Carl Rogers (1902-1987)

Humanistic-Existential Paradigm
Self Theory
THE PAST HAS ITS CHARMS,
BUT NOTHING NEW EVER HAPPENS THERE
NOTHING IN THE WORLD IS BIGGER THAN A PEOPLE

Except a Person
History

- Born in 1902 in Illinois--Midwestern conservative religious upbringing
- Started training for the ministry but rejected it as too rigid, but those values evident in his approach
- A key advocate of humanistic psychology..
Context for Theory Development

- Early, intense therapeutic practice in child guidance practice
- Pragmatic approach to make psychotherapy more effective. Practice based but also research efforts
- Departure from restrictions of classical psychological science because it removed important variables from examination..
Rogers Self Theory

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The most innate tendency of humans is a drive towards self-actualization
Rogers Self Theory

- The individual’s subjectively felt and interpreted experience is the only reality.
- The person’s experience of “self” is important in the formation of personality.
- The “self” develops through our interaction with others.
Rogers Self Theory

When the way we actually are and our self-concept, our ideal self, are the same (congruence) the person is self-actualized.

When the way we actually are and our self-concept, our ideal self, are different the person experiences confusion, tension and maladaptive behavior (incongruence).

We will grow up congruent if we are accepted, prized and loved for what we are (unconditional positive regard).
Parental Characteristics which foster Healthy Self-structure Formulation

- Ability to accept the child’s feelings and strivings.
- Ability to accept our own feelings that certain of the child’s behaviors are undesirable.
- Communication of acceptance of the child as a person.
- Avoid conditions of worth
Rogers Self Theory

If we develop incongruence the therapist can facilitate congruence if six conditions are met.
Open, authentic, communication in which the way I present myself to the world matches what I think and feel at a deeper level. Rogers writes, "I have found, in my relations with persons, that in the long run it does not help to pretend to be something I am not."
Moving Towards Congruence

Real Self

Self-Concept

Ideal Self
His Therapeutic Approach

Nondirective," "client-centered," and "person-centered." are the terms Rogers used at different points in his career, for his method. This method involves removing obstacles so the client can move forward, freeing him or her for normal growth and development. It emphasizes being fully present with the client and helping the latter truly feel his or her own feelings, desires, etc.. Being "nondirective" lets the client deal with what he or she considers important, at his or her own pace.
The Six Conditions Necessary for Personality Change

- Two persons are in psychological contact.
- The first person, the client, is in a state of incongruence.
- The second person, or therapist, is congruent.
- The therapist experiences unconditional positive regard for the client.
The Six Conditions Necessary for Personality Change...

- The therapist experiences an emphatic understanding of the client’s internal frame of reference and endeavors to communicate this experience to the client.
- The communication to the client of the therapist’s empathic understanding and unconditional positive regard must be minimally achieved.
Rogers' clients tend to move away from facades, away from "oughts," and away from pleasing others as a goal in itself. Then tend to move toward being real, toward self-direction, and toward positively valuing oneself and one's own feelings. Then learn to prefer the excitement of being a process to being something fixed and static. They come to value an openness to inner and outer experiences, sensitivity-to and acceptance-of others as they are, and develop greater ability achieve close relationships.
Characteristics of Psychological Health

- Primary characteristics
  - Openness to experience
  - Ability to live in an existential fashion
  - Trust in one’s own organism

- Secondary characteristics
  - Unafraid of one’s own feelings
  - Not determined
  - Creative
Other Characteristics

Transparency involves expressing your deep feelings, as your feelings rather than as facts about another, revealing yourself as a person, real and imperfect as You are, in your relationship with another.
Other Characteristics

Unconditional positive regard. To give a person your full, caring attention without judging or evaluating them. "It is a kind of liking which has strength, and which is not demanding."
Other Characteristics

What is most personal is most general. The most private, personal feelings are often those which, if shared, would speak to others most directly.
Other Characteristics

Willingness for another to be separate: Allowing others to have different beliefs, feelings, values, and goals than you do.