ACTIVE RESPONSIVENESS

Person-Centered Psychotherapy
A dialogical approach

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“You only hear the questions that you are able to answer.”

_Friedrich Nietzsche_
Person-Centered Psychotherapy
A dialogical approach

I. The development of PCT towards a substantial-relational understanding

II. Some essential foundations and characteristics of PCT

III. The fundamental dialogical nature of PCT and psychotherapy
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I. The development of PCT towards a substantial-relational understanding

- **Non-directive**
  not interfering in the process of actualization

- **Client-centered**
  the necessary and sufficient conditions for therapeutic personality change

- **Person-centered**
  therapy as encounter:
  the client as self healer – the therapist as facilitator
The emergence of the relational dimension of PCT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Year</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C. R. Rogers</td>
<td>‘therapy as relationship or encounter’</td>
<td>1962</td>
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<td>P. F. Schmid</td>
<td>‘therapy as the art of personal encounter’</td>
<td>1989</td>
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<td>W. Pfeiffer</td>
<td>‘relationship as the central effective factor in PCT’</td>
<td>1989</td>
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<tr>
<td>R. van Balen</td>
<td>‘Rogers’ development towards dialogue’</td>
<td>1990</td>
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<tr>
<td>B. Thorne</td>
<td>‘intimacy’</td>
<td>1991</td>
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<tr>
<td>M. O’Hara</td>
<td>‘relational humanism’</td>
<td>1992</td>
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<tr>
<td>L. Holdstock</td>
<td>‘interdependent, not individuocentric nature of self’</td>
<td>1993</td>
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<tr>
<td>U. Binder</td>
<td>‘empathy versus cognitive social perspective taking’</td>
<td>1993</td>
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<tr>
<td>G. Prouty</td>
<td>‘pre-symbolic experiencing, contact &amp; pre-therapy’</td>
<td>1994</td>
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<tr>
<td>G. Barrett-Lennard</td>
<td>‘client-centered relational psychotherapy’</td>
<td>1998</td>
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<tr>
<td>D. Mearns</td>
<td>‘dialogical model of self’</td>
<td>2000</td>
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<td>M. Warner</td>
<td>‘contact &amp; fragile and dissociated process’</td>
<td>2000</td>
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<tr>
<td>M. Behr</td>
<td>‘interactive resonance’</td>
<td>2003</td>
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<td>A. Bohart</td>
<td>‘the client as active self healer’</td>
<td>2004</td>
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<tr>
<td>M. Cooper</td>
<td>‘relationally-orientated approach to therapy’</td>
<td>2004</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Bipolar model of psychotherapy

P. F. Schmid:
‘therapy – the art of personal encounter & dialogue’

D. Mearns & M. Cooper
‘working at relational depth’
Mearns 1996; Mearns & Thorne, 2000; Mearns & Cooper, 2005

G. Barrett-Lennard
‘client-centered relational psychotherapy’
THE HANDBOOK OF PERSON-CENTRED PSYCHOTHERAPY AND COUNSELLING
Growing relational understanding of therapy

- **Intersubjective psychoanalysis**
  (interplay of transference-countertransference liaison …)

- **CBT** (relationship as prelude to treatment)

- **Systemic therapies** (negotiating …)

- **Existential and humanistic therapies**
The development of PCT towards a substantial-relational understanding

- Relationship is essential to *all* psychotherapy.

- But the concept of encounter of PCT marks a change of paradigm.

- The human being as individual-in-relationship: independence *and* interrelatedness.

- In PCT relationship is not a means or method, rather therapy *is* encounter, *is* dialogue.
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II. Some essential foundations and characteristics of PCT

- Person
- Encounter
- Fundamental We
- Presence
- Personalization
- Group
The state of the art of PCT

**Person**

- substantial-relational nature
- independence & interconnectedness
- image of the human being: personal anthropology, phenomenological, existential
The state of the art of PCT

**Encounter**

- the Other
- epistemology of alterity
- Thou-I-relationship
The state of the art of PCT

**Fundamental We**

- encounter as core of a co-creative process
- co-responding to the existential situation
- bi-polar model of psychotherapy: client makes acknowledgement and empathy of the therapist work
The state of the art of PCT

Presence

- to be fully there
- authenticity, acknowledgment, comprehension
- *the* core condition of being-with and being-counter
The state of the art of PCT

- **Actualizing process as personalization**
  - *energeia-dynamis / act-potency*
    - efficient cause (causa efficiens)
  - dialectical understanding of the actualizing tendency
  - actualizing tendency as *social construct*
    - (no development totally-by-itself)
  - *personalizing tendency: freedom & creativity*
The state of the art of PCT

- **Group**
  - „the Third“
  - the primary locus of therapy
  - the interface of individual & society
  - PCA is a group approach
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Different meanings of ‘dialogue’ in PCT

J. Finke & L. Teusch the dialogical must be amended by a functional relationship
G. Lietaer dialogical working alliance
K. Tudor & T. Merry dialogue is ‘a precondition for therapy and the therapy itself’
A. Bohart co-constructive dialogue as meeting of minds
K. Tudor & M. Worrall dialogue is the practice and mutuality is the outcome
P. Sanders dialogue is the co-created relationship between the helper and the person helped
not a school of therapy, but the idea that therapy is dialogue
D. Mearns & M. Cooper working at relational depth:
‘state of profound contact and engagement between two people in which each person is fully with the Other …’
specific moments of encounter & a particular quality of a relationship
What does ‘dialogue’ mean?

* Greek ‘δια-λέγειν’
δια = between (inter)

λέγειν = pick up, gather, collect; talk, speak
to put something apart by thinking over it

λογος = word, meaning, significance
‘between words’ → flowing of meaning
Dialogue: the conventional meaning

- human conversation face to face, mutual exchange, discourse, interchange in talking
  
v. entre-tien (conversation), inter-course (social communication)

- symmetry and equality

- a meeting of the one with the other
Dialogue: Socrates

- pro-active search for wisdom
- ἐν ζήν: to live a good and truthful life
- a pedagogical instrument
Dialogue: Martin Buber

Interpersonality ➔ Dialogue

“The sphere of the interpersonal is the opposite-to-each-other; its unfolding is what we call dialogue.”  

Buber, 1948

I-Thou relationship
Dialogue: Emmanuel Levinas

- of original im-media-cy
- not a consequence of experience
- primary occurrence
- dissymetric: The other comes first.
Dialogue: Emmanuel Levinas

Dialogue $\rightarrow$ Interpersonality

“It is precisely because the Thou is absolutely different from the I that there is - from the one to the other - dialogue.”  

Levinas, 1981

Thou-I relationship
Dialogue: Emmanuel Levinas

- Solidarity is a basic human condition.

- It means to say: “Here I am.”

- This dissymmetry is the origin of ethics.

- The I is constituted by his/her responsibility.
Dialogue

Self-consciousness $\Rightarrow$ dialogue

Dialogue $\Rightarrow$ self-consciousness
Dialogue

The human person is dialogue.
What does a dialogical understanding of PCT mean?

- A true humanistic therapy is not egology.
- Being concerned with the therapist attitudes above all = „therapist-centredness“.

- The client comes first.
What does a dialogical understanding of PCT mean?

Psychotherapy means to enter dialogue.
What does a dialogical understanding of PCT mean?

Psychotherapy means to **enter** dialogue.
What does a dialogical understanding of PCT mean?

- Dialogue is in the very beginning of therapy.
- The persons engaged in therapy are dialogue.
Therapy as dialogue?

Psychotherapy $\rightarrow$ dialogue

Dialogue $\rightarrow$ psychotherapy
What does a dialogical understanding of PCT mean?

- Dialogue is in the very beginning of therapy.
- The persons engaged in therapy are dialogue.
- Therapy is the unfolding of dialogue.
- Presence is an expression of the fundamental “Here I am”.
- Encounter is the realization of dialogue.
- Ethically therapy is a way of “being for” the client.
What does a dialogical understanding of PCT mean?

The dialogical understanding of PCT is a deepening of the comprehension of its image of the human being: the person.
Dialogue – an ethical enterprise & a political statement

- **Ethical task**
  
  To be existentially challenged as a person and as a professional.

- **Political task**
  
  To resist problem- and solution-centeredness.

  To avoid the trap of the customary politics of the helping professions.

- To develop a truly human science, research and practice.
‘You only hear the questions that you are able to answer.’

_Friedrich Nietzsche_
Without acknowledgement of the radical otherness of the Other ‘responding wouldn’t be what it is, namely a way of speaking and doing that – responding to demands of others – surprises itself’.

Bernhard Waldenfels
welcome to pca-online.net

The Person-Centered Website
by Peter F. Schmid

Die personzentrierte Homepage
Le site centré sur la personne
De Persoonsgerichte Site
Site da Abordagem Centrada na Pessoa
Página Web Centrada en la Persona
彼得. 史密德