Difference between Dream Therapy and Dream Interpretation

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Throughout recorded history, the dreamsâ€™ content and purpose were not definitively understood, though topics of scientific speculation were once widely discussed and debated as well as a subject of philosophical and religious interest.

Through time and culture, opinions about a dream meaning have varied and shifted. There were even attempts, both a failure and success, to give or endow a relationship and connection between dream interpretation and dream therapy.

Not until the Austrian neurologist Sigmund Freud, who developed the discipline of psychoanalysis and wrote extensively about dream theories and interpretations, did dream therapy and was put to use as a psychoanalysis tool in the late 19th century and outlined in his book The Interpretation of Dreams in 1900. It was then this time that dream therapy falls under the umbrella of the much bigger process of dream interpretation.

The Difference: Dream Interpretation vs. Dream Therapy

Dream Interpretation is said to involve the process of assigning meaning to dreams while dream therapy is basically a method of deriving or getting or generating meaning from images and elements from dreams in order to gain insight into a patientâ€™s psychology.

Dream therapy is said to be a subdivision of dream interpretation and a subdivision of psychoanalysis pioneered by Sigmund Freud in the early twentieth century.

Dream therapy becomes also known as psychoanalytic dream interpretation as it was famously put to use as a psychoanalysis tool by Freud in the late 19th century. On the other hand dream interpretation is also known as dream analysis.

Dream therapy is said to be more subjective, as according to Freud, it uses the process of explaining the meaning of the way the unconscious thoughts and emotions that are processed in the mind during sleep. As a result of distortion and disguise, the dream's real significance is concealed: dreamers are no more capable of recognizing the actual meaning of their dreams than hysterics are able to understand the connection and significance of their neurotic symptoms. The meanings are subject to the interpretation of the dreamer.

In dream interpretation, it also adopts Freudâ€™s beliefs but is balanced by Carl Jungâ€™s objective mod that believes that the scope of dream interpretation was larger, reflecting the richness and complexity of the entire unconscious, both personal and collective. Jung believed the psyche to be a self-regulating organism in which conscious attitudes were likely to be compensated for unconsciously (within the dream) by their opposites. Jung believed that there are archetypes such as the animus, the anima, the shadow and others and they manifested themselves in dreams, as dream symbols or figures.

Dream therapy uses a therapist to interpret the dream while in dream interpretation, it is the person itself who will assigned the meaning of the dreams using a dream dictionary.

In the 1970s, Ann Faraday and others helped bring dream interpretation into the mainstream by publishing books on do-it-yourself dream interpretation and forming groups to share and analyze dreams. Faraday focused on the application of dreams to situations occurring in one's life. It was

noted by Faraday that "the majority of dreams seem in some way reflect things that have preoccupied our minds during the previous day or twoâ€•.

Modern analysts make use of the manifest content to understand the patient's unconscious during a dream therapy.

During therapy, a therapist will attempt to understand the symbolism of the manifest content of the dream in relation to the total content of the session. During a session in which a patient describes a dream, everything that patient says and does after entering the therapist's office is considered an association to the dream and is used to untie its manifest content.

The alternative medicine movement adopted dream therapy as a treatment method, leading to its resurgence in popularity through the 1990s and 2000s.

In the 1980s and 1990s, Wallace Clift and Jean Dalby Clift further explored the relationship between images produced in dreams and the dreamer's waking life that is one of the core beliefs practice in dream interpretation. Their books identified patterns in dreaming, as well as ways of analyzing dreams to explore life changes, with particular emphasis on moving toward healing and wholeness.

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