

W10-01

APPLIED POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY THERAPY (APPT): EMPOWERMENT INSTEAD OF "CURING"

T. Ronen

Department of Psychology, Tel-Aviv University, Tel Aviv, Israel

The founders of Positive Psychology promoted the study of the "positive end" of human functioning such as happiness, strengths, virtues etc'. One of the major findings of a decade of research on the positive side of human behavior, cognitions and emotions is that the positive aspects are qualitatively different from the negative aspects on a number of dimensions (e.g., negative emotions occur automatically whereas one has to be active in order to produce positive emotions). Hence, we propose a new approach to psychotherapy that is based on current conceptualization of positive psychology: Applied Positive Psychology Therapy (APPT). It is a meta theory for a therapeutic approach based on positive psychology principles. More specifically, APPT is based on the following assumptions:

1. The long range goals of most human beings are to feel good and be psychologically satisfied.
2. Failures to materialize these goals are not a function of deep seated pathologies but lack of skills or knowledge how to materialize these goals.
3. The goal of therapy is not to cure clients from their pathologies (i.e., the "causes" of their anxieties, phobia, or aggression) but to train them in self-control skills and other skills that would enable them to achieve psychological well being in the most effective way and in harmony with their long range goals.

In the present paper I will bring two examples how APPT is practiced with aggressive adolescents and marital difficulties. In both cases clients are told to define the most essential goals of their lives and how they can master their strengths and skills in order to regain their basic life goals. In contrast to the prevailing disease model of psychological problems, APPT is based on a psych-educational model.