

Client-centred careers practice: firm foundation or shifting sand?

The Swedish Guidance Association
Conference

Thursday 22nd October 2020 – online

Dr Barbara Bassot

Canterbury Christ Church University, UK

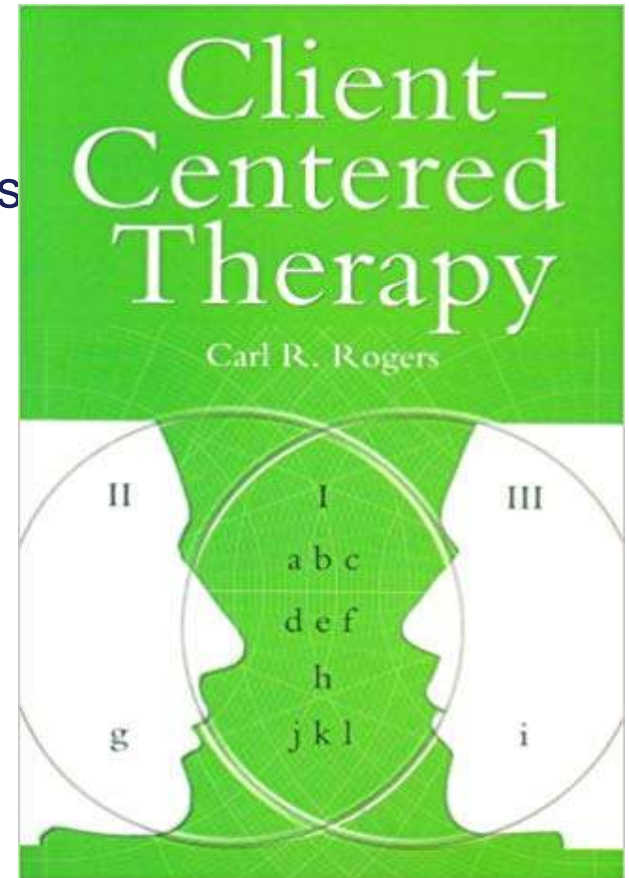


Overview

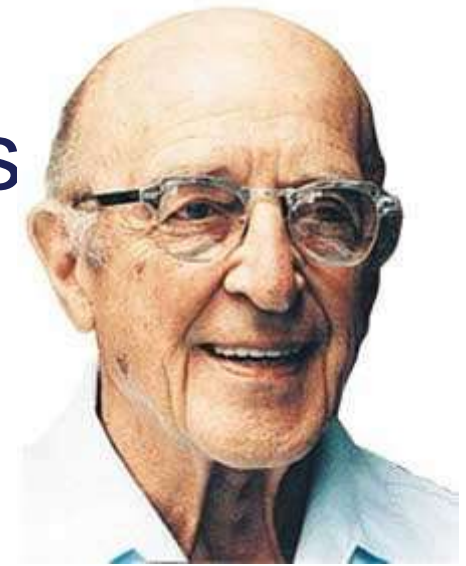
- Introduction and background
- A reminder of the client-centred approach
- Critique
- Challenges faced when applying it to career development and guidance
- The role of critical reflection
- An emerging model
- Conclusions

Background

- Career development started with trait/factor approaches in the early 1900s
- Client-centredness adopted around the middle of 20th century, alongside developmental approaches
- Now enshrined in many codes of practice around the world (including the IAEVG)



A reminder of the basics



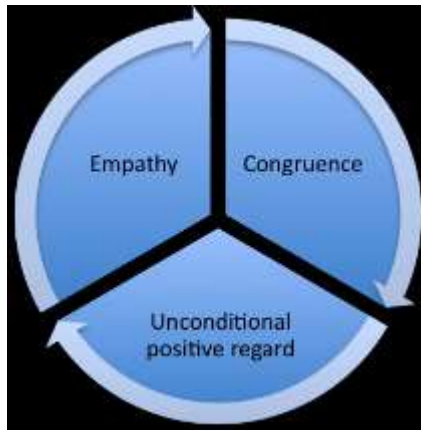
- Rooted in humanistic personal counselling and the work of Carl Rogers
- Somewhat revolutionary
- A reaction against movements in psychology at the time where the practitioner is seen as the expert (psychoanalysis and behaviourism)
- All individuals have a strong desire to self-actualise (called the actualising tendency) and has links with Maslow's work
- Non-directive
- The client is the expert on their own life

Background

- Understanding the context and Rogers' background
- Very traditional strict Christian upbringing described as 'middle-class, religiously strict and social conservative'
- Attendance at the World Student Christian Conference in Peking (now Beijing)
- Rejection of Christianity – difficulty with the concept of original sin

Central concepts

- Core conditions – empathy, unconditional positive regard (UPR) and congruence
- When these are present a practitioner with effective helping skills (e.g. active listening) can enable the client to bring about personal change through **critical reflection**



Career development practice

- Not the same as personal counselling, although there are some similarities and overlaps
- In 21st century the concept of career is seen more holistically
- Practitioners need effective counselling skills



Critique – raising some questions

- Are the core conditions possible with every client?
- Does every client have the desire to self-actualise/ does the actualising tendency exist in everyone?
- Dis



More questions - congruence

- Genuineness and being non-directive
- Practitioners have specialised knowledge e.g. of the labour market, the most successful routes into some areas of work. If a practitioner is to be genuine, can these be shared? Or does that mean they are being directive?
- Are practitioners being genuine if they don't share what they know?



More challenges

- Publicly funded outcome driven services
- ‘tight labour markets pit the client-centred ethic against the job-placement imperative’ (Sultana and Watts, 2006:43)
- Schools and colleges that want to present positive outcomes to the world outside
- Collectivist cultures where decisions are made by families and communities, not by individuals
- Opportunity centred? Employers and opportunity providers make decisions too

Clashes within professional codes of ethics

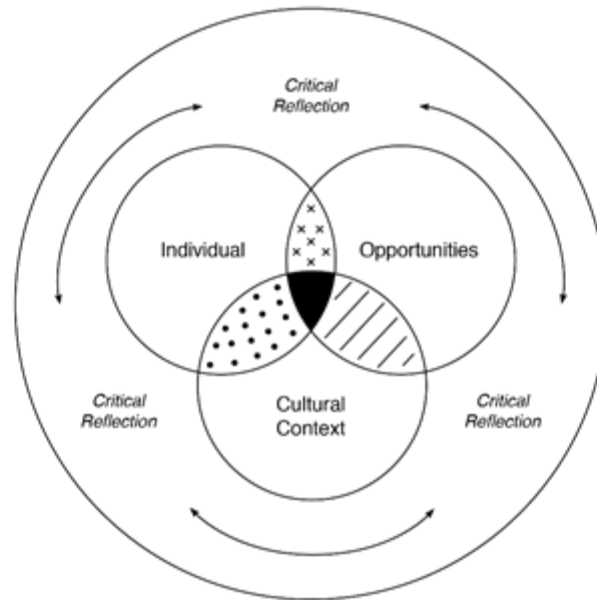
- Client-centredness and promoting equality
- IAEVG – ‘the obligation to provide equal opportunities in ...’
- Career Industry Council of Australia – ‘identify and work to overcome systemic biases that limit people’s career development’
- Career Development Institute – ‘actively promote equality’
- Can we do this and keep the client at the centre?

The role of critical reflection

- At the heart of professional practice
- A deeper kind of thinking
- A process
- Counselling skills as critical reflection enablers



An emerging model



Publication

The Oxford Handbook of Career Development



Any questions?

Thank you!