



## Unconditional Positive Regard

The theory of Unconditional Positive Regard underpins NCSE Relate throughout. According to Carl Rogers (1957), a humanistic psychologist, unconditional positive regard is a caring attitude towards another, where the other person is authentically valued and totally accepted without judgement. While it does not mean that all of their actions are approved of, viewing the person with unconditional positive regard fosters the development of safe, trusting and honest relationships, crucial for change.

With such connection, the person's self-esteem and self-belief is nurtured, with empathy being the catalyst for personal growth. In contrast, if a person receives care and acceptance from a significant adult solely on condition they act or think in a desired way, their growth is inhibited.

*"For a person to 'grow', they need an environment that provides them with genuineness (openness and self-disclosure), acceptance (being seen with unconditional positive regard) and empathy (being listened to and understood). Without these, relationships and healthy personalities will not develop as they should, much like a tree will not grow without sunlight and water".*

Carl Rogers

Traditionally used within person-centred therapy and treatments, unconditional positive regard has been applied across many contexts. In schools and classrooms, unconditional positive regard is a way of thinking as a teacher. Thinking in this way does not mean that teachers can never feel frustrated with situations or behaviours. Instead, teachers make the distinction between feeling frustrated at what has happened, disliking the actions or the coping strategy used, as opposed to disliking or feeling frustrated with the student as a person. While it may take practice to think in this way, and at times it may feel difficult to do, particularly if teachers feel overwhelmed themselves, unconditional positive regard shapes a mindset of forgiveness and looking for the best in students and the situation. This is also good modelling and helps develop a culture of tolerance and respect.

Unconditional positive regard involves:



**Barnardos "It's All About Relationships"**



**Benefits of Unconditional Positive Regard in the Classroom**



**The Sendcast: My Behaviour Journey with Catrina Lowri**

### NCSE TPL



Understanding Behaviour

Pathways to Prevention