

REVIEW

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Açık Erişim

Awe Therapy: Fundamentals, Formulation and Usage Area*Awe Terapisi: Temelleri, Formülasyonu ve Kullanım Alanları***Fuat Tanhan , Mehmet Engin Deniz , Gülşah Ezgican Akgün ****Authors Information****Fuat Tanhan**

Professor, Van Yüzüncü Yıl
University, Van, Turkey
fuattanhan@yyu.edu.tr

Mehmet Engin Deniz

Professor, Yıldız Teknik University,
İstanbul, Turkey
edeniz@yildiz.edu.tr

Gülşah Ezgican Akgün

PhD Student, Van Yüzüncü Yıl
University, Van, Turkey
ezgicankizilok@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Human life is in danger of losing the ties with humanity and spirituality as a result of massive dependency on digitalization, modern life and advancements. A potential solution is the cultivation of awe feeling in the field of psychology, which is an emotional perception of wonder and admiration, i.e., witnessing a massive view such as Grand Canyon, a sky full with hundreds of stars or undergoing a mystical experience. In this study, first the literature was meticulously scanned and the researches on awe were compiled within the framework of what this feeling is, its formulation, philosophy. Then, awe's usage areas in Existential and Transpersonal psychology are given, and in addition, therapy suggestions that can strengthen this feeling in patients are also presented. Consequently we believe that awe should be used more in therapies for the elevation of public health and life satisfaction.

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ÖZET

Dijitalleşme, modern yaşam ve gelişmelere olan yoğun bağımlılığın bir sonucu olarak insan hayatı, insanlıkla ve maneviyatla bağlarını kaybetme tehlikesiyle karşı karşıyadır. Bunun muhtemel bir çözümü, Büyük Kanyon'un enginliğine veya yüzlerce yıldızla dolu bir gökyüzüne tanık olmak veya mistik bir deneyim yaşamak gibi örneklerle açıklanabilecek, hayret ve hayranlığın duygusal bir algısı olan awe duygusunun beslenmesidir. Bu çalışmada öncelikle alan yazın titizlikle taranmış ve awe üzerine yapılan araştırmalar bu duygunun ne olduğu, formülasyonu, felsefesi çerçevesinde derlenmiştir. Daha sonra awenin Varoluşçu ve Transpersonal psikolojideki kullanım alanları verilmiş ve ayrıca hastalarda bu duyguyu güçlendirebilecek terapi önerileri de sunulmuştur. Sonuç olarak awenin halk sağlığının yükseltilmesi ve yaşam doyumunun yükseltilmesine yönelik tedavilerde daha fazla kullanılması gerektiğine inanıyoruz.

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INTRODUCTION

Modern life and the advancements in the society change the connection between humans and their surroundings, as well as each other. Modern life and connectedness with technology change the perception of people about the world and how to act in it (Tully, 2003). According to some researches (Pittman & Reich, 2016; Sanders et al., 2000), social isolation is always a possible risk due to the massive dependency on digital communication forms (Pittman & Reich, 2016). In order not to lose the bond with the humanity, awe may be a potential solution as the cultivation of awe means a domain between the self and the rest of the world (Chen & Mongrain, 2020).

In psychology, awe is accepted as a positive emotion as a result of many benefits after the emotion (Chen & Mongrain, 2020). It is associated with parasympathetic activation, which is a division in the Autonomic Nervous System (ANS). The mission of this system is to save energy and decrease heart rate, as well as sympathetic withdrawal (Shiota et al., 2014; Rankin et al., 2019). Consequently, it can be said that experiencing awe can be regulatory and can be utilized in finding balance and coping with stress (Chen & Mongrain, 2020). Another problem in modern area might be the time scarcity and it is associated with sleeping problems, stress, difficulties in delaying gratification and postponing going to a doctor (Zhong & DeVoe, 2010). In their research, Rudd and his friends (2012) found evidence that experiencing awe may supply an efficient method to alleviate time scarcity feeling that is felt by lots of people in modern life. Same study also found evidence that awe experiences make people less self-centered, more humble and more pro-social. Awe experiences also lead people to pay more attention to needs of others and not to harm any other individual (Piff et al., 2015; Bai et al., 2017; Wang et al., 2017). These characteristics and attitudes are thought to be a good way of leaving instrumentalist attitudes of modern life and of appreciating the value of the living.

In modern life, value of human life reminds critical concerns. Solik and others (2013) underline the evidences demonstrating the radically reduced, ignored and/or replaced human values in modern societies. The questions surrounding us include our place in the universe among all the mass communication technologies and how to escape from ignoring the beauties of life by becoming mechanical.

The times we experience something which is greater than ourselves, it is awe. Awe is an emotional perception of wonder and admiration, i.e., witnessing a massive view such as Grand Canyon, a sky full with hundreds of stars or undergoing a mystical experience. Keltner and Haidt (2003: 297) described this emotion as ‘in the upper reaches of pleasure and on the boundary of fear’. It is a response to a perception of vastness that challenges our mental schemes (Keltner & Haidt, 2003; Saroglou et al., 2008). It is a deep and complex emotion and it can change the lives of individuals (Chirico, 2016). Awe experiences typically characterized as meaningful by the individuals, and they state that these experiences make them happier (Li et al., 2019).

Although it can evolve out of daily experience, awe often signifies a momentous occasion, and it transports us from telluric everyday life and leads us to the nature of existence, as well as providing a pathway to boundary experience that can nurture the transformation and existential growth (Bonner, 2016). Shiota and others (2007) note that awe leaps out as a positively valenced emotional response to a stimulus which is information-rich in the nature and it motivates the person to revise and re-appraise his or her existing frames of knowledge accordingly. With all these aspects, awe might be a potential way of

realizing the value of human life. It could be regarded as a life orientation through noticing and appreciating the positives (Büssing et al., 2014).

What may be factors that influence the severity of awe? The answer may be personality, character traits, social class, religion and culture (Allen, 2018), however further research is needed on these controversies. There are researches that demonstrate people who are more open to new experiences are also more open to experiencing awe (Shiota et al., 2006) while another study found that extraversion is not a sign of tendency to experiencing awe (Silvia et al., 2015). Considering the character traits, one study found that dispositional awe of participants was significantly correlated with all 24 character strengths in the Values in Action Inventory of Strengths (VIA-IS) (Güeswell & Ruch, 2012). When it comes to social class, a study found that individuals from higher classes reported less frequently experiencing awe compared to individuals from lower social classes (Piff & Moskowitz, 2017). Regarding the religion, one study found that not only religious but also non-religious individuals report experiencing awe; however, religious one mentions explicitly religious or life-or-death events while non-religious one talks about the wonder of nature (Preston & Shin, 2017). In another case, during a simulation of viewing Earth from the space, the individuals who experienced awe were non-religious (Reinerman-Jones, Sollins, Gallagher, & Janz, 2013). Regarding the culture, one study from Iran, Malaysia, and Poland found that there were country-level differences for dispositional awe, amusement, and pride, and the largest difference was seen with awe (Razavi, Zhang, Hekiert, Yoo, & Howell, 2016). America reported the highest dispositional awe and Iran reported lowest, and the difference between them was large.

The Philosophy of Awe

18th century philosophers such as Edmund Burke and Immanuel Kant considered awe important and they talked about its bonds with the supreme. Awe tends to be elicited by the vast and expansive, it is 'in its chaos that nature most arouses our ideas of the sublime, or in its wildest and most ruleless disarray and devastation, provided it displays magnitude and might' (Kant 1790 [2000], x23, 5: 246).

Awe is traditionally associated with religious themes (De Cruz, 2020). Abraham Heschel notes that awe is not only an emotion, but also a way of understanding. It is an intuition for the creaturely dignity of all things and their preciousness to God; a realization that things not only are what they are but also stand, however remotely, for something absolute. It is obvious from what he says that awe is not only affective but it also involves cognitive states (Quinn, 1997). Keltner and Haidt (2003) articulate the connection between awe and the philosophical concept of awe while talking about its impact on some psychological systems depending on perception change and urge to accommodate vastness.

Awe can be approached as the core of transformative and enduring change (Chirico et al., 2016) Recent research has shown that the awe emotion is correlated with some behavioral states such as altruism, gratitude, creativity, happiness and even life satisfactions (Piff & Keltner, 2015, Rudd, Vohs, & Aaker, 2012, Van Capellen & Saroglou, 2012). For instance, individuals who have hiked among giant sequoias, and seen the huge Taj Mahal, or participated in a virtuosic musical performance can experience this self-transcendent sense, which shift their attention from themselves to the feeling of being a part of something greater (Allen, 2018). The various themes of awe include threat, beauty, ability, virtues and supernatural (Keltner & Haidt, 2003). These themes depend on what trigger the experience and how the individual interprets the awe experience. Accordingly, awe may result in positive and/or negative feelings. Even

though negative experiences have also been studied (Gordon et al., 2017; Piff, Dietze, Feinberg, Stancato, & Keltner, 2015), awe has a positive connotations more commonly (Bonner & Friedman, 2011) and positive forms of awe have received more experimental attention (Chirico, Yaden, Riva, & Gaggioli, 2016; Chirico & Yaden, 2018; Shiota, Keltner, & Mossman, 2007).

Awe and Psychology Field

The psychology discipline has started to reveal the prominent implications of awe which explains how we perceive ourselves and the world, however future research is needed to satisfy its promise for improving the human experience, as it is a sense that can be a unique tool for human well-being (Shiota, 2021).

This sense has especially been in the aesthetic, religion and spirituality areas of philosophy for such a long time. Records show the terms used in the analyses of Burke and Kant that a challenging experience exceeding the limitation of the individual's perception of beauty leads to a deeper can be found in modern understanding of awe (Yaden et al., 2018). When it comes to the psychology, William James was the first person who put intense experiences of awe within the field. In 1970, Abraham Maslow characterized the capacity to experience awe as an indispensable aspect of a good life. The modern understanding of awe comes from gets its foundation mostly by

Keltner and Haidt's scientific article (2003) which provided a basis for the psychological understanding of awe, which puts two cognitive appraisals on the center of experiencing awe: the perception of vastness and the need to mentally locate this vastness into individual's mental schemes.

As described by Keltner and Haidt (2003), the first appraisal dimension is vastness, which can be perceptual (such as seeing Taj Mahal) or conceptual (contemplating the endless space) (Allen, 2018). The variety of studies have been conducted in laboratory settings in order to elicit the sense based on the vastness perception. Prade and Saraglou (2016) used images and videos of natural scenery while Piff and others (2015) got participants out of the lab and took them to see eucalyptus trees to elicit awe. In 2016 and 2017, Chirico and others (2017) simulated vastness in virtual space with panoramic nature views and used virtual reality (VR) to elicit this sense.

The second dimension is need for accommodation of the vastness. This dimension consists of the alterations on the mental schemes which the individual already has (Keltner & Haidt, 2003). These existing mental schemes undergo change after witnessing the perception of vastness. Like Sundararajan (2002), some researchers claimed that this dimension is not defined sufficiently, therefore there is more than one operationalization of this definition in the literature. Schurtz and others. (2012) reported that the need for accommodation has measures of its own, however it has not been validated. However, seeking out (Razavi et al., 2016), the need for cognitive closure (Shiota et al., 2017), degree of novelty, degree of expectations (Lorini & Castelfranchi, 2007), the degree of uncertainty (Valdesolo & Graham, 2014) have been examined by researchers.

Existential Psychology and Awe

Human is the only creature with ability of self-reflection and thanks to this self-reflection, people become aware that sooner or later, one day they will die; that the most sacred beliefs and values, identities they have are uncertain; that they come face to face with a surprising set of choices throughout their lives; that

they are unaccompanied in an apathetic universe (Koole et al., 2006). Existentialism approaches the nature of human as a flexible, open-minded and capable of a huge inclination of experience phenomenon, and it believes that a fixed self does not exist, but we are continually in a process of becoming (Nesti & Ronkaian, 2020). This approach assumes that every individual has the ability to create meaningful and valuable existence (Furman, 2003). The aim of the existential psychology is to understand how humans settle with the basic facts of life and how these issues influence the diverse components of their behavior and experience (Yalom, 1980).

Existential Practice

Existential practice discovers the ways in which the here-and-now feelings, thoughts and dynamic relationships with both therapist and others enlighten their world consists of past experiences, current events and future expectations (Vos et al., 2014). It is a mutual, collaborative process. The client examines his own perspective, values and behaviors in order to change with the help of the therapist.

Existential therapies are a set of psychological interventions that explicitly turns to questions about existence, and they assume that psychopathology may be decreased or prevented by overcoming existential distress (Vos, 2014). There is a real relationship between the client and the therapist where the client faces with self-reflection and displays questioning stance to the whole experience, word and life (Nesti & Ronkaian, 2020). The therapist does not concentrate on a fixed or an altered psychology, but he pretends to be a catalyst and he helps to client to find the meaning and truth of life. In this practice, therapist and client come together in a dialogue with the aim of seeking and finding the truth and reality in the client's life, so that the client reconciles with the conflicts in the life and accepts the limitations as well as gets aware of the self-deceptions about his responsibilities to himself and other people (Nesti & Ronkaian, 2020).

Major existentialists such as Bugental (1987), Friedman (1985), May (1958), Schneider (1995) and Yalom (2002) considered that 'presence' – to be deeply connected to self and other (Schneider, 2003) as a main principle in existential therapy is indispensable to effecting change, and it plays vital role in a healing environment as well as a sincere, safe therapeutic relationship (Krug, 2009). Wampold (2001) supports the idea that contextual factors have a positive impact for clients to change based on the meta-analytic research. Presence is highly related with here-and-now principle in the therapy room and of the immediate moment. This principle describes a therapeutic attitude that both cultivates and expands presence (Krug, 2009).

Death in Existential Psychology and Awe

Death is a main consideration in existential thought (Yalom, 2008) According to the Furman (2003), in existential thought, death awareness results in anxiety which can be experienced in two different ways;

- a) an overwhelming anxiety (dread or depression) resulting in various dysfunctional behaviors and mood states associated with the choice of escape from it,
- b) an energizing source that leads to live life fully as much as possible.

Corey (2008) approaches it as a positive anxiety (energizing source) as it gives a meaning to the life in existentialist approach (Corey, 2008). It is a key notion (Moustakas, 1956) and being aware of one's own

mortality leads people to examine their choices on life and choose to live to the fullest. Death, which pushes people to search for meaning, has also been a concept that directs the religious literature, and religion has been defined as the answer given by the individual to some existential questions in the context of questioning the connection between people's search for meaning and death.

It is stated that existential anxiety, as a driving force in making sense of life, will play an active role in experiencing the awareness of death and coping with its anxiety (Corey, 2008). Yalom (2008) determined that if the person has an existential anxiety on a ground where he questions the meaning of life in the context of existential anxiety, he can be more successful in making sense of death and in coping with death anxiety. He determined this through some clinical trials he conducted with patients who were about to die. Yalom demonstrated with these experiments that patients who had a sense of meaning in life were less hopeless towards death than patients who did not have this sense of life.

Within this scope, awe can be considered as a possible way of dealing with death anxiety as it evokes positive attitudes towards life and its meaning. Schenider (2021) states that awe is a feeling that embrace the dread and life difficulties because it creates a joy and enthusiasm in living. Awe revitalizes the individual as it accepts 'death' as an opening. This acceptance is neither Pollyannaish – it does not deny the tragic and horrific part, nor cynical and despairing – it highlights that disarray and disorientation result in new possibilities and improvements. In this point, Schenider gives the examples of Stephan Hawking, Viktor Frankl and Maya Angelou as the people who fully acknowledged the life's dislocation, however, they set themselves free from these dislocation experiences through their resilience.

Awe in Existential Therapy

Specific techniques or interventions do not take place in existential psychotherapy, which cannot be regarded as a system (May, 1979). Jourard (1968) defines it as a process where the client is treated as a whole person and it embraces clients as individuals who are capable of shedding the barriers in front of meaningful lives.

Schenider (2004, 2009) believes that contemporary existential-spiritual psychology has a main responsibility which is the upbringing of awe sensibility. He claims that this emotion is a probable bridge between thought systems of East and the West, as well as between all the individuals without any discrimination and the existential psychology should embrace it in order to understand human experience (Schneider, 2011). He insists that the element of awe should be added to therapeutic healing and to the emerging contextual factors such as empathy, therapeutic alliance and hope. Awe unlocks the door of therapists understanding in client's struggle and potential for healing into the context of self-cosmic relation. Schenider (2001) considers depression is an experience of smallness and insignificance before the local context of family or job, as well as before being itself. However, healing experience transcends the circumscribed world of symptoms, family, or vocation, but relates to one's entire engagement with life.

According to Schenider (2011) an awe imbued therapeutic healing requires;

- 1- To be attuned with the passing nature of time and life and its impact on therapist-client connection
- 2- The therapist should be open to the unknown and possibilities of discovery with the client

3- To be attuned with the vastness's background within the therapist and client are situated, both within themselves and surrounding themselves.

Consequently, Schenider (2008) strongly supports the idea that existential or awe-based dimension support the healing and this healing guides to an enlargement of consciousness and considered the awe experience as a mean for public mental health elevator and increasing therapeutic change (Bonner & Freidman, 2016).

Transpersonal Psychology and Awe

Friedman and Hartelius (2013) defined transpersonal psychology approach as a way of understanding the human condition that acknowledges the insufficiency of traditional positivistic assumptions related to the independence of objective reality and subjective experience. It embraces inquiry and other investigation forms as classic scientific methods including drawing upon the practices of spiritual traditions (Hartelius, Rothe, & Roy, 2013). Transpersonal psychology, which is characterized as the 'fourth force' in psychology, reflects the drive to transcend identity and self-concept; Standing between psychology and spirituality, it brings together psychological concepts, theories and methods with spiritual disciplines (Davis, 2000, p. 3-8) and it aims to combine West's science with East's mystical experiences (Uysal, 2020).

'Transpersonal' encompasses genetic, racial, collective and phylogenetic memories, karmic experiences and archetypal dynamics (Grof, 2002, 14). It refers to the collective and archetypal realm that Jung and others talked about; It contains states that shed light on deep mystical insight, pure consciousness or enlightenment related to unconditional awareness (Uysal, 2020). As some traditional psychoanalysts theorize, transpersonal psychology sees these higher states as the natural peak experience of human development (Krystal, et al., 2002). Elmer (2003) notes that transpersonal psychology has always had a main interest in exploring the relation of consciousness and spirituality to physical and mental health. Transpersonal psychology deals with optimizing the human nature beyond the symptom remission (Rodrigues & Friedman, 2013).

Transpersonal Practice

Transpersonal practice aims the self-realization and self-actualization of the client, so the client discovers his essential self's core. Spirituality is also a part of this core and identity (Griffith & Griggs, 2001). Transpersonal therapy works on building and improving the existing qualities, spirituality and development of the self, so that the client is able to use his own free will and inner sources to erase inner conflicts and build a sense of harmony and balance in his life. Rodriguez and Friedman (2012) summarize the transpersonal psychotherapy process;

- Starting with an evaluation,
- Setting up the goal,
- Unfolding of the sessions for self-exploration and therapeutic gain,
- Final evaluation

It is a co-operative process where therapist is a catalyst most of the time for the healing and self-realization of the client. In a safe and comfortable environment, the relationship between the client and the therapist is settled. This relationship is open-minded, respectful, innocent and wondrous. In this relationship, not

only the client, but also the therapist can be in a modified state of consciousness and exchange information and energy that can include unconsciousness, normal consciousness, and higher consciousness. Following techniques can be applied in transpersonal therapies (Grof, 2000);

- Meditation,
- Hypnosis,
- Drumming and chanting,
- Trance dance,
- Breathwork,
- Active imagination,
- Guided imagery,
- Deep relaxation,
- Biofeedback
- Binaural tones.

Transpersonal therapist has an inclination to trust to believe in the inner potential and inner wisdom of the client as coming from higher Self and norm an inclination of consciousness to grow, expand and find healthy expressions (Rodriguez & Friedman, 2012). Kaspro and Scotton (1999) state that transpersonal therapy uses altered states of consciousness (ASCs). According to Metzner's definition, (1989) an ASC is a change in thinking, feeling and perception related with individual's usual primary consciousness, that has a beginning, a duration and an ending. Breathing technique, for instance, can stimulate calm and initiate an altered state of consciousness.

Transpersonal therapy creates spaces for the client to recognize and value his own self. Individuals who are experiencing symptoms of anxiety, depression, phobias and addictions, that may be blocking their ability to appreciate his life. Also, Bonner and Freidman (2016) note that transpersonal theorists approach post traumatic growth as a natural part of human development as humans which comes after the adaptation to capacity for transcendence. The integration of traumatic experience leads to the creation and/or discovery of the meaning of the event for the individual. Accordingly, transpersonal therapists put superficial explanations aside (such as cause and effect chains) and try to find meanings that can transcend ego and settle a connection between the client and the rest of the humanity, the universe and beyond. In this way, the symptoms and post-traumatic growth recess, and the client's capacity to transcend circumstantial conditions – whether they are traumatic, mundane or exceptional, increase.

Awe in Transpersonal Therapy

Bonner and Freidman (2016) emphasize on the potential way to transcendent modes of being in awe experience, in which the contextual meanings go beyond their referential frames and limitations of the ordinary experience. In other words, awe experience provides a transfer from mundane daily life to the nature of existence (Bonner, 2016). To reach the optimal personal growth and development, and increased capacity to transcendence provided by awe experience, transpersonal therapies have potential

experiences of awe in the client. For instance, the methods for modification of the consciousness are frequently used in transpersonal therapies. These are:

Experiential exercises. These exercises involve use of games, art, various activities and/or team-works in conjunction with traditional conversation-based strategies. They enhance the therapy by expanding the clients' insight, and they are more attractive and interesting (Thompson et al. 2011). The methods can aim to psychoeducation, social and life skills development, competency skills building, and coping skills.

Brainwave Entrainment. This method refers to the brain's electrical response to rhythmic sensory stimulation. When the brain receives a stimulus – through eyes, ears, nose or other senses, it emits an electrical charge as a response (Cortical Evoked Response). These responses become what we see or hear by traveling throughout the brain (Zhuang et al., 2009). In order to measure this process, sensitive electrodes can be used by attaching on the scalp.

In this technique, binaural beats are applied with stroboscopic light, using a high performance and definition audio-video equipment (Cruceanu & Rotarescu, 2013). The brain resonates with the binaural beat and produces synchronized cerebral waves. These waves are able to alter the subject's state of consciousness (Lakatos et al., 2007). By this 'frequency following response' (FFR) principle, therapists can reach the desired mental state of the subject, such as arousal or relaxation (Zhuang et al., 2009).

Hypnosis. It has been a fascinating therapy method since the times of Mesmer (1734-1815). Hypnosis is a social situation where a person strives to respond to imaginative situations offered by the therapists and these suggestions typically require the alterations in sensations, perceptions, memories, emotions, thoughts, and behaviors (Lynn & Kirsch, 2014). Transpersonal psychology uses hypnotic trances to produce altered state of consciousness (Zahi, 2009). The use of hypnosis as a visualization tool promotes wellness by using spiritual aspects (Bunning, 2008).

Meditation. Walsch and Vaughnan (1993a) named meditation as 'the royal road to the transpersonal' while comparing it with the dream role in psychoanalysis. Meditation is a mean of establishing mental health (Goleman, 1988) and also a powerful subsidiary in psychotherapies. Meditation techniques are beneficial for self-regulation, relaxation and pain control, self-exploration and self-therapy, as well as self-transcendence (Shapiro et al., 2002). Goleman (1988) states that, meditation can be a way of sluffing of our masks and egos and realizing our essential non-duality.

These methods are applied in transpersonal psychology in order to simplify dissolution of typical subjective perspectives that constrain the sense of self as being bound in space-time and existing separate from an assumed objective reality. The subjective experience of modified consciousness can itself serve as an elicitor of awe. Additionally, acknowledging that (such as through metacognition) such states can be revealed by intentional act may result in a deep sense of awe related with existential awareness experience. Transpersonal therapies can also lead to inclinations towards experiencing awe as well potentiating these experiences. Openness to experience, affect tolerance and creativity are fulfilled by the expansion of consciousness states. In the literature, there are empirical studies that have found a correlation between a disposition to experience awe and creativity and openness (Bonner, 2015; Shiota, Keltner, & John, 2006).

Another significant characteristic of eliciting awe in transpersonal therapy is the emphasis on spirituality as a component of holistic psychotherapy. Spirituality may be viewed as a problematic place by some therapists and they believe that it should not be used in psychology. Other therapists find spiritually important in human functioning, but they keep it out of their domain. On the other hand, transpersonal therapy sees spirituality as a source that can be used to facilitate change and growth aimed.

Bonner and Freidman (2016) advise therapists to appreciate the importance of awe as a component in psychotherapy based on the idea that the vast majority of therapists intuitively recognize the importance of awe in the individual's life especially in terms of changes. In order to promote positive change, that is vital for expansion of personal potential, Bonner and Freidman offer following recommendations:

1- Incorporate spirituality into the therapeutic process:

This can be achieved in many different ways such as such as discussing values, exploring existential concern or using activities that increase connectedness sense. The manner, form, timing of incorporating spirituality in psychotherapy should depend on unique characteristics of individuals, specific circumstances of their lives at the time of therapy.

Therapist can give such assignments as listening to meditation music while staring at the stars in the dark sky in order to elicit awe experiences. Instructing clients to exceed their ordinary experiences and think about the wonder of something they have at the moment can also be cultivating in transpersonal therapies. Openness to experience also elicits the potential of experiencing awe, so such techniques as dialectic discourses, exposure therapies can be used with regard to the unique characteristics of the client.

2- Evaluate clients' level of self-expansiveness

The clients' sense of self is a significant area and it should be assessed by the therapist in order to incorporate transpersonal domain into therapeutic arena. The evaluation of the self-expansiveness level of the client can be helpful for the therapist to represent a contextual framework where the client might find explore the transpersonal component of being, and to shape a tool for monitoring the progress of the client. Freidman's (1983) SELF – Self Expansiveness Level Form can be used, as well as other less-formal discussions.

3- Recognize and address barriers to awe

Affect tolerance level is another supreme aspect of experiencing awe. Accordingly, it is more difficult for people with low levels of affect tolerance to experience awe. In order to treat emotional problems, techniques that develop client's abilities to thoroughly feel the whole depth of emotional experiences, while maintaining their sense of personal integrity can be used. Lives are lived "more fully" then and this fully lived life may increase to capacity to experience awe.

Strict belief systems can also function as a barrier to experiencing awe (religion, strict ideas about gender roles, etc.). The client's flexibility should be increased in this scenario. Dialectic and/or behavioral methods can be used for this aim.

4- Cultivate personal awe and spirituality.

The knowledge and skills of therapists in this area should be expanded for an effective treatment. Didactic and experiential methods of knowledge expansion should both be included. Taking care of one's own

spiritual needs should take part in therapist's self-care repertoire. By this way, the therapist approaches the spiritual needs of clients from an authentic position, as well as it functions as a buffer that prevents caregiver stress.

Other Awe Eliciting Suggestions for Therapists

Up to this point, we have conducted an extensive literature review on the experience of awe and examined its uses in psychology. We investigated how and why awe should be used in the therapy process within the scope of existential and transpersonal therapies. Next, in addition to the existential and transpersonal practices mentioned above, we will be giving suggestions for the therapists who would like to elicit awe emotion in their clients taking all the literature above.

1- Gestalt Therapy

Even though the starting point of Gestalt therapy was a revision of Freud's psychoanalysis, it rapidly evolved into a totally different, independent therapy system (Perls, Hefferline & Goodman, 1951). Gestalt therapists benefit from such active methods that expand patients' awareness and their cache in which the aim is the self-knowledge, acceptance and development by the immersion into to current existence (Yontef & Jacobs, 1989). From this point, the resemblance to existential therapy is evident.

The interaction between the self and environment is called as contact in Gestalt approach (Aktas, 2002). The balance is settled by the contact between self and the environment and if the contact occurs successfully, change, growth and maturation happen. The notion of 'presence' was described by Zinker (1987) as a moment of awe in the face of an infinitely complex and mysterious universe. In other words, in the moments of "me-you" when the therapist and the client are in full contact, the perception of the ego doing anything disappears and a connection with the wholeness beyond the mundane is experienced in awe (Joyce & Sills, 2010: 251). Through this kind of contact, one transcends himself, experiencing awe by noticing all the relationships in the universe and the possibilities these relationships bring.

Awe experience rises when individuals witness natural phenomenon such as the rising of the sun, the streak of lightning, comprehend and respect it, or admire a book, thought or piece of art. This is a kind of contact as the individual establishes a bond with himself in these situations and feels the impact on himself. In an awe therapy, the aim is to provide and gain the emotional state that is lacking in more people, so the contact should be seen as a useful method to reach this aim. As influenced by Buddhism, Gestalt therapy suggests a provocative language increasing the contact, so it can be approached as an effective way to increase the sense of awe in patients.

2- ACT- Acceptance and Commitment Therapy

ACT aims to help individuals accept events or situations that are beyond their control and negatively affect them, and to maintain behaviors that will make their lives more meaningful and richer (Kul & Türk, 2020). In this approach, the individuals' preoccupation with their minds and even affecting their bodies are not seen abnormal; instead of fighting these feelings and thoughts, these experiences are accepted as they are, perceived as 'guests', so this approach focuses on to teach the individuals how to relate these feelings in different and new ways, and to help them to live focused on the present moment (Eifert & Forsyth, 2005). This is what leads to 'psychological flexibility' (Hayes et al., 1999).

The three main stages of ACT consist of three main process; (Harris, 2016)

A- Acceptance of your thoughts and feelings and be present

B- Choose a valued direction

C- Take action

The contact is also a key feature in ACT therapies. Being in touch with the present means being here and now, aware and conscious of what is being experienced in the present moment, without getting lost in thought. It is thought that focusing on what the client experiences in the moment rather than his comments about the past and assumptions about the future will help the other five basic processes of ACT work better (Hayes et al. 2004). The therapist encourages the client to live in line with his values, plays a facilitating role in his life and never tries to eliminate the client's symptoms (Harris, 2016; Batten, 2011).

The acceptance of the current situation and being in present, as well as realizing own values can be good way of awakening awe emotion. The contact here is between the individual and his inner world. This kind of realization and awareness may elicit awe feeling in the patient as he realizes his inner potential, accept himself and appreciate his existence.

DISCUSSION

Awe should be seen as a possible solution not to lose bonds with the humanity and the rest of the world as it is an emotional response to a stimulus coming from the nature by which the individual re-appraise his/her existence (Shiota et al., 2007). Many researches prove that awe emotion brings with good behaviors and attitudes (Shioate et al., 2007; Rudd et al., 2012; Piff et al., 2015; Van Capellen & Saroglou, 2012; Chirico et al., 2016; Prade and Saroglou, 2016; Bai et al., 2017; Wang et al., 2017; Chirico & Yaden, 2018). Despite its historical, philosophical and psychological roots (Burke, Kant, Maslow), it was Keltner and Haidt (2003) who provided a basis to understand the awe psychologically. This basis located two cognitive appraisals on awe; the perception of vastness and the need to mentally locate this vastness into the individual's mental schemes.

Within the scope of existential and transpersonal psychologies, awe is seen as a valuable therapeutic component in psychotherapy. According to Schneider (2008), in the existential therapy, the combination of awe, empathy, hope and therapeutic alliance, the patient's healing is supported, his consciousness is increased and awe experience becomes a mean of public mental health elevator. In transpersonal psychology awe emotion should be prompted in order to promote positive change, which is vital for the personal potential's enlargement (Bonner & Freidman, 2016). Both Schneider and Bonner and Freidman give suggestions for an awe imbued therapeutic environment and relationship between the therapist and the patient. Additionally, Bonner and Freidman offer four method to elicit awe in the clients; experiential exercises, brainwave entrainment, hypnosis and meditation.

We believe that it is vital that nature, spirituality or an abstract thought or concept can still affect us in a digitalized and mechanized world, and a sense of awe is a tool for perceiving both our own potential and the vastness of the cosmic world. Awe focuses the individual's attention on the here and now, but it also prompts the individual to think more self-transcendently and it shifts the individual's focus from inner concerns to outer sense of universality and connectedness (Mikulak, 2015). As it acknowledges death as

a beginning, awe embraces it and other life difficulties by creating an enthusiasm or joy in living (Schenider, 2021). In other words, this emotion is a good solution for dealing with death anxiety.

Realizing the importance of awe in our lives, we thought about how else this feeling could be aroused in psychotherapy. Gestalt therapy can be an effective method thanks to the emphasize on the interaction between the self and environment, that is called 'contact'; the notion of 'presence' and 'me-you' moments between the therapist and the client. ACT, on the other hand, also puts 'present moment' on the center, helps the individuals to relate the negative feelings in positive ways. The therapist encourages the client to live in line with his values, plays a facilitating role in his life and never tries to eliminate the client's symptoms (Harris, 2016; Batten, 2011). In this way, the acknowledgement and awareness can result in awe emotion.

To sum up, this article constitutes a contribution to the awe in psychology literature. It provides a large literature on the understanding of the feeling, and offers its formulation, fundamentals and use area in psychology. Awe should be used more in therapies for the elevation of public health and life satisfaction.

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About Authors

Fuat Tanhan. Fuat Tanhan is the head professor in the department of psychological counselling and guidance at Education Faculty, Van Yüzüncü Yıl University and he is also the director of Educational Sciences Institute of Van YYU. He completed his undergraduate and post graduate in Van Yüzüncü Yıl University and he completed his doctorate in 2007 in Ankara University. His research interest include social sciences and humanities, education, educational sciences and guidance and psychological counseling, addiction, death anxiety, trauma and bereavement, awe and cyber psychology.

Mehmet Engin Deniz. Mehmet Engin Deniz completed the Guidance and Psychological Counseling Undergraduate Program at Selçuk University Education Faculty in 1994. He completed his master's degree in 1997 and his doctorate in 2002 in the Department of Psychological Services in Education, Institute of Social Sciences, of the same university. He became an Associate Professor in the field of Guidance and Psychological Counseling in 2006. He is the editor and chapter author of the Life Skills Development Program Book for Risky Groups, Educational Psychology, Psychological Counseling and Guidance, Early Childhood Development and Classroom Management. He still works as a faculty member at Yıldız Technical University, Faculty of Education, Department of Educational Sciences, Psychological Counseling and Guidance Department.

Gülşah Ezgican Akgün. Gülşah Ezgican Akgün earned her B.A. from İstanbul University in Translation Studies and M.A. degrees from Van Yüzüncü Yıl University in Guidance and Psychological Counseling Program, Currently, she is a PhD student at Van Yüzüncü Yıl University in Guidance and Psychological Counseling Program. Her research interests include cyber psychology, behavioral addictions and awe-imbued techniques.

Author Contribution

This study was conducted by all the authors working together and cooperatively. All of the authors substantially contributed to this work in each step of the study.

Conflict of Interest

It has been reported by the authors that there is no conflict of interest.

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