

# Person Centred Therapy

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## What is Person Centred Therapy?

Person Centred Therapy is a method of promoting client healing and wellbeing by treating the client as an individual of inherent worth and dignity. The person-centred therapist or counsellor emphasises the importance of clients' own innate ability to heal themselves.

They treat their clients with *empathy* and *congruence* – relating to the client genuinely and authentically. While the relationship between client and counsellor is important in all therapeutic encounters, it takes centre stage in the Person Centred approach.

Person Centred counsellors and therapists view their clients with 'unconditional positive regard.' They see them as rational beings, as opposed to the view that it is the client's irrationality that causes his or her distress.

By being treated as individuals of dignity and worth, clients experience less anxiety. They feel free and confident enough to pursue their own healing, desires and destiny.

## The Tenets of Person Centred Therapy

The Person Centred approach has four basic tenets: 1) Each individual has dignity and worth; 2) Behaviour can be viewed perceptually (i.e. each person's perspective is unique); 3) Humans are drawn towards self-actualisation, and 4) People are basically good and trustworthy.

The tenet that each person has dignity and worth prompts therapists to treat their clients as 'equals,' especially in the area of their own destiny and wellbeing. They have the right to choose how they deal with their difficulties and pursue their goals, providing of course that they do not impinge on others' rights to do the same thing.

The tenet that behaviour can be viewed perceptually stems from the idea that each self is unique with its own set of experiences. These experiences shape the person's world view and view of themselves. Experiences constantly change us, so our self-concept changes also. It needs to be realistic and in sync with how things really are, not how we would like them to be.

The tenet that humans are drawn towards self-actualisation points to the intrinsic need for personal growth, autonomy and self-realisation. We want to achieve that of which we are most capable.

We want to be the best that we can be. This desire is basic and encompasses our whole being. It is not peculiar to humans, but is present in all of nature.

Finally, the tenet that people are basically good and trustworthy allows therapists to realise that when their clients have acted against this standard, it is because they have become alienated from their true nature. Their 'inauthentic' actions stem from fear and defensiveness, rather than from weakness or an inherent defect.

## Being your True Self

The more we are alienated, the more we experience anxiety, and the more our actions are incongruent with our true selves. The more we reconnect with our authentic self, the less anxiety we experience, and the more congruent and happy we are.

By treating the client as a person of value and worth, with 'unconditional positive regard,' the Person Centred therapist sets the foundation for healing to occur.

The Person Centred approach is an ideal starting point for counselling and other therapeutic interventions. Sometimes, that is all that is needed. Other times, other therapies will also be used during the counselling encounter.

If you would like to make a counselling appointment, you can do so via our booking calendar, or by contacting us below.

Dr Pauline Enright    Mobile: 0409 191 342  
Email: [pauline@radianceshobart.com.au](mailto:pauline@radianceshobart.com.au)

PO Box 907, Sandy Bay, TAS 7006  
Website: [www.radianceshobart.com.au](http://www.radianceshobart.com.au)

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