

Ordinary People: Person-Centered Theory

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Person-centered therapy is the theory first authored by Carl Rodgers. Rodgers felt that all humans live to obtain self-actualization. Humans make themselves fit into the reality that we perceive. This theory assumes that the client can understand his or her own distress and can direct themselves and is capable of constructive personal change. Change happens if the therapist makes contact with the client while facing anxiety. The client must feel that the therapist is genuine, accepting, and understanding for the therapeutic relationship to be successful. Rogers proposes that the attitude of the therapist is of utmost importance.

Rodgers also respected that no one knows the client better than the client. The goals of therapy are to develop a way to self-evaluate, become more willing to experience new things, trust oneself, and continue to grow. The client establishes goals and values. In this modality, the therapist is more transparent and more involved in the therapeutic relationship. The therapist must be flexible in accommodating the most effective methods with the client.

According to this theory, Conrad desires to be beyond his turmoil regarding the loss of his brother but is struggling. He can get to a place of wellness. He already has what it takes to think this through. He would do best if he engages in wanting to know himself more profoundly and achieve self-actualization.

Particularly when Conrad is in crisis regarding the loss of his friend Karen, as Dr. Berger, I would attempt to meet him where he is. I would reinforce that he is cared for and that his feelings are important by empathetically listening to what he is saying in the hopes of validating his feelings. I could also use motivational interviewing to guide him toward thinking more deeply about what he is experiencing. Since he previously attempted suicide, I may want him to identify his own feelings and use MI to see if we can change the thoughts that brought him to the same place Karen found herself.

I think this approach would be helpful because it provides a safe and non-judgmental place for Conrad to process his feelings. It is evident that though he craves it he does not find that space

in his home. It also shows would show positive regard for Conrad which he does not seem to be able to get from his mother.

References

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