

Person centred  
therapy strength and  
weaknesses  
psychology essay



Person centred approach is a humanistic phenomenological approach founded by Carl Rodgers, an American humanistic psychologist who believed in a way an individual sees themselves and realising their full potential for their personal growth and personal development he called “ self actualisation”. When there is no relationship between experience and the individual perception of self, a human being experiences anxiety and depression. This results in unpleasant feelings which make defence mechanisms to kick in and results in denial and distortion and blocks an individual self concept. The anxiety and depression will get in an individual’s life in a neurotic way and lead to psychotic behaviours, (Gross, 2010). Rogers believed that the behaviour can be re-organised by use of person centred therapy.

According to Graham (1986), person centred therapy also known as client centred therapy is a process whereby an individual takes control of their self in an attempt to become autonomous and increase in self confidence. It is an approach that is used for counselling patients with the emphasis of a relationship between the client and the counsellor with more responsibility on the client. The client takes control of the therapeutic sessions, determining when to terminate the treatment. In return, the therapist is expected to facilitate the client with appropriate condition for therapy which makes the client to fully interact and make a stable relationship with the client that is trustworthy, (Gross, 2010). This will make the client feel safe and able to open up during sessions. The therapist is expected to be non judgmental, empathetic and understanding. The approach emphasizes on creating conducive environment which is comfortable, warm and safe which

enables the client to open up. Therefore the approach is non judgmental and anti oppressive.

For the therapy to be effective according to Rogers (1951), it is determined by therapists attitude which is expected to be congruence; authenticity, genuine and showing of the true feelings of emotions. Unconditional positive regard which is accepting the client who they are regardless of the client's past. Being empathetic which involves an understanding of the client's world at the same time showing genuine emotional feelings and listening attentively during the sessions. These characters will help the client to trust the therapist and have the courage to open up and start the process of healing. Thorne (1984) suggested tenderness as another attitude that the therapist need to possess. These attitudes are of extreme importance as explained by Fonagy and Higgitt (1984) that possessing these conditions will help the client to talk about their life honestly and help the client to overcome their odd behaviour.

The counsellor will help the client to uncover and express the true feelings by adopting the non-directive role. During the sessions, the therapist is not allowed to alter client's way of thinking but only check with the client if they do not understand anything. They are expected to put themselves in the client's position and respect them at all the times. Any contribution from the client is valued and negative thinking is regarded as legitimate. The therapy will help the client to change their ways of thinking, setting them free and be positive. The therapy is mainly applied to people who suffer from schizophrenia, depression, anxiety, alcohol disorders, cognitive dysfunctions and personality disorders. Egan (1998) developed a systematic counselling <https://assignbuster.com/person-centred-therapy-strength-and-weaknesses-psychology-essay/>

model to help individuals solve their problems in order for them to develop opportunities. The Egan skilled helper works better when co-operated with person centred approach principles.

## **Critically evaluate 550**

### Strength

The effectiveness of the person centred approach is that, the counselling is a personal communication between the client and the therapist. It aids in helping the client's problems by increasing the client's sense of well being. This therapy makes the client to explore their true self by being honest and empowers them to be able to solve their own problems. It gives the client a chance to have self direction by allowing them to plan their own session and be in control of the therapy. Therapists give the client's upper hand and not take them as experts but rather a comforting hand to the client. It gives them an opportunity to show their caring nature, being non-judgmental and empathise with the client regardless of their abnormal behaviour or rigid patterns of thinking, (Gross, 2010). Maslow (1970) explained that self actualisation helps the client to fully concentrate on themselves and guide in decision making for growth and develop into an honest, selfless and independent person. In return it makes the client to have autonomy and not depend on others all the time. It gives the client self growth, confidence and better understanding of oneself. Client behaviour is expected to change and the way they view life, giving more appreciation and better relationships. Self actualisation also makes the client to have self acceptance and being able to accept others.

Another stronghold of the person centred approach is that it makes the therapist accept the client the way they are without judging them or pressuring them to change but rather showing empathy. In return it gives the client a platform to explore their true feelings and make them better people in a society. It also gives the client a chance to reflect on their previous behaviour and identify areas that they need to develop on.

### Weaknesses

However, on the negative side the client is not challenged by anyone or able to engage in a contest in order to find or show their ability. It deprives the opportunity to give opinion or suggestions that might be useful. The therapist cannot question anything even if they are concerned and it is too plain and not complicated. The therapy does not offer a proper structure to the client even though the therapist subscribe to the ethical principles of their profession which gives them guidelines about their boundaries, (Mearns and Thorne, 2007) and this can be difficult for the client to progress and have answers. The approach has developed since the 60's and it does not have much research and modern theory on it. Also there are no techniques in this approach such as questioning or clarifying.

Another drawback of this approach is that there is no intervention of which according to Adams et al (2009) intervention is an act to achieve effects and produce results. There is no involvement or interference from the therapist who might offer sound advice. McNeill et al (2005) identified elements of interventions that have an impact on behavioural change. Out of the elements, person centred therapy lacks the agreement intervention and

interactive communication. In comparison with crisis intervention where help is offered when a service user is faced with a problem, (Adam et al, 2009), person centred therapists are not allowed to offer help. Crisis intervention allows the practitioner to help an individual out of stress and change their behaviour by assessing the situation and making a plan to give support as well as advocating. Adams et al (2009) stated that crisis intervention makes an individual in crisis stronger and able to deal with threats and help them with personal growth.

Like

In person centred therapy, I like the fact that the client is given all the attention and focus and the relationship that is formed between the client and the therapist is of utmost important. I like the fact that it makes the client feel comfortable and don't feel like they are being judged because of their condition. In case of a client who has strong past like a paedophile or a murderer, I suppose they relax more knowing their therapist is not judging them and it can make them to relax and express themselves. I think they are bound to make a full recovery quicker with client centred therapy where they are in total control of the situation.

Dislike

My negative view of the therapy is the fact that the client is not challenged even if they are heading for a downfall; the therapist cannot change their minds or intervene. Another downfall I find with the therapy is the lack of intervention and techniques.

## **An example from work place**

Mr Johns (pseudonym for confidential reasons) is a 24 year old client in a residential home who has problems with substance misuse since the age of 13. He has a history of violence and thieving. He has been attending counselling sessions, a one to one approach to help him overcome his addiction. Mr Johns attended therapeutic sessions to help him identify where his problem started and what triggers him to take drugs. In his evaluation, he mentions that he was able to open up to his therapists because he knew he was not judged or discriminated but he was treated as an individual. He also mentions that the relationship and communication he had with the therapist made him comfortable and it helped him in his healing process.

## **Discuss how you envisage**

By looking at Mr Jones story and the way the approach worked towards his healing, I would envisage using the therapy in my professional practice especially in cases that involve mental health, drug misuse and learning disabilities. I believe personalising care is a key to effective treatment and it makes the client feel valued. Even though the approach has its weaknesses, I would use it in my practice depending on what the client is experiencing at the time.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the person centred approach has existed for a long time and is simple to use, though it can be difficult to see if it's working because the therapists rely on the person's behaviour. The non judgmental technique and

the warm relationship between the client and the therapist help individuals to open up and be free.

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