

Editorial

The Person-Centered Approach to psychotherapy and counseling has undergone dramatic changes over the past few decades. Although its prominence in the USA, where it originated, has declined, it has strengthened in many other parts of the world, particularly in Europe. Another evolution is its growth into the broader and larger 'family' of 'person-centered and experiential psychotherapies' reflective of different emphases. This 'family' now includes workers with 'process-experiential' and 'focusing-oriented' stances, as well as a range of opinion within the mainstream 'client-centered' tradition. Within any 'family' there are tensions as well as commonalities. Therapists of one emphasis will often think of the worst cases when they imagine the other, forgetting that highly skilled workers tend to be similar to each other in their practice. On the other hand, differences also challenge one to clarify and develop one's own view. This new journal, *Person-Centered and Experiential Psychotherapies*, seeks to provide a forum for exploring these tensions and commonalities and for a dialogue among the positions, presenting the developments within the paradigm to the wider world of therapy practice, accreditation, and academia. The journal will not give preference to any parts of the wider 'family', though it will set strong academic expectations for submissions. The official position of the journal is that of the World Association itself; to quote from the Preamble to its Statutes (see also the Appendix to this issue):

The terms 'Person-Centered' and 'Experiential' and the concepts and processes they encompass have an extensive, rich and evolving history. The choice of the phrase 'Person-Centered and Experiential' is intended to promote continued dialogue and development; it is not intended to favor any particular understanding of these approaches and their relationship.

We expect the journal to become a preferred place of publication for those who wish their work to be considered worldwide. In the present volume we have eleven papers from writers distributed across seven countries: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Germany, Holland, Scotland, and the USA. Yet this distribution falls far short of our future aspirations; we are looking for development particularly in regard to work coming from Latin America and Asia, and to the work of female authors, who are still underrepresented here but will not be in the next issues.

Person-Centered and Experiential Psychotherapies will restrict its attention to therapy and counseling, rather than to the wider application of the person-centered paradigm. However, it will attend to all aspects of therapy: practice, theory, research, training, and the underlying philosophy and social context of our therapies. Indeed, the present volume has papers focusing upon all these areas. The aim in this volume is to review the present position of the approaches, following on from the early contribution of Carl Rogers and looking forward to the needs of the future. In preparing this volume, part of our job as editors has been to remind authors to consider parallels to their work in other parts of the world and in other languages. In time this bridging process will be a major function served by the very existence of this international journal.

It has been possible to begin the journal with a double issue at the end of 2002 because

of the high level of contributions from authors. The eleven papers include an opening article from Germain Lietaer, the Chair of the Board of the World Association for Person-Centered and Experiential Psychotherapy and Counseling. Entitled *The United Colors of Person-centered and Experiential Psychotherapies*, Lietaer's paper presents his view of the development of client-centered therapy in recent times to include a strong existential influence and emphasizes such as 'process-experiential' and 'focusing-oriented'. He investigates the coherence of this wider paradigm and the distinctive factors in it compared with others. We are sure that his paper will stimulate discussion and further contributions.

This is followed by three papers on the development of the self: Dave Mearns, in a paper entitled *Further Theoretical Propositions in Regard to Self-Theory within Person-centered Therapy* presents a summary of his recent work on 'relational depth' and 'configurations of self', before going on to outline nine theoretical propositions designed to retrieve the dialogical quality evident in Rogers' earlier Self-Theory and render it more suitable to embrace the social dimension. A fundamental ingredient of Rogers' theory is the 'actualizing tendency', which is the focus of Jobst Finke's paper, *Aspects of the Actualizing Tendency from a Humanistic Psychology Perspective*. As well as offering a close analysis of the concept of the actualizing tendency in terms of its philosophical roots, Finke outlines a framework for examining how the actualizing tendency expresses itself in the way a person leads his or her life. He traces how 'incongruence' relates to blocks to the actualizing tendency, reflecting disorders in the self-system, which are manifested in the self-concept. Another aspect of the self, the inner critic, is the subject of the third paper in this set, by Nele Stinckens *et al.*, *The Valuing Process and the Inner Critic in the Classic and Current Client-centered/Experiential Literature*, in which Rogers' concept of the inner valuing process is deconstructed and a more pluralistic, interactive view is proposed.

After these papers, the focus shifts to two papers that attempt to identify the essence of the therapeutic relationship in person-centered and experiential therapies. Peter F. Schmid offers a philosophical analysis of the paradigm in his paper, *Knowledge or Acknowledgement? Psychotherapy as 'the art of not-knowing' – Prospects on further developments of a radical paradigm*. He highlights 'person', 'encounter', and therapist 'presence' as central dimensions within the paradigm and explores its ethical and epistemological foundations. The focus on 'presence' is also taken by Shari Geller and Les Greenberg in an empirical paper, *Therapeutic Presence: Therapists' experience of presence in the psychotherapy encounter*. In this qualitative study, the authors capture the quality of presence and investigate its process and how therapists of primarily humanistic backgrounds experience it.

The next two papers deal with research and research policy. John McLeod offers the paper *Research Policy and Practice in Person-centered and Experiential Therapy: Restoring coherence*. In it he offers an original review of the central 'discoveries' made about the paradigm in the work done at Chicago and Wisconsin, showing the factors that contributed to this effective research process. The paper goes on to review more recent research and to propose a future agenda for developing research policy and practice. The other paper on research is Robert Elliott's 2002 'Mary Kilborn Lecture' under the title *Render unto Caesar: Qualitative and quantitative knowing in research on humanistic therapies*. The central thesis of the paper is that

although quantitative outcome research tells us little about the important aspects of the therapeutic process, it is essential in most countries where therapeutic services are centrally commissioned. Elliott includes an outline of his 'Experiential Therapy Meta-Analysis Project', a ten-year endeavor to collate the outcomes from research projects worldwide.

This special inaugural issue concludes with three papers dealing with the social and historical context, with implications for future development. Hans Swildens in *Where Did We Come From and Where Are We Going: The development of person-centered psychotherapy* and Martin Van Kalmthout, in *The Future of Person-centered Therapy: Crisis and possibility*, both contribute to a review of the development of the paradigm in continental Europe in the twentieth century. Swildens goes on to offer five challenging propositions for the future development of the paradigm, and Van Kalmthout examines the dangers afforded by such factors as the growth of an 'evidence-based' culture where only a narrow conception of 'evidence' is permitted. To conclude this section, Godfrey Barrett-Lennard offers the paper *The Helping Conditions in Their Context: Expanding change theory and practice*, in which he reminds us that the client-therapist relationship is not a closed system. While Rogers only mentioned client 'incongruence' as an entry variable into therapy, many more social and cultural dimensions require attention. Indeed, these need to be taken into consideration as active variables if we are to understand the process of therapy and its effectiveness.

Finally, as an Appendix, we include the Preamble, Principles and Goals section of the Statutes of the World Association, where it will be readily accessible for readers.

We believe that this volume accurately represents many of the key current developments in the paradigm. However, an important omission is work with difficult client populations or processes. We hope to represent this area of work in Volume 2.

To conclude, and to begin: A hundred years on from Carl Rogers' birth, we find ourselves in this place, beginning something new. We speak with many voices, but his voice is in all of them: repeating, elaborating, extending; wondering, questioning, deepening; speaking, listening, hearing (we hear his voice speaking in our listening). We face challenges: Who now listens to *us*, in the clamoring marketplace, with so many other voices? Do we really listen to each other, or do we only hear what we imagine the other to be saying? Do we have the courage to move forward? Or is there a fear that the loss of our former place is too great? And are we willing to risk the rigors of disciplined research and theory development?

The World Association and this Journal are attempts to create a space in which to address these and other essential questions. And so we find ourselves engaged once again in trying to contribute the art and science of psychotherapy — not just for our own paradigm, but in general. In doing so, we commit ourselves to a wise-foolish act of faith: That these ideas, and the experiences they point to, have a future beyond our lives and disagreements; that joining the voices of our many 'tribes and nations' will result in a telling that continues and contributes to the growth of the human spirit, in times of confusion and darkness, as well as in moments of clarity and light.

Robert Elliott, Dave Mearns, Peter F Schmid

August 2002