. The first thing that

you must do with resisting offenders is to acknowledge their feelings by reflecting them back and giving offenders the opportunity to vent them. You need not share an offender's views of you or "the system" to acknowledge the offender's right to hold them. Arguing back and forth with offenders at this point only will serve to strengthen their resolve. In fact, Elliot (2002, p. 43) contends that "the most important issue in managing offender resistance to treatment is the avoidance of extended debates with offenders." You even may inform them that you do not particularly mind if they feel the way they do as long as they behave responsibly.

Offenders must be reminded that probation or parole (if this is the setting for the relationship) is a conditionally granted privilege and that they cannot be allowed to abuse it. You can inform resistant offenders that you understand their desire to get out of your office and out of your life and that you share this desire with them. That joint objective provides a mutually agreeable starting point. You then can begin to delineate the conditions under which your mutual goal can be successfully achieved. Emphasize that you are responsible for implementing the conditions of probation or parole and that you will not tolerate noncompliance. You also should state that both of you have a vested interest in successful completion of probation or parole; that it, therefore, should be a cooperative endeavor; and that a negative and/or hostile attitude could seriously impede your mutual goal: "Let's help each other out." In the vocabulary of transactional analysis, the laying down of expectations is a Parent-Child transaction, and the treatment contract to be negotiated is an Adult-Adult transaction.

This approach is the one that reality counselors would take. They have not punished the offender by returning hostility for hostility, but have let the offender know that he or she will be allowed to suffer the natural consequences of behavioral noncompliance. The counselor has been strong enough to deal with negative feelings in a constructive way by a judicious use of authority. The counselor has been straight with the offender without being overly authoritarian. The offender has been allowed the dignity of possessing and expressing attitudes contrary to the counselor's but has been told up front that nonapproved (irresponsible) behavior is not permitted. Most offenders much prefer and respect directness rather than sweet-talking and beating around the bush. The counselor has enlisted the offender's help to accomplish a goal both parties desire. Involving the offender in a shared purpose gives meaning to the relationship. The ability to involve offenders in their own rehabilitation is the major skill of doing reality therapy (Powell, 2004).

Jacobs and Spadaro (Jacobs & Spadaro, 2003, p. 120) suggest that reality therapy provides an excellent tool for correctional counselors for getting answers to four questions:

1. "What do you want?"
2. "What are you currently doing?"
3. "Is what you are doing going to get you what you want?"
4. "What is your plan?"

With these questions answered and some form of general agreement between yourself and your reluctant or resisting offender achieved, you can then channel the discussion to specific areas of concern by the implementation of a concrete plan of action. Initial plans should be microscopic in their breadth to maximize the

probability of successful completion. They also should be formalized in writing and signed by the offender and by you in the manner described by the “tentative treatment plan” form contained in Chap. 5.

This step says to the offender, “Your signature attests to your commitment to achieve this goal, and mine attests to my commitment to support you in your endeavor.” Adherence to such a plan begins the process of the development of a “can do” success identity and engenders a sense of responsibility for living up to agreements. Glasser himself has emphasized the importance of commitment: “Commitment is the keystone of reality therapy. It is only from the making and following through with plans that we gain a sense of self-worth and maturity” (Glasser & Zunin, 1973, p. 303). Moreover, keeping the expectations of the action plan modest often overcomes an offender’s reluctance to comply.

8.3.3 Treatment and Supervision Plans

8.3.3.1 Balance

To minimize reluctance, resistance, and the probability of failure, treatment and supervision plans should be balanced with the offenders’ present coping resources. You know these resources—intelligence and educational levels, financial situation, self-concept, strength of interpersonal relationships, and so on—from previous interviews and the needs assessment scale. Similarly, you should be aware of problem areas to be addressed in the treatment and supervision plans. Balanced plans are those whose demands on offenders should neither undertax nor overtax the resources they have available to implement them. Figure 8.3 illustrates the principle of balanced plans.

The diagram has three sections: one balanced and two unbalanced. The upper-left triangle represents an unbalanced condition in which high coping resources are paired with low treatment expectation. The lower-right triangle represents the

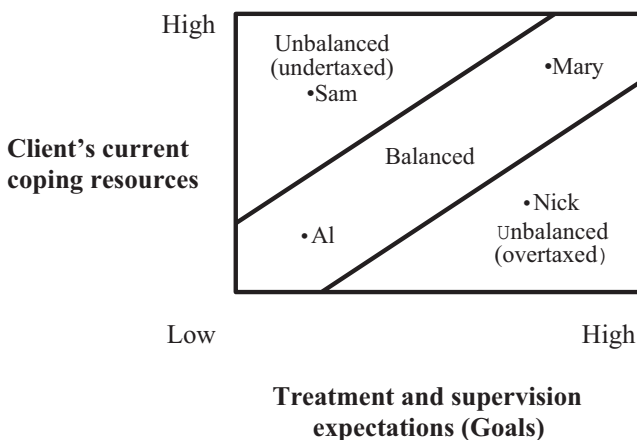


Fig. 8.3 Balancing treatment goals

opposite condition. Sam is in the undertaxed section because he has high coping resources, but low demands have been placed on his resources. Sam will be quite happy and content if you allow him to slide right along without having to do anything toward correcting problems that led to his criminal behavior. Of course, Sam may be a first offender who needs no treatment plan and who is best left alone. However, if there are clear problem areas that may lead him to reoffend, you must take advantage of whatever strengths are represented by his relatively high coping resources for his growth toward responsibility.

Nick's situation is the opposite of Sam's. Heavy treatment demands have been made on his limited coping resources. The dilemma here is that Nick's low level of resources (his intellectual and temperamental capacities) is the very reason that more intense treatment is required. Because his resources are deficient, heavy demands are made on him to correct the deficit. Yet, the lack of resources indicates that he probably will not be able to meet those demands at present. Thus, Nick represents a type of "Catch-22" situation. If you insist on maintaining Nick's present level of treatment, you will be setting him up for resistance and failure and the consequences that go with this. You must lower present treatment demands on Nick so that they are commensurate with his present capacities to cope with them. As his capacities increase, you then may renegotiate more demanding treatment goals with him.

The treatment goals set for Al and Mary are balanced with their present coping resources. Mary is considered to have coping resources equal to Sam's, but she is being challenged to use them for personal change and growth. Al has extremely low coping resources and thus probably needs a higher level of treatment than Mary. However, his present resources are not sufficiently strong to allow for the same level of treatment. As his resource strength increases (i.e., as he slowly builds up a success identity), the demands that you negotiate with him may increase as well. Do not undertax or overtax the offenders' coping resources. Rather, move them slowly toward the ultimate goal one simple step at a time.

8.3.3.2 Simplicity

To change a failure identity to a success identity, a good plan should be:

- Uncomplicated, simple, unambiguous, concrete, to the point: "Attend AA tonight at 6 o'clock."
- Active—something to do, not stop doing: "Attend AA tonight at 6 o'clock," not "Stop drinking alcohol."
- Something that can be done as close to "right now" as possible. "Attend AA tonight at 6 o'clock."
- Entirely dependent on offender's actions for fulfillment, not contingent on the actions of others: not "Attend AA tonight at 6 o'clock if your wife/husband lets you off doing the grocery shopping."
- Something that can be done every day, or as often as possible: "Attend AA tonight at 6 o'clock, and every Tuesday and Thursday at the same time and place for the next month."
- Specific as to what, where, when, how, and with whom it is to be done: "Attend AA tonight at 6 o'clock at St. Anthony Church on Pine Street. You (the

counselor) will pick me up at my home for the first meeting to introduce me to other members.”

The first plan need not be quite as active as this example. It can be something as simple as being on time for the next appointment. Whatever the plan may be, put it in writing, and have the offender and you sign it.

8.3.4 Orientation Toward Progress

Design subsequent plans to build on the offender’s strengths rather than on his or her obvious weaknesses (the strength-based approach). Again, the idea is to build a success identity. Too early an emphasis on major weaknesses creates too great a chance of failure, thus reinforcing the offenders’ failure identity and generates further reluctance and resistance. For instance, if JoAnn lacks a high school diploma and all indications are that she could successfully complete a General Equivalency Diploma (GED) program, show her that you have confidence in her capabilities and try to secure an agreement from her to enroll in such a program. Do not forget, though, to balance this goal with her capacities. Do not insist that she commit herself if she is overly reluctant. Instead, you must persuade her to at least take a placement test. She may well be more receptive to the entire program if the test shows that she could do well. The sense of personal accomplishment, the sense of participating in a socially valued endeavor, the anticipation of legitimate employment, and the idea that the “system” finds one worthy enough to make an investment in time and resources may be sufficient to stop an incipient criminal lifestyle (Walsh, 1985).

The secret of counseling in criminal justice, then, is to temper your necessary authority to direct your offenders’ actions along acceptable avenues while always being aware of, and showing a concern for, their basic humanity. Try to view offender resistance as a normal response to coercion, perhaps even a psychologically healthy one. Examine your own resistance to self-growth and development, and examine your own behavior with offenders to see if you are perhaps doing something to generate resistance.

For instance, you may be a little too directive, too authoritarian, or in too much of a hurry to accomplish your goals. Especially examine the possibility that your goals for the offender are not balanced with the offender’s present level of coping resources. As Newman (1961) stated:

One of the first major accomplishments of treatment comes about when the offender becomes aware, both intellectually and emotionally, that the officer represents not only authority with the power to enforce certain restraints and restrictions but that he [or she] is also able to offer material, social and psychological aids. (p. 38)

We must not forget that counseling is a very difficult and sometimes draining enterprise. You cannot expect to be an expert at it by simply reading a book, but with experience and caring, you will become better and better at it and begin to develop your own style. Treatment is often a “maze,” but the significant point to emphasize

is do something. Shelve the paper work, forget the coffee, get out of the office—and counsel. Risk a little involvement with the human beings on your caseload. Learn, teach, and grow with them in experiencing the most vital quicksilver of all, human behavior (Peoples, 1975, p. 372).

8.3.5 Lessons and Concerns

Reality therapy is a relatively simple method of counseling that stresses responsible behavior, and professionals can apply it fruitfully. Its “one small step at a time” approach to developing offenders’ success identities is particularly useful. Also very useful is its direct and assertive stance that fosters a no-nonsense, but warm and offender-involved, relationship. Its assertion is that, at bottom, the origin of many offenders’ problems lies in early and protracted deprivation of love.

Finally, a number of studies have concurred with Rachin’s (1974, p. 53) conclusion that “Correctional clients who have proven least amenable to conventional treatment methods respond well to Reality Therapy.” For instance, a study from Hong Kong (Chung, 1994) showed that reality therapy for 3 to 6 months prior to release significantly increased self-esteem and a sense of responsibility among incarcerated juveniles who received therapy compared with a matched group who did not.

At times, it may be necessary to resort to the vocabulary of transactional analysis when explaining reality therapy. By doing so, you bring the concepts home more strongly. Offenders also will better understand the supervision and counseling process if you introduce them to this simple vocabulary, which is the great strength of transactional analysis. The integration of this vocabulary into the reality therapist’s repertoire should prove very useful.

8.3.6 Exercises in Primary and Advanced Empathy

The exercise in interviewing in Chap. 3 emphasized listening to what your partner had to say. In these exercises in counseling, you will be taking a more active part. Not only will you be intensely listening to your partner; you will also be communicating to him or her that you understand his or her perspective. You will use all of the techniques outlined in the chapter on interviewing, including the use of paraphrasing, clarifying, and reflecting feelings. Do not be content with vague statements from your partner; make him or her cite specifics.

If you are the student being counseled, choose for discussion a topic of concern to you. Choose one with emotional content, such as the loss of a loved one, the breakup of a romantic relationship, the inability to get along with someone of importance to you, or a perceived personal defect. Such topics make for realistic counseling sessions for both partners. You will gain experience of an offender’s feelings when revealing intimate information, and the counselor will gain some experience in attempting to pull out deep feelings that the offender may be reluctant to express. However, please do not feel obligated to choose a topic that is too painful

to discuss with an inexperienced counselor. This exercise should be both productive and relatively safe. Therefore, you should be given ample time to decide on a topic.

After you have been through a short counseling session, you and your partner should put your heads together and try to identify strategies for understanding and/or ameliorating the problem discussed. Perhaps you could do some structural analyses on the offender's important relationships. Do you see a pattern of crossed transactions? What is the offender's typical ego state? Does the offender agree? Is his or her usual state consistent with what Berne would predict from the offender's history of strokes? How about irrational ideas that he or she may be harboring? If the counselor did not identify them, maybe you now can do it together as a team. Finally, can you together define a simple plan to work on to eliminate the problematic behavior or feelings the offender experienced? You should find these exercises fun if approached from a mutual "I'm OK; you're OK" position.

8.3.7 Counseling "Real" Offenders

The location of both male and female correctional institutions close to Boise State University affords the authors and their students the luxury of going to these institutions to interview and counsel real offenders. However, those not enjoying such proximity can also get the feel of counseling real offenders. If you have written presentence investigations as interviewing and assessment exercises, your instructor may wish to use them as the basis for providing practice in counseling with a criminal justice flavor. The student who initially wrote the PSI again can team up with the same partner to explore more fully the problems and concerns discovered during the PSI process. These problems are many: alcoholism, child molestation, drug abuse, negative self-concept, anger and aggression, and so forth. The student counselor should determine what referrals, if any, might be beneficial for the offender. Explore these problems in turn from each of the two counseling perspectives in this chapter, and then devise some simple "success identity" plans appropriate to the offender.

If you are role-playing the offender, then prior to the counseling session, you should think deeply about being in the offender's shoes (empathy) so that you can present a realistic challenge to your partner's developing counseling skills. Much of your partner's success in this exercise will depend upon how well you are able to capture the feelings of the offender. An added bonus for you will be a greater ability to view the world from the offender's perspective.

8.4 Summary

The laws of thermodynamics have applicability to everything in the universe, including human affairs. When applied to human affairs, the second law has been called Murphy's Law, which states that if anything can go wrong, it will. The point is that everything tends toward disorder unless strong efforts are put forth to prevent

it. We presented the five stages of responsible behavior as a guideline for thwarting Murphy's Law.

This chapter has outlined two counseling approaches often used in criminal justice settings. These theories have a place in corrections because they are relatively easy to understand and apply, emphasize the offender's own responsibility for change, and include equal involvement of offender and counselor.

Transactional analysis is built around five simple words: Parent, Adult, Child (the ego states), game, and script. Much of our behavior is a playback of scripts laid down during infancy and childhood. The type of scripts we have in our heads depends on the quantity and quality of the strokes (love) we received early in our lives. Our scripting leads to the four basic life positions from which we carry out our transactions with others: "I'm not OK; you're OK," "I'm not OK; you're not OK," "I'm OK; you're not OK," and "I'm OK; you're OK." The large majority of offenders will be operating from one of the first three life positions. We must strive to conduct all of our transactions from the "I'm OK; you're OK" life position.

Parent, Adult, and Child are three distinct ego states we slip into and out of during our various transactions. Offenders tend to operate mostly from the Child ego state. Many of them exclude the Parent altogether, and their Adult states frequently are contaminated by the intrusion of the Child. When interacting with offenders, you should be operating from the Adult ego state. You also should strive to get offenders more involved with their Adults.

Reality therapy views self-defeating behavior as being the result of not having one's basic needs adequately met. These interrelated needs are the need to love and be loved and the need to feel worthwhile. People who do not have these needs met tend to develop a failure identity. Your task is to assist offenders to develop success identities by becoming actively involved with them.

Reality therapy is especially useful in dealing with resistant and reluctant offenders. You will often run into this type of offender in the criminal justice field. Offenders resist your help because you are a symbol of authority, and they have spent much of their lives resisting authority. They also resist because they are not in voluntary association with you. You must recognize and confront their resistance rather than ignoring or downplaying it. Allow them the dignity of their opinions, but make it clear that you will not tolerate behavioral nonconformity. Indicate that you will allow them to suffer the natural consequences of nonadherence to the conditions of their supervision.

To minimize resistance, and to develop offenders' success identities, treatment plans must be balanced with their present coping resources. Neither overtax nor undertax offenders' coping resources. Overtaxing invites resistance, and undertaxing is not growth producing. Treatment plans should be as simple and as concrete as possible, and they should be in writing and signed by both parties.

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