

CHAPTER 2

THE PERSON-CENTERED APPROACH AS THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

2.1 Introduction

Working with people and be involved in taking crucial decisions about their future is an awesome kind of responsibility. Any input, whether meaningful or not, has a permanent impact on the lives of the people we work with. This is even more truer in work with children. Selma Fraiberg (In De Vos, 1979:65) stated it as follows:

The social worker carries the weight of the responsibility for making critical decisions for children and their families. This is an awesome kind of responsibility and perhaps an attitude of awe toward such undertakings is a proper one for us. We need to feel inadequate before the magnitude of these tasks.

Selma Fraiberg stated further that the chief source of error in our work is the equipment we bring to our work. In researcher's opinion, abovementioned statement is especially true when working with children. The task entrusted to the social work profession under such circumstances to always make the right decision, remains therefore a great responsibility. Doing justice to this task is however a challenge that could also serve to enhance the standard of professionalism in our work.

Evans (1997: 357-358) formulated the following requirements for professional competence, which comprises of four important components:

- A repertoire upon which the worker draws, which contains
 - a] the requisite knowledge, skills and values.
 - b] attributes relevant to the professional worker as a whole person, including warmth, empathy, emotional maturity, commitment, integrity and creativity.
- Effective practice (all the activities undertaken by the professional worker including direct work with service users, indirect work, internal judgment and decision making).
- Higher order learning skills, including skills for employing the repertoire of knowledge, skills and values in practice as well as the ability of evaluating practice outcomes.
- Development through time.

It would thus be irresponsible and unprofessional to work from a 'gut feeling' only and not be guided into a structured way of thinking as when working according a specific approach.

The approach that the researcher found most appealing through her 23 years of practice experience has been the Person Centered Approach by Carl Rogers.

As Rogers, researcher firmly believes that one cannot work with people without being able to 'hear' them.

Rogers (1980:26) referred to this ability as 'growth-promoting interpersonal communication' and describes it as follows:

A sensitive ability to hear, a deep satisfaction in being heard; an ability to be more real, which in turn brings forth the more realness from others; and consequently a greater freedom to give and receive love – these are the elements that make interpersonal communication enriching and enhancing.

Researcher further believes that the Person-Centered Approach enables the social worker to hear and so reached the child as well as to specifically address the rights of children in an effective way. The Person Centered Approach will therefore form the theoretical basis for this study and will be discussed in this chapter.

2.2 Defining the Person-Centered Approach

The Person-Centered Approach was founded and developed by Carl Ransom Rogers (1902 – 1987) who, according to Prochaska & Norcross (1999:140) demonstrated a profound openness to change. From Prochaska & Norcross (1999:140 – 142), it was learned that Rogers personally experienced the devastating effects on one's self-esteem of parents imposing conditions of worth on children. Since 1927, when he started as an intern, Rogers spent twelve years as a psychologist at a child guidance clinic in Rochester, New York. The seeds of Roger's ideas thus germinated in his work with children and their mothers.

Apparently, Rogers found both inspiration and confirmation of his views in the work of Otto Rank (1936), who emphasized the importance of the humanity of therapists rather than their technical skills in remedying human problems. Rogers (1980:114) referred to two tendencies as the foundation blocks of the approach, namely an actualizing tendency and a formative tendency. According to Rogers (1980:115), the central hypothesis of the approach can be formulated as follows:

Individuals have within themselves vast resources for self-understanding and for altering their self-concepts, basic attitudes and self-directed behaviour; these resources can be tapped if a definable climate of facilitative psychological attitudes can be provided.

Rogers (1987) believed that the tendency to self-actualization exists in every individual, and this tendency is facilitated in a climate where certain psychological conditions prevail. In the more recent literature [Prochaska & Norcross, 1999: 146 – 148] six conditions are specified, namely:

- Relationship.
- Vulnerability.
- Genuineness, realness or congruence.
- Unconditional positive regard.
- Empathic understanding.
- Personal power.

According to Rogers (1980:15), these conditions must be present in any climate aiming at growth promoting. Such a climate is necessary in any situation in which the development of the person is a goal.

2.2.1 Relationship

Rogers has stated explicitly in 1957 and again in 1959 that all six conditions are necessary for a relationship to result in constructive personality change. Obviously, two persons must be in a relationship in which each makes some perceived difference to the other.

2.2.2 Vulnerability

The client in the relationship is in state of incongruence and is therefore vulnerable to anxiety. This vulnerability to anxiety is what motivates a client to seek and to stay in the therapeutic relationship.

2.2.3 Genuineness

The term ***genuineness / congruence*** refer to the therapist making himself transparent to the client. As Rogers (1980:115) stated:

The more the therapist is himself in the relationship, putting up no professional front or personal façade, the greater the likelihood that the client will change and grow in a constructive manner.

This implies that the therapist is congruent and genuine in the therapeutic relationship. Genuineness, according to Prochaska & Norcross (1999:147),

means that therapists are freely and deeply themselves. Thus with the actual experiences of the therapists being accurately represented in their awareness of themselves. It is the opposite of presenting a façade.

2.2.4 Unconditional Positive Regard

Unconditional positive regard refers to a positive, acceptant attitude towards whatever the client is at that moment (Rogers, 1980:116). It is important to note that 'acceptance' does not mean 'approval'. As stated by Spies (Syllabus Theme 2 notes) the therapist need to accept an individual, group or community with whom they are working at any given time with all the feelings, attitudes and values that are present. Such an attitude requires an acute awareness of one's own values, biases and judgments, and an ability to suspend those during one's encounter with others. Prochaska & Norcross (1999:147) explained the essence of this condition as follow:

The client's incongruence is due to conditions of worth that have been internalized from other's conditional positive regard. In order for the client to be able to accept experiences that have been distorted or denied to awareness, there must be a decrease in the client's conditions of worth and an increase in the client's unconditional self-regard.

In other words, if the therapist is able to value and consistently care about clients, no matter what the clients are experiencing or expressing, then the clients become free to accept all that they are with love and caring.

2.2.5 Accurate Empathy

With the term *Empathic understanding* Rogers (1980:116) referred to the therapist's ability to sense accurately the feelings and personal meanings that the client is experiencing, and to communicate this understanding to the client. Empathy is not only a technique but also a way of being with the client. The client must experience, know and hear that he/she is understood.

As Prochaska & Norcross (1999:148] explained it, empathy means that the therapist senses the client's private world as if it were his/her own, without his/her own anger, fear or confusion getting bound up in the experience. With this clear sense of the client's world, he/she can communicate their understanding, including their awareness of the meaning in the client's experience of which the client is scarcely aware.

Without empathic understanding, clients cannot trust the therapist's unconditional positive regard. Rogers' statement that accurate empathy and unconditional positive regard ensures that clients come close to being fully known and fully accepted, brings us to the next condition.

2.2.6 Personal power or autonomy

The condition of personal power can be described as the ability to act effectively in accordance with one's own intentions, will, and capability or conscious choice rather than under external control. It is a state where-in the person is aware of and can act upon his/her feelings, needs and values rather than looking to others for direction (Spies, Syllabus Notes 2).

Patterson (1986:379) further emphasized the value of the Person Centered Approach when he refer to the approach as ‘**The theory of the fully functioning person.**’ He stated it as follows:

Each individual possesses an inherent tendency toward self-actualization; each individual has the capacity and tendency to symbolize experiences accurately in awareness. The individual has a need for positive regard from others and for positive self-regard. When these needs are met, to a maximum degree, the individual will be a fully functioning person.

Patterson’s referral is a cryptic summary of the essence of the approach and is confirmed by Rogers’ (1980:116-117) explanation of how this ‘growth-promoting’ climate (as described above), can bring about change:

As persons are accepted and prized, they tend to develop a more caring attitude toward themselves. As persons are empathically heard, it becomes possible for them to listen more accurately to the flow of inner experiencing. As a person understands and prizes self, the self becomes more congruent with the experiences. The person thus becomes more real, more genuine. These tendencies, the reciprocal of the therapist’s attitudes, enable the

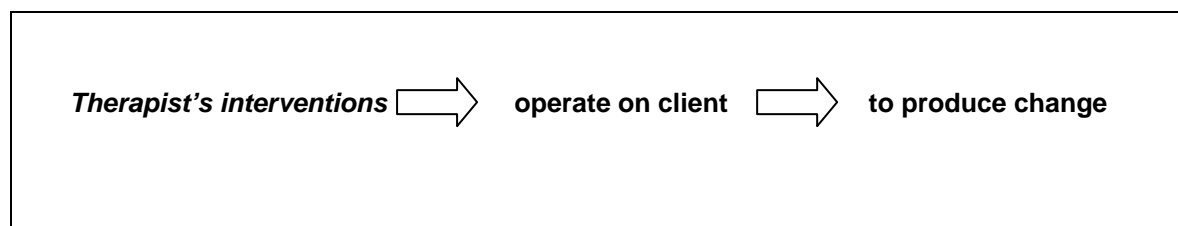
person to be a more effective growth-enhancer for him or herself.

There is a greater freedom to be the true, whole person.

2.3 Value of the Person-Centered Approach

Bohart (2004:102-106) explained that typical views of therapy are therapist-centric in that therapists and their interventions are portrayed as operating on client processes to create change. The “therapist-centric” model can be viewed as follows:

Figure 1: Therapist-Centric Model



In Person Centered Therapy however, the clients are seen as active change agents. Bohart (2004:106) states that it is clients who make therapy work.

The Therapist-Centric Model is thus changed as follows:

Figure 2: Person-Centered Model



Bohart (2004:102) explained the process, saying:

Clients are seen as active change agents who extract patterns of meaning from the therapy interaction, deduce implications, and use therapist empathy responses for purposes of self-support, validation, exploring experience, testing self-understanding, creating new meaning, and making connection with the therapist.

As van der Veen (2004:1-8) stated, there are certain essential and valuable characteristics and principles that are central and unique to Person Centered Practice that distinguish them from other practices. These core principles are the principle of self-direction and of mutuality.

Clients come to therapy when they need some assistance or support in order to move forward from the crisis they experience. This suggests that people (children included) are capable of generating personal growth on their own.

Rogers' (1980:330) opinion that ***“The very difficult crises of tomorrow represent equally great opportunities”*** is drawn from an analogy from the Chinese language in which the same character stands for two meanings, namely

Crisis and Opportunity.

If these believes, namely that

- every crisis represents an opportunity, and
- children too are capable of self-direction

can be internalized by children as well as the relevant professional role-players working with children, we will have a remarkable positive population.

For many people it is convenient to believe that “children are to be seen and not to be heard”. Yet, it is important to remember that the children of today will be our adults of tomorrow.

2.3.1 Qualities of the person of tomorrow

Rogers (1980: 350-352) identified certain characteristics that will enable a person to live in this revolutionized world of tomorrow. Each characteristic will be briefly discussed:

- **Openness:** The ability to be open to experience, to new ways of seeing, of being, new ideas and concepts.
- **Desire for authenticity:** The individual should value communication as a means of telling of the way it is.
- **Skepticism regarding science and technology:** The individual shows a distrust in science and technology that is used to conquer the world of nature and to control the world’s people. On the other hand, when science is used to enhance self-awareness and control of the person by the person, they are eager supporters.
- **Desire for wholeness:** These persons do not like to live in a compartmentalized world. They strive for a wholeness of life, with

thought, feeling, physical energy, psychic energy, healing energy all being integrated in experience.

- The wish for intimacy: Seeking new forms of closeness, of intimacy, of shared purpose.
- Process persons: The awareness that the one certainty of life is change. These individuals are or should be vitally alive in the way they face change.
- Caring: They are caring, eager to be of help to others when the need is real.
- Attitude towards nature: The ability to be 'ecologically minded' – in other words, they feel a closeness to and a caring for nature.
- Anti-institutional: These persons have an antipathy for any highly structured, inflexible, bureaucratic institution. They believe that institutions should exist for people, not the reverse.
- Authority within: The ability to trust in your own experience and a profound distrust of external authority.
- Un-importance of material things: The person should be fundamentally indifferent to material comforts and rewards. Money and material status symbols should not be their goal.
- A yearning for the spiritual: In other words, the individual will always yearn for meaning and purpose in life - greater than the individual will.

Abovementioned qualities can only be obtained and ensured when children too are treated with dignity and respect and the professional role player's

behaviour is build on an attitude of warmth, empathic understanding and unconditional positive regard.

David Mearns, a professor of Counselling at the University of Strathclyde, Glasgow and author of numerous academic articles, is fascinated by the fact that even in an apparent 'open' relationship, there is still a large 'unspoken relationship' between client and counsellor. He is delving more deeply not only into the practice of Person-Centered Counselling, but also into the Self theory which underpins it. Mearns (1994:18) said the following about it:

The Person-Centered Counsellor must always remember that he/she is guest within the client's world of experience.

The researcher echoes this statement whole-heartedly – more so when working with children! In practice, researcher is often confronted with children in therapy who are angry because they have to live a life decided by adults. Adults are of the opinion that they know best and are acting in the children's interest. Yet, children perceive it as a lack of trust in them as a person in own right as well as in their abilities.

The issue of how to prevent the therapist's own maladjustments, emotional biases and blind spots from interfering with the therapeutic process, has always been a matter for concern. Rogers (1951:42) is of the opinion though that this issue is minimized considerably in Person-Centered Counselling merely by the very nature of the therapist's function:

In any therapy in which the counsellor is asking himself 'How do I see this?' 'How do I understand this material?' the door is wide open for the personal needs or conflicts of the therapist to distort these evaluations. Where the counselor's central question is 'How does the client see this?' and where he is continually checking his own understanding of the client's perception by putting for the tentative statements of it, distortion based upon the counsellor's conflicts is much less apt to enter, and much more apt to be corrected by the client if it does enter.

The value of the Person-Centered Approach can thus be summarized as follows:

- Counsellors learn that self-disclosure and the expression of feelings are facilitative rather than 'weak'. They experience that cooperation rather than competition enhances both individual and group development.
- Counsellors accept differences – their own and others – as a resource for creativity rather than deviances.
- Person-Centered approach can be described as a double-edge sword in that it sets in motion a series of experiences that ultimately not only produce positive changes in the client, but also in the broader context in which the client is functioning.
- A Person-Centered approach contributes to the ability of clients to take responsibility for themselves, moving from a state of

dependence to increasing independence, from the expression of negative feelings to positive ones, from confusion to insight, and from being stuck to taking action.

- Clients develop an empathetic understanding for other people like their families and friends to which they belong. It enables them to recognize the personalized nature of their own belief system or realities.
- Counsellors using the Person-Centered Approach, often report that their own personal growth has been fostered by their understanding of those with whom they work.
- The Person-Centered Approach can be applied to a variety of fields. It is applicable to individuals, groups and in developmental work within communities.

(Taken from Spies, Syllabus theme 2 notes)

Rogers looked at much more than people's feelings and behaviour. He often refers to the 'self', the values and needs of people he works with and has formulated his theoretical ideas by the way of nineteen propositions, which will be discussed in the following section.

2.4 The integration of the different propositions in practice and implications for the child

According to Du Toit, Grobler & Schenck (2001: xi) these propositions about being human and what possibly motivates people, on various levels of consciousness, provide tentative guidelines for facilitators in their efforts to

understand, think about and make sense of what we can observe of others, like what they say, do and feel when we encounter them. These authors elaborated on this statement as follows:

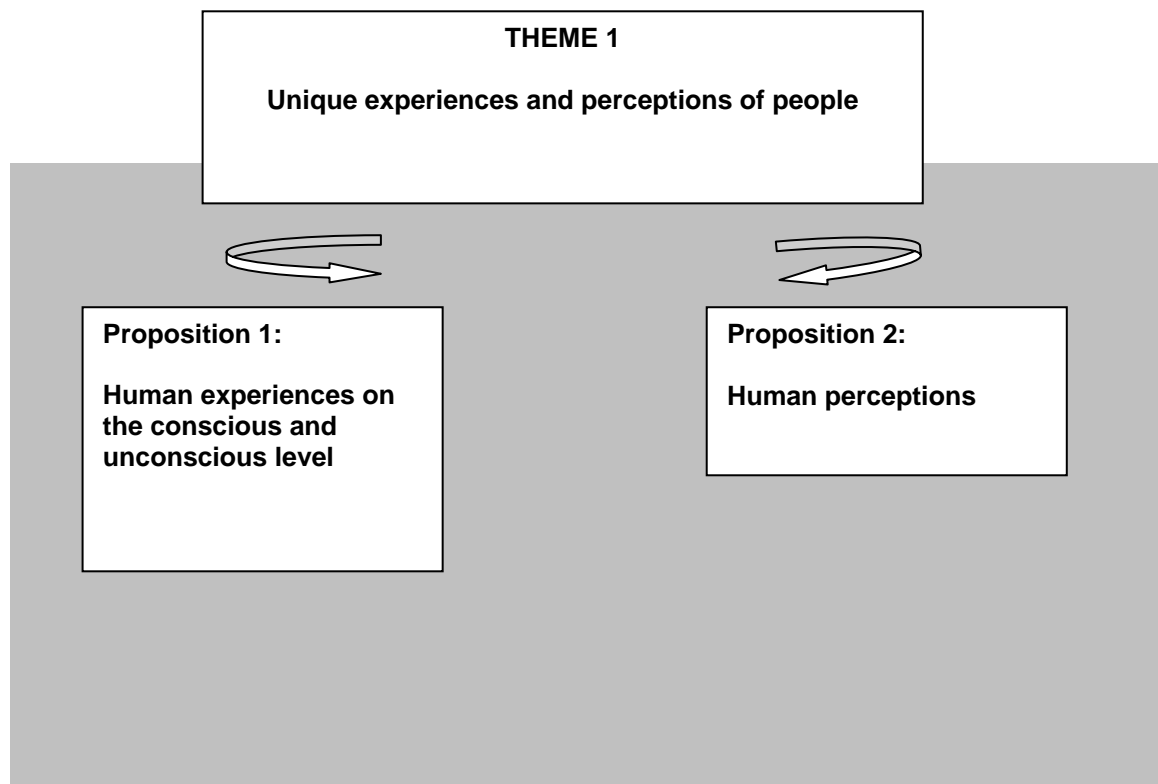
Considering these ideas, even if you do not agree with them, could enable you to think more broadly about other people.

They cautioned however that these propositions are by no means the only ones applicable to human beings. Furthermore one must bear in mind that people are not the propositions, but the propositions can help us explore and consider a spectrum of possible dimensions through which people can be understood.

2.4.1 Discussion of propositions

The propositions will be discussed according to the themes used by Du Toit, Grobler & Schenck (2001). These themes are presented in chronological order together with the various propositions peculiar to each theme. To get a comprehensive view of all the propositions these are presented in chronological order in Annexure 4.

Figure 3: Propositions - Theme 1



2.4.1.1 Proposition 1

Human experiences on a conscious and unconscious level

Every individual exists in a continually changing world of experience of which he is the center
Rogers, 1987: 483

The experiential world of each person includes both conscious and unconscious experiences and it is central, personal and continually changing. According to Rogers (1987: 483), only a portion of the experiential world is

consciously experienced. Du Toit, Grobler & Schenck (2001: 4) added to this by mentioning that this experience is only knowable to the individual and outsiders can only form an idea of that experience if the individual tells them about it. To explain this statement, Rogers used the example of himself sitting on a chair while writing. To feel the pressure of the chair against his body is something he is experiencing, but only as he deliberately think and write about it, does the symbolization of that experience become present in consciousness.

Practical example

A mother approached a counsellor because of continuous conflict between herself and her teenage son. In the individual consultations with mother and son respectively, it was evident that each of them was acting from their own experiential world. Only after sharing their individual experiences with one another, they could understand why each of them reacted the way they did. Part of their experience was still on an unconscious level.

Implications for the child

Every child is a person in own right. Already as a newborn, the baby is entering his experiential world of which he is central. This experiential world is constantly changing as he/she grows and develops. Nobody can on the child's behalf exactly tell what he/she is experiencing or even deny that such an experience does exist. Unfortunately, in practice, adults so-often do not want to realize that children have their own experiences of situations. Researcher is of the opinion that, in dealing with children, it is essential to

allow the child him/herself to share their experience as there is no way of knowing for sure how they experience certain situations. Adults must therefore not decide on their behalf, what they (the children) should be experiencing. According to Landreth (1991:55), children are the best source of information regarding themselves. Oaklander (1988: 324) confirmed this with her opinion that children knows best what is right for them and what their needs are.

2.4.1.2 Proposition 2

Human perceptions

**The organism reacts to the field as it is experienced and perceived. This perceptual field is, for the individual, reality.
Rogers, 1987: 484**

Du Toit, Grobler & Schenck (2001: 8) explained that people respond in terms of both experience and perception and this perception of reality is an individual matter. Rogers (1987: 484) realized that the individual do not react to some absolute reality but to his/her perception of that reality. For them, perception is reality.

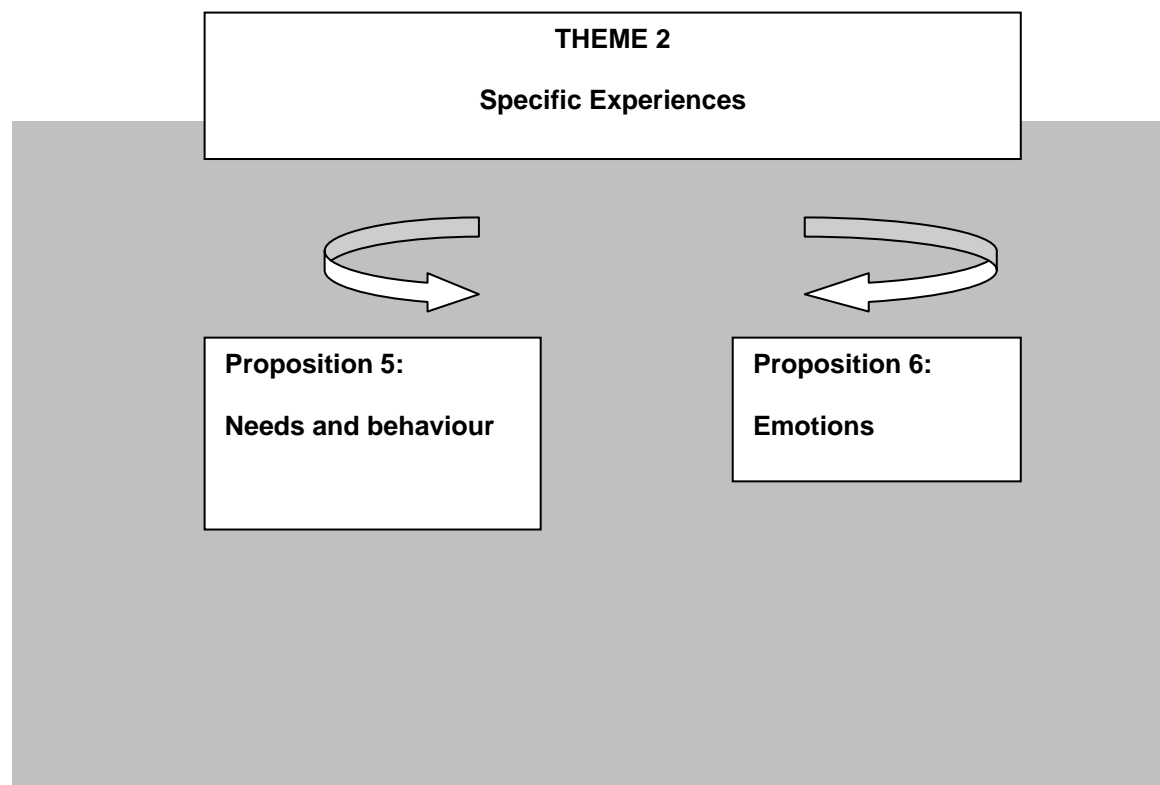
Practical example

Two or more children of the same parents grow up in the same home and are exposed to the same environment, but they each develop their own personality and set of values. One child may be an academic achiever and feels this is the only way to become an important person in the family system. The other child believes you have to be good in sport to be special. For both it is a reality and can not be argued by a counsellor that one is right and the other wrong.

Implications for the child

Every child reacts according to his/her perception of the importance in life (a different way of looking at the same thing) and must be respected for that. In practice, parents often expect from the second child to be similar to his/her older sibling. The result is that the child starts to rebel, which may as well have a negative influence on sibling relationships. In the case of the counsellor, his/her role will be to respect both children's views and help them to understand why their own personal views on being special within the family system, are so important.

Figure 4: Propositions – Theme 2



2.4.1.3 Proposition 5

Needs and behaviour

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

Rogers, 1987: 491

It is important to look at the relationship between an individual's needs, behaviour and emotions in order to make us aware that people have these kinds of experiences, which are unique to each person. Rogers (1987: 491) expressed the opinion that all needs have a basic relatedness in that it stems from the basic tendency to maintain and enhance the organism. Du Toit, Grobler & Schenck (2001: 14) said the following about it:

Behaviour is essentially purposeful endeavors by individuals to satisfy their needs as experienced in their life world.

Behaviour is thus associated with needs and individual needs motivate behaviour. If one considers this, it is clear that all behaviour has some motive, reason or goal – no matter how odd it may appear to an outsider.

Practical example

Parents of an adolescent boy approached the counsellor, as they are concerned about his juvenile delinquent behaviour. They do not know what causes him to steal and thinks it is a personality disorder. In consultation with the boy, he explained about a 'gang' threatening to kill his parents if he does not comply with their demands (to steal stuff they can re-sell)!

Implications for the child

This child wanted to protect his parents but everybody was focusing on his behaviour.

The importance of listening to the child before judging him or labelling him according to his behaviour is again emphasized. Through the Person-Centered Approach, the professional role-players need to be able to listen, understand and empower the child by asking the questions “What is happening here?” and “What process must be followed to empower this child to deal with the situation?”

2.4.1.4 Proposition 6

Emotions

Emotion accompanies and in general facilitates such goal-directed behaviour, the kind of emotion being related to the seeking versus the consummatory aspects of the behaviour, and the intensity of the emotion being related to the perceived significance of the behaviour for the maintenance and enhancement of the organism.

Rogers, 1987: 492-493

Rogers (1987: 493) referred to behaviour as a goal-seeking effort. In other words, behaviour has a purpose and is focused on fulfilling the individual's basic needs. Du Toit, Grobler & Schenck (2001:17) explained that emotion accompanies and facilitates the purposeful behaviour. The intensity of the emotion correlates with the importance that the person attaches to the behaviour in terms of self-preservation. This intensity of emotions also varies from one person to another and from one situation to the next.

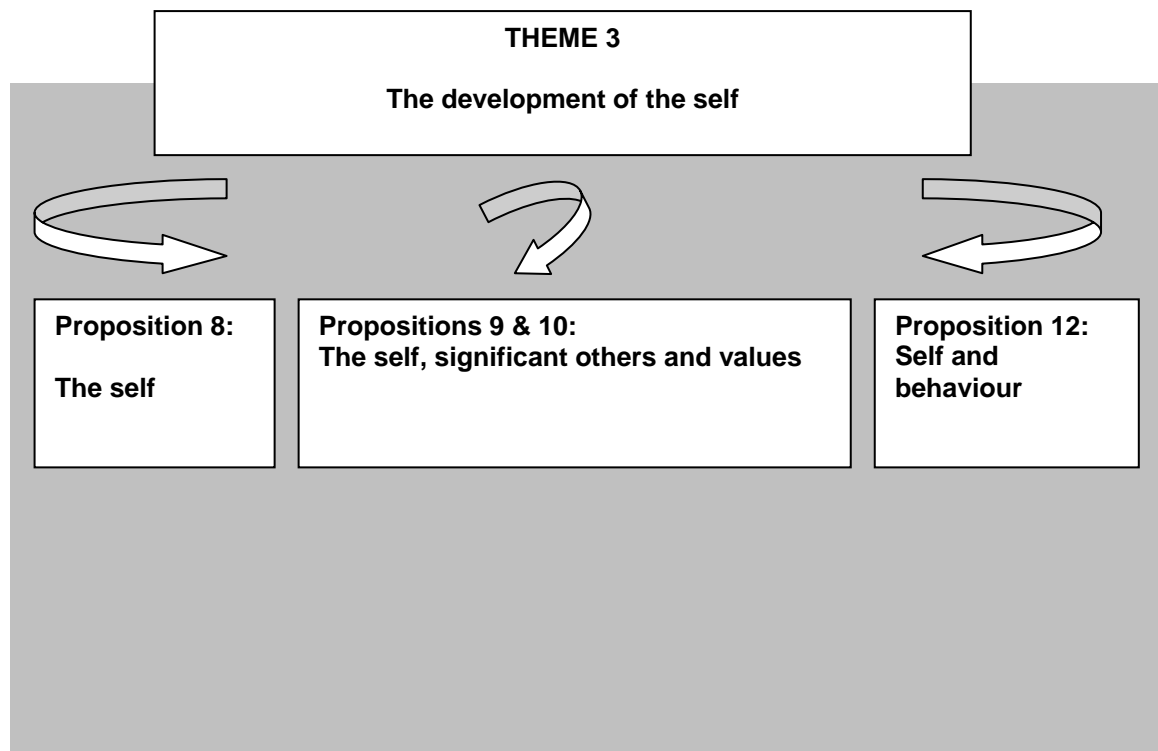
Practical example

Two boys from the same family will react differently to their parents' divorce. One will react with tantrums and acting-out behaviour while the other will be quiet and comply to everything in a withdrawn way. Obviously, the child with the severe reaction is the one brought for therapy.

Implications for the child

Adults are often of the opinion that the smaller the child, the quicker they will adjust to a situation – for instance their parents' divorce. Parents are further of the opinion that they spare the child the hurt by not sharing the facts with him/her. Hardly ever do parents bother to consider the child's emotions and perception regarding the situation – let alone considering how intense he may experience it. In fact, if the child does not display behaviour problems, they automatically assume he/she is coping well. Quite the opposite is the truth. When children have to live with major changes in their lives, parents owe it to them to explain the reason for the change – no matter what age. Children perceive it as a lack of trust from their parents and may react either by rebelling (showing their anger) or by complying (but actually withdrawing). The latter is more serious as the child is not showing any emotions because of the distrust in the parents.

Figure 5: Propositions – Theme 3



2.4.1.5 Proposition 8

The self

A portion of the total perceptual field gradually becomes differentiated as the self.

Rogers, 1987: 497

Rogers (1987: 498) referred to the self as the awareness of being, of functioning:

Gradually, as the infant develops, a portion of the total private world becomes recognized as 'me', 'I', 'myself'.

He further describes this awareness as a gradient of autonomy which first gives the infant the awareness of self, as he/she is for the first time aware of a feeling of control over some aspect of their world of experience. Du Toit, Grobler & Schenck (2001:21) made the statement that individuals always retain some part of themselves in the midst of day-to-day changes. In other words, you are not a completely different person from whom you were at ages 18, 25 or 30. As you grow older, your personality matures and your image may change by losing or gaining weight or a different hairstyle but, you still remain the same person.

Ferdinand van der Veen as guest at the European Person Centered Approach Network meeting in Luxembourg (September 1998), emphasized the principle of self direction of the client:

Self-direction is based on the value of individual autonomy and self-responsibility as most conducive to personal and social fulfillment and to the worth of the individual human being (van der Veen, 1998:1)

Moorman (1999:2) echoed abovementioned opinion in the paper he submitted to the ADPCA (Association for the Development in Person-Centered Approach) in 1999. His theme was to clarify and develop the notion of being in a way that allows a satisfying transaction between self and other – without forgoing either individuality or relationship. In other words, a way of moving

towards autonomy in a relationship. Moorman (1999:2) described the historical development process of dependence through a process of narcissism (excessive interest in one's own importance) and misunderstanding of Rogers' counter-dependence, towards an interdependence of autonomy and mutuality. Interdependence is described as having the capacity to prize ones self and to prize the different other – which is a key element in Rogers' notion of “the fully functioning person”.

To become a fully functioning person (to be that self which one truly is) is a complex maturing process through which the client discovers that your own life is your own personal responsibility. Moorman (1999:3) quoted a poem of Rudyard Kipling that he had learned as a child, as an example of a fully functioning person:

‘If you can keep your head when all about you
Are losing theirs and blaming it on you;
If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you
But make allowance for their doubting too...”

The abstract from the above mentioned poem confirms that the process of becoming a fully functioning person is a self accepted and executed developmental responsibility.

Clients need to be able to see themselves more clearly and explore their own purposes more deeply in order to make conscious choices as to the direction

they wish to take, before they will develop the capacity and ability to value themselves and other people differently from themselves.

Practical example

A newborn baby was breastfed by her adoptive mother. After two days she realized it was easier to get milk through the tube than from the breast. She started to push the breast away with her tongue and only sucked the tube!

Implications for the child

Researcher strongly believes that children know what they need and want regardless of their age. This belief is based on the principle of autonomy. Spies (Syllabus Notes 2) referred to autonomy as a state where in the person is aware of and can act upon his feelings, needs and values. Abovementioned practical example is a perfect example that a child, even two days old, is able to act upon feelings and needs.

A child is like a sponge – every life experience since birth is absorbed and continues to play an important role in the continual development of his/her personality. Once the adult stage has been reached, thinking, feeling and acting patterns are more firmly set and although not impossible, much more difficult to change.

It therefore places a serious responsibility on all adults dealing with children as we either contribute to the positive forming and development of their personalities or the destruction thereof. One must realize that a mistake in dealing with a child is not a mathematical calculation that can be easily altered or even erased.

2.4.1.6 Propositions 9 & 10

The self, significant others and values

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.

Rogers, 1987: 498

The self is shaped through interaction with both the environment and other people. As Du Toit, Grobler & Schenck (2001:24) explained it:

It is a fluid yet organized picture of the attributes and relationships of the self, as well as the values attached to that picture.

The values attached to experiences, and the values which 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.

Rogers, 1987: 498

Values attached to experiences and forming part of the self, may be shaped by the individual's own experience, but they may also be taken over from others and assimilated into the self as if they had been experienced personally.

Rogers (1987: 498-501) excellently described this through the example of the process of growing up. He explained that as the infant interacts with his/her environment, they gradually build up concepts about themselves, about the environment and about him/her in relationship to the environment. At the same time that there is the awareness of 'I experiences', there is also the awareness that 'I like / dislike' it. For example, "I am cold and I dislike it"; "I am cuddled and I like it". Infants value those experiences which they perceives as enhancing themselves and place a negative value on those experiences, which seem to threaten them.

The next step in this process is the evaluation of self by others, for instance parents, teachers and the peer group: "You're a good child" or "You're a naughty boy". These evaluations of themselves and of the behaviour by others, form a large and significant part of the infant's perceptual field. In this

stage of development, a distorted symbolization experience has much significance for the later development of psychological maladjustment. As Rogers (1987:501) claimed:

Out of these dual sources – the direct experiencing by the individual, and the distorted symbolization of sensory reactions resulting in the introjection of values and concepts as if experienced – there grows the structure of the self.

Practical example

Parents were pressurizing their son to participate and excel in everything: academic-, sport- as well as cultural activities. To cope, he was enrolled for therapy. It was learned that he has an older, mentally challenged sister who could not fulfill her parents' expectations. The boy felt he had to perform in order not to be another disappointment for his parents. He put an enormous responsibility on himself to perform on behalf of both children and loosing himself in the process! His performance was thus not necessarily according to his own values but more the values of his parents as he thought they wish to be seen.

Implications for the child

It is often experienced in practice that children do and say what they think the adult wants to hear or will approve of. Du Toit, Grobler & Schenck (1987:25) mentioned the situation where a mother may encourage her son to take part in athletics because he is a good runner. She believes in his potential and wants the best for her child. The son, on the other hand, may feel that he is

under pressure to achieve and may wonder whether he will still be accepted if he fails to achieve. Consequently, the boy may import the value of his mother, namely to achieve to be accepted. If he fails to achieve, he may resort to steroids or drugs because he fears rejection.

When working with children, it is important to convey the message that they are totally accepted, as they are – in other words, the principle of unconditional positive regard in action.

2.4.1.7 Proposition 12

Self and behaviour

**Most of the ways of behaving which are adopted by the organism are those which are consistent with the concept of self.
Rogers, 1987: 507**

Symbolised behaviour is usually consistent with the individual's self-concept.

Rogers (1987: 508) elaborated by explaining that:

As the organism strives to meet its needs in the world as it is experienced, the form which the striving takes, must be a form consistent with his self-concept.

Du Toit, Grobler & Schenck (2001: 27) confirmed abovementioned and is of the opinion that behaviour is not merely directed at need satisfaction but also

has to agree with the individual's self-perception. For example: The person, who attaches high values to honesty, cannot strive for a sense of achievement through means that seem to be dishonest.

I

As behaviour usually fits with the self of the person, the counsellor should ask:

- Who do the people involved experience themselves to be?
- In what way does the behaviour fit with their sense of self?

Practical example

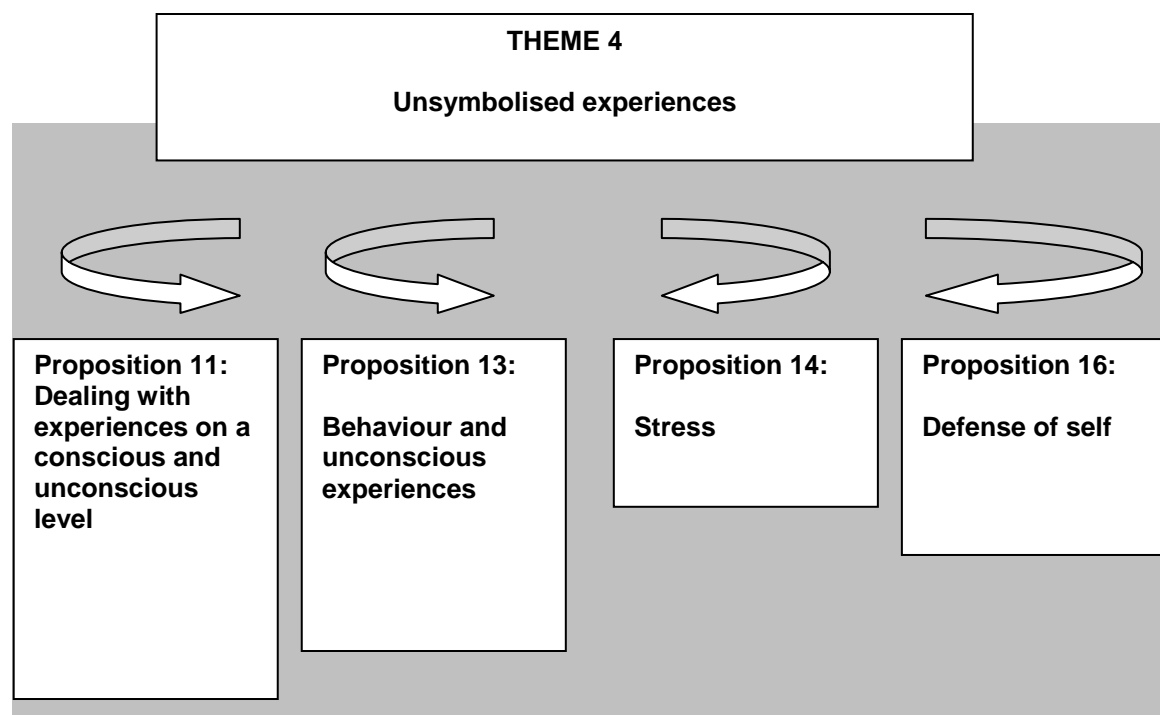
A 16 year old girl deliberately behave in a certain way to focus attention on herself – trying to shock people. In counselling it became clear that she has a very negative self-image and through her behaviour, want people to confirm it! She would, for instance, dress inappropriate for work and when confronted, blaming it on the fact that they just do not like her.

Implications for the child

Professional role-players working with children need to develop an ability to enable them to “see” the child's self-concept behind his/her behaviour instead of only focusing on the behaviour itself. Children try to tell us something through their behaviour and may not be able to verbalize their feelings or even be aware of what they are doing unconsciously. It is thus a challenge to the professional role player to first “see” the reason for and feelings behind the behaviour and secondly, to help the child also to “see” him/herself. As in the situation of the above practical example, instead of reacting to the negative behaviour and for instance placing the girl in a industrial school for problem

behaviour, “see” and listen to the unspoken message behind the behaviour, help her to see and understand herself and focus on enhancement of self worth. Through this, she will be more empowered to start taking control of her behaviour and her life.

Figure 6: Propositions – Theme 4



There are four propositions under the theme of unsymbolised experiences – as indicated in the schematic presentation above. In the previous proposition, it was clear that not all behaviour are necessarily conscious.

Rogers (1987: 144 -145) stated as follows:

The human being deals with much of his experience by means of the symbols attached to it. These symbols enable him to

manipulate elements of his experience in relation to one another, to project himself into new situations, to make many predictions about his phenomenal world.

As Du Toit, Grobler & Schenck (2001:31) explained the situation, a people have different experiences during their lifetime and attach particular symbols to each. For instance, a child see a picture of a tree and hear his/her parents tell him/her the word 'tree', which he/she then attach as symbol to the picture. The same process takes place in the case of feelings: If the child falls and his/her mother mentions a pain word like 'hurt', he/she symbolizes the word pain with something they do not like. Some experiences however are not conscious and therefore no symbols can be attached to it – for example when a client says 'I do not know why I am feeling this way of what is happening to me'. The proposition explains it as follows:

2.4.1.8 Proposition 11

Dealing with experiences on a conscious and unconscious level

As experiences occur in the life of the individual, they are either

- (a) symbolized, perceived, and organized into some relationship to the self,**
- (b) ignored because there is no perceived relationship to the self structure,**
- (c) denied symbolization or given a distorted symbolization because the experience is inconsistent with the structure of the self.**

Rogers, 1987: 503

According to Du Toit, Grobler & Schenck (2001: 32), individuals may deal with their experiences in various ways:

- Experiences may be symbolized and organized in some relationship to the self (Example: the books we read and remember are the ones that corresponds with our own ideas and needs).
- They may be ignored because they have no perceived relation to the self (Example: when we go shopping with a list, we focus only on the items we want to buy and hardly ever take notice of other items).
- Symbolizing of experience may be avoided (Example: Threatening or uncomfortable experiences are blocked out – for instance the individual exposed to incest cannot remember what happened as a child).
- Symbolizing may be distorted because the experience conflicts with the individual's self-perception (Example: If an experience cannot be symbolized or blocked out completely, it is distorted to fit in with the self. For instance, someone very modest may rather refer to an exam as easy instead of admitting that he/she did well).

Practical example

An eighteen year old girl was referred for counselling by her employer. She would make good progress in her work up to a point and then make careless mistakes as if she doesn't want to progress. The employer sensed that she might behave this way unintentionally because of something in her past. In counselling, it became evident that she was sexually abused by her father from a young age. In order for her not to tell on him, he deliberately belittled her. He told her it is because she is fat and ugly that these things happen to her and that she always will be unsuccessful!

Implications for the child

Before the professional role-player who works with children, make a decision that will affect such a child's life, they need to understand the symbols which were attached to every experience, which experiences are blocked out and which experiences are distorted to fit the child's self. In order to be able to do so, it is of utmost importance to get to know the child first, in other words, to see, feel and understand a situation through the eyes and experience of a child.

2.4.1.9 Proposition 13

Behaviour and unconscious experiences

Behaviour may, in some instances, be brought about by organic experiences and needs which have not been symbolized. Such behaviour may be inconsistent with the structure of the self, but in such instances, the behaviour is not 'owned' by the individual.

Rogers, 1987: 509

With this proposition Rogers (1987: 509) is of the opinion that the self is not in control and the behaviour not regarded as part of the self. Du Toit, Grobler & Schenck (2001: 37) elaborated on this as follows:

When an individual with a certain self-perception (of who he is and of what is consistent with his self) manifest behaviour inappropriate to that self, the individual will deny such behaviour rather than change his entire self-perception.

Practical example

An eleven-year-old boy constantly gets himself in trouble by running away from home – stay away for hours and then climbs back through the window again. He cannot explain his behaviour and, despite many promises not to do it again, he cannot control it. It was only through intensive therapy it became clear that tension in the home environment triggered the response.

Implications for the child

Never judge behaviour on face value only. It is important to investigate and to understand the motivation (conscious or unconscious) behind it. The behaviour of above-mentioned boy could have been seen as truancy and, because of his uncontrollable behaviour (through the eyes of his parents), found to be in need of care. Instead of placing him in an industrial school for behavioural problems, the social worker could focus on possible problems in the home environment and support the boy to become aware of the rational of

his behaviour, which lied on subconscious level and was inconsistent with the structure of his self.

2.4.1.10 Proposition 14

Stress

Psychological maladjustment exists when the organism denies awareness to significant sensory and visceral experiences, which consequently are not symbolized and organized into the gestalt of the self-structure. When this situation exists, there is a basic or potential psychological tension.

Rogers, 1987: 510

Rogers (1987: 510 – 512) argued that, if we think of the structure of the self as being a symbolic elaboration of a portion of the private experiential world of the organism, we realize that, when much of this private world is denied symbolization, certain basic tension result. He further indicates that statements as “I don’t know what I’m afraid of”, “I don’t know what I want” are frequent in counselling cases and are an indication of the lack of any integrated purposeful direction in which the individual is moving.

Practical example

In the previous practical example of the eleven-year-old boy who constantly ran away from home, he could never explain his behaviour – nor could he control it. Being caught in this vicious circle of running away, being caught, be in trouble, resulted in a lot of tension inside himself that he could not verbalize.

Implications for the child

Repeated negative behaviour, for instance stealing or absconding, must not automatically be labelled as delinquent behaviour. The professional role-player should first gain some understanding of whether the motivating behaviour is conscious or uncontrolled and then act accordingly.

2.4.1.11 Proposition 16

The defence of self

Any experience which is inconsistent with the organization or structure of self will be perceived as a threat, and the more of these perceptions there are, the more rigidly that self-structure is organized to maintain itself.
Rogers, 1987: 515

Du Toit, Grobler & Schenck (2001: 41) explained that experiences that conflict with the individual's self-perception are considered to be threatening to the self. The greater the number of such experiences, the more intent the self-structure becomes on self-preservation. In other words, the individual will protect him/herself from whatever appears to be threatening to their self-identified values and existence. In Prochaska & Norcross (1999:152-153) it was pointed out that Person-Centered Theory has been especially concerned with intrapersonal conflict between the client's concept of self and the total experience of the client, which includes feelings that are threatening to the person's self-concept.

Rogers (1987: 515) confirmed the seriousness of this when he said:

If the self cannot defend itself against deep threats, the result is a catastrophic psychological breakdown and disintegration.

In practice, for some reason, people find it acceptable to defend your physical self, but, behaviour to defend their psychosocial self is seen as peculiar. For instance, when a lion threatens people, they will act to protect themselves (*physical self*) by running and screaming. Nobody will find it peculiar behaviour. Yet, if a person becomes scared or angry when the *psychosocial self* is under threat, counsellors tend to regard such person's behaviour as abnormal. Researcher could not agree more with Du Toit, Grobler & Schenck, 2001: 42 when they stated that counsellors themselves are in fact threatening when they behave in ways that do not accord with the client's self! This is especially true when working with children. As Boy & Pine (1995: 222) confirmed:

Children quickly learn that the counsellor is the person with whom you have got to stay friendly or stay away from!

Practical example

A seventeen-year-old girl was labelled as 'delinquent' because she acted aggressively with every therapist and showed resistance to therapy - until she had a therapist who realized she was only defending herself because she felt threatened. The therapist actually "saw" through her. Not only did her behaviour change when she did not need to defend herself any longer, but she could actually be true to her real self – caring and sweet-tempered.

Implications for the child

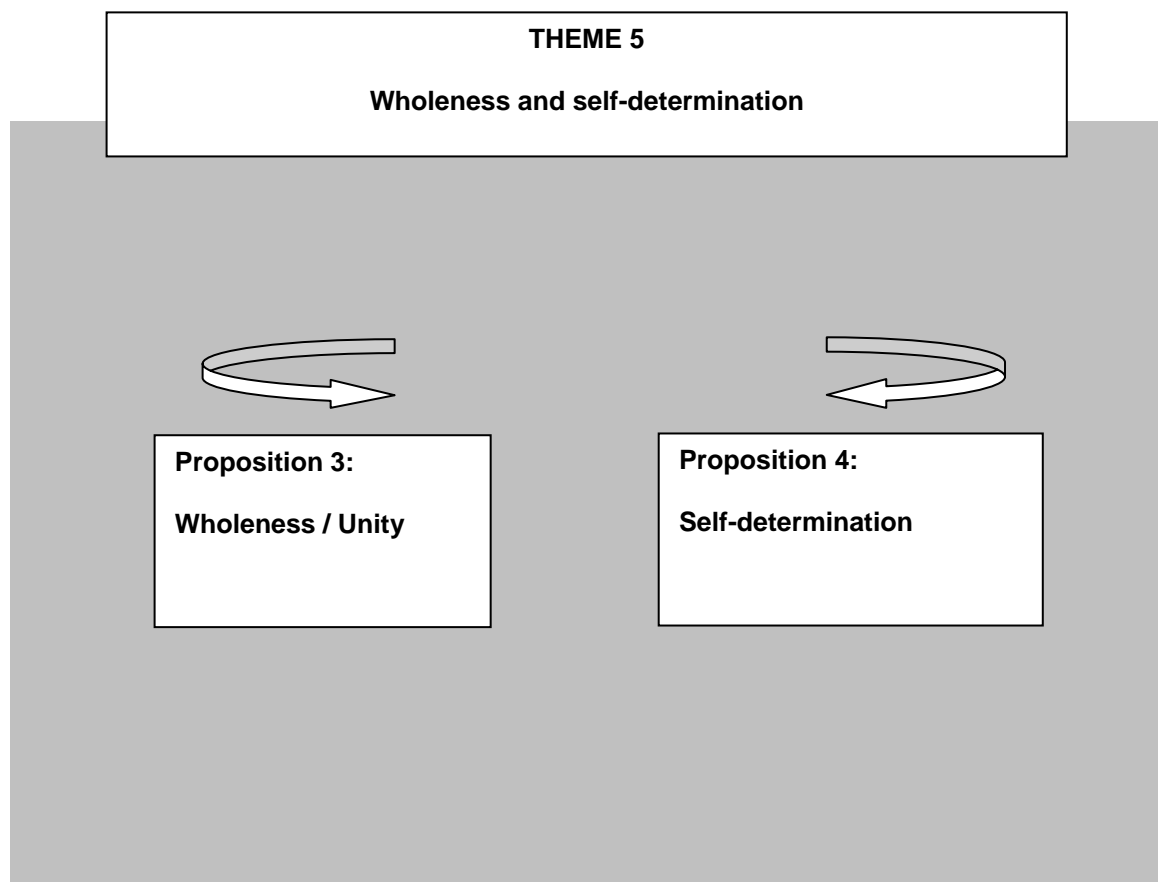
It is a regular tendency in practice to refer children for an assessment. Based on these assessments, recommendations are made and important decisions are taken, which seriously can affect a child's life. For researcher this imposes critical ethical issues, namely the issue of trust, versus the accuracy of the assessments on which the recommendations and decisions are going to be based. Researcher has often experienced that many professional role-players do not actually allow the child to get to know them first, build a trusting relationship with the children and let the children feel comfortable with the environment before doing the assessment. This implies that if the child does not trust adults and is scared because he/she perceives the environment as a threat, the assessment results will not be a true reflection of the situation.

Nobody feels exactly the same everyday. The results of a test on a day when a person is distressed will differ completely from the results of a test written in a relaxed atmosphere in which the person felt comfortable to reveal his/her real self. The latter will be a more accurate result and therefore more reliable for making recommendations on regarding issues that will affect such a person's whole life! Boy & Pine (1995: 223) echoed researchers concern by saying that children are aware of and are sensitive to such procedures:

The practice by the counsellor of gathering and using information may constitute a threat to the child and prevent the child from

revealing the feelings which cause behaviour. Counseling relationships formed under these circumstances, are not open and are characterized by a lack of authenticity and trust.

Figure 7: Propositions – Theme 5



According to Du Toit, Grobler & Schenck (2001:45) Rogers included all human experiences in his deliberations, including his thinking about how we respond to the world. Thus, our actions cannot be seen in isolation, or in terms of only some part of ourselves, but must be understood in the totality of people, including our interactions with each other.

2.4.1.12 Proposition 3

Wholeness / Unity

**The organism reacts as an organized whole to this phenomenal field.
Rogers, 1987: 486**

People are complete with all their ideas, feelings, behaviour, needs, values and physical attributes and each part is connected to the next. One does not act exclusively in terms of one's perceptions but all the dimensions of the self are integral to the person. Although we are not constantly aware of all these dimensions, they are always there and part of what we do and what we are.

Du Toit, Grobler & Schenck (2001:46) therefore urged counsellors to be open to all dimensions of human nature and not focus on just one aspect of a person.

Practical example

In order to counsel the mother and teenage son who experience serious problems in their relationship, the counsellor need to see each party within their own frame of reference. The mother's experience of childhood, issues she was exposed to, etcetera, influences her values attached to parenthood, her self-esteem and her way of thinking about life. The boy himself are exposed to different issues (peer pressure). The way they experience themselves, the values attached to parenthood, each individual's needs, how these needs are expressed, how they perceive each other, are all aspects that contribute to their wholeness and needs to be taken into consideration in order to understand their individual viewpoints.

Implications for the child

The professional role-players dealing with children cannot do so unless they have an understanding of children and an understanding of how children themselves experience all these aspects (their ideas, feelings, behaviour, needs, and values – every dimension of the self). Knowing the child is vastly different from knowing facts about the child!

Boy & Pine (1995: 210) stated categorically that it is the child's right to have the freedom of their own ideas, values and beliefs. Children should experience the epitome of respect, acceptance and understanding of their uniqueness and difference.

2.4.1.13 Proposition 4

Self-determination

The organism has one basic tendency and striving – to actualize, maintain, and enhance the experiencing organism.

Rogers, 1987: 487

Every human being has one basic striving: to actualize, maintain and develop the total self. Du Toit, Grobler & Schenck (2001:49) emphasized it as an extremely important principle in the counselling world but stressed that it is very difficult to operationalise. It is important that counsellors keep in mind

that this proposition refers to the *self* of the person (client) as he or she experiences it.

This self or identity might not necessarily be what a counsellor sees as 'good', but what is important is what the clients see as relevant to themselves. According to Rogers (1987: 487-488), self-actualization involves the tendency of the organism to maintain itself by for example taking in food, to behave defensively in the face of threat, to achieve the goal of self-maintenance even when the usual pathway to that goal is blocked, as well as the tendency to move in the direction of maturation. In short, to develop him/herself to be the best person he/she can.

Grant (2004:157) referred to self-determination as the liberty to do anything, which does not coerce, restrain, or injure another person:

The right to self-determination is the core element of the liberal idea of freedom, which claims for man, by reason of his humanity, the right, within limits to order his life as seems good to him.

Grant (2004:157) further more expressed the opinion that the right to direct one's life is an ethical, not a psychological or empirical concept. He confirmed the important principle as stressed by Du Toit, Grobler & Schenck (2001:49) that the focus are on the clients and what they see fit with their lives – not the opinion of the counsellor:

It does not depend on persons possessing an evolving capacity to make 'better' choices, or a potential to actualize their natures, or special knowledge or skills. All persons who are free from coercion, restraint or threat of injury are ordering their lives as they see fit. Persons who are depressed, miserable, suicidal, without hope or initiative, as well as those who are confident and have a sense of self-efficacy, are exercising their right to self-determination.

Practical example

Children removed from home and placed in alternative care (children's home) for instance – to what extent, if any at all, do we as professional role-players allow them to fulfil their right to self-determination? Researcher often experienced that they grow up with such a resistance towards the system (children's home) that their only focus in life is to get out and make their own decisions – whether right or wrong. The effect is that all the therapy given while in substitute care, are therefore of no value unless children are allowed to be an active participant in their lives and empowered to be part of their own process of decision-making.

Implications for the child

Axline (1969:13–14) referred to self-realization as the ultimate goal in life. She further stated that, when people develop sufficient self-confidence (consciously and purposefully to direct their behaviour by evaluation, selectivity, and application) to achieve their ultimate goals, they seem to be more adjusted in their experiential worlds. Landreth (1991:64) explained that all maladjustments result from incongruence between what is actually

experienced and the concept of the self. He specifically said the following about it:

Whenever a child's perception of an experience is distorted or denied, a state of incongruence between self and experience exists to some degree.

Rogers (1980: 115) built his Person-Centered Theory completely around the believe that:

Individuals have within themselves vast resources for self-understanding and for altering their self-concepts, basic attitudes, and self-directed behaviour.

He further believed that Client-Centered Therapy is an enactment of a deep feeling of respect for others. Landreth (1991:50) fully supported this opinion and in his tenets for relating to children, indicated that

- Children have an inherent tendency toward growth and maturity.
- They possess an inner intuitive wisdom.
- Children are capable of positive self-directio.
- They are capable of dealing with their world in creative ways.

According to Grant (2004: 158), the right to self-determination, can be exercised in the following ways:

- Through speaking for oneself, as voicing one's preferences and ideas.
- Through speech and action, as one makes one's own way in the world.

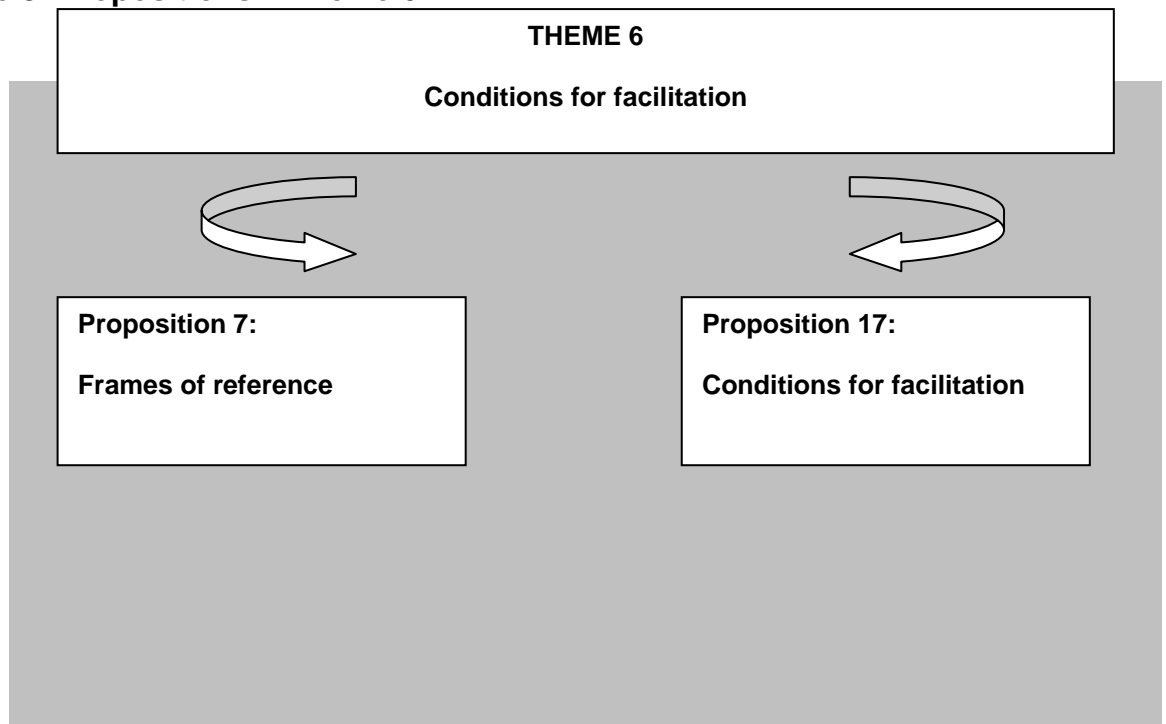
As professional role-players, we need to internalize this attitude and believe toward and about children. If not, we do not respect them as human beings and

do not allow them to fulfil their basic tendency or achieve their ultimate goal in life! As Grant (2004:159) eloquently stated:

Individuals who are not regarded as free to determine their ways in the world are treated as less than human, as less than oneself.

The right to self-determination is such a core aspect of the concept of a person in the Person-Centered Approach that we must have good ethical reasons to deny someone the right – even a child.

Figure 8: Propositions – Theme 6



2.4.1.14 Proposition 7

Frames of reference

The best vantage point for understanding behaviour is from the internal frame of reference of the individual himself.
Rogers, 1987: 494

Rogers (1897: 494) indicated that the only person, who fully knows his/her field of experience, is the individual him/herself. It would therefore appear that behaviour might best be understood by gaining, in so far as possible, the internal frame of reference of the person

him/herself, and seeing the world of experience of this person as nearly as possible through his/her eyes.

Du Toit, Grobler & Schenck (2001: 56) elaborates on this by saying that since behaviour is motivated by needs and accompanied by emotion, these three dimensions are best understood in terms of the individual's frame of reference. With respect to children in this regard, Landreth (1991:55) commented that children are the best sources of information about themselves.

Practical example

After failing Gr.9 for the second time, the professional role-players were considering placing this sixteen year old girl in an industrial school. Their justification was her IQ score of 85 (special school material!), her failing of two consecutive years and that she should be trained in a practical career direction. This girl experienced a lot of trauma within her family who always doubted her abilities. She had an extreme low self-esteem but a desperate need to proof her abilities. Through play therapy she started to believe in herself and believed she could complete matric in an academic school. Despite everything that counted against her, she did complete matric and also completed a secretarial course through college afterwards!

Implications for the child

Adults very often think they know what a child feels and therefore they entitle themselves to the right to make decisions on their behalf. As professional role-players we need to be very cautious about this as we make decisions that affect the child for the rest of his/her life. Sometimes behaviour seems meaningless and strange to the outsider but for that individual, it is meaningful and goal-directed. We need to remember that we are mere guests in the lives of the people we work with and need to use them to help us to understand their worlds. We are not allowed to force an entrance in people's lives but rather negotiate one with them. Rogers (1961:284) summarized it excellently when he explained the meaning of empathy, saying:

To sense the client's private world as if it were your own but without ever losing the 'as if' quality...!

2.4.1.15 Proposition 17

Conditions for facilitation

Under certain conditions, involving primarily complete absence of any 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.

Rogers, 1987: 517

It is clear that self-concepts change, both in the ordinary development of the individual as well as in therapy. In Person-Centered Therapy, by means of the relationship and the counsellor's handling of it, clients are gradually assured that they are accepted as they are. According to Rogers (1987: 517) people will then be more able to symbolise their experiences. Du Toit, Grobler & Schenck (2001: 60) explained that this proposition provides a guideline for intervention whereby the counsellor has to create a climate in which clients are accepted unconditionally, without judgment or condemnation. If the counsellor tries to perceive and accept the self as the client experience it, the client has no need to fight for the preservation of the symbolized self or to defend it. The result being that, as the symbolised self comes to be accepted, unsymbolised experiences are gradually admitted to consciousness.

Practical example

The biological mother of a teenage girl is involved in a lesbian relationship. The lesbian partner applied through court to adopt the girl and the biological parents consented to it. The court referred the case to a social worker for investigation. The social worker have to set her own values and believes aside, create a climate where the couple, as well as the child, feels accepted. Without any judgment and condemnation doing the investigation of whether the adoption will be to the benefit of the child, is of great importance.

Implications for the child

Landreth (1991:66) mentioned that he learned from his experience with children, what acceptance really mean and what it should be. He explained that children are non-assuming in their acceptance. They do not try to analyze or diagnose a person but accepts them unconditionally. It is therefore of utmost importance that the professional role-player realize how crucial the therapeutic conditions are in their relationship with children. Landreth (1991:64-65) described it as follows:

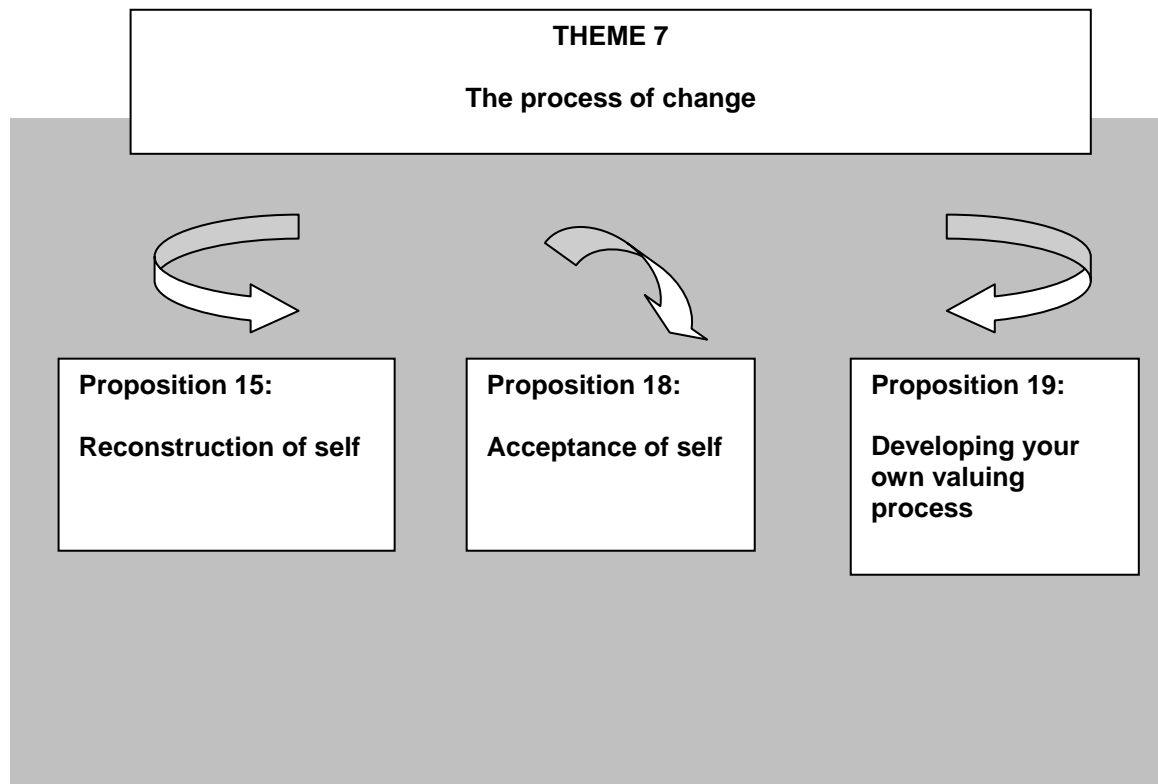
The attitude of the therapist which form the basis for the therapeutic relationship and which facilitate the release of the child's inner resources for growth are genuineness (being real), non-possessive warmth (warm caring and acceptance), and empathy (sensitive understanding).

This kind of acceptance and warm caring is characterised by respect for the child as a person of worth. If the professional role-player really cares about children and accepts them unconditionally, there will be an absence of labelling or judgment. The child will then be respected and prized just as much when deviant, moody, angry or resistive as when co-operative and happy with the result as Landreth (1991:77) confirmed:

Experiencing this acceptance of them, children begin to value them and come to perceive and accept themselves as unique and

separate. As children gradually experience being themselves, they are free to experience living in the present and to make creative, responsible use of their individuality.

Figure 9: Propositions – Theme 7



2.4.1.16 Proposition 15

Reconstruction of self

Psychological adjustment exist 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.

Rogers, 1987: 513

Rogers (1987: 514) mentioned that the freedom from inner tension exists when the concept of self is at least roughly congruent with all the experiences of the organism - in other words, the feeling of being in control of themselves. In this respect – with regard to children, Landreth (1991:120) explained that the development of self-control grows out of the interaction between the child's responsibility to make decisions, to choose without adult interference or guidance, and the child's redirection of unacceptable behaviours into controlled acceptable avenues.

Du Toit, Grobler & Schenck (2001: 64) hold the view that when previously unsymbolised or distorted experiences (whether positive or negative) are allowed symbolization and integration with the self, it enables the individual to express their experiences in a controlled way. This process (therapy) brings about changes – either the self could be restructured to fit with the experiences or the behaviour could change to fit with the existing self. The following practical example by Lucy Weeks (In Boy & Pine, 1995:154) would illustrate it perfectly:

Practical example

A Boy in fourth grade was referred for therapy as he was constantly in trouble with his teachers and playmates. He was disruptive, inattentive, rude or in tears and at times destructive.

In early play sessions, he showed great tension and restlessness. He tested out the counsellor's acceptance at first, and then found release from tension through bodily activity. He talked very little, and when he did, it was largely about interest other than self and family. When he mentioned his own behaviour, it was to blame others, a refusal of responsibility for his actions, and he would move away very rapidly from any uncomfortable subject. He soon began to use play media with more purpose. He found a means to express what he had experienced and what he dreamed. He expressed himself, often with great feeling and seemed to move to a greater realization of himself and his environment. His next steps were toward a more realistic assessment of himself and a greater acceptance of his family and peers.

Implications for the child

Oaklander (1988:281) confirmed the essence of this proposition when she said the following:

How we perceive and value ourselves determines to a great extent how we behave, how we cope with life, how we manage ourselves. Our society's general lack of respect for children as entitled human beings serves to deteriorate every child's sense of self-worth.

Weeks (In Boy & Pine,1995:145) echoes the above statement with the following:

The child's response to life, in the form of continual striving, growing, and changing as the child observes and experiences the world and the people in the child's life, can be supported and nourished by the child's self-awareness as a valued human being.

Children need to be treated in such a way that they can experience that they are accepted and respected as individuals in their own right. If we, as professional role-players, can act in such a way that children's rights will be protected, we will be giving them back their sense of self-worth.

2.4.1.17 Proposition 18

Acceptance of self

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.

Rogers, 1987: 520

The person who accepts him/herself, will, because of his or her self-acceptance, has better interpersonal relations with others. If a child experience love and acceptance from others, the child will more readily, accept his/her self. If the child is continually unsure of the self as a person of

worth, much of the child's energy for growth is spent in defending the self against the hurt of not being completely acceptable.

Landreth (1991:96) stressed the fact that a significant objective of the professional role-player is to help the child to create a climate in which the child feels free to be fully who he/she is at that moment. His rule of thumb is:

You cannot accept another person's weakness until you are able to accept your own (Landreth, 1991:97).

2.4.1.18 Proposition 19

Developing your own valuing process

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 so largely upon introjections, which have been distortedly symbolized - with a continuing organismic valuing process.

Rogers, 1987: 522

Du Toit, Grobler & Schenck (2001:67) stated that propositions 18 and 19 present the long-term goal of Client-Centered Therapy.

Individuals are now able to decide for themselves what they consider being important in their lives and no longer need to adopt other people's values.

Practical example

(Taken from Oaklander, 1988:232)

The parents brought their 10-year-old little girl to therapy because she is withdrawn and refused to talk. Although she does well in school, the teacher also commented on the fact that she completely clams up. By doing so, she closes herself off many parts of herself and her life. Through therapy and expressive techniques she first began to communicate without giving up her silence – giving information about her likes and dislikes. Eventually she realized she has something to say and began talking to the therapist, her parents, teacher and friends.

Implications for the child

The essence of these two propositions can be summarized through the opinion of Oaklander (1988: 284) when she said the following:

To help a children feel better about themselves, we need to bring them back to themselves. The first, and essential, step in this process is to accept their present feelings – the rotten, blank, nothing, despairing ones they has now. As they accept these feelings, they can become acquainted with their senses and their bodies and all they can do with it. They can learn about themselves and their uniqueness from the inside, instead of through the judgements and opinions of others, and begin to feel a sense of well-being - that it is OK to be who they are.

Taken above into account, the professional role-player has a responsibility, and according to the researcher, an obligation, to accept children for whom they are. Furthermore, to understand how they feel and experience a situation; to allow them to participate in their own lives by having a say as to what they need, like or dislike. Last, but not least, the professional role-player should respect children in ensuring that their rights are protected. Only then will children feel worth, safe and secure enough to allow themselves to be part of a therapeutically process.

2.5 Application of the Person-Centered Approach in work with children

2.5.1 The meaning of Person-Centered Therapy to the child

Rogers (1987: 257) expressed the opinion that

to be accepted as a person despite one's deficiencies, seems to be an important part of therapy.

To work according to the Person-Centered Approach as a counselor, and specifically in this regard a Child-Centered Approach, means that children perceive adults who

- Are not shocked by anything they do.
- Allow the expression of their feelings.
- Treat their utterances with respect which no other adult offers to the same extent.

Dated back to 1939, Rogers already realized the importance of dealing with children as persons and not with behaviour symptoms. In his book on ***The Clinical Treatment of the Problem Child (Rogers, 1939: 14)*** he said:

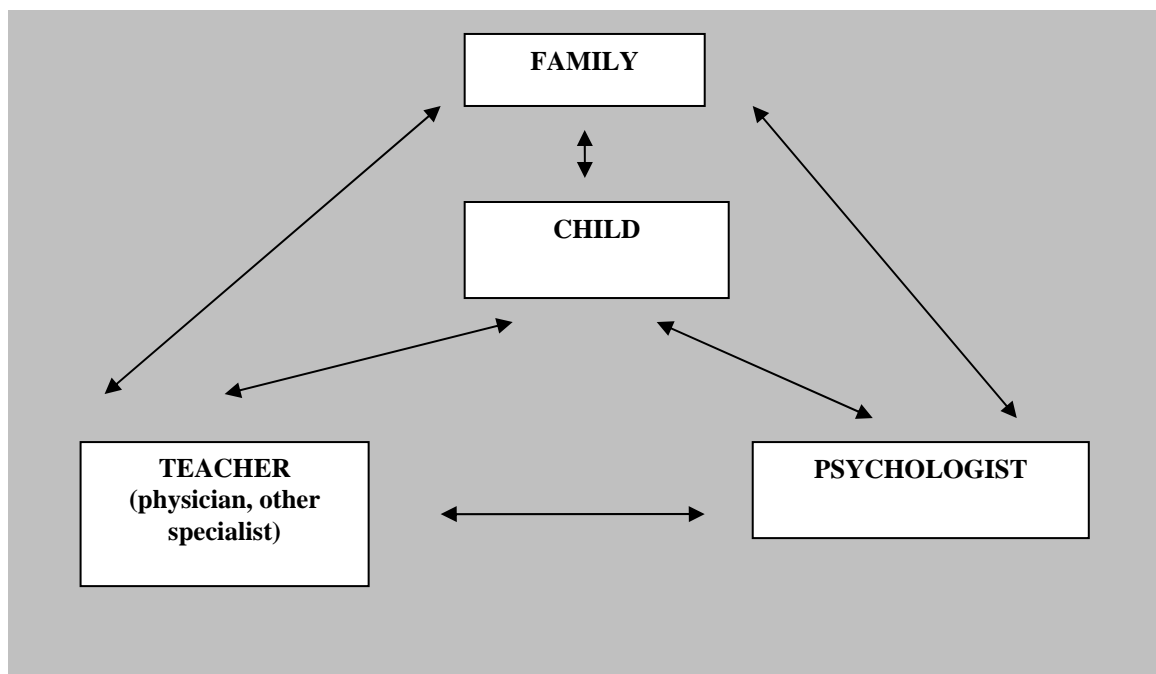
It is widely recognized that the child who today exhibits personality problems and behaviour deviations is the delinquent, the criminal, or the neurotic of tomorrow. To what extent have we developed rational means of treating the childhood symptoms so as to prevent and avoid the later serious consequences?

Many years later, the same question is still relevant, as confirmed by Boy & Pine (1995: 165):

Many adults have a “they’ll grow out of it” attitude toward the typical problems of children. Fortunately, some children do outgrow some of their problems. But for the majority, these problems carry over into the adolescent and adult years. They show themselves in various forms of delinquent behaviour, underachievement, self-centeredness, destructive tendencies, rebelliousness, personal irresponsibility, strained relations between husband and wife, personality clashes at work, lack of commitment to anything, and an inability to love or find meaning in life.

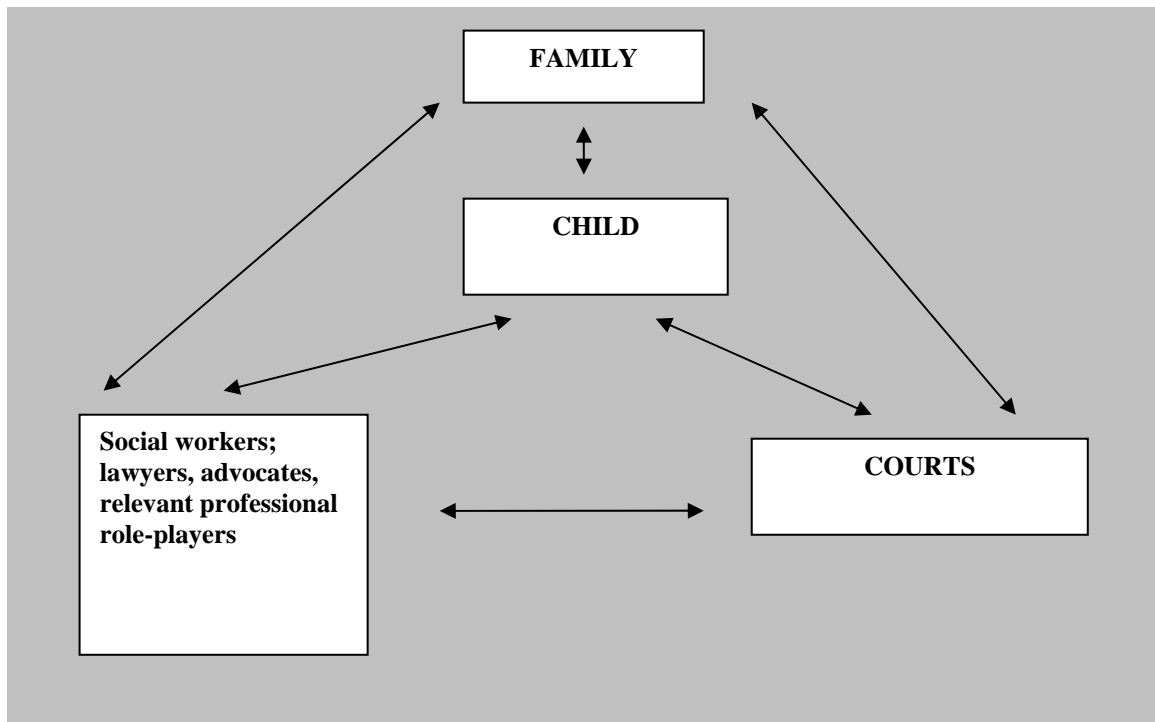
Recently the Russian Education Department realized that children's psychological health is the most fundamental value of education. Shuvalov's research (2003: 71 – 94) on *Problems of the development of the psychological counselling service in the system of children's supplementary education*, resulted in a model of Child-Centered Interaction:

Figure 10: Model of Child-Centered interaction in education



For the sake of the current research, namely to develop a protocol to ensure the protection of the rights of the child during the legal process, the same model will be applicable if adjusted as follows:

Figure 11: Model of Child-Centered Interaction in the legal process



This model implies that children (their needs, behaviour, thoughts and feelings about their lives as well as their rights) be the centre of the process that needs to be followed when children are involved in a legal process.

2.5.2 The need for a Child-Centered Approach

Adults too frequently adopt the attitude of “children are to be seen, not heard” and justify their own behaviour accordingly. Borland, Laybourn, Hill & Brown (1998:119) concluded in their research that adults like to remain in control – making decisions on behalf of children and saw this as the best way to promote children’s best interests! The first logical question in introducing this model will thus be “Why a Child-Centered Approach?” Boy & Pine (1995:164 -165) explained that, since adults are, (emotionally) many years removed from

the experiences of childhood, they tend to forget the difficult and painful aspects of being a child. The authors further emphasized an extremely important matter which researcher cannot stress enough, namely:

The child's psychological and social development is more critically important today than at any time in history. Today's children are faced with problems which are unprecedented in their severity. The world has changed and that change has produced deeper and more debilitating problems than those faced by any previous generation.

Landreth, Baggerly & Tyndall-Lind (1999:272) dealt with the frustration of many counsellors who attempted to counsel children by adapting basic adult counselling skills without success. Based on these experiences, they recommended a paradigm shift to Child-Centered counselling. Erdman & Lampe (1996: 374) recognized that:

Developmentally, children differ from adults cognitively, emotionally, physically, and psychologically, and these differences require special knowledge and sensitivity by the counselor.

Landreth, Baggerly & Tyndall-Lind (1999:272) pointed out how essential it is to recognize how the abovementioned developmental characteristics can affect a child's ability to communicate! Boy & Pine (1995: 9 – 21) identified

fifteen objective and subjective reasons to support the theory and practice of Child-Centered counselling which will be based on the Person-Centered Approach and will be discussed briefly as follows:

2.5.2.1 Reasons to support the theory and practice of Child-Centered Counselling

2.5.2.1.1 Child-Centered Counselling possesses a positive philosophy of the person

The Person-Centered Approach views the person as having basic impulses of love, belonging and security, which in turn influence one to be co-operative, trustworthy, forward moving and realistic. These human qualities tend to become actualized in environments that encourage their emergence and are dormant in environments that repress them. Through a Child-Centered Approach, the relationship between the professional role-players and the child concerned will focus on respect, the child's capacity for self-direction, and a prizing of the worth of each child (Boy & Pine, 1995: 9). As Landreth (1991: 55) confirmed:

Child Centered Therapy is an attitude, a philosophy and a way of being.

2.5.2.1.2 Child-Centered Counselling articulates propositions regarding human personality and behaviour

The propositions regarding human personality and behaviour (as discussed in detail in this chapter), form the philosophic core of Child-Centered Counselling and provide the counsellor with a general conceptual framework for understanding human motivation and behaviour. With specific reference to a Child-Centered Approach, Boy & Pine (1995: 9) summarized the basic propositions regarding personality as viewing the child as:

- Being the best determiner of a personal reality.
- Behaving as an organized whole.
- Desiring to enhance the self.
- Goal directed in satisfying perceived needs.
- Being behaviourally influenced by feelings that affect rationality.
- Best able to perceive the self.
- Being able to be aware of the self.
- Valuing.
- Interested in maintaining a positive self-concept.
- Behaving in ways that are consistent with the self-concept.
- Not owning behaviour that is inconsistent with the self.
- Producing psychological freedom or tension by admitting or not admitting certain experiences into the self-concept.
- Responding to threat by becoming behaviourally rigid.

- Admitting into awareness experiences that are inconsistent with the self if the self is free from threat.
- Being more understanding of others if a well integrated self-concept exist.
- Moving from self-defeating values toward self-sustaining values.

2.5.2.1.3 Child-Centered Counselling possesses achievable goals for the child

Boy & Pine (1995:10) emphasized that Child-Centered Counselling is aimed at helping the child to:

- Engage in behaviour which liberates, actualizes, and enhances the self [Propositions 5,6,12].
- Engage in the discovery of previously denied feelings and attitudes [Propositions 11,13,14.]
- Become more acceptant and trustful of the self [Propositions 8,18].
- Engage in re-organizing the self [Proposition 15].
- Become more self-reliant [Propositions 16,18].
- Become more responsible for the self [Proposition 19].
- Engage in self-determined choices, decision, and solutions [Propositions 1,3].
- Achieve individuality while being conscious of social responsibilities [Propositions 2,7,9,10].

- Becomes sensitive to the process of becoming a person which involves a new and self actualizing way of being [Propositions 4,17].

2.5.2.1.4 Child-Centered Counselling possesses a definition of the Counsellor's role within the counselling relationship

To work from a Child-Centered Approach as a counsellor (professional role-players) will enable the counsellor to be understanding, liberal, acceptant, empathic, a sensitive listeners, authentic, concrete and possesses a sense of involvement while equalizing the relationship (Boy & Pine, 1995: 10). Axline (1969) identified eight basic principles as the nature of the interaction between the therapist and child in the Child-Centered Approach. Landreth (1991:77-78) revised it in order to incorporate the basic conditions of the Person- Centered Approach:

- The therapist is genuinely interested in the child and develops a warm, caring relationship.
- The therapist experiences unqualified acceptance of the child and does not wish that the child were different in some way.
- The therapist creates a feeling of safety and permissiveness in the relationship so the child feels free to explore and express self completely.
- The therapist is always sensitive to the child's feelings and gently reflects those feelings in such a manner that the child develops self-understanding.

- The therapist believes deeply in the child's capacity to act responsibly, unwaveringly respects the child's ability to solve personal problems and allows the child to do so.
- The therapist trusts the child's inner direction, allows the child to lead in all areas of the relationship and resists any urge to direct the child's play or conversation.
- The therapist appreciates the gradual nature of the therapeutic process and does not attempt to hurry the process.
- The therapist establishes only those therapeutic limits that help the child accept personal and appropriate relationship responsibility.

2.5.2.1.5 Child-Centered Counselling has research evidence supporting its effectiveness

According to Boy & Pine (1995:11), any theory of counselling must satisfy the requirements of being both an art and a science by possessing both qualitative and quantitative research evidence, which confirms the effectiveness of the theory. They confirm that the Child-Centered Approach is supported by a greater amount of research than any other approach to counselling and psychotherapy.

2.5.2.1.6 Child-Centered Counselling is comprehensive

Boy & Pine (1995: 12) pointed out that the comprehensive nature of Client-Centered view is evident in its application to teaching, organizational behaviour, family relationships, parenting, groups, marriage and its alternatives, leadership, pastoring and the process of peaceful communication between and among nations. The comprehensiveness of Client-Centered Counselling enables it to be applied in a variety of settings which deal with a wide range of human problems: elementary, middle, and high schools; mental health centres; colleges and universities; rehabilitation agencies; prisons and halfway houses; pastoral counselling centres; marriage and family centres; human development centres; employment service agencies; youth centres and religious seminaries. The depth and range of the Client-Centered viewpoint enables it to be applied in any agency that deals with human experiences and perceptions.

2.5.2.1.7 Child-Centered Counselling has application value

A further motivation of the authors (Boy & Pine, 1995: 13) to support the use of Child-Centered counselling is that it is clear and precise enough to be applied. They explained it as follow:

At the process level, the counsellor's reflections of the child's feelings is an understandable concept that is

applicable in proportion to the counsellor's grasp of why it is done and how such reflections contribute to the child's self-awareness.

In order to apply the approach, it is important for the counsellor (professional role-player) to be *attitudinally* Child-Centered – as Landreth (1991:55) previously stated:

Child -Centered therapy is an attitude, a way of being!

2.5.2.1.8 Child-Centered Counselling has an expansive intellectual and Attitudinal substance

Boy & Pine (1995:14) is of the opinion that one of the intellectually stimulating aspects of client-centeredness is its connection with other past and present systems of thought. Through the Client-Centered viewpoint as a point of reference, it enables professional role-players to a better understanding of the writings of existentialists, humanist, phenomenologist, theists, rationalists and politicians. According to Prochaska & Norcross (1999:168), Rogers implored such an openness in his later writings. Rogers (1986:259) said:

Open new vistas, bring new insights, challenge our hypotheses, enrich our theory, expand our knowledge and involve us more deeply in an understanding of the

phenomena of human change.

2.5.2.1.9 Child-Centered Counselling focuses on the child as a person rather than on the child's problems

As this approach is Person-Centered and not Problem-Centered it have certain advantages in contrasts to other theories. However Mearns (2004: 90-91) acknowledged that it is difficult to function as a Person-Centered therapist in a Problem-Centered environment. He explained that, when we consider the relationship between 'Problem-Centered' and Person-Centered' we need to be aware that it very much depends on how we view 'the problem'. Mearns (2004:90) emphasized the fact that each person has a unique problem and must be treated as unique:

The definition of the problem is something the client does, gradually symbolizing different facets under the gentle facilitation of the therapist; the client's work in 'defining the problem' is the therapy. This is the same reasoning behind Rogers's statement that the therapy is the diagnosis.

In dealing with children in the legal process, researcher cannot emphasize enough that this is where the focus should be. As Boy & Pine (1995: 15) explained:

Since Child-Centered Counselling focuses on the child rather than the problem, it possesses a deeper potential for assisting

a child to become more adequate, as a person, in dealing with a range of problems. When the child becomes more psychologically stable, the child is freer to deal with, and find solutions to, specific problems.

2.5.2.1.10 Child-Centered Counselling focuses on the importance of the counsellor's attitude

Boy & Pine (1995: 15) made an interesting remark that counselling theories in general focus on techniques as the core of the counselling process and the therapeutic influence of the *counsellor as a person* is neglected.

The personhood of the counsellor, when expressed through a qualitative counselling relationship, becomes the primary influence on the child's co-operation in the counselling process (Boy & Pine, 1995: 15).

The authors substantiated their opinion by saying when one listens to children when they describe how counsellors have helped them, one often will hear the counsellor's personhood as the fundamental influence rather than the techniques that the counsellor used.

This is where the core conditions of the Person-Centered Approach (genuineness, unconditional positive regard, congruence and empathy) come into practice. When working with children, they

need to sense the genuineness of the relationship with the professional role-player before trusting them with the facts that influence their lives.

2.5.2.1.11 Child-Centered Counselling provides the counsellor with a systematic response pattern

Child-Centered Counselling presents the most clear and well defined response pattern to guide the Child-Centered counsellor in the process of counselling, namely to reflect the child's feelings. As described by Boy & Pine (1995: 16), this response pattern

- Enables the counsellor to assimilate and absorb the child's perceptions, values and attitudes. [*acceptance*]
- enables the child to develop an awareness of how these perceptions, values and attitudes affect his/her behaviour. [*relationship*]
- Enables the child to perceive the counsellor as a caring person who is able to understand him/her and his/her problem from the child's viewpoint. [*empathy*]
- Frees the child to disclose information which the child was not able to share in other interpersonal relationships.
- Serves to establish a bond of trust between the child and the counsellor. [*unconditional positive regard and acceptance*]

2.5.2.1.12 Child-Centered Counselling provides flexibility for the counsellor to go beyond reflection of feelings

The principles underlying Child-Centered Counselling are neither restrictive nor rigid. Consequently this approach gives the counsellor a high degree of flexibility if one is willing to absorb the implications of what it means to be Child-Centered. As Boy & Pine (1995:17) stated;

The Child-Centered counsellor's behaviour is within the bounds of the theory when it is Child-Centered and meets the needs of the child. The counsellor's behaviour is outside the bounds of the theory and is Counsellor-Centered when it instead meets the needs of the counsellor.

2.5.2.1.13 Child-Centered Counselling can be individualized according to the particular needs of a child

Child-Centered Counselling enables the process to fit the child rather than forcing the child into a predetermined process. Considering the current legal process, we have to admit it is a predetermined process and we are forcing the children into it – with the result that more harm than good, is done.

Through the Child-Centered Approach, the counsellor (professional role-player) develops a relationship in which the child identify the problem and choose the behaviour that will enable the need to be met. As Boy & Pine (1995: 18) explained:

A Child-Centered relationship is an open and flexible relationship because the child is the one who determines the scope and depth of a problem, and once this has occurred, the child is in the best position to explicitly or implicitly identify the process for solving the problem. Such and individualization of counselling enables child-centeredness to be a highly accurate approach in its ability to be congruent with the needs of children.

Landreth (1991:78-79) echoed above opinion and therefore suggested that the relationship (as the key to growth) is always focused on the present, living experience:

Personrather thanproblem

Present.....rather thanpast

Feelingsrather than.....thought or acts

Understanding.....rather thanexplaining

Accepting.....rather than correcting

Child's direction.....rather than.....therapist's instruction

Child's wisdom.....rather than.....therapist's knowledge

2.5.2.1.14 Child-Centered Counselling enables a child's behaviour to change in a natural sequence

Children who enter a counselling relationship usually has an interpersonal communication problem, which is caused by an inability to communicate their feelings. When a number of negative feelings are repressed, it causes tension, behavioural confusion and physical symptoms. When acting from a Child-Centered Approach, a relationship is established with the child, in which these repressed feelings can be released. By accurate reflection of this feelings, children become more comfortable in the relationship, which enable them to describe these feelings more deeply. Once the repressed feelings are expressed, these children will be inclined to seek a solution for these (Boy & Pine, 1995: 18). Landreth (1991:79) described it as follows:

The relationship provides the consistent acceptance of the child which is necessary for the development of enough inner freedom and security by the child to express self in self-enhancing ways.

2.5.2.1.15 Child-Centered Counselling can draw from the process components of other theories of counselling and child development

Since the Child-Centered Approach relies more on the counselling relationship itself as the vehicle for behavioural change, the counsellor

will look for useable techniques from other theories to suit the individual needs of the child. These techniques include role playing, fantasizing, desensitization, goal identification, modelling, encouragement and confrontation (Boy & Pine, 1995: 20).

2.6 Person-Centered Approach and the Rights of children

The statement by Boy & Pine (1995: 206-207) that

Counselling has the potential to be a liberating process in which the child can sense personal rights, the child's worth as a person, and an awareness that the child can have some control over what is happening in his or her life

is echoed by researcher and is, in essence, what this research is aimed at – namely to create a process through a protocol, to ensure that children

- Are aware of their rights.
- Feel worth as people.
- Can experience some control in their lives.

In the introduction of this chapter, researcher mentioned the fact that the Person-Centered Approach enables the social worker to deal effectively with the rights of children. Although chapter four deals with children's rights in detail, researcher do feel it is necessary to refer to some specific rights at this stage in order to clarify how the Person-Centered (Child-Centered) approach as such, is inseparable from working with children and ensure that their rights are respected.

Boy & Pine (1995: 207 – 214) identified a tentative list of rights of children that need to be respected. They described it as follows:

2.6.1 The child has the right to distributive justice

The child has the right to equality of treatment under the law.

Distributive justice is based upon the concept that all children should have equal access to counselling; equality of treatment, positive regard and empathic understanding regardless of the child's race, gender, religion, values, handicap and ethnic affiliation. It is the opinion of researcher that age should be added to the above criteria. It is often experienced in practice that children are being discriminated against because of their age.

The following example demonstrate researcher's view:

Practical example:

A four-year old boy witnessed his father killing his mother and himself. He wanted to remain in the care of his maternal grandmother who were his primary caretaker since birth and always lived with the family. Yet, the Commissioner of Child Welfare decided he is too young to decide for himself and issued an adoption order in favour of the paternal uncle and aunt. The result is an extremely unhappy child, constantly in psycho-therapy!

2.6.2 The child has the right to retributive justice

Retributive justice is the rendering of justice to those who have been denied justice. Children's rights are mentioned in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the child (United Nations Convention, 1989: 2 – 4); the Bill of rights as entrenched in the South African Constitution (The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act 200 of 1993) and various domestic legislation aimed at facilitating the implementation of principles espoused in the Constitution. Yet, when it comes to practice, it remains rhetoric! There are no consistency, for instance in court procedures, ensuring that children's rights will be respected.

2.6.3 The child has the right to be treated with dignity and worth as a person

Boy & Pine (1995: 207) expressed the opinion that the society and the counselling professions often give lip service to this concept. Oaklander (1988:281) actually confirmed the statement when she said:

The society's general lack of respect for children as entitled human beings serves to deteriorate every child's sense of self-worth.

What all children want, is fair treatment, equal access to a counsellor's time, energy and attention and to be treated with dignity and worth simply because the child is human. Their parents' position in the community should not be a qualifying criterion. Landreth (1991:50) echoed above statements and emphasized fact that children are worthy of respect because they have worth and dignity as individuals:

Children are people. They do not have to earn that distinction!

2.6.4 The child has the right to self-determination

The child's right to reach for self-determined solutions to problems comes from the counsellor's respect for the dignity and worth of the child as a person. This right of self-determination is a natural extension of the

counsellor's respect for the child's dignity and worth. The child's right to make mistakes, to challenge, to grow, to develop is a right which cannot be denied (Boy & Pine, 1995: 208). The question may be asked as to why not? As professional role-players dealing with children, we need to be aware of and believe in their abilities, as well as respect them for dealing with their worlds the way they do. Landreth (1991:50) confirmed that children are capable of positive self-direction and dealing with their worlds in creative ways. To prove the statement that children are capable of self-determination, Landreth (1991:61) referred to the infant as an example:

The infant is not content to continue crawling from one place to another. An inner urge exists to stand up, followed by a developmental forward-moving continuation of the inner striving which results in the child learning to walk. This is not a conscious decision, a well thought out plan, or the result of some significant adult's effort to teach walking. It occurs spontaneously as a result of growth and development. Although some pain may be experienced in this process when the child falls or take a wobbly step, the infant continues this forward-striving directional process toward growth. The infant will try again and again until walking is mastered to the infant's satisfaction. Since, in these experiences, the infant has been responsible for self, the accomplishment and accompanying satisfaction are internalized and strengthen the self. Such effort and determination do earn respect!

2.6.5 The child has the right to become voluntarily involved in counselling

The child's right to be voluntarily engaged in counselling will ensure a counselling program with credibility in which children sense that their voluntary participation is not only a right but a necessary first step if the counselling process is to be effective (Boy & Pine, 1995: 208). When children are forced into counselling, they lack the motivation to deal with a problem situation – mostly because they may not necessarily perceive or experience it as a problem in the same way the parent does. By allowing children to participate voluntarily in counselling, a responsibility is placed on the counsellor to render a quality service.

2.6.6 The child has the right to acquire an understanding of counselling

If the child has the freedom of choosing or rejecting counselling, then the child has the right to sufficient knowledge and understanding of the counselling process (Boy & Pine, 1995: 209). With regard to this study, researcher is of the opinion that children must have a right to know what is going to happen in their lives during a counselling process. Parents, counsellors and professional role-players often think they protect children by not sharing the information with them. Children can only experience and perceive it as distrust. In practice, this scenario is often found when parents go through a divorce. Parents often think they protect the children by not explaining the facts to them. This is unfair to children as their whole

life is disrupted through all the changes – yet it is expected of them to successfully cope with it! Concerning counselling, children need to know why they have to attend the sessions, what is expected of them and what the process entails. The following example explains the above:

Practical example:

Researcher explained to a nine-year old boy that he would be coming to play once a week until his heart is healed. When he realized he actually enjoys the special time where he do not need to pretend, he asked “*and what if I don’t tell you when my heart is healed?*”

2.6.7 The child has the right to confidentiality

Maintaining and respecting the confidences of children is essential in counselling. Boy & Pine (1995: 209) said:

counselling cannot occur unless the confidentiality of the relationship is assured.

If a child cannot feel secure in revealing him/herself to the counsellor because of a lack of trust, counselling will not have any purpose. Children will be hesitant to talk about their problems or needs until they are certain that the counsellor can be trusted. Boy & Pine (1995: 210) are of the opinion that children will enter the counselling relationship voluntarily and

more openly when they know that the counsellor will respect their right to confidentiality.

Landreth (1991: 145-147) pointed out that confidentiality is a difficult issue when working with children. On the one hand, the counsellor must be cautious of the way the child is informed or assured about keeping certain information confidential. The child should not feel guilty about information he/she shall or cannot share with the parents at that moment of time. On the other hand, parents are legally responsible for the child and also pay the bills for therapy. They may feel they have the right to know what is going on in the sessions. Where does the parent's right to know end and the child's right to privacy begin? It is an important ethical question and difficult to answer. Researcher would like to adhere to the guideline given by Landreth (1991:147) in this respect. According to him, the decision is always dependent on the parent's ability to use the information appropriately, the content of the information, the emotional vulnerability of the child, and the physical safety of parties involved.

It is also wise to inform children that their special time with the counsellor is private – no information about what is said and done will be revealed unless the child consents to it. Should there be information the counsellor deems necessary to share with the parents, the child will be informed about it – except in a situation where the child needs to be protected from physical harm (for instance a suicidal threat). It should always remain the

child's choice whether they want to share any information with their parents regarding the therapeutically sessions.

2.6.8 The child has the right to be different

In the counselling relationship, children should experience the epitome of respect, acceptance and understanding of their uniqueness and difference. Boy & Pine (1995: 211) pointed out that the freedom to have ideas, values and beliefs - the permission to be oneself - the right to be different - exist in a counselling climate that is marked by a deep respect for the individuality and uniqueness of the child. In line with the basic principal of Person-Centered Therapy, it is in an atmosphere where uniqueness is fostered and difference is valued that the full discovery of the self can be achieved. With reference to Child-Centered therapy, Boy & Pine (1995:211) confirmed the above statement by saying:

In an atmosphere where differences are valued and where the child feels that individual worth and contribution are held in high regard, the child sees that there is something that the child can contribute – that the child's meaning, feelings, and ideas have value and significance.

2.6.9 The child has the right to be accepted

Acceptance should be a basic therapeutic condition when dealing with children. Landreth (1991:185) also acknowledged the importance thereof and stated as follows:

Acceptance grows out of a genuine and sincere interest in children, sensitivity to their rights, and a belief that they can assume responsibility for themselves. Children, who experience such an atmosphere of acceptance, learn that they can depend on others for support while developing their own sense of adequacy and independence.

Acceptance of the child means acceptance of the child's values. Boy & Pine (1995:211) mentioned that the counsellor does not have to agree or disagree with these values, only accept them as representing the child's viewpoint. Landreth (1991:185) echoed above and mentioned that acceptance does not imply approval of what the child is doing. Children have a need to be accepted as a person of worth, regardless of inadequacies, deficiencies or behaviour. As Boy & Pine (1995: 211-212) explained:

In being acceptant of the child's personal values – the counsellor must recognize the child's right to be so that the child may become. Allowing a child to be will enable the child to examine

that state of being and alter it as a response to effective counselling.

In practice it implies that the professional role-player will give children the opportunity of holding and expressing personal meanings without ridicule, attack, or moralization. With this kind of acceptance children will be free to look at values without fear.

2.6.10 The child has the right to make mistakes

As Boy & Pine (1995: 212) explained:

Where mistakes are not permitted, the freedom and willingness of people to make choices are severely limited.

Growth is facilitated when error is accepted as a natural part of the process of growth. Growth requires the challenge of new and different experiences, the trying of the unknown, and therefore, it necessarily must involve, making mistakes.

For children to grow and learn, they need opportunities to explore new situations and ideas without being penalized. Unlike the preconceived notion of adults, Boy & Pine (1995: 212) confirmed researcher's opinion that no child, within a normal intelligence range, is incapable of making choices, although some children may feel that they can't. Boy & Pine

(1995:212) summarize the importance of allowing children to make mistakes:

The child who feels free to choose and move in any direction discovers an increasing pride and confidence in making personal choices, and those choices will be characterized by experiences and goals which sustain the self and enhance others.

2.6.11 The child has a right to counsellor genuineness

Genuineness, as one of the conditions for a therapeutic relationship in the Person-Centered Approach, implies, according to Boy & Pine (1995:212), recognizing persistent feelings and attitudes and expressing what one experiences. Prochaska & Norcross (1999:147) adds to this, stating:

Genuineness means that therapists are freely and deeply themselves, with the actual experiences of the therapists being accurately represented in their awareness of themselves. It is the opposite of presenting a façade.

Boy & Pine (1995: 213) confirmed that counselling has no room for facades. Prochaska & Norcross (1999:148) added a sixth condition for a therapeutic relationship – explaining that, in order for the client to trust the caring and empathy of the professional role-players, they must be seen as genuine and not as just playing a role. Boy & Pine (1995: 212) emphasized

that children have a right to know and respond to the counsellor (professional role-player) as a real person.

Children are extremely sensitive to genuineness and do not reveal themselves or relate to people who play a role. Boy & Pine (1995:213) confirmed this in stating the following:

By feigning acceptance and understanding when they are feeling anxiety, some counselors come across to children as unauthentic. Counselor genuineness in the helping process will help children to discover the universality of their own individual values.

Providing children with an opportunity to experience the preceding rights, represents the counsellor's (professional role-player)'s respect for both the child and for justice.

2.7 Conclusion

This chapter serves to motivate why researcher applied the Person-Centered Approach as theoretical foundation in work with children and, in conclusion, the following issues can be highlighted:

- Through the interpretation of the propositions, the professional role-player are able to have a better understanding of the child and realize the importance to treat a child as a person in own right and not as an inferior human being.

- It has research evidence that the Child-Centered Approach is supported by a greater amount of research than any other approach to counselling and psychotherapy.
- Researcher mentioned that, because it is such a responsibility to work with people, it is necessary to work from a specific frame of reference. The Person-Centered Approach provides an effective frame of reference to work from, and regarded as a highly accurate approach in its ability to be congruent with the needs of children.
- Most important, when a counsellor works from a Child-Centered Approach, the children will be able to perceive the professional role-player as a caring person who is able to understand them as human beings and their problems.
- If the child's viewpoint can also be taken into consideration, researcher will be assured that the rights of children will be better protected.

As the value of applying the Person-Centered Approach has been clearly indicated in working with children, the focus will in the next chapter shift to the needs and life tasks of children of different ages.