PYSC 333
Psychology of Personality

Session 5– Humanistic Theory of Personality-
Part 2

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2015/2016 – 2016/2017
Session Overview

- Oŷe ḞoŶ Dent ḞeŶtral to Rogers theorLJ is the ḞoŶ Dent of Self. Self-DoŶ Dent is iŶdi|iduals suďjeĐti|e perĐeptioŶ of ho theLJ are and what they are like
- His theory focuses on the self, distinguishing between the real self and the ideal self. A serious discrepancy between the two leads to psychological problems
- Rogers emphasised the role of interaction between the iŶdi|idual aŶd others iŶ shapiŶg the iŶdi|idual ųs personality
- Rogers also talked about factors that contribute to personality adjustment
- This sessioŶ disĐusses Rogers theorLJ aŶd ho|| he edžplaiŶs personality development
Session Goals and Objectives

At the end of this session, you should be able to

• Outline the assumptions of Rogers' theory
• Explain Rogers' view of self-concept
• Describe the role of positive regard and conditions of worth in personality development
• Outline the conditions essential for effective therapy
Session Outline

The key topics to be covered in the session are as follows:

• Carl Rogers
• Development of Self
• Personality development
• Nature of personality adjustment
Reading List

- Carducci, B. J. (2009). *The Psychology of personality* (2nd ed.). Chichester: John Riley & Sons Ltd (Ch 6)
Topic One

CARL ROGERS- 1902-1987
Carl Rogers 1902-1987

- Emphasizes that a person’s feelings and behaviour are determined by how he/she perceives and interprets event (Carducci, 2009)

- The individual is responsible for his/her own behaviour
According to him, individuals are motivated by an inborn tendency to actualize, maintain and enhance themselves—referred to as actualization tendency.

A person is therefore motivated to develop personal attributes and capabilities which will increase his/her sense of self autonomy.
• Every individual is motivated in their own unique way to maximize personal growth and self-enhancement (Carducci, 2009)

• Rogers believed that the unique way an individual viewed events or experience (experiences) was what was important and not the nature of the event

• Called subjective experience- E.g. how one reacts to the loss of his/her job
Rogers- Basic Assumptions

- Rogers emphasized “the here and now” of a person’s experiences
- A mechanism called the *organismic valuing process* guided the actualization tendency
- This process helped the individual to determine which experiences foster or hinder the actualization tendency
Topic Two

SELF-CONCEPT- DEVELOPMENT OF SELF
Self-Concept- Development of Self

- A person’s unique sense of self does not happen suddenly.
- As an infant’s social encounters and interpretation of life’s events widen, one part of their experience becomes differentiated from the rest.
- This separate part defined by the words I, me and myself is the self or self-concept.
• The concept of “self” is central to Rogers’ theory of personality

• Self-concept is our subjective perception of who we are and what we are like

• We have a subjective view of life but our view of our personal self is what is most important to our personality (Lahey, 2001)
Self-Concept- Development of Self

- Rogers distinguishes-
  - The *self* - “the person you think you are” and
  - The ideal self – “the person you wish to be”
- E.g. I see myself as a nice person, but I wish I could be less selfish
Excessive discrepancies between the self and the ideal-self result in psychological problems

A slight discrepancy is okay but if the ideal self is unrealistic and can never be reached

The individual feels like a failure
Topic Three

PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT
Personality development

- Relationship with others is important in personality development.

- As the self emerges, infants develop a need for positive regard which is universal and persistent.

- The basic desire each individual has for receiving acceptance, love, warmth, sympathy, respect of others, approval from others such as from the mother during infancy etc.
The infant’s behaviour is guided by how much love and affection he/she receives.

Development of the self-concept and actualization tendency will be hampered if a mother does not offer positive regard.
Personality development

- As a person develops and *access* a sense of self, he/she wants others to also accept this self as well

- Disapproval of behaviour from parents is seen as disapproval of the developing self (Schultz & Schultz, 2005)
Personality development

• This is why Rogers claimed it is the child's behaviour and not the child that should be criticized

• This could generate feelings of low self-worth, which can affect psychological well-being and can lead to maladjustment
When this disapproval is consistent, an infant may cease to strive for actualization and development.

Instead, they will act in ways that will bring positive regard from others.

Adults also express the need for positive regard by e.g. putting up behaviours that earn approval and respect from others etc.
Positive regard can take two forms:

1. **Unconditional positive regard**

Rogers believed that positive regards should have no strings attached

- Unconditional positive regard is accepting people for who they are and not what others like them to be
• E.g. if a child does something wrong, a parent can combine correction with unconditional positive regard.

• “You have done something bad, you are not bad. I still love you, don’t do this again”

• Rather than “you are bad, because of what you have done I will not show you love” (Larsen & Buss, 2008)
Personality development

• Unconditional positive regard *mean* (means) children accept their experiences rather than deny them

• They begin to take on the characteristics of a *fully functioning person* and begin to actualize (Larsen & Buss, 2008)
2. Conditional positive regard

When positive regard is earned by meeting certain conditions

Limitations are placed on the regard people give to others
Personality development

- E.g. when a parent says “if you want my approval, then you have to make A’s in your exams”
- or “if you don’t stop misbehaving, I won’t love you”
- This parent is imposing conditions of acceptance
Personality development

- Infants with conditional positive regard, may have their sense of \textit{self} being defined by others
- With time, they may lose touch with their desire and wants
- Self-actualizing and development is affected as an individual moves away from the ideals of a fully functioning person
Personality development

- In adulthood, they are still concerned with what others think of them.
- They work mainly for others’ approval and not out of their sense of self-direction.
- They become dependent on others for positive regards and make everyone happy except themselves.
Personality development

Conditions of worth

- Requirements that parents or others set forth for earning their positive regard
- Rogers (1959) felt conditions of worth can threaten one's effort towards self-actualizing
Interpreting feedback from significant others as approval or disapproval refines a person’s self-concept

He/she internalizes the attitude of other people in forming the self-concept (Schultz & Schultz, 2005)
Need for Positive Self-regard

• An individual’s desire to accept his/her sense of self- “this is who I am and this is what I am like”

• E.g.- I am a brilliant student who does not always make straight ‘As’.

• From this, a person develops self-acceptance and a unique identity (Carducci, 2009)
Topic Four

NATURE OF PERSONALITY
ADJUSTMENT
Nature of personality adjustment

Congruence and Incongruence

• Experiences that match one’s self-concept are symbolized and they contribute to gradual changes in the self (Coon, 2001)

• A match between how a person feels (thinks, act) about something and how these feelings are related to the sense of self, means a state of congruence (Rogers, 1959)
Nature of personality adjustment

- If one’s self-concept does not match his/her way of acting, thinking and feeling, there is *incongruence*.

- A man who perceives himself as a faithful husband has sexual feelings towards a co-worker, this can create incongruence.

- A person believes that he loves all humanity, but meets someone he has hatred against.
Nature of personality adjustment

- Incongruence can also arise from a discrepancy between the self and the ideal self.
- Setting goals and ideal standards that are difficult or perhaps impossible to achieve can create incongruence.
Nature of personality adjustment

• Experiences which are incongruent with our self-concept can become threatening and manifests as anxiety

• The individual is then motivated to reduce this anxiety to bring the sense of self together (Rogers, 1959)
Nature of personality adjustment

• When an individual is free and open to experience, it is more likely that he/she will maintain congruence within the self-concept (Carducci, 2009)

• According to Rogers (1951, 1961, 1964), a person who is constantly experiencing a high degree of congruence is a fully functioning person
Nature of personality adjustment

- This *fully functioning person*
- 1. Exhibits an awareness of all experiences
- 2. Lives fully and richly in each moment (here & now)
- 3. Trusts in themselves
- 4. Feels the freedom to make choices without inhibitions
- 5. Is creative and live (lives) constructively
- 6. Accepts that he/she may face difficulties
Nature of personality adjustment

• A fully functioning person has a high degree of mental health and personality adjustment
• Psychologically healthy and perceives him/herself, others and situations as they are
• Open to new experiences because nothing threatens their self-concept
• They feel worthy under all conditions, they develop all facets of the self (Carducci, 2009)
Nature of personality adjustment

• Consistent incongruence results in a degree of maladjustment
• Continually receiving conditional positive regard, results in a self that has conditions of worth attached to it
• Experiential freedom is limited and self-actualizing process is hinder (hindered)
Nature of personality adjustment

- The individual begins to experience anxiety and tries to cope by engaging in defensive behaviours.
- When the anxiety is too great, the person becomes disorganised.
- When disorganization becomes overwhelming the individual is motivated to seek psychotherapy to regain congruence and positive self-regard.
Person-Centered Therapy

- Emphasises therapeutic relationship
- **Condition (Conditions)** that are necessary for change are
  - Empathy
  - Congruence/ Genuineness
  - Unconditional Positive Regard
END OF SESSION 5 PART 2
• Carducci, B. J. (2009). *The Psychology of personality* (2nd ed.). Chichester: John Riley & Sons Ltd