Jeffrey H. D. Cornelius-White
Renate Motschnig-Pitrik
Michael Lux *Editors*

Interdisciplinary Applications of the Person-Centered Approach

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Editors
Jeffrey H. D. Cornelius-White
University of Missouri
Springfield, MO
USA

Renate Motschnig-Pitrik
University of Vienna
Vienna
Austria

Michael Lux
Neurologisches Rehabilitationszentrum
Quellenhof
Bad Wildbad
Germany

ISBN 978-1-4614-7143-1 ISBN 978-1-4614-7144-8 (eBook)
DOI 10.1007/978-1-4614-7144-8
Springer New York Heidelberg Dordrecht London

Library of Congress Control Number: 2013939567

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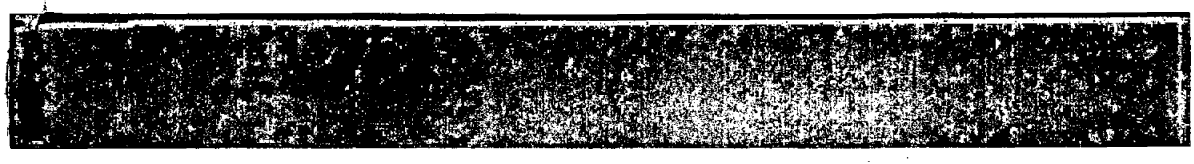


Person-Centred Approach: Theory and Practice in a Non-therapeutic Context

Eva Sollárová and Tomáš Sollár

1 Position of the PCA in the Context of Humanistic and Mainstream Psychology

There are attempts to advance humanistic psychology and psychotherapy in the twenty-first century. Among these, Cain (2003) identifies and comments on problems and challenges faced by humanistic psychology: humanistic psychology's minimal representation in American universities, declining membership in humanistic organisations, a lack of a coherent and shared vision, a plan for future development and strategies to enhance the growth and impact of humanistic psychology and psychotherapy. He offers concrete proposals to address these challenges facing humanistic psychology and to stimulate action.

Among those, Cain asks *whether humanistic psychology addresses relevant issues* with potential to make a meaningful contribution to psychology and the public. He thinks that humanistic psychologists "have fallen short in addressing relevant issues... and do not appear to be addressing adequately the major areas of importance of mainstream academic or clinical/applied psychology... the domain of humanistic psychology should not be limited to only those areas where it has tended to focus (e.g. human relations, personal growth)" (Cain 2003, p. 16). On the other side, he can see the unlimited potential of humanistic psychology in contributing to any area of psychology.

The aim of the Old Saybrook 2 Conference that took place in 2000 was to reassess and re-envisage contemporary humanistic psychology. Warmoth (2001) reflects on an authentic sense of the unfulfilled potential of humanistic psychology

E. Sollárová (✉) · T. Sollár
Faculty of Social Sciences and Health Care, Institute of Applied Psychology, Constantine the Philosopher University, Kraskova 1, 949 74 Nitra, Slovakia
e-mail: esollarova@ukf.sk

T. Sollár
e-mail: tsollar@ukf.sk

J. H. D. Cornelius-White et al. (eds.), *Interdisciplinary Applications of the Person-Centered Approach*, DOI: 10.1007/978-1-4614-7144-8_16,
© Springer Science+Business Media New York 2013

as well as discussions and work done to expand the professional applications of the field beyond the area of psychotherapy.

Humanistic psychologists agree that there are plenty of situations in which traditional humanistic thoughts, values and skills are applicable. Facilitating situations and conversations focused on conflict resolution or cooperative problem-solving, willingness to take personal risks, or active listening, which can all be useful in a wide variety of organisational and community settings.

The idea of developing optimal human functioning and well-being was an inherent focus on humanistic psychology theory and practice from its beginnings in the 1960s; although these ideas were primarily applied within humanistic psychotherapy, they became clearly articulated and a part of psychological mainstream approaches under the heading of positive psychology, thanks to Seligman's initiatives and work in 2000 and 2008 (Seligman 2000, 2008)..

Among humanistic psychologists, there are two standpoints visible—either blaming Seligman for not giving humanistic psychology the role it deserved and claiming that positive psychology has usurped what already had been established in humanistic psychology (Taylor and Martin 2001; Cain 2003) or accepting the fact that the emergence of positive psychology "has provided a conceptual home for researchers and practitioners interested in all aspects of optimal human functioning..." (Linley and Joseph 2004, p. 3).

We totally agree with this evaluation of the potential of humanistic psychology and present our understanding of the potential of the person-centred approach (PCA) in addressing some important areas beyond psychotherapy that we consider important for the academic and applied psychology mainstream. We also reconsider the topic presented in the perspective of historical inputs of the PCA as the base for our present understanding, experience and proposals for future developments.

2 Core Thoughts of the PCA Influential for Non-therapeutic Contexts

Among many historical inputs of PCA that have a great potential for its further development beyond the area of psychotherapy, we will mention selected thoughts and values of humanistic psychotherapy, the concept of the fully functioning person and the process of developing optimal personality functioning. The overview will help find the answer whether or how new the topic of PCA beyond the psychotherapeutic context is.

2.1 Thoughts and Values of Humanistic Psychotherapy

Seeman (2002), in his understanding of the link between humanistic thoughts and values and humanistic psychotherapy, stresses the "emphasis on the positive value

of helping people to maximize their optimal human potentialities" (p. 617). He points out four major themes or major characteristics that represent a *unifying framework for humanistic psychotherapy:*

- *Whole-Person Perspective* as the dominant aspect of the therapist's approach that involves the emphasis on the theme of *self.*
- *Strong Emphasis on Optimal Personality and Positive Functioning* that fits in with an interest in human potentialities and with a positive view of human nature. Rogers (1961) description of "the fully functioning person" or Seeman's (1983, 2008) research on positive health is an example illustrating the accent on optimal functioning.
- *Accent on Whole-Person Communication* and on "Presentness" and "Experiencing" in Therapeutic Practice "implemented" in and through the therapeutic relationship.
- *Emphasis on Relationship and Connectedness*—also supported by the research on empathy helping to recognise its central role in the therapeutic process.

The aforementioned characteristics are not limited to psychotherapeutic context, even though; they have been predominantly applied and verified within it. As early as in 1951, Rogers presented in his book client-centred psychotherapy (Rogers 1951) not only his revolutionary ("current") view of the client-centred therapy but also its applications beyond psychotherapy (group-centred leadership and student-centred teaching) and implications for psychological theory of personality and behaviour. Later, in 1959, in his work "Theory of Therapy, Personality and Interpersonal Relationships, as developed in the Client-Centred Framework", Rogers (1959) differentiated between applications of the theory and the approach which the therapy is based on. He proposed a general philosophy of life and relationships. Thus, the concept of the fully functioning person and the conditions facilitating the development towards such an optimally developed personality are readily available within the PCA, extending its potential far beyond psychotherapy.

2.2 The Concept of the Fully Functioning Person

Seeman (2002), in exploring possibilities for further development of humanistic psychotherapy, stresses *the potential of the concept of the fully functioning person in providing directions of development.* The concept according to Seeman encompasses both the whole-person idea and the fulfilment of personal potentialities that mark the goals of humanistic psychotherapy.

The concept has been quite intensively studied in the context of humanistic psychology. It represents one of top emphases in the content of the Journal of Humanistic Psychology since its beginning in 1961 (Taylor and Martin 2001) or almost 30 years of its empirical verifications carried out by Seeman and his team

(Seeman 1983, 2008). The concept of optimal human functioning is also high on the agenda of positive psychology (Linley and Joseph 2004).

Rogers originally wrote the paper on the concept of the fully functioning person in 1952–1953, and he published it in its original form in 1963 (Rogers 1963).

Rogers presents "speculations" on the general characteristics of the person who has completed psychotherapy. He presented the picture of the fully functioning person after he had formed a picture from his experience with his clients. It is his picture of what constitutes personal or psychological health.

According to Rogers (1962, p. 32), such a person is

> *sensitively open to all of his experience* – sensitive to what is going on in his environment, sensitive to other individuals with whom he is in a relationship, and sensitive to the feelings, reactions, and emergent meanings which he discovers in himself. The fear of some aspects of his own experience continues to diminish, so that more and more of his life is available to him. Such a person *experiences in the present*, with immediacy. He is able to live in his feelings and reactions to the moment... He lives freely, subjectively, in an existential confrontation of this moment in life. Such a person is *trustingly* able to permit *his* total *organism* to function freely in all its complexity in selecting that behavior which in that moment of time will be most generally and genuinely satisfying. (p. 33)

The trends Rogers has presented describe an individual who is *becoming integrated*. He is unified within himself from the surface level to the level of depth. He is becoming "all of one piece". The distinctions between "role self" and "real self", between defensive façade and real feelings and between conscious and unconscious are all growing less the further these trends continue. All that the individual experiences and is, within the envelope of his organism, is increasingly available to his conscious self, to himself as a person. There is a continuing growth of good communication between all the different aspects and facets of his or herself. Such a person is a *creative person*. With his sensitive openness to his world, and his trust in his own ability to form new relationships with his environment, he is the type of person from whom creative products and creative living emerge.

Finally, such a person lives a life which involves a wider range, a greater richness, than the constricted living in which most people find themselves..., and the reason they can thus live fully in a wider range is that they have this underlying *confidence in themselves as trustworthy* instruments for encountering life.

Rogers sees every person as having the potential to grow and to fully function if specified conditions are present. "A way of being" based on PCA qualities is open to anybody regardless of his/her profession or role. Becoming fully functioning is an implicit goal not just for therapy but for self-actualised life in general. Describing "the world of tomorrow" and "the person of tomorrow" in A Way of Being (Rogers 1980) or On Personal Power (Rogers 1977) he presents his view of a radically new world with such a kind of person—those who

decided to develop in fuller correspondence with their own integrity, as a consequence of their decision made either in therapy or at work. The impact of such people on society and how Rogers describes his vision fully meets the criteria of a citizen that corresponds with the present agenda of positive psychology. Rogers' visions used to be criticised as naïve while the same agenda under the heading of positive psychology is accepted as a legitimate psychological mainstream theme.

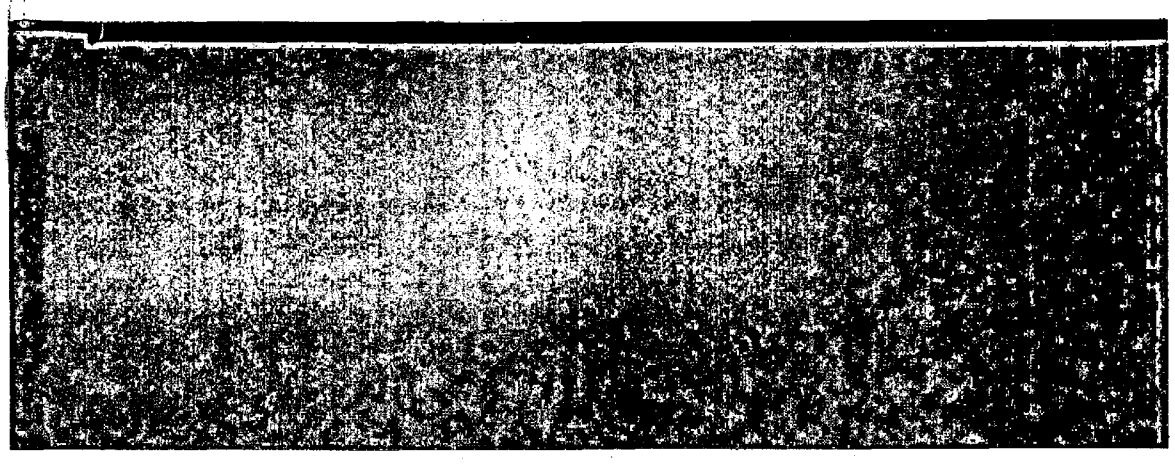
2.3 *The Development of an Optimally Functioning Personality*

Rogers' observations are made from a background of client-centred therapy. He assumes that all successful psychotherapy has a similar personality outcome. The answer to the question *what conditions are necessary so a person can become fully functioning* is expressed in the central hypothesis of client-centred therapy, according to which a person has enormous potential inside himself/herself to understand himself/herself or to change the self-image of his or her attitudes and self-managing behaviour, and that it is possible to get to these sources only when a certain definable atmosphere is provided to facilitate psychological attitudes or qualities—emphatic understanding, congruence, and unconditional positive acceptance (Rogers 1951). These conditions create the basis for the process of a client that facilitates his or her own personal development.

Seeman (2002) in his description of psychotherapy according to the human system model, specifies that "psychotherapy is a process in which the therapist helps the client to explore his or her modes of communication, enhance communication clarity and effectiveness, and foster maximal organismic connectedness and integration"... while the fully functioning person is characterised by an optimal level of organismic connectedness and integration (p. 629).

These conditions or characteristics of the process are applicable not only for the relationship between therapist and a client but according to Rogers (1980) between a parent and a child, a leader and a group, a teacher and a pupil or the superior and the subordinate. These conditions are applicable for every situation where the development of personality is involved. The characteristics valid for psychotherapy according to Rogers are applicable also to all of the abovementioned relationships.

Related to our research and practical experience, we would like to concentrate on one of potential application of PCA beyond psychotherapy—PCA in organisations.



2.4 PCA Beyond the Psychotherapeutic Context: Is it New?

Ten years after introducing client-centred psychotherapy, Rogers comments on its development from a method of counselling to an approach to human relationships applicable to a variety of activities, some of them very distinct from psychotherapy itself (Rogers 1951, p. 12). Tom Gordon in the same book presents a definition of a social therapeutic approach—a group-centred approach—in group leadership and organisational administration as well as experiences from application of the principles and philosophy of client-centred psychotherapy to supervision and administration of groups. Those experiences stimulated thinking about "therapeutic group leadership" with a new concept of leadership, where a leader would "facilitate the distribution of leadership, and would accelerate the development of a group toward the maximum utilization of its potential" (Rogers 1951, p. 333). The primary concern of the "group-centred" leader is to facilitate the group's development, help the group clarify and achieve its goals and help the group to actualise itself. The group's development is facilitated when a group-centred leader tries to create the same conditions which in client-centred therapy have been found necessary for releasing the constructive forces within the client: the members of the group have the opportunity to participate and freedom to communicate, in a non-threatening psychological climate.

In the 1960s, the encounter and "T-group" movement preceded organisational development theory and practice. For both the PCA and the whole of humanistic psychology, it is valid to say that since the 1970s, their impact on organisational development and management theory has lessened. As Montuori and Purser (2001) comment, managers in a changed socio-economic environment during and after the 1970s—turbulent and unpredictable—preferred practical tools and result-oriented interventions leading to pragmatic results and outcomes to "touchy-feely" group process-type interventions, which was how humanistic approaches were viewed.

We have shown that the field beyond therapy was articulated by Rogers and his team as early as the early 1950s (Rogers 1951), in proposing the PCA as the application of client-centred therapy in others—non-therapeutic settings. The approach has been validated since then in the practice of various caring professions, education, organisations and the public in general.

What has been an implicit goal of all the work in all these settings or, with the "non-client" participants of these activities, was to facilitate the development of optimal human functioning and well-being regardless of how the "content" of work was specified or became specified. How the work was done was by employing the qualities of facilitators that correspond with the conditions Rogers proclaimed as necessary and sufficient for personality change.

In practice, it means that PCA, with its theory specifying where, what and how to work and live, is fully compatible with what at present is articulated under the heading of positive psychology, more specifically applied positive psychology: the following 3 themes are aimed to contribute to the discussion of what and how

to increase the impact of humanistic psychology within psychology as a science as well as in practice.

3 The Process of Developing Optimal Personality Functioning in the Therapeutic Versus Non-therapeutic Context

There is a large applicability of the findings based on the way one's own capacities can be released to change one's personality and the way in which relationships (mainly) can reinforce such a self-oriented change.

One of the applications is also in *education/training, facilitating and interventions*, which have been, in a theoretical and practical way, dealt with by Rogers (e.g. Rogers 1951, 1983). This approach is fully relevant to the many types of effective education for children, students and adults. The meta-analysis of Cornelius-White (2007) synthesising 119 studies from 1948 to 2002 evaluating person-centred education as an educational psychology model showed effectiveness of learner-centred teacher–student relationships. Another example of recent studies applying PCA into education is represented by numerous studies carried out by Motschnig-Pitrik and her team (Motschnig-Pitrik 2008; Motschnig-Pitrik and Figl 2007; Motschnig-Pitrik and Mallich 2004).

Our own experiences cover PCA teaching of English to preschool children (Sollárová 2000), psychology courses and social skills training for university students (Sollárová 2005), training communication skills for adults, helping professionals (Sollárová and Sollár 2007) and PCA skills for managing work relationships (Sollárová et al. 2011). We will point out two elements relevant to the issue of the paper—the process of teaching (and learning) and results or outcomes that can be generalised from our educational experiences with adults.

3.1 The Process of Learning in PCA Skills Training

PCA skills training contains analogical elements to what Rogers (1951) and Seeman (1983, 2008) state as the elements in the process of therapy towards the integration of the client:

- *Exploration of one's own feelings and experience in the state of anxiety*
  When the participants select and deal with authentic situations that they perceive as problematic, stressful or conflicting, their re-experiencing during their exploration is negatively charged, which is also typical for an explored situation in a real context; the facilitation of exploration, for example support in an emphatic and accepting atmosphere, strengthens the ability of participants to explore this experience even in a state of anxiety.

- *Experiencing the whole range of one's own attitudes*
  In role-play situations, participants play out situations that are the causes of their discomfort; they also experience feelings towards the other participants of a situation as they would in a real situation
- *Symbolisation of one's own actual experience*
  When a participant, for example during self-exploration supported by the emphatic understanding of a facilitator, names what his/her experience is about ("...I am angry and terrified when I imagine that my clients (=unemployed) will think that I am such an incompetent and unwilling creature like my colleague ...")
- *Assimilation of the new experience into one's own self-image*
  When a participant acknowledges and accepts the facets of one's self so far unacknowledged or unaccepted ("... It is important for me to be perceived as a polite and competent social worker...")
- *Development of an internal centre of evaluation and the acceptance of the self and others*
  In situations when the participant is not able to accept that a significant person evaluates him/her negatively ("...I know that my mother is not satisfied with what my husband is like; I feel that in spite of that it doesn't influence my satisfaction with my husband...").

The direct results or outcomes of participants acquiring PCA skills in interpersonal interactions at work are mainly:

- skills in communicating clearly and congruently
- skills in understanding the communication of the other person in an interaction
- skills in facilitating clarity of communication with a person with a different standpoint
- skills in improving team communication when members differ in their understanding and experience
- skills in managing stressful, conflicting and emotionally charged situations (more details in Sollárová 2005, 2008).

3.2 Coaching

Another area in facilitating the development of the healthy functioning of a person beyond the psychotherapeutic context is represented by *coaching*. Person-centred coaching psychology is, according to Joseph and Bryant-Jefferies (2009) and Stober (2006), a way of working with people based on a meta-theoretical supposition that people have the potential to develop and grow and that when internal potential is released, they can move on and become more autonomous, socially constructive and optimally functioning. It requires a social environment with specified qualities and attitudes. These core attitudinal qualities create the necessary conditions posited by Rogers (1957), or a social environment that facilitates constructive unfolding of the actualising tendency (of a client).

A person-centred coaching psychologist provides a client with an accepting and authentic relationship where he/she does not feel judged or pressured. Then, the client will move the locus of evaluation within his/her self and be motivated towards optimum functioning. According to Joseph et al. (2009), the essential role of the person-centred psychologist, regardless of the fact where the client is situated from a perspective of psychological functioning, is to facilitate the self-determination of the client in such a way that he/she would move towards a more optimal functioning.

In an environment where a person does not feel to be judged and pressured, he/she does not feel the need to defend himself/herself and self-actualisation can happen. The application of the abovementioned attitudinal qualities in coaching work represents, according to Stober (2006), the core conditions for effective coaching practice. The recognition of key conditions as necessary for a change in the person coached is similarly applicable to coaching as to psychotherapy.

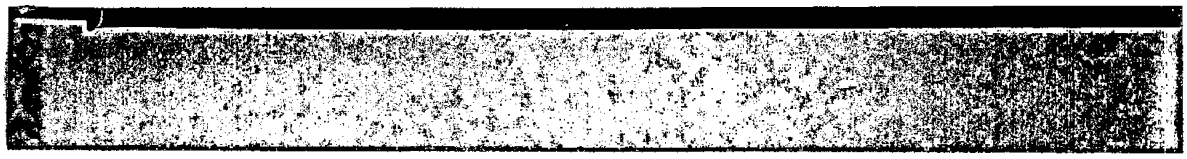
The psychology of coaching is the same activity requiring the same theoretical background and the same practical skills as work with people who are in distress and dysfunctional. Therefore, within a person-centred perspective, there is no theoretical difference between counselling and coaching. It is not important where one starts.

Thus, on a theoretical level, the role of the person-centred psychologist is always the same whether he/she works as a coach or a consultant or a clinical psychologist, but on a practical level, the content of sessions will be different as clients usually bring different material to consultancy than to coaching (more details in Sollárová 2011). Based on the ideas regarding the process of developing optimal personality functioning, we propose the following conclusions:

- The process of learning and developing optimal personality functioning beyond the psychotherapeutic context is articulated in PCA theory and practice, based on the theory and practice of the process of change in client-centred therapy, and as such it is applicable to education, trainings and coaching.
- The conditions necessary for facilitating learning and developing optimal personality functioning beyond the psychotherapeutic context are derived from client-centred therapy, articulated in PCA theory and practice and applicable in education, trainings and coaching.

4 The "Fully-Functioning Person" Beyond Therapy, and the Measurement of Optimal Personality Functioning in PCA Growth-Oriented Interventions

It is clear that the interest in the optimal functioning of a person exceeds the boundaries of psychotherapy both within the PCA and within the positive psychology. The question is in what way both can benefit from theory, research and practice in client-centred therapy.



The results of many years of empirical work within client-centred psychotherapy have indicated that there are consistent patterns of behaviour that characterise optimal personal organisation and that could thus serve in the development of *criterion measures for assessing psychotherapy outcome* (studies in Rogers 1951; Seeman 1983, 2008).

If we accept that the specified characteristics of an effectively functioning human system can serve as measures for assessing psychotherapy outcome, could the same measures be used for assessing outcomes of PCA growth-oriented interventions beyond therapeutic settings, too? We argue in the affirmative.

If we accept that there are measures differentiating the level of integration of a person empirically validated in studies of the process of client-centred psychotherapy (Rogers 1951), can those measures identify the level of personality integration in non-therapeutic settings? If we accept the universal validity of the idea of the natural process of the self-actualisation of a person, it means that the process of personality integration happens not only in therapy and that a person at a certain point of his/her existence is on a certain level of integration, we can propose to apply those measures of personality integration conceptualised and empirically verified within client-centred theory and research in psychological theory and research beyond therapy. Will the measures of personality integration show similar relations to characteristics specified as predictable consequences of high personality integration, as an outcome of successful client-centred therapy, in non-therapeutic context—with non-clinical population? We argue, yes.

In our study (Sollárová and Sollár 2010) of the parameters of a psychologically integrated person conducted on a sample of care professionals (social workers), we used the discrepancy between the "real self" and the "ideal self" as a measure of personality integration, in accordance with Rogers' proposal and findings that low discrepancy between the real self and the ideal self is characteristic for an integrated person; further, we verified relationships between the integration of an individual represented by the level of congruence between real self and ideal self and specified parameters of optimal personality functioning—proactive coping, self-evaluation, neuroticism and openness to experience—found by Rogers (1951, 1962) and Seeman (2008) within the psychotherapeutic context. We found that the more an individual is integrated, the more he/she is proactive, less neurotic and evaluates him/herself more positively. The correlations showed moderate relationships between the studied variable pairs. Proactive coping stresses the aspect of future orientation in solving everyday situations. The result found supports Rogers' (1962) finding that a fully functioning person will take more satisfactory decisions and actions, thanks to his/her trust in their own organism as the source of experiential data.

Higher and more positive self-esteem in highly integrated persons corresponds with those parts of changed self-concept that Rogers (1951) states as changes in an organised configuration of perceptions of a person's own characteristics and abilities and images of him/herself in relation to other people and the environment, as a consequence of increased self-acceptance as a valuable person.

The relationship between integration and neuroticism (in the direction of a lower level of neuroticism in more integrated persons) corresponds with the character of changes in the basal structure of personality that Rogers (1951) states as characteristics of a changed personality as a consequence of a successful therapy—decreased neurotic tendency and decreased level of anxiety.

Based on our study and findings, we would summarise the previous ideas and comments and propose the following conclusions:

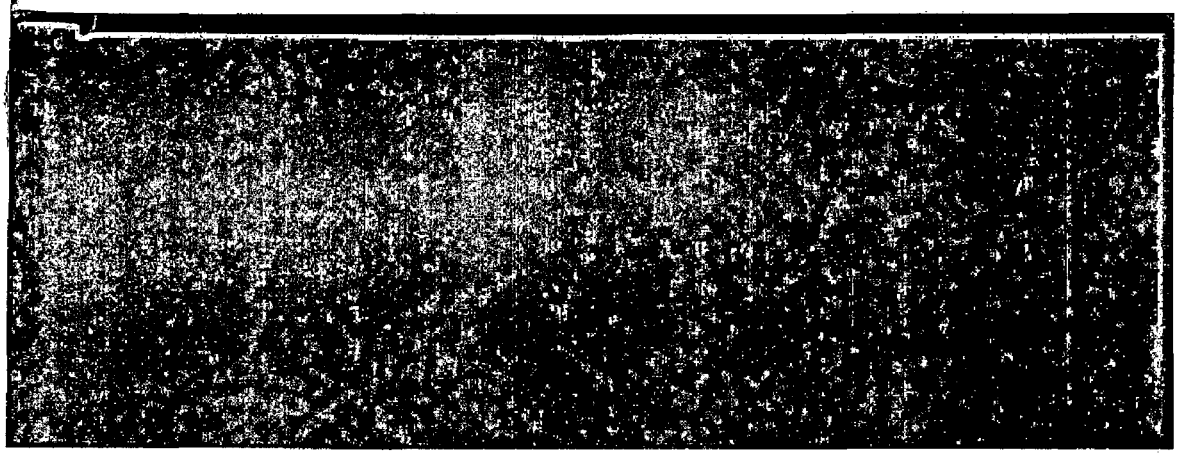
- The concepts of a "fully functioning person" and a "psychologically integrated person" as synonymous with optimal personality functioning are based on the general theoretical concepts of humanistic psychology and theory of personality (mainly self-actualisation and actualising tendency); thus, they are not limited to the psychotherapeutic context and are valid in a non-therapeutic context as well.
- The characteristics of an effectively functioning human system as proposed and verified as a successful psychotherapy outcome can be applied in assessing outcomes of PCA growth-oriented interventions beyond therapeutic settings.
- The measures differentiating the level of integration of a person empirically validated in studies of the process of CCT can be applied as measures identifying the level of personality integration in non-therapeutic settings.
- The measures of personality integration show similar/analogical relationships to characteristics specified as predictable consequences of high personality integration, as an outcome of successful CCT, and in a non-therapeutic context, too.

5 Perspectives of PCA Managerial Competence

Until now, we have stressed ideas that can serve as a basis for asserting the legitimacy of applying the PCA in non-therapeutic settings.

What implication for the managerial role does a PCA way of being represent—that is, developing PCA thoughts, qualities, attitudes and skills? Below, we share some of our experience and insight.

The perspective of a PCA coaching managerial "style" is quite analogical to the therapeutic way of "offering" conditions that are necessary (and sufficient) for a change in the other person in the relationship, with the consequence of a more fully functioning of the person whatever it might mean for a specific person in a specific context or situation. This perspective is theoretically and practically ready to be applied, and we consider the PCA coaching model (Joseph and Bryant-Jeffries 2009; Sollárová 2011) (applied by coaches and managers), one of top potential areas where PCA can gain significant impact in applied psychology fields. The role of a PCA facilitator/group-centred leader is typically understood and dismissed with the critique or trivialisation of viewing PCA as too "touchy-feely" a therapeutic way of being with others. Does this perspective cover the whole potential of PCA in the organisational context? We propose there are other



perspectives where PCA can offer its theoretical and practical potential in building organisational effectiveness. We will discuss one of them.

In the organisational context, focus on objectives, results, assessment and evaluation, crisis and (managing) change is typical for the present economic situation worldwide, and probably, most typical is competition among companies. It all creates pressure in the work environment, especially for managers. The question is whether a PCA primarily focused on interpersonal relationships can compete with different approaches that are typically result-oriented. Is the PCA philosophy in discrepancy with orientation towards results? Is focus on interpersonal relationships the aim (in) itself? Or can it also lead to good, even excellent results within the organisation? Most definitely, it can. And what consequences can a PCA way of being (or PCA competence) have for a manager? In situations that are not primarily focused on facilitation of the growth of others but focused on decision-making, problem-solving, managing change, conflict resolution, task assignment or performance evaluation, it means situations where managerial integrity and autonomy have a significant role. PCA can serve on his/her behalf as well! Both in

- building and managing effective work relationships as a means to good results and
- being effective in a difficult, crisis or even hostile environment as a means to decide and function according to one's integrity and to achieve one's aims, as well.

We first met with the idea of building and managing effective work relationships via PCA at the ADPCA 2000 conference, in a presentation by Ernie Meadows. After participating in his workshops and trainings, we started to apply and develop PCA within our own managerial roles and trainings for managers as well.

"Becoming" more and more "persons" in accordance with the PCA "way of being", we naturally started to be person-centred in all the roles, contexts and situations we found ourselves. Maybe because psychotherapy has not been our primary professional context, we became sensitive to where and how Rogers's ideas are especially applicable beyond therapy, and together we have had exciting conversations, discussions, attempts, as well as experiences and results that have had a significant impact on our lives. We both have rich experience with managing change, managing unsuccessful organisations or organisations in crisis. It might have focused our attention towards those types of managerial roles and situations that were primarily derived from difficult contexts, high demands on building goals, strategy, standards, performance and results that created a lot of pressure, resistance and conflicts in the process of change. Our belief in the "power" of PCA brought results.

We have presented more detailed comments and experiences elsewhere (e.g. Sollárová 2005, 2008; Sollárová et al. 2011). For the purpose of this article, we will stress the concept of being effective in a difficult, crisis or hostile environment

as a means making decisions and functioning according to one's own integrity and also to achieve one's aims.

In managerial roles and situations where a manager's task is to manage new, usually highly demanding or unpopular tasks or goals, to make difficult decisions or to assert high standards, his/her focus on their own integrity and a congruent way of communication is primary. In situations when he/she faces resistance, conflict, disagreement, critique, his/her attitude demonstrating empathic listening and unconditional positive regard will create conditions for constructive dialogue. Together with a congruent manner of communication on the manager's side, it creates the correct ingredients to arrive at conclusions legitimate and acceptable to both sides.

A summary of the complexity and universality of PCA in the non-therapeutic context, as we specified for the role of a manager, is then as follows:

The PCA way of being equips managers (and anybody in another role, of course, too) with competence to facilitate the other person(s) to become more effective in communication and interactions; build and manage effective communication and interactions within his/her own work team and with his/her colleagues; and be effective in one's own communication and interactions (especially in difficult or hostile conditions) (Sollárová 2005).

Instead of a final note, we will present an extract from a reference from a manager (we will call him John) written after a five-day training in a PCA model in coaching:

Quite a long while before I participated in the training, I identified two main problems in my work as a division director of our company:

Firstly, I was not able to increase the motivation of my subordinates (colleagues) not just to do their jobs mechanically but also to use their initiative, and to be interested in achieving better results.

Second, I am highly perfectionist and believe that I am the one who can do the work best. The consequence is that I usually leave meetings with a large number of new tasks that I have given myself, as a result of my conclusion that nobody would do them as I would expect.

Both these problems became clear in the process of working on a recent task, which was to forecast production of one specified product where my division depends on data from other divisions in the company. To be able to forecast with high accuracy we need complete and exact data and that was a problem. The same problems repeated themselves and I was not able to find a way out of deadlock.

During our first day of the training you showed me a different way of managing people. I plucked up the courage and at the next meeting with my colleagues I reversed the roles. Asking questions, I tried to identify the real source of the problem and then to find the way out of the deadlock. My colleagues of course repeated their arguments on poor data. Thanks to my questions based on careful listening they themselves identified that it was in their own interest to have good data and that they should take more initiative and be more proactive (instead of passively waiting and being uncomfortable with bad data). From this very first

"new-style" *meeting it was them who left the meeting with tasks not me. I started to use such conversations almost every day. First I carefully listened where they had arrived at with the problem, and then we discussed the present state of affairs and delegated new tasks. I quite anxiously tried not to take on any task and I also tried to listen more and left my colleagues to come up with ideas. This is how I understood what I learnt.*

I would describe the results of my changed managerial style as follows:

1. Three weeks later we got further than the previous two months and I did almost nothing.
2. My colleagues easily accepted new rules that I implemented without any introduction. They definitely identified a radical change in my attitude. I even felt uncertainty from their side—they did not know what was going on but they accepted tasks and solved them without comment.
3. Two weeks later I realised that they themselves started to do things that I had previously had to order them to do before.
4. They started to come up with new ideas and they worked on them (were developing them).

I realised that their previous low level of activity was a consequence of my high level of activity. I took on everything myself and they had no space. When I started to coach them more new perspectives opened up in front of them. Together with the pressure that it's them who are responsible for their results, they woke up, took on the problem as theirs and started to really solve it. ...

I believe that it all sounds like a fairy tale. It is exactly how I feel when I realise how easy and simply it happened. I appreciate this experience highly.

I realised the power of listening and asking questions that do not manipulate; they just straight and simply go to the core of the problem. As a coachee remains in his answers and following resolutions free, he himself finds out "what the problem is about" *and he himself finds an optimal solution and then easily accepts his share of the responsibility. Higher responsibility leads to higher activity because tasks are not commanded but because he them upon himself and thus wants to do his best in fulfilling the task.*

The experience of John demonstrates all three of the perspectives that we presented as PCA applications in the workplace: in his role of coaching his colleagues, he demonstrated the first presented role of a facilitator of the growth of the other; in his role as a member of the team, he showed how to build and manage effectively interactions in the team, and how he was effective in changing the originally passive and resistant attitudes of his colleagues to pro-active, responsible attitudes and autonomous functioning of the team as his own goal. John's experience of developing a PCA way of being demonstrates the application of PCA in the organisational context with its potential towards organisational effectiveness. As such, both theory and our experience confirm that PCA is able to facilitate it.

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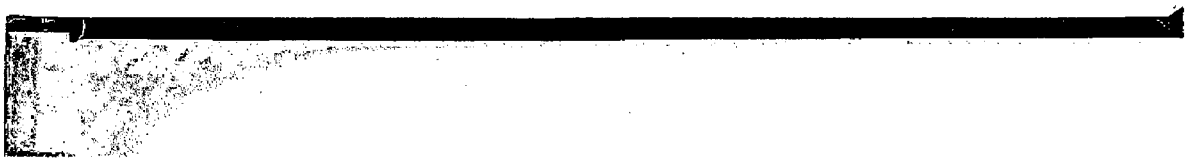

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Jeffrey H. D. Cornelius-White · Renate Motschnig-Pitrik · Michael Lux *Editors*

Interdisciplinary Applications of the Person-Centered Approach

The hallmark of Carl Rogers' work, the Person-Centered Approach (PCA), has long had a major impact on psychological research and clinical practice. More recently, as more diverse professionals recognize the relevance of humanistic thought to their fields, it is enjoying a wider diversity of applications across disciplines, populations, and settings.

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ISBN 978-1-4614-7143-1

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