

DE LA SALLE UNIVERSITY

THE EFFECTS OF LOGOTHERAPY ON THE MEANING OF LIFE OF A SUICIDAL INDIVIDUAL

742860
A Thesis Presented to the
Faculty of the College of Education
De La Salle University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts in Education,
Major in Guidance and Counseling

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September 1990



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ABSTRACT

This study was undertaken to find out the applicability of logotherapeutic concepts to counseling practice, and determine how logotherapy is translated into clinical strategies in helping a suicidal individual.

The specific questions this study intended to answer were:

1. What clinical strategies of counseling are used by a counselor who aims to employ logotherapy in assisting a suicidal individual toward a revival and a deepening of a meaning in his or her life?

2. Can a logotherapeutic treatment help a suicidal individual revive and deepen a meaning in his or help life (a) as measured by pre- and posttests differences in: (i) the Purpose in Life (PIL) Test Part A (rating of feelings) scores; (ii) the Spiritual Well-Being (SWB) Scale scores; and (iii) the PIL Part B (sentence completion), and Part C (essay on life goals, ambitions, aims, and progress) Test results? and (b) as attested by the suicidal individual himself or herself and the significant other in his or her life?



It used the intensive single case design, which is also known as the N-of-1, or the N=1 design. The subject of the study was a 22-year old female college student who had attempted to end her life on several occasions.

To find out what clinical strategies were used by the counselor in assisting the suicidal subject toward a revival and a deepening of a meaning in her life, counselor interventions found in the counseling typescripts were examined. To find out whether the logotherapeutic treatment helped the suicidal subject revive and deepen a meaning in her life, the pretest and posttest results of the Purpose in Life Test and the Spiritual Well-Being Scale were compared.

Data analysis revealed that the following clinical strategies were used by the counselor-researcher in his application of logotherapy to the suicidal counselee:

1. giving feedback of concern/rapport maintenance
2. confronting anxiety
3. searching for symptoms
4. searching for causes of suicide attempts
5. searching for meaning



6. assessing value of life for counselee/
counselee's determination to live
7. expressing personal/others' interest in
counselee's welfare
8. bringing counselee to face and accept reality
9. dereflection
10. paradoxical intention
11. focusing on counselee's self-responsibility
12. focusing on counselee's self-concept
13. focusing on counselee's latent values
(creative/experiential/attitudinal)
14. letting counselee assess possibilities/
alternatives to suicide
15. suggesting possible means of making life
more interesting
16. highlighting counselee's role in others'
development
17. focusing on counselee's having goals to aim
at/meaning to be fulfilled
18. challenging counselee to systematize living/
leading counselee to a plan of action
19. leading counselee to make concrete stated
values
20. ascertaining effects of changes of counselee
on others



A comparison of the PIL pre- and posttest results indicated that after two months of logotherapeutic treatment, the counselee's life perspective was significantly changed from a lack of clear meaning and purpose in life (54 points) to having a presence of definite meaning and purpose in life (113 points); from existential vacuum to meaningful life perspective; and from having no sense of freedom to having a sense of life meaning. Her contemplation of suicide was completely eliminated.

The SWB pre- and posttest results revealed that there was a marked increase (from 61 points to 97 points) in the counselee's sense of spiritual well-being. This increase indicated that the counselee had experienced a higher sense of well-being in relation to God, and a higher sense of life purpose and life satisfaction.

On the basis of the findings of this study, the researcher concludes (a) that a counselor who employs logotherapeutic counseling strategies can assist a suicidal individual towards a revival and a deepening of a meaning in his or her life; and (b) that the change brought about by the logotherapeutic treatment through the use of logotherapeutic counseling strategies to help



a suicidal individual revive and deepen a meaning in his or her life can be validated by the Purpose in life Test and the Spiritual Well-Being Scale which purposely measure depth of a person's meaning in life.

In light of the findings and conclusions drawn from the study, the following recommendations are offered:

1. That the clinical strategies which were employed by the counselor-researcher be validated by other counselors who aim or attempt to employ logotherapeutic concepts in helping suicidal individuals revive and deepen a meaning in their lives.

2. That the clinical strategies which were employed by the counselor-researcher to assist a suicidal individual be tried to assist individuals with other needs like alcoholics, drug dependents, cancer patients, unwed mothers, and others, whose sense of life meaning and purpose may need to be revived and deepened.

3. That the clinical strategies which were employed by the counselor-researcher be tried in group designs in future researches.

4. That the same N=1 design and treatment be applied to another suicidal individual by another



counselor, with a different philosophy in life.

5. That the Purpose in Life Test or the Spiritual Well-Being Scale, or a combination of these two, be used in measuring changes brought about by a logotherapeutic treatment to contribute to the evidence of the validity of these tests.

6. That the Purpose in Life Test or the Spiritual Well-Being Scale, or a combination of these two, be used in measuring changes brought about by other therapeutic treatments.

7. That an analysis of the counselee's verbal responses to the counselor's clinical strategies be rated by clinical practitioners.

