


## Gestalt

Humanistic Perspective

Frederick Perls 1893-1970




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## Frederick Perls

- Recognised as the founder of Gestalt Therapy
- Worked as a Doctor in Berlin in 1930's and began his psychiatrist career as a Freudian analyst
- Rebelled against the psychoanalytic approach considering it limiting in understanding human beings
- Awareness is more important than ideas




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## Definition

- The process of integrating a series of separate entities is more important than the sum of the parts
- We make meaningful wholes out of separate pieces of information


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## Key Concepts

- Humans have an innate striving for self actualisation
- Human identity is PHENOMENOLOGICAL – we create our sense of identity according to our perceptions of reality.
- It is a subjective experience only fully understood by ourselves
- Human identity is relational and develops according to conditions of worth



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## Humanism

- Humanism is concerned with the study of what it means to be human including
- Creativity
- Being and becoming
- Individuality
- Love and ways of living that are both individually enhancing and socially constructive
- Actualisation of the self
- Liberation, sharing power and control and open decision making



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## Aim of Gestalt approach

- For a person to integrate their many parts
- Enable a person to learn about his / her own process of making meaning and patterns in life
- To become aware of how their process shapes contact with self and others
- The person then becomes who they really are and can make informed choices about their life



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## Using the Gestalt Approach

- Bringing the clients attention to the HERE AND NOW
- Counsellor will notice body language and share observations
- Counsellor will state his perceptions of the clients issues
- Focus on WHAT AND HOW rather than WHY
- Counsellors self awareness during session
- Awareness of process of contact between counsellor and client



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## Figure and ground

- What is figure?
- What is ground?



- We cannot focus on the both at the same time.



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## Cycle (wave) of awareness

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### Interruptions to contact

- Projection
- Confluence
- Egotism
- Introjection
- Retroflection



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