



## Carl rogers theory of unconditional positive regard

Unconditional positive regard, also known as "UPR" is associated with Carl Rogers the founder of Person-centred therapy. Unconditional positive regard in counselling describes a prizing of the individual, meaning holding no judgement towards them and accepting them fully, just as they are. This Carl Rogers UPR quote described a way of being in the relationship as: "A caring which is not possessive, which demands no personal gratification ... It involves an acceptance of and a caring for the client as a separate person, with permission for him to have his own feelings and experiences and to find his own meanings for them." (Rogers, 1967) For positive regard to be unconditional in the therapeutic relationship, the therapeutic relationship, the therapeutic relationship, the therapeutic relationship, the therapeutic relationship and experiences equally and avoid making judgements about their value or validity. Carl Rogers believed that self-acceptance is a key ingredient for therapeutic movement and growth in therapy. He elegantly captures the essence of this sentiment in this Carl Rogers, 1967) Unconditional positive regard means offering full acceptance towards clients in the therapy room. This allows an opportunity for clients to explore their feelings and experiences more fully, perhaps hearing themselves vocalise aspects of themselves which have remained hidden or denied to self for many years. Expressing difficult thoughts and feelings, which are often accompanied by a sense of shame, in an environment free from the threat of judgement and rejection can help the client to internalise the therapist's nonjudgmental attitude and to promote self-acceptance and self-love - making growth and change possible. For positive regard to be unconditional in the therapeutic relationship, the therapist must accept all of the client's feelings and experiences equally and avoid making judgements about their value or validity. Here are some of the key criticisms of unconditional positive regard: a. UPR may fall into conflict with congruence It can be argued that developing a way of being which is unconditionally accepting of the client may also be inauthentic. We all make judgments in our lives and hold internal biases; does laying those aside put the therapist in a position of incongruence? b. Challenge and UPR Modalities which favour challenge, and solution-focused techniques to promote change are less likely to see value in unconditional positive regard. Techniques such as challenging unhelpful behaviours and highlighting cognitive distortions appear to be in conflict with Rogers's ideas around accepting the client just as they are. c. Lack of empirical evidence Like a lot of humanistic theory, which is difficult to research and measure in an empirical way, unconditional positive regard comes under criticism for the lack of conclusive evidence for its efficacy. Expressing difficult thoughts and feelings ... in an environment free from the threat of judgement and rejection can help the client to internalise the therapist's non-judgemental attitude and to promote self-acceptance and self-love - making growth and change possible. 3 Tips on Unconditional Positive Regard and SMARTER Targets In order to fully accept the other, it is important that we work towards developing compassion towards ourselves. If a client brings a feeling or element of their personality which we are unable to accept in ourselves, we are much less likely to be able to offer UPR in the relationship. Personal therapy and self-care are important for nurturing our feelings and attitudes towards ourselves. Offering unconditional positive regard requires us to put our judgments aside and be alongside the client - stepping into their frame of reference. Behaviours or attitudes which the therapist might ordinarily feel compelled to judge must be viewed from the perspective of the client, in the context of their experiences, and not from the therapist's frame of reference. Being aware of our prejudices It is important to understand and acknowledge our personal prejudices and unconscious, we may not spot its presence in our interactions with our clients and may unknowingly be responding from a place of judgment. Open and non-defensive work in supervision is vitally important. Being open Enter into every therapeutic encounter with an openness and willingness to be with the client in the moment. Avoid making assumptions or predictions and check yourself if you find yourself doing so. This way we can fully receive the client, providing the conditions for growth and change. Rogers, C. R. (1967) On Becoming a Person: A Therapist's View of Psychotherapy. 2nd ed. London: Constable. This article was written for Counselling Tutor by Erin Stevens Tetra Images / Getty Images Unconditional positive regard is a term used by humanist psychologist Carl Rogers to describe a technique used in his non-directive, clientcentered therapy. According to Rogers, unconditional positive regard involves showing complete supports the client, no matter what they say or do, placing no conditions on this acceptance. That means the therapist supports the client, whether they are expressing "good" behaviors and emotions or "bad" ones. "It means caring for the client, but not in a possessive way or in such a way as simply to satisfy the therapist's own needs," explained in Rogers in a 1957 article published in the Journal of Consulting Psychology. "It means caring for the client as a separate person, with permission to have his own feelings, his own experiences." Rogers believed that it was essential for therapists to show unconditional positive regard to their clients. He also suggested that individuals who don't have this type of acceptance from people in their lives can eventually come to hold negative beliefs about themselves. "People also nurture our growth by being accepting—by offering us what Rogers called unconditional positive regard," explains David G. Meyers in his book, "Psychology: Eighth Edition in Modules." "This is an attitude that values us even knowing our failings. It is a profound relief to drop our pretenses, confess our worst feelings, and discover that we are still accepted. In a good marriage, a close family, or an intimate friendship, we are free to be spontaneous without fearing the loss of others' esteem." Rogers believed that people have a need for both self-worth and positive regard for other people. with a stronger sense of self-worth are also more confident and motivated to pursue their goals. During the early years, children hopefully learn that they are loved and accepted by their goals. During the early years, children hopefully learn that they are capable of accomplishing their goals. feelings of confidence and self-worth. Unconditional positive regard from caregivers during the early years of life can help contribute to feelings of self-worth as people age, the regard of others plays more of a role in shaping a person's self-image. Rogers believed that when people experience conditional positive regard, where approval hinges solely on the individual's actions, incongruence may occur. Incongruence happens when a person's vision of their ideal self is out of step with what they experience in real-life. Congruent individuals will have little overlap between their self-image and ideal self. Rogers also believed that receiving unconditional positive regard could help people become more congruent and achieve better psychological well-being. Is it really possible for therapists to offer unconditional positive regard to each and every client? Many suggest that the answer is no. However, as John and Rita Sommers-Flanagan note, it is possible for therapists to try to feel such regard toward their clients. They also note that such acceptance does not constitute permissiveness or an endorsement of all behaviors. Natalie Rogers, the daughter of Carl Rogers, later explained that her father believed that while any thoughts and feelings are OK, not all behaviors are acceptable. While unconditional positive regard is a cornerstone of client-centered therapy, it isn't always easy to put into practice. Imagine a situation in which a therapist is working with a sex offender. In their book, "Counseling and Psychotherapy Theories in Context and Practice," Sommers-Flanagan offers some advice to practitioners who encounter such difficult situations. Rather than focusing on the behaviors might represent. "Rogers firmly believed every person was born with the potential to develop in positive, loving ways," they suggest. "When doing person-centered therapy, you become their next chance, to be welcomed, understood, and accepted. Your acceptance may create the conditions needed for change."