

**BASIC COUNSELLING SKILLS
BUDDHIST COLLEGE OF SINGAPORE —
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LESSONS TOGETHER



| Week | Topic | Sub-Topics |
|------|-----------------------------------|---|
| 8 | Person-Centred (PCT) perspectives | Humanistic & Existential School of Psychology Key beliefs of Person Centred approach |
| 9 | Person-Centred (PCT) perspectives | Six conditions for personality change. Criticism of PCT |
| 10 | Application - PCT | Case Study / Video |
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CHARACTERISTICS OF PERSON CENTERED THERAPY

1. Focus is on the client and not the counsellor

Person Centered Therapy is the turning point of giving the client power of himself/herself. Before the humanistic movement, counsellors are considered the experts and all the 'patients' have to do is to listen to their advices. Person Centered Therapy departed from the model by giving more power and respect to the client (not patient). Client as the experts of their lives.

Focusing on the client also means that in Person Centered Therapy, the counsellor does most of the listening while the client does more of the talking.

2. Non-Directional

Being non-directional means that the counsellor does not intervene much in directing and focusing the client's sharing. The counsellor delivers less skills of influence and allows the client to express themselves and be themselves.

The non-directional nature of Person-Centered Therapy is known to be one of its weaknesses. This is because in our society today, we demand a counselling record and a counselling plan.



CHARACTERISTICS OF PERSON CENTERED THERAPY

3. Permissive

Person Centered Therapy allows the client to say what they want and express all they want. The counsellor in this field does not wish to frustrate or even judge the client for being who they are. We respect our clients the way we want others to respect us.

4. Reflective

Relating to the Microskills of counselling, Person Centered Therapy acts like a mirror that will help the client gain more awareness to their lives and experiences. To be reflective is to be empathic, non-judgmental, and at the same time conducive for the client's learning.

5. Experiential

In Person Centered Therapy, the client ends up narrating their experiences and at the same time re-living them in their minds. The counsellors job is to assist their clients in their journey to these fearful and sensitive moments in their lives and to encourage them to accept themselves no matter what.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE PERSONALITY

The Self and The Organism

The **Self** – The differentiated portion of the organism's experiences that are 'owned' or 'symbolized' by the person.

The self is the collection of conscious experiences of the person (the organism). By conscious experience, we mean that not all of the environmental stimuli are experienced or 'owned' by the person. The Self chooses what experiences to accept and what experiences not to accept.

The **Organism** refers to the aspect of the person that experiences the phenomenal field – these are the sum total of all experiences, conscious or unconscious. The organism (or the person) is the sum total of the person's component. It is the main component that experiences the whole of the environment.

The main concern in Person Centered Therapy is how the organism communicates with The Self. With this the question of congruence arise: are the experiences owned (symbolized) by the self the same as the actual experiences of the organism?

CONGRUENCE AND INCONGRUENCE

Congruence of the Self and the Ideal Self

1. A congruence of the Self and the Ideal Self shows consistency in a how a person sees himself or herself and their Ideal Self (what they think they should be).

For example a person wants to become a good mother and is actually perceived by the self that she is a good mother. Incongruence occurs when the person fantasizes about being a good mother but in real like she condemns herself for not spending enough time with her children.



CONGRUENCE AND INCONGRUENCE

2. Congruence in these aspects will yield a sense of satisfaction and pride.

For people with congruent personalities (minimal inconsistencies), they will experience a sense of ease and happiness. These people, as we will see later on, are the ones who cope effectively with life and are characterized as healthy people. Congruence of the personality is one of the goals of Person Centered Therapy.



CONGRUENCE AND INCONGRUENCE

3. Incongruence occurs when the perception of the Self is inconsistent with the Ideal Self and this will lead to frustration and anxiety.

People become frustrated when the effects of the incongruence between what they want and what they are (or what they have) become prominent in their field of experience. Such people who plans: “I should be happily married at 25 years old” but is now currently 45 years of age will develop negative emotions of frustration and even depression.



CONGRUENCE OF THE SELF AND THE ORGANISM

1. A congruence between the self and the organism will show that the person readily accepts his/her own experiences without much defenses.

The organism experiences the real environment while the self draws in what it wants to own. Congruence, in this sense, is about the self owning as much real experience the organism is experiencing. The more real experiences the self symbolizes, the more congruent the self and the organism is.

CONGRUENCE OF THE SELF AND THE ORGANISM

2. An incongruence occurs when the Self denies a huge portion of organismic experiences.

Incongruence occurs because of denial. Here the person accepts only portions of organismic experiences, not the whole thing. This occurs because the self cannot accept other parts of organismic experiences.

This occurs because of the anxiety provoking experiences of the organism. The person chooses to 'disown' certain experiences he/she went through (denial).

Another term for this process coined by Carl Rogers is called Subception. Subception also occurs when unsymbolized experiences affect the person's functioning beyond the level of awareness.



CONGRUENCE OF THE SELF AND THE ORGANISM

3. Symbolized and Unsymbolized experiences.

The Organism contains unsymbolized experiences. These are raw experiences that are not owned or processed by the person's self. They exist as pure emotions.

These are also known as real experiences of the organism. Only a part of them will reach its way to the person's conscious mind (the self).

Experiences that are brought up to consciousness are termed Symbolized Experiences. These are experiences of the organism that are owned by the self. Symbolized experiences are those organismic experiences that are acceptable to the person.

When symbolized experiences deviate from unsymbolized experiences, incongruence occurs. Imagine a house wife abused by her husband. Her organism is experiencing physical pain, emotional damages, and all sorts of negative painful experiences. However, her Self is experiencing everything as "my husband really loves me". This is a model of incongruence held by abused wives; reality presents them a painful experience, but their mind accepts them differently. Their Self simply cannot see what really is. They are suffering from incongruence.



THE DEVELOPMENT OF ABNORMAL BEHAVIOURS

1. Unconditional Positive Regard is simply Unconditional Love and Acceptance from the people around us.
2. Unconditional Positive Regard or U.P.R. is a basic need of man.

All human beings want is to be their real selves and be loved for it. We don't want to be bothered about self-improvement or striving to be better or even comparing and competing with others. Biological theories would state: organisms simply want to maintain their state of homeostasis. So, as children, as adolescents and adults, as human beings, all we want is for our real selves to come out; the problem with society today is that our real selves are not usually accepted by others.

3. It is impossible to obtain high doses of U.P.R. in our society today.

The saying goes: "there is no such thing as a free meal." Not to be negative and pessimistic about our world today, but society is built in a way that one has to work in order to gain what they want. This is how we were raised as human beings and this is what we will impart to our children in the future (unless a huge structural change happens in society).

THE 7 CHARACTERISTICS OF THE FULLY FUNCTIONING PERSON

1. **Openness to experience**

Less defenses towards everyday experiences

Acceptance of reality (Less denial of experiences)

They see what really is and not see what they want to see

2. **Living each moment to the fullest**

Spontaneity – these people are not restricted to schedules and structure.

They can act according to their situations without guilt.

To enjoy what they have for the moment

Not living in the past or in hopes of the future. They are happy now.



THE 7 CHARACTERISTICS OF THE FULLY FUNCTIONING PERSON

3. **Organismic trust**

Trust in their own judgment

Trust in their own decisions

Trust in their own self identity

They don't need people to tell them who they are

4. **Freedom of choice**

The person doesn't act to please anyone.

Act out of their own free-will, simply because they like it.

Claim responsibility for their actions.



THE 7 CHARACTERISTICS OF THE FULLY FUNCTIONING PERSON

5. **Creativity**

Free to be creative

Free to express themselves.

Have no need to conform to others.

6. **Constructiveness**

Their behaviours are more often than not channeled for good.

Destructive needs (aggression instinct of Freud) are put in check and are in complete control of the fully functioning person.

7. **Rich full life**

Life experienced in a wide range of emotions.

Excitement and Happiness

Sadness and Anger

Positive and negative sides of life are experienced.





THERAPEUTIC TOOLS : UNCONDITIONAL POSITIVE REGARD

1. Unconditional Positive Regard is the main tool used in Person Centered Therapy. UPR is the provision of unconditional love and acceptance from the counsellor to the client.

2. Unconditional Positive Regard in the counselling session lessens the experienced condition of worth of the clients.

Conditions of worth always send the message the one is not good enough. Unconditional Positive Regard conveys to the client: “you are beautiful for who you are and for who you are not.”

3. Unconditional Positive Regard encourages the client to reveal their true self.

When clients believe that the counsellor is not a person who will judge or criticize them, the clients will in turn share their true self to their counsellors. This emergence of the true self brings more unsymbolized experiences closer to the self yielding less incongruence and allowing the person to have a more integrated personality (not a personality full of denial).

EMPATHIC LISTENING

1. Empathic listening is all about listening to the client's stories and at the same time genuinely understanding their feelings and experiences without judging the clients.
2. Empathic listening is one way of delivering unconditional positive regard to the clients.
 - 2(i). It naturally conveys to the clients that they are being listened to and that they are understood by the counsellor.
 - 2(ii). Clients feel accepted and they feel loved.
3. Empathic listening is one of the core skills of general counselling.
 - 3(i). It conveys basic respect to the client and allows the client to share more about themselves.
 - 3(ii). Empathic listening prevents the counsellor from going out of their boundaries by giving advices, bombarding the client with sermons, and throwing judgmental words to the client.
4. Empathic listening also contributes to data gathering.
 - 4(i). While entering into the client's field of experiences, counsellors are also trained to take down and record important information of the client's experiences for future use.



SELF-ACTUALIZING DRIVE

A photograph of a basketball hoop and net against a clear blue sky. The hoop is orange, and the net is white with green trim. The background is a solid blue color.

1. The Self-Actualizing Drive is a natural force within human beings that drives us to reach their fullest potential.
2. It motivates us to improve ourselves and become better than who we are now.
3. The Self-Actualizing Drive is heavily connected to our meaning system and our drives push us towards the direction of our life's meaning.
4. Any obstacle that will slow us down or even put an abrupt stop to our drive for self-actualization will be experienced as frustration and anxiety.
5. Our job as counsellors is to re-awaken our client's frustrated drives and to motivate them into reaching their goals.

We are here to take advantage of our clients' strengths and use it to help them get back at their feet and become the fully functioning human being they were once were.

GENUINENESS

1. Showing our true selves to our clients.
 - 1(i). Counsellors do not carry a façade of self-righteousness towards their clients.
 - 1(ii). Counsellors are honest about their humanity and are not ashamed of who they really are. Counsellors are real people with real life experiences which makes us qualified to understand and to empathize with our clients.
 - 1(iii). Counsellors, although professionals, do not have a split personality towards their clients. Who we are in the counselling session is also who we are outside the counselling session.



GENUINENESS

2. Clients appreciate the counsellor's honesty.
 - 2(i). The more they see our honest human side, the less ashamed and critical they will be of themselves.
 - 2(ii). This is another form of Unconditional Positive Regard.
3. Clients are disillusioned with counsellors who are not honest with themselves.
 - 3(i). Incongruence between counsellor-client relationships is as damaging as incongruence within the client's personality.
 - 3(ii). Clients will end up losing their trust to the counsellor.



LIMITATIONS OF THE HUMANISTIC APPROACH

- May not be suitable for clients with deeply repressed traumas and conflicts.
- Less effective for people with depression, addiction, phobias or eating disorders.
- Clients with repetitive thoughts and obsessions will probably gain more from Cognitive-Behaviour Approach.
- Cultural difference may also affect how one perceives a person-centred counsellor. People who value advice or more directive forms of intervention may sometimes view person-centred counsellors as passive and lacking in initiative.



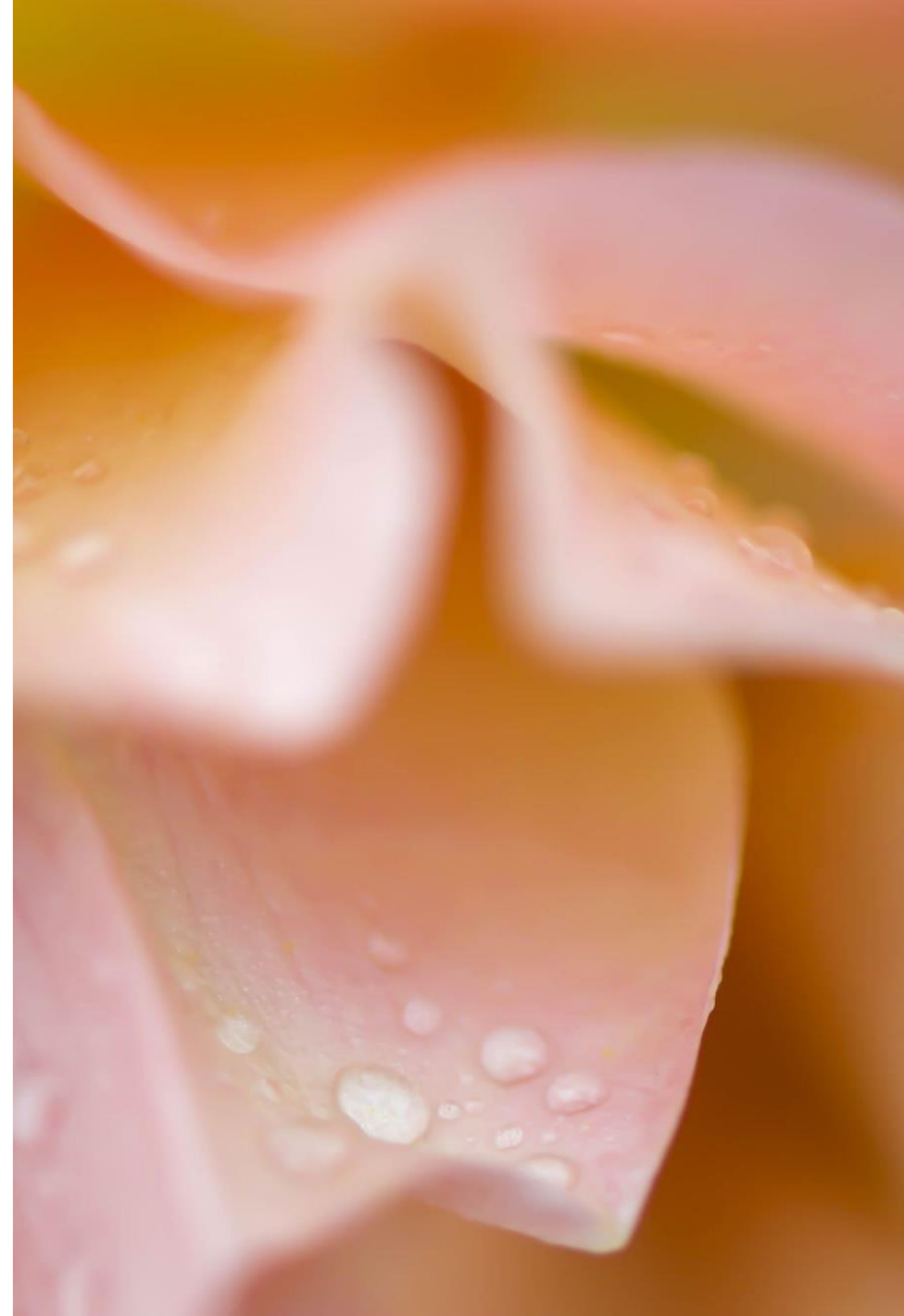
STRENGTHS OF PERSON CENTERED THERAPY

1. Humanistic direction to counselling

Person Centered Therapy gave rise to the movement of giving respect to the clients. All other approaches (apart from the humanistic movement) assume that the counsellor/therapist is a lot more competent than the client. Humanists don't believe in controlling the situation using authority. Humanists simply gain their client's trust and loyalty.

2. Versatility of its application and Effectivity

A strength of this therapy is that it has been tested and used effectively in a wide variety of cultures. Regardless of the location (country) or client factors (gender, etc.), Person Centered Therapy has been proven to work.



STRENGTHS OF PERSON CENTERED THERAPY

3. Simplicity

The tools and methods are simple. People can start practicing or using Person Centered Therapy as early as day 1 after hearing about it. It requires no skill or talent, just a genuine want to help others.

4. Foundational theory of counselling

Today, no matter what fancy name the therapies are calling themselves, it will utilize the philosophies of Person Centered Therapy. These are the basic guidelines in today's counselling: respecting the client, forming a trusting relationship with the client, and listening. These are all founded within the humanistic background of Person Centered Therapy.



THANK YOU

Please contact me if you have any questions:

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THANK YOU