The person-centered approach in college advising

Working with students in a university early entrance program
Introductions

- Name
- Current setting
- Interest in this topic
The Early Entrance Program (EEP) was created in 1977 by the late Dr. Halbert Robinson, a professor of developmental psychology at the University of Washington. The goal of the EEP from its inception was to enable a small and carefully selected group of academically advanced middle school students to accelerate into post-secondary education at a pace equal to their intellectual development. Dr. Nancy Robinson, a professor of psychiatry and behavioral sciences at the University of Washington, assumed directorship of the Center following Dr. Hal Robinson’s death in 1981, stewarding the Center until her retirement in 2000.
In 2001, the Robinson Center and the University of Washington Honors Program partnered to create the UW Academy for Young Scholars. The first class of Academy students enrolled at the University of Washington in 2002.
Robinson Center

- Transition School
- EEP students
- UW Academy
Gifted learners

- Asynchronous development
- Multipotentiality
- Existential depression
- Perfectionism
PCA and gifted research

- Leta Hollingworth
  - Psychologist in early 20th century – worked with gifted students
  - Counseling must be child-centered
  - Counselor attitude must be positive, constructive and comfortable
  - Child must not be the only focus for change

(Kerr, 1990)
PCA and gifted research

- Rogers worked under Hollingworth at Columbia in the late ‘20s
- “Leta Hollingworth's child-centered approach likely provided a foundation for Rogers' client-centered therapy” (Kerr, 1990)
- She is listed in the acknowledgments of two of his publications
- “Rogers (1961)…remarked that he learned more from who she was than from what she taught him.” (Silverman, 1992)
PCA and gifted research

Best Practices of Counseling Gifted Students

- The counseling relationship: required knowledge/understanding of gifted traits
  - Addressing of client concerns
  - Counselor understanding
  - Counselor empathy
  - Rights and respect
  - Core conditions: genuineness, unconditional positive regard
  - Accurate empathy
  - Active listening

(Wood, 2010)
Academic Advising

What am I expected to do:

- Major, post-grad and career exploration
- Meeting Gen Ed requirements
- Staying on track to graduation
- Parent support
- Student support
- Program support and outreach
Academic Advising

Where do expectations come from:

- University
- Robinson Center
- Parents
- Students
- Me
A Rogerian Approach to Academic Advising: Building Common Ground between Advisers and Students When Conflict Exists

- Carl Rogers was a psychotherapist known for his therapeutic technique...
- Rogerian listening helps the adviser show a sympathetic understanding of the student's position before asking the student to consider an alternate course of action. Thus, the adviser encourages a continued and open exchange of ideas with the student.

https://dus.psu.edu/mentor/old/articles/090506jn.htm
Academic Advising

Rogers in the literature:

- ’Affective’ Advising: Building Relationships Using a Student-Centered Approach
  - Learn how to evoke positive feelings in students...
  - Congruence – authenticity of advisor – be genuine (appropriate self-disclosure is necessary), do not ‘act’...
  - Advisors must have an attitude of general caring, respect, acceptance, and understanding – help students loosen defenses
  - Congruence † Advisor points out how both the advisor and the student have been similarly affected by such issues at some time.
  - Accurate Empathetic Understanding † Rephrase the words of the student and repeat them back to him or her.
  - Advisors may find it hard to self-disclose † Have one or two anecdotes that you use repeatedly and that you feel comfortable sharing

http://www.wiu.edu/advising/docs/nacada_presentation.pdf
Academic Advising

Rogers in the literature:

- **Apathy's Antidote: Using Mindfulness to Improve Advisor Performance**

  So, we are left wondering how to get the most out of what is sometimes a 10 minute interaction. Famed clinical psychologist Carl Rogers, in his memoir *A Way of Being*, came to the conclusion that one of the most simple and healing services he provided his clients was simply “hearing” them (1980). Active listening – responding to both verbal and non-verbal behavior, paraphrasing, and clarifying – is a basic interpersonal skill that can be helpful in forming an instant connection. The art of active listening is not new to anyone in academic advising, but it can be challenging to maintain in EVERY student interaction. We propose that when we calm our minds and focus on our breathing – a basic mindfulness skill – advisors can strengthen the relationship between ourselves and our students. When we do this we heighten the verbal and non-verbal exchange of advising.

PCA informing practice

Examples and opportunities:

- 1:1 meetings
- Regular check-ins
- Group meetings
- Staff meetings
- Student’s goals first
- Power redistribution to assist in navigating bureaucracy
PCA informing practice

Directive challenges:

- Poor academic performance
- Parental concerns
- Child abuse, self-harm with university system
- Focus on results, data, success of students
PCA attitudes

How and where can I incorporate the attitudes:

- Genuine in my student interactions
- Purposeful and clear in student interventions
- UPR with students, families, system
- Empathic communication
- Advocacy in staff meetings
Working within other systems

- School
- Hospital
- Outpatient clinic
- What else?
PCA attitudes for you?

- With interventions
- With specific outcomes
- When a different modality is requested/preferred
Resources