Section: Modern PPT practice

THE REFLECTS METHOD: A SYSTEMATIC AND COMPREHENSIVE WAY TO RESOLVE THE BASIC CONFLICT IN POSITIVE PSYCHOTHERAPY

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Abstract

In Positive Psychotherapy approach, conflict resolution has a positive effect on reducing the symptoms of psychopathological problems and at the same time increasing the functionality of individuals. According to positive psychotherapy, one of the important conflicts is the basic conflict. The study aims to develop the eight-stage REFLECTS method for resolving basic conflicts. Resolving the basic conflict is at the center of the psychopathological patterns of the clients. The resolution of this conflict makes significant contributions to the enhancement of client functionality. Resolving the basic conflict with more systematic and functional models can contribute to this process. With this developed method, the psychotherapist and the client work together to resolve the client's basic conflicts. In this way, clients learn to satisfy their unfulfilled needs healthily. Concurrently, this method is compatible with the five stages of positive psychotherapy. In the future, the effectiveness of the model investigated by empirical research can be revealed.

Keywords: Positive Psychotherapy, conflict resolution, basic conflict, reflects

Introduction

Humans are conflict-oriented beings. The structures in a person's personality are constantly important actors in the conflict process. Individuals also tend to approach the psychotherapy process with the conflict of their needs for change and maintenance (Binder et al., 2010; Eryılmaz, 2020). According to the psychodynamic approach, a conflict-oriented psychotherapy school, the conscious, subconscious, and unconscious processes, as well as the personality structure, are important psychological structures where conflict is experienced. The conflicting impulses, needs, and desires in the subconscious of individuals create tension in individuals (Abend, 2005). At the same time, the existence of conflicts between unconscious desires and social norms creates tension in individuals. The tensions experienced affect both the personal worlds of individuals and their relationships with other people (Blatt, 2007). Individuals resort to defense mechanisms to reduce these tensions. Another approach with a psychodynamic structure that helps clients resolve various conflicts is the positive psychotherapy approach.

Positive psychotherapy is an analytically oriented and intercultural therapy model that tries to resolve people's conflicts. Individuals' ability to effectively express their strengths requires their primary and secondary capacities to be in unified harmony. These capacities are mechanisms that help cope with psychological

problems. The diversity among individuals stems from the different development of these capacities (Peseschkian, 1996). The difficulties we experience in accepting others may arise from their perceptions being different from our expectations. For individuals, the disconnection between primary and secondary capacities can create psychological and physical problems. Ultimately, these problems stem from the inadequate recognition of capacities (Eryılmaz, 2020; Peseschkian, 1990, 1987, 2016).

The positive psychotherapy method has a humanistic nature, particularly in its approach to addressing the individual's capacities during the conflict process (Peseschkian, 1987). Capacities are expressed as concepts in positive psychotherapy. One of the important conflicts between concepts is the basic conflict (Peseschkian, 2016). Basic conflicts can mostly arise from the individual's needs, which are reflections of their capacity to love, being tried to be satisfied with secondary capacities in a rational and dysfunctional manner (Eryılmaz, 2020).

From a psychoanalytic standpoint, as is characteristic of all conflictual situations, resolving the basic conflict necessitates the preliminary development of awareness regarding the conflict process. Four critical factors significantly contribute to the formation of the conflict. The first factor pertains to the activation of sexual and aggressive impulses, which is evidenced by the individual's orientation toward specific activities or objects. The second factor involves the existence of a regulatory system that denounces these impulses as erroneous and perilous, thereby prohibiting their expression. The third factor encompasses the identification of emotions, such as anxiety and depression, that arise within the context of the experienced conflict. Lastly, it is essential to unveil the defense mechanisms that individuals employ to cope with these conflicts (Abend, 2005). Positive psychotherapy uses the capacity to love and know instead of instincts such as sexuality and aggression in resolving the basic conflict. These capacities lead to the development of specific abilities in individuals. The unhealthy development of capacities or the unfulfillment of needs causes psychopathology in individuals (Eryılmaz, 2020).

Once the basic conflict has been formulated, the psychotherapist and the client have reached the stage of resolving this conflict. At this point, there are many methods for resolving the basic conflict. A multitude of methodologies exists for addressing the basic conflict resolution, with a primary emphasis on cultivating awareness of the conflict process itself. Following this initial step, the psychotherapist needs to help clients identify the fundamental elements that constitute the underlying conflict. An additional approach involves the psychotherapist fostering a deeper understanding of the basic conflict by exploring its model dimensions. Supplementary methodologies include examining the basic conflict from the perspective of personality elements and identifying and organizing the dysfunctional emotions and thoughts that manifest within this framework (Eryılmaz, 2020). From the perspective of model dimensions, the capacities implicated in the basic conflict process warrant careful examination. At this juncture, the psychotherapist should scrutinize which capacities align with the expectations of the client's parents. It is also vital for the therapist to assess the benefits associated with adhering to these parental expectations within the context of the client's basic conflict. Concurrently, the therapist should contemplate the advantages of noncompliance with these expectations, ultimately exploring avenues to achieve equilibrium regarding the client's nonconformity to parental desires during the core conflict process (Abend, 2005).

Another approach to resolving the basic conflict involves identifying and organizing the dysfunctional emotions and thoughts that emerge within it. To this end, the psychotherapist must first discern the emotions present in the context of the basic conflict. Following this identification, the therapist should uncover the dysfunctional thoughts that accompany these emotions. Ultimately, the therapist is tasked with identifying functional thoughts that can effectively replace the dysfunctional ones (Eryılmaz, 2020).

One of the pathways to resolving the basic conflict is self-regulation. The literature presents numerous models of self-regulation, among which Zimmerman's model is the most comprehensive. According to Zimmerman (1986), self-regulation occurs in three significant stages. The first stage is the forethought phase, which comprises two essential sub-phases: task analysis and motivational beliefs. The performance phase, the second stage, consists of two sub-dimensions: self-control and self-

observation. The final stage is self-reflection, which encompasses two sub-dimensions: self-judgment and self-reaction. By adhering to the stages outlined in this model, individuals can effectively regulate their capacities.

Within the basic conflict process, capacities that are incongruent may be activated or may impede one another. The most critical response to the question of "why certain patterns are exhibited" by these capacities lies in the dysfunctional or unrealistic beliefs that accompany them. Dysfunctional beliefs may manifest within the patterns of capacities formed by individuals since childhood experiences (Ellis, 2003). Positive Psychotherapy is an eclectic therapeutic model that permits the use of techniques from other therapeutic frameworks (Peseschkian, 1996). In this process, it is essential to replace irrational beliefs accompanying individuals' capacities with rational beliefs. The psychotherapist identifies the individual's irrational belief and subsequently presents evidence challenging the validity of this belief (Eryılmaz, 2020).

Psychotherapy aims to effectively resolve these issues by focusing on strengthening the individual's positive resources while addressing internal and relational conflicts. The approach links conflicts not just to personal defense mechanisms but also to the individual's cultural and universal values (Eryılmaz, 2023). Although there is substantial literature on conflicts in Positive Psychotherapy (Cesko, 2024; Ciesielski, 2024; Eryılmaz, 2020; Peseschkian, 1990, 1987, 2016), there is a notable lack of research on how to systematically resolve basic conflicts. The purpose of this study is to examine systematic, analytical, and positive psychotherapy-based methods for resolving the basic conflict.

Methodology

This study generally examines systematic, analytical, and positive psychotherapy-based methods in resolving the basic conflict. In line with this general purpose, the study aims to examine the REFLECTS method, which can be used to resolve the basic conflict. The REFLECTS method discussed in this study is based on positive psychotherapy and an analytical approach. In addition, empirical studies have also been the sources used in the creation of the model (Aveline, 1999; Cesko, 2024; Ciesielski, 2024; Davis, 1986; Eryılmaz, 2020, 2023; Johnstone & Dallos, 2013; Davis, 1986; Persons, 2006; Peseschkian, 1990, 1987, 2016; Weerasekera, 1996). With this method, resolving the dynamics of the basic conflict can become a systematic reality for both clients and psychotherapists.

2.1. Resolving Basic Conflict with the REFLECTS Method

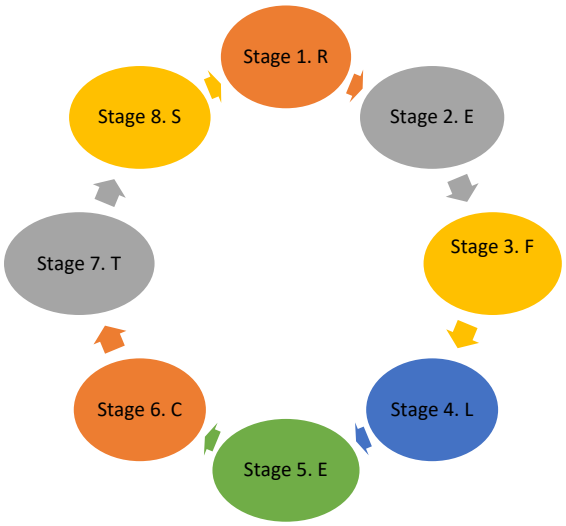

Figure 1. Diagram of the REFLECTS model

The REFLECTS method has been developed to resolve the basic conflicts of clients. This method consists of eight stages. The client and the therapist proceed step by step through eight important steps to address the client's basic conflict and realize their needs. They seek healthy ways for clients to meet their needs. Thus, they eliminate the pathological pattern and develop a healthy personality pattern and structure. The development of the REFLECTS method is based on literature. Empirical and experimental studies, as well as theoretical explanations in the literature, served as the basis for the development of this method (Aveline, 1999; Davis, 1986; Eryılmaz, 2020; Heritage & Watson, 1979; Persons, 2006, 2020; Peseschkian, 1990, 1987, 2016; Weerasekera, 1996). Additionally, the author's personal experiences in presenting this model were another effective factor.

Below are thorough descriptions of each level, along with the meaning of each letter.

1. R - Recognizing Unmet Needs
2. E - Establishing a Functional Way to Meet the Needs

3. F - Focusing on Redirecting Intermediary Capacities to Yourself
4. L - Looking into Psychological Structures to Break the Pathological Pattern
5. E - Evaluating the Capacities that Break the Pathological Cycle
6. C - Cultivating Unmet Needs Impacts Your Self-Concept
7. T - Taking Steps to Make a Healthy Structure Become Stronger
8. S - Selecting Capacities to Strengthen the Structure.

In this section of the study, the REFLECTS method is explained step by step. The characteristics of the eight clients previously mentioned (as outlined in the DYNAMICS article) remain relevant in this section as well. To avoid redundancy, the specific client characteristics are not provided here. Readers interested in the client characteristics can refer to the client profiles presented in the DYNAMICS article.

Stage 1: R - Recognizing Unmet Needs

The first stage is referred to as describing unmet needs. In this phase, the psychotherapist conducts an in-depth examination of the issues the client brings into the therapeutic process, focusing on identifying the client's unmet or unfulfilled needs about the problems they seek to resolve. These unmet needs are considered fundamental to the internal conflicts and psychological challenges that the client faces. At this stage, the therapist seeks to uncover which psychological needs have remained unfulfilled in the client's life, thereby delving into the root causes of the client's difficulties. This stage is quite compatible with the observation/distancing stage of positive psychotherapy. At this stage, the therapist should ask the following questions:

a. What are your unmet needs?
b. Why were these needs unmet?
c. How has the lack of these needs affected you?

Example from the Psychotherapy Process with Therapist Reflections

Therapist: What are your unmet needs?

Client: My needs for trust and love were not fulfilled.

Therapist: What do you think are the reasons for these unmet needs?

Client: When I evaluate other people, I base my feelings and thoughts entirely on them. I focus on the inconsistencies in those people and constantly think about whether they pose a threat to me. Although I expressed these matters clearly, my needs were unmet because the other person didn't address things with the same clarity.

Therapist: How has the lack of these needs affected you according to the Balance Model?

Client: I'm starting to think that isolating myself from people is unnecessary. I need to interact with other people more. On the physical level, I don't have many symptoms. I've started to pay more attention to religious practices, praying more frequently, and living in alignment with my values to gain a deeper understanding of myself. I've also been listening to and reading materials that address these concerns from a religious perspective. I haven't avoided the topics that I seek meaning in; instead, I write, listen, and give myself affirmations.

Stage 2: E - Establishing a Functional Way to Meet the Needs

In the second phase, clients are encouraged to explore and identify functional strategies that can effectively satisfy their unmet psychological needs. This stage focuses on shifting the client's perspective from maladaptive behaviors—often rooted in previous coping mechanisms—to healthier, more constructive alternatives. The functional method aims to help clients establish healthy relationships with others without creating pathological patterns in their interactions, thereby meeting their unmet needs. It also means that clients are aware of their own needs and find ways to satisfy these needs without harming themselves or others and without producing negative emotions and thoughts. This stage also aligns with the Inventory Stage in Positive Psychotherapy.

In this stage, the following questions should be asked of the clients:

What can you do to satisfy your unmet needs without relying on others?

What positive emotions and thoughts will arise from satisfying these needs independently?

How will satisfying these needs independently affect you in terms of your Balance Model?

Example from the Psychotherapy Process with Therapist Reflections

Therapist: What can you do to satisfy your unmet needs without relying on others?

Client: I can ask people I love and care about to meet my need for love. This can especially happen to my family members because I have

blood-based relationships with them. Additionally, I can fulfill my need for love through plants and animals. For example, I can get a pet and take care of it. By spending time fulfilling my desires and focusing on my hobbies, I make significant progress towards being fair to myself. I can also satisfy these needs by using imagination.

Therapist: What positive emotions and thoughts will arise from satisfying these needs independently?

Client: When I satisfy these needs, I will feel stronger, and my contact with myself will increase.

Therapist: How will satisfying these needs independently affect you in terms of your Balance Model (body, achievement, relationships, spirituality)?

Client: I complain the most about my migraine pains. Getting rid of these pains will be a great relief. I will continue my life without being a dependent individual and without seeking approval from anyone. I will determine areas of real success and focus on them. In this way, I will stop success from being an escape route.

Stage 3: F - Focusing on Redirecting Intermediary Capacities to Yourself

At this stage, clients are responsible for directing their mediating capacities to their healthy patterns. Thus, instead of leaving the satisfaction of unfulfilled needs to others, clients can take the initiative themselves. Thus, clients take an important step towards creating a healthier structure. This stage also aligns with the *Inventory Stage* in Positive Psychotherapy. From the perspective of Positive Psychotherapy (PPT), the therapist's goal is to prevent the client from expending their energy in maladaptive and unproductive ways. Rather than directing intermediary capacities—such as as order, cleanliness, punctuality, politeness, honesty, success, reliability, frugality, obedience, justice, and loyalty (Eryılmaz, 2020; Peseschkian, 1990, 1987, 2016) - toward others in a futile attempt to meet personal needs, it is considered more rational and beneficial for the client to focus these capacities on themselves. In this way, clients learn to manage the process healthily by revealing their self-help aspects. (Eryılmaz, 2023; Peseschkian, 1990, 1987, 2016).

In this stage, the following questions should be asked of the clients:

How can you redirect the intermediary capacities you use to fulfill your unmet needs toward yourself?

What positive emotions and thoughts will arise from redirecting the intermediary capacities used to fulfill your unmet needs toward yourself?

How will redirecting the intermediary capacities you use to fulfill your unmet needs toward yourself impact you in terms of the Balance Model (body, achievement, relationship, and meaning)?

Example from the Psychotherapy Process with Therapist Reflections

Therapist: How can you redirect the intermediary capacities you use to fulfill your unmet needs toward yourself?

Client: My intermediary capacities are loyalty, achievement, conformity, kindness, and reliability. Loyalty leads to trust. I cannot exist by denying myself; I must bring myself to the forefront. For this, I need to engage in self-awareness practices. I should learn about my capacities, personality traits, values, and what I should be loyal to. Achievement leads to love and relationships. I need to create my standards and adhere to them. Kindness leads to love. I must show kindness and self-compassion toward myself. Reliability leads to relationships. It involves acceptance and approval.

Therapist: What positive emotions and thoughts will arise from redirecting the intermediary capacities used to fulfill your unmet needs toward yourself?

Client: I believe that redirecting my intermediary capacities toward myself will expand my skills and increase my self-confidence and self-worth.

Therapist: How will redirecting the intermediary capacities you use to fulfill your unmet needs toward yourself impact you in terms of the Balance Model (body, achievement, relationship, and meaning)?

Client: In terms of relationships, I will no longer struggle to end unhealthy relationships. My standards for close relationships will become clearer. Regarding my body, I will organize my self-care needs more effectively. In terms of achievement, as I apply the criteria for true success, my self-love will increase. As for

spirituality, my self-awareness will deepen, and my thoughts about myself will expand.

Stage 4: L-Looking into Psychological Structures to Break the Pathological Pattern

In this stage, psychological structures that break pathological patterns are examined. As clients become aware of their patterns, they progress to the next stage. Thus, the effects of psychopathological patterns gradually decrease. Clients now help express themselves with healthier psychological structures. The role of the psychotherapist at this stage is to help the client establish a healthy structure as they resolve the basic conflict. As clients progress, healthy psychological structures emerge, along with positive emotions, attitudes, and behaviors. Clients learn to balance different areas of their lives, including physiological awareness, personal success, interpersonal relationships, and fantasies (Eryılmaz, 2020; Peseschkian, 1990, 1987, 2016). They develop better psychological resilience and adaptability by connecting more deeply with their genuine selves. The fourth phase involves the cessation of maladaptive tendencies and the development of a healthy, integrated self; the emphasis shifts from alleviating symptoms to fostering emotional and cognitive wellness. It aligns with the Inventory Phase and Situational Encouragement.

In this stage, the following questions should be asked of the clients:

What psychological structures will emerge as you free yourself from the pathological pattern?

What positive emotions and thoughts will the emerging healthy structure bring about in you?

How will the emerging healthy structure influence you in terms of the Balance Model (body, achievement, relationships, spirituality)?

Example from the Psychotherapy Process with Therapist Reflections

Therapist: What psychological structures will emerge as you free yourself from the pathological pattern?

Client: I have long suspected that I have an attachment problem. I struggle to experience positive emotions myself, and I often seek external validation. I cannot form deep connections in human relationships, but I have stopped looking for my value and security outside of myself.

Therapist: What positive emotions and thoughts will the emerging healthy structure bring about in you?

Client: I will develop positive and supportive thoughts in my future life. By moving away from external approval, I can focus on understanding and supporting others in my relationship with my environment. I believe this change will enhance my relationships, broaden my perspective on life, and give me greater strength.

Therapist: How will the emerging healthy structure influence you in terms of the Balance Model (body, achievement, relationships, spirituality)?

Client: In my future, I will establish strong connections between relationships and achievement, and redefine personal achievement through inner growth and compassion. I prefer emotional depth and mutual respect over external success in my relationships with myself and others.

Stage 5: E - Evaluating the Capacities that Break the Pathological Cycle

In the fifth stage, skills that break the pathological cycle are emphasized. There can be many skills that eliminate the pathological structure. These skills can sometimes be primary skills, and sometimes secondary skills (Eryılmaz, 2020; Peseschkian, 1990, 1987, 2016). Psychotherapists can break the pathological cycle by using the skills that the clients are strong in. For example, if the clients' needs, such as patience and time, are not met, they may cause them to behave more impulsively. In this case, psychotherapists can help clients achieve achievable goals by leveraging their hope skills. When clients achieve their goals in small steps, they feel a sense of success. At this point, hope and success skills can be considered effective in breaking the pathological cycle. This stage also aligns with the *Verbalization Stage* in Positive Psychotherapy.

In this stage, the following questions should be asked of the clients:

What are the capacities that tell you that you have broken the pathological/negative cycle (such as order, cleanliness, punctuality, politeness, honesty, success, reliability, frugality, obedience, justice, and loyalty)?

What positive emotions and thoughts will emerge when you listen to the capacities that tell you you have broken the pathological/negative cycle?

How will listening to the capacities that tell you you have broken the pathological/negative cycle affect you in terms of the Balance Model (body, achievement, relationships, spirituality)?

Example from the Psychotherapy Process with Therapist Reflections

Therapist: What are the capacities that tell you that you have broken the pathological/negative cycle (such as order, cleanliness, punctuality, politeness, honesty, success, reliability, frugality, obedience, justice, and loyalty)?

Client: These concepts resonate deeply with me, especially as I confront my shyness and social anxiety. For me, the most important tool is talent justice. With justice, I believe I deserve to be respected and cared for as much as anyone else. I act using my talent to inspire hope and interact with people who will understand and support me. In this way, my shyness decreases with the support I receive from them. In this way, justice allows me to focus on my rights, and hope allows me to find people who will support me.

Therapist: What positive emotions and thoughts will emerge when you listen to the capacities that tell you you have broken the pathological/negative cycle?

Client: Knowing that my efforts are not in vain will make me feel happy and secure. I will feel that I have succeeded, and my hope for solving my other problems will increase.

Therapist: How will listening to the capacities that tell you you have broken the pathological/negative cycle affect you in terms of the Balance Model (body, achievement, relationships, spirituality)?

Client: Body: It will positively affect my emotional reactions, and I will have more flexible body language. Success: Since it will increase my self-confidence, it will also enhance my achievements. Relationships: I will feel safe and loved in my relationships. Spirituality: It could expand my imaginative dimension. Addressing my body, I believe that improving my emotional responses will lead to more positive interactions with others. When I cultivate a sense of self-worth and begin to appreciate my efforts, I notice a shift in my physical presence.

Stage 6: C - Cultivating Unmet Needs Impacts Your Self-Concept

At this stage, clients achieve a healthy self-structure, influenced by the gains made in the previous stages. As their perception of themselves becomes more positive at each stage, their self-structure also becomes healthier. Because in this process, their self-awareness, self-recognition, self-acceptance, and self-regulation are strengthened (Eryılmaz, 2024). Thus, the self-integrity achieved is reflected in the lives of clients as a strong foundation. It becomes a very powerful source to meet unmet needs healthily, especially in basic conflicts. This stage also aligns with the *Verbalization Stage* in Positive Psychotherapy.

In this stage, the following questions should be asked of the clients:

What expansions and developments will meet your unmet needs, leading to changes in your self-concept?

What positive emotions and thoughts will emerge as a result of the expansions and developments in your self-concept?

How will the expansions and developments in your self-concept, resulting from meeting your unmet needs, affect you in terms of the Balance Model?

Example from the Psychotherapy Process with Therapist Reflections

Therapist: What expansions and developments will meeting your unmet needs lead to in your self-concept?

Client: Through this process, my self-awareness will increase. I will strive to become a more authentic individual. In other words, I will be open to my desires and expectations. With increased awareness of myself, I will overcome the obsessive thoughts that lead me to lie, as I will no longer have to doubt myself by cultivating a strong ego. It will be fascinating for me to step out of my cycle and become a healthier individual in this process.

Therapist: What positive emotions and thoughts will emerge because of the expansions and developments in your self-concept?

Client: Existing with self-confidence and away from anxiety will make me feel free. Not seeking my value in the reactions of other people to me reflects the idea that I am an autonomous individual. In this way, I will present myself with a true self.

Therapist: How will the expansions and developments in your self-concept, resulting from meeting your unmet needs, affect you in terms of the Balance Model?

Client: I can be more involved in my life and experience less anxiety because I can find the

good in myself and my environment. Unfulfilled wants will ease my physical strain and help me focus more intently on achieving my objectives. When I am more true to myself, I feel more confident in my relationships and can communicate with people more freely. Developing my spiritual beliefs has helped me feel less anxious and given me a greater sense of purpose in life.

Stage 7: T - Taking Steps to Make a Healthy Structure Become Stronger

In the seventh stage, clients act in the dimensions of the Balance Model with the help of psychotherapists to strengthen their healthy psychological structures. Clients begin to take more initiative to strengthen their healthy structures. During this process, clients both trust themselves more and evaluate the people around them more realistically. In this direction, they seek out people who can provide them with genuine social support and receive support in return. To strengthen their healthy structure, clients engage in activities such as exercising, eating healthy, and taking care of themselves in the body dimension of the Balance Model. To be more productive in their working lives, they seek jobs that align with their talents and interests. They strive to reach the books, values , and role models in their belief systems that support a spiritually healthy structure. This stage also aligns with the *Verbalization Stage* in Positive Psychotherapy.

In this stage, the following questions should be asked of the clients:

How will the healthy structure be strengthened?

What positive emotions and thoughts will emerge as a result of strengthening the healthy structure?

How will the strengthening of the healthy structure affect you in terms of the Balance Model?

Example from the Psychotherapy Process with Therapist Reflections

Therapist: How will the healthy structure be strengthened?

Client: I want to allow myself the chance to thoroughly experience my emotions rather than being consumed by my thoughts. Sharing my feelings aids me in making connections. Keeping busy makes me feel closer to others. This can help me get past my relationship problems.

Therapist: What positive emotions and thoughts will emerge as a result of strengthening the healthy structure?

Client: In my relationships with others, I experience love and trust by being sincere with them and authentic to myself. I try to satisfy my desires by focusing on the present moment. In this way, I continue to live a happier life.

Therapist: How will the strengthening of the healthy structure affect you in terms of the Balance Model?

Client: Making my relationships, spirituality, and body a priority helps me develop a more stable attachment style. Maintaining my physical well-being gives me greater energy and improves my ability to communicate with others. Building trust and understanding in my relationships enables me to experience a greater emotional connection. Developing my spiritual side gives me a feeling of direction and community. This lessens anxiety and feelings of loneliness. My body, relationships, and spirituality all need to be improved in order to address my attachment issues and have a healthier life.

Stage 8: S - Selecting Capacities to Strengthen the Structure

During this final stage, clients choose particular capacities required for resolving conflicts and developing personally. Clients gain control and authority at this period. This procedure promotes development via conflict resolution and the integration of unique talents, and it is comparable to Positive Psychotherapy's expanded objectives phase. Clients increasingly think about using their capacities to cope better with conflicts. This stage involves using the principle of self-help to the maximum extent. The client's ability to establish relationships increases with skills such as empathy, listening, and appropriate responses learned from the therapist during the psychotherapy process. With the capacities that support a healthy structure, clients' resources for coping with conflict in the areas of body, success, relationship, and fantasy also expand. The capacities identified by clients help them to be more psychologically robust and to successfully complete their personal development tasks. This stage also aligns with the *Broadening Goals Stage* in Positive Psychotherapy.

In this stage, the following questions should be asked of the clients:

Which empowering capacities will you include in the process to strengthen your healthy structure?

How will integrating empowering capacities into the process lead to positive emotions and thoughts for you?

How will integrating empowering capacities into the process affect you in terms of the Balance Model?

Example from the Psychotherapy Process with Therapist Reflections

Therapist: Which empowering capacities will you include in the process to strengthen your healthy structure?

Client: Love will make me feel important and connected to other people. It will be easier for me to approach myself without passing judgment if I have compassion, even when it's difficult. Hope will bolster my confidence in my ability to overcome dissociation.

Therapist: How will integrating empowering capacities into the process lead to positive emotions and thoughts for you?

Client: By using these skills, I will become a happier individual and will be satisfied with my life. Thanks to these skills, my self-acceptance will increase. I will love myself more and respect myself more.

Therapist: How will integrating empowering capacities into the process affect you in terms of the Balance Model?

Client: I will feel great relief in the body bath. Because before, my body was constantly tense. My tenseness will disappear. My life energy will increase, and I will feel more dynamic and active. These gains will also have a positive effect on my relationships. In terms of success, I may accomplish my objectives by sharpening my attention, which will make me feel accomplished and satisfied. I'll build appropriate limits to create more stable and harmonious interactions in the relationship dimension. Spiritually, I will gain confidence and inner serenity by learning to accept the things I cannot control. I will lead a more fulfilling life when these factors align.

Discussion

There are numerous theoretical and empirical studies on the importance of resolving conflicts that have been formulated during the psychotherapy process (Davis, 1986; Eryılmaz, 2020; Johnstone & Dallos, 2013; Persons, 2006; Weerasekera, 1996). Positive psychotherapy formulates and tries to solve clients' problems through various conflicts (Eryılmaz, 2020; Peseschkian, 1990, 1987, 2016). One of these conflicts is the basic conflict. In studies based on positive psychotherapy, the emphasis is on resolving basic conflicts (Cesko, 2024; Ciesielski, 2024; Eryılmaz, 2020; Peseschkian, 1990, 1987, 2016). However, it is evident that the number of systematic models proposed for resolving basic conflicts is limited. The development of more systematic and staged methods not only allows the problems of the clients to be solved but also contributes to the development of psychotherapy approaches. Furthermore, this study contributes to the existing literature by responding to the identified need for clearer frameworks in the resolution of basic conflicts within the therapeutic context. When the model developed in this study is evaluated in this context, it can be said that this study makes an important contribution to the literature because this model provides psychotherapists with a map to conduct their psychotherapy sessions more effectively. Thus, they can resolve the conflicts experienced by their clients both holistically and analytically.

In this study, a summary of the REFLECTS method is given in Table 1. What to consider when applying this method is given in the relevant table. First, each step of the method is given in the table. Then, it is emphasized which questions the psychotherapist should ask in each step. Finally, the issues that the psychotherapist should pay attention to when applying the method are mentioned. As it is clearly seen in the relevant table, it is important to manage the process by using therapeutic skills and creating therapeutic conditions. In this way, clients feel more secure. The importance of the principle of balance, which is an important principle of positive psychotherapy in the process (Eryılmaz, 2020; Peseschkian, 1990, 1987, 2016), cannot be denied. Revealing how each stage affects the client's Balance Model contributes to both acting according to the principle of balance and creating a balanced life according to the Balance Model.

Table 1
Summary of the REFLECTS Method in Resolving Basic Conflicts

Stage	Questions for Clients	Therapist's Focus
1. R - Recognizing Unmet Needs	a) What are your unmet needs? b) Why were these needs unmet? c) How has the lack of these needs affected you?	- Create therapeutic conditions for clients and use therapeutic skills - Create a deep understanding of clients' unmet needs
2. E - Establishing a Functional Way to Meet the Needs	a) What can you do to satisfy your unmet needs without relying on others? b) What positive emotions will arise from satisfying these needs independently? c) How will satisfying these needs affect your Balance Model?	- Explain the functional path for clients - Focus on what can be done for this functional path - Show the client the points that the client has difficulty seeing
3. F - Focusing on Redirecting Intermediary Capacities to Yourself	a) How can you redirect your intermediary capacities towards yourself? b) What positive emotions will arise from this redirection? c) How will this impact your Balance Model?	- Guide clients to identify their intermediary capacities - Empower them to use these for personal fulfillment and growth.
4. L - Looking into Psychological Structures	a) What psychological structures emerge as you break the pathological pattern? b) What positive emotions will these structures bring? c) How will this influence your Balance Model?	-Show the client the importance of breaking the toxic pattern - Focus on the positive emotions and thoughts produced by the healthy structure - Examine the healthy structure in terms of the Balance Model
5. E - Evaluating Capacities that Break the Pathological Cycle	a) What capacities indicate you have broken the cycle? b) What positive emotions emerge from recognizing these capacities? c) How does this affect your Balance Model?	-Focus on capacities that break the cycle - Examine positive emotions and thoughts through the Balance Model
6. C - Cultivating Unmet Needs Impacts Your Self-Concept	a) What developments will meeting your unmet needs lead to in your self-concept? b) What positive emotions will arise from these developments? c) How will this affect your Balance Model?	- Support clients in reflecting on the interconnectedness of their needs and self-concept
7. T - Taking Steps to Strengthen the Healthy Structure	a) How will the healthy structure be strengthened? b) What positive emotions will emerge from this strengthening? c) How will this impact your Balance Model?	- Focus on a healthy structure - Examine positive emotions and thoughts through the Balance Model
8. S - Selecting Capacities to Strengthen the Structure	a) Which empowering capacities will you include in the process? b) How will integrating these capacities lead to positive emotions? c) How will this affect your Balance Model?	- Encourage clients to actively engage in identifying and developing their healthy structure.

Table 2 provides important tips for applying the REFLECTS method. As can be understood from the table content, it is necessary to consider the five stages of positive psychotherapy, which express the consultation principle, in resolving the basic conflict. Since this method will be applied in the verbalization stage, by this stage, the clients have already acquired knowledge on topics such as the basic concepts of positive psychotherapy, skills, the Balance Model, and basic conflict. At this point, psychoeducation can be provided on these topics as needed. Gradualness is important in resolving the basic conflict with this method. Each stage should not be completed before moving on to the next. At the same time, the process should be managed according to the client's pace.

Table 2.
The REFLECTS Model According to Five Stages of Positive Psychotherapy

Five Stages of Positive Psychotherapy	The REFLECTS Method	Transition to Positive Psychotherapy's Five Stages
Observing-Distance Stage	1. R - Recognizing Unmet Needs	The initial focus on unmet needs aligns with the first stage of Positive Psychotherapy, which emphasizes the identification and understanding of the individual's core needs. Recognizing these needs is crucial for fostering insight and beginning the therapeutic process.
Inventory Stage	2. E - Establishing a Functional Way to Meet the Needs	A psychotherapist further aids in identifying and establishing healthier, functional strategies that align with personal growth.
Inventory Stage	3. F - Focusing on Redirecting Intermediary Capacities to Yourself	A psychotherapist helps clients refocus and direct their intermediate strengths toward meeting their needs in more constructive ways.
Inventory Stage and Situational Encouragement Stage	4. L - Looking into Psychological Structures	Analyzing emerging patterns reflects Positive Psychotherapy's focus on understanding the origins of psychological issues. It allows clients to contextualize their struggles and recognize recurring themes in their experiences.
Verbalization Stage	5. E - Evaluating Capacities that Break the Pathological Cycle	Clients learn to articulate and recognize the implications of their capacities. In the helping process, evaluating one's capacities helps break the pathological cycle by transforming maladaptive behaviors into more adaptive responses.
Verbalization Stage	6. C - Cultivating Unmet Needs Impacts Your Self-Concept	Exploring unmet needs helps clients understand how these needs shape their self-concept and how addressing them can alter their self-perception.
Verbalization Stage	7. T - Taking Steps to Strengthen the Healthy Structure	Psychotherapist emphasizes the importance of strengthening a healthy internal structure by recognizing and addressing the factors that contribute to both primary and secondary pathologies.
Broadening Goals Stage	8. S - Selecting Capacities to Strengthen the Structure	By reinforcing their strengths, clients can cultivate healthier patterns and improve their overall Balance Model. Psychotherapist mirrors this by helping clients consciously select the capacities that will best support their psychological growth and help them maintain a balanced, resilient lifestyle.

Recommendations

Using the REFLECTS method appears to have a significant impact on resolving the basic conflict. At this point, several key application principles for psychotherapists come to the forefront. One of these principles is to manage the process in a way that clients understand the cause-and-effect relationship. Understanding the cause-and-effect relationship may differ according to the perception capacities of the clients. In this context, individual differences and personal needs should be taken into consideration. Secondly, the psychotherapist should facilitate the resolution of the client's basic conflicts by using analytical skills throughout the process. Thirdly, it is necessary to

manage the process as a power from the principle of hope. In this way, clients are more likely to believe in the process and become more motivated. Fourthly, it is necessary not to forget the five stages of therapy.

Limitations and future directions

There are a few key points to note when using the REFLECTS method. First of all, this method has a holistic perspective. There are studies on the importance of a holistic perspective in the psychotherapy process (Eryılmaz & Doenyas, 2024). Before applying this method, it is essential to understand the importance of the entire basic conflict resolution process. Secondly, clients may need supportive psychotherapy. In such cases, it is necessary to prioritize supportive practices instead of applying this model. Thirdly, it is necessary not to move on to solving the basic conflict and implementing this model before the clients are ready, in other words, before their problems are defined and their causes are discovered. Fifthly, it is necessary to gain momentum from the client while resolving the basic conflict, and it would not be right to give a definite number of sessions for resolution at this point. The factor that will determine the number of sessions at this point will be the client's readiness and the capacities they have, as well as the therapist's management of the process. In addition to all this, resolution requires many more sessions because clients also make behavioral adjustments while resolving the basic conflict. It should not be difficult to predict that the number of sessions will increase when assignments outside of sessions, as well as the implementation and processing of these assignments, are also included in the process. Sixthly, since positive psychotherapy is a culturally sensitive psychotherapy model, it is necessary to resolve the basic conflict in a culturally sensitive manner while applying the REFLECTS model.

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