

The Consciousness-Based Approach to Psychological Healing. By Isaac Cherian, Registered Psychologist

"At the heart of our very being, consciousness stands unwavering, transcending the ephemeral nature of thoughts, feelings, agency, and the diverse array of objects that weave the fabric of our experiential world." - Isaac C.

The Consciousness-Based Approach (CBa) in the field of mental health offers a comprehensive perspective, distinguishing itself from specific techniques. This approach serves as a foundational lens through which we understand mental well-being, emphasizing the multifaceted nature of human existence. It draws parallels with the allegorical tale of blind men describing an elephant, highlighting the necessity of perceiving mental health as a complex phenomenon. In contrast, techniques are specialized tools employed within the framework of an approach to address specific aspects or symptoms of mental distress. Collectively, they contribute to a well-rounded and effective approach to mental health, recognizing the intricate nature of the human experience and promoting all-encompassing healing. In CBa, the focus encompasses both foundational understanding and specific techniques.

This approach places consciousness at the center of the healing process, deviating from traditional methods that emphasize specific aspects of mental health such as the body (somatic), emotions, cognition, agency, or external factors like family and social dynamics. The CBa acknowledges that consciousness is a fundamental aspect of our existence. By understanding and working with our consciousness, we can achieve higher levels of well-being and self-awareness. While this approach involves working with various aspects, it places a particular emphasis on exploring them from a conscious perspective.

For instance, when someone says, "I am depressed," several components come into play. There's a cognitive aspect involving thoughts drawn from specific experiences. An emotional facet involves feelings of sadness or guilt. The somatic element encompasses changes in bodily sensations during depression, which may be uncomfortable. Additionally, there's an agentic component wherein an internal decision-maker chooses to act or refrain from acting. While numerous healing practices concentrate on cognition, emotion, and the body, few delve into the concept of agency. The CBa addresses these areas while giving special importance to examining the phenomenon of the inner self—the entity aware of these occurrences—and exploring the nature of that being.

In contrast to traditional approaches, the CBa does not perceive the individual as a passive recipient of treatment but rather as an active participant in the healing process. It underscores the importance of the individual's subjective experience, encouraging them to assume an active role in their healing and personal growth. This approach recognizes that

each individual possesses a unique perspective on their experiences, and it values and respects this perspective.

The CBa operates on the principle that consciousness transcends the brain, constituting a fundamental aspect of the universe. It acknowledges that consciousness exists beyond the confines of the physical body and is not bound by it. This perspective enables individuals to explore deeper aspects of their being, beyond the limitations of the physical body, and tap into their inherent healing potential.

By centralizing consciousness in the healing process, the CBa fosters greater self-awareness and a connection with inner wisdom and intuition. It emphasizes the development of a strong sense of self and identity, along with living in alignment with one's values and aspirations. This approach encourages individuals to delve into their distinct identity and express themselves authentically, free from societal expectations.

In summary, the CBa represents a comprehensive perspective on mental health, acknowledging the interconnectedness of mind, body, and spirit. It motivates individuals to explore deeper aspects of their being, connect with their innate healing potential, and actively participate in their healing and personal growth. By placing consciousness at the forefront of the healing journey, the CBa offers a unique and empowering outlook on mental health, capable of transforming the lives of those who embrace it.

The Seven Principles of Healing, as guided by the Consciousness-Based Approach (CBa), encapsulate the fundamental knowledge and actions instrumental in fostering a state of ease, imbuing life with meaning, and nurturing a profound appreciation for the human experience. These principles constitute a comprehensive framework for personal growth and healing, facilitating a comprehensive transformation of one's well-being.

Principle One: The Authority of the Self

"In the sanctuary of your being, the authority of self reigns supreme, the custodian of your inner world. Embrace its innate knowing, allowing it to guide you towards self-awareness, acceptance, and the profound healing that awaits." - Isaac C.

The first principle of the Consciousness-Based Approach is accepting the authority of the Self, which places the individual's subjective experience at the center of their therapeutic process. This approach emphasizes that only the individual knows their unique perspective on their own life and experiences, and what is best for them. It recognizes the individual's inherent autonomy and agency and values their right to self-determination. Accepting the authority of the self in psychology also values the individual's inner wisdom and intuition and encourages them to identify and trust their own inner voice.

This perspective recognizes the impact of culture, identity, and social context on the individual's experience and acknowledges the role of power dynamics in therapeutic

relationships. It encourages a more egalitarian relationship between the therapist and client and can help to reduce the stigma and shame associated with seeking help for mental health concerns.

Accepting the authority of the self in psychology can help individuals to develop a stronger sense of self and identity, as well as a greater sense of self-awareness and understanding. This approach can also help individuals to build stronger, more fulfilling relationships with others, by encouraging healthy boundaries and communication of needs and values.

In addition, accepting the authority of the self in psychology can help individuals to live a more authentic and fulfilling life that is aligned with their own values and goals. It values the individual's right to make their own choices and decisions, and encourages them to practice self-care and prioritize their own well-being.

This approach recognizes that individuals may have different strengths and resources that can be leveraged in the therapeutic process, and emphasizes the importance of identifying and utilizing these strengths and resources. Overall, accepting the authority of the self in psychology encourages individuals to take ownership of their own thoughts, feelings, and behaviors, empowering them to overcome feelings of powerlessness or helplessness and live a more fulfilling life.

Second Principle: Being from our natural state of ease-ness

"Reclaim Your Birthright: Joyfulness and Freedom." - Isaac C.

The Consciousness-Based Approach emphasizes the importance of functioning from our natural state of ease-ness or contentment to achieve wellbeing. In this perspective, our natural state of being is considered as one of inner peace, happiness, and harmony with ourselves and the world around us. The Self functions as a whole in this state of wholeness, with access to all the resources needed to navigate life. On the other hand, when the Self is fragmented, distress arises.

Living in a state of ease-ness allows us to feel more connected to ourselves, others, and the environment around us. Well-being, in this approach, is not necessarily tied to external circumstances or material possessions, but rather to our inner state of being. Pursuing external pleasures and material possessions is valued, but they are not considered as the source of ease-ness. In fact, when we function from a state of ease-ness, there is a greater possibility of obtaining resources in a sustainable way.

Prioritizing our well-being can lead to greater levels of inner peace and happiness, and can help us cope better with stress and challenges. When we make choices that promote our overall health and well-being, we tend to feel more resilient and better equipped to face the ups and downs of life. Our natural state of being involves a sense of curiosity and

wonder towards the world around us, which can foster our intellectual and cognitive well-being.

Living in a state of well-being also involves feeling more connected to nature and the environment, which can foster our environmental well-being. It is a proactive approach to health that emphasizes prevention and self-care. Our natural state of being may involve a sense of creativity and inspiration that is not necessarily tied to external stimuli or circumstances. We may also experience a sense of compassion and empathy towards ourselves and others, which can foster our social and altruistic well-being.

Fostering a sense of gratitude and appreciation for the blessings in our lives can contribute to our emotional well-being. Prioritizing our well-being also involves engaging in activities that promote our physical health, such as exercise, healthy eating, and adequate sleep. Our natural state of being may involve a sense of humility and acceptance towards the uncertainties of life, which can foster our existential well-being. When we experience well-being, we tend to feel more accepting and non-judgmental towards ourselves and others, which can contribute to our psychological well-being.

Third Principle: The subject and objects of awareness in any experience

"Pause and recognize the duality of experience: the subject and the objects. Know that you are the subject, the one who brings meaning and understanding to the objects that come into your awareness, allowing yourself to be more than the fleeting objects themselves." - Isaac C.

The third principle of healing based on the Consciousness-Based Approach emphasizes the importance of recognizing the subject and objects of awareness in any experience. This principle recognizes that a person is more than just an object of awareness, and the center of our being is the subject and not the object. Objects are anything that we can experience or observe.

Recognizing the subject and objects of awareness is crucial for understanding the nature of perception and consciousness. By doing so, we become aware that our experiences are not solely determined by external factors, but also by our own perception and interpretation. This awareness helps us cultivate a more mindful and present state of being.

Understanding the subject and objects of awareness enables us to appreciate the interconnectedness of all things and the role we play in shaping our own experiences. When we realize the subject and objects of awareness, we develop a greater sense of self-awareness and understanding. We become more attuned to our thoughts, feelings, and behaviors, leading to greater clarity and insight into ourselves.

Recognizing the subject and objects of awareness can help us break free from habitual patterns of thought and behavior that may be limiting us. It allows us to develop a more

flexible and adaptive approach to life, as we become more aware of the ever-changing nature of our experience. Moreover, this awareness can help us develop deeper and more meaningful relationships with others. By recognizing the subjectivity of their experiences, we seek to understand and appreciate their perspective, which can promote empathy, understanding, and compassion.

In summary, the third principle of healing based on Consciousness Based approach highlights the importance of recognizing the subject and objects of awareness in any experience. This awareness can help us develop greater self-awareness, adaptability, and empathy towards others. By doing so, we can cultivate a more fulfilling and meaningful life.

Fourth Principle: Focusing on effort rather than the outcome of our efforts

"Embrace the inherent value of your efforts, for they are the essence of your personal growth. Release the need for control over outcomes, and instead find healing in the genuine appreciation of your own perseverance and resilience." - Isaac C.

The healing principle four of the Consciousness-Based Approach emphasizes the importance of focusing on effort rather than the outcome of our efforts. When we focus solely on the outcome, we may become stressed and anxious as the result is often influenced by factors beyond our control. By focusing on effort, we cultivate a growth mindset that values learning, improvement, and resilience. We are more likely to persevere through challenges and setbacks when we emphasize effort.

Focusing on effort can create a sense of autonomy and self-determination in our lives. It can help us stay motivated and engaged in the present moment. By emphasizing effort, we are less likely to experience disappointment or regret over outcomes that are beyond our control. We can also develop a sense of self-efficacy and confidence in our abilities when we focus on effort.

When we focus on effort, we are more likely to engage in behaviors that promote our well-being and success, such as setting goals, seeking feedback, and practicing self-reflection. Additionally, focusing on effort can help us feel fulfilled and satisfied with our accomplishments. Emphasizing effort can cultivate a sense of resilience that enables us to bounce back from setbacks and adversity.

Furthermore, emphasizing effort can help us develop a sense of discipline and self-control that can benefit us in various aspects of our lives. It can also help us develop a sense of humility that enables us to learn from our mistakes and failures. By focusing on effort, we can cultivate a sense of inner strength and resilience that can benefit us in various aspects of our lives.

In conclusion, the Consciousness Based approach's Healing Principle Four emphasizes the importance of focusing on effort rather than the outcome. This approach can help us

cultivate a growth mindset, self-efficacy, and resilience. By emphasizing effort, we can also develop a sense of discipline, humility, and inner strength that can benefit us in various aspects of our lives.

Fifth Principle: Embracing the fragmented self

"Life is an Ocean, Embrace Every Wave, Calm or Wild" - Isaac C.

The principle of embracing the fragmented self in the Cba. invites us to acknowledge and embrace all aspects of ourselves, including the ones that we may perceive as negative or undesirable. It encourages us to accept and integrate these parts of ourselves rather than trying to suppress or deny them.

By embracing the fragmented self, we can develop a greater sense of self-awareness and self-acceptance. It allows us to let go of self-judgment and criticism, and instead approach ourselves with compassion and understanding. Embracing all parts of ourselves can also help us to heal from past traumas and emotional wounds.

Embracing the fragmented self also enables us to develop a deeper understanding and empathy towards others. It allows us to recognize that everyone has their own unique experiences and struggles, and that it is through embracing our differences that we can foster greater connection and unity.

Furthermore, embracing the fragmented self can help us to tap into our creativity and intuition. It allows us to explore different aspects of ourselves and express them in our own unique way. Embracing all parts of ourselves can also help us to discover our true passions and purpose in life.

In summary, embracing the fragmented self in the Consciousness Based approach invites us to embrace all aspects of ourselves and our experiences. By doing so, we can cultivate self-awareness, self-acceptance, empathy towards others, creativity, and a deeper sense of purpose and fulfillment in life.

Sixth Principle: Deep Relaxation for Experiencing the Wholes of Consciousness

***"Deep relaxation is the balm that soothes the body, calms the mind, and nourishes the soul."* - Isaac C.**

Principle six of the Consciousness-Based Approach is deep relaxation, which enables us to experience the wholeness of consciousness. It is important to explore the depths of our consciousness to cultivate stability and resilience in dealing with the ups and downs of daily life.

Through deep relaxation, we can access a state of restful alertness, where the mind and body are deeply relaxed, yet fully awake. This state of consciousness allows us to experience a sense of wholeness and unity with ourselves and the world around us.

Deep relaxation has numerous benefits for our physical, mental, and emotional well-being. It can help us to reduce stress, anxiety, and tension in the body. It can also promote better sleep, lower blood pressure, and boost the immune system.

In addition to its physical benefits, deep relaxation can help us to develop a greater sense of self-awareness and inner peace. It enables us to access a deeper level of consciousness, where we can connect with our inner wisdom and intuition.

By regularly practicing deep relaxation, we can cultivate a sense of balance and equanimity in our lives. We become better equipped to navigate the challenges and uncertainties of daily life with greater ease and grace.

Moreover, deep relaxation can also be a gateway to experiencing higher states of consciousness, which are characterized by expanded awareness, joy, and bliss. These experiences can be transformative, leading to greater insight, creativity, and a sense of interconnectedness with all of life.

Seventh Principle: Agent Functioning from the Whole Self

"Living authentically is the journey of self-discovery, where we learn to function from our whole self, not just fragments of it." - Isaac C.

Healing Principle Seven of the Consciousness-Based Approach emphasizes the importance of helping the agent function from their whole self, rather than their fragmented self, through reflection. Life can be seen as a journey of self-discovery and learning, and the more we understand ourselves, the more we can live authentically and fulfill our potential.

Living from a whole self means that we are not just identifying with our thoughts, emotions, and external circumstances. Instead, we are tapping into a deeper sense of being that is not limited by our immediate experiences. When we function from a whole self, we are more likely to be in touch with our intuition, creativity, and purpose.

On the other hand, living from a fragmented self means that we are identifying with only certain aspects of ourselves or our experiences. This can lead to a limited sense of self and a lack of connection with our deeper nature. Living from a fragmented self can also cause us to become overly attached to certain outcomes or external circumstances, leading to stress and anxiety.

Reflection is a powerful tool for helping us understand ourselves and function from our whole self. Through reflection, we can examine our thoughts, emotions, and behaviors and

identify patterns that may be limiting us. We can also gain insight into our values, goals, and purpose in life.

Practicing reflection can help us develop a greater sense of self-awareness and self-acceptance. It can also help us identify areas of our life where we may need to make changes in order to live more authentically and fulfill our potential.

In summary, Healing Principle Seven of the Consciousness-Based Approach emphasizes the importance of helping the agent function from their whole self, rather than their fragmented self, through reflection. By living from a whole self, we can tap into our deeper nature and fulfill our potential in life.

This approach and the seven principles it encompasses represent my contribution to the field of psychological healing. These writings can be regarded as a collection of my reflections, deeply influenced by extensive research in neuroscience, the profound insights of William James known as the father of American Psychology, the wisdom found in Buddhist literature, the empirical findings of Mindfulness research, the ancient healing traditions of Indigenous cultures, and the philosophical foundations of Advaita Vedanta, as expounded by Shankara. The CBa. framework aims to promote mental well-being and facilitate the healing journey for individuals seeking a deeper understanding of themselves and their place in the world. In this endeavour, I am deeply grateful for the invaluable contributions of these remarkable individuals and the wealth of resources that have guided my path. Knowing is freedom.

Isaac C.

August 2023