

Cover Sheet

Assignment

Unit 3: An Introduction to Counselling Theory

1. The Historical Development And Basic Philosophy Of The Main Therapeutic Model Used By The Centre

Historical Development

Carl Rogers was born in 1902, near Chicago, in the United States of America. Rogers studied to be a psychologist and his first position was with the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. Whilst practising here he became unhappy with the current theories and practices being used and began to develop his own methods. Rogers particularly disliked the fact that clients were often treated as objects for study and examination and believed that they should be treated as individuals deserving respect and understanding. Rogers published a book, 'Counselling and Psychotherapy: Newer Concepts in Practice' in 1942, which set out his own theories on 'non directive counselling', later to be called the 'Person Centred Approach' (PCA).

Basic Philosophy

The basic philosophy of the PCA is that 'Individuals have within themselves vast resources for self understanding and for altering their self concepts, basic attitudes, and self directed behaviour; these resources can be tapped if a definable climate of facilitative psychological attitudes can be provided'*(1)

Importance of Approach

Rogers and his colleagues influenced the development of counselling and psychotherapy in the following ways:

1. Emphasising the central role and importance of the counselling relationship itself as a significant factor for promoting change
 2. Describing 'the person' as resourceful and tending towards actualisation of potential
 3. Emphasising and developing the central role of listening and empathy in counselling and other relationships
 4. Using the term 'client' rather than patient to signify respect for the person coming for help and to acknowledge his or her dignity
 5. Making sound recordings of counselling interviews for the first time and using them to learn about the counselling process
 6. Engaging in scientific research and encouraging others to do so
 7. Making the counselling process more democratic and encouraging non-psychologists and non-medical people to become counsellors
- *(2)

Supposed Limitations

Brian Thorne noted that there were some individuals who believed that the PCA had the following limitations:

- ❖ That it was naïve and too simplistic.
- ❖ That it was overly optimistic in how trustworthy people are.
- ❖ That subjective experience is not wholly reliant as some people are clearly not in touch with reality.
- ❖ That the climate for growth was too simplistic and must rely on other factors being present.

It is interesting to note that while Roger's theories may be simplistic in practice they demand tremendous skill to carry out in the correct way.

2. The Key Concepts And Principles Of The Model

Key Concepts and Principles of the Person Centred Approach

The key concepts of the PCA are as follows:

Actualisation

That all individuals have within themselves the ability to reach their full potential; to grow as individuals, through self understanding and have the internal resources to change their behaviour, attitudes, self concepts. In order to facilitate the actualising tendency and there needs to be the right climate for growth; this climate exists between a client and a therapist when the following core conditions are met:

Core Conditions

Congruence

The therapist must be genuine, real and transparent in the relationship with the client; I understand this as being the same on the outside as on the inside.

Prizing (UPR)

The therapist must not be judgemental towards the client in any shape or form and must express a positive, accepting and loving attitude towards the client. This 'prizing' of the client creates a relationship where the client feels safe to disclose problems, feelings or observations to the therapist.

Empathy

The therapist tries to place themselves in the client's shoes and to align themselves with the client's internal frame of reference. Being able to sense

and feel those feelings allows the therapist to have a genuine empathy with the client and allows them to have a greater understanding of the client's perspective.

Relationship between Client & Therapist

In order for constructive personality change to occur the following conditions need to exist throughout the course of the relationship between the client and the therapist:

1. Two persons are in psychological contact*
2. The first, whom we shall term the client, is in a state of incongruence, being vulnerable or anxious.*
3. The second person, whom we shall term the therapist, is congruent or integrated in the relationship.*
4. The therapist experiences unconditional positive regard for the client.*
5. The therapist experiences an empathic understanding of the client's internal frame of reference and endeavours to communicate this experience to the client.*
6. The communication to the client of the therapist's empathic understanding and unconditional positive regard is to a minimal degree achieved.*

The PCA therapist enters into a relationship with the client as an equal; who is present in the relationship to be honest, caring and empathic. In other forms of Counselling the therapist's role may encompass all of these properties but due to the nature of the therapy, the role of the professional or expert will be played, providing an imbalance in the relationship; with the therapist being superior to the client.

3. Illustrate Through Five Scenarios Various Aspects Of The Concept Of Self And The Development Of Self Concepts In Terms Of The Chosen Model

1. Condition of Worth

Theory: As children we develop behaviour which will gain us approval from others and discard behaviour which doesn't. This can sometimes lead to a rigid way of behaving; always seeking to do things that gain approval and disregarding thoughts, feelings and actions which may not.

Scenario: As a child I grew up in a family which expressed little emotion and frowned upon any drama. I learnt very quickly that my parents did not want to know if I was having problems and expected me to get on and deal with life's trials. I therefore learned to keep my problems to myself and tried to be as independent as possible. Being strong, independent and successful was the only way I could think of gaining approval from my parents.

This scenario shows how I adapted my behaviour in order to gain my parents love and approval. I felt driven to be someone my parents were proud of and in the course of doing so, lost sight of who I was and what I really wanted to do in my live.

2. Locus of Evaluation

Theory: Fully functioning individuals have a source of wisdom within themselves which they trust to guide them in there lives; this self referent has been described as the internal locus of evaluation. When an individual has been subjected to a critical and judgemental environment, they become separated from this internal guide and try to gain direction and approval from external sources. This often leads to the individual trying to please everyone and behaviour which is variable and incongruent. An

individual can find and become re-attuned to this reference point through therapy.

Scenario: Up until two years ago I spent most of my time trying to please others and gain their approval, in order to feel that I was valued and loved. My 'people pleasing' was becoming a major problem in my life, as I spent too much time trying to help others to the detriment of myself. Having reached a breaking point I began therapy and began to understand that I did not have to do things for other people that I did not want to do and it was okay if someone didn't like me or approve of my actions.

This scenario shows how through therapy I became reconnected to my own internal locus of evaluation, in which I valued myself and my own deep beliefs. This 'connection' expressed itself through thoughts and actions that I began to take in my life; I became the true me, not the one I had created in order to please the outside world.

3. Self Actualisation

Theory: Self actualisation is an expression of the actualising tendency. We all have an innate desire to reach our full potential; however this desire may be restrained by environmental factors such as society's boundaries or expectations. In reality we try to achieve as much of our potential as we can within the given boundaries; this is a balancing act which, when not achieved, can lead to individuals having psychological maladjustments.

Scenario: Having tried to gain praise and love through pleasing others and doing what I thought society expected of me i.e. to be successful, I found that I was deeply unhappy. My inner 'voice' indicated that I needed to change. Change of my belief system was too frightening for me to

consider and I believed that 'people' would see me as a failure, so I continued to be miserable, drinking more and becoming deeply depressed. The crisis point was reached when I realised that I was losing the will to live; I wanted to be useful and have a happy life, so I sought help from my GP and agreed to have therapy.

This scenario shows how self actualisation can be a strong force in our lives and the denial of our inner directions can led us to a 'rock bottom' where we have to change or remain 'stuck'.

4. Self Acceptance

Theory: That we need to recognise and accept ourselves, in order to continue to grow and change. Only through being congruent can we recognise our own issues and learn how to accept, forgive and change our behaviour.

Scenario: As part of my treatment I had to participate in group therapy; I found the experience very cathartic. I felt comfortable talking about my inner most fears, without the fear of being judged. I learnt a lot about myself, both good and bad and also learnt that I could change and accept myself.

The scenario shows that through being congruent with others we become congruent with our inner selves. Sharing problems and feelings helps us to recognise that we are not unique in having 'bad' feelings and that we can learn to accept and adapt our behaviour in order to become 'better' people.

5. The Fully Functioning Person

Theory: Fully functioning people are those individuals who are psychologically healthy, having awareness and trust in their own organismic valuing process and an awareness of their own feelings and those of others. Living in the present, they have their source of wisdom deep within and accessible.

Scenario: Having had therapy, both as an individual and in a group, I have begun to recognise and trust my own internal guidance

This scenario illustrates that through therapy you can learn to express feelings with others and that becoming congruent leads to personal growth, through acceptance and change.

4. Introduction Of Material From Two Other Therapeutic Schools

1. Psychodynamic

The Psychodynamic Approach was developed from the work of Freud. Ideas central to the psychodynamic theory are as follows:

- Psychosexual stages of development
- Innate sexual and aggressive drives
- Links between childhood and present behaviour
- Transference
- Dreams
- Unconscious motivation
- The therapist interprets clients experience and behaviour to unveil unconscious motives

Comparison to PCA

Psychodynamic is more analytical and 'medical' in its approach. It deals with clients as individuals who are at 'fault' with 'normal' behaviour and therefore tries to change this behaviour by giving analytical comment and guidance. The therapist acts as the expert with the client in the patient role; this imbalance in the relationship does not encourage UPR, empathy and congruence.

2. Rational Emotive Behavioural Therapy

The REBT approach was developed by Albert Ellis. Core to its central theories are the following:

- People choose their reactions to events and it is this choice that is the problem, not the event itself
- People are irrational
- Irrational behaviour is learnt, along with the associated emotional reactions
- The therapist needs to confront the client's behaviour and belief's in order for change to occur

Comparison to PCA

An REBT therapist confronts clients with their irrational belief's and actions. The therapist argues that they belief's are right and the client is therefore at fault. UPR and empathy are therefore not prominent in this type of therapy; however there is a need for the therapist to be congruent with the client in order for the irrational behaviour to be highlighted.

5. Recognition Of The Dangers Of Using Methods And Techniques Without Adequate Training

Dangers of using methods and techniques without adequate training

In recognising that client's come to counselling in a vulnerable and anxious state the therapist has a duty of care to ensure that the way the client is treated is with the utmost professionalism. Using techniques which the therapist is not trained or experienced in is dangerous to client and could potentially make the client worse. Any therapist using techniques that they are not trained in is being irresponsible, disrespectful and unprofessional in their duties to the client. The client is therefore well within their rights to sue any therapist who has used techniques on them which they are untrained for.

References

1. *Way of Being*, Carl Rogers, pg.115
2. *Learning and Being*, Tony Merry pg.3
3. *Way of Being*, Carl Rogers, pg. 221