

My Nature and the Mental Health Profession

Georgia L. Kelly

Brigham Young University of Hawaii

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Dr. Eric Orr

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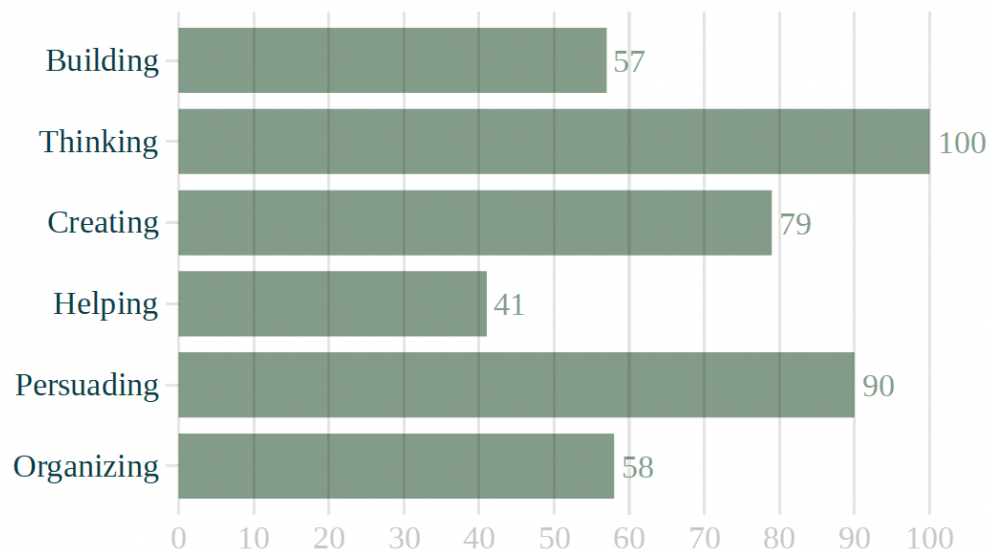
Self Awareness

As an American, I am very blessed to be in the United States where we put an emphasis on one's mental health and value finding healthy ways to cope. Mental health has come a long way in the U.S. and it hasn't always been this way. Thankfully, Clifford W. Beers changed the country's stance for mental wellbeing and began advocating for proper ways to improve when diagnosed with mental illness. It wasn't until 1947 that the United States passed the national mental health act which advocates for everyone's mental and emotional health. Self-awareness to me is knowing and understanding yourself in every aspect, whether it be psychological, physical, emotional, social, spiritual, etc.. Understanding our own nature is so crucial in achieving our goals and seeing personal growth throughout our life. Knowing our own nature is valuable in making our decisions and outcomes.

One of the most helpful tools of self awareness, for me, was my personal Holland Code. The Holland Code is a form of Self Directed Search and it exemplifies the congruence between your personality and your preferred job type. From reviewing my Holland Code, I have found that I am investigative yet I like to motivate and change people's minds. I've always loved to lead people and I've found this passion of mine through playing soccer and running all my life. I am a people person and I love to be independent on certain things as well. Oftentimes, I can be very independent to the point where I will do whatever I want even when everyone else says I shouldn't. I'd like to say that I am a people person, but from the results of my Holland Code, it comes off that I am more of an idea person.

Personally, I was shocked to see that my highest area was thinking. I never thought of myself much to be a thinker, specifically because I don't like to find the deeper meaning of things or to be very philosophical. Quickly I found that this translates into my interest in math and

science, as found in my answers to the Savika's Questioning test. My next two highest were persuading at 90 and creating at 79. I love to convince people and to make them more open minded. Persuading others doesn't mean just manipulating people all the time, it is the biggest trait in being a leader and creating passion in other people. I fully believe you cannot motivate others if you are not passionate about what you are teaching. I love to lead groups and would rather not have someone else bossing me around. I'm surprised this trait wasn't my highest. Lastly, was the creating category, for my top three characteristics. Creating generates pathways for free-thinking and space for innovative ideas. Being intuitive is important to me and if there's one thing that I've become more aware of, it is that I think for myself and I do not follow the crowd.



As I interviewed with others about the characteristics I need to be aware of, I talked to the people who know me best, my mom, dad, and my sister. My findings were all extremely similar, if not the same. I first talked to my mom and sister and they expressed to me that I have a lot of

consistent energy all the time. They continued to agree that I am very persistent in finishing tasks, meticulous and attentive to detail. Aside from these characteristics, my mom pointed out that I do not let anyone distract me from what I want to accomplish and never let anyone's opinions affect my own goals. From my dad's interview, I found very similar results that easily connect directly with my Holland Code results. My dad conveyed to me that I have a lot of energy, especially for the things I am passionate about. He exclaimed to me that I would like a job that I can focus on for a long time and not become bored. He emphasized that I should find something that isn't repetitive and that I should do something that allows me to be a leader.

The Work Values Inventory was a crucial test in seeing what I value among the workplace. I found that my highest five values were balance, leadership, open communication, spirituality, and independence. From the WVI to the Holland Code, I love to see the congruence between the two and how they are basically the same. As stated before, I value a healthy balance between work, family, and play. Having balance is such an important part in having a healthy mind set. As stated before, I wasn't surprised to see leadership and open communication as my highest values because they fall perfectly in line with my Self Directed Search. Spirituality plays a huge role in free-thinking and sticking to one's core beliefs no matter what they are. Independence falls perfectly in line with what my dad connoted to me about how I should find something that allows me to be mobile that I don't have to rely on others for. Overall, the work value inventory portrayed a great reflection on what will make me happy in my future work-life and made me more self aware about how I can appreciate work-life.

Career Awareness

Looking back on the relationships, familial, friendly, and romantic, there is one that really shaped my way of thinking most. As I was in a very manipulative and demanding relationship, I was curious to know what made this boy the way he was. During further investigation, I found that he was abandoned emotionally by both parents and physically by one as well just as a young boy. Hearing this boy talk about mental illness running in his family, I knew this had something to do with the way he conveyed emotions and the way his psychological health was as well. This experience guided me to resonate with the psychodynamic paradigm.

There are a number of counseling opportunities that one can achieve if they are striving to become a psychodynamic therapist. You must at least obtain masters in either social work, mental health counseling, psychotherapy, etc.. In a master's program a student needs certain amounts of credit hours, supervision, certain length of schooling, pass multiple aptitude tests, take classes of specific criteria, and participate in a lot of clinical training in order to obtain one's licensure.

A psychodynamic therapist aids clients to resolve repressed or unresolved conflicts within their unconscious self by bringing it to their subconscious. This way of thinking is a Freudian theory in which he theorizes that these events that happen when we are young and what we are taught shape who we become. Freud says that these needs, that are brought about through mental illness, are unmet needs from our childhood. A psychodynamic counselor uses techniques like the Rorschach Test, Freudian Slip, Free Association, and Dream Analysis. These techniques help to find what to resolve from clients and helps them come to terms with what they missed out

on as children. I would enjoy working in this type of therapy because I find it very fulfilling to work with people's trauma and empathize with them. Aiding clients to find their a-ha moments, or golden moments, is satisfying in helping them better understand themselves.

Maile Batchelor

One of the most important lessons I've learned throughout my personal experiences in therapy and in my undergraduate education is the power of our thoughts. When I was really struggling with mental health, my counselor helped me realize that one of the things that was truly causing me to suffer was my thought pattern. I had a habit of spiraling into very negative patterns and having extreme cognitive distortions. Learning how to identify and gain better control over these helped me take control of my mind again, and this has caused me to strongly identify with the Cognitive-Behavioral paradigm.

In order to become a cognitive-behavioral counselor, you must pursue either a master's in counseling or get a doctorate in psychology or other counseling related fields. To get licensed, you must follow the requirements dictated by your state, which usually calls for at least a master's degree, a specified number of clinical hours under supervision, and passing of licensure exams.

As a cognitive-behavioral counselor, most of the focus in counseling is helping empower clients to change their behavior, beliefs, and especially negative thought patterns. The counselor is seen as a professional expert and guide in helping the client identify what is going on in their mind and will often assign homework to the client to continue practicing the things that are learned in therapy. The idea is to help the client restructure their cognitive processes and help them to overcome negative thought patterns that are affecting their moods and day-to-day functioning. These counselors have a very action-based way of working with clients, and they

are taking on equal responsibility in helping clients pick out goals and helping them work towards them. Personally, I feel that I am well-suited for this type of therapy because I am skilled in identifying patterns in people's emotions and responses, and I am good at countering these negative thought patterns and coming up with goals, so I feel that I would personally do well within this paradigm.

These two approaches are both very popular among psychologists and beneficial to various groups. The approaches are similar in that they both change people's responses in how they react to situations or triggers. They are also similar in the way that the client's way of thinking is trying to be changed. These clients are both given new ways in coping. The difference between the two stands strong that cognitive-behavioral based therapy is solely based on the client's behavior and way of thinking, whereas psychodynamic is finding why they feel this way and reaching way back into their past to resolve these unmet needs. The paradigms also differ in their treatment techniques as well. A cognitive behavioral therapist might use techniques like journaling, exposure therapy, cognitive reframing, dialectical therapy, mindfulness, etc.. Some psychodynamic techniques used are free association, Rorschach test, dream analysis, etc..

Career Prep and Planning

For my educational plan, I plan on applying to multiple graduate schools to obtain my doctorate in neuroscience. In the next two years, I plan to graduate from BYU-Hawaii and give myself a little bit of time to decompress before jumping back in to do more school for the next 5 or 6 years. My main goal is to attend the University of Utah and finish school there in the next 5 or 6 years. Whether I am doing research in neuroscience or doing brain surgeries in the next 10 years, I know I want to be passionate about whatever I am doing and want to be helping others. I want to be deep into my career and to be making a sufficient amount of money to be supporting

my family. I do not want to be staying at home with the kids either. I want to fulfill others and then I will be fulfilled in doing so.

Self Care

As I have studied self care and my personal self care, I have come to learn the benefits of which and the detriments of a lack of self care. My personal goals were set for this semester and I was set up to have a friendly, kind mental space if I kept consistent with my goals. The goal of having a consistent schedule with self-help is so that we are better able to aid other people in their mental health and so that we don't become burnt out. If we increase our endurance in helping others and become better at putting our own agenda to the side, we will further make a bigger difference in improving the people of our community's mental health. For my health goals, I challenged myself to work out or do any sort of physical activity, whether that be weight lifting, playing soccer, walking, running, hiking, etc for 5 days of the week. This is personal to me because when I do physical activity I feel like I challenged myself and that I accomplished something to my full potential. With my goals, I stayed consistent in working out for most of the semester. I found when my schedule was super busy and I was slammed with tests and papers it was harder to make time for myself. When I did make time for myself during these times, my mind felt way more clear and way more capable of achieving more. As I fell off of my self-aid schedule, it was extremely hard for me to start working out again and to get into the habit of doing something for myself everyday. With finals approaching, I know that this is the most important time for me to stay consistent with my goals because they will help me with my grades and my health in the long run. As I said it was difficult for me to keep on a routine, I found that I wanted to do better at being consistent in the future, so I took this up with a school counselor. My counselor helped me get tested and began aiding me in the process of seeing a psychologist

for ADHD. This was helpful to look at my options of help but I quickly learned the BYUH counseling center is not the most efficient place for quick sessions. I appreciate what I learned from this counselor and for the in person experience of counseling I received.

Reflecting on my research on the self-help book, *The Seven Principles For Making Marriage Work*, John Gottman analyzes his findings of his own studies and draws various conclusions. John Gottman and Nan Silver ran a longitudinal study in their so-called “love lab.” Their team studied hundreds of couples in different stages of their relationships, newly weds and long term, for 16 years to base their research off of. They, evidently, consolidated their findings to seven principles; enhance your love maps, build fondness and admiration, turn toward each other, solve the solvable problems, manage perceptual problems, and create shared meaning. In addition to this self-help book, I have participated in some counseling experience as well with my class partner, Maile. Counseling with Maile this semester has given me a small taste of what a therapy session could really feel like. I gained a lot of insight from these exercises with Maile in my future career and my wellness in the future. I support everyone having a therapist and understand the importance of being able to have someone to help with coping and the stressors of life. I think having a psychologist is a great way to be able to attend to more people and know how to support your family if your own issues are being enriched. For my personal wellness, I want to always continue to push myself and stick to my goals. Making new goals often will help me with achieving them and holding myself to them.