

The Criticality of Vertical Development in NLP Coaching in an Intensely V.U.C.A. World

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Abstract

Introduction: *Practitioners of NLP have been increasingly involved in life and executive coaching in the last 15 years due to a global rise in the demand for coaching. NLP coaches in Singapore have been experiencing the effects of an increasingly Volatile, Uncertain, Complex and Ambiguous (V.U.C.A.) world in their practice. NLP coaches and coachees are grappling with the rapid and complex changes in the global marketplace, with organizational restructuring, the pace of technological changes, a multi-cultural and multi-generational workplace as well as climate change related issues, such as the COVID-19 pandemic.*

This paper provides the findings of a dissertation research hypothesizing that NLP lacks a vertical development concept which is much needed in a V.U.C.A. world. This concept is contrasted against horizontal development, which is based on education- and professional-based competencies, whereas vertical development is based on the different stages of adult maturity development (AMD). The different stages of AMD hold the key to understanding one's worldview and meta-competencies which allow one to adapt and thrive in an ever-increasing V.U.C.A. world.

Objectives: *The central question that this dissertation research aims to address is: "In a V.U.C.A. world, do NLP coaches in Singapore understand the difference between vertical and horizontal development? If so, does understanding their own stage of vertical development (namely AMD) make a difference in the way they self-manage and work with clients?"*

Methods: *The dissertation research uses a mixed-method approach, i.e., qualitative and quantitative approaches. This mixed method explores the impact of V.U.C.A. on NLP coaches (research subjects) through structured open-ended first and second interviews (qualitative). Through the use of an established AMD assessment (quantitative) and debriefing by an external AMD-trained scorer, this research aims to help NLP coaches understand the relationship between their stage/ level of AMD and the demands of the V.U.C.A. world. In the weeks that followed the AMD assessment, a pre- and post-Likert scale self-assessment (quantitative) was developed to help the NLP coaches apply the AMD knowledge. A weekly email follow-up (qualitative) over four weeks drew out the NLP coaches' learning as they applied the AMD checklist.*

Results: *The research uncovered many practical insights, the key ones being: none of the subjects knew about the concepts of horizontal and vertical development (namely AMD); each subject experienced the V.U.C.A. world according to their own stage of AMD; by understanding and applying the AMD knowledge, subjects improved the way they managed themselves and their coachees by 12.53%.*

Conclusions: *In the context of coaching people who experience V.U.C.A. challenges that require higher levels of adult maturity, understanding the difference between horizontal and vertical development, and using the appropriate approach to coach people in different stages of AMD is crucial for getting effective and sustainable results.*

Keywords: *Vertical and Horizontal Development, Adult Maturity Development, Adult Development Theory, V.U.C.A. world*

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Marital Adjustment and Emotion Regulation between Personal Choices and Family Legacy

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Abstract

Introduction: Marital adjustment is a facet of the perceived quality of the couple relationship along with marital happiness. Johnson (2020) argues that if partners are able to communicate, to depend on a trusted person and to internalize a clear sense of secure connection with their partner, they discover an important resource that helps them build healthy and lasting relationships. In these relationships, shared vulnerability creates connections, not only because it encourages efforts to communicate with the other, but especially because it values each partner's need for attachment to fulfil the desire for connection and comfort. The feeling of secure attachment changes when new experiences are present, that allow the revision of the cognitive attachment patterns and the associated emotion regulation strategies (Davila, Karney & Bradbury, 1999).

Objectives: The present research aimed to study the relationship between the partners' marital adjustment and emotion regulation, as well as to identify the partners' ways to adapt to married life and their emotion regulation strategies taking into consideration the transmission of patterns from their ancestors.

Methods: The participants individually completed two psychological tests: the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS) and the Difficulties in Emotion Regulation Scale (DERS).

Results: The statistical results obtained show that there is an association between marital adjustment and emotion regulation, as well as differences between couples of predecessors and those of descendants in terms of difficulties in regulating emotions and adjustment in couples.

Conclusions: The in-depth analysis of the aspects in which behavioral patterns are transmitted from generation to generation can lead to better knowledge and understanding, both personally and in the couple relationship. Also, the results can be capitalized in the design and implementation of therapeutic programmes focused on the partners' proper emotion regulation and easy adjustment to married life.

Keywords: quality of the relationship, strategies for regulating emotions, transgenerational transmission

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Couple Dynamic and Bipolar Disorder

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Abstract

Introduction: *This present article aims to study the influence of Bipolar disorder upon a couple's relationship. As there are vast behavioral changes during both the manic and the depression episodes, there is reason to believe that these changes influence the quality of the relationship and the wellbeing state of the partners. Apart from the cumulated effect that the episodes have on the patient's psyche and state of comfort and health, the specific behaviors of these episodes have a significant effect upon the partners within the couple and their mental health.*

Objectives: *The objective of this study is to analyze to what extent the presence in the couple of at least one partner who exhibits severe Bipolar symptoms significantly influences the quality of life, the adaptation within the couple, dyadic satisfaction, individual satisfaction, partner proximity, partner sensitivity, partner cooperation and compulsive caregiving.*

Methods: *In this qualitative and transversal study, the sample consists of four couples, where in 2, at least one partner meets the DSM-V criteria for Bipolar I or II disorder. The couples are of heterosexual orientation and are married or have been living in a civil cohabitation relationship for at least 6 months. The participants signed the consent and were given 5 assessment tools aimed at measuring their quality of life, the dyadic adjustment and the couple relationship, and the presence of symptoms specific to Bipolar disorder.*

Results: *The scores obtained by each participant, but also the analysis performed at couple level, indicate that there are no significant differences between adaptation in the couple in the case of people with symptoms specific to Bipolar disorder compared to those who do not have such diagnosis. The specific symptoms of Bipolar disorder do not have an influence on the couple's relationship, respectively on the quality of life, adaptation in the couple, dyadic satisfaction, individual satisfaction, proximity to the partner, sensitivity to the partner, cooperation with the partner and compulsive caregiving.*

Conclusions: *In conclusion, the couple dynamic is not significantly altered when symptoms of Bipolar disorder are experienced by at least one partner. The most common difficulty in couples where there is at least one partner with symptoms specific to Bipolar disorder is that partners without symptoms attribute a very high degree of control to the behaviors of the Bipolar partner. Among the many variables that influence the quality of life in emotional disorders, one of the most important is marital adjustment – a state in which there is a general feeling of wellbeing in both partners, and they are satisfied with their marriage. Marital adjustment is considered part of the psychosocial wellbeing, and its improper functioning adversely affects the physical and mental health of both partners, as well as the quality of life.*

Keywords: *Bipolar disorder in relationship, dyadic functioning, Bipolar spouse, spousal burden*

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The Hierarchy of Needs from the ‘Urge for Motherhood’ Perspective

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Abstract

Introduction: *This article is a qualitative research that emerged from a more extensive study on pregnant women, and, at the same time, it is an analysis of the results of several studies that focus on a particular dimension of human needs, the need to give birth to a child. The involuntary lack of a child is a reality considered psychologically stressful for most couples. Some researchers have even claimed that the symptoms of this “stress” are similar to those associated with other severe medical conditions, such as cancer (Johansson et al., 2010).*

Objectives: *The purposes of this paper were to conduct analysis of human needs from the perspective of Maslow’s hierarchy of needs and the configuration of the pyramid including a particular need, specific to women: the need for motherhood, the need to give birth.*

Methods: *This was done through a qualitative research, based on semi-structured (qualitative) interviews conducted as part of a larger study, and by also looking into the results of various available research on the topic.*

Results: *We started the study from the classic Maslow’s hierarchy model and researched into the specific feminine need for giving birth. The desire to give birth is one of the fundamental needs of the human being. The article presents the physiological and social needs with their applications from the perspective of the need for motherhood.*

Conclusions: *The experience of motherhood completes human becoming. The unsatisfied psychosocial needs of women and even of their partners prevent human self-actualization.*

Keywords: *pyramid of needs, femininity, motherhood, suffering, self-actualization*

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The Relationship between Experienced Discrimination and the Level of Empathy in Members of the LGBT Community

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Abstract

Introduction: *Even though the positive effects of empathy as well as the negative ones of discrimination are well known and supported by scientific studies, the relationship between the two concepts and the way in which they interact was not thoroughly investigated. Experiencing discrimination can affect the empathic abilities of people, and this study aims to find evidence in support of this. The LGBT community in Romania is an appropriate starting group for this investigation because they often become victims of discrimination.*

Objectives: *Exploring the relationship between experienced discrimination and the level of empathy for members of the LGBT community.*

Methods: *A number of 342 participants filled out an online survey containing scales for measuring their empathy level and their experience of discrimination, 245 (71.63%) of which were LGBT, and 97 (28.36%) were heterosexual cisgender individuals, making up the control group.*

Results: *The statistical analysis did not succeed in identifying any differences in the means of the groups, correlations or regression equations that were statistically significant.*

Conclusions: *The main limit of this study that can explain the results is the usage of a general discrimination scale that does not adequately measure the specific discrimination encountered by LGBT people. The survey also contained open-ended questions pertaining to the research objective, and their analysis suggests the presence of a complex relationship between the two variables whose investigation is justifiable.*

Keywords: *LGBT community, sexual orientation, gender identity, positive empathy, discrimination*

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“Take My Hand”. Parent-Child Reconnection in Experiential Approach, through a Boardgame

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Abstract

Introduction: In this paper we address the matter of parent-child relationship, as we aim to develop a therapeutic game and apply techniques in the psychotherapeutic intervention with parent-child dyads, based on Unifying Experiential Psychotherapy approach, using methods as: art therapy, play therapy, role play and guided meditation.

Objectives: This paper has as scope to validate the construct of the therapeutic game “Take my hand”, developed by the main author during this research project and to investigate its effects on family communication, adaptive abilities of the children, the parent’s reflexive ability and, also, the cohesion and flexibility within the family. Moreover, the family therapeutic intervention will be revealed following the case study called “In search for the lost Rainbow”.

Methods: The specific method implied developing an experiential therapeutic game and using it in psychotherapy interventions with 8 mother-child dyads, in a process of 9 sessions. During the intervention, a pre- and post-intervention evaluation took place, in which several instruments were used: the Parental Reflective Functioning Questionnaire (PRFQ), the Parent-Child Relationship Inventory (PCRI), the Family Adaptability and Cohesion Evaluation Scale (FACES IV), the Behavior Assessment System for Children 2nd Edition (BASC-2), The Pictorial Scales of Perceived Competence and Social Acceptance, but also the projective tests: Draw-a-Family test and CAT.

Results: The results confirmed that the use of the “Take my hand” game based on experiential techniques, within a family intervention, can have an effect on: pre-mentalization modes ($Z = -2.100$; $p = 0.03$), certainty about the child’s mental state ($Z = -2.366$; $p = 0.01$), parental involvement ($Z = -2.388$; $p = 0.01$) and functional communication within the family ($Z = -2.205$; $p = 0.02$). At the same time, the intervention had results on the improvement of children’s adaptive abilities ($Z = -2.438$; $p = 0.01$), the degree/ level of acceptance he felt in the family ($Z = -2.524$; $p = 0.01$) and family flexibility ($Z = -2.524$; $p = 0.01$).

Conclusions: It can be argued that the use of the therapeutic boardgame “Take my hand” in family intervention has effects/ impact on the level of connection between parents and children, fosters the development of the ability to communicate in the family/ more openly discuss/ share even topics that are considered “taboo” and on the ability to identify and express emotions among members. Moreover, the paper highlighted other effects, this time notable as qualitative, not quantitative, as are specific changes in family dynamics, in the behavior of the child or parent, which emerged during the meetings or were collected through the participants’ feedback.

Keywords: family, game, psychotherapy, play, emotions, taboo, connection, attachment, parenting, family dynamics, parental acceptance, reflexive abilities

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