



Rational-Emotive Behavioral Therapy

Albert Ellis, uses a directive approach to confront faulty belief systems. Ellis feels that emotional disturbance and maladaptive behaviors result from faulty beliefs. To Ellis these faulty beliefs are irrational, not merely too absolute, extreme or unrealistic. Their irrational quality stems from the demand that the universe, should, ought to, and must be different.

Ellis postulates an ABC theory of personality:

A (activating event) --> **B** (Belief) --> **C** (Emotional and Behavioral Consequence)

For example if a person loses her job (the activating event), she may become depressed (Emotional and Behavioral Consequence) because of the belief that failure is totally unacceptable (Belief).

Ellis felt that it is not the job loss that causes the depression rather the irrational belief.

Ellis (1962) identifies twelve irrational beliefs:

1. It is a dire necessity for an adult human to be loved or approved by virtually every other significant person in his community.
2. One should be thoroughly competent, adequate, and achieving in all possible respects, if one is to be considered worthwhile.
3. Certain people are bad, wicked, or villainous and they should be severely blamed and punished for their villainy.
4. It is awful and catastrophic when things are not the way one should very much like them to be.
5. Human happiness (or misery) is externally caused and people have little or no ability to control their sorrows or disturbances.
6. If something is or may be dangerous or fearsome one should be terribly concerned about it and should keep dwelling on the possibility of its occurring.
7. It is easier to avoid than to face certain life difficulties and self-responsibility.
8. One should be dependent on others and needs someone stronger than oneself on whom to rely.
9. One's past history is an all-important determinant of one's present behavior and because something once strongly affected one's life, it should indefinitely have a similar effect.

10. One should become quite upset over other people's problems and disturbances.
11. There is invariably a right, precise, and perfect solution to human problems and it is catastrophic if this correct solution is not found.
12. One must have absolute control over one's emotions and that one cannot help feeling certain things

After the ABC comes D: disputing. Following an explanation of cognitive restructuring, an interview assessment identifies the clients rational and irrational beliefs. Through persuasion and other direct means, the therapist leads the client beyond awareness, to actually experience how their irrational beliefs lead to emotional and behavioral consequences. Then the therapist confronts and disputes the client's irrational beliefs, helping them to modify them.

The final goal is E, the rational-emotive effect to get the client to adopt a more rational approach to life and to dispute their own irrational beliefs, actively and vigorously. The thoroughly rational person should show health social and self-interest, be tolerant and flexible, be a self-starter and take risk, and not be too idealistic. REBT fosters clients sense of responsibility for their situation and empowers them to change it.