

Counselling Theory Essay

Counselling has long been used in helping people overcome issues, change their thoughts, behaviours, and live a happier life. This essay is going to discuss and compare three counselling Theories, identifying any similarities, and differences among them. The three theories are, The Person-centred Theory, Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT), and the Psychodynamic approach. Finally this essay will be analysing the purpose of the British Association of Counsellors and Psychotherapists (BACP), also, its value and purpose within counselling practice.

The person-centred theory, also known as client centred therapy, was created by Carl Rogers. Carl Rogers argued that counselling sessions should be client lead. Carl Rogers believed that people are honest, smart, and have the ability to understand themselves, enabling them to solve their own problems and direct their own growth (Yao and Kabir, 2023). While Ellis and Beck, that designed Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT), and Berne, that believed in the Psychodynamic perspective that was developed by Freud, disagreed, they argued that the counsellor was the expert and should lead the counselling sessions (Gaudio, 2008). Ellis and Beck were confident that the thinking process of an individual affects how they feel, and in turn affects their behaviour, so the counsellor needs to take the lead to help the client change their disturbed thoughts, into more rational ones. Helping them to see things in a more logical and realistic way, so that they will feel better, and ultimately change their behaviours (Chand, Kuckel and Huecker, 2023). Berne had a different theory on why he believed that therapy should be led by the counsellor, developed from Freud's strong feelings about why an individual behaves in certain ways. Freud suggested that behaviours stem from unresolved childhood experiences, that have been suppressed into one's unconscious mind, which he called the unconscious Id. For counselling to work the unconscious id needs to become conscious, so it can be accessed and addressed, enabling the client to come to terms with their repressed ideas, and conflicts (Erskine, 1991).

The basis of Freud's Psychodynamic analysis is the id, ego, and super ego. The Id is the unconscious part of a person's brain that is present from birth, that just wants instant pleaser, and gratification regardless of the consequences. The ego is the conscious part, that rationalises with the id, to gain what it wants in a socially acceptable way, then there is the super ego, this part develops in a child last. The super ego is the part that knows what is right from wrong. Bernes used Freuds ideas, and reconceptualised them to the parent, adult, and child ego status. The parent is when an individual replays what they were taut as a child, acting in a way such as their parent used to towards them. The Adult part of Bernes analysis, is the rational part, that is in the here and now, without past influences, finally, the child part is when someone has the thoughts, and feelings, that they had from childhood, and replays them out in their behaviour (Petruzzi, 2019: Erskine, 1991).

Through psychodynamic therapy and CBT, core conditions are desired. Lavik et al (2022) suggests, that for a client to remain in psychotherapy for the duration, the client and counsellor should have a therapeutic relationship. If a client does not like the counsellor or lacks confidence in the help that they will receive, this could potentially result in them quitting before they completed therapy, which normally happens in the first few sessions, so a therapeutic relationship needs to be built from the start. Josefowitz and Myran (2005) emphasises the importance of the counsellor, using unconditional positive regard during CBT. A part of CBT is to explore the client's thoughts, so as the sessions go on, more personal information will be shared from the client. For therapy to work, they must feel comfortable in disclosing their thoughts, so they must not be, or feel-judged, which will help build a therapeutic relationship. While in Person-centred therapy core conditions are necessary. The counsellor should act in a respectful, non-judgmental way to make the client feel comfortable and at ease, giving them the confidence to speak freely, and direct the process through the wisdom of their own self-healing tendencies. Carl Rogers had confidence that if conditions are right, the more likely one is able to reach their full potential (Joseph and Murphy, 2012). The three core conditions in person-centred therapy are, Congruence, Empathy, and

Unconditional positive regard, these are used to ensure a good relationship between the client and Counsellor is developed (Bozarth and Bradley, 1986). Rogers (1957) believed the Counsellor must be congruent, this means to be genuine, and real, showing an interest by being integrated into the relationship. The counsellor being his truest self and having awareness of how he feels good or bad. Secondly, unconditional positive regard, this is when the counsellor accepts the client's experiences, and feelings, no matter what they are without any judgement, so the client feels safe to speak freely. Finally, empathy is for the counsellor to see the client's world as his own, for him to be able to listen to the client's feelings, emotions, and experiences, to imagine them as if they were his, so he can understand, and relate, enabling him to help the client work through them. Rogers (1957) felt strongly that a good relationship between the client and counsellor is necessary for therapy to work.

Tang and Kreindler (2017) also, Helbig-Lang and Fehm (2004) concur that a key element of CBT is homework, which is described as specific and structured, therapeutic activities that are discussed frequently in sessions, that need to be completed in-between session. When Beck created CBT, he placed a strong emphasis on the completion of homework tasks. CBT practitioners assign a variety of homework assignments, such as self-reflective journals, symptom logs, and organised exercises like exposure and response prevention for compulsions and obsessions. Tang and Kreindler (2017) express that if homework is not completed, therapy will not have the desired outcome, therefore, the maintenance of the coping strategies are necessary for the client to have a successful outcome from therapy. Psychodynamic Therapy may also use homework and set tasks to help with therapy, but it is not seen as important as it is in CBT, so it is not always given (Stricker, 2006). Depending on the therapist and each client's individual needs, some may say that giving homework may lead to client losing focus on the primary goal of psychodynamic therapy, specifically, the process of gaining understanding, usually through reflection. Some therapists may use their own version of homework, such as having patients record their dreams, or monitor their emotional responses and social interactions over the course of the week, as they believe

that these kinds of exercises might improve rather than diminish a clients' understanding of their internal thoughts and feelings (Nelson and Castonguay, 2017). Client centred therapy disagrees with providing homework. Client centred therapy is based on building a therapeutic relationship with the client, and the client being in charge of the therapy sessions. For the councillor to hand out homework it would alter the roles and would seemingly put the councillor in charge. The councillor is not to advice, or guide the therapy only encourage the client to self-direct, so they are able to solve their own problems (Wachtel, 2007).

The length of the therapy differs with not just the client's needs, but also with the type of therapy that is undertaken. CBT is usually short-term as it teaches the client skills and methods to help with negative, unrealistic thoughts. Once the client is equipped with the knowledge that they need to overcome their disturbed thinking patterns, they can go off and apply these in the future, whenever they may need them. An individual will become aware of their inaccurate thoughts and using the methods that they have learned from CBT, they will eventually alter their thinking patterns; it will become second nature to them (Mayo Clinic, 2023). Sohal and Murphy (2022) suggest that from the results of their research on people with serious mental health issues, and those experiencing suicidal thoughts, Carl Rogers client centred therapy takes around 15-20 session to achieve a significant improvement to a client's well-being, this suggests that this therapy approach is also only needed for a short period of time. Psychodynamic therapy on the other hand can take years, as it delves deeper into a person's mind, with the goal of retrieving unconscious, unresolved issues stemming back from childhood, that may need continued support throughout an individual's lifetime (Leichsenring and Rabung (2011).

The British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) is a professional organisation in the United Kingdom (UK) for professional counsellors and psychotherapists (BACP, 2023). The BACP (2023) state that they have over 50,000 members. The purpose of the BACP is to promote a safe, ethical, and skilled practice while highlighting the importance of the counselling professions in enhancing mental

health and psychological well-being (BACP, 2023). A Professional guide and framework for professional practice is important to make sure that the highest quality of care is provided, it is a structured guide to several elements of a practitioner's profession. A professional guide and framework ensure that the service provided is safe, ethical, and effective, with continuous education to ensure up to date knowledge is applied in a professionals practice (Davis, 2014).

Ethical framework is one of the requirements that need to be complied with when being a member of the BACP. The BACP (2023) emphasis, that confidentiality is an essential part of the ethical commitment, as it is important to protect a patient's personal information. Information should not be shared with anyone that is not involved in the patients care without the consent of the patient, as people have the legal right to privacy, also this information maybe sensitive. Patients need to be informed, and agree, before their care about any breach of confidentiality that might take place due to safeguarding concerns, to protect the client or others from serious harm (BACP, 2023).

The application of the provision of Empathy differs in counselling and nursing. Williams and Stickley (2010) suggest that empathy in counselling emphasises on the importants of a real connection within the client patient relationship, whereas with nursing its more about being physically present to help with the loneliness, and isolation of the patient by being kind, and providing comfort and support. A Nurse many use physical touch such as, holding a patient's hand to provide comfort through receiving some difficult news, whilst in counselling this would be inappropriate, and may confuse the patient of the boundaries in the client patient relationship, as the counselling sessions are more intimate that a nurse's settings.

This essay provides an overview of three different counselling approaches and highlights the differences and similarities between them. The information shows that Psychodynamic Therapy and CBT are both counsellor lead, whilst person-centre therapy is all about the client leading the sessions to direct their own healing process. The

information also shows the different beliefs of the areas that need to be addressed to have a successful outcome from therapy, and the time in which is needed for the processes to reach their maximum benefits. Person-centred therapy and CBT needed for a brief time and Psychodynamic therapy being a longer process. This essay describes the three core conditions, congruence, empathy, and unconditional positive regard, emphasising their importance in each method of therapy. The BACP is a professional guide and framework for professional practice it has been analysed, explaining the importance of the work that they put in place and provide, emphasising on how confidentiality is necessary, and can only be overridden in certain circumstances that maybe placing people at risk. Finally, how empathy is applied differently in nursing and counselling is discussed, showing that its application in one environment can be perceived differently if applied in the same way in another environment.

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