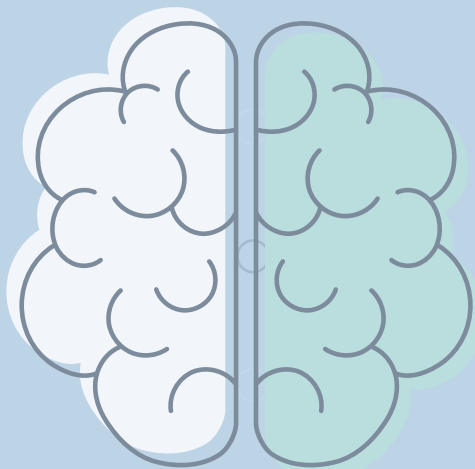


LINKING ASSUMPTIONS TO THERAPY

Unconscious mind: the main aim of psychoanalysis is to make the unconscious conscious, so that people become aware of unconscious influences. Dream analysis is thought to be the 'via regia' (the royal road) to the unconscious mind.

Childhood experiences: any traumatic event that has occurred during early childhood may have been repressed and surface in the form of dreams. To uncover such repressed memories the therapist would offer interpretations of the dream in the context of the client's life.

Tripartite personality: Freud believed when a person is dreaming, the ego becomes suppressed and the Id is given free rein and dreams may represent unconscious motives, wishes and desires that would be socially unacceptable in the waking world.



STEPS IN THE DREAM ANALYSIS PROCESS

Step 1

The dreamer recalls their dream to the therapist. What the dreamer remembers (the story of the dream) is referred to as the manifest content.

Step 2

The process of dreamwork is applied to understand the dream. Dreamwork is when the latent content (underlying meaning of the dream) is transferred to the manifest content.

Step 3

There are five main processes in dreamwork.

- **Condensation:** this is the idea that many elements that make up the latent content of the dream are represented in the dream by just one image/picture. The information is therefore condensed.
- **Displacement:** Freud noted that significant features of the latent content were sometimes represented as seemingly insignificant features of the manifest content. This means that what the dream seems to be about is very different to the meaning. Therefore, the emotion linked with one idea or experience is detached from it and attached to another, so the dream content isn't censored.
- **Representation:** this is the idea that an abstract thought is represented by a visual image. When we describe our dreams, we use words to describe the images.
- **Symbolism:** any significant features of the dream may be replaced by a symbol, for example, a sword representing a penis.
- **Secondary elaboration:** this process occurs by the unconscious collecting all the images within the dream and fitting them together in to make sense of the dream, giving it a logical story but by doing this it further disguises the latent content.

Step 4

The therapist reverses the dreamwork process to uncover the underlying meaning of the dream, i.e. decoding the manifest content back to the latent content. It is important that the therapist considers the context of the client's life when offering interpretations and more than one interpretation should be offered allowing the client to select the one that makes the most sense to them.

EVALUATION: EFFECTIVENESS OF DREAM ANALYSIS

- P.** Dream analysis has been found to be effective in treating mental disorders such as depression and anxiety.
- E.** **Matt and Navarro (1997)** in a review of 63 meta-analyses on the effect of psychotherapy found, on average, 75% of clients receiving dream analysis showed improvements. **Schredl et al. (2000)** found in a survey of psychotherapists in private practice that approximately 70% of patients reported benefits of working through dreams.
- E.** These studies illustrate the benefits of dream analysis on uncovering the root cause of the disorders.
- L.** However, psychotherapy using dream analysis is less common than other forms of psychotherapy such as talking therapy and hypnosis.
- P.** There is limited scientific evidence to support the effectiveness of dream analysis.
- E.** **Hobson and McCarley (1997)** argue that dreams are nothing but commands sent from the brain and are simply a form of 'thinking that happens while we sleep'.
- E.** This questions Freud's suggestion that dreams fulfil unconscious wishes and desires.
- L.** As dream analysis cannot be scientifically validated, it is difficult to support Freud's idea of wish fulfilment in dream with any other research.

EVALUATION: ETHICS OF DREAM ANALYSIS

- P.** There is a **risk of stress, anxiety, humiliation, or pain to the participants** during dream analysis. The therapist may guide the client towards an interpretation of the dream that is emotionally distressing as it may bring uncover past traumatic events. Although this event may have occurred, it could also be a false memory.
- E.** This needs to be handled carefully during the therapy to ensure that the participant is protected during and after the therapy and be informed of their right to withdraw if the therapy becomes too distressing.
- L.** The therapist should make the patient aware of false memory syndrome and the interpretations of the dream should be within the context of the client's life with multiple interpretations offered.
- P.** **Valid consent** is a key consideration of dream analysis.
- E.** This is an important ethical issue to consider within dream analysis as it potentially will uncover emotionally distressing memories and the client should understand what is involved in the therapy before committing.
- E.** The therapist should make sure the client understands what they are consenting to and if they feel distressed, they should be able to stop it at any point.
- L.** There is a risk of power imbalance between the therapist and client and the therapist needs to manage this carefully to ensure an over-reliance doesn't occur.

CONCLUSION

To conclude, dream analysis is effective in treating depression and anxiety disorders where the root cause of the problem can be traced back to early childhood experiences. It is one of the only therapies that gets to the underlying cause of the problem. Although this is a lengthy process, which can sometimes span several years, it has significant long-term benefit. Ethically, care should be given to protect clients from any psychological harm that they may experience during the therapy and the therapist should be careful to balance the power imbalance to avoid an over-reliance on the therapist.