

Self theory

introduction :

Carl Ransom Rogers (1902 –1987) was a psychologist who developed a theory called Unconditional Positive Regard. He believed that children learn through unconditional acceptance and understanding.

Rogers' theory is based on his own experience working with children. His work focused on helping parents understand their children better and teaching them to accept their children unconditionally.

Rogers was born in 1902 in North Carolina. He attended medical school at Johns Hopkins University and became a doctor. However, he didn't feel fulfilled by his career path. So, he left medicine and began studying psychology.

1- Definition:

The **Self Theory** emphasizes on the set of perceptions an individual has for himself and the perceptions of the relationships he has with others and the other aspects of life. Carl Rogers has contributed significantly towards the self theory.

2- The self theory comprises of four factors that are explained below:



1. **Self-Image:** Self-image means what an individual thinks about himself. Everybody has certain beliefs about themselves, such as who or what they are, these beliefs form the self image and identity of a person.

According to Erikson, identity is formed through a lifelong development usually unconscious to the individual and his society, i.e. an individual forms perception about himself unconsciously, according to the social circumstances.

2. **Ideal-Self:** The ideal-self means, the way an individual would like to be. It is very much different from the self-image, as it shows the ideal position perceived by an individual, whereas the self-image is the reality that an individual perceives. Thus, there could be a gap between these two.

The ideal-self-acts as a stimulus to motivate an individual to undertake those activities that are in compliance with the characteristics of his ideal self.

3. **Looking-Glass-Self:** The looking-glass self means, an individual's perception of how others are perceiving his qualities or feeling about him. Simply, it is the perception of other's perception, i.e. perceiving what others perceive about yourself and not see what actually you are.

4. **Real-Self:** The real-self is what others show you with respect to your self-image. An individual's self-image is confirmed when others responses to him and shares their beliefs or perception, about what they actually feel about him.

This is taken as feedback from the environment that helps an individual to adjusts his self-image accordingly and be in line with the cues he had received.

Thus, according to Carl Rogers, the self theory is composed of several perceptions of **“I”** or **“me”** and the perception of relationships of **“I”** and **“me”** to others.



3- Exploring Rogers Self Concept:

Self Concept is the belief we hold about ourselves. We believe who we are based on our past experiences, our current circumstances, and our future expectations. Self Concept is not static; it changes over time.

We change our Self Concept when we experience events that affect us emotionally. Carl Rogers believed that Self Concept was influenced by three factors:

- 1) Our parents' attitudes toward us (our early environment).
- 2) The beliefs we hold about ourselves (our internal world).
- 3) Our perceptions of others (the external world).

Carl Rogers developed his theory of Self Concept through his work with patients suffering from emotional disorders. He found that many of these patients had negative feelings about themselves because they held inaccurate beliefs about themselves. These beliefs were often reinforced by their parents.

Rogers concluded that the only way to help these patients overcome their problems was to teach them to question their own beliefs about themselves. This would allow them to develop more accurate beliefs about themselves.

To illustrate this point, let's say you're a teenager who feels inadequate because you've never been able to play sports well. Your parents may reinforce this feeling by telling you that you're too small to be successful at playing basketball.

If you accept this belief, you'll feel bad about yourself and experience negative feelings. But if you challenge this belief by asking yourself positive self-reflective questions, you can address any negativity in a constructive way.