

# Theory of person centred counselling psychology essay



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In this essay, the theory of person centred counselling and skills for best practice will be identified. This will also show the use of my listening skills, use of the core conditions and how I manage the time boundaries of a session. Evidence of my progress will be included by demonstrating my own understanding of person centred counselling and the theory behind it. As well as my ability to convey the six necessary and sufficient conditions for therapeutic change, mainly the three core conditions of empathy, congruence and unconditional positive regard and overall assessing the skills I use to listen to the clients.

The theory of person centred counselling is a humanistic approach, founded by Carl Rogers and this approach was based on the self i. e. the client. The counselling setting is a place to which a person may go to learn or try to express thoughts and feelings of which ever kind they desire to speak about, knowing that they are in a safe environment to do so and it is the counsellor who can facilitate this safe and correct environment to assist the client on the path towards their own journey to that of self-exploration, leading to becoming more congruent with their self and gaining a more internal locus of evaluation, therefore on the right path to achieving to become a fully functioning person. The skills for best practice in person-centred counselling are the six necessary and sufficient conditions for a therapeutic change, the three main conditions being empathy, congruence and unconditional positive regard and these core conditions are vital to a counsellor. With the three main core conditions being in place these will assist the counsellor to assist the client to move forward with the main skill of listening to the client.

Listening is the most important attribute of person centred counselling, if not in all forms of counselling. Frankland et al (1995) explains about listening and explains the different types of listening i. e. active listening, listening to feelings and process and listening to thoughts. Exploring the client's thoughts, feelings and the whole world of the client is of utmost importance. As growing up in Britain, common knowledge was that it was wrong to show emotions of any kind in public and because of this, listening to a person who is telling you their deep thoughts and feelings can be greatly difficult. It can also be as greatly difficult expressing these thoughts and feelings, after being told most of a person's life if not all of their life that you do not talk about emotions and feelings. I have found that listening came natural to me as this is something which I have always done with friends and family. However, through my journey on the counselling degree I found out that I was not actively listening. What I found hard was the not giving advice like I would if I was with family or friends. I found that if something in my personal life was affecting me, it was almost like a distraction and my listening skills would become fairly poor, in the sense of missing the client's key feelings here and there, which in turn affected my reflecting skills, because if I missed the key feelings I could not reflect them back to the client. Most of the sessions I have had as a counsellor have been pretty good. I do miss things as this is my learning curve and I have to make mistakes to make myself a better trainee counsellor and person.

The core conditions of empathy, unconditional positive regard and congruence are fantastic however, I am not entirely sure if I have managed to be congruent with a client. I do not believe the opportunity has come

around, yet I have been told on a feedback sheet that I had shown great congruence in a session but I am unsure to how as I perceived this more as a challenge rather than congruence, unless of course it was congruence in a challenge. However, Mearns et al (2000: 204) says, “ congruence is the accurate symbolisation and integration of self-experience into awareness and the accurate expression of this integrated experience in behaviour.” Therefore, without realising I could have possibly been congruent toward the client.

So far I have come across a potential unconditional positive regard slip, for example; “ you were unaware of how you were being”. Now the client did not feel this was a slip but could have been seen by others as such and the feedback came from a tutor. This does bother me as I know how judgemental I can be in general circumstances and need the challenge to make sure I am able to handle the situation at hand professionally. I would like to become a non-judgemental person but I believe this is hard to come by. However, unconditional positive regard, as Merry (2002) states, does not mean I have to agree with everything a client does. It is more about becoming more understanding whilst training to be as non-judgemental as possible as nobody is perfect.

“ Empathy is the willingness and ability to enter the experiential world of the other person...” (Mearns et al (2000: 199). I have shown great empathy as my peers have mentioned in feedback sheets, for example; “ empathic toward client”. I nod to show the client I am listening and depending on the emotions in the session, I laugh with the client and at times feel very sad with the client and by reflecting key emotions back I assist the client to focus

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on the thoughts and feelings etc. that the client has brought. Clarifying is something which Rogers believed was primarily linked to empathy. The clarifying is checking with the client that what the counsellor heard was right and this is also seen as reflection, depending on how the counsellors say's the clarification back to the client. Reflections have been the basic skills I have been learning and up until recently was not aware that reflections could be seen as clarification as before I cannot recall ever having clarified. Nothing has been mentioned in my feedback, therefore would be a good idea for myself to ask my peers for that as my specific feedback.

I have found the skills needed for a counselling session like reflecting, paraphrasing, clarifying, silence and challenge to be great challenges. I find I kick myself if I miss a key feeling and I believe that my paraphrasing is coming together nicely now, however I have found that I started to paraphrase too often instead of using key emotions which would have been powerful if reflected back to the client. This started to worry me as whilst in a counselling session I did not realise that I had been paraphrasing as often as I was. As Ivey et al (2009) explains if a paraphrase is given correctly then the outcome would be for the client to agree and continue to explore their emotions etc. that were being explored in more depth. Also at one point I found myself using words or statements that my peers could not understand. This is something I will be sure not to do again as I do not want a client believing I am doing this to use power over them. Up until this was brought to my attention I was unaware I had even used words that someone may not understand.

Straight reflections are the area I must improve on, rather than focusing on not sounding like a parrot. A straight reflection in itself can be so powerful and by replacing that with a paraphrase, may come across to the client that I have not been listening properly to them. A reflection is not just repeating back what has been said, it is also repeating the emotions behind what has been said, which is also just as powerful as the words themselves. Helping the client get a better understanding of what they have been saying and understanding that there are emotions behind what has been said, if emotions are present in what the client has brought.

Time boundaries I have found difficult without a timing device in the room. I manage to state perfectly fine at the beginning of the session, how long the client has with me, however I did struggle for some time as I was stating " we have roughly" instead of " we have". Judging how long we have been in the session I find greatly difficult, without a colleague waving an arm to inform me that time is almost up, this is something I believe will come to me in time with practising. However, in the mean time I have taken up practising at home.

Closing a session of recent has been fine, however, I went through a stage of asking the client " is there anything else you want to add", which is misleading to the client as it leaves the end of the session open therefore not actually closed at all. The importance of set beginnings and endings as Hodges, (2011: 67) states " Counsellors who allow sessions to begin late... are modelling poor boundaries to the client".

The use of silence, if done correctly is extremely powerful as it gives both client and counsellor time to reflect on what was said before the silence. I found silence was a big thing for me, as in personal development I tend to struggle with long silences but realised that during a counselling session this is no longer the case, and I find I can switch from being myself to being professional. I believe this is only down to the fact we have been doing fifteen minute DVD's and the silences in that time are only short. Once lengthening the DVD I may come across this personal challenge again which with being aware of this I will be able to deal with it if it comes up.

I am aware I have a long way to go before my skills are to the quality they should be for me to achieve my degree and as Mearns et al (2007: 45) explains " It is impossible to offer a client acceptance, empathy and genuineness at the deepest level if such responses are with-held from the self" and this is where I need to focus on not with-holding these from myself. I am aware of some of the conditions placed on myself as a child and I now know just how important it is for me to deal with these conditions by seeing a counsellor and I am aware that I am on the ladder aiming to reach toward self-actualisation.

The theory of person centred counselling and skills for best practice have been identified throughout as I have mentioned anything that I have had struggle with as well as skills I have not. This has shown the use of my listening skills, use of the core conditions and how I manage the time boundaries of a session. Evidence of my progress has been included by demonstrating my own understanding of person centred counselling and the theory behind it. As well as my ability to convey the core conditions of <https://assignbuster.com/theory-of-person-centred-counselling-psychology-essay/>

empathy, congruence and unconditional positive regard and overall assessing the skills I have used to listen to the clients.

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