



Carl Rogers 19 Propositions 'Decoded'

Of all the work Carl Rogers published "The 19 Propositions", seems to give students more than a little difficulty.

The theory first appeared in the book *Client Centre Therapy*, written by Rogers and published in 1951, is steeped in the psychological and philosophical language of the time.

I also suspect, that as this was Rogers unified theory of personality, he was keen to make it as academically robust as he could, unfortunately for those students who in the course of their studies revisit the theory, it can seem inaccessible and wordy.

The decoded version is of course an interpretation; however the explanations give an accurate idea of what Rogers was trying to convey, hopefully in more accessible language!

How to use this resource

If you are writing a case study in which it is expected that you make reference to "The 19 Propositions", consider what attitudes you client expressed that fits with the 'decoded' explanations then use Rogers explanation in the assignment.

For example a client who states,

"I had to leave her – we wanted different things, I wanted to travel, see different countries before returning home to go to college, she wanted to party all the time, it is hard to admit, but she was holding me back and as much as I loved her, I had to let her go".

In this case Proposition 8 in decoded form *'I behave as I do in order to meet my needs, as I experience and perceive them, and as I experience and perceive 'reality'-*

Would a good fit of Rogers theory, which states.

'Behaviour is basically the goal-directed attempt of the organism to satisfy its needs as experienced, in the field as perceived'.

You could also use this sheet in case discussions in your class to check out with peers and tutors if you have the the correct perspective when linking theory to practice.

If you are making recordings of client work , when playing them back try to hear if any of the clients thoughts , feelings or narratives fit with the decoded version of the theory, the more you listen to recordings or read transcripts while using the decode sheet, the easier it will be to link theory to practice in your case study.

	Rogers explanation		Decoded
1	All individuals (organisms) exist in a continually changing world of experience (phenomenal field) of which they are the center.		<i>I make sense of myself, others and my world based on my own constantly changing experiencing.</i>
2	The organism reacts to the field as it is experienced and perceived. This perceptual field is "reality"		<i>My sense of 'reality' is unique, formed out of (1) what I experience; and (2) how I process and understand my experience – my 'story/ies'.</i>
3	The organism reacts as an organized whole to this phenomenal field		<i>My entire way of being/doing arises out of my personal sense of 'reality'.</i>
4	A portion of the total perceptual field gradually becomes differentiated as the self		<i>Part of my 'reality' is my sense of self</i>

5	As a result of interaction with the environment, and particularly as a result of evaluational interaction with others, the structure of the self is formed – an organized, fluid but consistent conceptual pattern of perceptions of characteristics and relationships of the “I” or the “me”, together with values attached to these concepts.	<p><i>My sense of self arises from my experiences and perceptions, especially from comparing myself with others and from the opinions and judgements of others (as I perceive them).</i></p> <p><i>My sense of self – who and what am I? who am I in relationship? – is fluid, but includes consistent perceptions. I attach values to those perceptions.</i></p>
6	The organism has one basic tendency and striving – to actualize, maintain and enhance the experiencing organism.	<p><i>I have an innate impulse to care for myself, heal and grow.</i></p> <p><i>This includes seeking to (1) keep myself safe/intact, and (2) realize my inward potential – become who I am capable of becoming.</i></p>
7	The best vantage point for understanding behavior is from the internal frame of reference of the individual	<i>You can adequately understand my behaviour only through understanding how I see myself, others and the world.</i>
8	Behavior is basically the goal-directed attempt of the organism to satisfy its needs as experienced, in the field as perceived	<i>I behave as I do in order to meet my needs, as I experience and perceive them, and as I experience and perceive ‘reality’.</i>
9	Emotion accompanies, and in general facilitates, such goal directed behavior, the kind of emotion being related to the perceived significance of the behavior for the maintenance and enhancement of the organism.	<p><i>I am emotionally present in my behaviour.</i></p> <p><i>My feelings are part of how I attempt to get my perceived needs met. What I feel and how strongly depends on how important the need is to me.</i></p>
10	The values attached to experiences, and the values that are a part of the self-structure, in some instances, are values experienced directly by the organism, and in some instances are values introjected or taken over from others, but perceived in distorted fashion, as if they had been experienced directly	<i>The values I attach to my experiences, and how I value myself, is a mix – based on my own direct experiences and also including values taken on or absorbed from other people. I may be unaware some of ‘my’ values derive from others.</i>
11	The values attached to experiences, and the values that are a part of the self-structure, in some instances, are values experienced directly by the organism, and in some instances are values introjected or taken over from others, but perceived in distorted fashion, as if they had been experienced directly	<i>There are a number of ways I can meet my experiences – I can (a) make personal sense of their meanings, and integrate them into my view of myself and my world (so my view will shift and change with my experience); (b) ignore them because they do not fit in with how I see myself or the world; (c) treat them as if they have no meaning or reshape (‘re-story’) and distort them to fit my view of myself and the world.</i>

12	Most of the ways of behaving that are adopted by the organism are those that are consistent with the concept of self.	<i>I usually behave in ways that are consistent with how I see myself (so if I believe I have little value, I will behave as if that's true).</i>
13	<p>In some instances, behavior may be brought about by organic experiences and needs which have not been symbolized.</p> <p>Such behavior may be inconsistent with the structure of the self but in such instances the behavior is not "owned" by the individual</p>	<i>Underlying needs and experiences which I deny, distort, or have not managed to make sense of, will tend to leak through into my behaviour, and this behaviour may be less consistent with how I see myself. I am likely not to 'own' this behaviour.</i>
14	Psychological adjustment exists when the concept of the self is such that all the sensory and visceral experiences of the organism are, or may be, assimilated on a symbolic level into a consistent relationship with the concept of self.	<i>When I am connected to my own authentic being, I am able to be open to my actual embodied experience in its immediacy and totality, and integrate this into how I see myself and my world</i>
15	Psychological maladjustment exists when the organism denies awareness of significant sensory and visceral experiences, which consequently are not symbolized and organized into the gestalt of the self structure	<p><i>When I am disconnected from my own authentic being, I will deny awareness of significant actual embodied experience, so will be unable to make sense of this or integrate it into how I see myself and my world.</i></p> <p><i>This will cause deep unease and tension within me.</i></p>
16	Any experience which is inconsistent with the organization of the structure of the self may be perceived as a threat, and the more of these perceptions there are, the more rigidly the self structure is organized to maintain itself.	<p><i>I may find an experience threatening if it is inconsistent with how I see myself and my world.</i></p> <p><i>The more experiences I find threatening, the more rigid my sense of self becomes and the more tightly I cling to my viewpoint.</i></p>
17	Under certain conditions, involving primarily complete absence of threat to the self structure, experiences which are inconsistent with it may be perceived and examined, and the structure of self revised to assimilate and include such experiences	<p><i>If I feel safe enough, it becomes possible for me to look at experiences I have denied because I find them too threatening.</i></p> <p><i>I can begin to make sense of myself and the world in a different, fuller way, to take account of these denied experiences. This is healing.</i></p>

18	When the individual perceives and accepts into one consistent and integrated system all his sensory and visceral experiences, then he is necessarily more understanding of others and is more accepting of others as separate individuals.	<i>When I am able to hold in awareness and integrate all my actual embodied experiencing, I am inevitably more understanding and tolerant of others, and more able to understand, value and accept others as separate beings.</i>
19	As the individual perceives and accepts into his self structure more of his organic experiences, he finds that he is replacing his present value system – based extensively on introjections which have been distortedly symbolized	<i>When I am able to reshape my view of myself and my world to include denied experiences, I begin to reshape my values, letting go values that really belong to other people and forming values within my moment to moment awareness of the flow of my unique experiencing.</i>

Handy Bibliography for this theory

Rogers, Carl (1951). *Client-centered therapy: Its current practice, implications and theory*. London: Constable.