

The Core Conditions in Emotion-Focused Therapy

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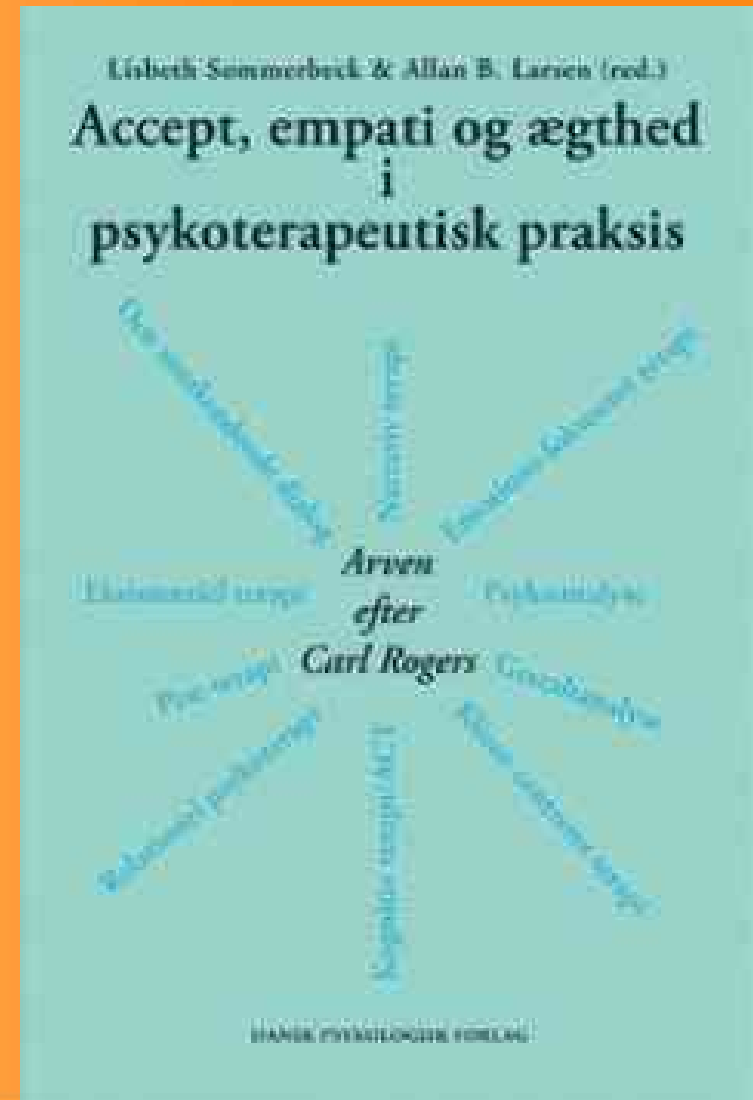
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- Co-founder of Danish Carl Rogers Forum with Lisbeth Sommerbeck
- EFT therapist and supervisor trained by Leslie Greenberg
- Private practice & IPCOPT



Accept, empathy and congruence in psychotherapeutic practice

- Investigating the legacy of Carl Rogers
- Research has repeatedly shown the effect of relationship factors
- 9 schools of therapy describe their use of the empathy, accept and congruence
- EFT and core conditions



The necessary and sufficient conditions of constructive personality change

1. Two persons are in psychological contact.
2. The first, whom we shall term the client, is in a state of incongruence, being vulnerable or anxious.
3. The second person, whom we shall term the therapist, is congruent or integrated in the relationship.
4. The therapist experiences unconditional positive regard for the client.
5. The therapist experiences an empathic understanding of the client's internal frame of reference and endeavours to communicate this experience to the client.
6. The communication to the client of the therapist's empathic understanding and unconditional positive regard is to a minimal degree achieved.

(Rogers, 1957)

Emotion Focused Therapy

- Person-Centered and experiential emotional process-guiding relational stance
- Emotion theory
- Marker-guided task strategy
- 35 years research program

Elliott, Watson, Goldman & Greenberg (2004)

Basic Principles of Emotion-Focused Therapy

A. Relationship Principles: Facilitate safe, productive relationship:

1. **Empathic Attunement**: Enter, track clients' immediate and evolving experiencing
2. **Therapeutic Bond**: Actively offer accepting, congruent, empathic presence to clients
3. **Task Collaboration**: Facilitate mutual involvement in goals and tasks of therapy

B. Task Principles: Facilitate work on specific therapeutic tasks:

4. **Process Differentiation**: Offer clients opportunities to work in different ways at different times, according to the current task they are engaged in
5. **Task Completion/Emotional Change**: Help clients resolve key therapeutic tasks in order to facilitate reorganisation of core maladaptive (no longer useful) emotion schemes
6. **Self-development**: Help clients differentiate and access new experiencing, inner strength or resources, agency or self-empowerment

Same root
(Rogers)

Diverse branches
(EFT)



Therapist

1

Therapist internal processes

Empathy process

2

Therapist experiential response mode

6

Empathy tasks

3

Experience of events

Client micro process

Client

Immediate & evolving Experience

4

Perceived empathy

Deconstruction
Reconstruction

Affect regulation

Interpersonal process

5

1. Therapist internal processes

- Presence and genuineness
- Empathic attunement
- Accepting, prizing and trust
- Collaboration
- Procedural knowledge of the model
- Process awareness and guiding stance

Presence and genuineness

- **Presence**
- **Genuineness**
 - **Wholeness** - not divided, contact with self
 - **Authenticity** - being who you are, real
 - **Transparent** - showing who you are

Acceptance, praising, trust

- **Accepting**

- Letting go of values, standards preferences
- Not approval or endorsement
- Validation of experience as actual (vs. illusory), interesting, unique, meaningful, understandable, tolerable, valid

- **Prizing**

- Active sense of caring, valuing
- Warm, emotionally touched

- **Trust**

- "unconditional confidence"

(Elliot, Watson.
Goldman &
Greenberg, 2004)

Empathic Attunement

- **Present maintained understanding of clients internal experience as it evolves moment to moment**
- **Follow client on several tracks**
 - What client is talking about, immediate experience, emerging experiences and what it is like to be the client
- **Imaginative, bodily experience**
 - not conceptual
 - T Feeling same or complementary feeling
 - T Grasp C experience in lively, poignant and emotionally near way, then the way of communicating is less critical
- **Subprocesses of empathy**
 - Entering, letting go, ...

Empathy – sub process

- Letting go
- Entering
- Resonating
- Searching and selecting
- Grasping and expressing

(Elliot, Watson. Goldman & Greenberg, 2004)

The client is expert on his or her
own experience

Empathy tracks

Client	Track
The main thing the client is saying	Content
The cl's feelings, poignancy	Emotion
What is at the edge of awareness	Emerging
What it is like to be the cl generally	Person
The process or way cl communicate	Process
What is implicit or between the lines	Implicit
What the cl is avoiding or minimizing	Avoiding

2. Therapist Experiential Response Modes

A. Simple Empathy

Empathic Reflection

Empathic Following

Empathic Affirmation **A**

B. Empathic Exploration

Exploratory Reflection

Evocative Reflection

Exploratory Question

Fit Question

Process Observation

Empathic Conjecture

Empathic Refocusing

C. Process Guiding

D. Experiential Presence

General **G**

Process Disclosure **G**

Personal Disclosure **G**

E. Content Directives

Main expression of core conditions in therapist experiential response modes

1. Empathy

- Reflection, affirmation, following, exploratory reflection, evocative reflection, exploratory question, fit question, process-observation, empathic conjecture, empathic refocusing

2. Accept

- Empathic affirmation, nonverbal and extra verbal behaviour

3. Genuineness

- nonverbal and extra verbal behaviour, process disclosure, personal disclosure

3. Client processes

1. Experience of events (content)

2. Micro-processes (ways of processing experience)

- Micromarkers
 - Verbal, non-verbal, level of arousal and experience
- Markers of characteristic style How clients treat them selves and others
- Mode of engagement markers
 - Non-experiential, experiential
- Task markers
- Treatment foci indicators

(Elliott, Watson.
Goldman &
Greenberg, 2004)

Following and leading

relation has primacy
over process

4. Client perceived empathy

Client perceived empathy is best predictor of outcome over therapist and observer perceived empathy (Elliott, Bohart, Watson, Greenberg, 2011)

Client readiness for receiving empathy:
past experiences, emotion schemes

Development of client perception of empathy through **relationship** with empathic therapist

5. Empathy - Active process of change

- Interpersonal function - therapeutic relationship
 - Safe, understood, supported
 - Build alliance and prevent alliance rupture
 - Part of negotiation of goals
- Explorative and deconstructive function
 - Hermeneutic process (interpretation of text)
 - Deconstruction → reconstruction of understanding
- Affect regulation
 - Relief and satisfaction in being understood
 - Containing emotions
 - Greater self-soothing and self worth

(Elliot, Watson.
Goldman &
Greenberg, 2004;
Watson, 2001)

EFT Tasks

TASK RESOLUTION

1. Marker and initiation
2. Evoking and entering
3. Deepening
4. Partial resolution
5. Restructuring
6. Carrying forward

EMPATHY-BASED TASKS

Empathic exploration

Empathic affirmation

RELATIONAL TASKS

Therapeutic alliance formation

Alliance dialogue

EXPERIENCING TASKS

Clearing a space

Experiential focusing

Allowing and expressing emotion

REPROCESSING TASKS

Trauma retelling

Meaning protest

Systematic Evocative Unfolding

ENACTMENT TASKS

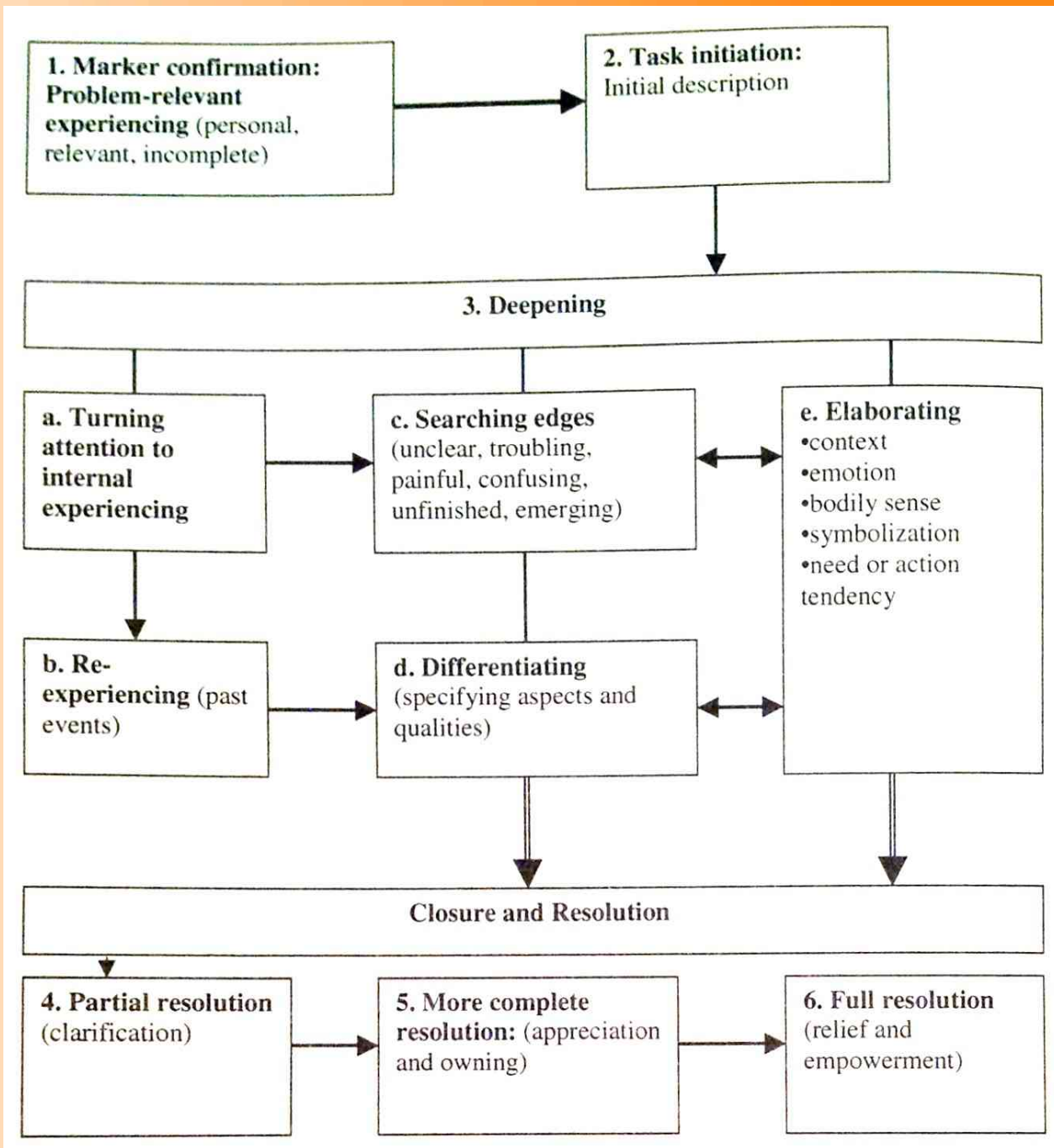
Two-chair dialogue

Two-chair work

Empty-chair work

6. Empathy Tasks

Task Marker	Intervention	End State
Problem-Relevant Experience (e.g., interesting, troubling, intense, puzzling)	Empathic Exploration	Clear marker, or new meaning explicated
Vulnerability (Painful emotion related to self)	Empathic Affirmation	Self-affirmation (feels understood, hopeful, stronger)



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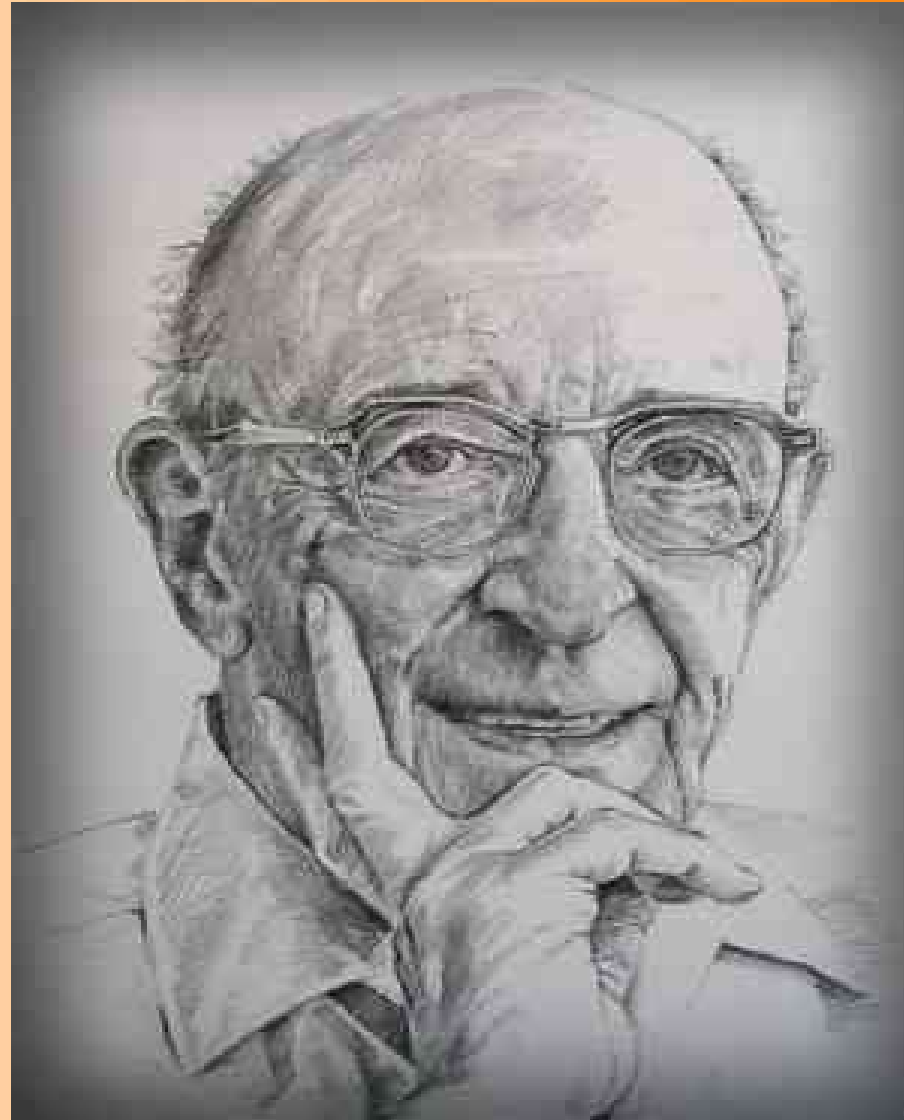
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