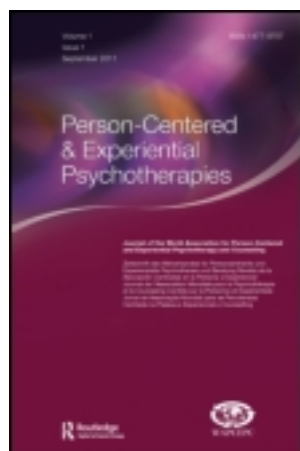


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The Process of growth and transformation: Extending the process model

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This paper extends Rogers' processing model and presents an integrative framework of human functioning that draws on recent developments in neuroscience and person-centered and experiential theory. Four developmental processes, including *emotional processing*, the *differentiation of experience*, the *development of somatic markers*, and the *treatment of self* are identified as important developmental processes that contribute to becoming a fully functioning person as defined by Rogers (1961). Potential problems in living and being that clients might encounter with one or more of the developmental processes are identified and discussed in the context of person-centered and experiential approaches to psychotherapy.

Keywords: Person-centered; experiential; emotion-focused therapy; affect regulation; differentiation; process

Der Prozess des Wachstums und der Transformation: die Erweiterung des Prozessmodells

Dieser Artikel erweitert Rogers' Prozessmodell und stellt ein integratives Modell menschlichen Funktionierens vor, das sich auf jüngste Entwicklungen der Neurowissenschaften sowie personenzentrierter und experienzieller Theorie stützt. Vier Entwicklungsprozesse werden als wichtig identifiziert: emotionales Prozessieren, die Ausdifferenzierung von Erfahrung, die Entwicklung somatischer Marker und der Umgang mit dem Selbst. Sie machen es aus, dass man zur "fully functioning person" wird, wie es Rogers' definierte (1961). Potenzielle Probleme mit dem Leben und dem Sein, die die Klienten dabei bei einem oder mehreren dieser Entwicklungsprozesse möglicherweise erleben, werden identifiziert und im Kontext von personenzentriertem oder experienziellem psychotherapeutischem Vorgehen diskutiert.

El Proceso de Desarrollo y Transformación: Extendiendo el modelo de proceso

Este escrito amplía el modelo de procesamiento de Rogers y presenta un modelo integrativo del funcionamiento humano que se basa en los recientes desarrollos en las neurociencias y la teoría experiencial y centrada en la persona. Se identifican como importantes procesos de desarrollo que contribuyen a convertirse en una persona de funcionamiento pleno, tal como la definió Rogers en 1961, cuatro procesos de desarrollo, incluyendo el procesamiento emocional, la

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diferenciación de la experiencia, el desarrollo de los marcadores somáticos y el tratamiento del self. Los problemas potenciales en la vida y el ser que pueden encontrar los consultantes con uno o más de los procesos de desarrollo, se identifican y discuten en el contexto de los enfoques a la psicoterapia centrados en la persona y experienciales.

Le Processus de Croissance et Transformation: Élargir le modèle processuel

Cet article élargit le modèle de processing de Rogers et présente un modèle du fonctionnement humain qui tient compte des développements récents des neurosciences et de la théorie centrée sur la personne et expérientielle. Quatre processus développementaux, comprenant le processing des émotions, la différenciation de l'expérience, le développement de marqueurs somatiques, et la manière de traiter son self, sont identifiés comme étant des processus développementaux importants contribuant à ce que la personne fonctionne pleinement selon la définition de Rogers (1961). Des problèmes potentiels concernant l'un ou plusieurs de ces processus développementaux sont identifiés dans la vie et l'être des clients. Ils sont analysés dans le contexte des approches psychothérapeutiques centrée sur la personne et expérientielle.

O Processo de Desenvolvimento e Transformação: Expandindo o modelo do processamento

Este artigo expande o modelo rogeriano de processamento, oferecendo um modelo integrativo do funcionamento humano, decorrente de desenvolvimentos recentes nas neurociências e nas teorias centrada na pessoa e experienciais. Identificam-se quatro processos de desenvolvimento, como sendo relevantes para a pessoa se tornar plenamente funcionante, de acordo com a definição de Rogers (1961) designadamente: processamento emocional, diferenciação da experiência, desenvolvimento de marcadores somáticos e tratamento do *self*. São identificados e debatidos potenciais problemas que os clientes podem encontrar com o viver ou com o ser, num ou mais dos processos de desenvolvimento, no âmbito das abordagens centrada na pessoa e experiencial da psicoterapia.

成長と変容のプロセス：プロセスモデル再考

本稿では、ロジャースの論じたプロセスモデルや人間性の機能について、近年の神経科学、PCA、実証的理論を踏まえ、より統合的モデルとして捉えなおすことを目的とした。具体的には、ロジャース(1961)の定義した「十分に機能する人間」になる上で重要な要因として、感情、経験、身体的気づき、自分をいたわる態度の4つをあげ、それぞれの発達過程を論じた。また、それらの発達過程の中でクライアントが体験し抱える、生きていく上で、またありのままの自分としてある上で妨げとなる潜在的課題について、PCAと体験過程アプローチの観点から論考した。

A primary objective in this paper is to extend Rogers' (1951/1965, 1961) view of personality and the process of change described in his book *On Becoming a Person* in an attempt to bridge the differences between the various arms of the person-centered and experiential psychotherapy (PCEP) approach. An integrative framework is proposed that draws on Rogers' (1959, 1961) views of human functioning and the work of Antonio Damasio (1994, 2000). Four developmental processes that are important to becoming a fully functioning person are identified and some of the potential difficulties or problems in *living* and *being* that clients might encounter as they navigate these processes are highlighted.

A number of authors have pointed to the relevance of recent developments in neuroscience for our work as PCEP theorists and practitioners (Motschnig-Pitrik & Lux, 2008; Watson & Greenberg, 2009). Additional support comes from the work of Antonio Damasio (1994, 2000), whose model of organismic functioning and the important role of emotional processing in the development of the self and organismic survival illuminates Rogers' and Gendlin's views of human functioning from the inside out. As we move forward into the 21st century I would like to acknowledge and celebrate Rogers' (1951/1965, 1961) contribution to our understanding of human functioning and the practice of psychotherapy. Neuroscience is only now catching up and illuminating what he saw and recognized as he listened intently to his clients and tried to represent their experiences from the outside in. In developing his theory of personality development and change, Rogers emphasized both the therapeutic relationship and the process of change (Rogers, 1959, 1961). While his views about the therapeutic relationship and its role in therapy have become universally acknowledged (Bohart, Elliott, Greenberg, & Watson, 2002; Burns & Nolen-Hoeksema, 1992; Norcross, 2002), less attention has been paid to his theory of personality change (Watson & Watson, 2010). In this paper I will focus on his theory of personality change and propose an integrative model of development and functioning to bridge the two poles of person-centered and experiential thought that represent his vision.

Rogers' view of human functioning

Rogers, locating his discourse within a biological worldview, illuminated the importance of the organism in human functioning as well as the role of emotional processing in understanding and guiding experience. According to Rogers (1951/1965, 1961) people in interaction with their environments acquire concepts and understandings of themselves, their world, and their relationship to the world that they use to guide their behavior, along with their own organismic sense of what feels right, good, or bad. Support for this view comes from studies in developmental psychology that show that infants demonstrate an innate preference for displays of good behavior as opposed to bad or selfish behavior by others (Hamlin, Wynn, & Bloom, 2007). Rogers conceived of human functioning as differentiated, with people operating as organized wholes in their environments as they try to actualize themselves and maintain and enhance their experience. The process of actualization is facilitated and guided by feelings and emotions, which alert organisms to the significance of events so that they can act in ways to promote and enhance their survival (J. Watson, 2007; Watson & Watson, 2010).

Organismic experience consists of all the ways human organisms experience themselves and their environments through their *bodily felt sense* (Gendlin, 1962, 1996; Rogers, 1961). This knowledge comes in part from their senses, like hearing, vision, and touch, as well as their construals, feelings, and emotions. Thus experiencing is made up of both inner and outer experience as persons apprehend what is occurring in their environments through their senses, react to that experience with emotions and/or their felt sense, and come to know and understand the impact of that experience on their organism (Damasio, 1994; Rogers, 1961; Watson & Greenberg, 1996). Much of the information that human organisms acquire through their senses is processed out of awareness so that it can be acted upon efficiently and effectively to enhance survival. However some experience becomes conscious, forming the self.

Rogers (1959, 1961) regarded persons as functioning optimally when they are aware of their feelings, able to represent them symbolically, think about them in the context of their total experience, are hypothetical in terms of how they view their experience, and able to appropriately share their experience with others. As people become more aware of their inner experience and able to represent and name their feelings they become more congruent (Rogers, 1961). More recently these activities have become viewed as core to effective affect regulation (Behr & Becker, 2002; Gratz & Roemer, 2004; Kennedy-Moore & Watson, 1999; Salovey & Mayer, 1990; Watson & Watson, 2010). In order to regulate affect effectively individuals need to be aware of their inner experience, accurately symbolize it in awareness, act on it appropriately to meet their individual and social needs, and communicate it effectively to others (Damasio, 1994; Elliott, Watson, Goldman, & Greenberg, 2004; Greenberg & Safran, 1989; Kennedy-Moore & Watson, 1999; Salovey & Mayer, 1990).

Damasio's theory of emotion

There is growing support for Rogers' view of human functioning from the neurosciences both in terms of the experience and the role of empathy as well as emotional processing (Iacoboni, 2009; Motschnig-Pitrik & Lux, 2008; Watson & Greenberg, 2009). Damasio's (1994, 2000) work and theoretical perspective in particular provides a view of human functioning and emotional processing that coheres with Rogers' views and those of the PCEP approach more generally.

Emotion as the representation of body states

Damasio (1994), like Rogers, identified the organism and its regulating capacities as essential to survival, with emotion at the heart of this regulatory process. According to Damasio, emotions are brain representations of body states and provide a reading of our internal environment and how it is being affected from without – as it processes information from our senses. While much regulation occurs out of awareness and is never directly known, governed by instinctual responses to various body states, other types of regulation are in awareness. Instinctual regulation occurs in the brain stem and hypothalamus with some help from the limbic system. While the first two are not modifiable, the latter, the limbic system, is *changed by experience*. The more complex the environment and the more complex the organism, the greater is the need for modification and more conscious self-regulation in order for it to survive. According to Damasio (1994) this is where the conscious apprehension of feelings and emotions comes into play: to help human beings adapt to and cope with complex social and physical environments. It is emotion that provides individuals with information to guide their behavior and enables them to communicate with others.

Damasio (1994) suggests that human organisms come into the world with a set of automatic survival and regulatory mechanisms to which are added a set of *socially permissible* and *desirable* decision-making strategies that are developed out of their *unique individual life experiences* in order to enhance survival and serve as the basis for becoming a fully functioning person (Damasio, 1994). Like Rogers, Damasio sees human beings as organisms that are able to respond to and evaluate experiences by means of their emotional or bodily felt reactions. In order to take account of both the innate biological predispositions and those that are acquired by interaction with

the environment, Damasio distinguishes between early or *primary* emotions and adult or *secondary* emotions.

Primary emotions are those innate emotional responses that are triggered by *innate dispositional characteristics* helping us to respond in preorganized ways when presented with certain stimuli in the world or in our bodies either alone or in combination (Damasio, 1994). Some stimuli that elicit innate emotional responses include *size, motion, sounds*, and *specific body states* like hunger, thirst, pain, and exhaustion. These emotional bodily felt responses to certain stimuli enhance survival but in addition they *become tailor-made* and *personalized* as a result of individual experiences.

Damasio uses the term *secondary emotion* to describe the connections that form between primary emotions and specific stimuli that individuals encounter as a result of experience, otherwise known as *acquired dispositional representations* (Damasio, 1994). Secondary emotions can be activated by conscious reflection and consideration of specific dispositional representations including people, places, and memories. These responses are *specific* and *customized* for each individual based on their experience of being in the world. For example, seeing someone looking wounded has distinct meanings for different people. While one person might experience it as silencing, another may see it as manipulative, and yet another as a call for help. These customized dispositional tendencies are important in the development of emotion schemes (Elliott, et al., 2004; Greenberg, Rice, & Elliott, 1993; Pascual-Leone, 1987; Piaget, 1969).

Thus as individuals experience the world they learn to connect their feelings with specific stimuli, for example, a baby who comes to feel contentment and joy in response to an attentive mother's face; or someone who feels comforted by an outstretched hand if he/she has been treated well as opposed to fear if he/she has been beaten and physically abused. Damasio (1994) used the term *somatic marker* to identify the links between specific feeling states and specific stimuli. He suggested that these links are the basic reason for consciousness, buying individuals an "enlarged protection policy" (Damasio, 1994, p. 133) that enables them to plan ahead and predict the probability of certain stimuli being present in different situations. The other benefit is that feelings can be generalized to other stimuli without individuals having to have direct experience with them thereby offering people "flexibility of response based on their particular history of interactions with the environment" (ibid.).

Like Rogers, Damasio (1994) sees body representations as dynamic, moment-by-moment syntheses of what is happening in the body moment-by-moment as a result of specific neural and chemical changes. Damasio (1994) distinguishes emotions from feelings, seeing the former as resulting from a combination of mental evaluation of stimuli/situations along with the dispositional responses to that process. This is similar to Rogers' (1961) notion of the organismic valuing tendency. In contrast, feelings are the *conscious perception* or experience of these bodily changes. Like Rogers and Gendlin (1962, 1981), Damasio (1994) sees feelings as the process of continuous monitoring of the experience of your body while specific contents roll by. Moreover while all emotions generate feelings not all feelings originate in emotions.

Damasio identifies three types of feelings: first, *primary* emotions like fear, or joy; second, the *subtle variations* of the primary emotions like embarrassment, nostalgia, or apprehension; and third, *background feelings* that provide "the feeling of life itself, the sense of being" (Damasio, 1994, p. 150). These latter feelings are restricted in

range so that they are not too positive or too negative. It is background feelings of which people are most aware – the feelings between emotions which, by prevailing over an extended period of time, give rise to moods, and are core to individuals' senses of self. He argues that the brain requires this ongoing continuous information of the individual's living state in order to maintain its level of awareness and wakefulness.

PCEP theory and practice

What is the relevance of Damasio's views of emotion and feelings for us as PCEP practitioners and thinkers? First let us consider how closely aligned Damasio's view of functioning is with that of Rogers' (1959, 1961). Damasio's views highlight the importance of attending to and listening to our clients' body states, feelings, emotions, and the meanings that situations have for them. While Damasio embeds his thinking in more specific biological processes so that his understanding grows from the inside out, Rogers was working from the outside in. Nonetheless he discerned that his clients were engaged in the process of symbolizing their inner experience including their emotions, both primary and secondary, and their background feelings as he listened to them explore and resolve their problems in living and being. Many of the processes that Damasio uses to support his arguments are covert processes and not visible to the type of observation in which Rogers was engaged.

Yet from his vantage Rogers was aware of the role that emotions, feelings, and body states play in our understanding of our worlds and ourselves. A study of Rogers' therapy tapes shows that he was aware of the different types of feeling states as he mirrored his clients' experiencing (Brodley, 2002). He symbolized much more than clients' emotions, including the meaning of their experiences, and was attentive to clients' background feelings and those feeling states that did not emanate from emotions as well as those that did.

Like Damasio (1994), Rogers and his colleagues recognized that we are emotional beings. He was conscious of working to understand clients' feelings and to facilitate the symbolization of their experience and its expression in words. In his words: "Counselor participation becomes an active experiencing with the client of the feelings to which he gives expression, ... and this through the most intense, continuous and active attention to the feelings of the other, to the exclusion of any other type of attention" (Rogers, 1951, p. 29). Rogers appreciated that by bringing these states into awareness people could arrive at new understandings and that by reflecting on these feeling states they could develop new ways of being. Like Rogers, Damasio (1994, 2000), too, sees the capacity for change emanating from intense reflection. Engaging in therapy and trying to become aware of and represent feelings and emotions in the presence of an empathic, accepting, and congruent other allows clients to come to know and understand their feeling states in response to various external and internal stimuli and identify problematic feeling states or *somatic markers* they may want to change.

Developmental processes

Building on the work of Rogers and Damasio, I would like to present a model of four important developmental processes. These are *emotional processing*,

differentiation, the development of somatic markers, and treatment of self. Both *emotional processing* and *differentiation* are important capacities people use to help them know the world and themselves as their organisms actualize and mature in interaction with their environments. The other two processes, the *development of somatic markers* and *treatment of self*, are the products of this knowing and subsequently interact with and guide the first two processes.

Emotional processing

A cornerstone of Rogers' (1959) theory is the notion of congruence. Implicit in this process is the development of emotional processing skills or *affect regulation* (Gratz & Roemer, 2004) that includes among other things *the awareness of bodily emotion-feeling states*, and *their symbolization or labeling in conscious awareness* – otherwise known as *congruence* (Watson & Watson, 2010). Rogers (1959) recognized that clients needed to balance their feeling states with the demands of their environments and in doing so acquire *conditions of worth*. The latter were defined as the internalized rules and ways of being that are deemed acceptable and that can result in incongruence when the valuing process of the organism is at odds with the demands of the environment and the ideal self that has internalized these demands and/or rules. For Rogers (1961) then the focus of psychotherapy was on helping clients to resolve discrepancies between the real self and the ideal self and between the self-concept and the organismic valuing process, by having them become more aware of their organismic experience and reflect on their needs to develop a better balance between conditions of worth and organismic experience (Watson & Watson, 2010).

Emotional processing requires individuals to become aware of their inner experience, symbolize or label it in order to differentiate and know it, and then to identify needs and ways of behaving that will enhance their organisms. As individuals develop they not only acquire the capacity to know what they are experiencing and know what their organisms need but they also learn to modulate and regulate their emotions and their emotional experience. This capacity to regulate emotion is learned and internalized in interaction with the environment. People learn and internalize the ways in which caretakers respond to their feelings and expression of emotion and adopt these evaluations and rules of behavior; subsequently these become amplified as cultural and social norms are internalized.

Differentiation of self

In adaptive and supportive environments individuals develop the capacity to accurately symbolize all aspects of their experience independently of the demands of others. Rogers (1951/1965, p. 502) observed that "... in fully functioning persons this behavior would not *necessarily* conform to that of his parents' wishes, nor would it *always* be socially good." Rather it would be adaptive behavior of a "*separate, unique, self-governing individual*" Rogers, 1951/1965, p. 502, italics added). That is one who is fully differentiated in terms of self and other. In contrast a poorly differentiated individual would be unsure of his or her own organismic tendencies and values and unable to differentiate his or her needs and values from those of others. Thus we see that differentiation is both an *inter* personal as well as *intra* personal process, as people differentiate self from other and environment and differentiate their own inner experience so that they can know it better.

Both Rogers (1961) and Damasio (1994, 2004) emphasize the importance of differentiating self from others and the environment during development. In Proposition VIII of his theory of personality Rogers (1951/1965) proposed that a portion of the individual's field becomes differentiated as the self. Like Damasio (1994, 2004), Rogers sees the self as a product of symbolization and at the root of consciousness. Rogers (1951/1965, p. 498) defined the self as the "organized, fluid, but consistent conceptual patterns of perceptions of the *I* or the *me*, together with the values attached to these concepts."

The differentiation of self is further articulated in Rogers' (1951/1965) propositions IX and X. According to him this is the process by which individuals develop a concept of self and is made necessary because people are emotional beings with the capacity for empathy. First individuals need to differentiate out self-experiences from their perceptual fields. Rogers (1951/1965) observed that there was no distinct line between the organism and his or her environment. In fact the one way that he suggested that the distinction is made is through the notion of control. He noted that even aspects of one's own physical functioning may be considered more or less *me*, depending on whether it is viewed as under one's conscious control. Thus to take ownership of a behavior is to begin to see it as under one's conscious control. Rogers, like Damasio, sees the self as awareness of being, or of one's sense of functioning.

The dictionary definition of differentiation is the development of one into many. This is a basic biological principle and, I would suggest, a basic psychological principle as well. Psychologically it is a process of coming to know and to isolate aspects or facets of experience; to do this requires us to name them and bring them into consciousness. One way of doing this is through symbolization. Rogers (1961) observed that the process was necessary in order to make sense of emotional experience. He highlighted the role of differentiating emotional experience in order to make it known and to differentiate out its various aspects and nuances. This was later referred to as the process of symbolization of feeling. It is one of the hallmarks of PCEP practice, and one of the essential processes identified by non-PCEP practitioners as necessary for effective affect regulation or emotional processing (Damasio, 1994; Gratz & Roemer, 1994; Kennedy-Moore & Watson, 1999; Salovey & Mayer, 1990).

One of the complexities of being is that individuals are both autonomous organisms that are made up of separate processes and they are also in continual interaction with their environment, so any theory of individual functioning needs to take account of both *intra* personal as well as *inter* personal functioning. Rogers' (1961) view of what it takes to become a self-governing and fully functioning person takes account of both these processes. He recognizes that individuals have to be aware of and accurately represent their inner organismic experience as well as that of others and integrate both of them in order to divine solutions for living that are optimal for each individual. Thus being optimally congruent implies differentiation at its core.

In order to become fully functioning, individuals need to, first, differentiate their inner and outer experience and, second, differentiate from others. This latter process does not require that individuals be totally independent of others but rather it means that individuals are *able to adequately differentiate their experience from that of others and clearly represent that experience as well as that of others in consciousness in order to be self-governing*. As emotional beings that interact with others and have the capacity for empathy to understand how others are feeling and anticipate what they might

need, want or intend, they can subserve their feelings to those of others such that their own organismic experience is distorted or denied to awareness. In other words individuals can silence, reject, neglect or otherwise misattribute their own feelings and needs and take on the feelings of another as their own. The process of differentiation is vital to healthy and adaptive functioning – it is essential not only to the wellbeing of individuals, but in addition to that, of couples, families, communities and ultimately to the survival of the species and the planet.

The development of somatic markers

The third developmental process that is essential to survival is that of *somatic markers*. Damasio (1994) defined *somatic markers* as events, and/or stimuli that are marked by specific emotional responses; or the links that form between perceptions and emotion as a result of experience. Some of these links may be more common and shared more generally across individuals, for example, the sight or smell of food can elicit feelings of hunger; or the sound of thunder a tightening in the stomach and fear; or the image of a smiling face may elicit feelings of happiness and joy. Alternatively certain stimuli that elicit feelings of love, contentment, and security in some people might evoke feelings of betrayal and anxiety in someone who has been abused by a significant other. This latter example reflects the malleable and highly *idiosyncratic* nature of individuals' responses honed in interaction with their environments. It suggests how highly adaptive emotional responses develop as well as how more problematic secondary emotional responses might form in conjunction with maladaptive environments. Damasio (1994) recognizes that the development of adaptive somatic markers requires that both the *brain* and the *environment* be normal. Thus problematic somatic markers may occur if either the brain and or environment are abnormal and maladaptive for any given individual.

Somatic markers can be viewed as the precursors of emotion schemes (Greenberg, et al., 1993; Elliott, et al., 2004). In emotion-focused therapy/the process experiential approach, emotion schemes are composites of specific perceptual-somatic-emotional-action representations that form as a result of experience and help guide individuals' actions in specific situations. Emotion schemes represent a blend of somatic markers and treatment of self. Although they are out of awareness they are characteristic ways of acting that mediate between individuals and their environments.

Treatment of self

The fourth developmental process that is important to highlight is treatment of self. Rogers (1959) observed that individuals develop *conditions of worth* as they interact with their environments. He defined these as the rules that individuals learn about what behavior is acceptable and what is not if they are to maintain contact and attachments with significant others in order to survive. Rogers (1959; 1961) was aware of the role of significant relationships and attachment experiences in developing conditions of worth. However with the development of somatic markers and the resulting emotion schemes, the emotional connections between certain experiences with significant others and the environment can lead not only to judgments about the self but to ways of treating the self as well as inner and outer experience. People learn how to value themselves and how to value and treat their

experience as somatic markers form. In propositions IX and X Rogers (1961, 1951/1965) notes that the values that are attached to the concept of self are the product of both the individual's organismic valuing process and those that have been introjected from the environment and significant others. Rogers (1959) observed that when the introjected values conflict with organismic experience individuals may deny their organismic experience or distort it so that some behaviors may be experienced as positive even though the organism finds them negative and other behaviors regarded as negative when there is no such organismic or bodily reaction (Rogers, 1959, p. 501). These introjected values later became known as conditions of worth – typically they have become thought of as rules of acceptable behavior, for example, “I should not be angry”; “I should always be polite”; “I should take care of others before myself”; “It is wrong to be sad.”

However, in addition, these internalized conditions of worth are the ways individuals learn to treat their inner and outer experiences. As a result of interactions with significant others and the environment, including cultural norms and values, people learn how to treat themselves in particular ways and especially how to treat their organismic experience. In interaction with others, individuals learn that feelings are acceptable; that they will be listened to and heard, appreciated, and validated; or alternatively that emotions and feelings must be managed, silenced, or neglected. Thus the ways in which individuals are treated becomes internalized and used to manage their organismic experience and behavior. Impaired treatment of self and emotional experience results from being oppressed, controlled, dismissed, silenced, and neglected, and provides the blueprint for ways of modulating and regulating emotions. The ways that individuals develop and learn to respond to their feelings, emotions, needs and wishes can be positive and life enhancing enabling them to live fully and with satisfaction in the moment or they can be negative causing problems in being and living that can be experienced as problematic and painful.

Difficulties in development

As a result of interactions with problematic, difficult, and maladaptive environments, difficulties can occur during one or more of the developmental processes outlined above. Exposure to maladaptive environments may result in individuals failing to master one or more of the processes so that they experience difficulties with emotional processing, or have problems differentiating self and other; or develop problematic somatic markers; or negative ways of treating themselves and their organismic experience.

Difficulties with emotional processing

Rogers (1959, 1961) identified incongruence as a major source of dysfunction. According to him incongruence makes a person vulnerable to anxiety and depression because the self-structure and the needs of the organism are in conflict. Fully functioning individuals do not need to distort experience to fit with introjected conditions of worth. Rather they are able to be aware of and open to their experience, including their sensations, feelings, perceptions, construals, and emotions; and they are able to accurately symbolize and label it in awareness, and accept, and express it in ways that are responsible both for the individual's well-being, the specific community, and society at large (Watson & Watson, 2010).

According to Rogers, in the process of effective therapy, clients experience a decrease in self-discrepancy and improved emotional processing or affect regulation. These changes reflect an organism that is operating fluidly and is able to process feelings and experiences in a manner that is satisfying and enhancing to its survival.

However, as Rogers (1961) noted, organismic experience could be distorted or denied to awareness, resulting in impaired emotional processing, including impaired attention to and representation of body cues and states, as well as impaired modulation of arousal and expression. When clients experience difficulty processing their emotional experience they may have difficulty being aware of and recognizing what is happening in their bodies; alternatively they may be so overwhelmed by what they are experiencing that they are overpowered by it. Other clients may have difficulty labeling or adequately symbolizing what they are feeling so that they can know and understand it better. Yet others may have difficulty modulating their emotional arousal and how they express it. Clients who experience difficulty with aspects of their emotional processing may seek out better ways of handling or processing their emotions so that they can experience and express them with less pain for themselves and others.

Difficulties with differentiation

As with the development of other self-processes, people can experience problems differentiating self from other. These types of difficulties are reflected in the terms used by family therapists (Bowen, 1966; Minuchin, 1974) including enmeshment or disengagement. Enmeshment results when someone overly identifies with the experience of another. It is a natural outcome of individuals' capacity for empathy, which enables them to resonate to and know the experience of others and at its extreme confuse their experience with that of others (Iacoboni, 2009). This process often occurs in the context of dependent relationships. As part of development infants require the help of caretakers to differentiate the experiences of each person in the dyad as they respond appropriately to the infant's needs. Differentiation may become problematic if caretakers are unable to respond adequately to their infants or if they themselves are unable to distinguish their own experience from that of others, entering a merged, enmeshed state with the other. Disengagement on the other hand is the polar opposite signifying complete withdrawal and a breaking of connection so that the other is almost invisible to conscious awareness. These states of being are represented in the attachment literature as attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance respectively (Feeney, Noller, & Hanrahan, 1994). Enmeshment or extreme differentiation can be experienced as very problematic and painful by some clients and often prompts them to seek help in psychotherapy.

Problematic somatic markers

Damasio (1994) observed that problematic somatic markers occur in maladaptive environments or if the brain is maladaptive so that various stimuli that might otherwise be perceived as positive, neutral, or unthreatening acquire a negative or threatening emotional response or meaning for the individual. The focus in this paper is on problematic somatic markers formed as a result of maladaptive environments. Damasio (1994) suggests that somatic markers generalize as a way of allowing individuals to process experiences quickly and efficiently to insure survival.

As a result somatic markers may over-generalize to disparate but similar experiences. If emotional responses over-generalize to different stimuli and the specific idiosyncratic meaning of the event is inadequately differentiated and represented in awareness then they may be experienced as problematic for some individuals. For example, a client, who had not symbolized the impact of feeling betrayed by her father whom she loved dearly but who was physically abusive, became anxious and scared when she experienced feelings of trust or warmth towards others later in her life. She experienced these feelings as problematic but did not understand why she reacted as she did. It is understandable that, while some people might respond to gestures of friendship with warmth and greater openness, people who have been repeatedly hurt by loved ones may withdraw or become angry when greeted by acts of warmth and affection.

Extrapolating from Damasio's (1994) theory, I would like to suggest that the links between various feeling states and environmental cues that cause the organism to feel anxious and vulnerable and become over-generalized and/or inadequately differentiated, as can happen when they are formed pre-verbally or under circumstances of intense emotion, threat, or vulnerability, might contribute to the development of anxiety. The organism, in its attempt to protect itself, responds to environmental cues that are similar to those in the original threatening situation with feelings of fear and vulnerability. If the original situation has not been adequately represented in consciousness then the anxiety will be over-generalized to other stimuli that are somewhat similar. For example, the client who saw any act of friendship as potentially threatening until she consciously named and identified her father's behavior as betrayal, after which she was able to differentiate the intentions of the agent from the act and develop ways to protect herself from her father specifically as opposed to people in general. Rice's (Rice & Saperia, 1984) work with problematic reactions highlights how specific dispositional representations that are inadequately differentiated can be triggered by surprising and unexpected stimuli. Rice coined the term "meaning bridge" to refer to the understanding of the connection between certain problematic emotional reactions and the acquired dispositions or stimuli that trigger them.

Negative treatment of self

As Rogers (1959, 1961) observed, conditions of worth develop in interaction with significant others. However, while he focused more on the effect that conditions of worth have on individuals' awareness of their experience, I propose that they extend beyond that, to how people regulate and soothe themselves and how they express and communicate their feelings to others. Individuals may be told to be brave and "suck it up"; not to express grief and sorrow; and sometimes that what they sense and perceive to be happening is not so, for example, when they experience something as bad and damaging and they are told it is good or pleasurable. Responses that dismiss the organismic valuing tendency can have the effect of silencing and/or distorting it so that individuals lose trust in what they feel and begin to treat their experience negatively. Negative treatment of self is apparent in many people who experience difficulty regulating their emotional experience and feel distress, including those who have problems with addictions, experience disordered eating patterns, or experience intense depression (Watson, Goldman & Greenberg, 2007). Alternatively environments and people can be so neglectful that people may struggle to care for themselves and fail to thrive given such inadequate resources. This in turn can lead

people to be neglectful, oppressive, ashamed, and unforgiving of themselves. These negative ways of treating the self can be very damaging and painful often bringing clients to therapy.

Processing tasks

A foundation stone of PCEP theory (Rogers, 1959, 1975) is that the way to heal problems in living and being – including conditions of worth or negative treatment of self, incongruence or impaired emotional processing, and distorted, or denied organismic experience – is an accepting, warm, nonjudgmental relationship with a congruent therapist who is actively trying to understand their client's experience from the inside out (Barrett-Lennard, 1997; Bohart & Tallman, 1999; Bozarth, 1990, 1997; Brodley, 1994; Mearns & Thorne, 1999; Raskin, 2002; Warner, 1998). This view is supported by research as well as clinical observation and theory (Elliott et al., 2004; Cooper, Watson, & Hölldampf, 2010; Freire, 2001; Norcross, 2002; Watson & Steckley, 2001; Watson & Geller, 2005).

However, occasionally some clients may experience difficulty accessing their organismic experience to become aware of how they are treating themselves or clearly specify the links between certain events and their emotions. At times when clients are experiencing difficulty, they may find it helpful for their therapists to share different processing suggestions to help them and ease their frustration. Rogers (1961) and Gendlin (1962) observed that clients who did well in therapy became aware of their feelings, symbolized them in awareness, and reflected on them to come up with more satisfactory ways of being and to solve problems in living. However some clients did not seem to engage in this process as easily. Rogers (1961) observed that good-outcome clients focused on their feelings and bodily felt referents, leading to the development of *focusing* (Gendlin, 1962). Subsequently other tasks have been developed and modeled to help clients access their organismic experience and successfully differentiate from others, resolve problematic somatic markers, or change negative ways of treating the self. These processing tasks include empty chair work, systematic evocative unfolding, and two-chair work (Greenberg, et al., 1993).

Focusing on an unclear felt sense

Focusing serves as a step-by-step guide for clients on how to attend to their bodily felt sense including primary, secondary, and background feelings in order to fully apprehend situations and their meaning, or impact, and relevance for the individual (Gendlin, 1962). Like Damasio (1994), Gendlin (1996) was acutely aware that not all feelings originate in emotion and he encouraged his clients to attend to more subtle secondary and background feelings in order to symbolize and understand their experience. Gendlin's method provides a way of being with the self that helps clients attend to, symbolize, and articulate the connections between inner and outer experience (Gendlin, 1996; Leijssen, 1998).

Empty chair work for differentiation

Following Gendlin's example, Greenberg and colleagues (Greenberg, Rice & Elliott, 1993) modeled a processing experiment developed by Fritz Perls (1969) entitled empty chair work. This task provides increased understanding of the different routes

that clients employ in order to differentiate from significant others. Empty chair work helps clients to activate an episodic memory of the significant other, leading to heightened access to feelings and emotions as well as the specific triggers that evoke specific reactions. Once the feelings are evoked clients have the opportunity to express them and process them more effectively. When this is successful clients experience a sense of relief and a feeling of being unburdened, usually leading to an enhanced ability to take care of themselves and become unhooked from negative interaction cycles. Clients who successfully resolve this processing difficulty are more able to hold other people accountable for harming them, or alternatively are able to let go of painful experiences as they realize that the other did not intend to harm them (Elliott et al., 2004; Greenberg & Paivio, 1998). This processing task can be experienced as very helpful when clients are struggling to differentiate their own experience from that of others, or when they are having difficulties becoming self-governing and taking care of themselves.

Systematic evocative unfolding for problematic somatic markers

Rice and Saperia (1984) noted that some clients who judged certain of their reactions to be problematic or too intense were able to come to a better understanding of their reactions when they activated the episodic memory and recalled the situation by describing it vividly and concretely. Similar to the empty chair task, once clients are able to access their episodic memory they are able to identify the trigger or stimulus that led to their reaction (Rice & Saperia, 1984; Watson, 1996; Watson & Greenberg, 1996). Subsequently they may differentiate their reaction in order to understand its meaning and origin so that it can be differentiated from its current context. One of the outcomes of examining problematic reactions is not only that people come to see the links between their reactions and environmental stimuli more clearly but they also begin to examine the origins of those links and begin to better differentiate the stimuli that evoke them. As the salient trigger becomes more differentiated clients' reactions become less generalized and pervasive. Moreover if the original situation is adequately processed the stimulus loses its potency and no longer serves to trigger the emotion or feeling that is experienced as problematic.

Two-chair work for negative treatment of self

Again extending Perls' work, Greenberg and colleagues developed models of how to resolve conflict splits and self-criticism using the two-chair task (Greenberg, 1984; Greenberg & Watson, 2007; Perls, 1969). In essence this task addresses negative treatment of self. Two-chair work helps clients symbolize the negative ways in which they treat themselves through their self-talk. With the use of two-chair work clients can become aware of how they control and manage; oppress and silence; or neglect and fail to adequately take care of themselves. Once these oppressive and negative behaviors are activated therapists can help their clients become aware of their impact on their organism and help them to express their organismic experience in order to develop more nurturing and positive ways of treating themselves. As they become aware of their organismic experience it is easier for clients to see that what they need and learn more nurturing and empathic ways of treating themselves.

One of the primary objectives in each of these processing tasks is to help clients represent their organismic experience in the session so that they can more clearly

perceive the impact of events and see the links between their feelings and events more clearly so that they can choose whether or what they want to change. Clients' actualizing tendency is released so that they can continue to grow and develop as they become aware of and clearly represent their organismic experience. However, while these tasks are useful to help clients process their experience, they are inadequate to promote change without an accepting, empathic relationship in which clients can come to experience and learn acceptance and concern for their experience and themselves (Barrett-Lennard, 1997; Bohart & Greenberg, 1997; Watson, Goldman & Greenberg, 2008).

Conclusion

In this paper Rogers' (1961) theory of personality has been elaborated and integrated with that of Damasio's (1994) – specifically the latter's view of emotional experience in human functioning, and the development of somatic markers. An integrative framework for person-centered and experiential theory has been proposed, which identifies four processes as essential to becoming a fully functioning person, and the difficulties that can occur if organisms are exposed to negative and maladaptive environments. Finally various ways that PCEP theorists and practitioners have developed to help clients' resolve different processing problems were identified and described.

Using an integrative framework, I have tried to show that there are a variety of ways of helping clients to achieve their goals and objectives so that they can flourish and continue to actualize in ways that are enhancing to themselves, their families, and their communities. Rogers would have encouraged us to be maximally responsive to our clients' needs and objectives. As we look at the road ahead and move forward into the 21st century, PCEP is as relevant now as ever. I believe that contemporary theory and research in neuroscience supports our views of the ways in which human beings develop, grow, and transform themselves. These ideas are not based on a simple mechanistic determinism but rather are rooted in a biological, psychological, and social understanding of human organisms that is growing and continues to reveal their innate capacity to actualize with courage, determination, and compassion in relationship with others, especially when they feel genuinely accepted, prized and understood.

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