



Key Ideas in Therapy

The Therapy Relationship

Narrator:

Existential, psychodynamic, behavioural: there's certainly no shortage of therapies out there. So, which one's best?

Well, the results are in and we have a winner. The most effective type of therapy is ... (drumroll) ... all of them.

Yes, if you look across all therapies and all clients, they are in fact equally effective. Bit of a shock but, to see what's going on, let's look at what all therapies have in common:

From psychoanalysis to CBT, whatever the flavour, what we have are two people in a room, a therapist and a client, working something through.

They call it the therapy relationship; and it may just be one of the most important parts of getting better.

So what is it? Well, it's made up of a number of things – such as the feelings the client and therapist have for each other and how they behave together.

For Carl Rogers, the 'father' of Person Centred Therapy, a good therapy relationship has three key ingredients.

Number 1: Unconditional Positive Regard – the therapist has to truly think the very best of the client.

Number 2: Empathy - The therapist needs to really 'get' the client.

And number 3: Congruence – the therapist should be genuine. So, off with that mask of professionalism.

Rogers really believed in his three ingredients. He said they were all a client needed from their therapist in order to get 'better'.

Experts say it's so effective because we carry our old relationships around with us.

So, say you grew up with a very critical parent, you might now expect criticism from those in charge.

In counselling, you can try a different kind of relationship, one defined by positive regard instead of criticism.

It takes some skill to build a good relationship. It's easy to make mistakes, to misunderstand or say something hurtful.

Therapists have to know when to speak and when not to, when to show empathy and when to push.

They have to be careful not to bring their own bad relationships into the room.

Clients should consider their therapy relationship too.

If your therapy isn't working, don't just give up altogether. You wouldn't stop getting your haircut after just one bad hairdresser.

Shop around until you find the right therapist, and the right relationship, for you.