

# PYSC 333

# Psychology of Personality

Session 5– Humanistic Theory of Personality-  
Part 2

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# Session Overview

- One of the central to Rogers' theory is the concept of the Self. Self-concept is an individual's subjective perception of who they 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 individual and others in shaping the individual's personality
- Rogers also talked about factors that contribute to personality adjustment
- This session discusses Rogers' theory and how he explains 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 Wiley & Sons Ltd (Ch 6)
- Larsen, R. J., & Buss, D. M. (2008). *Personality psychology: Domain of knowledge about human nature* (3rd ed.). New York: McGraw Hill. (Ch 11)
- Schultz, D. P., & Schultz, S. E. (2005). *Theories of personality*. Belmont: Wadsworth. (Ch 12 )

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

# Carl Rogers 1902-1987

- 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



# Carl Rogers 1902-1987

- 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

# Self-Concept- Development of Self

- 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

# Self-Concept- Development of Self

- 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.

# Personality development

- 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

# Personality development

- 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.

# Personality development

- 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

# Personality development

- 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)



# Personality development

- 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 *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 ones effort towards self-actualizing

# Personality development

- 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)

# Personality development

## 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

# References

- Carducci, B. J. (2009). *The Psychology of personality* (2nd ed.). Chichester: John Wiley & Sons Ltd
- Coon, D. (2001). *Introduction To Psychology; Gateways To Mind And Behaviour*. California: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning.
- Lahey, B. B. (2001). *Essentials of Psychology*. (1<sup>st</sup> ed.). McGraw Hill
- Larsen, R. J., & Buss, D. M. (2008). *Personality psychology: Domain of knowledge about human nature* (3rd ed.). New York: McGraw Hill.
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