Name _____

Date _____

ACTIVE LEARNING EXPERIENCE

12.3 EMPATHY

Humanistic psychologist Carl Rogers stressed the importance of several behaviors of effective therapists. The therapist must be genuine and honest (*congruent*), provide *unconditional positive regard*, and be able to *empathize* with clients in order to create a climate conducive to growth. To assess your capacity for empathy, complete the following subscales of Mark Davis's (1980) Empathy Questionnaire.

Empathy Questionnaire

Respond to each of the following items by circling the appropriate number.

1. When I am reading an interesting story or novel, I imagine how I would feel if the events in the story were happening to me.
    | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
    | does not describe me well | | | describes me very well | |

2. I really get involved with the feelings of the characters in a novel.
    | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
    | does not describe me well | | | describes me very well | |

3. I am usually objective when I watch a movie or play, and I don't often get completely caught up in it.
    | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
    | does not describe me well | | | describes me very well | |

4. After seeing a play or movie, I have felt as though I were one of the characters.
    | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
    | does not describe me well | | | describes me very well | |

5. I daydream and fantasize, with some regularity, about things that might happen to me.
    | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
    | does not describe me well | | | describes me very well | |

6. Becoming extremely involved in a good book or movie is somewhat rare for me.
    | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
    | does not describe me well | | | describes me very well | |

7. When I watch a good movie, I can very easily put myself in the place of a leading character.
    | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
    | does not describe me well | | | describes me very well | |

8. Before criticizing somebody, I try to imagine how I would feel if I were in their place.

       0   1   2   3   4

does not describe me well   describes me very well

9. If I'm sure I'm right about something, I don't waste much time listening to other people's arguments.

       0   1   2   3   4

does not describe me well   describes me very well

10. I sometimes try to understand my friends better by imagining how things look from their perspective.

       0   1   2   3   4

does not describe me well   describes me very well

11. I believe that there are two sides to every question and try to look at them both.

       0   1   2   3   4

does not describe me well   describes me very well

12. I sometimes find it difficult to see things from the "other guy's" point of view.

       0   1   2   3   4

does not describe me well   describes me very well

13. I try to look at everybody's side of a disagreement before I make a decision.

       0   1   2   3   4

does not describe me well   describes me very well

14. When I'm upset at someone, I usually try to "put myself in his[her] shoes" for a while.

       0   1   2   3   4

does not describe me well   describes me very well

15. When I see someone being taken advantage of, I feel kind of protective towards them.

       0   1   2   3   4

does not describe me well   describes me very well

16. When I see someone being treated unfairly, I sometimes don't feel very much pity for them.

       0   1   2   3   4

does not describe me well   describes me very well

17. I often have tender, concerned feelings for people less fortunate than me.

       0   1   2   3   4

does not describe me well   describes me very well

18. I would describe myself as a pretty soft-hearted person.

       0   1   2   3   4

does not describe me well   describes me very well

19. Sometimes I don't feel very sorry for other people when they are having problems.

       0   1   2   3   4

does not describe me well   describes me very well

20. Other people's misfortunes do not usually disturb me a great deal.

       0   1   2   3   4

does not describe me well   describes me very well

21. I am often quite touched by things that I see happen.

0	1	2	3	4
does not describe me well			describes me very well	

Scoring: There are three subscales, each composed of seven items. On scale 1, "Fantasy," (items 1–7), questions 1, 2, 4, 5, and 7 are scored directly and questions 3 and 6 are reversed (i.e., change 0 to 5, 1 to 4, 2 to 3, 3 to 2, 4 to 1, and 5 to 0). Add the total of the seven questions.

Total "fantasy" score _____

On scale 2, "Perspective-taking" (items 8–14), questions 8, 10, 11, 13, and 14 are scored directly and questions 9 and 12 reversed. Add the total of the seven questions.

Total "perspective-taking" score _____

On scale 3, "empathic concern" (items 15–21), questions 15, 17, 18, and 21 are scored directly and questions 16, 19, and 20 are reversed. Add the total of the seven questions.

Total "empathic concern" score _____

Davis reported the following means for college undergraduates:

Scale	Men	Women
Fantasy	15.73	18.75
Perspective-taking	16.78	17.96
Empathic concern	19.04	21.67

Taken together, these three dimensions of empathy determine how deeply we can relate to others, understand their perspectives, and genuinely feel for them. How did your score compare to these means?

Do you think you would make a "good" therapist based on Rogers's views? Why or why not?

Reference

Davis, M. H. (1980). A multidimensional approach to individual differences in empathy. *Catalog of Selected Documents in Psychology, 10*, 85. Scale reprinted with permission of the author and Select Press © 1980, P.O. Box 37, Corte Madera, CA 94976.