

Brief History of Humanistic Psychology

The revolution of humanistic psychology first began in the 1960s.



At this time, humanistic psychology was considered the third force in academic psychology and viewed as the guide for the human potential movement (Taylor, 1999).

The separation of humanistic psychology as its own category was known as Division 32. Division 32 was led by Amedeo Giorgi, who “criticized experimental psychology’s reductionism, and argued for a phenomenologically based methodology that could support a more authentically human science of psychology” (Aanstoos et al., 2000, p. 6).

The Humanistic Psychology Division (32) of the American Psychological Association was founded in September 1971 (Khan & Jahan, 2012). Humanistic psychology had not fully emerged until after the radical behaviorism era; however, we can trace its roots back to the philosophies of Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger.

Husserl spurred the phenomenological movement and suggested that theoretical assumptions be set aside, and

philosophers and scientists should instead describe immediate experiences of phenomena (Schneider et al., 2015).

Who founded humanistic psychology?

The first phase of humanistic psychology, which covered the period between 1960 to 1980, was largely driven by Maslow's agenda for positive psychology. It articulated a view of the human being as irreducible to parts, needing connection, meaning, and creativity (Khan & Jahan, 2012).

The original theorists of humanistic theories included Abraham Maslow, Carl Rogers, and Rollo May, who postulated that behaviorism and psychoanalysis were inadequate in explaining human nature (Schneider et al., 2015).

Prior to these researchers, Allport, Murray, and Murphy had protested the reductionist movement, including the white laboratory rat as a method for comparing human behavior (Schneider et al., 2015). Influential women in the development of this branch of psychology included Frieden and Criswell (Serlin & Criswell, 2014).

Carl Rogers's work

Carl Rogers developed the concept of client-centered therapy, which has been widely used for over 40 years

(Carter, 2013). This type of therapy encourages the patient toward self-actualization through acceptance and empathetic listening by the therapist. This perspective asserts that a person is fully developed if their self is aligned with their organism (Robbins, 2008).

In other words, a fully functioning person is someone who is self-actualized. This concept is important, as it presents the need for therapy as a total experience.

Rogers's contribution assisted the effectiveness of person-centered therapy through his facilitation of clients reaching self-actualization and fully functional living. In doing so, Rogers focused on presence, congruence, and acceptance by the therapist (Aanstoos et al., 2000).

10 Real-Life Examples in Therapy & Education

The human mind is not just reactive; it is reflective, creative, generative, and proactive (Bandura, 2001). With this being said, humanistic psychology has made major impacts in therapeutic and educational settings.

Humanistic psychology in therapy

The humanistic, holistic perspective on psychological development and self-actualization provides the

foundation for individual and family counseling (Khan & Jahan, 2012). Humanistic therapies are beneficial because they are longer, place more focus on the client, and focus on the present compared to positive psychology (Waterman, 2013).

Maslow and Rogers were at the forefront of delivering client-centered therapy as they differentiated between self-concept as understanding oneself, society's perception of themselves, and actual self. This humanistic psychological approach provides another method for psychological healing and is viewed as a more positive form of psychology. Rogers "emphasized the personality's innate drive toward achieving its full potential" (McDonald & Wearing, 2013, p. 42–43).

Other types of humanistic-based therapies include: