

A Developmental View of the Personal Psychological Journey

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Abstract

Introduction: *This paper offers a staged view of individual psychological development based on the research of Clare W. Graves and the theory popularly known as Spiral Dynamics Integral.*

Objectives: *To describe each of the stages as identified by the theory and relate the ways that they appear in individuals from the perspective of healthy and damaged aspects.*

Methods: *The paper presents an analytical, observational and experiential viewpoint based on what the theory tells us to expect and on experience gained, both personal and reports from others, in the varying practice arenas of coach, mentor, parent and trainer, as well as on personal experience.*

Results: *There are clear patterns in personal development and behaviour that correspond to the predictions of the Graves paradigm in its evolutionary, societal and organisational descriptions and predictions. These patterns can be related to both cultural context and individual upbringing. They offer a valuable lens for observation and understanding of psychological difficulties and useful prescriptive guidance for parenting that will act to reduce such difficulties.*

Conclusions: *The paper offers a strong basis for the use of the Spiral Dynamics lens as an additional perspective when working with individuals, and for further detailed research into the way that an individual forms their worldview and creates meaning as an adaptive process for thriving under differing conditions of existence.*

Keywords: *Spiral Dynamics, parenting, child development, Graves theory*

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Therapeutic Presence in Emotionally Focused Couples Therapy

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Abstract

Introduction: This theoretical study explores the concept of therapeutic presence (TP) in the context of Emotionally Focused Couples Therapy (EFT), as there is a lack of literature devoted to exploring these concepts. This qualitative systematic literature review explores, identifies and describes TP and its role in the practice of EFT.

Objectives: This article aims to provide findings on TP to successfully practice the skills and interventions required for becoming an effective EFT therapist and to aid the teaching, supervising and development of EFT therapists.

Methods: Literature review.

Results: This article finds that TP is a fundamental, trans-theoretical phenomenon implicated in the provision of effective psychotherapy. Furthermore, TP is identified as a determining factor – part of the “roadmap” per se – in the quality of the therapeutic relationship that informs meaningful change in EFT.

Conclusions: This literature review provides strong evidence for the necessity of further development of TP as a construct as it is foundational and conditional to transporting a couple from insecure and distressed to secure and bonded in the process of EFT.

Keywords: therapeutic presence, therapeutic relationship, emotionally focused therapy, couples therapy, common factors

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Antenatal and Postpartum Psychological Intervention. Case Study.

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Abstract

Introduction: *The pregnancy period and the birth of a child are unique events, full of joy and hope. The future child represents the origin of a new family, changing the parents' lifestyle and perspective upon life. On another note, the prenatal period may be experienced in a less positive manner due to the stress that a pregnancy typically involves, the intense changes and the numerous difficulties that the woman may face. The woman becomes a mother, which means that this interior revolution implies a lot of physical significant changes.*

Objectives: *The objectives of the current study, focused mainly on psychological evaluation, are as follows: assessing the emotional state of the pregnant woman and assessing the emotional relationship between mother and fetus (at the prenatal stage), as well as that between mother and child (once the child is born, at postnatal stage). The objectives of the psychological assistance meetings were: connecting the pregnant woman with her own body, physical and mental stress relief and optimizing the mother-fetus relationship/ mother-child attachment.*

Methods: *The methods that we used in the evaluation were: clinical observation, clinical interview and questionnaires. The methods that we used in our intervention that subserve the mentioned objectives were: expressive-creative techniques, relaxation techniques, music on the background of relaxation exercises and yoga for pregnant women, the observation of mother-child relationship and techniques for optimizing this relationship.*

Results: *There have been minimal changes at psychological level, but there has been remarkable improvement in the mother-child relationship during the three months of intervention, when we noticed an activation of maternal resources and an increase in the mother's affective availability for the child.*

Conclusions: *It can be concluded that the psychological intervention process has achieved its objectives by building a harmonious mother-child relationship and by leading to consciously assuming the maternal role. Mother-fetus relationship techniques from the prenatal period have contributed to the development of an afterbirth relationship based on emotional and physical security, protection, affection and mutual interaction.*

Keywords: *prenatal stress, depression, anxiety, emotional attachment, mother-child relationship*

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Using Experiential Metaphors in Assessing Self-Image in Children with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

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Abstract

Introduction: *The paper presents the construction and validation of a process research instrument in experiential psychotherapy, aimed for the detection of improvements in the self-image of children diagnosed with ADHD. It also provides the conceptual frame on using experiential metaphors in the psychotherapeutic intervention of the same children.*

Objectives: *We have created two dynamic, experiential diagnosis techniques called “The Orchard” and “My World”, starting from the classical projective techniques “Draw a Person test” and “Draw a Tree test”.*

Methods: *The techniques were applied to 2 groups: 5 children diagnosed with ADHD, in the experimental group, and 5 typical children composing the control group. The dynamic exercises were video recorded. Then we created and validated an observation sheet for video images centered on self-image. The construction was made using the method of expert groups, with a total of 16 experiential psychotherapists. The validation was carried out with help from a group of 33 independent psychologists, who watched the videos of the experiential diagnosis sessions and assessed the children involved in these meetings, based on the observation charts.*

Results: *The psychometric qualities of the observation sheet for video images centered on self-image indicated a good reliability. The internal consistency was also good, Cronbach’s alpha coefficient indicating 0.914. Content validity was ensured by involving experts in elaborating the exercises, the items and the definition of the answer options. The discriminative validity *t* test revealed a significant difference between the group of children with ADHD and children in the control group, with the global score ($t = 2.294$, Sig. = 0.029) obtained in the observation sheet.*

Conclusions: *The experiential metaphorical scenarios that we have proposed can be used as assessment methods because they do not only evaluate certain areas of mental development, but also capture interactions between them, as well as the child’s capacity for emotional regulation in social contexts.*

Keywords: *ADHD, experiential diagnosis, experiential psychotherapy, child psychotherapy, metaphors*

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A Case Study on Coming Out: Theoretical and Practical Implications for Psychological Counseling

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Abstract

Introduction: Coming out to parents can be a really challenging and stressful experience for gay and lesbian people, as they are faced with a wide variety of fears, such as fear of rejection, disapproval or even aggression, losing the support and love from their families. In fact, coming out to parents per se is not as problematic as facing and dealing with the possible negative outcomes in the family relationships after the disclosure. Parents of gay and lesbian persons also internalize the negative social attitudes and mythologies regarding the gay/lesbian identity and implicitly expect their children to be heterosexual and live their life according to the traditional family model. In this context, the disclosure of the gay/lesbian identity can produce significant changes in the family dynamics. After the disclosure, parents need to manage their own feelings and challenge their prejudices in order to understand the reality of their son or daughter being gay or lesbian.

Objectives: This study analyzes and connects different theoretical aspects regarding coming out to parents with practical implications in counseling clients who want to disclose their gay/lesbian identity to their parents.

Methods: The methods used are based mainly on grounded research and consist of a case study presentation and literature review regarding coming out to parents and its influence on the family system.

Results: Aspects regarding the psychological effects of coming out, parents' reactions and possible changes in the dynamics of the family are discussed. Also, a case study on a client coming out to her mother is illustrated, in order to emphasize a counseling process centered on preparing and supporting a client to come out. Different psychological mechanisms and dynamics within the mother-daughter relationship are analyzed and clarified in order to offer a broader perspective on how to manage the disclosure both before and after coming out.

Conclusions: Coming out to parents represents only a first step, being followed by having to deal with parents' reactions, their own process towards acceptance or tolerance, as well as the potential changes in the dynamics of the family system after the disclosure. Having multiple implications in the family life and the relationships between its members, coming out should be carefully considered and prepared. Practitioners working with gay or lesbian clients who want to come out to their parents should assist and accompany their clients in building some landmarks for the moment of the disclosure and also in activating the clients' inner resources to help them cope with potential negative outcomes.

Keywords: coming out, parents, gay/lesbian identity, family dynamics

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Mental Space Psychology – a Review of some Clinical Experiments and their Neuroscientific Background

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Abstract

Introduction: *Therapy methods using mental space representations have a long history. The program of mental space psychology (MSP) has recently shifted them into focus.*

Objectives: *The objective of this article is to review clinical experiments in mental space and discuss the neuroscientific background.*

Methods: *The concepts of mental space psychology are being introduced and clinical experiments in mental space are being reviewed. A review of the literature about the neural background is provided.*

Results: *Clinical experiments in mental space show promising results for a variety of psychological problems. A review of the literature on the neural background shows a number of neuroscientific studies supporting the assumptions by mental space psychology.*

Conclusions: *Clinical experiments in mental space can be connected to a lot of existing knowledge about neural processing.*

Keywords: *mental space, spatial cognition, clinical experiments, neural representation of space, mental space psychology, social panorama*

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The Use of Integral Eye Movement Therapy (IEMT) in the Treatment of Psoriasis Induced Skin Eruption – a Case Study

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Abstract

Introduction: *Psoriasis is a non-contagious but chronic skin disease that does not usually affect the client's wellbeing, but, due to the changes regarding the aspect of their skin, other members of society tend to avoid and sometimes marginalize a person that exhibits clear visual symptoms. This can cause the patient issues like anxiety, stress and depression. In this paper, we outline and detail a case study with the treatment of a patient diagnosed with psoriasis and the effects of the IEMT model treatment. In addition, the IEMT primary concepts and techniques are described and further references and training resources are provided.*

Objectives: *The current paper aims at providing evidence for the IEMT model, both as possible and efficient, but also a non-intrusive, complementary method for treating patients diagnosed with psoriasis skin eruption.*

Methods: *The Integral Eye Movement Therapy process was specifically designed by the Association for IEMT Practitioners for their psoriasis research project.*

Results: *The client participating in this case study presented improvement after two weeks of the single IEMT based treatment session and after three months the client's psoriasis-induced eruptions completely disappeared. Moreover, after two years and a half, his psoriasis-induced eruptions also did not reappear.*

Conclusions: *Although further research is needed, following this case study, we can clearly see the Integral Eye Movement Therapy (IEMT) model shows to be a promising approach in treating stress-related psoriasis.*

Keywords: *identity, Patterns of Chronicity, dermatological lesion, Eye Movement Deviation, neuroscience*

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