The six necessary and sufficient conditions are ‘the hypothesised conditions by which the therapist facilitates constructive personality change’ (Tudor and Merry, 2006: 25).

Carl Rogers first used the term in a paper published in 1957 by the Journal of Consulting Psychology. There, he claimed that ‘for constructive personality change to occur, it is necessary that these conditions exist and continue over a period of time: (1) Two persons are in psychological contact; (2) The first, whom we shall term the client, is in a state of incongruence, being vulnerable or anxious; (3) The second person, whom we shall term the therapist, is congruent or integrated in the relationship; (4) The therapist experiences unconditional positive regard for the client; (5) The therapist experiences an empathic understanding of the client’s internal frame of reference and endeavors to communicate this experience to the client; (6) The communication to the client of the therapist’s empathic understanding and unconditional positive regard is to a minimal degree achieved.’

Rogers continued: ‘No other conditions are necessary. If these six conditions exist, and continue over a period of time, this is sufficient. The process of constructive personality change will follow’ (Rogers, 1957: 95–96).

Kelly (2017: 18) writes: ‘Together, the core conditions build deep rapport and trust within the relationship. And with deep rapport and trust, we are able to work at relational depth (Mearns and Cooper, 2005) – which is where real movement happens.’

If any of the six necessary and sufficient conditions – which are ‘best seen as a gestalt or unity operating together rather than as separate elements’ (Merry, 2014: 71) – cannot be met, then referral to another therapist/service is the ethical course of action.
References

Kelly K (2017) *Basic Counselling Skills: A Student Guide*

Mearns D and Cooper M (2005) *Relational Depth in Counselling and Psychotherapy*, Sage

Merry T (2014) *Learning and Being in Person-Centred Counselling*, PCCS Books
