Empathy and Unconditional Positive Regard in Person-centred Counselling

The issue I will be analysing throughout this essay is my recent move out of home into living independently and the issues that have transpired since this transition. The issues I will be “seeking help for” include, anxiety about independence and a lack of self direction as I am no longer influenced by parental authority and am now in control of my life. I would aim to change my perspective on the issue of living independently, such as gaining confidence in my independence and a stronger sense of direction through goal setting and personal purpose. I will use the psychologist intervention model of Rogers’ person-centred counselling (1959), as this model is focused on growth, individual potential and engenders self-healing. Person-centred counselling would be an effective model to use for my issue as it may assist in strengthening my ability in decision-making skills, gaining confidence in being independent and exploring my personal direction in life. The skills used by psychologists in person-centred counselling, such as empathy and unconditional positive regard, would be effective in feeling comfortable expressing my issue honestly and ultimately, allowing me to accept myself, which may assist in exploring my direction and purpose in life. The micro-skill I will be applying to my issue is reflection of feelings as it displays empathy and allows the client to accept their emotions in order to heal. Reflection of feelings would be effective in helping my issue as this skill assists in accepting emotions in a healthy way, which helps to understand my issue with a rational and clear perspective, leading to constructive decision making.

Conclusion sentence

The psychologist intervention model of Rogers’ person-centred counselling (1959) would be effective for my counselling in helping my issue of independence and personal direction as the therapeutic method focusses on the capacity of the individual to direct their own lives and determine their goals in order to regain control over their lives and reach their potential. Humanistic psychology rejects the scientific, medical perspective of psychology on human behaviour, in favour of an empathetic understanding of human nature and a focus on the individual human experience. Person-centred counselling was developed by Carl Rogers, a prominent psychologist in humanistic psychology, as a therapeutic method of applying humanistic psychological principles. Person-centred counselling believes we are at the centre of our own existence and capable of directing our own lives and reaching our potential, or self-actualisation. Therefore, the role of the counsellor in this model is to support and guide this personal exploration through core techniques. Person-centred counselling aims to provide a safe environment in which the individual can regain control over their lives, relying upon the capacity of the individual to solve their issues and determine their goals to reach personal fulfilment. I believe person-centred counselling would be an effective model in relation to my issue as it relies upon the abilities of the client to solve their problems, which strengthens their ability and confidence in decision-making skills, thus helpful in my issue of claiming personal responsibility, managing myself and overall independence. Person-centred counselling would be an appropriate model for my issue as it emphasises the positive traits and behaviour of the client, enabling the client to utilise their personal instincts to find personal growth, healing, wisdom and fulfilment within themselves. This focus would be effective for my issue as realising

my positive traits and behaviour would provide the opportunity to gain confidence in my ability to be independent and guide me in finding my personal sense of direction. Rogers believed that in order for clients to make significant process during counselling a counsellor must use the core conditions, including empathy and unconditional positive regard, into the counselling process. These core conditions are my personal desired qualities in a counsellor as I believe they facilitate change and growth within the client. Empathy enables the counsellor to understand the client at a deep level, allowing awareness into the client's unique experiences of personal problems. In person-centred counselling, the task of the counsellor is to delve inside the client's frame of reference, allowing them to identify and respond to feelings expressed by the client and even feelings the client does not express. The quality of empathy would be important in a psychologist for my personal counselling as feeling I am being empathised with whilst communicating my issues is fundamental in feeling comfortable opening up and prevents my defensive instinct to understate my issues. It is necessary psychologists convey unconditional positive regard in person-centred counselling to make the client feel understood and accepted. Unconditional positive regard is exercised by counsellors through accepting the client with no conditions or judgement and acknowledging the validity and entitlement to their own feelings, thoughts and experiences. Rogers believed that when clients are valued with no conditions attached, they are more likely to accept themselves and become confident in their abilities. The use of unconditional positive regard would be effective in my personal counselling as it would allow me to feel capable of being independent and accept myself, which may assist in exploring what I want from life and my purpose.

The micro skill I would find most effective during my counselling process would be the refection of feelings as it encourages us to accept and consciously experience our emotions in order to emotionally heal, think in a more rational way and make constructive decisions. Reflection of feelings means essentially, mirroring or reproducing of feelings. This micro-skill demonstrates to the client that their feelings are being understood and acknowledged, which is critical for development of empathy. Counsellors also pay attention to client's nonverbal behaviour, the content communicated and tone in order to be attentive to the emotions they may not explicitly express. This is crucial in my counselling process as I struggle to express the full gravity of the emotions I am experiencing and in order to effectively reflect my feelings, a counsellor must pay attention to the subtle ways in which I express my emotions. Reflection of feelings enables clients to feel entitled to their emotions and gives permission to cry, which would benefit my ability to be comfortable expressing emotions. This skill is useful in deconstructing the conditioning of avoiding emotions that we often learn as early as childhood, as it encourages us to face our painful emotions in order to emotionally heal. This would be effective in changing my natural instinct to avoid my emotions through either philosophising them or indulging in escapism, thus enabling me to accept my emotions and deal with them in a healthy way. Reflection of feelings is especially useful in times of crisis as the emotional release, or catharsis, that this micro-skill enables is important in the client regaining control over their state of mind and life. Reflection of feeling would be effective in helping my issue as through emotional release, I would feel more competent overcoming my issue as I have processed my anxiety which may help to regain control over my perspective of independence. Through reflection of feeling, the client can begin to think in a more rational way as their cognitive distortions and painful emotions have been accepted and consciously experienced. As we start to think in a more rational way, our ability to make constructive decisions increases. This would be effective in seeing my issue in a rational and clear perspective and enable me to make constructive decisions in regards to living independently and finding a personal sense of direction.