

Rogers' approach



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Identify specific examples which demonstrate the main tenets/skills of Rogers' approach and offer a personal evaluation of this approach

Carl Rogers (cited in Hill, 2009) proposed six conditions necessary for client centred therapy to be affective. These are:

- * The client and helper must be in psychological contact
- * The client must be in a state of incongruence
- * The helper must be congruent (genuine) or integrated in the relationship
- * The helper must feel unconditional positive regard for the client
- * The helper must experience empathy for the client
- * The client must experience the helpers congruence, unconditional positive regard and empathy for the client (Hill, 2009, p. 87)

Rogers stated that the three essential characteristics are empathy, unconditional positive regard and congruence (Geldard & Geldard, 2003).

The characteristic of empathy refers to the helper's ability to relate to the client with some level of understanding of what the client is going through (Thorne, 2003). It is the ability of the helper to 'walk in the client's shoes'. This condition can be seen throughout the video taken in 1964, which consists of Carl Rogers counselling session with Gloria, a thirty year old divorcee who has issues surrounding her newly single life and the impact her relationships with other men will have on her daughter Patty. When Gloria expresses that she cannot accept some areas of her personal life and so cannot share them with her daughter, Rogers portrays his empathy by

saying “ And if you can’t accept them in yourself, how could you possibly be comfortable in telling them to her?” (Shostrom in Thorne, 2003, p. 54).

Another example of this can be seen when Gloria talks about her “ utopian” moments and Rogers says “ I sense that in those utopian moments you really feel kind of whole. You feel all in one piece...” (Shostrom in Thorne, 2003, p. 54). Through these examples you can see Rogers ability to express to Gloria his understanding of what she is going through at that time.

Unconditional positive regard refers to a counsellor’s ability to accept a person irrespective of what they have done in the past, as well as the differences between their values, beliefs and culture compared to their own (Geldard & Geldard, 2003). An example of this characteristic can be seen in the counselling session when Gloria expresses what she is thinking and says “...‘ Gee, I’d like you for my father’...” (Shostrom in Thorne, 2003, p. 55) and Rogers “ You look to me like a pretty nice daughter.” (Shostrom in Thorne, 2003, p. 55). Rogers also mentions to Gloria during the interview that he feels close to her in the present moment, which suggests that he does not hold a judgement about her sleeping with men although she is not married, which in 1964 may have been frowned upon. By accepting her and making her feel listened to Rogers achieves a connection with her.

Congruence refers to a helper’s ability to be ‘ real’, authentic or genuine with a client (Geldard & Geldard, 2003). An example of this condition can be seen in the video when Gloria pushes Rogers for a solution to her problems. She says “ I have a feeling you are just going to sit there and let me stew in it and i want more.” (Shostrom in Thorne, 2003, p. 54) to which Rogers replies “ And I guess I’d like to say, ‘ No I don’t want to let you stew in your

feelings', but on the other hand, I also feel that this is the kind of very private thing that I couldn't possibly answer for you. But i sure as anything will try to help you work toward your own answer. I don't know whether that makes any sense to you, but i mean it. (Shostrom in Thorne, 2003, p. 54). Here, Rogers achieves his wish to show his authenticity to Gloria by using words such as ' I'd', ' I feel' and ' I sure as anything will try...' portraying to her his involvement in the conversation. Another example would be when Gloria talks of moments of utopia and Rogers says " I expect none of us get it as often as we'd like, but I really do understand it.". This shows Gloria that Rogers understands what she is saying and is being authentic. Another example is shown when Gloria speaks of enjoying talking to him and says she feels close to him, to which he replies " I don't feel that's pretending" (Shostrom in Thorne, 2003, p. 55). Through his ability to be genuine with her, you see a shift in her willingness to talk openly about her issues, when originally she tried to hide her issues.

I feel that Rogers Person-Centred approach to counselling is incredibly affective. Through his congruence, unconditional positive regard and empathy he makes Gloria feel accepted, not judged, listened to and succeeds in facilitating her to face her issues and decide what she would like to do to change them. He succeeds in accomplishing this in just one half hour session with her! He helps her feel comfortable in herself and helps her realise that she seeks and deserves love, recognition and respect. I originally felt that not having someone give you direct advice on issues in your life would frustrate me but having spoken freely without judgement to someone about the issues in my life, I can see how the Person-Centred approach

helps. For this reason, I plan to implement the approach to the best of my ability to help others in my social care practice in the future.

Bibliography:

* Hill, C. (2009). *Helping Skills: Facilitating Exploration, Insight and Action* (3rd ed.). Washington D. C.: American Psychological Association

* Thorne, B. (2003). *Carl Rogers* (2nd ed.). London: SAGE

* Geldard, K., & Geldard, D. (2003). *Counselling Skills in Everyday Life*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.