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EDITORIAL SECTION

EDITOR'S NOTE

As I sit down to write this editorial in my new role as the Managing Editor of SAJTA, I am filled with a sense of gratitude and reflection. I am taking up this role from the very able and efficient Nisha Rao, who held this position from 2018. I have been a co-editor for SAJTA since 2019, and it has been an immensely rewarding experience to be a part of this team. Although I was initially hesitant to take up this new role, working with the team, their enthusiasm and commitment to SAJTA has been motivational.

SAJTA is a psychology journal hosted by the South Asian Association of Transactional Analysts (SAATA). It captures views, theories and concepts shared by practitioners in the mental health field.

In recent years, the field of mental health has seen a significant increase in the use of Artificial Intelligence. And now, we have seen yet another technological revolution – Open AI's ChatGPT. I think it's important to pay attention to this new change that is brewing.

OpenAI and ChatGPT have shown remarkable progress, not only in comprehending and generating human-like text but also in the ability to write poetry, debug computer programs, generating business ideas and much more. Many of its tools and resources being open source, has democratized AI technology, making it accessible to all and applicable to all facets of our lives. Researchers, developers, and enthusiasts worldwide can access and build upon the existing models, fostering collaboration and innovation. With its real-time language translation, it can

break all language barriers, so much so that it is helping me correct my grammar as I am writing these words now.

ChatGPT has the capacity to bridge existing gaps in the mental health field, and quite possibly reform the current academic world.   And yet I am apprehensive about the ease with which information is available, the reliability of the said information, and its implications for our present and future. It can be used for malicious purposes such as generating fake news, phishing attacks, or deepfake content. Over-reliance on it, especially in contexts where human interaction is paramount, like a therapeutic setting, can pose its own set of limitations.

Measures are being taken to prevent AI plagiarism and other related misuses through the implementation of checks and balances. As an academic journal, SAJTA too will relook at its guidelines for publication.

However, I think rather than focusing our attention on the technology, it is time to point our gaze inwards and think about how we will use it. And I have not, even for a moment, lost my faith in our capacity for 'Humanness' - the core of who we are, the inherent capacity that allows us to contribute, collaborate, and cocreate (Kurian, 2021). To this definition, I would now add 'ethical thinking' as the foundational element of 'Humanness'. Ethical thinking encourages empathy and compassion. It helps us understand the impact of our actions on society and the environment and take responsibility for our decisions.

In order for us to harness the potential of this new technology and other future innovations, ethics and ethical thinking must take precedence, in our schools, colleges, work environments, and our homes.

"Knowing that we can control our own behavior makes it more likely that we will." ~ Peter Singer. I have faith that we will.

Rosemary Kurian

Managing Editor, SAJTA

Reference

Kurian, R. (2021). Empowering our Present and Future with 'Humanness': A Mental Health Practitioners Role in the Age of Artificial Intelligence. South Asian Journal of Transactional Analysis, 7(2), 55–69.

ABOUT THIS ISSUE

Welcome to the 2023 July edition of SAJTA! I extend my sincere appreciation to the editorial board for their hard work and devotion to creating an outstanding issue. Our team is expanding, and I'm thrilled to introduce our new co-editor who has joined us.

An academician at heart, **Asha Raghavan** has traversed the path of teaching, corporate training, content writing and finally moved into the realm of mental health as a psychotherapist. She also has been holding the fort for SAATA newsletter for the past three years and is still going strong. Welcome Asha!

Despite the new processes we incorporated for this issue, our team worked cohesively and seamlessly. We were able to learn from one another and grow together. We will continue to maintain this energy within our team and grow SAJTA.

This edition, we are pleased to offer you a diverse selection of articles, ranging from personal reflections to research pieces.

[Deepika Kaur](#) shares her personal experience of encountering her resistance to receiving positive strokes. Her curious and creative exploration takes readers on a journey of self-exploration. Examining into the story of her resistance, she presents the readers with the insightful connections she makes between impasses and stroke economy.

[Gunjan Zutshi](#) discusses the dilemmas she faced as a psychotherapist and Group Relations practitioner while balancing two distinct frameworks. She delves into the challenges of over-

identification with a framework, and encourages the readers to move towards integrating parts of ourselves that are split on account of the different frameworks.

Mitra Heidari introduces the fascinating concept of "Physis in Action" and its crucial role in personality growth and Self-Realization. Drawing on her insights over the last two decades, this paper delves into the connection between the concepts of Metanoia and Physis, with an emphasis on the latter. The paper provides a thorough exploration of Physis from multiple perspectives, including Transactional Analysis, while also presenting a new diagram that illustrates "Physis in Action".

In their article, Rosemary Kurian, Sangeetha Dilipkumar, and Susan George, closely examine the effects of TA-based educational interventions on the mental health of students. They emphasize on the significance of incorporating such interventions as part of student's regular curriculum and highlight the impact of design, supervision, and relationship in education in an educational intervention.

I invite your curiosity and creativity as you engage with this issue. Let the author's ideas inspire new thoughts within you.

We would love to hear your views, ideas, questions, or feedback. You could write to any author and / or us, at journal@saata.org

EDITORIAL BOARD

THEME FOR JANUARY 2024 ISSUE

"Open Issue"

(No Specific Theme)

Deadline for submissions: **October 15ᵗʰ 2023**

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ARTICLES

STROKES AND IMPASSE
DEEPIKA KAUR

Abstract

The article showcases the author's personal experience of accepting and rejecting strokes. Her journey has led to the exploration of discovering how one can reject even the desired positive conditional and unconditional strokes. The author uses the Impasse theory to understand this phenomenon.

Keywords: Strokes, Positive Conditional strokes, Positive unconditional strokes, Stroke filter, Stroke economy, Impasse, Injunctions, Counter injunctions.

Introduction

"Transactional analysis is a theory of personality and a systematic psychotherapy for personal growth and personal change" (Stewart and Joines. p3, 1987). It is outstanding in the depth of its theory and the wide variety of its applications. Over the years of learning Transactional Analysis (TA), I personally find this theory exuding both simplicity and profundity. Knowing the basics of TA itself can bring about a great deal of self-awareness and growth. This article is dedicated to one such personal experience in learning.

I volunteered to present on the concept of "strokes" when my trainer invited my learning group to make presentations. I was not sure why I considered this topic, as it was a basic concept, and the group was well versed with it. My trainer also asked me "why strokes?" At the time I

needed more time to think why I had made that choice. Today, I thank her for her patience that helped me gain further clarity on the topic.

Strokes Theory

Eric Berne (1910-1970) created the theory of TA to explain human behavior. Berne (1957) identified three ego states in which all thoughts, feelings, and actions of a person can be categorized as Parent, Adult, and Child. Berne (1964) defined a stroke as the fundamental unit of social action, essential for physical and psychological health.

Strokes can be classified into different kinds; verbal, non-verbal, positive, negative, conditional, and unconditional. Most interactions involve both verbal and nonverbal exchanges. Positive strokes are pleasurable, carry a "you're OK" message and usually result in good feelings for the receiver. Negative strokes are painful, sometimes carrying a "You're not OK" message. An unconditional stroke is a stroke for one's "being" whereas a conditional stroke is a stroke for "doing". In many transactions we see a combination of positive and negative, conditional, and unconditional strokes. "You did that very well!" is an example of a positive conditional stroke whereas "You're a star!" is an instance of a positive unconditional stroke.

Everyone desires to be stroked positively given that strokes meet our need for recognition-hunger. TA places great importance on the quality of recognition among people as fundamental to healthy psychological development.

Why the topic "Strokes"?

Having a "Please Others" driver (Kahler, 1975), it has always been easy for me to give more positive strokes to the people whom I connect with. This driver also makes me sensitive to negative strokes, so I prefer to give and receive positive strokes to feel "OK" (Berne, 1962). Reading about strokes made me wonder how easy life could be if everyone would give and receive positive strokes to each other. In fact, relationship issues could be solved so simply!

I started to think about the positive strokes I received and how good I felt about them. For instance, when I was complimented on how well I play scrabble or drive a car, it gave me a sense of pride. There are many more such positive conditional strokes I enjoy.

Thoughts related to the theory were constant in my mind. I wanted to work deeper and brainstorm on this topic. There was a sense of wonder and excitement as I proceeded ahead. Very soon I got the opportunity to explore further when I met my cousin after many years. She had organized a prayer ceremony for her father's birthday. After the function I stroked her for organizing the ceremony, stating that it was the best way to celebrate her father. Immediately, she stroked me back and told me how she has always known me as a religiously inclined person. It was a stroke for "doing" and it was true; I have always been religious. That was a positive conditional stroke and yet, to my surprise I felt uneasy in my body as I heard it. My facial expressions portrayed disappointment and I observed myself becoming numb. I was unable to accept the stroke. I was keenly observing my behavior, and this ignited in me a deep need to unfold what was happening to me. I realized that I was complimented for something I enjoyed doing, but I rejected the stroke. I spoke to my trainer about this confusion. She was delighted

with my query, and we discussed the confusion that led to the theory of Impasse (Goulding and Goulding, 1978). My trainer told me to continue with this exploration and expressed her excitement. She praised me for the way I was working, and I enjoyed her positive conditional stroke.

Stroke Economy and Stroke Filter

Steiner (1971) posits that there is a limited circulation of strokes, and each person decides upon a particular system for handling the giving, taking, and processing of strokes to satisfy their ever-present need for stimulation and this becomes their stroke economy.

In the process of deciding upon a life script our Little Professor [1]creates a stroke filter (Steiner 1971, Woolams, 1978). Each person's stroke filter is unique and functions in such a way as to let in certain types of strokes and information while it filters out others.

Taking it forward:

The theory of impasse connected with my uneasiness in receiving the stroke from my cousin. Impasse is a point at which two or more opposing forces meet, in other words, a stuck place (Goulding and Goulding, 1978, 1979). Bob and Mary Goulding are the originators of a therapeutic approach that combines the theory of TA with that of gestalt therapy, developed by Frederick (Fritz) Perls (1930). Bob and Mary Goulding follow Perls in believing that when someone is "stuck" with a problem, this indicates that two parts of their personality are pushing in opposite

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[1] *Little Professor: A1, the adult in the Child, is a label for the whole collection of strategies the child has available for solving problems. The little professor (A1) tries all sorts of behaviour to find out which ones yield the strokes the child needs (Stewart and Joines, 1987, p35).*

directions with equal force. The net result is that the person is using a great deal of energy but getting nowhere. This situation is called an impasse.

Impasse was first conceptualized in the TA literature as an intrapsychic process that inhibited or blocked internal communication among states of the ego. The Gouldings (1978) categorize impasse in three degrees (Figure 1) (Mellor, 1980,p216). The first-degree impasse is between the Parent ego state (P2) of the individual and their Child ego state (C2) and is based on counter-injunctions or drivers i.e., they develop after the child is old enough to understand language.

The second-degree impasse is between the P1 and the C1 of the individual. Second-degree impasses relate to injunctions; they usually originate much earlier than first-degree impasses and the messages received are carried by feelings.

Third-degree impasses relate to primal protocols (Berne, 1972); they originate during very young experiences, perhaps even pre-natal.
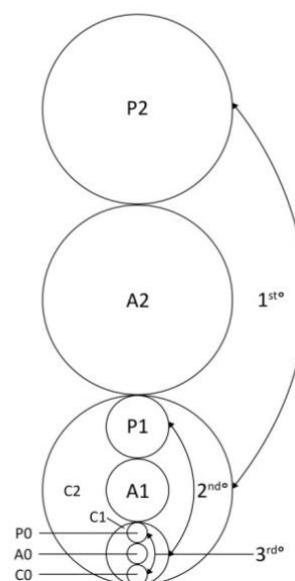
Figure 1. Structural Diagram of Impasses

My Presentation

My presentation included my experiences and was designed to invite participants to reflect on their stroke economy. This was a new perspective on rejected strokes, i.e., the possibility that it could represent an impasse. I then invited them to think about the possible connections between rejection of positive conditional and unconditional strokes and impasse.

The experiential nature of the presentation helped the participants look at the theory through their lived experience. The following questions were offered for reflection:

1. Write down a positive conditional stroke which you often receive and that you reject. This could be about something you make efforts towards and enjoy doing it.

    Examples of such strokes would be "you are talented", "hardworking", "religious", and "emotionally strong" amongst others.

2. Write down an unconditional positive stroke that you deeply desire but are unable to receive.

    Examples of such strokes would include "you are Intelligent", "trustworthy", "important", and lovable".

My Impasses

I used the same questions to understand my experience as well. I often receive the positive conditional stroke that I am religious as I regularly read and practice religion. However, when people praise me, I deny it. I found myself being stuck between doing and not doing (Figure 2). I realized that my parents had different views about religion. My mother read the holy book daily; my father on the other hand gave more importance to a virtuous life. I store within me two

opposite Parental messages or counter-injunctions. This was my impasse, which created a state

of confusion. By praying I was pleasing my mother, it also helped me overcome the fear instilled

by her that only those who pray have a safe life. By rejecting the stroke I was pleasing my father,

it helped me overcome the fear instilled by him that doing rituals I will waste my time.
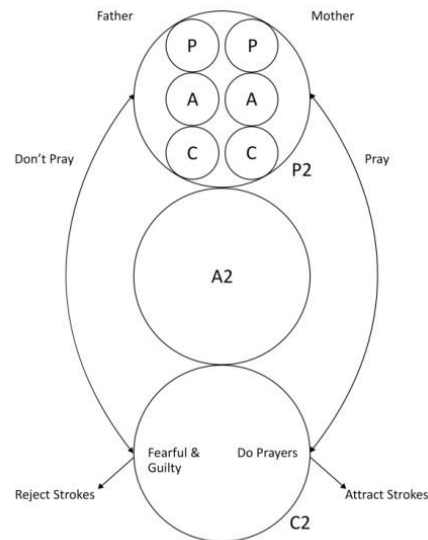
Figure 2. My first degree

Answering the second query, the positive unconditional stroke I desire is that others

consider me unconditionally worthy, good enough. I appear to experience a consistent feeling of

being not good enough, even after a notable achievement.

I discovered being stuck between constantly desiring and then not accepting the

unconditional positive stroke (Figure 3). I was the youngest child among four siblings in the

family. While growing up I was mostly judged by my siblings for whatever I did. I developed a

state of being unconditionally unworthy. Being the youngest, I also received unconditional love

from my father. Feeling unconditionally worthy came from my father's love and feeling

unconditionally unworthy came from the judgement of my siblings. In this situation there are a

set of feelings that exist in conflict with each other, that of worthiness and worthlessness. When I feel unworthy, I balance it by moving towards feeling worthy. I do this by taking up responsibilities and helping others, in a way pleasing people. And when I am appreciated, I feel uneasy and I negate it by saying "it is my duty", or that "it was an easy job". If I am not appreciated, I still feel uneasy. In this process, I live my second message of being unworthy. For an impasse to be diagnosed there needs to be equal and opposing forces in conflict. Injunction is an important negative script element held in the Child ego-state (Goulding and Goulding, 1972, 1976). Each injunction has its corresponding permission. Injunctions are "Don't" messages, including for example, "Don't be worthy". Permissions on the other hand counteract the injunction and let the Child be worthy. Here the conflict, and therefore the impasse is between two opposing forces of feelings, that of "don't be worthy" and "you are worthy".
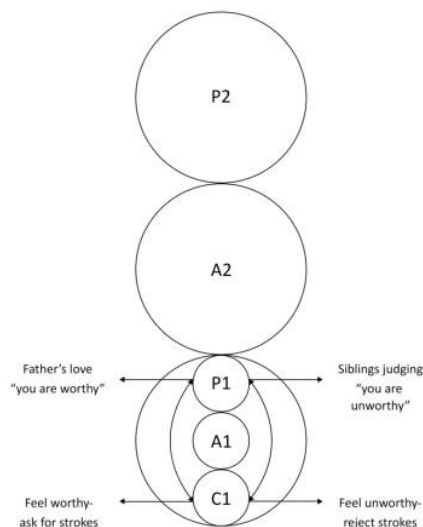
Figure 3. My Second Degree Impasse

Discomfort was created due to two opposing feeling messages or strokes. "Don't make it" is another injunction that I received from my family. However, this injunction was not an impasse. I had never been ambitious and always been comfortable with whatever I achieved.

Conclusion

This work started as a presentation and turned into a deep query on rejected strokes that could represent an impasse. The exploration was touching and revealing for the group as they could connect with their first- and second-degree impasse respectively, which each one was unaware of. Personally, awareness of my first-degree impasse gave me great comfort in freeing my Adult from my Parent contamination; thus, it helped me to break my first-degree impasse. Now I am more comfortable than before to pray, and it is a personal choice without any fear. I no longer experience guilt nor experience any anxiety towards strokes related to religious activities.

My second-degree impasse has had a huge impact on my life. This realization itself has made me recognize my struggle. It has evoked my nurturing Parent that provides me with patience and self-care. Working with the self has contributed towards great learning, especially as a counselor it has helped me handle similar situations with empathy. I feel emotional while writing and sharing this article. I hope that it offers another lens to look at one's stroke economy and break free from an impasse.

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About the Author

Deepika Kaur practices 'Individual Counseling' remotely. She holds a Master's degree in Counseling and has a Transactional Analysis Practitioner certification from USATAA. Presently she is training to become a Certified Transactional Analyst in Psychotherapy. Besides her private practice she has worked with patients in a Naturopathy Centre. In therapy, she has a keen interest to work with patients with health anxiety and psychosomatic disorders. You can reach her at ashwindeepika19@gmail.com

GROUP RELATIONS AND PSYCHOTHERAPY: Learnings from Praxis

GUNJAN ZUTSHI

Abstract

This article explores the author's experiences and dilemmas as a psychotherapist and Group Relations practitioner, of holding two different frameworks, the struggles of trying to integrate them, and what that means for one's practice. It reflects on how the frameworks can be used as defense and therefore sometimes become limiting instead of enabling our work.

Keywords: Group Relations, Transactional Analysis, Psychotherapy

Introduction

As an OD consultant, coach, and psychotherapist, I am engaged in working with individuals or with small and large groups. The focus in each of these roles is to enable individuals and groups to reach their full potential and be more effective in their roles and tasks. My quest for a framework that provided a way to understand and effectively work with group dynamics in organizations led me to the practice of Group Relations (GR) after I attended my first Group Relations Conference[2] (GRC) in 2011. The focus on unconscious processes in groups and taking

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[2] *Group Relations Conferences are learning events designed as temporary institutions in order to learn about the psychodynamics of groups and systems via one's direct experience. They provide a unique opportunity to study unconscious dynamics in groups and how we take up roles and exercise leadership and authority in systems we co create.*

a systemic view to work with issues of leadership, authority, role, task, and boundaries in organizations has been significantly helpful in dealing with systemic dynamics and change. At almost the same time, I was drawn to Transactional Analysis (Psychotherapy) to have a deeper understanding of working with individuals and the process of individual change.

GR and psychotherapy became my frames of reference for understanding individuals and groups. Each has strongly influenced the practice of the other and yet, often times I found myself comparing the two in an attempt to make meaning of what I was experiencing and how I was working. When I say psychotherapy, I am referring to individual therapy, though since 2020 when I wrote this paper, I have also started group therapy, which has added to my experience of working with groups and individuals in both therapeutic and non-therapeutic settings and what that has meant.

When I started writing this paper, I titled it "GR and psychotherapy – how the twain meet" as if it was somehow important for the two to meet and underlying this was a need to find similarities and account for differences. I got in touch with the anxiety of dealing with seeming contradictions and a need to bring congruence between the frameworks rather than being OK with holding the differences and working with them in service of task and role.

I also became aware that unconsciously, I had been holding one framework as better than the other and thus creating a competition or hierarchy of sorts in my mind where I had to somehow prove that, in some aspects, one is better than other. I became aware of the splits and my projections of them as OK/not OK, good/bad, and soft/ difficult on the frameworks.

The primary task of this article then is to articulate learnings from my praxis of the two frameworks of GR and psychotherapy in working with groups and individuals. It also looks at how one impacts and informs the practice of the other while taking stock of the challenges and dilemmas of trying to integrate the two frameworks. Furthermore, this paper makes meaning of these experiences at a personal and systemic level.

The Individual and the Group

In the initial days of my practice, I assumed that my training in psychotherapy would prepare me to work with individual change in a deeper way while I saw GR as the framework that would help me understand and work with systems better. It created a sort of split between working with individuals and groups as if the two were so neatly separate. An early experience of this split was in my therapy training group where the focus of exploration of what was happening in the group was almost always the intrapsychic or interpersonal processes. While we were learning to understand and work with such processes, the exclusion of exploration of the group as a whole and its impact on the individual and interpersonal struck me as not very helpful.

I remember many instances in the group where one of the trainees would bring up how they were feeling incompetent or anxious or envious and almost always, it was addressed in personal therapy work as if it was only an individual phenomenon and that the individual had to resolve it for themselves. Any attempt to explore how the group may have evoked and impacted these seemingly personal feelings was brushed aside. And I would wonder, how could it be all about the individual? What about this group that evokes these dynamics? What about the context?

The outcome of this singular focus on the individual was missed opportunities for learning and finding newer and more effective ways of being for the individual. An incident that comes to mind is of one of my trainee colleagues who felt quite frustrated and overwhelmed by what she thought was her inability to learn at the same pace as some others in the group. She also felt incompetent and inadequate, and expressed resentment towards another colleague who it appeared was being favoured by the trainers. In her personal work, she was encouraged to work on her feelings and while that was no doubt one thing to do and would have helped her, not responding to her by looking at the systemic context seemed to have missed the bus.

There was enough data that many others in the group were feeling anxious about their competence, and that there was a sense of competition and comparison which was adding to the anxiety. The anxiety was being projected on those who were seen as more competent and therefore, the trainers favourite. It seemed that one person was set up on behalf of many in the group to challenge the trainers and raise some of these issues, which were unsayable by the others. By not working with these aspects and seeing it only as an individual/interpersonal phenomenon meant that this was made as "her issue" and the final result was quite unfortunate in that she left the group with a lot of bad feelings. The group got some respite from the anxiety by ejecting the person who was raising it and thereby missed an opportunity to learn about themselves. Not looking at the systemic dynamics proved detrimental for both the individual and the system.

I would later experience it in my work with clients as I grappled with the question of where does psychotherapy stop being only an individual process? One needs to consider its systemic

origins and impact if meaningful transformation has to take place, especially when there is oppression, power differential, and marginalization. To expect clients to change in a context that is not changing nor supportive poses challenges to personal change.

I was working with a client who was struggling to hold on to a job and attributed it to her lack of confidence and assertiveness, because of which she came into therapy. We worked for a while on this but it wasn't making much difference. However, when we began to explore how as a woman from an orthodox community where it is not OK for women to work and their role is only to take care of the family, it was as if the system wanted her to fail again and again so she would give up and take on the more acceptable role of being a wife and mother. This realization and that of how she was setting herself up for failure brought her some relief as she could see the systemic impact. Once she realized that it was not just a personal failure, she was able to make progress in therapy.

Thus, keeping the systemic lens on even when working with the individual has been very helpful to me especially when it involves processes of gender, patriarchy, oppression, hierarchies, marginalization etc. The client who is struggling to find her voice and autonomy in a patriarchal system or a client from the LGBTQ community, who wants to be able to own their identity or a client who responds to the world with anger because they feel judged as being "low class" or the client who is anguished and feels anxious with what is happening in the country with the rise of authoritarianism and aggressive nationalism – all of them while being individual struggles, are rooted in the systemic context. To not see these outside the context in which the individual

experiences them is important even when one is focused on individual change. Personal change cannot happen in a vacuum without paying attention to the systemic context.

At the same time, when I have been part of a group and exploring the unconscious group dynamics, I have also held the question of where does one stop looking at the group processes and begin considering what is happening at the individual and interpersonal levels? The need for interpersonal connection, individual competence, accountability, and responsibility in a group are important to be held in mind else we run the danger of using a group as a defense in taking up personal authority. The very famous Indian saying "we are like that only" seems to be a classic example of using the collective to defend the lack of individual responsibility and accountability.

In groups, we find it easy to personalize and not look at the systemic processes whereas when paying attention to the systemic processes, it's also possible to miss the individual and the interpersonal. It's easier to hold the polarities of an individual and the group rather than integrate and balance and learn to pay attention to both, even if the intervention is aimed at one or the other, depending on the task.

When a group is aware of some of the unhelpful dynamics but not much changes in the way members respond to those dynamics, where then is the accountability for individual change, which can impact systemic change? Are we to only become more insightful about the group dynamics or does it also require that we pay close attention to our own intrapsychic processes and change what needs to be changed? Berne's (1961) famous saying that insight is not enough holds meaning where a focus on the group and trying to get insight into group dynamics can become the primary task instead of change that such understanding must surely bring. And while

individual and interpersonal are not the focus when working with a group as a whole dynamics, ignoring them can also leave the individual feeling isolated in a group. For instance, I was working with a colleague on some preparatory work for a conference and something happened that I wanted to process with them because it had an impact on me. On hearing it, my colleague felt that it's something that belonged perhaps to the whole system and asked me to bring it up in the group meeting, which I did. As a group we explored what it meant for me and the system but it still left me feeling quite dissatisfied. I realized that I had a need to also connect with my colleague at an interpersonal level, which was sidelined, leaving me feeling not heard, not understood, and isolated.

As a GR practitioner, one pays close attention to projective transference especially when it is the bad object that is being projected. But how do we see and respond to the longings and yearnings for an attuned other which may manifest themselves as introjective transference (Hargaden and Sills, 2002) In a group, they perhaps get lodged in as the need for interpersonal relating, and the danger I feel, of seeing these as defenses or representing a basic assumption mentality (Bion, 1961) is that it can leave the individual feeling not understood and isolated in a group and have its own resultant dynamics of shame and resistance. I experienced this even more acutely when I started working as a group therapist. What should be the focus of my intervention? Is it intrapsychic, interpersonal, or group as a whole? I struggled with it for a while till I realized that it's all three. While in a therapy group, the focus is individual change, and therefore what's happening at the level of intrapsychic and interpersonal is important, it's very often informed by

what's happening at the level of the group. As a therapist, not using those processes to inform one's interventions is then not in service of the task.

Meaning Making

All these experiences and explorations have helped me make meaning of my own practice and through that offer something for us as practitioners to consider whether in psychotherapy or group relations. These are as follows:

Being mindful of unconscious splits and how we may further them.

There is a danger of using frameworks to maintain splits, that of individual/group, knowing/feeling, insight/action, hard/soft because it is easier to deal with and manage things when they are split. One can focus on one at a time, identify with one, and disown the other. Collapsing the polarities would require one to own up parts of self and learn to integrate, hold more than one thing in mind and build skills at different levels, even when working in a specific context, role, and task. The anxiety of doing that may be too much and hence the need to maintain these splits. Splitting the frameworks as good/bad thus creates comparisons and hierarchies in our minds. I have often wondered why it's difficult for clients to join therapy groups and for us to offer them. The projection on group therapy of being more difficult, scary, and not as comfortable as individual therapy is a way of maintaining the split and through that the idea of therapy and therapist as "gentle/nice/good objects". As therapists, to be available as "bad objects" on whom not just an individual but the group can project does feel daunting.

In groups, which I am part of, that largely consist of fellow therapists, there is a resistance to looking at unconscious systemic phenomena, and in groups that hold Group Relations as the

lens, there is a resistance to working with the interpersonal and intrapsychic. Some data for that is that my many attempts to get colleagues from psychotherapy to explore how GR can add to our work as psychotherapists have been largely unsuccessful. And I have not dared to question my GR colleagues if they consider being in therapy or any individual practice for self-development and growth as essential to their practice of GR.

Using frameworks as defense to maintain an OK sense of self

There is a real danger of our identification with a particular framework and that framework becoming an extension of who I/we are or believe we are! It then allows us to project our sense of good/bad, OK/not OK onto the framework and helps maintain a sense of OK-ness for the individual and/or the group. And we see this in many places where we become so wedded or loyal to our frameworks that they can't be questioned or challenged and nothing from outside must get in to pollute the held beliefs.

One of my psychotherapy colleagues who attended a GRC and has been quite influenced by GR said that for a long time, they resisted the idea because it felt like betrayal to the frameworks of psychotherapy and its ways of working. At a more fundamental level, maybe it's the difficulty of accepting that I, the individual, am an extension of the group just as the group is a reflection of me, and that we are not so separate after all.

Conclusion

While presenting this article, what I learned was how frameworks can be used as defenses to maintain certain splits and provide a false sense of comfort and security in holding on to them.

J Krishnamurti (1995, p26), one of the radical thinkers of our times wrote,

We follow authority – if not that of a person, then of a system, of an ideology – because we want a result that will be satisfactory, which will give us security. We really do not want to understand ourselves, our impulses and reactions, the whole process of our thinking, the conscious as well as unconscious. We would rather pursue a system that assures us of a result. But that pursuit is invariably the outcome of our desire for security, for certainty and result is obviously not the understanding of oneself.

Identification with a framework can then stop us from understanding ourselves while using the framework to prove a point, project on, feel OK, and secure. Our work, therefore, is not to integrate frameworks. Our work is to integrate parts of ourselves that are split and manifest as our projections. Only then would we be able to use frameworks effectively and work in our roles in service of the task. What I have also come to understand is the intricate ways in which the "I" and the group are connected. There is no "I" outside the context of the group and many "I"s make the group. To be effective in bringing about change at any level, both have to be accounted for and attended to.

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PHYSIS IN ACTION

MITRA HEIDARI

Abstract

The primary goal of this paper is to introduce the concept of "Physis in Action" in the course of personality growth and self-realization through the author's own understanding, spanning more than 20 years, with an emphasis on the years since 2011. The author's personal experiences have helped to connect the concepts of Metanoia and Physis. Thus, both concepts are engaged with in this paper with a greater emphasis on Physis. The concept of Physis is discussed from different perspectives including that of Transactional Analysis (TA). Furthermore, the author introduces an innovative diagram that presents "Physis in Action" in TA[3].

Keywords: Physis in Action; Physis; Metanoia; Personality growth; Self-Realization; Eudaimonia; Transactional Analysis.

Introduction

Berne used Physis to describe the driving force behind cures, personal aspirations, and collective evolution. Further, he introduced it as "the generalized creative force of nature, which eternally strives to make things grow and to make growing things more perfect" (Berne, 1968, p.89). Simply put, according to Berne, the continuing process of growth is dominated by the concept of Physis.

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[3] *The present paper is a small portion of the conference presentation, titled "Physis, Metanoia, and Collective Creative Evolution" delivered in a workshop at the International Transactional Analysis Association (**ITAA**) online conference in June 2022 (Heidari, 2022a).*

Moreover, Clarkson (1998) considered Metanoia as a turning point in life. She defined it as a process that changes one's mind or opinion based on reflection. Metanoia is also considered as transformation (James, 1901; 1985, p. 199) or an irreversible turning point (Watzlawick, Weakland, & Fisch, 1974).

Numerous experts have stated this dominant force. For instance, Gregg Braden, a famous scientist, talked about a natural force that reflects on the surroundings to assist the individual in becoming aware of their inner need for change as a step toward personal growth (Horizons et al., 2019). Elif Shafak4 (2010)– a novel writer– wrote: "East, west, south, or north makes little difference. No matter what your destination, just be sure to make every journey a journey within. If you travel within, you'll travel the whole wide world and beyond[5]."

I experienced a highly irreversible turning point in my life. After this significant transformation, I went through great ups and downs in life but none of them were able to deviate me from the decision that I made. I never wished to go back to my comfort zone and never regretted for any price that I paid after this turning point.

Metanoia

Metanoia is derived from the Greek verb "metanoeo," which means to perceive afterward or too late, to change one's mind or opinion, or to turn around. Later it came to mean "to change one's mind on reflection" (Liddell, 1963, p. 439; cited in Clarkson, 1989). Burchfield defined Metanoia as "a change of the inner man" and a "turning about" (1976). According to Clarkson

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[4] *Elif Shafak wrote a novel based on Rumi's life (2010). In her Novel, extracting from Rumi's master's Rules of Love, she noted the given example. Rumi's Master: Shams-i Tabrizi was a Persian Sufi and Mystic person who was the spiritual master (guru) of the world famous Persian poet- Rumi.*
[5] *10th Rule of Love by Shams-i Tabrizi*

(1989), Metanoia is a permanently transformed state of being. Carl Jung (1956/1986, p. xxvi) referred to his personal mental transformation as "a Metanoia." Sam Keen (1985) defined it as, turning around and away from the persona toward the self (p. 146). Metanoia is also defined as a "transformation" (James, 1901;1985, p. 199), which according to Watzlawick, Weakland, and Fisch means an irreversible turning point (1974).

Physis

Physis as a verb means to grow or to be. Heraclitus defined it originally as the change or growth within a person (Guerriere, 1980, p. 100). All the Presocratic philosophers refer to Physis in two major conceptualizations: the change as flux itself, without source or goal, and the change as the cure, growth, or creative evolution. It is in the second sense that Berne used Physis (Clarkson, 1992). Paul Edwards (1967, p. 100) referred to Physis as "to grow" or "to be what things really are." According to Heraclitus, Physis is the Truth of things (Guerriere, 1980, p. 110).

Berne (1968) formulated his view of Physis as "the growth force of nature, which makes organisms evolve into higher forms, embryos develop into adults, sick people get better, and healthy people strive to attain their ideals." He (1969) also mentioned that Physis is a force within us that keeps us striving to go onward and upward; it is the human capacity to change and evolve. Berne (1968) added Physis to the other two unconscious forces (energies) in human life- Eros and Thanatos (Erwin, 2002, p. 1012; Freud, 1930, pp. 50-54)- and he saw all three as constituent of the psychological experience. Maslow (1963) said, "in fact, the concept of Physis could be the unifying symbol for all of third-force psychology , of which Transactional Analysis is a part." (p.

iii), Clarkson (1992) mentioned that if Physis subsumes the other two forces, it may be more accurate to be conceptualized as the first force (Table-1).

| *Thanatos*	*Eros*	*Physis*
death	survival	life
death instinct	life or sexual instinct	life instinct
destruction	procreation	creation/creativity
self-destruction	self-preservation	self-transformation
mortido (inwardly directed)	libido (outwardly directed)	libido (inwardly directed)
		mortido (outwardly directed)
seeks freedom from striving	seeks pleasure/ gratification	seeks fulfillment/ realization
ending	beginning	evolving
expiration	inspiration	aspiration

Table 1. Characteristics of Thanatos, Eros, and Physis , reproduced from Physis in Transactional Analysis by Petruska Clarkson (1992).

Physis in Action

Taking in to consideration all the above and some other perspectives (Heidari 2022a, Heidari, n.p.), below is a diagram to show the developmental availability of "Physis in Action"[6] in the process of personality growth and Self-Realization (figure 1). The very bottom of the diagram shows the Euphoric Utopia of the very early infantile state of global OK-ness (English, 1975). English (1975) mentioned that later in life, an individual attempts to re-enter this state but the average persons cannot re-enter the original OK position except at certain moments- for

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[6] *As seen in figure 1, physis is available from the Euphoric Utopia to allow the infant to sense its presence in his phenomenological being as a whole, but as the C0 moves forward and transacts with environment more precisely, physis allows its presence to be experienced in the duality- Eros and Thanatos. Later in life, the individual might grow in his/her spirit in a way that would be able to consciously experience the same feeling by the union of Eros and Thanatos. This process of developmental availability of physis is not time or age dependent. Experiencing this reunion of two subsume of physis- Eros and Thanatos- as an adult, is based on the acquiring of wisdom as the virtue of Self-Realization.*

instance, during meditation. Similarly, I believe that Physis is available to humans as an innate force at the very infantile stage. Furthermore, as the individual grows, physis manifests its energy through its two subsumes of Eros and Thanatos as opposing forces to allow the newborn to develop his personality in duality. Later in life, the individual might sense the same state that experienced during infantile, by perceiving pure physis not only during meditation[7], but during any other activity in everyday life[8].
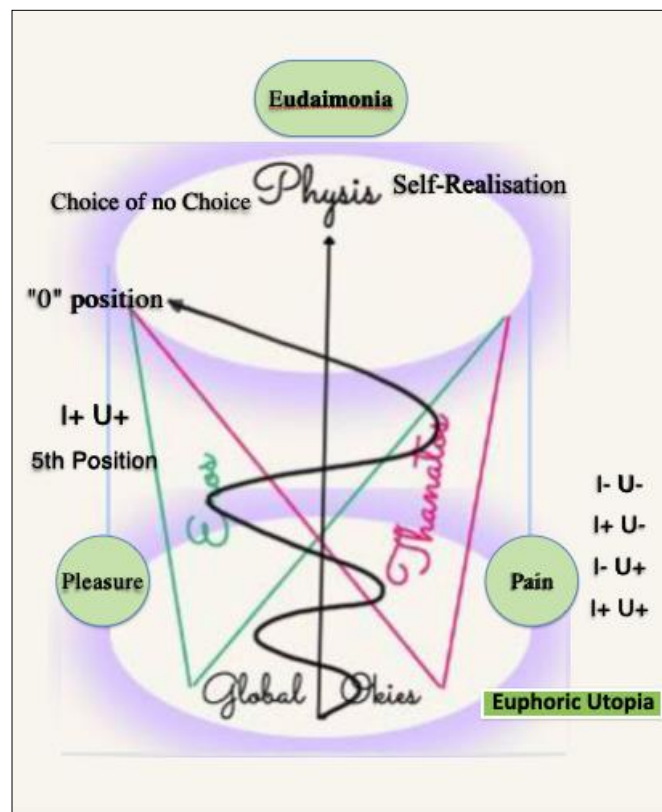
Figure 1. Developmental Representation of "Physis in Action." Source: Adopted from ITAA webinar (Heidari, 2022a).

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[7] *Meditation is considered as a special position that an individual is sitting unmoved and concentrating to be mindful with or without a guidance voice or music.*

[8] *In my understanding, sensing this state of pure physis energy, begins to be experienced only for a few milliseconds, but as the individual grows in his spirit, the time spent in sensing this state lasts longer.*

Berne (1972, p. 132) describes Anti-Script as the individual's rebellion against their Script. Based on my own personal experience[9,] I have realized that my rebellion was majorly by the power of my primary Script against my later Script, which was formed after 3.7 years old. Furthermore, I understood it was the hidden force (Physis) that empowered me to rebel.

Thus, I perceived as I grew in my Spirit, I moved from my Script[10] towards my Anti-Script[11] which resulted in Self-Realization. I also understood while growing upward and onward in the process of Self-Realization, Eros and Thanatos lost their absolute opposing characteristics and began overlapping. This is where the individual can experience the Fifth Position (English, 1975) of OK-ness[12]. Furthermore, one can yet evolve beyond the Fifth Position to be a harmonious individual by experiencing the "0" Position.[13] Centering at the midpoint of the "0" position indicates that one is experiencing harmony beyond duality in the life position matrix. It is a state of nothingness. Sarfaraz Syed Ahmed (Heidari, 2022b) said that the "0" position is where we experience "the Choice of no Choice[14]." We can perceive negative and positive emotions in self and others and still choose to stay as an observer and move beyond duality to sense what Mihaly called "Flow" (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975, 1988) by tracking the chain of related events beyond the surface scene[15].

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[9] Journey of Me to MySelf mentioned in Personal Experience section in this Article

[10] By Script here I refer to maladaptive Script, otherwise as Fanita English mentioned without Script the individual will experience existence in a vacuum of time and space (Erskine, 2010).

[11] Every Maladaptive Script has its Anti Script within itself to be broken, because according to physis, the nature's tendency is towards upward and onward growth.

[12] To know more about Fifth Position, you may refer to Fanita English Article (English, 1975).

[13] This state is where the overlapping process continues util Eros and Thanatos unite completely.

[14] To know more about Choice of no Choice, "0" Position and "0" point in Life Position Matrix, you may refer to the article written by author (Heidari, 2022b).

[15] Such a person is empowering himself to realize how an event, regardless of being pleasant or unpleasant, is a small piece of the puzzle that will give meaning to the final outcome as a whole (See also, Heidari, 2022b).

Back

As the individual grows and gets more stability in the "0" position, he, more or less, is in the Eudaimonia zone. Eudaimonia is derived from Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics (1985). Waterman (1990; 1993) considered Eudaimonism as a theory of Self-Realization. Further, he stated that Eudaimonia is the experience of personal expressiveness, which are conceptually linked with the feelings associated with Deci and Ryan's "Intrinsic Motivation" (1985), Mihaly's "Flow" (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975,1988), and Maslow's "Peak Experiences" (Corsini, 1998; Maslow, 1964,1968). For Telfer (1980), Eudaimonia is about "what is worth desiring and worth having in life" (p. 37). According to Norton (1976), Eudaimonism is an ethical theory that calls people to recognize and to live in accordance with the Daimon or True Self.

What I have arrived at through this model is that each individual continuously exchanges energy with his environment to foster self and collective growth. According to "Physis in Action," whenever we define an act, we are referring to Physis in one of its various forms. Everything is made of energy, and Physis permeates everything.

Personal Experience

At my frothiest, something happened that completely altered my life and forced me outside of my comfort zone. At this time, I was a winner in the eyes of the outside world, but a loser in my own eyes. The main question that remained unanswered for me was:

- o Why am I experiencing such a degree of dissatisfaction while I have accomplished almost everything I had planned for?

- o Why could none of my achievements give me a sense of fulfillment?

- o What else am I seeking for?

There was an unknown thing in everything that always remained unsolved, untouched, unfolded, and that thing caused me to feel empty and made my achievements meaningless. In an effort to find an answer to this confusion, I used to read a lot of books. At the end of 2010 and the beginning of 2011, I was home alone for months incidentally and dedicated all of my time to read books with an extraordinary urge. It appeared as though my life had hit the pause button for all other activities excluding reading book after book. I didn't even feel like cooking and lived on fresh or dried fruits for months. In striving to understand this confusion, one day, when I was reading and reflecting, I felt a sentence emerged deeply inside me. I jumped and yelled it out:

"I lost myself."

I'm not sure for how long the feeling was so real, maybe for a couple of minutes. However, it quickly lost its meaning. I continued:

"I lost myself?!"
"What does it mean?"
"What can I do to find myself?"
"If I am lost, then who am I right now?"
"And who will I be when I find myself?"

I was struggling with such thoughts when all of a sudden, I heard the sound of an SMS on my cell phone. A force from within pushed me to read it as if I was waiting for an important message to come:

Carrying my backpack
Must start a journey
An unaccompanied journey
Getting lost to the bottom of sheer loneliness
My instrument told me
Whenever you trembled
Whenever you were afraid of the journey,

Just say from the depth of your existence:
"I have God"
It's quiet a long time that my instrument and I are only with Him[16]

"It is the road map for my journey." A strong sensation said within me.

I have no idea how I came up with a title for this message: "A Journey from Me to MySelf."

I wrote this poem on a piece of paper and pasted it on the wall where I could see it constantly.

Until now I have never been able to explain in logical terms how the various pieces of this

puzzle fell into place to push me from one point in life to the other. As a part of this journey, I

came to India in 2013. I realized a deep need to switch my profession and field of study from

education to psychology. I went to college for the second time and started studying psychology

from the very basics. I have lived the very challenging life in this journey that started from me

and ended to myself. It was Transactional Analysis (TA) that helped me to find my lost self. I

named this part of the journey as:

"*The storm that broke the hidden door.*"

I realised the storm started when I was 3.7 years old and I lost my father. Due to

unforeseen circumstances, after my father's death, I found myself living with my married sister

and her husband, away from everybody else. Although they raised me up as if I were the child

they never had, my father's death and subsequent losses had a profoundly negative affect on me.

Later on, when I was 7, my elder brother brought me back home. At home, even though he cared

for me and loved me like a father, my mother made me feel both love and hate. But I realized my

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[16] This is the original poem in Persian: کجا هر :گفت من با سؤکم ...محض تنهایی ته تا شدن گم ....همراه بی سفری ...باید می سفری دوش بر بزم کوله
.....اوییم با فقط که ... چندیست سؤم و من .....دارم را خدا من : وجود عمق از بگو .... ترسیدی سفر از ...لرزیدی

brother was in charge of the family, thus he held the power. He was a secure enough anchor for me to feel safe. He used to check on me regularly to ensure that I wasn't being disturbed at home. At the time, I didn't understand why he was so sensitive and overly concerned about me, but years later, I learned that there was a stigma in the community that the youngest child is responsible for the family's fortune, and my mother firmly believed that I carried bad luck for the family by my birth.

When I was 11 years old, all of a sudden, a figurative tsunami wreaked havoc in my life. My brother tragically passed away in a car accident and I felt my whole being fell apart. After him, my life had devolved into a dark night. First and foremost, the grief was unbearable, and secondly, it affected my life on a daily basis. Though there was no physical fire, the pain and suffering were sometimes so intense that I felt like my bones were on fire. I learned to tolerate low intensity pain and suffering and saw only high intensity sufferings as problematic events. Drivers of "Try Hard", "Be Strong", "Please Others", "Hurry Up", and "Be Perfect" in their extremes began to dominate different aspects of my life.

The hope that empowered me to move forward was a hidden force that appeared to me like a helping hand during serious dangers and caused me to believe in miracles. This hope became my power and helped me to build the best over the worst. It empowered me to achieve almost all of my objectives that I planned for and when time came, Metanoia happened and Physis pushed me to find the missing part of the puzzle.

Physis, the healing hand of nature, gave me all the hints and the storm opened the hidden door to free my trapped self, the me who was alive before my father's death. TA helped me to

realize that I carried a complicated grief throughout my life and how it had impacted me. It also helped me to mourn deeply. Crossing all these steps was not easy at all. Finally, I could close the chapter of my grief, overcome my fears, feel belonged, claim my worth and importance, and permit myself to exist. During the healing process, I learned that " de-cathexis may occur, but re-cathexis is unlikely to fill the void completely" (Heidari & Venkatesh, 2021).

Deepening the learning

To illustrate how to use what we have learned, I refer to Sturgess' definition that identifies between Personality and Individuality. According to him, personality refers to the personas or masks we must maintain, such as our physical status, name, character, emotional type, religion, and occupation. But he regarded uniqueness as the Soul. He said that the sense of "I-consciousness" (the True Self) that exists continuously is what defines Individuality. He mentioned that the True Self remains the same throughout childhood, adolescence, old age, and beyond (2014).

The personality growth that is mentioning in this article leads us to what Sturgess called Individuality. To grow in our Individuality, we need to learn how to stay in the "0" position of non-duality in the life position matrix (See also Heidari, 2022b). This will create the space of nothingness and the presence of what Norton (1979) refers to as the Real Self (p. 58) which allows the Atman (p. 49) or Soul (p. 29) to shine through the physical self.

Figure 2 is a pictorial representation of how the space of non-duality is a virtual space, which goes beyond the dual feelings of pain or pleasure. From a meta-view perspective, we watch

a part of ourselves that is feeling pain or pleasure in this virtual environment. Neither extremes

of pleasure nor pain can fully captivate our attention when we are in this state.

The serial thinking versus quantum creative thinking, centering at the "0" position with

"Choice of no Choice" represents the mindset beyond binary polarities where we can see how the

whole (or the outcome of a series of continuous events) is greater than the sum of its parts. This

gestalt implies that a single event is only one component of a larger picture. Therefore, regardless

of whether we are experiencing a painful or enjoyable event at a time, we need to be aware that

it is only a small portion of an overall scene.
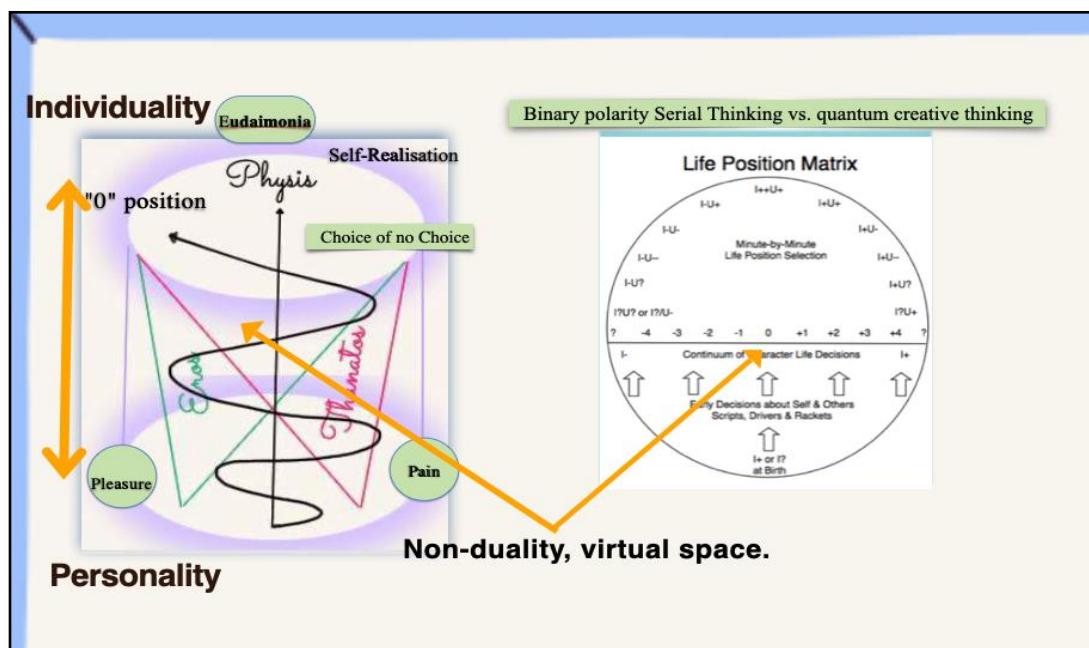
Figure 2. Personality vs Individuality. Reproduced from the ITAA webinar (Heidari, 2022a)

Thinking in dualities is similar to serially considering the numbers of 0 or 1 and the

potential values that could lie between 0 and 1. Quantum thinking is a subset of non-duality

thinking. We allow our unconscious to exist in a superposition where it acknowledges nature's

decision as the scenario's final result (Heidari, n.p.). Even though the expected result is never

guaranteed, this does not imply that our choices are unimportant or that we should be uncaring. On the other hand, it implies that because this is how the nature behaves, any form of resistance will cause us to disintegrate, whereas acceptance will enable us to move forward as a harmonious wave. We need to keep in mind that the universe won't give us what we want, but it will give us what we need in the path of personality growth, so even if the outcome is contrary to our expectations, we need to accept it and move forward to learn from the experience. We can avoid suffering from unfavorable outcomes by practicing acceptance. Additionally, it enables us to experience high-frequency emotions like unconditional love, gratitude, generosity, forgiveness and the like while residing in the Eudaimonia realm. In Teilhard's opinion, love is the primary force behind what he called "noogenesis" (De Chardin, 2015), and he predicted that the vibration of love would help human consciousness evolve to the "omega point". He identified the omega point as the apex of thought and consciousness, which he considered to be the return of Christ consciousness[17].

We need to practice the meta view or meta-cognition in order to exercise this level of our existence. As shown in figure 3, at the level of the ego -state, we might say "I am happy" when something pleasant happens, but when we adopt a meta-view, all that is left is "I Am" and "I Am the Observer," and I am having a pleasant experience in myself at ego state level.

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[17] *To know more about Teilhard's views, you may refer to De Chardin (2015).*
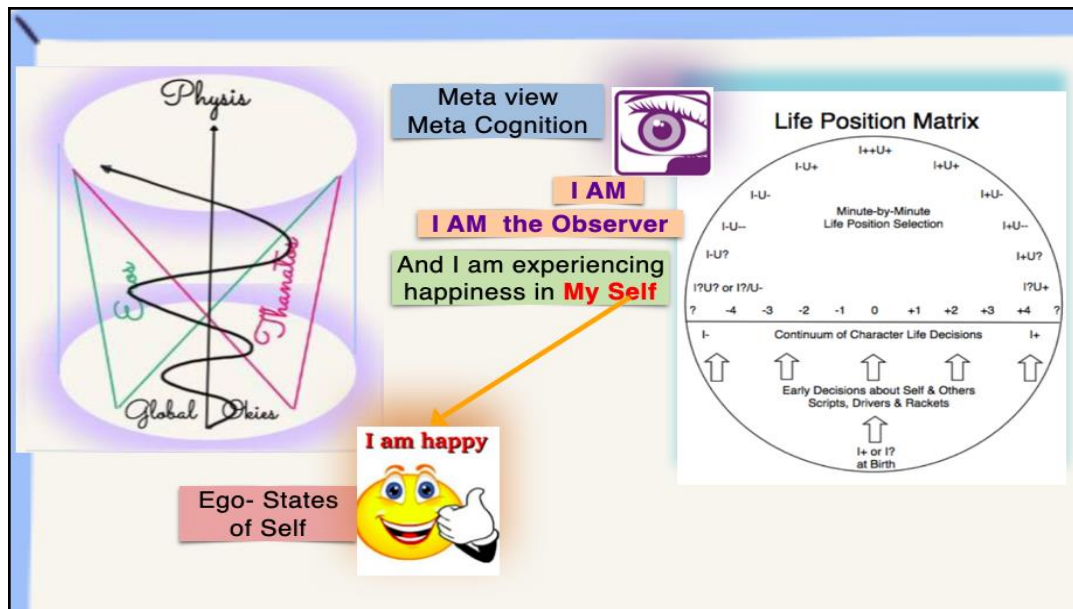
Figure 3.Personality vs Individuality. Reproduced from the ITAA webinar (Heidari, 2022a)
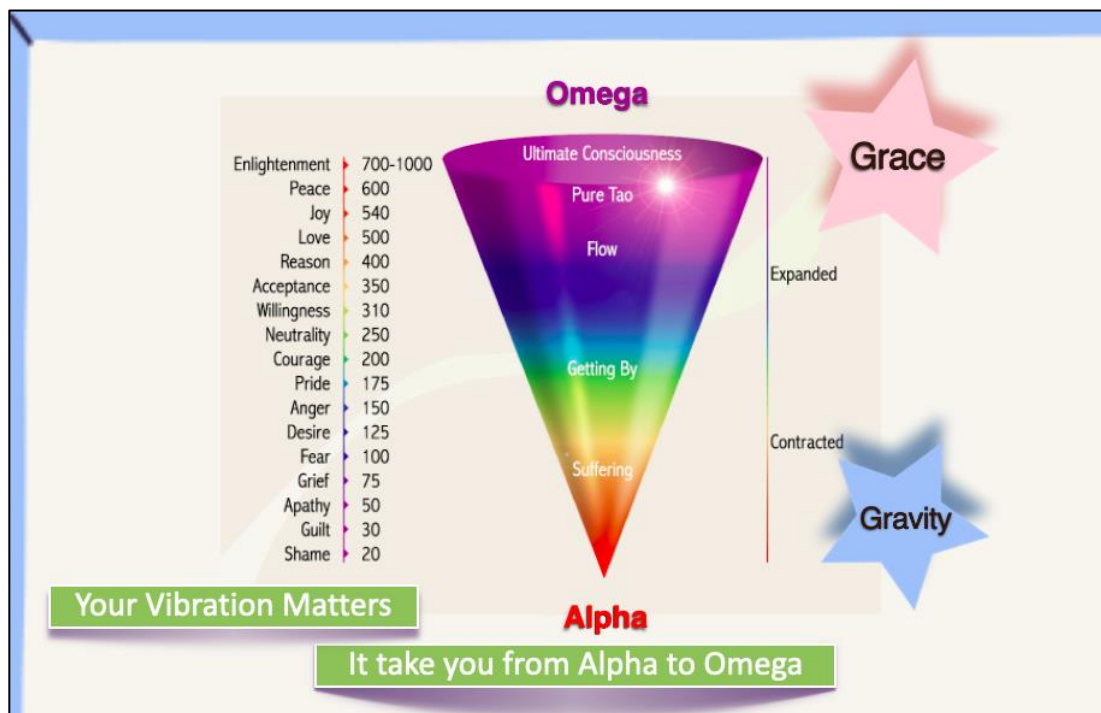

Figure 4. Hawkins's Levels of Consciousness. Reproduced from the ITAA webinar (Heidari, 2022a).

Figure 4 shows the vibrational caliber of each emotion, from alpha to omega[18] (Hawkins, 2006). Dr. Hawkins claimed that a very normal human being requires at least 200 caliber[19] of vibration.

Figure 5 shows the scales of consciousness. When we are not in tune with change or flux, the Physis manifests itself to us as a force in lower-frequency emotions. In contrast, experiencing Physis becomes less rigid as we move forward and upward in our individuality and process of personality growth. As we enter the "co-creating" and "creating" zones with the creator, we consequently feel more powerful. As much as the individual grows in Soul, Hedonic Happiness would be replaced by Eudaimonic Happiness (Baumgardner & Crothers, 2014, pp. 17-18; Norton, 1976, pp. 5-14, 58).
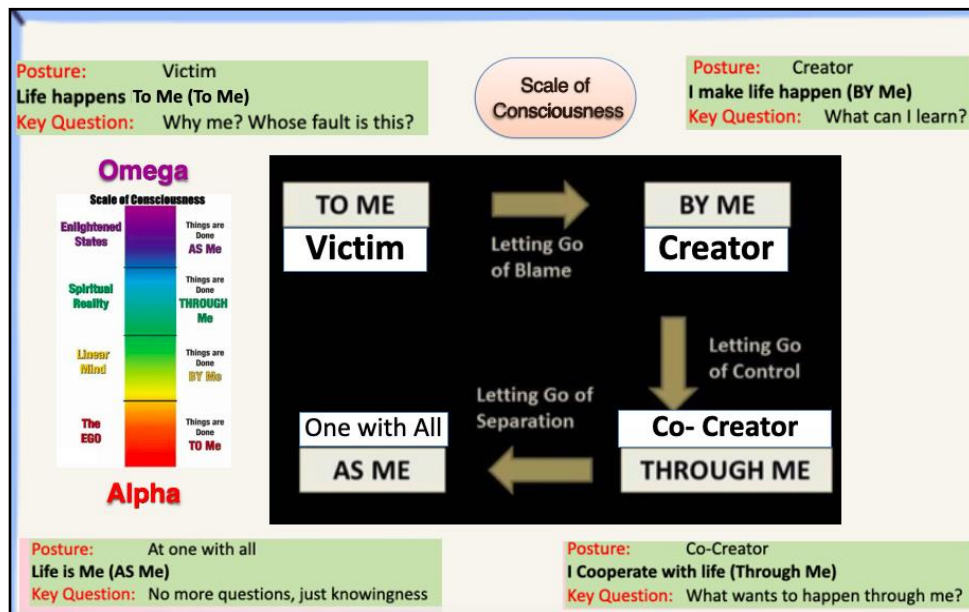

Figure 5. Hawkins's scale of Consciousness (Hawkins, 1905; 2006). Reproduced from the ITAA webinar (Heidari, 2022a)

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[18] *in his book Transcending the Levels of Consciousness.*
[19] *Caliber represents a person's moral standing or degree of competence.*

Conclusion

The model of Physis in Action is a process understanding that developed within me over decades. Learning about Physis, Life positions, Human instincts, Eros and Thanatos, along with tracking a mysterious energy in the consciousness field of study, Quantum Physics, Biology, Morphic Resonance, Schumann Resonance, Heart Math Coherence, Ancient wisdom, Ancient Scriptures, Learning by Observation and Reflection and many more (Heidari, n.p) empowered me to give birth to this model. It is borne out of my experience of what Haruki Murakami (2005) described as life's storm:

> *"And once the storm is over, you won't remember how you made it through, how you managed to survive. You won't even be sure, whether the storm is really over. But one thing is certain. When you come out of the storm, you won't be the same person who walked in. That's what this storm's all about."*

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IMPACT OF L.I.F.E, A TRANSACTIONAL ANALYSIS BASED WORKSHOP, ON THE MENTAL WELL-BEING OF COLLEGE STUDENTS

ROSEMARY KURIAN, SANGEETHA DILIPKUMAR & SUSAN GEORGE

Abstract

The present study investigated the effectiveness of a 40-hour Transactional Analysis (TA) based workshop on the mental well-being of its participants. A quasi- experimental pre and post test design with control group was used as the research design. The Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS) was used to measure the mental well-being of the participants.

Keywords: Mental Well-Being, Young Adulthood, L.I.F.E, Supervision, Transactional Analysis and Education

Introduction

College life marks a period of transition for young people, a liminal phase. Liminality means "threshold" and refers to the midpoint between two points of certainty. Therefore, liminality is a disconcerting process, an upturn of sorts in an individual's frame of reference (Barrow, 2020). This transitional phase, moving from adolescence to adulthood is a challenging time for students, having to make independent decisions, learning to build relationships with people from varied backgrounds, meeting their academic requirements and making other major life decisions. Erikson (1958) describes this as a unique developmental period that allows the young adult to participate in self-exploration and identity formation. Being in their "Integration"

stage of "Cycles of Development" (Landheer, 1980), it is significant for them to have an environment that allows them to explore the following: "How can I become a separate person with my own values and still be OK?" and "How will I balance my needs for competence, intimacy, connectedness, and separateness with the demands of caring for others, and how will I move from dependence to independence to interdependence?" (Clarke & Dawson, 1998). An educational intervention that offers a holding space for the young adult to explore these aspects is vital and can make a significant difference in their overall well-being.

"Mental well-being relates to a person's psychological functioning, life satisfaction, and ability to develop and maintain mutually benefitting relationships. It includes the ability to maintain a sense of autonomy, self-acceptance, personal growth, purpose in life, and self-esteem" (WEMWBS User Guide, p. 2). TA is a theory of personality and human relations offering systematic methods for personal growth and professional development (Project Aristotle, TAJ, Vol. 47(4), p. 325).

"Each person decides, early in childhood, how he will live and how he will die, and that plan which he carries in his head wherever he goes is called his script" Berne (1973, p. 31). English (1988) describes script as a valuable organizing support structure originating in childhood. It is also important to acknowledge that life script is a complex set of unconscious relational patterns based on physiological survival reactions, implicit experiential conclusions, explicit decisions, and/or self-regulating introjections, made under stress, at any developmental age, that inhibit

spontaneity and limit flexibility in problem-solving, health maintenance and in relationship with people.

The philosophical underpinning of TA helps take responsibility for the decisions we make and therefore, claim the power to change them. There is always hope that we can do things differently once our script is brought into awareness. Through this process, we become familiar with our own characteristic system and also with our relationships with other people and try to rebuild these relations.

The educational intervention, L.I.F.E workshop is designed to facilitate awareness about such limiting patterns of the script and allowing for movement towards Autonomy (Berne, 1964) and Homonomy (Angyal, 1972).

This research has been carried out to understand the significance of using TA as an educational intervention to improve mental wellbeing, by creating in-depth awareness about possibilities for change and growth which can be highly stimulating and empowering for students.

Review of Literature

A study examined the effectiveness of a TA101 course on emotional intelligence among participants who attended the two-day course held across seven centers and it was found to be effective in increasing the participants' scores on all the dimensions of emotional intelligence (Kanchana, Suriyaprakash, Bajaj, & Abdulla, 2019).

Research also suggests that TA can help mothers to parent their children from a healthier authoritative parent style, rather than authoritarian and permissive styles (Baumrind, 1960) which means that they have better control over their emotions and reactions, and can communicate

with their children from the Adult position, rather than taking part in conflicts and scolding them, which can lead to the improved well-being of the children (Eghbali, Mousavi, & Hakima, 2017).

Harford & Widdowson (2014) demonstrated the effectiveness of TA on global distress, anxiety, and depression in short- (24 sessions) and long-term (52 sessions) TA treatment of 15 soldiers with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), using the quantitative and the qualitative change interview. Qualitative findings indicated that a broad spectrum of therapist factors and psychotherapy process factors within the TA therapy delivered was beneficial for these participants groups.

Akbari A et al., (2012) investigated the effect of TA therapy on personality states, self-esteem, and clinical symptoms of people going through romantic relationship break ups. Therefore, the sample of five female university students was selected using a purposeful sampling method and was treated by TA. Participants completed questionnaires of Love Trauma, BDI-II, self-esteem, GHQ-28, functions after an emotional breakdown, DASS-21, and PAC in pre-treatment (baseline) and during the first, seventh, eighth, and final session (Session XIV), and the three-month and six-month follow-up. Results showed that TA has been effective on personality states, self-esteem, and clinical symptoms of people with emotional breakdown. Newton and Temple's (2003) research has shown positive effects of a TA educational module included in the Integrative Masters Programme of Plymouth University, on students from different educational contexts. There were significant increases in the subjects' levels of self-knowledge and professional efficiency. Lilian Wissink (1994) conducted a quasi-experiment by which he studied

the effects of a six weeks TA-based program, and the application of specific TA techniques (self-parenting) on students' self-esteem. The results showed significant differences in self-esteem in the subjects of the experimental group compared to that of the control group, in favor of the former. Amundson & Sawatzky (1976) have described the effects of TA theory-based educational programs for children. The results showed that the educational program resulted in a significant increase in the student's self-esteem. Bloom (1978) observed statistically significant changes in attitudes toward people, family, psychological self, and work as a result of a four-week TA workshop. A study by Saberinia & Niknejadi (2019), gave 15 mothers of children with oppositional deficiency disorder, 8 weekly 90-minute sessions of TA, and found it to significantly improve their relationship with their children, minimizing conflicts and stopping any "games" taking place between them as interactions would take place more frequently from Adult-Adult states.

Need for Study

The above studies support and establish the positive impact of TA on self-esteem, effective communication, attitudes, self-knowledge, and professional efficiency and has been observed to be beneficial in treating anxiety and depression. However, there is a lack of sufficient research-based studies in the field of TA, especially within the field of education.

The authors' lived experience of TA training has led them to understand themselves better, heal and function better in several aspects of their life. They have observed similar changes in their clients in both individual and group settings as a result of a TA based educational intervention. This prompted them to conduct the present study using empirical evidence.

Young adulthood, being one of the major transitional phases in the development cycles, needs better support and timely intervention. Introducing a holistic module as a part of education can be highly beneficial for young minds before they dive into the wider world. TA learning highlights the need for nurturing our "being," the mere existence of mankind as the core need of our self that enables us to identify the purpose of life. Young adulthood being a stage of transition from adolescence to adulthood has its own impact on the mental health of students and it is during this phase that an intervention will be most supportive especially when introduced as a part of education.

Objective of the study

The objectives of this research were as follows:

i. to examine the effectiveness of the program, L.I.F.E – Living with Integrity, Freedom, and Empathy, in impacting the mental wellbeing of participants.

ii. to encourage the incorporation of TA based mental wellbeing programs as a part of the academic curriculum in educational institutions.

Research Hypothesis

H0: L.I.F.E Workshop, a training program based on TA will not have a significant impact on the mental well-being of college students.

Methodology

Participants

The population of the study consisted of undergraduate students, between the ages of 17-22. Purposive sampling method was adopted for the study. The sample size was 35, of which 20 students participated in the experimental group and 15 in the control group.

Design

A quasi-experimental method was used. For both experimental and control groups, a pre-test was held before the sessions began and a post-test was conducted after completion of sessions. A TA based workshop, L.I.F.E was the intervention offered to the experimental group and the control group had no exposure to the program. The facilitator ensured informed consent from all the participants and confidentiality has been maintained.

Tools

The WEMWBS comprises of 14 items that relate to an individual's state of mental well-being (thoughts and feelings). Responses are made on a 5-point scale ranging from "none of the time" to "all of the time".

Living with Integrity, Freedom and Empathy (L.I.F.E) is a 40-hour workshop designed and facilitated by R. Kurian (n.p), (one of the authors). L.I.F.E is a proprietary material of her organization and is curated using TA philosophy. It is offered to young adults in various settings with the understanding that an educational encounter can have a therapeutic impact, in that any change in someone's behavior will likely be accompanied by a corresponding change in their script, and vice versa (Hay, 2021).

Wagner (1980) states that "the process of cure is to facilitate wholeness with dignity, even in the face of death. To reach this wholeness, there are stages of development, roadblocks to cross, and times to turn to another for help with our interactions." (p.160). His thinking about cure resonates with the World Health Organization's (2014) definition of mental health as a state of well-being in which every individual realizes their own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to contribute to their community. Wagner (1980) posits that this is possible by building a sense of "I", self with others, and self with environment. Integrating the above ideas, the essence of L.I.F.E can be described as follows:

i)   Integrity is the finding and acknowledging this sense of "I", moving towards autonomy; the release or recovery of the three capacities of awareness, spontaneity, and intimacy.

ii) Freedom is the fluidity in relating with oneself and others with OK-ness allowing for harmony between "you" and "I", embracing "us" (Kurian, 2020) - self with others.

iii) Empathy allows for a deep connection with the environment and the world, moving towards homonomy, and making the journey come full circle accounting for the human and the more-than-human experience (Barrow & Marshall, 2020) - self with environment.

These components are at the heart of the L.I.F.E workshop, however, the process and the content evolve based on the assessment of needs and contracting.

Procedure

The L.I.F.E workshop was designed and facilitated by one of the authors of this paper, R. Kurian, as a value- added course, prescribed by the University Grants Commission (UGC). The University Grant Commission (UGC) is a Statuary Body of Government of India, Ministry of Education, Department of Higher Education, constituted under the University Grants Commission Act, 1956 (3 of 1956), vested with two responsibilities: that of providing funds and that of coordination, determination and maintenance of standards in institutions of higher education. The scheme's objective is to introduce career-oriented, skill-enhancing add-on courses that have utility for jobs, self- employment, and the empowerment of students. The 40-hour workshop was designed with the two-fold objective of skill enhancement and students' personal growth and well-being. 12 sessions were facilitated over one month, scheduled two to three times a week.

Human beings are social creatures, and we learn through relationships. The relationship between the learners and teachers is a powerful mechanism for change. The quality of the relationship is rarely an explicit goal for an educational process, but it is the medium by which the goals can be accomplished. This medium offers a lot of opportunities for healing (Miljkovic, 2010). Research suggests that the ideal classroom is one with a high degree of warmth and good communication between pupils and teachers (Truax and Tatum, 1966; Tyler, 1964). Kanov et al. (2004) argue that compassion consists of three facets: noticing, feeling, and responding. Therefore, compassionate presence in the teaching-learning relationship would encompass inquiry, attunement, and involvement (Erskine & Trautmann, 1996). The facilitator incorporated

the above philosophy in her facilitation and gently invited the participants to move from the top-down Dogmatic and Liberal learning imagoes to the Humanistic learning imago (Newton, 2003).

The Functional Fluency model (Temple, 1999) not only offers a framework for growing awareness and understanding of how to behave and find balance in the use of energy but also became a working model for the participants to experience the fluidity of being functionally fluent. Further in an in-depth multi-party contract (English, 1975), the following aspects emerged as part of the final contract: self-awareness, communication, interpersonal relationships, time management, and basics of TA.

As the focus of this program was both personal growth and skill enhancement, the intervention included most topics prescribed for TA101. A few topics that would encourage ethical thinking and practice were included as well.

Concept	Intervention Outcome
Introduction and Learning to Contract	Clarity on areas needing growth and change. Motivation to participate fully and benefit from the course. Inviting new behaviors in self and others
Relating to Others	Motivation of self and others. Inviting new behavior in others
Self-Care	Identifying needs, recognizing the importance of feelings, and taking responsibility to take care of ones needs
Theory of Personality	Understand the manifestation of our personality and awareness of blind spots, Communicate effectively
Modes of Behaving	Appropriate use of energy in service of self and other
Theory of communication	Communicate with Attention and Awareness
Attitude & Time Structuring	Clarity and awareness of belief systems & time structuring
Games	Understand the impact of the decisions we have made so far. Take responsibility for change.
Breaking free of Games	Game free authentic relating
Working Styles	Breaking free of limiting behavior and making new decisions and reinforce strengths.

Life script	Reinforce strengths. Review and not re-live our stories to change and grow
Racket Analysis	Understanding the vicious cycle of stuckness. Learning to change thought, feeling and behavior.
Cycle of Development	Knowing child needs and parent responsibilities
Problem solving and ethics	Ethical Practice and Problem-solving
Preventive and restorative	Piece together the models learnt and understand how each provides an option to change.
Action planning	Translating learning to action in personal and professional lives ethically. Feedback

Table 1. .L.I.F.E Workshop Course Content

Table 1 provides an overview of the concepts covered through the workshop.

The facilitator used the Teaching and Learning Cycle (Quisumbing, 1999) and the Cycles of Development as the learning models to design and implement the intervention. Figure 1 depicts the fluidity in choosing the instructional strategies using the Quisumbing teaching learning cycle as it accounts for learning at all levels: conceptual, affective, and active.
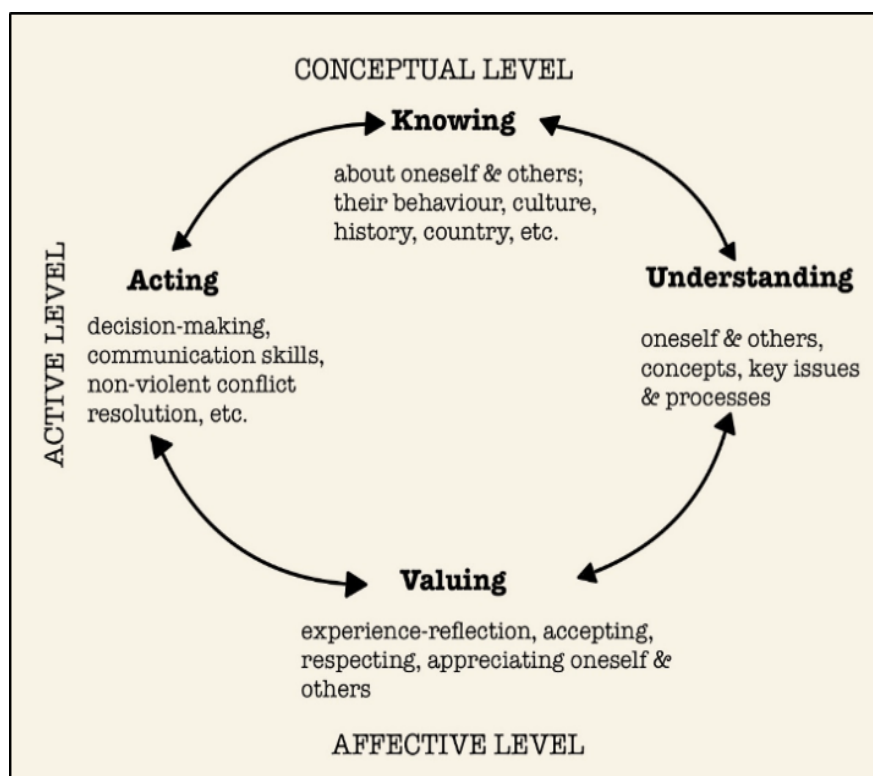
Figure 1..Quisumbing Teaching and Learning Cycle

Table 2 describes an example of a session structure of the workshop using both the models for design and implementation.

Stages	Session Structure	Teaching and Learning Cycle
Being	We began our sessions with a 5 minute mindfulness practice. I guided them through paying attention to our breaths, body sensations, external stimuli to senses and other practices each session allowing them the space to be.	Knowing
Doing	Participants were journaling their experience through the lens of TA and the check-in each day was them sharing their stories and experiences.	Acting
Thinking	We would then move to the theory for the day.	Understanding
Identity	I would offer questions that would encourage the application of this theory to their personal lives.	Knowing/ Understanding
Skills/ Structure	I had planned activities for each theory that would give them an oppurtunity to practice.	Valuing
Integration	Final closing for the day was about asking them for key takeaways, action plans.	Acting emering from Valuing

Table 2. Learning Model in Action, Integration of Cycles of Development and Quisumbing Teaching and Learning Cycle

Learning needs to be engaging, inviting the Free Child to experiment and be creative. Therefore, various instructional strategies were used during the facilitation – videos, presentation, role plays, story-making, drama, chart work, and floor exercises.

The intervention invited the students to be curious and critical about any new idea. The sessions were scheduled with sufficient gaps, so they had enough opportunities to experiment with the new ideas in their daily lives. It helped them make observations, collect data, and use their Adult thinking to develop and concretize new ways of thinking and behaving while using their feelings to remain in touch with their needs. The students were invited to maintain a journal for the duration of the workshop and regular prompts were shared for reflection.

Integrating the value system of TA into the relationship helped build an educational encounter that invited OK-ness, mutual trust, and open communication. An educational encounter can be an invitation to a new spiral in the Cycle of Development and goes through all the stages from "being" to "recycling" (Hay, 1992). As much as these stages are an opportunity to grow, they also present possible sabotages with the learner re- experiencing their need to "Hurry up" and Grow Up" or "Stay Little" (Landheer, 1980). Establishing OK-ness through the "becoming" to the "moving on" stages of a learning group (Barrow, 2016) brought safety, power, and involvement and an opportunity to challenge these sabotages towards learning.

Contracting (Berne, 1966) helped not only in making mutual decisions for ground rules but also became an opportunity for increased options for the students rather than a set outcome or course of action decided by the facilitator. This helped co-create a mutually agreed contract, clarifying the administrative and professional levels, and surfacing the psychological contract, which offered boundaries for safety and freedom to learn.

Learners, as is true for all human beings, need experiences of being valued by the significant other. Studies report that pupil achievement and self-concept are linked to teacher traits such as empathy, openness, and authenticity (Combs, 1978; Sprinthall, 1977). Establishing connections using the Relational Needs model (Erskine 2002) allowed the facilitator to be sensitive to the learner's needs.
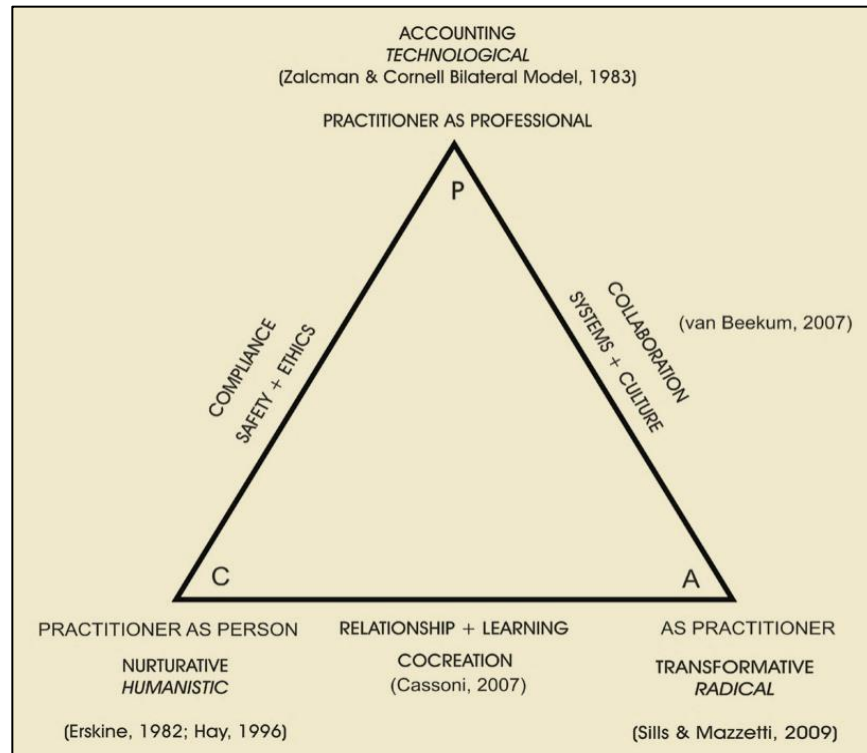
Supervision

L.I.F.E workshop, in its design and facilitation, has undergone a continuous and ongoing process of supervision. Newton's (2012) Supervision Triangle offered a framework for this process as it allowed for the following:

- o A balance of management and support ensuring safety and ethical practice. This helped honor the UGC requirements, the expectations of the institution and the needs of the participants.

- o Education and management combined to promote collaborative growth. This encouraged one to be mindful of the dogmatic imagoes present in the institution by offering a new experience for the participants without disrupting their learning environment.

- o Support and education helped build co-creative learning relationships during the process of facilitation.

Figure 2 depicts the impact and significance of supervision for L.I.F.E workshop.

Figure 2. Supervision Triangle, (Newton, 2012)

Erskine (1982) identifies the different stages of learning including acquiring skills, building confidence, gaining an identity as a therapist, refining treatment planning, resolving countertransference issues, and integrating multiple theories into clinical practice, dividing the stages into beginning, intermediate, and advanced. As the participants were pursuing their bachelor's in psychology, the workshop's focus was on the tasks of the beginning stage that helped skill and confidence building. This intervention served as an opportunity for them to experiencing the possibility for healing in the relationship.

Results and Discussion

Descriptive statistical indices such as Mean, Standard Deviation, WEMWBS scores, Wilcoxon signed-rank test were used for the analysis.

	% Low wellbeing	% Moderate wellbeing	% High wellbeing	Mean	SD	't' value
Before Intervention	5%	79%	16%	49.5	5.2	
After Intervention	0%	70%	30%	55.0	5.5	- 2.82**
Change	-5%	-9%	14%	5.7	6.9	

**P <0.01 – significant at 0.01 level

Table 3. Mean, Standard Deviation, t value and level of significance for mental well–being measured before and after intervention in the experimental group

From the above table (Table 3), it can be observed that the change in mental wellbeing of the experimental group, before and after intervention is significant, t (–2.82) = p <0.01. Hence, there is a significant difference in the well-being of the experimental group post intervention (M = 55.0, n=15) compared to pre intervention (M = 49.5, n=15).

Furthermore, from observing the change in different levels of wellbeing, it is seen that 14% of the participants moved to high well-being, thereby reflecting significant effectiveness of the intervention. In the category moderate well-being it is seen that there is a -9% change indicating a decrease in the percentage of participants from 79% to 70% whose wellbeing was moderately impacted. In the category of low well-being, it is seen that there is a change from 5% to -5%, indicating that all participants with low-well-being benefited significantly.

Hence, the null hypothesis, L.I.F.E workshop will not have a significant impact on the mental well-being of college students, is rejected.

	% Low wellbeing	% Moderate wellbeing	% High wellbeing	Mean	SD	't' value
Before Intervention	20%	67%	13%	49.1	9.6	
After Intervention	27%	67%	7%	48.9	8.6	- 0.078 NS
Change	7%	0%	-7%	-0.2	7.2	

NS Not Significant

Table 4. Mean, Standard Deviation, t value and level of significance mental well-being measured pre and post intervention in the control group

Table 4 indicates that the 't' value of the control group is -0.078 and is not significant indicating no significant change in the mental well-being of the participants. It is observed that the mean values have decreased during the post test, indicating a decrease in the well-being of the control group participants.
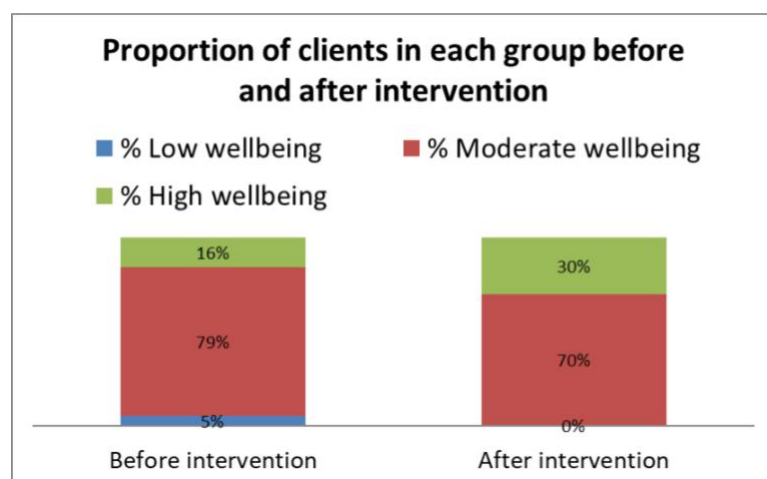
Figure 3. Graphical representation of the impact of the intervention

Sl.No	Statements	Pre Test Mean	Post Test Mean	Change
	WEMWBS Question wise Analysis			
1	I've been feeling optimistic about the future	3.4	3.9	0.5
2	I've been feeling useful	3.6	3.9	0.4
3	I've been feeling relaxed	3.4	3.7	0.3
4	I've been feeling interested in other people	3.5	3.6	0.1
5	I've had energy to spare	3.4	3.9	0.5
6	I've been dealing with problems well	3.1	3.7	0.6
7	I've been thinking clearly	3.2	3.7	0.5
8	I've been feeling good about myself	3.6	4.3	0.6
9	I've been feeling close to other people	3.5	3.6	0.1
10	I've been feeling confident	3.5	4.0	0.5
11	I've been able to make up my mind about things	3.4	4.0	0.5
12	I've been feeling loved	3.9	4.3	0.4
13	I've been interested in new things	4.4	4.5	0.1
14	I've been feeling cheerful	3.7	4.2	0.5

Table 5. WEMWBS question wise analysis for the experimental group

Table 5 shows that all mean values have increased for each item in the WEMWBS questionnaire, indicating a positive shift. Items 1,5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11 and 14 have shown higher change in the mean values. These items are indicative of increased self-awareness and independence that are key developmental needs of the participants who were in their integration stage. This is a crucial stage where to be competent, responsible, make decisions, and develop a sense of self is important. This program has impacted the participant positively in these areas. Items 4 and 9 have shown the least impact. This could be indicative of their need to emerge as a separate independent person and achieve emotional separation that is necessary for this stage.

Conclusion

The findings of the present study show that L.I.F.E, a workshop based on TA was effective in enhancing participants' mental wellbeing.

Limitations

Following is a list of limitations of this study.

1. The student group consisted of only women

2. The workshop was facilitated in English

3. All students were from the field of Psychology

4. The participants consisted of only those motivated to participate

Future Implication

TA is a powerful tool; however, unlike other fields in psychology, TA has very little research to scientifically back this, especially in the field of education. To help bridge this gap, it is important to conduct similar studies that investigates the impact of TA (content and process). Having established the positive impact, it is useful to study the impact of this workshop on the different dimensions of mental wellbeing. For educational institutions to include mental wellbeing as a constituent component of their curriculum, they will need an understanding of the intrinsic value of mental wellbeing. Several studies suggest that mental health and wellbeing has a significant effect on academic achievement (Kasinath, 2003; Singh, 2015). Further studies to correlate TA based educational interventions such as the present study and its impact on academic performance, absenteeism, bullying etc. will help integrate TA into schools and colleges. With the ever-rising stressors of today's world, it is important that educational institutions are invited into paying attention to the mental health of their students. We believe that studies such as this will help incorporate such interventions into their regular academic curriculum.

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GUIDELINES FOR WRITING FOR SAJTA

The *South Asian Journal of Transactional Analysis* welcomes contributions from all fields of practice – counselling, education, psychotherapy and organisation. No field or practice or theoretical frame of reference will be privileged in the evaluation of manuscripts submitted for review and publication. All theoretical perspectives within Transactional Analysis, not limited to quantitative and qualitative research, case studies, literature surveys, book reviews and reflective essays, are welcome.

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Only original material—not previously published in English and not under review by another English-language publication—is eligible for consideration and inclusion in the *SAJTA*. As an exception, any paper previously published in a language other than English will be considered if professionally translated into English prior to submission.

If you are an author considering a submission to the *SAJTA*, the first step is to determine that your paper is well written in terms of content, structure and style. The second step is to prepare your manuscript according to the following technical requirements and then to submit it as a Word document via e-mail to the *SAJTA* Managing Editor at journal@saata.org.

To be published in the January issue, your manuscript has to be mailed by 15 Oct of the previous year and for the July publication, by 15 April of the same year.

General Writing Guidelines

- Your manuscript is in word format, no longer than **2,500–3,000 words** (not including any bibliography, references, keywords and author biography). Please bear in mind that additions or deletions during the course of iterations, would impact the final word count. Hence this number is to be adhered to.

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- Keep **sentences short and precise**. Where there are multiple ideas, construct as two or more sentences.

- Use **simple and easy-to-understand words**. Remember that your audience may not be Transactional Analysis literate or even use English as their first language.

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- Provide **English translations to any vernacular** quotations that are made in the article.

- As part of our learning, we have decided to only accept **single part articles** that align to the theme of the issue. Multi-part series will only be considered on a case-by-case basis, depending on the relevance and timeliness of the topic.

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- Write scientifically on topics – original thoughts, research, application in professional or personal context, reviews, experiences, opinions – which can be explained primarily using Transactional Analysis concepts.

- Double-check Transactional Analysis terminologies and their definitions, e.g., names of games, components of script, drivers, injunctions etc. Transactional Analysis full form, not TA, to be used. All terminologies to be in small case, e.g., script not Script.

- Quote the original authors of any concepts / ideas used. Reference accordingly.

- The article should not be published anywhere before, including in SAATA Diploma or Advanced Diploma exams. We are open to answers modified into a journal article.

- Select a strong title, which crisply explains what the article conveys.

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Review Process

Once you have met the above submission requirements and timelines, you will receive a 'receipt of your submission' mail in <u>a week.</u> Over the next <u>3-4 weeks,</u> your manuscript will be anonymously reviewed by at least two of *SAJTA's* co-editors, who will assess basic readability (i.e., professionally written English, clarity and novelty of the ideas presented, relevance for the transactional analysis community and its contributions to the evolution of transactional analysis theory, principles, and practice) as below.

Evaluation/Review Criteria

- How is the paper **relevant** to organizational, educational, counselling, or psychotherapy applications?

- Is there an **adequate review of the relevant literature** – transactional analysis as well as the literature of other related fields, such as cognitive research, neuroscience studies, organizational behaviour and consultation, mother/infant research, systems theory, educational theory and practice, psychoanalytic perspectives, ethics, anthropology, social/political literature, etc.?

- The editors and reviewers also consider whether the **author's writing is professional and clear**:

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- o If the paper includes **figures, tables, or other graphic images**, are they necessary, easily understood, and integrated well into the main text and with the ideas of the paper?

- o Does the author end the article with a **conclusion** (rather than a summary), one that engages the reader in thinking about further questions the article might raise, how others might build on or further develop the ideas presented, creative uses of the material, etc.?

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- o Is there any **plagiarism** of ideas or concepts which have not been appropriately referenced?

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Around <u>4 weeks</u> after your submission, you will be notified if your manuscript has been accepted for publishing and if additional modifications are needed. If not accepted, reasons will be shared. A Co-Editor from the *SAJTA* editorial team is assigned to work with each author over the next <u>3-4 weeks.</u> They will collaborate closely - to challenge ideas or thinking, question the logic or rationale or make suggestions. The work will go through a few iterations before both Author and Reviewer agree it is ready for publishing. Some minor changes might occur as part of the final editorial process, prior to publication.

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