

Humanistic & Rational-Emotive Therapy

by Sophia Tutorial



WHAT'S COVERED

In this lesson, we'll discuss two other approaches to psychotherapy, the theories of which were covered in previous lessons, as well as some of the details and subcategories of these approaches.

The specific areas of focus include:

1. Humanistic Therapy
2. Rogers' Four Conditions
 - a. Unconditional Positive Regard
 - b. Empathy
 - c. Authenticity
 - d. Reflection
3. Cognitive Therapy
 - a. Rational Emotive Therapy

1. Humanistic Therapy

If you recall, humanistic theory is focused on the human experience; this theory specifically looks at the human point of view. It's also focused on human potential, or what people can do, so it's very much a positive view of humans and of psychology.

Humanistic theory is centered on conscious thought, as opposed to psychodynamic theory, which is focused on unconscious thought. Therefore, **humanistic therapy** is client-centered. In contrast to psychodynamic therapy, which is very much guided by the therapist, humanistic approaches view the client as the center of the therapy, and the agent of effective change.

In other words, the clients are the ones that can actually help themselves to get better, and they set the tone and determine what is discussed in the therapy session. This is a very non-directive approach, and it's based on the insights of the patients themselves.

The therapist might simply guide the patient along, asking questions that are open-ended to help reflect what the patient might want to talk about, or any issues in the back of the patient's mind that the patient might want to bring to the front.



TERM TO KNOW

Humanistic Therapy

Style of therapy that is non-directive and focuses on the client's growth; the client has free will.

2. Rogers' Four Conditions

As we discussed in a previous lesson on humanistic theory, one of the important figures in the development of this theory was Carl Rogers.

Rogers was an American psychologist and therapist in the mid-1900s, and he laid out four conditions for effective therapy. These conditions were originally applied to Rogers' **client-centered therapy**, but they can also be applied to some other forms of therapy in general.



TERM TO KNOW

Client-Centered Therapy

Humanist therapy developed by Carl Rogers, emphasizes accepting one's true self by exploring their growth potential. Based on four core principles: empathy, authenticity, unconditional positive regard, and reflection.

2a. Unconditional Positive Regard

The first condition is **unconditional positive regard**, meaning that the therapist should have a total acceptance of the client, and shouldn't express any shock, dismay, or disapproval at anything that the client might say. The underlying belief is that the therapist thinks the client is inherently good and treats the client as such. This, in turn, leads the client to have an acceptance of him or herself, whereas previously, the client might not have thought of him or herself as being an inherently good person.

Through the unconditional positive regard on the part of the therapist, the client comes to accept his or her different faults.



TERM TO KNOW

Unconditional Positive Regard

A sense of caring that is not dependent on the client's actions; respect and caring toward the client.

2b. Empathy

The second condition is **empathy**, meaning that the therapist should try to see and feel through the client's eyes.

By having empathy, the therapist is able to understand the client on not only an intellectual level, but an emotional level as well.



TERM TO KNOW

Empathy

Feeling with someone; attempting to understand the feelings of the client.

2c. Authenticity

The third condition is **authenticity**, which goes along with empathy. Having authenticity means that the therapist is genuine and honest.

Instead of hiding behind the professional role like in some forms of therapy, or being secretive, the therapist should disclose some personal information so that the client doesn't feel like he or she is being held at arm's length.

If the client feels a sense of authenticity from the therapist, the client is more likely to build a positive relationship with that person.



TERM TO KNOW

Authenticity

Therapist must respond to the client in a genuine way

2d. Reflection

The fourth condition is **reflection**, which is a bit like the concepts we discussed in regards to client-centered therapy. The therapist doesn't try to interpret what the client says or propose advice or solutions for the client. Instead, the therapist acts as a sort of mirror, providing a reflection through the conversations with the client, allowing the client to see him or herself more clearly and to come to an understanding of his or her own thoughts and feelings.

Again, the client is supposed to be the agent of his or her own change, so the questions the therapist asks are open-ended. Asking questions such as "What do you think about that?" and turning back to client ultimately helps the client reach understanding and acceptance.



TERM TO KNOW

Reflection

Therapist does not interpret the clients' statements, but repeats them back for the client to hear and judge

3. Cognitive Therapy

The second approach to therapy we'll be discussing in this lesson is **cognitive therapy**. Like cognitive theory, cognitive therapy is a larger category under which a lot of different ideas and theories fit.

However, at its basis, cognitive therapy tries to recognize what people think, what they feel, and how they behave, as well as understand their internal mental processes. At the heart of cognitive therapy is an attempt to understand how a person perceives an event, and how that can be just as important as the event itself.



HINT

This is very much in keeping with some of the **self-help** books that you might see, which focus on the idea of

the mind's power over the body, and how you can think things into existence.

The goal of cognitive therapy is to help clients change the thinking patterns that might be leading to the troublesome emotions or behaviors that they have in their lives.



TERM TO KNOW

Cognitive Therapy

Cognitive therapy that emphasizes changing the client's internal mental processes by identifying and changing irrational beliefs

Self-Help

An approach to psychology that attempts to empower the individual to solve their own mental or behavioral problems

3a. Rational Emotive Therapy

One specific form of cognitive therapy is **rational emotive therapy**, which was developed by Albert Ellis in the 1950s.

Rational emotive therapy is very influenced by psychodynamic theory, as you'll see. This type of therapy also makes use of the ABC model, in which ABC is an acronym:

- **A**ctivating event, which leads to different thoughts and feelings
- **B**elief about the event
- **C**onsequence (emotional) of the belief about the event

The idea is to help the client realize that the problem is not A, the event itself, but rather B, the client's belief or interpretation of that event, which caused him or her to have an adverse reaction to it.

The therapist's goal in rational emotive therapy is to help the client understand the underlying irrational thought patterns and beliefs, which generally take the form of some kind of absolute (e.g., "I should do this" or "I must do this"), when reacting to this kind of event.

After helping the client understand the irrational beliefs, the therapist then aims to help the client challenge those thoughts, and realize that they aren't the ways to think about the event.

The hope is that by gaining insight into the event and the beliefs that follow, the client can recognize these patterns in irrational thought in order to avoid this type of mental loop in the future.



TERM TO KNOW

Rational Emotive Therapy

Cognitive therapy that emphasizes changing the client's internal dialogue by focusing on the ABC's (activating event, beliefs, emotional consequence)



SUMMARY

In this lesson, you learned about two more approaches to therapy: **humanistic therapy** and **cognitive**

therapy. Humanistic therapy is client-centered and was largely developed by Carl Rogers, who created **four conditions** of effective therapy: **unconditional positive regard, empathy, authenticity,** and **reflection.**

Cognitive therapy, on the other hand, focuses on people's thought patterns as the underlying cause of troubling emotions and behaviors. Developed by Albert Ellis, **rational emotive therapy** is a form of cognitive therapy that attempts to help clients identify and thus avoid irrational thought patterns by separating these thoughts and beliefs from the event that initiated them.

Good luck!

Source: Adapted from Sophia tutorial by Erick Taggart.



TERMS TO KNOW

Authenticity

Therapist must respond to the client in a genuine way.

Client-Centered Therapy

Humanist therapy developed by Carl Rogers, emphasizes accepting one's true self by exploring their growth potential. Based on four core principles: empathy, authenticity, unconditional positive regard, and reflection.

Cognitive Therapy

Cognitive therapy that emphasizes changing the client's internal mental processes by identifying and changing irrational beliefs.

Empathy

Feeling with someone; attempting to understand the feelings of the client.

Humanistic Therapy

Style of therapy that is non-directive and focuses on the client's growth; the client has free will.

Rational Emotive Therapy

Cognitive therapy that emphasizes changing the client's internal dialogue by focusing on the ABC's (activating event, beliefs, emotional consequence).

Reflection

Therapist does not interpret the clients' statements, but repeats them back for the client to hear and judge.

Self-Help

An approach to psychology that attempts to empower the individual to solve their own mental or behavioral problems.

Unconditional Positive Regard

A sense of caring that is not dependent on the client's actions; respect and caring toward the client.