

Core conditions
proposed by carl
rogers psychology
essay



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Client centred therapy which is also known as person-centred therapy is an adaptation to the humanistic approach within counselling. The heart of client-centred therapy was fathered by Carl Ransom Rogers in the 1950's and is known today as Rogerian therapy. Carl was born in 1902, beginning his career within religion but soon found his feet firmly in this field as a remarkable psychologist and was one of the greatest humanistic thinkers of all time.

Roger's believed that if one was able to get to the core of an individual then one finds a trustworthy and positive centre, the attitudes and behaviours that are used and shown create a growth producing climate within the helping relationship. Roger's was the first to describe the counsellor and client therapeutic environment as a relationship that was totally professional and non-directive with key ingredients of empathy, unconditioned positive regard and congruence that are imperative if positive changes are to happen. Roger's believed that individuals are in charge of their own destiny and able to become all that they can be as they were in fact the experts of their lives as opposed to the counsellor being the one that knows best.

Carl Rogers was born in Chicago in 1902 and received his Psychology PhD in 1931 at Columbia University, he wrote the first of many aspiring books and went on to set up a counselling centre within the University of Chicago, Roger's focused on the humanistic approach which was the third force of psychology, which began as a reaction to behaviourism and psychoanalysis. Carl believed that the importance of growth rested profoundly with the individual themselves and it was whilst working there that he published his major work, such as ' Client centred therapy' in 1951, which outlines his

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basic theory. The theory was a clinical one based on years of experience dealing with clients, seeing individuals as uniquely good and healthy, with a natural internal force to develop their own capacities and talents to the fullest, however, any mental health issues, criminality or other human problems were seen to Roger's as a normal progression of life or distortions of the natural tendency. Roger's believed that every human had 'the actualisation tendency' which enables them to fulfil their potential, becoming the best that they can be. In 1961, Carl also published another famous book 'on becoming a person' and stated in it "... In my early professional years I was asking the question; how can I treat, or cure, or change this person? Now I would phrase the question in this way: How can I provide a relationship which this person may use for his own personal growth?" (Rogers. 1987)

Rogers believed that the most positive change within therapy is dependent on the relationship between the counsellor and the client, trying to get away from the role of the therapist being the expert, stating that the individual knows what is best for them, developing a relationship with the client, who is the knowledgeable one. The concept of Rogerian counselling was to develop a trust and understanding, which created a comfortable professional relationship with the client who would be seeking help in the resolution of a problem that they are experiencing in a non-directive way, Natiello states that:

" This very act of acceptance teaches us to let go and let be." (2001, P. 22)

The counsellor would embark into their client's inner world by listening to them, looking at them and showing them acceptance and respect, according

to Roger's the more real the therapist was, the more real the client would be, encouraging them to explore their feelings and experiences more actively, stating that a good therapist had to have core conditions which were key ingredients in therapy if the client was to self-discover and grow becoming all they can become. The first of the conditions that lay the foundations of Carl's approach is the psychological relationship within the therapy that is to develop with the next core condition being the client whom enters into therapy incongruent, vulnerable and anxious. Greeted and comforted by the third condition, the therapist who is focused on the client's uneasiness of the unknown.

The purpose of the person centred approach is for the client to become more self-aware with themselves, which is captured by Gerald Corey who states: "the metaphor of how an acorn, if provided with the appropriate conditions will automatically grow in positive ways, pushed naturally towards its actualisation as an oak." (2001, p. 171)

Whilst Carl's approach consisted of six core ingredients, only the following three of which are mainly mentioned within the counselling field, however they are still widely used even today. The counsellor or skilled helper is not success orientated and is responsible to their client and not for them directly, knocking on their door, waiting for the invitation into their mind, feelings and exploration of their inner feelings and truly valuing their experience as if it were their own. Congruency, which of the core conditions provides the skeleton key to the therapist enabling their clients spoken words and the perceiving of the client's world reflectively as if they too had been in the exact same experience as their client with sensitive

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communication, meanwhile the therapist who has given their clients the most of the person that they can too, freely be, which isn't only healthy for the client's personal growth but gifted to the awareness of their counsellor's needs or fears as the intrusion of this factor can falsify the psychological space for the client. (Mearns and Thorne, 2007)

As therapy is endured and the walls of the unknown are knocked down, the client opens up and the therapist is able to match their external behaviours and expressions with their internal feelings and thoughts, getting behind the masks that the individual could be wearing, which facilitates positive and effective therapeutic movement. I have experienced this personally through a parenting group that I attend which has enabled me with genuine empathic understanding from other mum's like me bringing me back from the alienated loneliness that now enriches me with value.

Second of the core conditions is empathy which is not a technique, but a way of being with regards to the counsellor who is transparent and continuously demonstrating to the client they are real, they are genuine with their feelings, the client will open up more having the comfort that the counsellor is hearing and experiencing their pain, hurt or frustration and paraphrasing their spoken thoughts, reflecting a clear understanding of what they have delved into during therapy. As a mother to three, empathy is present often between my children and i, who I comfort but not molly coddle on many occasions. The last of the core conditions which is unconditioned positive regard which focuses on an attitude full of grace that values us knowing our inner self, which I too have learned to adapt, making no judgements and working out my life finding comfort that is gained when pretences are

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dropped which enables the client to confess their worst feelings, enabling them to discover that they are still accepted. The three core conditions all go hand in hand within this approach.

Seeing the bigger picture and being heard is so different to being listened to, when someone hears you, you feel it, it feels good, however, someone can listen and not show any interest making you feel as if you're dismissed. When you hear things your feelings are involved, showing understanding and emotion puts the client at ease. We need the contentment of being heard rather than just listened to and with empathy, congruence and unconditional positive regard which is then reflected onto the client they start feeling better inside themselves.

The best therapeutic changes to take place within therapy which feed the clients' personal and emotional growth which is learned through experience and is demonstrated by the counsellor who is helpful, genuine and at face value, which is vital if there are changes to be made toward a positive self-actualisation tendency to occur for the client. However care should be taken within this relationship as it is on such a personal level it cannot become befriending, judging or even being dictated as this can breed unwanted feelings within the profession. While this approach can be seen as good for the client in becoming more self-actualising it is widely criticised for being so simple and long-winded which can be too costly, therefore positive change is limited with the client attending and reflecting on themselves. The focus is also on the counsellor's attitudes within therapy rather than their skills which can lead to the client rambling over scenarios which then makes the therapy

unhelpful. Another factor is that not all humans have the same self-actualising tendency and not all are able to find their own inner direction.

When approaching this topic I had a small understanding of the client-centred approach which was fathered by Carl Rogers and his own experience as a therapist, he became extremely trustworthy and vice versa with his client' as the relationship developed with respect and understanding to the projective nature of experiences that both the therapist and client venture through. I have discovered that the counsellor's feelings can bubble up into the relationship making the client more aware of the person they sit in front of, becoming more true to themselves, and having more faith of their own individual importance. The Rogerian approach has inspired me as I have taken great pleasure in some of Carl's creative words within his famous books. Sadly the world lost a great icon and at the age of 85 years old, Carl Ransom Rogers sadly passed away in 1987 after dedicating the majority of his life to psychotherapy.