



Humanistic approaches offer an original and fruitful perspective for understanding identity and supporting individuals within the LGBTQ+ community. They emphasise an individual's growth potential and highlight the importance of the therapeutic relationship as a catalyst for change.

A central concept of humanistic approaches is that of actualising tendency. Developed by Carl Rogers, it refers to the innate tendency of all organisms to develop and realise their potential. According to Rogers, every individual has within themselves the necessary resources to thrive and become fully themselves. The role of the therapist is to create favourable conditions for the expression of this tendency by providing an authentic, empathetic and unconditionally positive relationship.

This positive view of human beings is particularly relevant for people within the LGBTQ+ community, who often encounter negative and invalidating messages about their identity. By postulating their intrinsic value and ability to self-determine, humanistic approaches contribute to restoring their self-confidence and self-esteem. They invite individuals to connect with their deep aspirations and develop their unique potential.

Another key concept is that of congruence. It refers to the alignment between a person's lived experience, their conscious awareness of it and the communication they convey to others. For Rogers, psychological suffering often results from a discrepancy between these three levels, linked to the internalisation of external value conditions. For instance, a gay individual who grew up in a homophobic environment may experience their attraction as being incongruent with their self-image and what they believe they can express. Therapeutic work aims to restore congruence by assisting individuals in acknowledging their experiences, integrating them into a positive self-image, and expressing them

authentically.

The notion of unconditional acceptance is also fundamental. It implies that the therapist welcomes, without judgement, everything that the individual expresses, including aspects they consider negative or shameful. This acceptance allows individuals to slowly open up to all facets of their experience and integrate them into a coherent identity. For LGBTQ+ individuals, often accustomed to rejection and stigmatisation, experiencing unconditional acceptance can be deeply transformative. It allows them to develop self-acceptance and giving permission to fully exist within their identity.

Thus, in supporting a young trans man, the humanistic therapist will aim to convey a benevolent acceptance of his journey and queries. They will assist him in exploring his feelings and deep-rooted aspirations, without guiding him towards a predefined identity. In experiencing being listened to and validated in his subjective experience, the young man can gradually reconnect with his inner sense of self and affirm his identity with greater confidence.

Existential psychology, another humanistic current, provides another interesting insight. It invites us to consider identity as a dynamic process shaped by our choices and our fundamental freedom. For authors like Irvin Yalom or Rollo May, human beings are fundamentally free and responsible for giving meaning to their lives. This perspective can be liberating for LGBTQ+ individuals, often trapped in fixed identities and predetermined fates. It encourages them to see themselves as authors of their own lives, capable of making authentic choices and creating their own values.

Existential psychology also highlights the importance of commitment in the process of change. Committing means actively taking responsibility for one's choices and responsibilities, despite the anxiety this may induce. For LGBTQ+ individuals, committing to their identity may involve coming out, confronting the views of others, and advocating for their rights. The existential therapist will support the individual in this commitment, helping them to clarify their values and muster the courage to embody them.

Lastly, humanistic approaches place great emphasis on creativity and self-expression. They encourage the use of creative media (art therapy, writing, play) to explore and express different facets of one's identity. For LGBTQ+ individuals, often constrained to silence and invisibility, these spaces for expression can be particularly liberating. These tools enable individuals to share their story, shape their experience and create new narratives of self.

For example, in a discussion group for LGBTQ+ individuals, a workshop on autobiographical writing could be proposed. In writing their story, the participants could reclaim their journey, identify key moments of their path, and envisage new possibilities. Sharing these narratives within the group would foster mutual recognition and legitimacy. It would contribute to creating a supportive and validating community, crucial for supporting the

process of self-acceptance.

In summary, humanistic approaches provide stimulating perspectives for understanding identity and supporting LGBTQ+ individuals. By emphasising growth potential, acceptance, commitment, and creativity, they encourage the development of an authentic and integrated identity. Their respectful and liberating approach makes them invaluable allies in the journey of affirmation and fulfilment of LGBTQ+ individuals.

Key Points to remember:

- Humanistic approaches emphasise the growth potential of every individual and the importance of the therapeutic relationship as a catalyst for change.
- The actualising tendency refers to the innate tendency of all organisms to develop and realise their potential. The role of the therapist is to create favorable conditions for its expression.
- Congruence refers to the alignment between lived experience, conscious awareness, and communication about it. Therapeutic work aims to restore this congruence.
- Unconditional acceptance implies that the therapist offers a welcoming and non-judgmental reception of everything the individual expresses. This leads to the development of self-acceptance.
- Existential psychology invites individuals to consider identity as a dynamic process, shaped by our choices and our freedom. It encourages commitment to one's identity.
- Humanistic approaches heavily emphasise the importance of creativity and self-expression in exploring and asserting one's identity.
- Overall, humanistic approaches foster the development of an authentic and integrated identity for LGBTQ+ individuals, thanks to their positive, respectful, and liberating perspective.