

Introduction to Theories in Counseling

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What is a theory, and why bother, anyway?

There are some in the field of counseling today who believe that we should not bother with theory ~ theories, they suggest, are inadequate concepts based more on the theorists ideas rather than models truly reflective of human behavior.

- What is a theory?
 - A belief or principle that guides action or assists comprehension or judgment
 - A set of statements or principles devised to explain a group of facts or phenomena, especially one that has been repeatedly tested or is widely accepted and can be used to make predictions about natural phenomena.
 - The branch of a science or art consisting of its explanatory statements, accepted principles, and methods of analysis

Counseling is a field dedicated to assisting people adjust to life situations through the application of various psychological, empirically based means...

- Counseling can be described as a face to face relationship, having goals to help a client to learn or acquire new skills which will enable them to cope and adjust to life situations. The primary focus is to help a person reach maximum fulfillment or potential, and to become fully functioning as a person.
- Depending on the setting and the circumstances, counseling may range from problem identification, decision making and resolution to stress management and coping strategies, to conflict resolution to diagnosis and treatment of mental illness.
- Counseling is a process of helping grounded in science and the scientific method that takes place within the context of interpersonal relationship.
- Theory provides a framework for understanding human development, behavior, and change so that the counselor can understand her clients and intervene appropriately and competently.
 - Without theory, we have no basis for the actions we take with clients.

The Core Conditions of Counseling

- Rogers (1957) *The necessary and sufficient conditions of therapeutic personality change*
 - *Congruence: the match or fit between an individual's inner feelings and outer display*
 - *The congruent person is genuine, real, integrated, whole, transparent.*
 - *The noncongruent person tries to impress, plays a role, puts up a front, hides behind a facade*
 - *Unconditional Positive Regard*
 - *The counselor creates a warm atmosphere in which clients can explore, understand, and solve their own problems without risk of reprimand or being told what to do*
 - *Autonomy ~ respect of client ability to decide what's best for them*
 - *Empathic Understanding*
 - *The caring skill of temporarily laying aside our views and values and of entering into another's world without prejudice.*
 - *The active process of seeking to hear the other's thoughts, feelings, tones, and meanings as if they were our own*
