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## **Psychological Analysis of Catharsis in the Field of Psychotherapy (By Emphasizing on the Counseling Theories)**

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### **Abstract**

The following article has focused on the role of emotional catharsis and the effectiveness of it in different theories of psychotherapy and counseling. Each of the theories has been examined based on their possibilities in the catharsis of five emotions: anger, sadness, fear, anxiety and hatred. Counselling is not giving advice and teaching information to the clients, but the possibility it provides for catharsis is the success factor of the treatment. In catharsis of the anger, therapy's primary emphasis is facilitating the client's development. But in the release of grief, the focus is on resolving personality conflicts. In releasing anxiety, the main purpose is to change behavior. In catharsis of the hatred, psychotherapy aims to adapt the client to the environment. This article examines counseling theories in terms of how they deal with the aforementioned five emotions. Psychotherapy is interactive, confidential, and humanitarian conversation. In this conversation, the client talks about the troubles, disturbances, pressures and discomforts. Clients express their feelings and thoughts, and the therapist tries to simplify the process of this retelling with specific methods appropriate to the client's situation and problem. Therefore, only the consultation based on catharsis carries out the treatment in the true sense.

**Keywords:** Counseling theories; Catharsis; Emotion; Anger; Sadness; Anxiety; Fear; Hatred.

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## **1. Introduction**

One of the most important influencing factors in psychotherapy is catharsis [1], so different theories of counseling have chosen different methods of catharsis of anger, sadness, anxiety and hatred. By using catharsis, counseling theories significantly impact the client's value system, which makes the clients' control over themselves and the environment more so that the client accepts responsibility and achieves meaningful goals in his/her life. One of the most critical dimensions of counseling in this regard is the dimension of reducing the client's anxiety. In such a way, counseling can create a suitable platform for relieving anxiety through talking about anxiety-provoking topics. In the past, traditional psychological therapies have been done through reciting religious chants, shouting in the open, shaking the body through dancing, and encouraging followers of religions to cry. [2] Such treatment occurs in the context of catharsis, which we classify as "traditional catharsis methods" in this article. These methods have been approved by several quantitative studies that have shown that those who perform catharsis regularly recover from negative emotions faster [3].

One of the ways to investigate how the treatment process is formed is to analyze the psychological structure of different counseling theories, because every approach provides a unique platform for catharsis through a conversation about the discomforts that have caused anger, sadness, anxiety, and hatred. Therefore, the fundamental question of the present research is how to explain the importance of catharsis in the psychotherapy process in various counseling theories. In this regard, by applying Paul Ekman's theory of basic emotions, we have tried to identify how the catharsis of basic emotions can implement in each counseling theory. Emotions mean "complex experimental, behavioral and narrative feedback" [4]. Therefore, it is essential to analyze it as one of the most significant explanatory factors of human cognition and behavior in individual domains. For this reason, the different theories of counseling psychology have always taken a unique look at emotional catharsis within the framework of their epistemological apparatus. One of the famous authors named, Daniel Goleman considers different components of emotions [5]. In his view, these components are the cognitive, physiological, and behavioral. Emotional intelligence states that all behaviors can be explained in the context of different types of emotions. In the theory of basic emotions, Paul Ekman introduced six basic emotions [6], which are:

### ***1.1. Feeling of anger***

This feeling has a high frequency and high intensity and causes an increase in speaking. One of the critical features of anger is the tension in speaking. It also increases the heart rate, [7] patient care report [8]. It also causes certain facial features: downward-facing eyebrows, wide eyes, staring eyes, closed lips, and wide nostrils [9]. This feeling can be released by talking, shouting, punching and kicking. In conversational psychotherapy, one tries to talk about the subject one is angry about and thus learns to manage it.

### ***1.2. Feeling of grief***

This feeling has low frequency, low desire to speak, low tone and hoarse voice, decreased heart rate, and increased patient care report [10]. Narrow eyes, lips apart, and a wrinkled face [11]. This feeling is discharged by crying.

### ***1.3. Feeling of fear***

This feeling has a high frequency and high intensity, increases the speed of speaking, decreases the cardiac output, increases the heart rate and patient care report, and decreases the thyroxin hormone [12]. This feeling is discharged by shaking movements and dancing.

### ***1.4. Feeling of hatred***

This feeling has low frequency, decrease in speech, and reduction in heart rate. Eyes become narrow, lips are separated, the nose is wrinkled, and cheeks are raised [13]. The most natural response to intense disgust is vomiting.

### ***1.5. Feeling of pleasure***

This feeling has a high frequency and intensity, which increases speaking. It also increases patient care report and decreases cardiac output. In this case, the cheeks are raised, and the eyes are calm [14]. This feeling naturally shows itself with a smile and also it is discharged by laughing.

### ***1.6. Feeling of surprise***

This feeling illuminates in the tone of voice. It also increases patient care report [15]. The eyebrows are raised, the mouth is open, and the jaw is dropped [16]. This feeling is discharged by conversation. People like to talk about the subject they are surprised by.

Such a position is based on Paul Ekman's theory, which presents emotion as the actual generator of the cognitive process and the manifestation of human personality [17]. Therefore, system of beliefs is a manifestation of human emotions and not the other way around. As a result, catharsis is a therapeutic loop between the "cognitive system" and "emotions". Thus its function is the balance of emotions with the evidence and documentation of the cognitive system. For example, talking in the psychotherapy process is both practical to correct false beliefs and release emotions related to these beliefs. As a result, the success of some psychotherapies comparing to others are due to the prominence of the catharsis dimension [18]. The reason behind this fact forms the following axes of the current article.

## **2. The main foundations of catharsis theory**

Modern catharsis theory was proposed by Wilhelm Reich (1897-1957), an Austrian psychoanalyst. This theory has been elaborated by some commentators and interpreters, such as Hart, Heron, and Reich, as well as others [19]. The fundamental basis of his theory is based on the use of catharsis instead of psychotherapy. That's why he goes even further and considers mere catharsis as the cause of achieving the integrity of the human personality [20]. In this sense, it is very close to the traditional view of catharsis. Repressed emotions such as anger, fear, and sadness play a central role in the thought of Hart, Heron, and Reich. This suppressed emotional collection is a recorded message from what a person has received in childhood from the actions and behaviors of

his father, mother, teacher, spiritual father, etc [21].

In this framework, the person should go back to the time when the undesirable emotions were created and then release the feeling that was not possible to release at that time. When a person performs catharsis, the human psychological system can function properly. It should also be mentioned that by releasing the emotional burden, the human mind can achieve a new insight. Because sometimes a person brings up a specific topic over and over again. Therefore, some researchers have concluded that the treatment is very long and never ends in this method [22]. In Freud's treatments, it has been seen that people who were treated at one point come back for treatment. While the subconscious mind is full of negative emotions [23], and every incident is an intrusion into the unconscious mind so that the loaded emotions can be discharged [24].

### **3. The necessity of catharsis according to the existential position of human**

No treatment can be successful regardless of the existential situation of the human being. Feelings of unreasoning anxiety, sadness, and anger that exist even when we don't have a psychological problem have existential causes rather than the psychological trauma which discussed earlier. People are often involved in one of the basic emotions without realizing it. Human emotions are created not only against events but also against life. According to Freud's psychoanalysis, a person's feelings are influenced by the interaction of psychological forces. Freud's point of view considers the source of emotions a kind of dynamism; for this reason, psychoanalysis is considered representative of the dynamic perspective. Treatment in this view includes remembering trauma and performing the catharsis about them. Existential therapy is based on interacting with entirely different inner forces, motivations, and fears.

The existential point of view emphasizes a different fundamental conflict, not a conflict with suppressed instincts, but a conflict that is the result of a person's confrontation with the certainties of existence. In this view, it is assumed that anxiety provides the necessary fuel for abnormality. Death, freedom, loneliness, and nihilism play an essential role in the psychological structure of a person. Freudian psychoanalysis is trauma-oriented; for example, the fundamental source of anxiety is the first psychological-sexual disasters, i.e., separation and castration. The root of anxiety in existential psychology is beyond the history of each person's private life and is related to the human position in the world. Therefore, in existential psychology, human carries anxiety because of his/her position in the world, life's events are the only excuse to consider this ultimate anxiety in this approach.

Psychological abnormalities can be personally examined in existential psychology because each person experiences the pressure of the human situation uniquely; each person goes through certain developmental stages, each of which has its anxieties. The only pathological approach that does not rely on universal experiences is the approach based on psychological trauma, however, these cases are rare, and most patients suffer from stress that is part of every human experience to varying degrees. Therefore, existential psychology looks at the clients' feelings not as a transient and short-term issue but as a lasting matter. The difference between it and other psychotherapies is that the therapist must find the origin of the clients' negative feelings in clients' existential concerns and remind them that this is part of the concept of human life.

The universality of psychological anxiety is one of the main reasons that cause researchers to have problems in trying to define and describe the normal mental state: the difference between normality and abnormality is a quantitative difference rather than a qualitative one [25]. Psychological pressures are inseparable from life, and all people deal with them in some way, so all people are confused, but some are not able to cope with this confusion [26].

Irvin Yalom proposes the catharsis in existential psychology as the eleventh stage of treatment. According to the philosophy of existential psychology, the catharsis in this perspective should have some fundamental differences from catharsis in other counseling theories. First, the initiation of catharsis does not require psychological trauma because existential psychology is a universal approach. The only approaches that do not rely on a universal experience are based on psychological trauma. The second difference is that even in cases where there is a psychological trauma, the existential psychotherapist tries to pay attention to it from the existential point of view and show the client that a person is vulnerable to psychological trauma due to his/her existential situation. Therefore, neuroticism has only manifested after psychological trauma, not that it has arisen fundamentally. For example, illness anxiety can indicate fear of death. Third, although the catharsis is self-revelation in Yalom's view, existential psychology is prone to accepting all types of catharsis. From the perspective of general emotion theory, self-disclosure is the venting of anger because talking only reduces anger. Since existential concerns include different ranges of emotions, including anger, sadness, and anxiety [27]. Speaking alone cannot be sufficient for all existential concerns [28]. In this regard, the catharsis which includes different emotional aspects can be responsive to treatment in existential psychology. For example, crying can reduce feelings of loneliness and absurdity.

Now the following table explains how each of the existential concerns can awaken one of the negative emotions in us. Of course, this does not mean that there are no other feelings about each concern, but it means that in each of the concerns, one of the emotions is dominant. Ervin Yalom believes that each of the four concerns mentioned above confronts a person with one of the facts of life, and in this context, all psychological abnormalities are rooted in one of these concerns [29]. Now we will examine each of these four existential positions and examine the role that catharsis can play in each of them:

**Table 1:** Existential concerns.

Existential concern	Existential therapy addresses this concern	A feeling of concern
Death	Awareness of death	Anxiety
Freedom	Responsibility training	Anxiety and anger
Solitude	Immersion in feeling of lost and loneliness	Grief
Absurdity	Finding personal meaning	Grief

### **3.1. Death**

Death is constantly going on under the skin of life and significantly impacts human experience and behavior. Death is the primary and initial source of anxiety, and as a result, it is also the primary source of mental abnormality [30]. One of the most obvious truths of life is that everything is perishing, that we are afraid of

extinction and destruction, and that we must live despite facing destruction and fear. In this regard, Ervin Yalom states this fundamental issue: "Although death itself destroys a person, the thought of death saves him" [31]. Heidegger states that a person is present in two states: forgetting existence and thinking about existence. In the first instance, a person worries about the way things exist [32]. Still, in the second instance, a person faces absolute freedom and emptiness and becomes anxious and worried about this encounter. Therapeutic experiences show that any severe long-term treatment will be incomplete without working on awareness and fear of death. If the one tries to neutralize death with a primitive belief in being saved by the therapist, one will not leave the therapist. The first stage of treatment is the consciousness of death; one of the most suitable ways for this purpose is to examine the critical events of life. Whatever challenges the world's permanence is a point of support through which the therapist can break the patient's defenses and shows the patient the existential entanglements of life [33]. Here, when the client is forced to talk about fear of death and the concern has about the death of loved ones, in fact, by the catharsis of anxiety through talking about the fear of death, the client can gain new insight into life. After this level, three possible emotions appear: First, anger due to the inevitability of an unwanted event. Second, sadness due to separation from interests. Third, Fear is due to the process of death and the possibility of destruction after death. The catharsis through self-disclosure cannot discharge all these feelings. Therefore, complete catharsis can be done through shouting (revealing anger), crying (revealing sadness), and shaking the body (revealing anxiety).

### **3.2. Freedom**

Responsibility is the human's answer to the second existential concern (freedom). Responsibility means creating and authoring. Being aware of responsibility means being aware that we have created ourselves, our destiny, and the troubles of life, our emotions and, as a result, our sufferings. There are no laws, values or moral systems. There is no external reference, no outstanding goal is identified for the world, the experience of existence from this point of view brings confusion, in fact, and impermanence is a common term for the subjective experience of awareness of responsibility [34]. Many existential philosophers have called the existential anxiety of indeterminacy "ur-anxiety". The most basic anxiety, an anxiety that penetrates even deeper than the anxiety of death. One of the common dynamic cognitive defenses against awareness of responsibility is the creation of a psychological world in which a person does not experience freedom under the influence of obsessive forces. In general, irresponsibility, laziness, procrastination are the result of anxiety caused by existential responsibility. The existential conflict of responsibility is the clash between our confrontation with instability and our desire for a solid and structured foothold. This insight can influence the will in addition to fostering the patient-therapist relationship. The insight that the therapist wants to give to the client is on four levels: 1. I can change the world that I have created. 2. There is no danger in change. 3. To achieve what I really want; I have to change. 4. I have the power to change [35].

After getting acquainted with existential freedom in the above four areas, a person should gain a new insight. The therapist enters into a discussion with the client in these areas and encourages the client to explain all the reasons that make him/her not accept the above beliefs. This explanation is actually the catharsis of doubts and fears that the client has towards his existential responsibility, and after this level, client will have less anxiety and be more responsible. The awareness of existential responsibility and freedom evokes two feelings in a

person: the feeling of anger (caused by not being able to hold anyone else responsible for the current situation) and fear (to accept responsibility in order to make a positive change in life). Thus, the treatment that does not include all these feelings cannot be complete.

### **3.3. Isolation**

The existential conflict of Isolation is a tension between the awareness of absolute Isolation and the desire to communicate, to be protected and to be part of a whole. According to this view, Isolation is always associated with the feeling of sadness. The awareness of "death" makes one deeply realize that one is not able to die with or for another. Isolation-helplessness is an understandable emotional response to the realization that we have been forced into existence without our will or satisfaction [36]. In the face of nothingness, no being can help us, this is the moment when we fully experience existential Isolation. No relationship can eliminate Isolation, each of us is alone in existence.

But we can share each other's Isolation as love compensates the pain of Isolation. The therapist helps the patient to face Isolation and understand the responsibility one has for one's life. The best way to treat Isolation in existential psychology is the method of self-disclosure. In this way, the relationship with others is the basis for knowing the inner existential Isolation.

### **3.4. Meaninglessness**

This existential conflict is rooted in the enigma of a creature in search of meaning thrown into a world without clear meaning. Yalom quotes Jung: "Lack of meaning in life plays a decisive role in the etiology of neurosis. Neurosis should be considered the ultimate suffering of a human soul that has not understood its meaning" [37]. Existential meaninglessness is a common phenomenon: boredom, apathy, and lack of content. A person becomes bitter and negative, has no clear direction in life, and questions the purpose of most life activities. Everything loses its importance when we remove ourselves from the flow of life and become distant spectators. From this appropriate position, philosophers have called the galactic perspective, we and those around us look low and trivial. This is precisely when we try to suppress our feelings with a logical and philosophical view instead of paying attention to them, and that's why we end up in meaninglessness. In this regard, it should be said that meaninglessness indicates unexpressed feelings. Ervin Yalom raises the same issue: "Many of the things that are sheltered under the umbrella of meaninglessness, belong somewhere else (or they are created by culture, or part of other ultimate concerns, i.e., death, freedom, and Isolation) and must be treated on this basis." [38].

## **4. The importance of catharsis in counseling theories**

The main focus of counseling psychology is the discharge of negative feelings through speaking. Thus it is possible to analyze how different theories perform the act of catharsis on their own ways and on what emotions they perform catharsis. (anger, sadness, fear, anxiety, and hatred). In the next part of the current article, we will analyze this issue.

#### **4.1. Cognitive therapy**

Based on the cognitive therapy theory, the feeling has a secondary basis and is formed under the influence of the individual's belief system. In this view, false thoughts are not the cause of the mental disorder, but the combination of biological, developmental, and environmental factors cause mental disorders [39]. Automatic thoughts are an essential part of the mental disorder process. Treatment in cognitive therapy is done by examining defective and unhealthy schemas. The cognitive schema consists of human's thinking about their needs, beliefs, and assumptions about people, events, and the environment. According to Freeman, one critical factor that forms the schema is the emotional component [40]. This component is seen as prejudice and anger, which prompts one to defend one's false beliefs. The therapist tries to play the role of a fair judge in examining the person's beliefs and therefore enters into a discussion with the client. This judgment is done to investigate cognitive distortions. Cognitive therapy cures "wrong cognitive processing" by encouraging clients to enter into discussion about their belief system, so the emotions behind these beliefs, by the catharsis of anxiety and anger, will disappear.

In this treatment, one repeats one's false beliefs in the defense position in the discussion. Accordingly, catharsis is used not because of its inherent value but because of the cognitive therapy method of conversation with clients. Therefore, catharsis has an "instrumental" aspect that releases hidden emotions behind false beliefs [41]. The emphasis of this theory on the release of emotions through discussion and the instrumentality of catharsis can cause the problem that the therapist does not realize the importance of the therapy as a mean of releasing emotions behind false beliefs but consider it as a mean to change beliefs.

#### **4.2. Gestalt therapy**

Gestalt means a tendency towards perfection, anything that disrupts one's gestalt is harmful and causes one's life to be incomplete. The unfinished state is the collapse of the external gestalt, which causes client's incompatibility and behavioral problems. In this view, harmony helps clients move from dependence on others to personal independence. Catharsis is one of the foundations of gestalt therapy, which can release the pressure that caused the person's internal gestalt to collapse and provide the conditions for creating a new gestalt [42]. Gestalt therapy helps clients pay attention to what they are feeling now. Therapists should not remind the trauma. It is only essential to be aware of the current feeling, and the therapist should inform the client about the disruption of the gestalt, which caused the negative feeling. Therefore, awareness is one of the main foundations of Gestalt therapy.

One of the ways of catharsis in Gestalt therapy is expressing dislikes and gratitude. These hatreds and gratitude are part of the hidden emotions in the client, and by expressing them, the client opens the way to express their personality. Therefore, catharsis in Gestalt therapy is crucial because it makes one know oneself better, only when one finds the possibility of expressing oneself through catharsis one can show one's actual feelings such as "hate", "love", "spontaneity" ", "stubbornness," and... This way, the client will show the real tendencies and be more effective with self-acceptance. In Gestalt therapy, catharsis is not accepted as a goal but is considered a part of the treatment. A feeling that is openly expressed makes a person aware of oneself. In this type of



catharsis, the expression of feelings will also be attributed to the current feeling state. Each of the states of anger, hatred, sadness, fear, etc. are the gestalt of the person in the "now" time. The purpose of catharsis is to return to coordination and internal gestalt of the person.

The primary difference between catharsis in Gestalt therapy and other therapies is that catharsis in Gestalt therapy is based on expanding the current emotional experience [43]. A duality that, on the one hand, places catharsis as a means to expand a person's feelings and, as a result, increasing awareness of their depth. But on the other hand, it prefers awareness to the act of catharsis itself. Thus, the duality of "emotion" and "wisdom" and synthesis, although inconsistent between these two, is one of the unique features of Gestalt therapy. However, the priority and progress with the current "awareness" of the individual and catharsis is placed in the second degree of importance. This is why the therapist is encouraged to intervene in the catharsis process and ask the clients to try to explain their feelings in words instead of just the catharsis of emotions (for example, crying or shouting). The specific feature of this type of catharsis comparing to other kind of cognitive therapies is that in this method, catharsis is considered the basis of awareness and as a tool to create awareness. This instrumentality makes gestalt therapist scientists always emphasize that catharsis is never the goal. According to what happened in Gestalt therapy, catharsis serves as the "now" feeling of the person. In such a way, catharsis is firstly the expression of feelings and their direct experience and, secondly, an awareness stage to restore inner harmony [44].

#### **4.3. Transactional analysis**

From the theory of transactional analysis, each person has three personal states: child, parent, and adult. One responds to environmental stimuli based on one's emotional moods. In the person's physical and verbal behavior, clues can be found that indicate these moods. Crying, laughing, and trembling of the body are the clues of child, and shouting is the clues of parent part. These clues are the same types of expressions of sadness (by crying), anger (by shouting), and fear (by shaking the body). In this direction, reaching the mature state of existence is possible only by passing through the child and the parent, so only by the catharsis of the parent and the child, person can reach a mature degree to manage them [45]. Mature level is organized, adaptive, and rational and deals with evaluating reality, estimating possibilities, and calculating interests. The mature is formed when the child tries to understand the surrounding world correctly, and this is only possible when person can dominate the child and parent parts. This is why the catharsis of parent and child finds its proper place in the transactional analysis.

For this reason, the "removal of confusion" method [46] is used to release the repressed states of childhood. Because this method is the connecting link between catharsis and transactional analysis. The existence of such a cornerstone that considers the value of the catharsis in transactional analysis to be an intrinsic and self-standing matter, not a credit matter, converts it to an inevitable part of treatment. Because it is an adult who, using "reason" in the process of perception, brings such a method to the fore. It is for this reason that transactional analysis therapists sometimes neglect the importance of the catharsis by highlighting the analytical dimension of therapy. While only the catharsis due to the characteristic of emotional discharge provides the conditions for the emergence of an adult.

## **5. The importance of catharsis in moral psychology**

Kohlberg is one of the most prominent psychological scientists who has dealt with the issue of ethics. He enumerates six moral stages that divide people according to their motivation for moral work, which can be seen in the way they reason. People's motivation includes: avoiding punishment, moral pluralism, benevolence, maintaining social order, social contract, and universal principles [47]. Belief in human rights, justice, and equality is an example of the sixth stage where a person goes beyond all conventional ethics. The most important reason to reach this stage, from the point of view of emotional psychology, is the existence of a feeling of compassion. According to Gilligan, compassion plays an important role in our moral life [48]. Compassion is the superior form of benevolence as caring is tied to feelings of compassion and empathy [49]. Haidt defines moral emotions as stimuli that are the basis of motivation for moral behavior. A motive that encourages people to do good deeds and avoid bad deeds [50]. Catharsis because it gives the opportunity to experience different emotions and examine different moral motivations (which we are not aware of them before catharsis) and also helps empathy, it helps to attain psychological motivation to achieve the sixth stage of Kohlberg's moral perspective. Kohlberg's sixth moral stage is the same stage that is mentioned as the main goal in religions [51] with the terms: "enlightenment", "kingdom of God", "compassion", "perfect man" and "bliss" which the motivation for moral action is only the understanding of the value of moral behavior.

## **6. Summary and conclusion**

Undoubtedly, catharsis, one of the most critical and essential influencing factors, has played a significant role in various counseling theories. A great tool that benefits from multiple dimensions, such as understanding the depth of feeling (as a basis for self-knowledge), creating a new insight, discharge of negative feeling and etc. So it has various manifestations in counseling theories. The diversity of effects of catharsis is, of course, indicative of the prominence of one dimension of psychotherapy compared to other dimensions and the distinct way each theory has been considered for emotional discharge. The catharsis in psychotherapy is one of the most critical parts in the occurrence of treatment. The analysis of the "why" and "how" of this prominence with the help of psychological knowledge and the use of counseling psychology approaches formed the main concern of this article. Therefore, according to the views of counseling theories, three types of catharsis are identified and analyzed how to perform each of them and their therapeutic effects. Catharsis in cognitive therapy is based on releasing anger and anxiety through discussion, which aims to prioritize a person's logic over feelings. In cognitive therapy, catharsis has a marginal aspect. It serves to change beliefs, and it is done not because of its intrinsic value but because of helping to manage emotions rationally. Another feature of catharsis in this framework is the concern of the persuasion of the client and, in other words, "limited to the discussion frameworks". From the theory of transactional analysis, the therapist usually accepts and uses the therapeutic method by which the client's child-centered emotions are discharged. In the aforementioned theory, unlike cognitive therapy, the catharsis implementation is not the result of the discussion-oriented method but the therapist's effort to focus on the individual's feelings. Catharsis is used in transactional analysis therapy to discharge the child part, not because of catharsis intrinsic value.

In the theory of Gestalt therapy, catharsis based on the psychological structure of maintaining inner harmony are

used in such a way as to discharge the person's "now" feeling state. A state that can be "hate", "anger", "sadness", "anxiety," and... In this point of view, catharsis has an "instrumental" aspect, and the logic of Gestalt therapy is the center and creator of catharsis. States of anger, sadness, anxiety are considered the current feeling of a person, and catharsis is reduced as a way to recognize them and create emotional awareness. Of course, such a process is justified by the concepts and themes of Gestalt therapy and by a thorough understanding and interpretation of the individual's psyche. In the psychoanalysis theory, catharsis is based on the dual existence of "trauma" and "remembering it" and a synthesis, although inconsistent, between the two. In this view, emotion is now considered secondary to trauma. That's why catharsis is used to remember the trauma and discharge the related feelings. In this context, catharsis is an intrinsically valuable act and is considered a therapeutic method, but it is consistent with "feelings related to trauma". From the point of view of existential psychology, catharsis can be considered as the basis, building block, and foundation of treatment. This is because anxiety and sadness are interpreted based on the state of human existence consistently, and catharsis is considered a way of transitioning from this feeling. This feature shows that catharsis can be manifested not only as a treatment but also as a "continuous instrument of discharging negative emotions", only in this theory because the "feeling of inner anxiety" is a junction between existential psychology and the traditional view of catharsis and can lead to highlighting the role of catharsis in existential psychology. In this theory, the definition of catharsis can be changed from: "the discharge of previously repressed affects connected to traumatic events that occur when these events are brought back into consciousness and re-experienced" [52], to: "the discharge of emotions connected to the existential position of human that occurs when existential concerns are brought back into consciousness". Although there are considerable qualitative researches on catharsis, some limitations of this method's academic analysis should be considered. The most widespread aspect addresses the fact that many qualitative, short-term studies have inferred the increased need for catharsis during the development of treatment as the weakness of this approach [53]. Therefore, not paying attention to the performance of catharsis in understanding the depth of feelings, excessive emphasis on the use of cognitive methods, not paying attention to the effects of catharsis on cognitive change in the long term and its influence on decreasing existential concerns in many quantitative types of research has caused this article to lack sufficient prior quantitative studies. This research can be a basis for more quantitative studies on measuring the effectiveness of catharsis in improving mental health, emotional intelligence, moral maturity, declining existential concerns and reducing the need for medical therapy in mental disorders. As a result, catharsis is not seen as a factor in increasing negative feelings in any of the counseling theories. All theories consider catharsis as an instrument for one to realize the depth of suppressed feelings. People under the control of anger, sadness, or anxiety cannot be freed from them by ignoring them or speaking logically about them. Based on the mechanism of catharsis, an internal conversation takes place, where the person gradually gets to the depth of negative emotion and is released from it. This issue has led to the mistake of some researchers who ignored that catharsis is the main factor of treatment considered catharsis a factor in increasing negative feelings. The importance of catharsis is such that in all types of counseling theories, catharsis is regarded as the main factor of the treatment. In this case, Luft and Ingham divide the relationship between counselor and client into four categories: open area, hidden area, blind area, an unknown area. The unknown area is the area in which the subject is unknown to the client and the consultant, and it is only by becoming aware of this area that treatment takes place in its true sense and only catharsis will illuminate the unknown region [54]. In the table below, we have summarized the mentioned contents:

**Table 2:** Various counselling theories.

Counselling theories	The main characteristics of emotion	Theory main aspect	An emotional catharsis tool
Traditional	Catharsis as a goal	Feeling oriented	Screaming, crying, trembling
Psychoanalysis	Remembering trauma	Emotion-oriented based on trauma	Screaming, crying, trembling of the body when remembering the psychological trauma
Existential	Existential concerns	Feeling -oriented based on existential concerns	Discussion (it has the capacity to accept traditional catharsis)
Cognitive therapy	Irrational beliefs	Cognitive -oriented	Discussion
Gestalt therapy	Creating emotional-cognitive harmony	Cognitive-Emotional	Screaming, crying, trembling
Transactional Analysis	Growth of inner adult	Cognitive-Emotional	Screaming, crying, trembling

### **Dedication**

My paper is a dedication to my respectful and beloved master: Dr. Eyvazi without whose sublime teachings this paper was not possible.

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