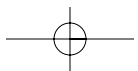
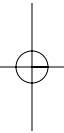
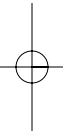
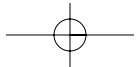
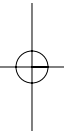
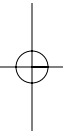


THEORY





1

INTRODUCTION: Why Working with Young People in a Person-centred Way is Different

INTRODUCING THIS CHAPTER

This chapter explores why working with children and young people is so rewarding. It will use case study material to examine the variety of ways in which we listen to young people and why the person-centred approach is so highly valued by the younger age group. The chapter will show how interest in working with children and adolescents has grown in recent years. It will introduce the reader to the work of Carl Rogers and the influence of his thinking and practice. Some of the criticisms and limitations of the person-centred approach will be identified and challenged, including those issues raised by the professional environments in which this kind of work takes place. The chapter begins with some discussion about the differences between counselling and helping and who this book is written for.

TO THE COUNSELLOR

Whether you are new to the profession or have been counselling for some time I believe that there will be much to interest you in this book. The counsellor always remains a counsellor in the making, never reaching the end of learning.

(Continued)

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(Continued)

Counselling is a unique and sometimes stressful profession and there are times when you may have questioned what you are doing and whether the person-centred approach was sufficient. I hope that this book will sustain your faith in the process. It may be that you are new to working with children and young people or are considering working with young clients. To you, I say read on, for there is little that is more rewarding.

TO THE HELPER

This book is deliberately directed at therapists and those who are not professionally trained as counsellors, but who want to work within the person-centred approach with children and young people. The approach set out here emphasises the qualities needed by the caring adult to establish warm and empathic relationships with young people, based upon acceptance and realness. There are of course differences between the role of helper and that of the professional counsellor and hopefully this book will highlight these. However, the essence of the person-centred approach remains the same. You may already have decided to pursue a qualification in counselling or may be happy working with children and young people outside of the profession. Either way, you are welcome.

WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN MIND

Many of the ideas, concepts and principles, which have helped shape the person-centred approach, have been developed with adults in mind. However, I hope to show their relevance and meaning to working with children and young people. Working with this age group (8–19) does however present us with different challenges and I hope this book will explore how these can be overcome without losing the essence of the approach.

So far, I have used the words ‘children and young people’ interchangeably. Often working therapeutically with young people is the same across the ages. However, where the age of a young person is significant in our work, I will draw attention to these differences.

WHAT THIS BOOK IS ABOUT AND HOW TO USE IT

This book is about working with children (aged 8–13) and young people (aged 14–19) in a very special way. It is about working therapeutically, using the person-centred approach, which is based on the writings, research and practice of the celebrated American counselling psychologist Carl Rogers (1902–1987), whose influence lives on in a wide variety of professions which offer psychological support to people in need. Many people have been helped in this way and have subsequently gone on to grow and develop in ways that Carl Rogers believed individuals had the potential to. However, this book has an ambitious goal in mind, that is, to apply the approach directly and specifically to counselling and supporting children and young people.

This book is meant to be read in its entirety. This is because the person-centred approach evolves with each new chapter. However, an experienced practitioner may wish to focus on specific sections of the book or use it for reference. Each chapter begins an **Introduction** which sets out an overview of the chapter, its content, and significant concepts or themes to be explored.

This book is designed for both the specialist and non-specialist and whilst the content is relevant to all readers, I have used boxes – **To the counsellor** and **To the helper** to speak to counsellors or helpers directly where there exist tensions in practitioner-related issues or where there is information or a particular perspective to share with this particular readership.

I have tried to weave together the person-centred approach and work with children and young people throughout the book, although all person-centred theory is applicable when working both with adults or younger clients. However, where I want to emphasise issues around working with younger people, I have used a number of ‘pop-up’ boxes – **With children and young people in mind**. These are designed to extend and complement the main text and draw attention to an issue of direct importance to work with children and young people. They provide relevant information, a new perspective or may simply offer an additional observation.

Finally, the chapter normally concludes with a number of **Exercises**. These can be completed alone or preferably in collaboration with others; most probably those participating on a course. I hope you find them stimulating, thought provoking and an opportunity for self-reflection and sharing thoughts, feelings and experiences with others.

WHO THIS BOOK IS FOR?

This book has set itself a difficult task, that is, to be of use and interest to both the professional counsellor and non-specialist alike. Firstly, an important point needs to be made – working in a person-centred way with children and young people is

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less concerned with knowledge, techniques and methodology and more to do with the relationship between client and counsellor or helper, that is, between the adult and child. For this reason, the approach is relevant to all adults who want to work in this way.

It is important that the practitioner who wishes to work with the young continues with their professional and personal development. However, courses and reading alone do not make a person-centred practitioner. The emphasis of the person-centred approach rests with the practitioner, as the name suggests, as a 'person'. Mearns and Thorne (1988) tell us that: "The person-centred counsellor knows that she cannot rely upon her diagnostic skill, her role as a provider of "treatment", or a sense of superiority at being regarded as an all-knowing: "expert"" (p. 22).

WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN MIND

This book is relevant to the experienced counsellor, possibly turning towards specialising in work with young people; to the counsellor in training as well as the non-specialist working in a school, in the youth justice system, in social work, health or the third sector, which includes charitable organisations, charitable trusts and funded community groups and organisations.

A refreshing perspective on the relationship between counselling and helping can be found in John McLeod's (2008) discussion around the use of counselling 'skills' by non-specialists. He argues that whilst there has been a growth in the provision of counselling by specialist counsellors and therapists, most counselling takes place outside the formal counselling room, and is carried out by professionals, where therapy is an important aspect of their work, but where they are not in a specifically counselling role. Examples include teachers, nurses, GPs, career advisers, youth and community workers, youth justice workers and within those in social care or support roles.

McLeod introduces us to the concept of the 'embedded' counselling roles, which he feels more accurately reflects the idea of using 'counselling skills' but which he argues, do not do justice to the 'complexity and reality' of this aspect of people's work. Consequently, the work of the generalist professional who attempts to work therapeutically could possibly be more challenging than that of the specialist counsellor who has the benefit of a special room set aside for a prescribed period. He provides us with an illustration of this point:

Compare this to the situation where an upset student turns up at his or her teacher's office during the morning coffee break. Many decisions need to be made around what can be done at that moment, and whether other moments can be found later in the day to follow up the crisis – and in 15 minutes time the teacher will be standing in front of a class in a teaching mode. (2008: 14–18)

McLeod's article is forceful in its recognition that, whilst much counselling takes place in the counselling setting, a lot occurs outside, and that much good work occurs 'as fulfilment of other professional roles'.

Over the years, I have worked with highly qualified and experienced counsellors. However, some of the most effective practitioners have been in the voluntary sector and other settings, who have few qualifications but who display a passion for young people and an ability to establish the kind of relationships, which are explored in the remainder of this book.

TO THE HELPER

Whilst it is wholly appropriate and I believe desirable for the non-counsellor to work in a person-centred way, it is important for the practitioner to be aware of their role and to be clear whether the relationship they have initiated is a counselling one, established by a contract with clear understandings. This is to differentiate your helping or support role; where you are essentially working within the approach, but not in the role of counsellor. Wherever possible in this book I will attempt to draw attention to these differences and tensions.

The specialist counsellor and non-specialist often share a commitment to children and young people and a belief in the person-centred approach, and in this sense, this book will hopefully speak to all.

Before continuing, it is important by way of introduction to place the book in some kind of counselling context. Because the approach owes its origins largely to the work of Carl Rogers, this would seem like a good place to begin.

THE INFLUENCE OF CARL ROGERS

WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN MIND

Whilst Carl Rogers is most often associated with adult work, we will see below how much of his early thinking evolved through his work with children who were experiencing problems in their lives. There is little, if anything in the work of Carl Rogers, that is not highly relevant and transferable to work with children and young people. Indeed, his influence upon work with children and young people has been most profound and still influences much practice today. Sometimes practitioners have identified a need to interpret and develop his ideas in creative ways and these will be examined in later chapters.

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Carl Rogers is widely known for his original thinking and radical ideas, which have had a profound impact on personality theory and the development of psychotherapy. That we should not understate the influence of Carl Rogers is articulated by Brian Thorne (1992), who knew Carl Rogers personally and whose own works have discussed and extended the person-centred way of working. He writes:

Carl Rogers enabled countless people throughout the world to be themselves with confidence. His impact has been enormous through his voluminous writings, through the school of counselling and psychotherapy which he founded and through the indirect influence of his work on many areas of professional activity where the quality of human relationships is central. (Preface: vii)

David Cohen (1997), in his biography of Carl Rogers, comments on how such a famous psychologist 'was amazed his ideas should have touched and affected so many people'. He also suggests that although 'psychologists are often cynical about the greats of their discipline' Rogers was regarded as accepting, non-judgemental, with an ability to attune to another human being and hear what they were saying as an individual. It is qualities and skills such as these, which form the essence of the person-centred approach.

Carl Rogers' own interest in children and young people relates to the early part of his career. Carl's father was a civil engineer but during his early teenage years, the family moved to a farm. Rogers studied for a degree in agriculture at the University of Wisconsin. Later his career was to move in a different direction. He started studying history, which he believed would provide a better background for eventually entering the ministry, which he felt was his calling. At this time, he was one of a small group of students from the United States who were offered an opportunity to go to Beijing for the 'World Student Christian Federation Conference' for a period of six months. It was at this time that he began to question some of the more traditional doctrine he was exposed to, and after marrying Helen Elliot they moved to New York City where he began attending the Union Theological Seminary. Rogers changed direction again, this time to studying psychology at Columbia University Teacher's College where he received his PhD in 1931.

Between 1928 and 1940, Rogers was appointed as a member of staff at the Child Study Department of The Rochester Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. These 'Rochester Years' have been explored in depth by Howard Kirschenbaum. Between 1928 and 1939, Rogers worked with problem children and their parents. Kirschenbaum writes:

And troubled children they were. Every year an average of 600–700 children, mostly lower-to lower-middle-class whites, came on average to the Society for help. They were referred by dozens of social agencies throughout the community: parents, the social worker, Children's Court, the schools, private charitable organizations, medical authorities, and the like. They represented every behaviour and personality problem imaginable: enuresis, stealing, lying, extreme sex curiosity, sex perversions, sadism toward animals or younger children, extreme withdrawal or

aggressiveness, incest, stammering, eating dirt and worms, and numerous other comparable problems. (2007: 62–3)

It is unlikely that a modern person-centred practitioner working with a child or young person would use such descriptive and often judgemental language, but it does offer the reader some insight into the complexity of the young lives Rogers found himself working with. In 1939, Rogers wrote his first of many books, *The Clinical Treatment of the Problem Child*, from which it was clear that he was forming the basis of the ‘Core Conditions’ which were to be so influential later. Rogers had begun to challenge the psychological orthodoxy and theories, which he had previously understood. Brian Thorne (1992) puts it this way:

Instead, what was required was a method of responding to the children and their parents which actually worked and proved effective in meeting their needs. In such a pressurised situation Rogers soon discovered that even some of the most elegant theories he had previously embraced failed to stand up to the test of reality. (pp. 8–9)

In developing his approach, Carl Rogers was progressively to devote much of his time to working with adults and the wider political implications of his new theories. However, in 1969 he did publish *Freedom to Learn: What Education Might Become* and in 1983, *Freedom to Learn for the 80's*; books which emphasised the role of the facilitator and the ‘relationship’ in education and which still influence learning and pedagogy today.

To the present time, there have been few attempts to apply person-centred theory, and specifically the work of Carl Rogers to work with young people. Richard Bryant-Jefferies’ (2004) book *Counselling Young People: Person-Centred Dialogues* remains an exception and explores in some depth the dialogues between young person, counsellor and supervisor and is worth a read for any practitioner working in this way. This paucity of relevant texts belies the influence of the Rogerian approach for it is unlikely that on reading a book on counselling children and young people the reader would not be able to discern his influence both in terms of theory and practice.

THE GROWTH IN COUNSELLING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

TO THE COUNSELLOR

A significant growth in the need for and delivery of therapeutic work with children and young people has increased employment opportunities, whether these be as part of an organisation or where counsellors offer their services to organisations as individuals.

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TO THE HELPER

As the mental health and psychological needs of children and young people have become more pronounced and acknowledged, it is likely that non-counsellors working within educational and helping professions will have been called upon to offer informal support as an aspect or dimension of their work.

Counselling with children and young people has been one of the growth areas in the profession, as evidenced by the substantial rise in numbers joining ‘Counselling Children and Young People’, a division of The British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy. There has also been an increase in the numbers of courses offered by colleges and universities in counselling specifically relating to work with children and adolescents.

In recent years, we have seen a growth in the ways in which adults have become involved in young people’s lives. Schools have continued to evolve sophisticated pastoral systems and the introduction of mentors into schools has been celebrated as an initiative to support young people. Education social workers, attendance officers, careers advice workers, educational psychologists, teaching assistants and behaviour support workers have become part of a growing professional children’s workforce, which aims to support the school in achieving its primary aim, that is, school achievement. Outside schools, social care workers continue to intervene in the lives of parents and children where a need has been seen, or more likely, where abuse or neglect of one kind or another has been identified. We are also seeing an expansion of mental health services for young people and Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS).

Any additional support that can be offered to young people is to be welcomed, especially at a time when organisations such as Young Minds, The Samaritans, The Mental Health Foundation and MIND are in agreement that mental health problems among the young are increasing. More specifically, the incidence of eating disorders, self-harm and suicide has been seem to be on the increase, with all the pain and heartache these bring to the young person, their families and friends.

Each of the professionals highlighted above has their own professional responsibilities and orientations. Schools have a responsibility to ensure that pupils are benefiting from the Every Child Matters agenda and in particular, are in school, safe and learning. Where a child’s behaviour is causing concern and affecting the rights of peers to learn, interventions are necessary, while in some schools, exclusion remains an option. Social workers are charged with ensuring that children are safe and this remains their stated priority. Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services workers are involved, along with psychiatrists, in the diagnosis of mental illness and offering either talk therapies or drugs, or indeed a combination of both. These professional responsibilities and an increasing emphasis on outcomes, sometimes prevent the kind of support young people in my experience, value the most.

WHY WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IS DIFFERENT

Counselling and supporting children and young people using the person-centred approach is particularly rewarding because the emphasis is on the relationship and the focus is on the young person and what they need, as defined by themselves. In some ways, professionals working with young people from other orientations have an easier task, since the process is set out and reinforced by training and procedures. Counsellors and therapists using a wide variety of approaches have clear models to work with and sometimes the dialogue is clearly set out. Counsellors working in a solution-focused way or who use cognitive-behavioural approaches are such examples. Techniques and strategies are there to be used at appropriate times. These 'advantages' have been identified by Dave Mearns (1994) who writes:

Most other approaches to counselling and therapy are much more exciting for the counsellor and perhaps also for the client with the practitioner playing a dashing role exhibiting mastery of sophisticated skills of analysis, interpretation and near mystical insight into the client's condition and the requirements for change. (p. ix)

It could be argued that counselling and supporting young people, i.e. using counselling skills and approaches, is different to working with adults because we are working with potential, with futures, with transition, with growth and becoming. However, the person-centred counsellor would argue that these ideas apply to all people, regardless of age or circumstance.

Jean Campion (1991) has explored why working with children might be different. She agrees with the assertion that person-centred counselling is 'basically the same regardless of the age of the client' (p. 1) but argues that working with children presents important challenges. She sees a 'good knowledge of the state of childhood' (p. 2) as being a necessary prerequisite for this kind of work. She also sees young people as having a greater tendency to 'take their personal circumstances for granted, and even to blame themselves when they find themselves in situations which are not their fault'. (p. 2) She also asks us to bear in mind that children are not normally 'independent beings' (p. 3) and therefore often still dependent upon parental care.

WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN MIND

The person-centred approach to counselling and helping is especially powerful in that it begins to address some of the most basic and fundamental needs of the child or young person. They have a need to connect on a very human level in a way which suggests belief in their potential and acceptance of them, for who they are; not how we would like them to be. The power of the approach is there to be experienced. When adult and child or young person connect, as two human beings, the results can be quite memorable.

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For me, the great rewards of working with children and young people in a person-centred way are fundamental. Despite all the important and valued interventions into the lives of young people in difficulty made by parents, family and professionals, it is in my experience, very rare that a young person coming to counselling has ever experienced the kind of warmth, openness, acceptance and empathy which are characteristic of the person-centred way of working. It would not be unusual in such circumstances for the young person to say to a counsellor something like: 'This is the first time I have really been listened to and really understood. I feel that you are here for me and you are not going to tell me what to do or what is best for me.' I am not suggesting here that professionals cannot be warm and caring but rather that often, pressures to achieve behavioural change predominate.

A number of brief case studies may illustrate some of the key points discussed above. These case studies and those throughout the book are drawn from my own experience of working with young people. The people identified and their stories of course do not exist in their own right but are rather an amalgam of young people's experiences and their interactions with counsellors and professionals working in a variety of settings. These contexts – schools, youth centres, social care and health – are not in themselves significant because the skills, attitudes and processes remain the same regardless of the setting in which the work takes place.

Case study: Dean

Dean, aged 19 years, had been attending a youth counselling agency for just under two years. Much of the work had centred around relationship issues; Dean had a fairly sanitised relationship with his mother and very little contact with his father. He saw himself as overweight and defined himself as ugly. Whilst he had kept some friends since his schooldays, he saw them infrequently and felt they had little in common now. He could not remember ever being in what he would say was a 'relationship' and feelings about himself were so low that it was unlikely that he would risk this fragile sense of self by seeking intimacy. Dean was not in work or full-time education.

Dean had been hospitalised on a number of occasions having attempted suicide and self-injury had become a way of life. Glass and rope had left their marks on his arms but Dean's centre of attention was his abdomen which he cut regularly and which had become quite scarred and disfigured; this was the part of his body that he hated most. Dean had felt unhappy for as long as he could remember and sessions with the counsellor often involved sharing his sense of hopelessness and despair.

As the work continued Dean started to bring in some art work, mainly drawings and sessions often revolved around these. Each week Dean would end the session with the same words:

'I don't think you are going to like me anymore'. The counsellor reflected back: 'You think I might reject you in some way?'

It took Dean six more weeks of checking out the strength of his relationship with his counsellor before he revealed how, when he was younger he had been 'touched' by his father and that he had subsequently played a 'game' with his younger cousin which involved the removal of clothes. Dean had read articles in magazines about how the abused becomes the abuser and he was now convinced that this was happening

to him. It had taken Dean many years to share his own abuse and his shame that he might too become a perpetrator. Nearly two years passed before Dean felt able to share his experiences and fears with his counsellor, building up the courage to reveal his torment. Dean told his counsellor that this was the first time he had told anybody about any of this: 'I didn't think anybody would listen. I thought they would be disgusted with me and tell me to go away and die'. The counsellor replied: 'I'm glad that you have built the courage to share these very personal things with me. It could not have been easy. If anything, I feel a little closer to you at this moment'.

Dean had gone through the whole of his schooling and had been involved with a range of psychiatric services but was only able to reveal his feelings at this time. The counsellor, working in a person-centred way had created the kind of relationship where Dean could feel accepted and understood to the point where he could trust his counsellor with his innermost fears and anxieties.

TO THE HELPER

If you met Dean in your non-specialist professional capacity, there is a great deal that you could offer him in terms of warm, empathic listening. In Dean's case, it is significant that, had he had an opportunity for this kind of help earlier in his life, appropriate support could have been offered to him, possibly at a time when he most needed it. However, as a professional using counselling skills, it is always important to be aware of the limits to your training and experience and know when to refer a child or young person for more specialised counselling. If you work within an agency or organisational setting, there will most likely be guidance on when and how to refer on.

WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN MIND

Dean is 19 years of age and unlike a younger child, he has the right to choose where he gets support from. Indeed, he may reject more formal counselling and this remains his choice.

Case study: Amrita

Amrita was in year 8 (ages 12–13) at secondary school when she was referred by her Head of House, to a school mentor. She had begun life in secondary school just where she had left off in her small junior school, that is, near the top of her

(Continued)

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(Continued)

class. SATs and early testing predicted significant success at GCSE level and beyond. More recently, Amrita's performance in class had declined. Her normal 100% attendance was punctuated by occasional unexplained absence and, unthinkable before, homework tasks were not handed in on time, and sometimes not at all.

Concerned for her well-being, the school made every effort to re-motivate her, offering rewards and encouragement for any signs that she was returning to her 'successful self'. It was whilst working with her mentor that she talked about the pressure on her to succeed, to maintain a momentum that would take her through to the end of her school life. She told her mentor:

People are not listening to me. I don't know what's wrong. If I did, I would put it right but I don't. The school is trying to help. They do care, but they are stressing me out. It's not what I need just now. I just need space and somebody to listen to me without trying to make things better. This is how I feel just now.

The mentor replied: 'It sounds as though people are trying to help you but it's only making matters worse. Right now, you just want someone to listen and understand your confusion.'

These two brief case studies illustrate how sometimes we let young people down, either because we do not recognise their pain and provide the space, opportunity and conditions for listening or where, in their enthusiasm and desire to help, the adults in a child's life fail to really listen. Well-intentioned interventions miss the mark because they represent the adult's solutions to the child's difficulties. In other words, help comes from the professional and not the child's 'frame of reference', a concept we will return to later in this book.

CRITICISMS OF THE PERSON-CENTRED APPROACH

This book has been written out of a passion for the person-centred approach and its potential for working with children and young people. However, this way of working is not without its critics. Some of these 'criticisms and rebuttals' are explored in detail in Thorne (1992). The person-centred approach is sometimes seen as lacking a strong and robust theoretical basis. It has been described as being naive and over optimistic in outlook, highly subjective and as not having the backing of evidence and research. In addition, the approach is regarded as being too slow in achieving desired outcomes.

Any visit to a quality bookshop will reveal a vast array of books relating to counselling psychology, philosophy and psychotherapy. Certainly books relating to the

person-centred approach will appear to be outnumbered by psychodynamic texts and the writings of key theorists, from Sigmund Freud onwards. Similarly, books adopting cognitive approaches abound, with many of these spilling over into popular psychology shelves because of their emphasis on thinking and its effects on behaviours and the belief that these can be changed. Cognitive-behavioural approaches lend themselves to self-help books, which sell so well as people seek to find solutions to problems such as anxiety, depression and relationship difficulties.

There has of course been a significant increase in the numbers of books relating to person-centred theory and many of its basic ideas have been extended and refined. However, a reliance on philosophy and theory in the person-centred approach fails to understand what Rogers believed to be the essence of his approach. Tudor et al. (2004: 4) argue that they: 'Do not want to reify and concretise person-centred theory precisely because this would be antithetical to its philosophy.'

Rogers himself always emphasised the predominance of experience over theory. In *On Becoming a Person* (1967) he wrote:

Experience is, for me, the highest authority. The touchstone of validity is my own experience. No other person's ideas, and none of my own ideas are as authoritative as my experience. It is to experience that I must return to again and again ... (p. 23)

In *Client-centred Therapy* (1951) he argued that: 'It is the writer's conviction that theory, to be profitable, must follow experience, not precede it'. Rogers saw the dangers of adherence to theory as leading to 'a closed and dogmatic approach to experience'.

The assertion that the approach being advocated here is simplistic, optimistic and naive has been challenged by Thorne (1992) who again cites Rogers' conviction, despite some doubts, in the positive and trustworthy nature of the person. Certainly my own experience of working with young people has shown me that despite behaviours to the contrary, young people, regardless of their circumstances, have a deep inner desire to move forward in constructive directional ways. This relates to Rogers' commitment to the idea that the human organism has an underlying 'actualising tendency'. We will return to this concept in the next chapter.

The idea that the person-centred approach is subjective, for me represents one of its fundamental qualities. Young people, like adults, construct meaning from experience. It follows therefore that we all experience the world and our relationships in different ways. Person-centred ideas are philosophically 'existential' and it is in this we are most interested, since objective reality, should it actually exist, does not determine our behaviour, rather it is our perception of events and people that gives us our reality. 'Existential' here refers to the philosophical position that life has no essential meaning, therefore sense can only be found within a personal view of the world.

Person-centred counselling has traditionally been 'open-ended' with endings determined by the counsellor and client together. This means that sometimes the work is long-term, sometimes taking years. Apart from those readers who are fortunate enough to work in the third sector, it is unlikely that you will be able to work with complete freedom and without some form of organisational expectations, and

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in recent years we have seen the introduction of more time-limited approaches to working in a person-centred way. Again, my own experience of working with children and young people suggests that the work does not have to be long-term and that a small number of sessions can be powerful and valued by the young person.

EXERCISES

1. Share with another person what draws you to working with children and young people.
2. Why are you interested in the person-centred approach?
3. Think of a time when you were unhappy or concerned. Were you able to share these feelings with another person? Why did you choose this person? What was the experience like? As you think back, what emotions are you experiencing now?
4. Can you think of any family member, friend or colleague who appears to have the kind of warm, empathic relationships with young people advocated by those who use the person-centred approach, but who does not occupy a formal therapeutic role?