

# Existential humanistic and career development psychology essay



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This essay will review and analyze person-centered and existential approaches and career development theories of John L. Holland and John D. Krumboltz and catalogue the significant understanding of theoretical dynamics and application of techniques/strategies during counselling relationship. The common thread that runs through the existential-humanistic theories and career counselling theories works on unifying theme of understanding human existence, career concerns and experiential approaches to counselling. Practice by counsellors in these disciplines have an eclectic or integrated approach to develop their own core metatheory (Neukrug, 2011).

While reviewing both Existential approach and person-centered approach and exploring variety of understandings on counselling process and client relationships, both approaches both share similar efficacy orientation in multicultural context. Person-centered founded by Carl Rogers and existential theory developed by Victor Frankl are applied across diverse settings, from individual to group counselling (Corey, 2013).

The field of career counselling has evolved to a holistic career/life path approach. Theories of career development support career concerns through series of interventions help understand; job selection, broaden horizons, improved life-style, work-life balance and implementation of decisions in career dealing with entire life span of the individual (Amundson, Harris-Bowlsbey, & Niles, 2009).

## **Introduction**

In the 1960s and 1970s there was a growing awareness among therapist towards other approaches like existential and person-centered for counselling practice apart from psychodynamic and behavioral approaches. Both approaches brought in perspective of human philosophy and human experience to deal with crisis and traumas in life more successfully (Corey2013).

Corey (2013) stated that “ Existential therapy can be best described as a philosophical approach that influences a counsellor’s therapeutic practice” (p. 127). The therapy indicates that people are independent and are capable of finding a meaning to their life when faced with tragic situations. It also suggests new ways and alternatives to face problems and take decisions to evolve holistically. Moreover, people have the power and freedom to take conscious decisions in directing their life (Van, 2002).

As stated by Corey (2013) “ Quiet Revolutionist” (p. 159). References to his earlier writings reflect under the heading of client-centered approach which later evolved to person-centered therapy. Rogers’s therapy on human nature was an alternate to psychoanalytical therapy. Counsellors preferred Rogers’s therapy as it did not involve extensive psychological training for counsellors to practice. Rogers work is regarded as the changing force in channelizing current counselling therapies (Welfel & Patterson, 2005).

## **Validated Research**

Frankl was one of the contemporary therapists who contributed to the development of existential school of therapy. As mentioned by Neukrug

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(2011) in 1930, Frankl framework of his theory was reproduced in his book 'Man's Search for Meaning' a best seller translated into many languages (Neukrug, 2011). Existential family trauma therapy (EFTT) is based on an orientation to help people who have undergone traumatic experiences in their life. EFTT approach was most effective with Vietnam families living under symptoms of post-traumatic war stress for last 30 years, useful with couples and families facing serious medical problems such as heart disease, respiratory disease, cancer, diabetes, families who have faced migration disturbances in a new country, families to overcome death of a family member and with families who have been subjected to physical or mental abuse or rape. The therapeutic sessions have proved to be very successful in the past and continue to be effective in today's scenario (Lantz & Gyamerah, 2002).

In 1942, Rogers wrote a book on 'Counselling and Psychotherapy on non-directive approach in therapy (Neukrug, 2011). From 1945 he worked in University of Chicago and established a counselling center. In the center Rogers practiced group counselling therapies with people who had returned from World War II using non-directive approach to express their innermost fears and experiences. After the sessions people in the group had a deeper understanding of their inner self and were able to bring positive changes in their lifestyle thus resulting in popularity of these group encounters in the 1960s and 1970s. Rogers was the first psychotherapist to use the word client instead of patient (Neukrug, 2011). In the 1960s Rogers and his colleagues' counselled clients who were hospitalized schizophrenics in the University of Wisconsin. Person-centered approach has been applied extensively across

diverse cultures, groups, families, individuals facing situations like (alcoholism, agoraphobia, depression, cancer, and personality disorders), crisis intervention (unwanted pregnancy), people in the helping profession (nurses, doctors, teachers) leaving clients fully accepted and valued (Corey, 2013).

## **Underlying Theoretical Approach**

Existential and person- center approaches have parallel phenomenological (experience of human nature) orientation towards experiential counselling (Corey, 2013). Both approaches believe that an individual's life is infringed with boundaries of weakness, strengths, limitations and opportunities created by the environment. The client being the focal point explores and goes along on a self-discovery inward to evaluate the value and meaning to live. Largely the theories construction empowers the clients to assume responsibility of their actions, choices and direction. However, the two schools approach therapeutic relationship through different theories (Neukrug, 2011).

According to Rogers client has the liberty to develop freely without being directed, this faith in human nature is considered as a humanistic approach to counselling (Welfel & Patterson, 2005). Individuals can be trusted to choose the right direction, they are self directed and can solve their own problems(Henderson & Thompson, 2011). Person-centered focuses on two primary needs of a client. The first is need for self-actualization and second is to be loved and valued by others (McLeod, 1998). Rogers believed that a client has remarkable capacity within to self-determine the choices for self-healing and personal growth eventually leading to self-actualization with a <https://assignbuster.com/existential-humanistic-and-career-development-psychology-essay/>

focus on the recent experience. Self-theory in person-centered is the belief that the person's perception of looking at self from others point of view is reality example when the person feels inferior and incompetent, will act on that belief and even though others view the person as competent and confident. This state of personal reality/incongruence can be changed through counselling (McLeod, 1998).

Existential theory revolves around the disturbing inevitable life experiences and wiliness of the client to explore self by facing the reality and realign to create a meaningful and purposeful existence (Van, 2002) . The objective of the approach is to enable client to assume personal responsibility to rediscover their values, beliefs, and purpose in life to make authentic self directed choices of how to live example a client is suffering from cancer and has three months to live (Van, 2002). The central theme of existential therapy is based on client responsibility and freedom to recreate a meaning to their life for example a client has acrophobia and is always dreaming that somebody will kill him, leading to lack of confidence. It is up to the client to remove the confusion from his life by reflecting on self- attitude towards others (Van, 2002).

## **Counselling Process and Client Relationship**

Counselling is a journey, the role of counsellor is to provide a nurturing environment that would permit and encourage clients for a personal growth. The existential and person-centred approaches have similar orientations towards client and counsellor relationship. The underlying philosophy of both approaches requires the counsellor to dive into the client's world and provide on non-judgemental, caring, safe and supportive environment (Corey, 2013). <https://assignbuster.com/existential-humanistic-and-career-development-psychology-essay/>

As stated by Corey (2013) existential counsellor paves a way for the client to overpower slavery of inner conflicts to state of therapeutic awakening.

Situational conflicts which are client's primary concern like meaning to life, thoughts, beliefs, suffer losses, friends die, relationships end, isolation, anxiety or blaming others for their conflicts. The counsellor assists the client in this process of uncertainty by reflecting on different tangents which were not looked at earlier by the client. (Van, 2002) .

In person-centered counselling relationship is given highest importance.

Client is reassured looking at the attitude and beliefs of the counsellor during therapy and moves forward for a personality change (Bozarth et al., 2002 as cited by Corey, 2013, p. 166). Person-centered therapy training underpins three qualities of counsellor congruence, positive regard, and empathy which enable the client to feel accepted. This leads to a secure and caring relationship allowing the client to open up and divulge deep into their rigidities and non genuine lifestyle (Corey, 2013).

## **Diversity Perspective**

Person-centered and existential therapies have a major impact on with diverse culture groups. They both have worked with diverse groups and with different ethnic backgrounds. They share similar views of not imposing their beliefs or values on the client, instead help in connecting to secular values and issues related to racialism (Corey, 2013).

## **Person-centered and Existential in Today's World**

Carl Rogers was the first psychologist to receive American Psychological Association award. In the last thirty year there have two new offshoots based

on person-centered approach called 'focusing' and 'process-experiential' which are based on similar approach as person-centered approach of Carl Rogers.

There are about 200 professional organizations and training centers in the world which are working on application of Carl Rogers's theory example Association for the Development of the Person-Centered Approach in the United States, in Europe Gesellschaft für Wissenschaftliche Gesprächspsychotherapie in Germany (Kirschenbaum & Jourdan, 2005).

From January 1, 1987 to September 6, 2004, 141 books, 174 book chapters and 462 journal articles have been published on Carl Rogers's person-centered approach.

The International Society for existential Psychotherapy and counselling in London develops programmes for existing existential counsellors, The New School of Psychotherapy and Counselling is set up and also offers distance learning course in existential counselling. There has been an increase in the number of training institutes for counsellors considering existential therapy (Corey, 2013). Existential practicing counsellors have increased over the past 20 year and case studies have proved the efficacy of the approach. (McLeod, 1998). Existential approach has been beneficial for people who are facing mid-life crisis worrying about approaching old age. The therapy helps them to overcome fear of death and diseases in old age (Becker, 2006). Existential therapy is widely accepted and applied with anxious and depressed adolescents who have concerns like identity issues, isolation, scared of entering adulthood, leading aimless life. It has been noted that there has



been a steady increase in the number of adolescents experiencing existential therapy (Shumaker, 2012).

## **Limitations for Therapist**

Existential therapist lack clear guideline for practice and therapist find practicing therapy at times unclear, especially who do not have a philosophical mind frame. Existential theory has no techniques and there are situations when therapist needs to borrow techniques from other schools to have evidence based practice and be able to evaluate therapy outcomes and effectiveness. The most important limitation in existential counselling is the therapist needs to be mentally healthy otherwise the therapist can undergo emotional drain while practicing existential therapy (Corey, 2013).

Person-centered counselling has its limitations; there are no intervention strategies and techniques leading to unaccountability of therapist with no evidence of effective therapy. Person-centered therapy is a non-directed therapy and there are times therapists are not satisfied with client's decisions. The therapist also feel incapacitated when they are not able to express their viewpoint after listening to the client to make the therapy more effective (Corey, 2013).

## **Synergy of Career Counselling and Counselling**

Career counselling for career development is useful in helping people to get the right job. Career development plays an important role in guiding and acquainting people to the change in the environment. Individuals who satisfied in their career work towards a goal, their job traits matching their personality and they make choices out of their experiences to create a better

future (Amundson et al., 2009). Existential therapy has benefited mid-life career decision, helped clients to re-evaluate their career satisfaction with meaningful existence (Cohen, 2003).

John Holland based his career counselling on finding the right blend between a person's personality and work environment, closer the match greater the satisfaction in career (Isaacson & Brown, 2000). According to Holland success and personal consistency is inevitable when there is congruency between individual and the career with a right blend of personality and job. (Andersen, 2006).

John Krumboltz theory is based on individual's learning of new skills through their experiences. According to Krumboltz people are born with genetic distinctiveness such as race, genders, physique. People build their observation and task skills when they come in contact with the environment, while undergoing social and cultural change. Career counselling based on this theory helps an individual to learn from their experiences and move on to make choices to achieve success (Amundson et al., 2009).

Career development counselling approaches of Holland and Krumboltz and existential -humanistic counselling approaches synergize very well with each other. All of these approaches guide the client to overcome their dilemmas in life or career. Person-centered approach works well with individuals who are confused about their future career directions and need interpersonal adjustments in career or are facing developmental or personal growth issues. Existential approach is appropriate for encouraging individuals to examine the process of decision making between present and future actions

empowering them to make career choices based on their judgments (Dahir & Stone, 2011).

## **Conclusion**

Approaches have been discussed in detail; they are under one umbrella called existential-humanistic approach focusing on human experience and authentic therapeutic relationship. Existential and person-centered theories are in congruence with my strong belief in the positive nature of all human beings.

After reviewing both theories in detail, would like to synergize both the theories and unify them into my own core theory without diluting the theoretical commitments. In my opinion existential and person-centered have similar viewpoints and they both rely on experiential therapy for clients when in crisis or paradox in their current life situations (Van, 2002). They share an underlying assumption that clients are trustworthy and they have the freedom to make congruent choices to lead a meaningful life. They have a common emphasis on quality relationship between client and the counsellor and techniques have no role to play in the therapeutic environment (Corey, 2013).

While working on the piece, also came to a conclusion that career counselling theories of Holland and Kramboltz can be integrated with counselling theories. I personally feel counsellors can have an eclectic approach and choose theories and their techniques in situations accordingly (Amundson et al., 2009).