Differences and Similarities between Theories

Sociodynamic counselling –
Crossing lines, broadening minds
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SOCIODYNAMIC COUNSELLING IS:

A. PERSPECTIVE ON CONTEMPORARY SOCIAL LIFE AND THE NATURE OF SELF

B. A PHILOSOPHY OF HELPING

C. A SET OF COUNSELLING CONCEPTS AND PRACTICES BASED ON A & B ABOVE.

SOCIODYNAMIC PERSPECTIVE, PHILOSOPHY AND PRACTICE COMBINE IN A HOLISTIC FASHION TO HELP PEOPLE SEEK ANSWERS TO THE QUESTION:

*HOW SHOULD I LIVE MY LIFE?*
Some concepts:

- Socio – dynamic
- Autobiographical self
- Multi-voiced self
- Cultural awareness
- Co-construction, joint action
- Guided participation
- Mindful problem-solving
- Counselling as bricolage
- Life Space
SocioDynamic perspective in two dimensions

Psychoanalytic,
Positivist behavioural/cognitive behavioural
Trait and factor-approach
Developmental paradigm
Matching paradigm

Existential philosophy
Humanistic psychology
Solution focused theory
Appreciative inquiry

System theory

SocioDynamic
Constructivist approach,
Social constructivism
Narrative thinking

Cultural-historical theory

Cognitive psychology

Positive Psychology
NLP
Linguistics

Socio Dynamic perspective in two dimensions
Critical points to form and purpose of counselling and therapy:

**Psychoanalytical approach:**

- Built on a medical, quasi-scientific model.
- Emphasis on biological drives, unconscious processes.
- Counsellor valorised as all-knowing expert.
- Language of ‘pathology’ dominant.
- Patriarchal theorizing and profession.
- A prescriptive style of counselling and therapy.
Critical points to form and purpose of counselling and therapy

Positivist behavioural and cognitive approach

Quasi-scientific model, reductionistic and focused on behaviour, conditioning, and adaptation to social norms and standards.

Rational, logical methods of therapy reflecting an ‘industrial man’ framework assumptions, values, and justifications.

Therapist/counsellor construed as expert, scientific, and therapy largely decontextualized, objective and linked directly to neurophysiology.

A persuasive style of therapy.
Critical points to form and purpose of counselling and therapy:

**Humanistic**

Compassion and human perfectability valorised. Existential values emphasized.

Language less on pathology and more on achieving utopian states of being and ways of living. De-linked from medical model of cure.

Most forms of humanistic counselling deeply personal, individualistic and focussed on subjective, inner experience, and personal growth ideals.

A supportive, utopian style of therapy and counselling Conceptualizes ‘problems’ as being located ‘in the heads’ of people not in the context and not as normal reactions to malign circumstances.
Differing points to form and purpose of counselling and therapy:

**Postmodern/constructivist:**
Counselling is moving toward moral discourse, meaning, self-organizing, activity, and away from objectivity, behavioural focus and claims for scientific legitimation.

The self is seen as less a psychometric entity – that is, linear set of variables, rational, and decontextualized – and more as a reflexive project.

The self is construed to be an evolving dynamical system which is relationally constructed rather than the product of a monadic individual.

Concept of voice, meaning and activity are rising to ascendancy over behaviour.

Concepts such as narrative, symbolic co-ordination, self-authoring, life-space, ethical assumptions, frames of mind and meaning-making are likely to be more useful to understand human actions and the dynamics of social life than concepts such as personality variables, traits, classifications, and behaviour, both normal and abnormal.
Basic differences between SD counselling and ‘modern’ forms of counselling

SD perspective uses a vocabulary that neither psychopathologizes people and their actions, nor objectifies them through classification and diagnosis.

SD perspective does not invoke the metaphor of “curing”. It is not a form of “therapy”: Instead, the SD counselling process is viewed as:

* a learning process,
* a process of co-construction,
* a life-planning process,
* means of extending perspective, choice, capacity, opportunity and thus, personal freedom.
Basic differences between SD counselling and ‘modern’ forms of counselling

- personal and social realities are socially constructed
- humans are self-organizing, non-linear and dynamic systems
- humans use language to construct meaning and society
- agency and activity replacing concepts of cognizer and behavior
- relationality, connectedness, context, and ‘public’ space replace reliance on ‘inner world’
- role of counsellor as expert is de-emphasized – collaboration and cooperation between therapist and client replaces domination
- concept of therapy as contextual activity, includes issues of power/empowerment, advocacy, social policy, and emancipatory action
Differencies between approaches

- Primary assumptions
- Means of verification
- Methodology
- Vocabulary
- Value system
- Counselling focus
- Counselling goals
- Counselling practice
- Counselling methods
- Counsellor state-of-being
- Methods of accessing data
- Methods of communication
- Counselling relationship
Differences between approaches

• **SocioDynamic model**
  - Individual has a self-organizing capacity
  - Self-awareness, reflectivity
  - Bricolage quality, development, construction, personal, social
  - Vocabulary: positive, potentials, possibilities, creativity, cultural tools, particularity and self-responsibility

• **Analytic & Behavioural**
  - Individual needs intervention to get back strength etc.
  - Expert opinion, tests, diagnosis
  - Research based, theory driven, interventions, objective
  - Vocabulary: uncapacity, dysfunction, cure and treatment, psychopathology, generalization
Differences between approaches

- **SocioDynamic**
  - Values: openness, respect for integrity and wholeness of living systems, ethics, self-creation and creativity
  - Focus: description of life experience, relations between self and others
  - Goals: expanding capacities, increasing personal freedom, responsibility, help in lifeplanning
  - Methods: negotiations, guided participation, projects

- **Analytic & Behavioural**
  - Values: with techniques analysing personality and behaviour, norms, prediction, control, effectiveness
  - Focus: diagnosis, behavior change, expertise
  - Goals: cure people, shape behavior and relief from tension and stress
  - Methods: diagnose, advice, teach, use expert opinion
Differences between approaches

- **SocioDynamic**
  - Role of counsellor: continuous learning, openness to experience, self-observing and caring
  - Listens, uses dialogical conversation, language, mapping, metaphores
  - Story gathering, visualizing, promotion of reflection
  - Relationship: personal, dialogical, cooperative, cfo-constructive

- **Analytic & Behavioural**
  - Role of counsellor: professional, answers, knows better or best how to solve problems
  - Uses tests, inventories, interviews, observates
  - Informing, suggesting, data gathering, rational analysis, explaining
  - Relationship: consultative, professional, objective, clear role separation
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Alternative new paradigms

In Finland; specially Solution focused approach, narrative approach, NLP

* Language and mental models, metaphors, visualizations

* Relationship between the client and the counsellor; co-creating

* Competence centreness, client empowerment
NLP/Other approaches; similarities

- ethic codes and general rules
- relationship between the counsellor and the client
- characteristics of a “good counsellor”
- necessity of general humanity
- methods begin to live in the counsellor’s person
NLP; Specific features

- Client – counsellor – relationship; e.g. rapport and pacing
- for working with unconscious interaction which is not verbally describable; “reading” feedback carefully, methods for handling issues by non-verbal methods
- using different information channels
- targets of uttering
- reading verbal/conscious and non-verbal/unconscious feedback
- emphasising working on the pattern level in addition to traditional content based working
Some basic assumptions:

– Positive human concept
– “The map is not the terrain”
– the human being is concept is considered:
  * as a whole
  * in her relationships
  * in her contexts

NLP aims at taking account multi levels of the human experience:

* Processes are both conscious and unconscious.
* Processes occur simultaneously and parallely in various subsystems
* Processes occur on many logic levels
* Processes can be considered on different abstraction levels
Basic Philosophy of Solution Focused Approach

• searching the solution
• finding causal reasons are questioned

• the problems are tried to reformulate
• the clients have resources and strengths to solve their problems
• client defines her goals by herself and it is possible to reach them

• exceptions form the basis of the solution: they undermine the rule
• ‘doing something different’

• change is happening all the time; function of any counsellor is to be a source of hope to clients

• solution talk is encouraged
• ‘without any definition of pathology’
• counselling is Co- construction
Basic Philosophy of Solution Focused Approach

• A. Meet the client at his or her model of the world.
• B. Transform the client from being a "visitor" or "complainant" to being a "customer."
• C. Start with the end in mind (miracle question and well-formed outcome conditions).
• D. If it ain't broke (in the client's mind) don't fix it.

• Well-Formed Goals:
  – 1. The goal must be important to the client
  – 2. Keep goals small and achievable
  – 3. Make goals concrete, specific and behavioral
  – 4. Goals express the presence of something or of a behavior, rather than an absence
  – 5. Goals are expressed as beginnings rather than endings
  – 6. The goals are realistic and achievable within the context of the client's life
  – 7. The client sees the goal as involving "hard work."
Basic Philosophy of Solution Focused Approach

- Five Useful Questions:
  - The first one: takes advantage of the spontaneous improvements
  - The second type: exception finding questions
  - The third type: miracle questions
  - The fourth type: scaling questions
  - The fifth type: coping questions
Unique in Socio Dynamic perspective

- a continuous dialogue with theorising and the experience of real counselling practice
- philosophical ideas of human existence
- Counselling: a general method of life-planning; creating meaning, life-decisions
- counselling process is a social process; co-construction
- practice of wisdom, culture of healing,
- cultural tools; cultural orientation to the counselling
SocioDynamic counselling strategy

- “counsellor attitude” is more important than prescriptive methods for counselling
- SocioDynamic counselling tools: “suggestive strategies” aiming at enhancing improvisation and spontaneity in the counselling process
- Continuous reflective dialogical feedback process between the counsellor and the client; joint resources
- Dialogical listening; Inner peace, harmonious relationship, “human face”
- Life-space
Group work on Different Applications; Mapping my/our terrain

1. International small groups are created

2. Individual task (15 min.):
   Reflect on your own paradigm development and draw your own Time Line of theories/approaches, which have influenced your thinking and practice as a counsellor:
   • How have they changed and enriched?
   • Have you perhaps rejected some?
   • How have you become enthusiastic of something new?
   • How have you integrated different approaches/Do you find some contradictions between some perspectives you have absorbed

3. Co-construct your common map of the terrain of different theories/approaches you find in your group.
   Reflect together which kind of space and universe does it form

4. Map exhibition in the auditorium at 16