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Palpable existentialism: A focusing-

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oriented therapy

Psychotherapy in Australia

Volume 20 Issue 2 (Mar 2014)

Gendlin, Eugene

Abstract: Focusing, developed by Eugene Gendlin, and its incorporation into clinical practice has been well-documented. In this article, Greg Madison explores how the method of Focusing can be integrated with an existing orientation to therapy to take

the next step into becoming a 'Focusing-oriented therapy'. In particular, Madison explores the integration of the work of Gendlin and existential psychotherapy to demonstrate how the experiential emphasis of Focusing can enhance existentialism, and how the deconstructive and phenomenological spirit of existentialism can transform the potential of Focusing. The combination of these orientations makes the practice different from what one finds in either orientation alone and becomes what Madison calls 'palpable existentialism'. Gendlin (1964) proposed that the body is the doorway to the palpable 'self' that lies underneath concepts and is the opening for this self to its continuity with the vastness beyond. Palpable existentialism adds experience to existential therapy, and existence to the practice of focusing therapists. It imbues living with the potential of experiential process and the pessimism of an existence where sometimes there is no way forward.



FULL TEXT PDF (897KB)

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