

Multimodal Therapy

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Multimodal therapy is approach to psychotherapy founded by Arnold Lazarus. It is based on the idea that humans are biological beings that think, feel, act, sense, imagine, and interact; and that each of these "modalities" should be addressed in psychological treatment. Multimodal assessment and treatment is built around the acronym BASIC I.D.: (i.e., seven interactive and reciprocally influential dimensions of personality/psychology or "modalities" which are Behavior, Affect, Sensation, Imagery, Cognition, Interpersonal relationships, and Drugs/biology, respectively).

Multimodal therapy originated within the context of behavior therapy and, later, the framework of cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT"). Indeed, Arnold Lazarus introduced the terms "behavior therapy" and "behavior therapist" into the professional literature in 1958. During his pioneering work in the clinical arena of CBT, Arnold Lazarus realized that more areas of psychosocial functioning often needed to be addressed in therapy than merely actions and thoughts. This led him to expand the model of traditional CBT by incorporating additional modalities for assessment and treatment. This was briefly referred to as "broad-spectrum behavior therapy," and ultimately became multimodal therapy.

Multimodal therapy embraces technical eclecticism, or the idea that treatment can and should consist of techniques from many different theoretical perspectives, without the clinician necessarily adopting the theoretical basis for those techniques. While Multimodal therapists enjoy a great deal of flexibility in terms of technique selection, they are expected to consult relevant research and to favor research-backed techniques over techniques without research backing. Much emphasis is placed on tailoring treatment to the individual client. What's more, rather than using traditional diagnostic nomenclature, Multimodal therapy uses several methods to identify specific problems within the various BASIC I.D. modalities and proposes specific therapeutic interventions for each identified problem.