EXISTENTIAL PSYCHOTHERAPEUTIC INTERVENTION IN THE END-OF-LIFE CARE AND POSITIVE HEALTH OUTCOMES: AN OVERVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Existential psychotherapy begins where the modern medical system and formulas created for treating the terminally ill patients end. It is not just a mere philosophical approach to one's illness, but a part of critical medicine that gives a holistic care by providing hope, when cure is not possible. Existential psychotherapy is a humanistic psychotherapy, which aims to uplift the process of meaning making in the midst of medical helplessness, purpose in suffering, to deal with existential stress, alienation, loneliness and provide quality of life with peaceful and meaningful death and dying. The aim of this particular study is to identify some of the emerging themes and principles in regards to existential psychotherapy, through literature review and philosophical enquiries, basing it on the available documents and literatures.

Key Words: End-of-Life Care, Existential Psychotherapy, Anxiety, Depression, Meaning, and Quality of Life.

End-of-life care is an interdisciplinary program mainly focusing on those who are with various terminal illnesses and at the stage of their limited prognosis. However, due to advance in medical technology, diagnostics and other antibiotic therapies, critical care have created bioethical dilemmas that confront physicians while dealing with terminally ill patients who are at the end of their life. This tends to aggravate the isolation and loneliness experienced by the dying individual. Out of many, at present existential and spiritual suffering at the end of life are the most debilitating conditions, yet the most neglected area of care (Nydegger, 2009; Yeolekar et al., 2008; & Boston et al., 2011).

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Though the most neglected area of care in the country, yet this play an important role in end of life care, as it addresses issues that preoccupy many terminally ill patients from alienation and loneliness to depersonalization, and most importantly giving meaning in suffering and pain in the course of illness (Goddard, 2018). More than any other existing therapies, existential psychotherapy provides a set of fundamental principles that serve as guidelines and structures for meaning-making in the end of life care (Spinelli, 2005). However, looking at the present advance modern medical realm, meaning in suffering has been totally forgotten or neglected, which could actually be a propose solution in the midst of medical helplessness and those untreated emotional sufferings and pain in the course of illness and dying. Patient as a human needs a holistic care with dignity, rather than being use as an experimental object or as a laboratory for testing the effect of modern medicines.

Existential psychotherapy is not just a mere philosophical approach to one’s illness, rather a holistic approach to care for dying patient, which provide hope, when cure is not possible. It is a transformational medical therapy providing purpose, improving well-being, peace, and meaningful death, and dying, which the modern medicine fails to provide. Most importantly, existential psychotherapy acknowledges the meaning and purpose in life as an important instrument for well-being and helps the dying individual to look at human condition as a whole and their place within it (Banalities, 2016). The focus as a whole in existential psychotherapy is to form a balance between being aware of death without being overwhelmed by death, which will led to quality decision making in the face of death and dying (Good Therapy, 2018). However, the challenges lies in how than the existential psychotherapy can be applies and implemented effectively in the clinical setting?

Looking at the present end-of-life care practices, meaning making, and quality of life are the two greatest challenges of all time, especially in a country like India. Creating and providing a structure for professionals working in end-of-life setting also remain as the unsolved challenges in Indian health care system. Thus, considering the importance of treating the dying individual’s in regards to their beliefs, perspective and values, the propose study is being form mainly focusing on meaning making in the midst of medical helplessness, stress, isolation, loneliness, freedom and its associated responsibilities at the end-of-life. The study adopts the methodology of traditional literature review on the existing available literatures and documents with philosophical inquiry in an attempt to produce positive health outcomes.

**PSYCHOTHERAPEUTIC INTERVENTION AT THE END-OF-LIFE CARE: AN OVERVIEW**

In general, end-of-life care is an interdisciplinary approach, mainly focus on delivering quality of life by any possible means for those who are suffering...
from terminal illness and their families. According to National End of Life Care Program, London (2007), end of life care “is a care that helps all those with advanced, progressive, incurable illness to live as well as possible until they die.” The key issues in end-of-life care includes, pain and symptom control, shared decision-making, psychological and spiritual well-being support, and most importantly quality of life. Maximum amount of care and attention are require in addressing to distressing pain and non-pain symptoms including physical discomfort, emotional suffering, and functional limitations affecting quality of life (Yeolekar et al., 2008). However, in the clinical setting, especially in India at present, medical practitioners frequently underestimate the potential and positive benefits of psychotherapy for seriously medical ill patients, especially those who are months far from death, when psychotherapeutic approach and its intervention have been proven as an effective element for patients struggling with advance life threatening medical illness (Breitbart et al., 2004).

The thought provoking question as Puchalski (2002) set up; how can we meet the patients’ needs, so that they can die at home and avoid treatments that violate their preferences? How can we, as health care providers and as a society guarantee people a peaceful and meaningful death? Chochinov (2006), in describing the new horizons in palliative care stated, “the good palliative care practice oblige us to acknowledge the innate existential nature of distress that accompanies the experience of dying people”. There are no easy answers in meeting the patient needs to the fullest, however, spirituality is an important domain for the propose of solution. Recently, researchers recognizing the importance of existential or spiritual issues for dying patient have begun to conceptually parse out and examine the effect of hopelessness, burden to others, lose of sense of dignity, and loss the will to live on patients approaching to death (Puchalski, 2002 & Cochinov, 2006).

According to Meador (2004), “palliative care informed by spiritual attentiveness allows both the patient and the care providers to give up illusions of therapeutic entitlement to cure and at the same time honor the privilege of intentionally and reverent caring for the dying.” Chronic illness impose extensive coping demands on patients and families, and psychologists has extensively involved themselves and significantly contributed to the treatment of the major disorders of our time such as; heart disease, cancer, AIDS, dementia, diabetes, chronic pain and respiratory ailments and multiple sclerosis (Haley et al., 2003). Understanding the psychological dimension to the work of all involved in palliative care will strengthen the practice of any professional working in the end of life care setting (Tachel, 2003).

In special palliative care contexts, the generic skills of the psychologist are applied in a setting where a person either has been given a terminal diagnosis, or is a relative, a close friend or to those who has been bereaved because of death.
Existential Psychotherapeutic Intervention in the ... 23

(British Psychological Society, 2004). In most of the developed countries, the primary care psychologists are in a prime position to help patients, their relatives, and other health care professionals to navigate and coordinate care along the disease continuum and maximize quality of life no matter what the patient’s prognosis (Kasl-Godley, King & Quill, 2014). In his study Rousseau (2000), developed seven approaches that needs to be address in treating the dying patients: Controlling physical symptoms; Providing a supportive presence; Encouraging life review to help recognize purpose, value and meaning; Exploring guilt, remorse, forgiveness, and reconciliation; Facilitating religious expression; Reframing goals; and Encouraging meditative practices focused on healing rather than on cure.

Considering the impact of terminal illness in one’s life and all the factors that involves, psychotherapy plays an important role as it focus on better chance to be able to release the built-up tension and anxiety, and make one’s life goal oriented, with meaning making as its prime focus (Sobesto, 2014 & Wise, 2013). Though neglected, however, psychologists have the potentially central role in end of life care as they are train to help others explore and make sense of their hopes, aspirations, achievements, disappointments, and relationships. Most specifically, they can provide expert intervention where needed (Bristish Psychological Society, 2004). The psychotherapeutic relationship gives the patient a feeling of comfort, certainty of being respected and valued which helps them view life differently apart from being ill (Sobesto, 2014 & Guex, 1994). After all, spirituality turn out to be the propose solution and answer for delivering peaceful and meaningful death in the course of illness and dying, as it focus on increasing patient’s sense of meaning and purpose in life. This meaning-centered approach is however, deeply rooted in the existential theory and therapeutic practices (Breithbart et al., 2004).

Existential Psychotherapy: Meaning and Concept

Existential psychotherapy is a dynamic psychotherapeutic approach that recognizes the importance of meaning and purpose in one’s life for the sense of well-being. It is a mid-twenty humanistic psychology, which studies on how people come to terms with the basic givens of human existence, basing on the principles of psychodynamic therapy (Diamond, 2011; Koole, 2010; & Banalities, 2016). Unlike the experimental psychologists, the existential psychologists have rejected the use of experimental methods in their study, thus, preferring to analyze people’s subjective experience and personal phenomenology. It is a philosophical method of therapy that focus on the belief that inner conflict within a person is due to the individual’s confrontation with the ‘givens’ of human existence (Koole, 2010 & Wikipedia, 2018). The ‘givens’ according to Yalom (1980), are the inevitability of death, freedom and its attendant responsibility, existential isolation and meaninglessness. In clinical setting, existential psychotherapy is often misperceived as morbid, arcane, pessimistic, impractical, cerebral, and esoteric.
to treatment (Diamond, 2009 & May, 1983/1986). However, looking from the approach of meaning making and therapist-client relationship in treatment, it is an exceedingly practical, concrete, positive, and flexible, and it was Irvin D. Yalom, an American existential psychiatrist, was the first to complete a manual on existential psychotherapy, which delivered both theoretical structure and practical techniques for an approach (Diamond, 2011 & Berry-Smith, 2012). The emerging interest in existential psychotherapy follow several themes which includes: definitional understandings, the needs of patients, interventions, theories of existential suffering, methods and designs, and the responses of palliative providers who care for patients who are at the end of life (Boston et al., 2011). Citing Koole, Greenberg, and Pyszczynski (2006), S.L. Koole (2010) listed out the following five major concerns that are central to current research in Experimental Existential Psychology (XXP):

- First major existential concern is death, which refers to the psychological conflict between people’s awareness of the inevitability of death versus their desire for continued existence.
- Second major existential concern is isolation, arises from the conflict between people’s need to feel connected to others versus experiences of rejection and the realization that their subjective experience of reality can never be fully shared.
- The third major existential concern of XXP is people’s sense of identity, raises from the conflict between people’s desire for a clear sense of who they are and how they fit into the world versus uncertainties, because of conflicts between self-respects, unclear boundaries between self and non-self, or limited self-insight.
- Freedom is the fourth existential concern, which originated from people’s experience of free will versus the external force on behavior and the burden of responsibility for their choices.
- The fifth and the most important major concern in XXP is meaning and stems, originated from the conflict between people’s desire to believe that life is meaningful and the events and experiences that appear random or inconsistent with one’s bases of meaning.

Existential psychotherapy is a type of therapy that emphasis on the human condition as a whole through positive approach that appreciate human capacities and aspirations while simultaneously acknowledging its own limitations. It build its principles on the fundamental belief that all people experience intrapsychic conflict due to their interaction with certain conditions inherent in human existence such as; freedom and its associated responsibility; death; isolation; and meaninglessness (Good therapy, 2018). Existential psychotherapy strives to empower and place the person and his/her existential choices back at the center of the therapeutic process. The central features of existential psychotherapy is
to authentically face personal and social responsibility, choice, integrity, courage, rather than escaping existential anxiety, anger and guilt (Diamond, 2011). Most importantly, existential psychotherapy explores what it means to be human in the light of our shared human condition; that is, we may live infinite possibilities, but we are essentially finite creatures (Breitbart et al., 2004). Quoting Fischer (1982), in their study “Psychotherapeutic Intervention at the End-of-Life Care” Breitbart and colleagues (2004) outlined the following six propositions that underlie the basis of existential psychotherapy, which also can serve as the professional guidelines in dealing with the dying patients:

- The capacity for self-awareness (we are finite, yet have the potential to continually grow and become until we die)
- Freedom and responsibility (we can make the commitment to authentically choose a life for ourselves)
- The need for center and the need for others (we can have the courage to be, as well as the experience of aloneness and relatedness)
- The search for meaning (we have the capacity to discard old values, to freely choose new ones, and to continually question and challenge the meaning of life)
- Anxiety as a condition of living (we can experience anxiety as a source of growth, and experience the escape from anxiety)
- Awareness of death and nonbeing (the very realization of eventual nonbeing gives meaning to existence, because it makes every human act count).

Eventually, existential therapist is not confine to the passive, neutral, anonymous, and interpretive role of the psychoanalyst. It require the courage and commitment to truly and genuinely encounter each unique patient, without avoiding his/her own anxiety by hiding behind a rigid professional persona or route therapeutic technique (Diamond, 2011). Existential psychotherapy does not only address the emotional issues, but also teach people in therapy on how to grow and embrace their own lives and exist in them with wonder and curiosity. The uniqueness of this therapy is that, it does not focus on a person’s past, rather work with the person in therapy to discover and explore the choices in regards to their limited time. It makes people to feel a sense of liberation and the ability to let go the despair associated with insignificance and meaninglessness (Good Therapy, 2018). On the other hand, in contrast with the above statement of Good-Therapy on ‘not dealing with the past,’ Breitbart and colleagues (2004) stated that, existential psychotherapy encourages patients to seriously explore their past, present, and future in terms of meaningful choices and the experiences that created and continue to generate their story. It also offers dying patients a way to bear the burden of their suffering and eventually death with strength and dignity. Most importantly, it helps patients to explore the ‘why’ of their existence and the meaning...
of their lives. As per the findings of Breitbart and colleagues, existential psychotherapy create a platform for patients to meaningfully reflect upon and take ownership of their lives which they have chosen and focus on the possibilities that are still available until the moment of their death.

**Significance of Existential Psychotherapy**

The significance of existential psychotherapy according Ackerman (2017) is that, it helps in guiding the clients/patients in learning to take responsibility for their own choices and making choices that align with their values and help them to live more authentically and to form a realistic and authentic relationship with life. Apart from other existing therapy, existential psychotherapy has the advantage of hindsight. It proceeds through relationship and mainly, the psychotherapist functions as guide, accompanist, and symbol. The therapist is one who has confronted the ‘givens’ of existence and significantly worked through existential anxiety towards more effective integration (Mendelowitz & Schneider, 2016). In existential psychotherapy, the human relationship between patient and therapist takes precedence over technical tricks, and is not a passive or neural presence in the therapy room. It is not a distant expert magnanimously guiding a patient through self-discovery, rather, the therapist is also a fellow human being who has experienced existential anxiety and fear, and aims to guide others through the difficult process of accepting and living with the inevitabilities of human life (Diamond, 2011 & Ackerman, 2017).

Existential psychotherapy is the therapy that fulfilled the primary goal of palliative and hospice care by improving the patient’s quality of life, and focuses on the importance of patient’s existential well-being, through eliminating existential and spiritual suffering alongside psychological and physical symptoms through comfort and compassionate care for the dying. The real comfort can come only by building a quality relationship between therapist and the client. Moreover, in focusing upon various inter-relational realms, the existential psychotherapy through their acts of collaborative and clarifying dialogue provides the potential transformative experience. This compassionate, shared, professional, yet profoundly personal human relationship provides both the structured, supportive container and potent existential catalyst for therapeutic transformations (Boston et al., 2011; Diamond, 2011; & Spinelli, 2006).

Among all existing psychotherapy, the existential psychotherapy is the only established form of psychotherapy that focus mainly on psycho-philosophical approach, rather than experimental psychotherapy alone. People at some point misunderstood existential psychotherapy as purely philosophical approach in its nature. However, it is to be noted that, the existential psychotherapy focus on the intra-personal dimensions of human existence and have formulated psychological theories that does not allow the philosophical dimension to come to the fore or to be central (Deurzen, 2015). In its wider approach, the existential
psychotherapist mainly focus on questions having to do with “What and How” of human existence and experience, seeking to assist their patients in striving to focus on their current experience of being in the world, that usually create a positive impact on quality of life for the dying (Spinelli, 2006). The existential suffering sometime is view and understood as a concept distinct from that of spirituality. However, in this approach, the concepts of spirituality and existential suffering are neither discussed separately nor acknowledged a having different meanings (Boston et al., 2011). The central claim of existentialism is acknowledging the essence of existence precedes. Existential psychotherapy addresses issues that preoccupy many people, from alienation and loneliness to depersonalization and above all, it offer meaning. It stress the value and importance of individual experience, and adopt the policy that one is not defined by his/her past, rather he/she is free to create their own life and identity, and is responsible for it (Goddard, 2018).

Citing Lava, Achenbach, & Hoogendijk (1995; 1084; & 1991), Deurzen (2015) stated that, existential psychotherapy focuses on the inter-personal and supra-personal dimensions to capture and question people’s worldviews. It aim to clarify and understand personal values and beliefs, and seek to enable a person to live more deliberately, more authentically, and purposefully, while accepting the limitations and contradictions of human existence. It is symbolizes as humility wounded healer therapy, which heal both the patient and the therapist. It recognizes that the meaning and purpose we feel in life is hugely important to our sense of wellbeing. Existential psychotherapy helps the dying patient to look at human condition as a whole, and their place within it, rather than trying to sort out one’s life just by looking at his/her psyche and life history, which are the source of doubt, anxious, distress, and state of despair (Mendelowitz & Schneider, 2016 & Banalities, 2016). Moreover, the existential psychotherapeutic thinkers like Binswanger, Yalom and Deuzen (1963, 1980, & 1984), avoid restrictive models that categorize or label people, rather look for the universal hypothesis that can be observed cross-culturally.

An Evaluation of Existential Psychotherapy on Meaning-Making

It is important to note another view of existential psychotherapy, that life has meaning under all circumstances, even under suffering. Meaninglessness on the other hand, is also a meaning not yet discovered. Existentialism has a unique perspective on meaning in the face of death and dying that sets it apart from the mainstream philosophies that precede it that, there is no meaning. Moreover, there is no meaninglessness, as every individual in this world can derived meaning from all the circumstances of their existential being (Schulenberg, 2004; Frankl, 1997; & Ackerman, 2017). Yalom (1980) stated that, if existential therapists prioritize one thing, it would be the search for meaning and the need to feel that one’s life has its own meaning. In context of end-of-life, the dying individual’s frequently
ask himself/herself “why is there something rather than nothing,” and sometime experience the process of unclear meaning of their own life.

The existential psychotherapy here plays an important role to help the patient to become self-reflective and enable them to discover the miracle of being, especially in the midst of doubt and wonders, as existential psychotherapy based on the fundamental principle that human beings have the unique capacity to question and reflect upon their own existence. The aim of existential psychotherapy is to liberate oneself from being passive victims of circumstances and invite them to become active participants in their lives through heightened awareness and responsibility. It also enables the dying individual to take meaningful ownership of their life, feelings, choice, and beliefs that promotes authentic relatedness with oneself, the world, and others (Heidegger, 1954, 1968; Deurzen, 1988, 1992, 1997; Breitbart, 2004; & May, 1983).

Though mostly neglected in the clinical setting, existential psychotherapy carried out the most important and difficult task in the end-of-life care, which other health care providers cannot delivered, as it is not an easy task to be truly available to help others in finding meaning in their lives when their existence is in crisis. The meaning of life however, is never given and cannot be transmitted unless a person is willing to search for it independently. Moreover, inner peace develops from finding clarity on what one wants life to be about and understanding what truly matters to us as an individual, outside of the influence of others and even society (Deurzen, 2015 & Banalities, 2016). Here, existential psychotherapy is an excellent method for treating the psychological and emotional instabilities or dysfunctions that stem from the basic anxieties of human life. According to existential thought, one must look within himself/herself to find meaning, to assert values, and to make quality decisions that shapes one’s lives (Ackerman, 2017). Yalom (2008) proposed that, human beings should confront death anxiety in the same way they confront any fear, as it is possible in one’s life to face the anxieties head-on and embrace the human condition of loneliness, to revel in the freedom to choose and take full responsibility for his/her choices. One does not need to arrest feelings of meaninglessness, but can choose new meanings for his/her lives, and able to live life as one’s own adventure (Wikipedia, 2018).

For existential psychotherapists the experience of anxiety is the fundamental ‘given’ of being-in-the-world, and the responses that individuals raise up in order to minimize, deny, or repress intolerable level of anxiety are in themselves, mainly through the ability to reflect within oneself and within an inmate knowledge of one’s own suffering. The human suffering as an individual experience is the central theme in the thinking and writings of the existentialists (Spinelli, 2006 & Boston et al., 2011). Victor Frankl (1997), in his study “Man Search for Meaning” stated that, what is important is not an action in and of itself, but the way action is experienced, the intensity with life is lived, and the notion that a person has the
ability to choose his/her own response to a given situation. What makes a person is not determine by type, rather by who he/she becomes, and most importantly, learning to be anxious in the right way is the key to live a reflective and meaningful life (Boston et al., 2011 & Deurzen, 2015).

The principles of existential psychotherapy extend to a widening clinical domain, and its perspectives apply far beyond the clinical setting. Here the principles such as, freedom, experiential reflection, and responsibility are being propagated in work and educational settings and even in religious and political realms as well (Mendelowitz & Schnelder, 2007). The psychotherapeutic process of existential therapy is then to elicit, clarify and put into perspective all the current issues and contradictions that are problematic. Thus, the ultimate therapeutic search is about allowing the client to reclaim personal freedom and a willingness and ability to be open to the world in all its complexity (Deurzen, 2015). However, looking at the current situation (mainly in India), it is sad to say that, the existential issues are yet still ill defined in its concept, a neglected symptoms of suffering, and little is known about its effectiveness concerning its interventions, though can be widely effective in the end-of-life care (Boston et al., 2011). It is important to know the existential attempt of the meaning-centered psychotherapy, as it is to explore the complex relationship between meaning and illness. It also offers a therapeutic and healing alternative that may help patients confront the existential challenges that are being produces by life threatening medical illness (Breitbart et al., 2004). Moreover, within the existential psychotherapeutic relationship, the therapist is the ‘other’ who serves a representative of all others in the client’s wider world relations. Most importantly, the therapist is also the ‘other’ who challenges the client’s beliefs and assumptions regarding others and their impact and its effect upon his/her ways of being (Spinelli, 2006). On the other hand, the importances of sensitivity and trust relations, as well as the awareness of the individual nature of patients are also an important existential concern, and the challenges of assessing and treating the existential domain includes consideration of the subjective nature of its expression and the personal experiences of vulnerability by clinicians who witness their patients’ suffering.

The uniqueness of existential psychotherapy as one observes, can takes many different shapes and shapes and forms unlike other therapy, but it always observes the therapeutic exploration of what is true for the patient at the given condition (Deurzen, 2015). The strength of existential psychotherapy lies in its objectives, as it focus on authentic living with courage and in humility, and another important objective would be learning to reflect for oneself and effectively communicating with others in search of meaning and purpose in suffering and dying. Thus, effectively implementing the existential psychotherapy in palliative end-of-life care can contribute to the desperately needed reform in the prevailing world of complexity, discernment, and inquiry. The reform that all healers are summon
and challenges in dealing with anxiety, pain, and sufferings in the end-of-life care (Tillich, 1952; Buber, 1923, 1929; & Mendelowitz & Schnelder, 2007).

**CONCLUSION AND CHALLENGES**

The existential psychotherapy is a revolutionary therapy that seeks to find ways for patients and families to improve well-being, patients own version of purpose and meaning in suffering and dying, which the modern medicines fail to provide. It begins where the existing medical system and formula end, having its ultimate goal as using coping most effectively by enhancing patients’ sense of meaning and purpose in life. The existential psychotherapy also encounter the medical realms and the world on different levels that connect to give dying patient own definition of reality, freedom of choice, and to overcome anxieties about life under any circumstances. Apart from other existing medical therapy, the uniqueness of existential therapy lies in its commitment to give positive changes in one’s life, and help them to move forwards with a life that the dying individual wanted to live and a better future within the limited time period for survivor (Boston et al., 2011 & Banalities, 2016). Most importantly, it seeks for purpose and the need to feel that one’s life has its own meaning, which every human as whole are longing to have. The therapy also helps in developing awareness about the treatment principles and theories given before or during the medical treatment. Moreover, it is quite adaptable in clinical setting, and can be widely use along with other approaches of medicare in treating people with life threatening medical illness.

As per the findings of the present philosophical inquiry, the combinations of both medical and existential approaches in the end-of-life care setting can maximize the effectiveness of both and will promote greater sense of recovery (Good therapy, 2018). As it is well notify that apart from the existing medical illness, the patients with terminal illness and those who are nearing death frequently confronted with several existential symptoms, spiritual sufferings, and psychological distress. Thus, the combination of medical and existential approaches can also enlarge the worldview of the dying individual towards self, illness, sufferings, and others that involves, and its outcome will resulted in better quality of life in the face of death and dying.

Existential psychotherapy in its approach can provide an awareness of one’s own inner resources in the midst of existential and medical challenges and sufferings. It often seeks for the way to successfully provide and implement constant joy, delight, celebration of life, perfect love, and freedom. The therapy also provide a platform where one can enhance self-consciousness, by making oneself to see things more nearly/clearly as they are, and increasingly experience one’s existence as real (Mendelowitz & Schnelder, 2007; James, 1902, 1936; & Becker, 1973). The existential psychotherapy has produce some of the most
eloquent case studies in their existing professional literatures that helps the terminally ill patients in many positive ways in the course of their illness mostly characterize by physical pain and emotional sufferings, which kept the dying patient in debilitating condition. Though the existential psychotherapy took many forms and shapes in its approach, which people seen it as confusing and lack of clarity, it always requires a philosophical exploration of what is true for the individual and leads to greater recognition of what is true for human beings in general. Thus, affording the beginning of a genuine philosophical stance, which make it easier to tackle life’s inevitable darkness and adversity (Deurzen, 2015).

However, it is also important to know its limitation in the clinical setting, as the existential psychotherapy in its long run has lack of consistency, and clarity in the way it is define and understood. Though the most challenging and demanding area of care in end-of-life care, setting the existential psychotherapy is neglected and untouched area of care due to the confusion over its definition, lack of conceptual understanding, few documented interventions, and most importantly, due to the absences of appropriate training among the palliative care providers as a whole. (Boston et al., 2011).

The challenges of existential psychotherapy also lies in its nature of approach, as it incorporate many techniques or idea from the other form of therapy such as, cognitive, behavioral, narrative, and others, that usually create confusion for the end-of-life care providers. However, the existential psychotherapy sessions depend on the productive and close relationship between therapist and the client to success (Ackerman, 2017). This being the reason, it is important for the clinicians and other care providers working in the end-of-life care need to be mindful of their own choices and consider treatment options from a critical approach (Boston et al., 2011). So, the emerging needs of the hours is to systematically explore existential psychotherapy by removing confusions and its inconsistency issues and implement to its fullest for better health outcomes, in which the dying individual finds his/her purpose in meaning in life that produce quality of life.

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Existential Psychotherapeutic Intervention in the ... 33


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