

Rogers and Maslow

Organismic theory

- emphasizes the unity and integration of the normal personality
- does not analyze the parts in isolation, but only in relation to the whole
- the primary drive is toward *self-actualization*
- emphasizes the potentialities of the organism for growth
- emphasizes comprehensive study of individuals

Rogers

Humanistic

- opposed the pessimistic psychoanalytic and mechanistic behaviorist views

- people have the potential for healthy growth
- growth can be blocked by faulty environmental influences
- individual can take responsibility for own growth
- some overlap with *existential* psychology
 - emphasized the person's experience, feelings, and values: the "inner life."
- theory grew out of working with clients in therapy

I began my work with the settled notion that the "self" was a vague, ...scientifically meaningless term...Consequently I was slow in recognizing that when clients were given the opportunity to express their problems and their attitudes in their own terms, without any guidance or interpretation, they tended to talk in terms of the self....It seemed clear...that the self was an important element in the experience of the client, and that in some odd sense his goal was to become his "real self." (1959, pp. 200-201)

Structure of the Personality

Organism – the locus of all *experience*

- *experience* is everything going on within the organism that is potentially available to awareness
- the totality of experience is the *phenomenal field*
- it is the person's frame of reference
- can only be known by the person
- behavior depends on the phenomenal field (one's subjective reality)

Self or Self-concept

- becomes differentiated from the phenomenal field
- an organized, consistent, conceptual gestalt
- available to awareness, though not necessarily in awareness
- fluid and changing, a process
- at any given moment, a specific entity

Congruence/Incongruence

1. between subjective reality (the phenomenal field) and external reality (the world as it is)
2. agreement between the self and the *ideal self* (what I'd like to be)
3. between the self and the experience of the organism

Dynamics of Personality

"...the organism has one basic tendency and striving – to actualize, maintain, and enhance the experiencing organism." (1951, p. 487)

- motivating force: self-actualizing drive
- goal of life: to become self-actualized, a whole person

- all behaviors are attempts to grow towards wholeness

"...behavior is basically the goal-directed attempt of the organism to satisfy its needs as experienced, in the field as perceived." (1951, p. 471)

- all needs are subservient to the organismic basic tendency

- when there is incongruence, the actualizing tendency of the organism may be at odds with the self-actualizing tendency

Development of Personality

unconditional positive regard – permits congruence between the organism and the developing self

positive self-regard – based on positive regard from others

"If an individual should experience only unconditional positive regard, then no conditions of worth would develop,...the needs for positive regard and self-regard would never be at variance with organismic evaluation, and the individual would continue to be psychologically adjusted, and would be fully functioning."
(1959, p. 209)

- regard from others may at times be negative
- child concludes some actions and feelings are unworthy
- these become excluded from the self-concept (even though they are organismically valid)
- results in a distorted self-concept
- organismic experiences at variance with the self-concept evoke anxiety
- incongruent experiences are denied or distorted

Healing the Breach

1. in a completely non-threatening situation, the person can examine all his inner experience
2. when a person accept all her inner experience, she becomes more accepting of others
3. the person becomes involved in a "continuing valuing process."

Fully Functioning Persons

- increasing openness to experience:
unafraid of own feelings
- increasingly existential living:
live more spontaneously, in the moment
- increasing trust in the organism:
trust their own cognitive and emotional strength