

Film Ordinary People with Person-Centered Therapy Applied

Feng Zhu

Alliance University

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George James Ramos

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The person-centered theory (PCT) is a theoretical approach that emphasizes the importance of understanding and accepting each individual for who they are and working to support their unique journey towards self-actualization. The central premise of this theory is that people have a natural inclination towards growth and self-actualization and that this can be facilitated through a supportive and non-judgmental therapeutic relationship.

According to person-centered theory, mental disorders are not seen as pathological deviations from normal behavior but rather as symptoms of unmet needs and blocked growth. This approach emphasizes the importance of the therapeutic relationship in facilitating growth and change. PCT seeks to create a supportive environment where individuals can explore their thoughts and feelings, as well as develop greater self-awareness and understanding. The three main therapist attributes that can create a growth-promoting climate for clients are therapist congruence, unconditional positive regard, and accurate empathic understanding.

When viewed through person-centered theory, Conrad struggled to find a sense of self and fulfillment during overwhelming challenges. His behavior reflected his inadequacy and struggles to find his path in life after his brother Buck's death. For example, his sense of disconnection from others could be seen as an expression of his unmet needs for acceptance and validation.

As a person-centered therapist treating Conrad, I would respond to his self-report of how he viewed himself and the world around him in the following ways. I would utilize two critical methods to help him achieve his self-actualization: accurate empathic understanding and immediacy. I would provide him with a safe space to express and explore the feelings around the loss of Buck and his disconnection from others. I would put myself into his shoes and allow

myself to react more actively when counseling him. Conrad's parents hid their feelings, chose not to discuss Buck's death, and hoped Conrad just be a normal kid. However, I would do the opposite. I would like to use accurate empathic understanding and immediacy methods to let him know that people can sense his feelings and vividly respond to him. This person-to-person relationship is the fundament of the therapeutic process.

Person-centered therapy can provide a supportive environment for Conrad in order for him to share his experiences and grow through challenges. By reaching out to Dr. Burger for help, Conrad has demonstrated his willingness and capacity for change and self-direction, which aligns with the person-centered therapy belief that clients have the ability to identify the sources of their distress. Through therapy sessions, Conrad will have the opportunity to delve deeper into his thoughts and emotions and become more attuned to his internal cues, rather than relying solely on external validation. This can lead to a stronger sense of self-awareness and more remarkable personal growth.

References

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