

Carl Rogers (1902-1987) - Person Centred Therapy

Dr.A.John Balaiah

Carl Rogers

Carl Ransom Rogers (1902–1987) was an American psychologist and one of the founders of the humanistic approach in psychology. He is best known for developing the client-centered therapy approach and the Carl Rogers theory of personality, which emphasized a person's subjective experience and their innate drive toward personal growth.

Rogers believed that every human being has the potential to grow, learn, and become the best version of themselves- a process he called self-actualization.



Summary & integration

- ☐ Family characterised by close and warm relationships
- ☐ Play was discouraged
- ☐ Scholarly interests than social interest
- ☐ Agriculture, history, religion and to clinical psychology
- ☐ In 1964 – western Behavioural Sciences Institute in California- Fostered encountered groups

- ☐ In 1968- Centre for the studies of the person
- ☐ Mother & Theory of Nonjudgmental listening and acceptance if clients are to change
- ☐ Humanistic movement all over the world
- ☐ During his last 15 years , he applied his person centred approach to politics by training policy makers, leaders and groups in conflict
- ☐ Greatest passion was to reduce interracial tensions and the effort to achieve world peace , he was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize shortly before he died.
- ☐ After a fall in 1987, fracture in the hip, surgery, heart failure and his boots on as he hoped always looking forward
- ☐ I do not know when I will die , but I do know that I will have lived a full and exciting 85 years (1987, p.152).
- ☐ Therapist, author and the person were the same man
- ☐ He embodied the characteristics of the fully functioning person and challenge the status quo throughout his career
- ☐ For a person to achieve self-actualization they must be in a state of congruence. According to Rogers, we want to feel, experience and behave in ways which are consistent with our self-image and which reflect what we would like to be like, our ideal-self

Human nature

- ☐ Based on a philosophy of human nature that postulates an inner striving for self actualization. View is phenomenological (We structure ourselves according to our perceptions of reality. We are motivated to actualize ourselves in the reality that we perceive)
- ☐ People are essentially trustworthy
- ☐ Potential for understanding themselves and resolving problems without direct intervention on the therapist's part
- ☐ Attitude and qualities of the therapist and the quality of client/therapist relationships as the prime determinants of the therapy
- ☐ **Self-concept** emerges as a pivotal product of the process. As individuals strive toward actualization, the self is divided into two categories: the **real self** and the **ideal self**. The real self is representative of the individual while the ideal self exemplifies the aspirations of the individual. When the real self is closely aligned with the ideal self, there is a wholesome sense of **congruence**
- ☐ Find the core of an individual when one finds a trustworthy, positive centre

- ☐ When therapists communicate their realness, caring and non-judgemental understanding, significant changes in the client are most likely to occur
- ☐ No superior / expert opinion

Major Turning Points

Zimring and Raskin

- ☐ **I Phase**
- ☐ 1940s- Non directive counselling as opposed to psychoanalytic approach to individual counselling. He challenged the basic assumption that “ Counsellor knows the best”
- ☐ Diagnostic procedures were inadequate
- ☐ Focussed on clarifying and reflecting the client’s verbal messages
- ☐ Acceptance of feelings and getting insight in to these feelings
- ☐ **II Phase**
- ☐ 1950s Client-centred therapy was published to reflect on the client rather ND methods
- ☐ Phenomenological world of the client
- ☐ People behave from their own internal frame of reference
- ☐ Actualizing tendency as the motivational force to change
- ☐ Person centred approach
- ☐ How people obtain, share and surrender power and control over themselves and others
- ☐ Broadening of the approach
- ☐ Individual and family, education, leadership and administration, organizational development, health care, international relations
- ☐ Offer a facilitative climate where congruence, acceptance and empathy were present and the client perceived these conditions , therapeutic movements would occur
- ☐ **Phase III**
- ☐ 1960’s on becoming a person (Rogers, 1961)
- ☐ Becoming the person that one truly is
- ☐ Openness to experience, internal locus of evaluation and willingness to be process
- ☐ Quality of relationships as a catalyst leading to personality change
- ☐ Student centred teaching , encounter groups

- ☐ **Phase IV**
- ☐ Person centred approach
- ☐ How people obtain, share and surrender power and control over themselves and others
- ☐ Broadening of the approach
- ☐ Individual and family, education, leadership and administration, organizational development, health care, international relations

Third Force

- ☐ Existentialism and Humanism
- ☐ Experiential and relationship oriented
- ☐ Existentialism and humanism (Confusing)
- ☐ **Common concepts** – Freedom choice, values, personal responsibility, purpose and meaning
- ☐ Both approaches call for the therapist to enter client's subjective world
- ☐ **Differences-** Existentialism- we are faced with the anxiety of choosing to create and identity in a world that lacks intrinsic meaning
- ☐ Humanism talks about a natural potential that we can actualize and through which we can find meaning
- ☐ Humanistic – how an acorn – in good conditions will become an oak
- ☐ Existentialism- No internal nature but faced with every choices of what to make of this condition
- ☐ Humanism - When it is lived, it stimulates constructive changes in others

Core Concepts of Carl Rogers' Theory of Personality

The Carl Rogers self theory of personality focuses on the individual's subjective view of the world. Here are the fundamental components:

1. The Self-Concept

The self-concept is how a person views. It includes:

- **Self-image:** How we see ourselves (e.g., "I am kind").

- **Ideal self:** Who we want to become (e.g., "I want to be more confident").
- **Self-worth:** How much value we place on ourselves.

A healthy self-concept leads to positive mental health, while a distorted self-concept can result in low self-esteem and inner conflict.

2. **Unconditional Positive Regard**

Rogers emphasized that individuals flourish when they receive **unconditional positive regard**- love and acceptance without any conditions.

For example, a child who is loved only when they behave a certain way may develop a conditional self-worth. But a child who feels accepted no matter what is more likely to develop a strong and stable sense of self.

3. **Congruence vs. Incongruence**

- **Congruence** is when your self-image matches your experiences.
- **Incongruence** happens when there's a gap between how you see yourself and what you experience.

According to **Carl Rogers' theory of personality**, psychological problems arise when there's high incongruence.

Therapeutic Process

- ☐ **Therapeutic goals**
- ☐ Focus is not on the problems but person
- ☐ To provide a climate conducive to helping the individuals become a fully functioning person
- ☐ Help them to remove the masks
- ☐ Lost contact with the real self (Facades)
- ☐ In therapy: Encourage these characteristics

- ☐ 1. openness to experience
- ☐ 2. in themselves
- ☐ 3. sense of evaluation
- ☐ 4. Willingness to continue growing

Attitudes and Function

- ☐ Attitudes of the therapist rather than knowledge, theories, techniques facilitate personality change in the client
- ☐ Not to do something but ways of being
- ☐ Creating a helping relationship where clients experience freedom to explore the areas of their life either denied or distorted

Client's Experience

- ☐ Perception of their own experience in therapy and of the counsellor's attitudes
- ☐ When a client feels understood and accepted their defensiveness is less and they become more open
- ☐ They begin to appreciate more about themselves and their behaviours become creative and empowering

Therapeutic Relationship

- ☐ The following six conditions are necessary and sufficient for personality changes to occur
- ☐ 1. Two persons in psychological contact
- ☐ 2. First- Client- Experiences incongruence
- ☐ 3. Second – Therapist- in congruence/Integrated
- ☐ 4. Therapist experiences unconditional positive regard/ Caring/Acceptance
- ☐ 5. Empathic understanding is communicated
- ☐ 6. therapist's Unconditional positive regard and Empathy is to a minimal degree achieved
- ☐ When they experience realness of the therapist, they drop many of the pretenses and are real with both themselves and the therapist
- ☐ Therapist relationship tends to free the client from self defeating ways

Three Personal Qualities

1. Congruence

- ☐ Congruence or Genuineness : Real self/ ideal Self
- ☐ By expressing both negative and positive experiences, facilitate honest communications
- ☐ Feels one way about the client but acts in a different way
- ☐ Congruence works on a continuum

2. Unconditional Positive Regard

- ☐ Caring is unconditional not contaminated by evaluation and judgements of the client's Feelings, thoughts and behaviours as good and bad
- ☐ It is not approval of all the overt behaviours
- ☐ I'll accept you as you are (no conditions)
- ☐ Therapists caring be nonpossessive
- ☐ Greater the degree of caring, prizing, accepting and valuing, therapy will be successful

3. Accurate Empathic Understanding

- ☐ Therapist tries to perceive the subjective experience particularly in the here and now
- ☐ As if they were his own without being lost in those feelings
- ☐ Deep subjective experience of the client with. the client
- ☐ It is a sense of personal identification
- ☐ Therapist should not lose their own separateness
- ☐ When the therapists grasps the client's private world as the client sees and feels it, constructive change can happen
- ☐ Congruence (genuineness or realness)
- ☐ Unconditional positive regard (acceptance and caring
- ☐ Accurate empathic understanding (an ability to deeply grasp the subjective world of another person)
- ☐ Less defensive and more open
- ☐ Leave the doors open for self exploration
- ☐ When people are free they find their own way

- ☐ Maslow “psychopathology of the average’ so called ‘normals’ never extend themselves to become what they are capable of becoming
- ☐ Too much importance is given to medical models
- ☐ Too little attention is given to love , creativity, joy and peak experiences
- ☐ Positive implication of moving towards psychological health from maladjustment
- ☐ Therapy is more than an adjustment to norms
- ☐ But living fully and authentically demands a struggle
- ☐ People never arrive at a static state of being self actualized, they continue in the process of actualizing themselves
- ☐ Focus on the here and now experience
- ☐ A shared journey , where both can be fallible

Fully Functioning Person

- ☐ Rogers also proposed a central concept of his theory in the "fully functioning person." A fully functioning person is
 - ☐ authentic and self-aware,
 - ☐ being in touch with his feelings, emotions, and desires.
 - ☐ He has a high degree of satisfaction with life, leaning in favour of positive thoughts, spirituality, and intrinsic values
 - ☐ Fully functioning person is well on the way to becoming self-actualized.
- ☐ Rogers identified five characteristics of the fully functioning person:
 - ☐ **1. Open to experience:** both positive and negative emotions accepted. Negative feelings are not denied, but worked through (rather than resorting to ego defense mechanisms).
 - ☐ **2. Existential living:** in touch with different experiences as they occur in life, avoiding prejudging and preconceptions. Being able to live and fully appreciate the present, not always looking back to the past or forward to the future (i.e., living for the moment).
 - ☐ **3. Trust feelings:** feeling, instincts, and gut-reactions are paid attention to and trusted. People’s own decisions are the right ones, and we should trust ourselves to make the right choices.
 - ☐ **4. Creativity:** creative thinking and risk-taking are features of a person’s life. A person does not play safe all the time. This involves the ability to adjust and change and seek new experiences.
 - ☐ **5. Fulfilled life:** a person is happy and satisfied with life, and always looking for new challenges and experiences.

Carl Rogers in Education

Rogers strongly believed that education should focus on the learner's experience, not just rote memorization. His student-centered learning model respects individual needs and encourages self-directed learning.

Teachers using **Carl Rogers' theory of personality** principles:

- Treat students with respect and empathy
- Create emotionally safe classrooms
- Encourage open dialogue and curiosity

Transform the Way Your Child Learns English!

At Planet Spark, we believe in nurturing each child's potential using personalized, student-focused methods, just like Carl Rogers did.

Real-Life Applications of Carl Rogers' Self Theory of Personality

A. Parenting

Parents who adopt **unconditional positive regard** help their children develop a healthy self-concept. Instead of saying, "You're a bad kid," say, "That behavior wasn't okay, but I love you."

B. Therapy

Carl Rogers' client-centered therapy is still widely used. Therapists offer empathy, genuineness, and acceptance, helping clients resolve inner conflicts and discover their true selves.

C. Workplace Coaching

Modern leadership training uses Rogers' ideas to promote employee growth, emotional intelligence, and authentic communication.

How Kids Can Learn From Carl Rogers' Personality Theory

Kids benefit tremendously when taught in an environment that fosters:

- Open communication
- Empathy
- Non-judgmental feedback
- Opportunities for self-expression

By using **Carl Rogers' theory of personality**, educators and parents can help children express themselves in English confidently and without fear.

Give Your Child the Freedom to Express!

Carl Rogers' Theory in the Context of Modern Psychology

Even decades after its introduction, **Carl Rogers' theory of personality** continues to influence how we understand the human mind and behavior. His work laid the foundation for **positive psychology**, a field that emerged in the late 20th century with the core aim of studying what makes life most worth living, focusing on strengths rather than disorders.

Modern psychologists like **Martin Seligman** and **Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi** drew inspiration from Rogers' ideas when shaping their theories on **flow, optimism, resilience, and well-being**. These concepts are now widely used in therapy, coaching, leadership development, and educational reform, proving that Rogers' self-theory is more relevant than ever.

Unlike the deterministic approach of Freud or the rigid conditioning models of behaviorism, Rogers believed in **agency**- the idea that people can choose to grow, heal, and flourish. That philosophy is crucial in today's mental health practices that focus on **empowerment, strength-building, and emotional awareness**.

Evaluating Humanists

- ☐ Hard to operationally define many of the concepts.
- ☐ Have added balance to the study of personality.
- ☐ The approach has encouraged others to focus on "positive psychology."
- ☐ The argument that we have the power to choose our own destiny has fostered a new appreciation for resilience.

Carl Rogers – Non directive Method – You tube link

<https://youtu.be/jU097drQzYc?si=b-M3UI41m7jhx-06>