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Handbook

Inner State

Output of the project European
Development of Counsellors



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Introduction

Dear reader,

welcome to reading this handbook. This handbook has been created as a part of the Erasmus plus project called European Development of Counsellors (EDECO). This project aimed to support Inner State of counsellors and other helping professionals. The main activity of the project was to create a model training for counsellors which was called "Dialogical Mind Goes beyond any Technique". This handbook should enable counsellors, might they attend training or not, to get familiar with the central ideas, theoretical concepts, and a selection of practical exercises.

We will be happy to hear any of your comments or questions via email Lucie.sedlackova@aspektzs.cz.

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Use of this handbook

The main aim of this handbook is to provide the relevant theoretical and practical information about developing those "Inner-State"-variables for counselors, that meet with the purpose of the EDECO-project. Trained counselors who read this handbook should understand the central ideas and theoretical concepts that form the basis of the EDECO-project. A number of practical exercises will support this sense of understanding. As the theoretical framework of the project is based on some scientific concepts, the reader has the choice to dive deeper and read additional literature that is referred to at the end of the handbook.

Important is, that working on one's Inner-State is a process that takes quite some time, and cannot be forced (in the sense of Paul Watzlawick's paradox: "Be spontaneous!"). Therefore it needs a strong will of a person to work on the inner-state. It is not enough to understand and reflect the theories behind it; it needs the will and effort to step into the level of "emotions" and do exercises over a longer period of time.

As this project was developed for experienced counselors, we did not deal with basic content, like how to articulate questions in a coaching environment, or models of human communication, etc. Therefore any experienced counselor should be able to draw his personal conclusions out of the handbook, get the main points, and benefit from its ideas, hypotheses, and described exercises.



Adults as learners

The learning process is the key process for our topic. Without learning there can't be any new development of counsellor's Inner State. That's why we invite you to consider how the learning of adults works.

Differences between learning in the group of children and group of adults are usually stated like:

- For adults as learners self-direction is typical. They accept responsibility for their own lives.
- Another specific for adults as learners is the need for information that can be immediately applicable to their professional needs.
- They are more resistant to a change, therefore less open-minded.
- The learning process is slower for them, yet more integrative. The depth of learning tends to increase with age.
- They use personal experience as a resource which means that they tend to link anything new to prior knowledge.
- The sources of motivation are different. It is often a personal choice to learn something deliberately.

We are dealing with learning of adults that is why an andragogical approach is implemented. We consider an adult learner as an active subject of learning, not the passive object. Learning is ACTIVE (not passive) and CREATIVE (not mechanistic).

We suppose that the learning process will be self-directive. Each of our learners knows his/her needs. The adult person is coming into the process with her own experience from his previous education and especially with his/her work based practise. And this practice is very important for our learning process. The new learning may integrate all of previous knowledge and through new knowledge may give to a learner a new perspective on his practise. It also may point on some challenges in current counsellors practise. This learning can't stay on theoretical surface but its aim is to encourage the learners to find their own new way. Only the professionals (learners) may say if and how they can integrate new knowledge. That is why individual reflective practice is crucial. We support participants to consider new knowledge and find a way how to make them a part of their updated practice. One useful tool could be e.g. learning diary which will be described later on.

We stress out the neuroplasticity of the brain. Even as adults the brain remains to a certain extent flexible and can establish new connections. In certain structures in the brain of an adult new neurons may grow (f. e. in the Hippocampus¹).

Learning is a never-ending process and we understand learning not in the sense of "facts". We understand it as expanding possibilities in adults.

Learning happens all the time, mostly we don't classify it as "learning". It is not about "facts", learning often is more about connecting an experience with emotions on a subconscious level.

¹ see f. e.: Spitzer (2007)



Stance of learner

We base our approach on learning how to have a dialogical mind on David Bohm's dialogical feature called **the stance of a learner**.

This attitude enables us to be genuinely curious and to put aside our cultural conditioning to be "knowers". The Zen master Shunryu Suzuki said: "In the beginner's mind there are many possibilities; in the expert's mind there are few."

Dialogical learning approach

Dialogical learning approach is an approach that stresses out learning through deep listening, openness, radical respect, adopting the stance of a learner. It involves practicing a spirit of inquiry and embracing the paradox of differences.

In dialogical learning approach we work with our thoughts.



The term "Inner State"

"Inner State" is the core term in the EDECO-project, and therefore needs some clarification. Claus Otto Scharmer (2009) refers to "inner sources", which build the base of perception, communication, and acting, for individuals as well as groups. And: "we can't see these sources, that is the base for our thoughtfulness; we are not aware of that location, which is the starting point for our awareness". Martin Buber (2006) talks about three different kinds of perception: observe ("Beobachten"), consider ("Betrachten"), become aware of ("Innewerden").

Observe: It is done completely intentionally, a kind of scientific observing when people want to take notice of every single detail. Therefore there is some tension in it, for not to miss anything.

Consider: A person who is considering another person, is doing this also in a very pragmatic way, but without this strong tension - the considering person is willing to trust more in the process so that he won't miss the relevant things. He is looking more like an artist, wants to learn something about the nature of the object, but is not really involved.

Become aware of: A person who is "becoming aware of" another person, doesn't look at that person as a kind of object, it is very close and personal. It is not like describing the other person like you do when observing or considering, it is more: taking the other person as he or she "really" is, without any judging or scientific/artistic interest.

When we deal with art, for example, a painting or a music piece, and we really can connect to it, we can draw emotions, cognitions, feelings out of it that touch our identity - the identity, which ties everything together. We could define the term Inner State as "the part of the mind that is really me, that actually does the thinking, wanting, deciding, enjoying, suffering and much more". According to Marvin Minsky² we could state: perhaps it is the sort of thing that science can't explain. But, regarding the arts: without the perceptive and emotional participation of the observer's inner state, art, or better: the world around is, is incomplete. Nowadays we have technically elaborated face-recognition systems with artificial intelligence, that can do a lot: but it does not have that "Inner State" that humans have.

An important factor is, that, as mentioned above, there are some blindness, blind spots, when we try to look at our Inner State. In the counselling training, people usually learn counselling techniques and self-reflection; the latter more, on an analytical level, which is good and relevant. The idea behind our definition of Inner State is, that we can't access our deepest inner that is driving our thinking, feeling, and behaving in a direct, rational, analytical, academic-scientific manner, as there are so many blind spots that are interconnecting and too complex for rational reflection. These considerations lead to the idea that we should work with the Inner State on a more emotional approach, that - nevertheless - uses the analytical cognitive processes as well, as these are an integral part of our human being as well.

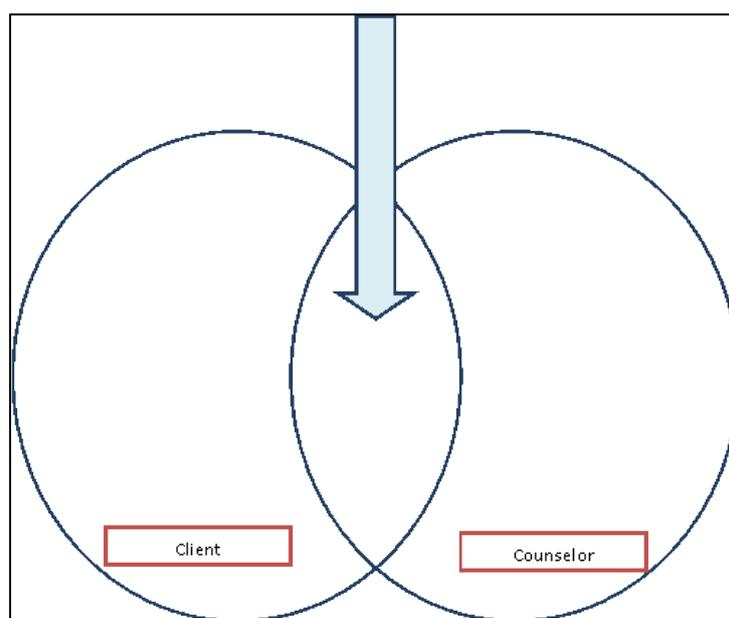
² Minsky, M. (1988). The society of Mind. New York City: Simon & Schuster.



Our body is the starting point of all our considerations. Traditional European philosophy splits mind from body (*res extensa* and *res cogitans* sensu Rene Descartes): emotions were treated as something of different quality (concerning cognitions; this is the old "mind and body"-problem). There is a lot to be said about this topic, but for the purposes of the EDECO-project we state it short and simple: According to the studies of scientists like Antonio Damasio and others we cannot split emotions and cognitions, as they are not just interconnected significantly, but emotions are the basis of cognitions and (higher) feelings, and cognitions are in a deep feedback loop with emotions. All this is based on the somatic ground of our body (see: Embodiment/Damasio). Why is this important for the concept of Inner State? Our body and somatic sensations influence our mind in a significant way, very often and deeply without conscious thinking and emotional processes, and vice versa. This is the reason why the science of embodiment, which has led to numerous publications in the last three decades, plays a key role when dealing with the Inner State.

The term Inner State is not to be defined scientifically here. It is a working term in close relation to what we call "identity" with the focus on unconscious/subconscious cognitions, emotions, and feelings (where emotions are more "raw", and feelings are closer to higher cognitive processes in the sense of bottom up and top down), and which should not be seen as something completely different from somatic sensations, as all is interconnected and tied together in permanent feedback loops.

A hypothesis in the EDECO project is that people can gain progress in their counselling profession when they work on their inner state processes, as the counselors and the clients inner state always have overlapping terrains. The systemic perspective says that, when people are dealing together, their inner states interact and reflect on each other. From this view, working on the counselors inner state must have some influence on the clients inner state and vice versa (see the following figure). In the EDECO project we focus mainly on the counselors Inner State.





The perspective of our training

The EDECO motto “Dialogical Mind Goes beyond any Technique” describes the pioneer spirit of the training setting up the goal of looking at the counsellor training from a new perspective. While traditionally counsellors have been trained to manage counselling “methods” to incorporate them into their “toolbox” and thus better help the clients, EDECO has had more ambitious goals. The EDECO message for the counsellor training is that instead of training the counsellors more and more methods we have now to investigate the counsellor him/herself. The counsellor’s ideas, values, psychologically individual ways of thinking and acting, body consciousness, his/her unconsciousness, and even his/her social positioning and personal life situation is something that has a significant, and important role in the counselling process.

EDECO adopted the concept of Inner State (of the counsellor) as its main approach to the counsellor’s side of the counselling process. In introducing the PSI-theory as a modern psychological personality, the mind-body bridging approach with various exercises, positive psychology linked with Sociodynamic Counselling, EDECO faced the challenge of creating a new conceptual framework and training programme. The pilot training was a journey to the unknown.

In the light of the evaluations made during the training and after it by all stakeholders involved it may now be stated that the EDECO managed to “make the case”. The Inner State was proven as a valid approach to the counsellor bringing them added value to their professional work. Of course, more experience of the concept developed here and evaluations of its effectiveness will be done in the future.

Inner State – new opening for career counselling?

EDECO training and its concepts were born by counselling practitioners’ dissatisfaction with the prevailing counsellor training. The counsellors have been taught mainly counselling techniques and it has been assumed that the counselling practice will work to the extent of how well the counsellors are able to “apply” these methods in their work. However, it has turned out that counselling is something more complex and the techniques, although carried out in a skillful way, do not necessarily lead to a better counselling process or better counselling outcomes. And, most importantly, the counsellors themselves are forgotten in this approach. What is happening in the counsellor’s mind and mental orientation to the counselling process, has been a neglected theme. As a response to this challenge, EDECO training adopted the concept of Inner State as a starting point to be elaborated in real interaction with frontline counsellors. It was hypothesized that developing the different aspects of the Inner State counsellors would be able to ‘beyond any technique’. The pilot training of EDECO has also been a journey of elaborating the various aspects of Inner State as there was not a ‘handbook’ ready to explain what Inner State includes as a methodology or practice. In this chapter, I will try to locate the Inner State approach in a historical perspective of career counselling. The outline of the historical



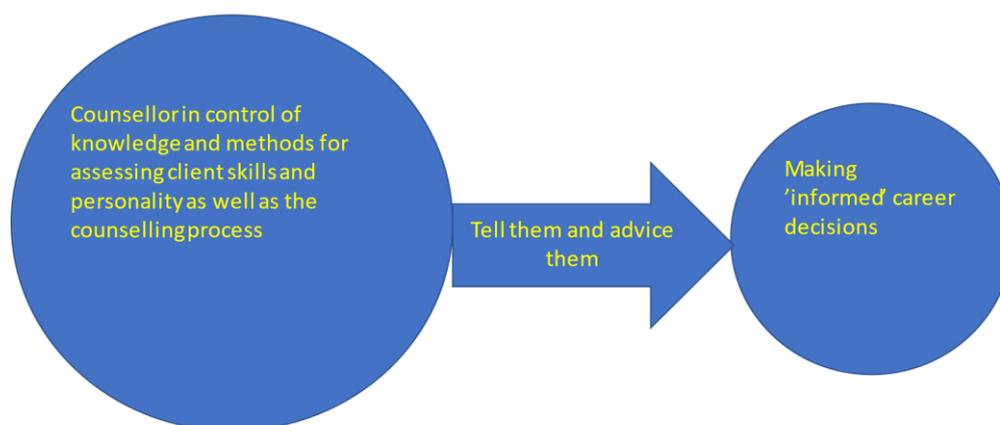
development will inevitably be incomplete and full of shortcuts not respecting the nuances of historical trends. However, it is important to try to locate the Inner State approach with the developmental trends in career counselling as it has not appeared out of the blue but has its roots in the real counselling practice.

Counsellor role dominating

Career counselling as a profession was born in the late 1900s and early 2000s as a response to the demands of industrial working life and concerns about the social conditions of the youngsters. Parsons³ introduced the idea of counselling as a “true reasoning” between work requirements and client skills. Counselling was about ‘matching’ these two worlds together. The counsellor (psychologist) presented the client’s psychological tests and made recommendations for the clients’ career choices. Counselling was in its simplest form a “test them and tell them”- process. This basic formula remained dominant for about half a century until it was “softened” by the developmental theories after the second world war. The developmental theories emphasised now more the client’s personality development and tried to fit it with working life and job requirements.

However, in both approaches the counsellor role remains dominant over the client’s role. Visually this paradigm may be presented like this:

Counsellor dominating



³ <https://psychology.iresearchnet.com/counselling-psychology/career-counselling/history-of-career-counselling/>



Thus, the key elements were in the hands of the counsellor and the client's role was clearly weaker. In the developmental approach, the counsellor's role was more supportive towards the client but still in a one-up-one-down position.

The social constructivist turn in career counselling

Things started, however, to change along with the analysis of the changing working life and the new developments in the field of counselling more generally. The economies changed from industrial to post-industrial ones and a call for new approaches was raised. The essential change in working life was that there were no longer available life-long careers from education-to-(lifelong) job-to retirement. Furthermore, work moved from hands to brains, and from individuals to teams. Jobs were not anymore strictly determined, they did not have clear boundaries, and testing their "requirements" for the individuals became even more complicated. The individuals seemed to have much more freedom in performing their work in their individual and personal way. Work was now more than ever something that could be shaped and molded instead of being only something to be adapted to. And it turned out that citizens do not make career choices based on their individual skills or personality traits but rather considering their life situation in general. It was declared that 'location of work' should now be the focus of career counselling (e.g. Richardson 1993⁴, Peavy 1997⁵, Vähämöttönen, 1998⁶). At the same time in counselling (and therapy) the traditional diagnosis–treatment model started to change as the new approaches like Neurolinguistic Programming (NLP), solution-focused (brief) therapy, family and system therapy came into the field.

The new approaches were crystallized in the social constructivist approach. The outcome of the counselling process was now seen depending on how the interaction and communication between the counsellor and the client succeeded. Counselling became collaboration and negotiation (Vähämöttönen 1998). The counselling process and the mutual and equal communication created and constructed "from within" the client's career development. Visually the basic features of the social constructivist approach might be described as follow.

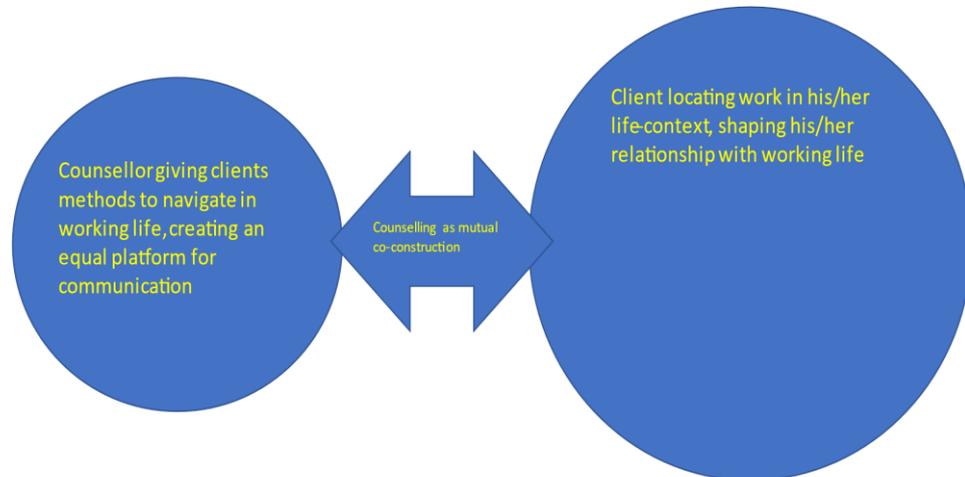
⁴ Richardson, M. S. (1993) 'Work in people's lives: a location for counselling psychologists'. *Journal of Counselling Psychology*, 40, 423-33.

⁵ Peavy, R. V (1997) *SocioDynamic Counselling. A Constructivist Perspective for the Practice of Counselling in the Twentieth-first Century*. Victoria, BC: Trafford.

⁶ Vähämöttönen, T. T. E. (1998) 'Reframing career counselling in terms of counsellor-client negotiations'. *University of Joensuu: Publications in Social Sciences 34*. Joensuun yliopistopaino: Joensuu.



Social constructivist (career) counselling



Thus, the client's role is the main role in social constructivist counselling making the life context of the client even the decisive factor in career counselling. The world of work was now assessed as a part of the client's life. This has problematized the traditional view of career counselling focusing on the relationship between work and the individual. The rise of "life coaching" (Savickas 2012⁷) reflects the shift of focus rather on life than work. From the point of counsellor role social constructivist approach has taken the counsellor on equal ground with the client and now they constitute a team resolving together the client's (working) life concerns.

The Inner state approach – towards a reflexive career counselling practice?

It is rather obvious that social constructivist career counselling approaches like SocioDynamic have put the emphasis on how to best help the client to solve his/her career concerns. However, the social constructivist practical methods include as much the idea that the methods create at the same time platforms for mutual "co-construction", they give the clients possibilities to "act differently" but at the same time a possibility to communicate with counsellor as a human being trying to solve together the concerns of the client.

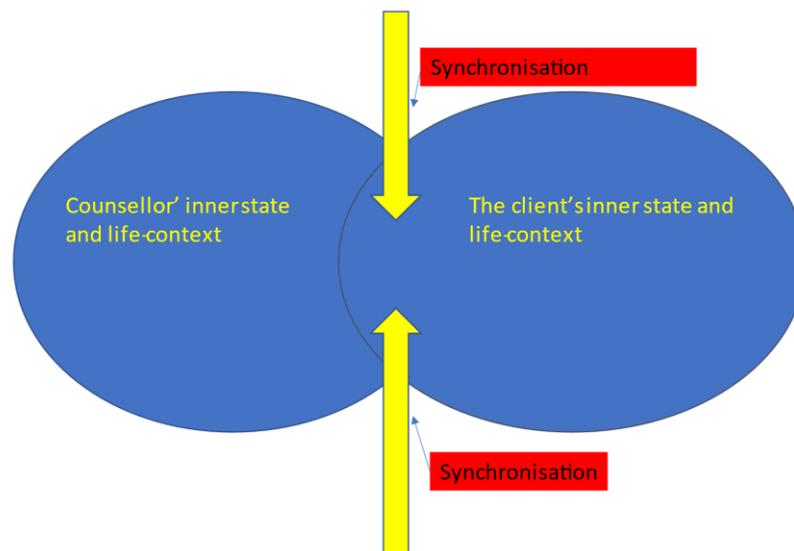
In EDECO the goal was to put more emphasis on the counsellor side of the counselling process as it was seen as a prerequisite for a more flexible role for the counsellor and as a

⁷ Savickas, M. L. (2012). Life design: A paradigm for Career Intervention in the 21st Century. *Journal for Career Counselling and development*, 90, 1.



method to prevent the counsellor from “getting lost” in the ambiguities of the counselling process, feeling overly stressed and even burned out. The EDECO counselling concept, the Inner State approach, can be visually presented as follows:

The Inner State approach to counselling



Thus, the counselling process includes equally the counsellor's and the client's mental processes and world related to their life contexts. EDECO focused on helping the counsellors become aware of their inner state processes and develop them in a conscious manner. The psychological PSI theory indicated that the counsellor's personality and his/her individual ways of acting are always present also in the counselling and other spheres of life and these processes really matter regarding how the counsellors act with the clients. Positive psychology created a basis for identifying important elements for a satisfying life attitude. SocioDynamic counselling approach created a bridge towards understanding the significance of the counsellor's inner state during the counselling sessions.

In EDECO one of the main approaches used was drills and exercises with emotions and their bodily expressions. The embodiment approach turned out vitally important and helped the counsellors become aware of positive or negative emotions and feelings relevant in their work and life. Methods, like ISEK, for identifying and developing them were created during the process.

It might be seen that EDECO definitely took steps towards “reflexive counselling practice” by which I mean that the Inner State process of the counsellor is always present in the counselling process. “*Reflexive*” means that the focus during the counselling process should continuously be as much on the counsellor's Inner State process as on the client's processes.



Discussion

“Reflexive professional practice”, as an outcome of EDECO links the Inner State approach – based on PSI-theory, positive psychology, and embodiment - with the current trends in counselling. First, it seems that the Inner State approach has a bridge-building capacity in that it takes us back to the counsellor perspective, the key factor in counselling and psychotherapy. The PSI theory reminds the counsellors that psychological personality theory in its modern version has an important role in the counselling process. Based on positive psychology the Inner State approach resonates with Robertson’s (2015)⁸ idea of positive psychology as a way of reintegrating career counselling within counselling psychology.

Secondly, the Inner State approach reaches for something new. The embodiment approach, mind-body bridging, used in EDECO is in line with some of the latest developments in the social constructivist movement. Shotter (2010)⁹ argues for moving from understanding the social constructionist approach from its post-modern versions based on how to do -thinking and often overly emphasizing verbal forms of language only. The key element of the new turn in social constructionism is the human body as a starting point in all social interaction. What we need now is ontological skills, skills on *how to be* in the world.

“Being a good organizer, good listener, a careful reader, a good speaker, etc., are all to do more with our learning of how to be in the world (ontology) than with our gaining knowledge of it (epistemology)”.

The Inner State approach seems to open the counsellor’s mind towards the question of *how to be a counsellor* in the (counselling) world. For me, EDECO training was really an existential, or ‘ontological’ in Shotter’s terminology, endeavor. This door opening towards ontological Inner State perspective may turn out a new phase in the development of career counselling with all its challenges ahead.

And, finally, Inner State approach reflects also the current challenges of career counselling especially in the context of employment services. In their analysis of the development of the activation labour market policy of Ireland Whelan & al. (2021)¹⁰ argue that the outcomes of the “work first” labour market policies in Ireland have been scarce. What now is needed is a move away from the mechanistic and often punishing ‘activation’ attitude towards the client to life-first employment counselling with a holistic understanding of the client and his/her life context. Inner State approach will certainly contribute to this development.

⁸ Robertson, P.J. (2015). Positive psychology: A movement to reintegrate career counselling within counselling psychology? *Counselling Psychology Review*, 30, N:o 3, September.

⁹ Shotter, J (2010). *Social construction on the edge. Witness thinking and embodiment*. TAOS: UK.

¹⁰ Whelan, N., Murphy, M.P. & McGann, M. (2021). The enabling role of employment guidance in contemporary public employment services: A work-first to life-first typology. *British Journal of Guidance and Counselling*, 49,, 2, 200-212.



Scientific background of the concept of the EDECO project and of Inner State

The ideas behind EDECO should be based on empirical (practical) as well as scientific evidence. There are numerous empirical and scientific approaches to be named, all of which play a certain role. The main sources on which the project is based on the Sociodynamic Counselling sensu Vance Peavy (which is, in the words of Peavy, more a practice-based and not so much a scientific approach), the PSI-Theory by German Psychologist Julius Kuhl, Embodiment (which cannot be named a stringent, well defined "science" with coherent, widely accepted hypotheses behind) influenced hugely by Portuguese Neuroscientist Antonio Damasio, and Neuroplasticity (which states and shows that even the adult brain has the potential to change and build new structures, what is in opposition to older ideas that the adult brain is more or less static; a view that was valid till the 1970s/1980s). And another source for the EDECO is Dialogue sensu Bohm and Isaacs.

Kuhl has guided a lot of scientific publications and psychological experiments to give his PSI theory empirical evidence. A good example of how an assumption made by the PSI theory was examined is this: The so-called "first modulation assumption" states that positive affect supports the transfer of difficult intentions into practice. This assumption was examined a couple of times by adequate experiments, for example with the well-known Stroop effect. This effect - naming the "wrong" color of a written color-word like: the word "green" is written in yellow color - leads to an inner psychological conflict and cant be controlled consciously (the test-persons have to name the right color as quick as possible; the conflict can be seen by measured time-latency). According to the first assumption of the PSI-theory this effect should disappear, or at least lower when the test-persons are confronted with positive words ahead. Experiments show clearly, that this assumption can be approved. Additionally, it could be shown that this effect is accompanied by activating a region in the right praefrontal cortex, a region that is also activated when people work on tasks connected with the sense of self. In other words: the motivation to consolidate the will is resulting from a region that is closely connected to the self.

In the EDECO project, it was an important factor to do certain exercises regularly and reflect on them, either alone or with peers. This necessity was stated often, as there is scientific proof, that one of the main factors that distinguish more effective from less effective counselors is the time counselors spend on self-education and self-reflection. "Therapist characteristics (e. g., years of experience, gender, age, profession, highest qualification, caseload, degree of theoretical integration) did not significantly predict client-reported outcomes. Consistent with the literature on expertise and expert performance, the amount of time spent targeted at improving therapeutic skills was a significant predictor of client outcomes"¹¹

¹¹ Chow, D. L., & Miller, S. C. (2015). The role of deliberate practice in the development of highly effective psychotherapists. *Psychotherapy*, 52 (3), 337-345.



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When we want to go deeper into working on a counselors mind, dealing with personal values and attitudes, we cannot expect this to happen just by attending a model training. What happens between the training sessions is at least as important as the experience of the face-to-face training sessions. Therefore we recommended the use of a learning diary.



PSI-Theory

The PSI-theory by Julius Kuhl is a dynamic theory, therefore it is called "Person-System-Interaction". It consists of four systems (Extension Memory, Object Recognition, Intention Memory, and Intuitive Behaviour Control) that are interconnected. Most people prefer one or two of these four systems but normally are not aware of this. Important is that we can train ourselves to get more and more aware of what system actually is working in the first place, and then adapt our cognitions and our behaviour. The PSI-theory states that all four systems have it's benefits and weaknesses and should be activated according to the situation. As a comprehensive, complex theory of personality, just parts of it were used in the EDECO project: mainly the four perception-systems, their interaction, and some aspects (emotional, cognitive) of the dynamic behind the fields and the interactions between them.

The four perception fields

Intention Memory (IM): The IM is highly responsible for the formation and maintenance of conscious intentions that cannot be carried out immediately so that the intention will remain there until a favorable situation is happening¹². When people are fixated too much on the IM, they tend to do too little for bringing their intention into action.

Extension Memory (EM): The EM is the location of the "self". It has a huge potential for integrating opposing thoughts and feelings and provides information about (the individuals) values and motives. It mostly works without conscious awareness, despite the contents can become conscious, f. e. by focussing attention. The EM is very important for establishing a "meaning" for life.

Object Recognition (OR): This system isolates single objects from the context and is accompanied mainly by negative effects, so it is important for the avoidance of danger. If people are too much in the OR, they easily can become what is called "discrepancy experts".

Intuitive Behavior Control (IBC): The IBC is necessary for the decision to and the execution of behavioral routines, and the transfer of intentions into practice. As it is mainly responsible for easy, more or less automatized behavior, it operates on a lower intuitive level (as does the OR), whereas the EM and the IM are operating on a level of higher, more elaborate intuition.

The paths between these four fields play a key role in the PSI- theory. According to Kuhl, self-growth needs communication between the four fields, and a kind of equilibrium should be reached, according to the circumstances, so that an appropriate activation should enable the individual to react properly.

¹² Kazen, M. & Quirin, M. (2018). The integration of motivation and volition in Personality Systems Interactions (PSI) theory. In N. Baumann, M. Kazen, M. Quirin & S. L. Koole (Eds). *Why people do things they do: Building on Julius Kuhls contributions to the psychology of motivation and volition*. (pp. 15-30). Göttingen: Hogrefe. (See this reference for further explanations of the PSI-theory as well in this part of the handbook)



Example: A person who has a big preference for intuitive thinking and just "doing", prefers the routines and easy-going "lifestyle", even when confronted with something that is complicated enough to require a kind of planning. If this person cannot find a strategy to strengthen the flow between the Extension Memory and the Intuitive Behaviour control on the one hand, and the Intention Memory (and maybe even the Object Recognition) on the other, that person could get stuck somehow.

The PSI theory gives a frame, a personality theory to work with during the whole EDECO project, as it is elaborated, scientifically proved and many of its implications are easy to integrate in practice. A lot of exercises of the project have a base at the PSI theory and aim a) to get better aware of the role of the four perceptive fields, and b) to strengthen the paths between the fields, as this is important for self-development sensu Kuhl and others. From theoretical and practical considerations, these exercises should lead to a more balanced activation of the four perceptive fields, support better access to the Self, and therefore help with the development of the Inner State in general: Development means to find a supporting and helpful Synchronization-process between counselor and client.

The terms "Self" and "Synchronization" need some clarification. The Self as explained by Kuhl¹³ is a functional unit with a bunch of tasks, for example: integration of feelings to the body, regulation of affects, vigilance, and much more. It is situated mainly in the Extension Memory, where it works parallelly and on a level of high integration, for example: the self can integrate opposing feelings (ambiguity) what is a key competence in the development of the Inner State.

Synchronization: Synchronization is a concept of how communication between people should work, away from the so-called "sender-receiver"-models. A successful, open, creative, output-oriented, peaceful communication needs a mutual understanding, that is not so much based on rational thinking, in the sense of "data", but takes place on the mutual humane ground. Let's take a metaphor: when two people are synchronized, they feel well, feel a sense of common understanding, are synchronized in body language as well as verbal language, might they have opposite views about a subject or not. It has to do with a kind of feelable respect, and that's valid for the opposite opinion as well. Synchronization does not mean: be the same, hold the same view. It is a kind of respect independent from the content. Let's look at it in a more metaphorical way than from a strongly scientific perspective. To reach a constructive, natural state of synchronization can be supported by exercises, reflections, and experiences that work on a more emotional level, where the Self sensu Kuhl is being addressed – that's one of the main assumptions in the project. But again: our analytical mind should never be neglected, as we as humans need both: the analytical as well as the emotional mind (mind: feelings, other than "raw" emotions, can't be split from higher cognitions¹⁴).

¹³ Storch, M. & Kuhl, J. (2017). Die Kraft aus dem Selbst. Göttingen: Hogrefe.

¹⁴ see Damasio, A. (2004). Descartes Irrtum. Fühlen, Denken und das menschliche Gehirn. Berlin: List/Ullstein.

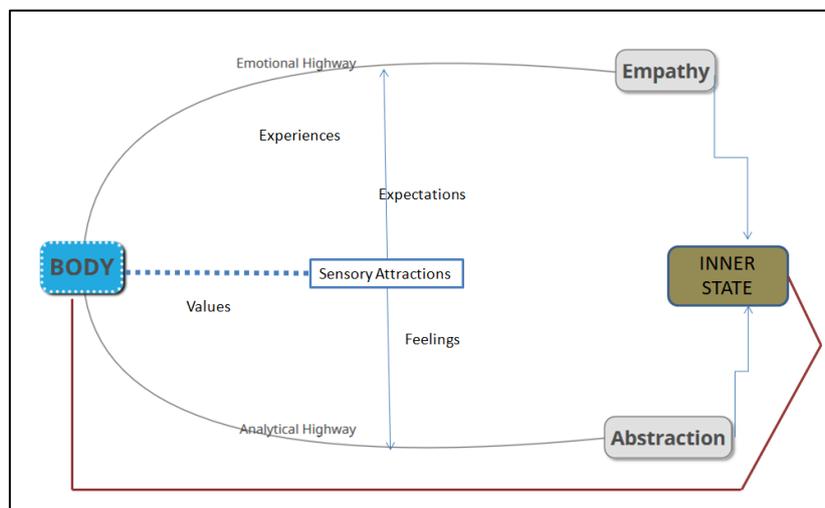


Embodiment/Damasio

David Bohm made a distinction between "feelings and felts" and "thinking and thoughts", meaning that feeling and thinking are the actual ongoing processes, while felts and thoughts are stored feelings and thoughts (see the chapter about "thinking and feeling/thought and felt"). When we, consciously or not, reactive stored feelings and thoughts, we normally - especially if it's intensive - feel it on a somatic level (heart-beating, sweating, a certain feeling in the chest, etc.). In general: neither cognitions nor feelings can be separated from the somatic ground.

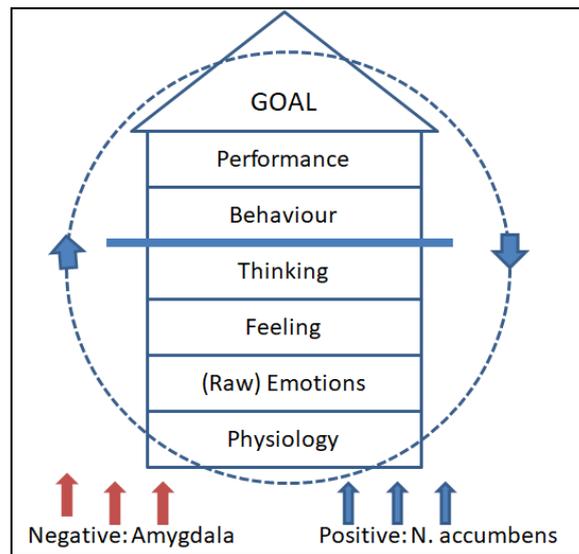
"There is a profound connection between the state of the body and the way you think... The state of the body is very profoundly tied to thought, affected by thought, and vice versa¹⁵". Every emotion is connected with a somatic condition (and the same is true for "pure" cognitions), therefore we should be aware of what our body tells us. This is true especially for negative conditions when we should be anxious and prevent harm, but we can use these interconnections also for self-development in a very positive context.

A key term here is "Somatogram". Before we look at this further, we have to think about innerpsychic bottom-up and top-down processes, or, in other words, about the interconnection of (raw) emotions and (higher) cognitions.



As illustrated in the model (figure above), we have to consider a permanent interaction between our inner-state that is fed by (raw) emotions ("emotional highway") and (higher) cognitions ("analytical highway"). There is a constant flow of information (bottom-up and top-down, see next figure), a permanent circle of stimuli that nudge each other and have to be processed. Base of all this is the BODY, as the materialistic source of our existence.

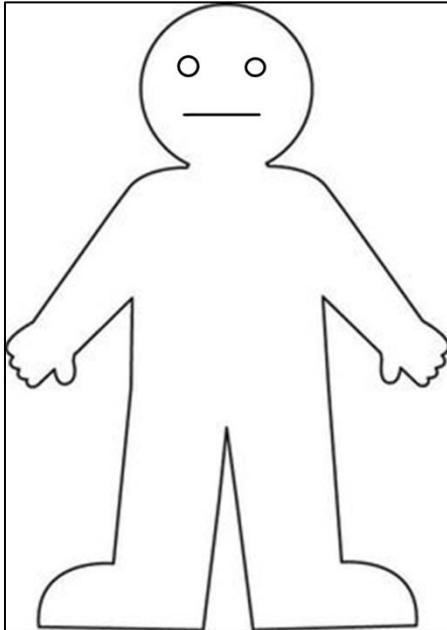
¹⁵ Bohm, D. (2007).



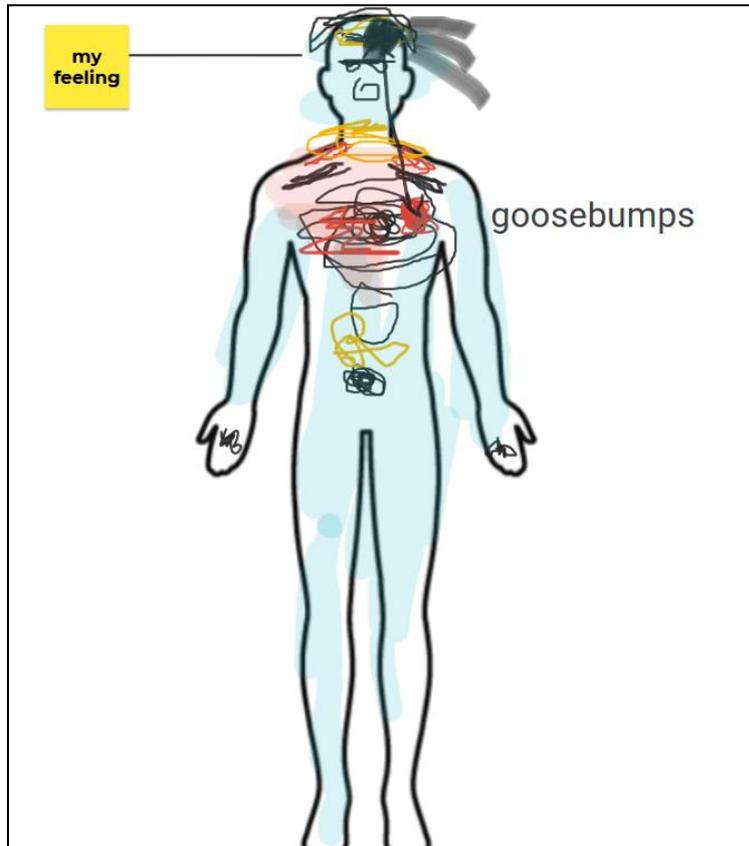
When we want to reach a certain goal, the way there is starting on a very basic somatic level. There are two different and independent systems provoking either reward (Nucleus accumbens) or punishment (Amygdala). These stimuli are going up from this basic physiologic level, form (raw) emotions that are being transformed into feelings and thinking processes, before a specific behaviour is formed, a behaviour that leads to performance and, in the end, reaching a goal. At the same time, there are top-down processes happening, these two processes are meeting somewhere and influencing each other. So it's difficult to determine "what is what" (it's a classical egg-and-hen problem). Important for our project is this: Our mind (the cognitive system) is - via its organ, the brain - always in interaction with the body and the environment, which we live in. This is called "embodiment". We have a double embedding. Mind is embedded in the body, the body is embedded in the external environment. It's a feedback loop. We influence the environment, the environment influences us.

Cognition is embedded in the body and implemented in an environment so that cognition is happening all the time in interaction accompanied by feedback loops with the body. Body states are affects (emotions), feelings, body gestures, etc. All these interactions of cognitions, emotions, body-states are circular and causal. These three factors: cognitions, body, environment are influencing each other in causal feedback-loops.

These considerations should make clear, why the term "somatogram" is one of the key elements in the EDECO project. Change of attitudes and behavior sometimes happens just via analytical reflections. But, and that's the main assumption here, usually it's more effective, more sustainable, and deeper, to focus significantly on our (raw) emotions and feelings, mediated by our body, so that analytical reflections form a part of these transformation processes, but - generally - do not build the center of these processes. Again: we as humans are driven a lot by our "emotions" (mostly not conscious), emotions are much more important as we like to think. But we have our cognitions, too, so it would not be a good idea to neglect these in intended transformation processes.



A somatogram (sensu Damasio) can be used in a variety of situations. We can use it for self-reflection ("Where in my body do I feel something in this situation, and how do I feel it?"), as a supportive method when thinking about a certain procedure ("How does it feel when I think about not reaching this goal?"), or with client work, and many others. Here you find an example of a somatogram that was done by the whole group.



Such an image can be extremely helpful for group discussion as well, as it usually helps people to find words for feelings and maybe even (raw) emotions that are difficult to articulate.

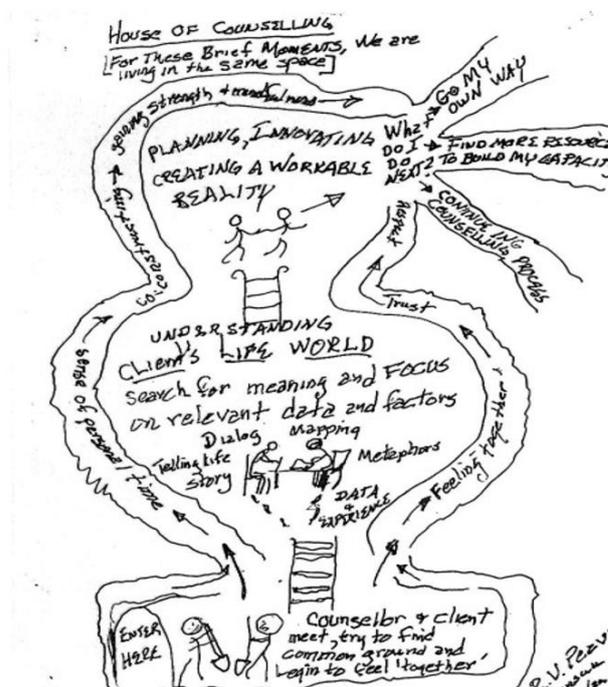
Generally, there is no limit on the means used in somatograms. Some people prefer words, others prefer symbols, maybe in different colors, or just lines or other forms. It might be helpful to instruct people to use different colors (f. e.: blue or green more for the "cool" [cognitive driven] system, yellow or red for the "hot" system sensu Walter Mischel), and to show examples in advance. Such a reference to scientific background might be helpful for analytic people, who often are not used to drawing/sketches and find it childish.



SocioDynamic Counselling

SocioDynamic Counselling was created by Vance R. Peavy (1929 – 2002), Professor of University of Victoria. It is a social constructivist approach where helper (Peavy’s name for counsellor) and helpseekers (clients coming for counselling) are co-creators of the counselling outcome and the counselling process itself. Peavy analyzed the changing relationship between citizens and working life. He concluded that career counselling cannot anymore be based on comparing the individuals’ capabilities and job requirements and matching these two worlds together. The individuals have now to create their own unique relationship with the world of work and career counselling is a process to help them to do that. Thus, Sociodynamic counselling is an approach that addresses both the client’s relationship with the working life and the counselling process. By implication, it must now be more of a more dialogue between the client and the counsellor rather than the counsellor being a kind of “besserwisser”¹⁶.

The core of Sociodynamic counselling lies in its dialogical approach to the process between the client and the counsellor. Peavy¹⁷ himself visualized the counselling process (“House of counselling”) as follows:



¹⁶ Peavy, R.V. (1997). Sociodynamic counselling. A constructivist perspective for the practice of counselling in the 21st century. Victoria: Trafford Publishing.

¹⁷ Peavy, teaching material, unpublished



The description of the 'house of counselling' underlines the career counselling as constructed mutually by the client and the counsellor in the process of reciprocal dialogical communication and emphasizing the emotional rather than only cognitive or rational elements of the process. In that sense it may be seen that SocioDynamic Counselling concept also creates *a bridge* towards the counsellors' inner state as a crucial element of the process. Peavy himself also addressed elements of counsellor's inner state like reflecting the changing role of the counsellor, the hidden and unconscious values, embodiment, the significance of emotions, etc. However, these themes were not elaborated by him in more detail. In his time Peavy focused rather on helping the client to navigate in working life and thus creating an equal relationship with the client based on mutual negotiations. The methods for the client to resolve his/her orientation to working life created platforms for communication.¹⁸

SocioDynamic approach has been perhaps one of the most well-known and taught an approach in counsellor training in the last two decades. However, the training team of EDECO concluded that Sociodynamic Counselling has very often been adopted mainly as the techniques (like a shallow use of life-space mapping). It has been shown often while Aspekt and his trainers, Lenka Cole and Lucie Sedláčková, have promoted the SocioDynamic Counselling in the Czech Republic. The training team also analyzed the previous training programme with Polish counsellors and their experiences with their clients.¹⁹ The analysis indicated challenges stemming from *challenging clients* (e.g. the client being shy or passive, not engaged in the counselling process, not capable of verbal communication or conceptual thinking), the *roles of the counsellors and the client* (e.g. who decides what is good counselling outcome), and themes related to *the interaction and communication* among the counsellor and the client (e.g. gaining trustful and candid atmosphere, the counsellor's challenges to understand what the client's real situation is).

To summarise, if the challenges in the current counselling practice are treated superficially by counselling "techniques" following challenges – that might become even pitfalls (also threatening adequate applying of Sociodynamic Counselling) - may be identified:

- When the counsellor decides instead of the clients what topic is important for the client.
- When a counsellor uses suggestive questions but not being aware of them, like: A client is facing troubles at her job. While visiting the counsellor, he gets questions like: Have you already tried to ask your manager?
- It is hard for the counsellors to acknowledge when they actually give advice to clients and to which extent they actually structure the client's thinking by their questions.
- To be able to slow down in the counselling and be able to be silent as a counsellor.
- When a counsellor who thinks that he is a constructivist counsellor says at the end of a session: What information have you obtained today? Or another one who after a mapping a counsellor says: The counselling went well, I advised him to...."
- Or when a counsellor is still thinking about possible proposals for clients, not able to reflect the process, only the content.

¹⁸ Peavy, R.V. (2004). SocioDynamic Counselling. A practical approach to meaning making. USA: Taos Institute.

¹⁹ Training programme carried out by Timo Spangar and Anita Keskinen.



Neuroplasticity

Neuroplasticity means the fact that life experiences of a person are being adapted within the central nervous system (CNS). This is happening throughout the whole life. Learning refers to changes of synapses or strengthening the synaptic connections between neurons²⁰. It is not true that the adult brain doesn't show changes based on experiences or learning processes.



source of figure: see footnote 12

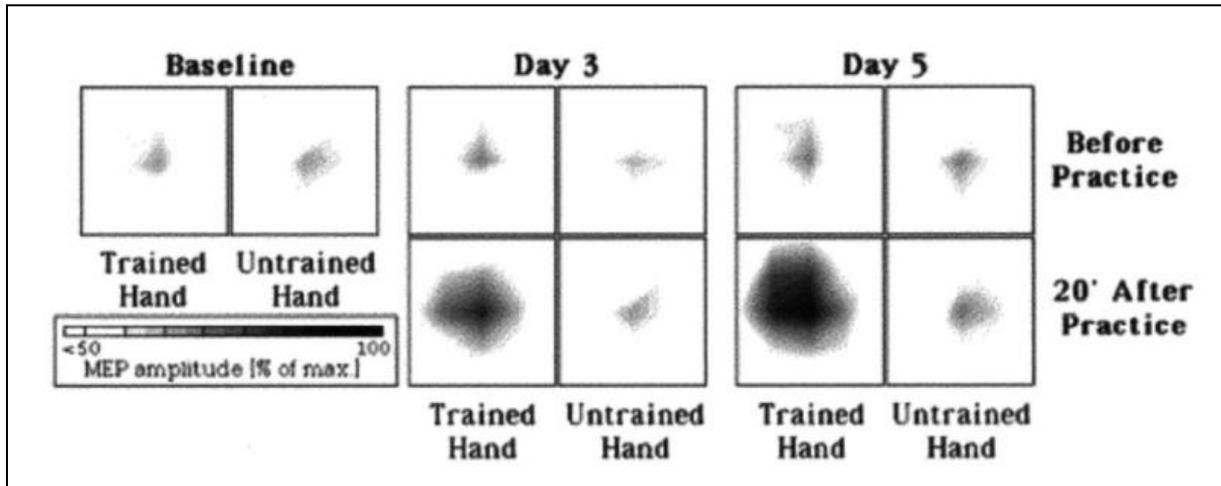
The so-called "Nürnberger Trichter"²¹ shows an old-fashioned concept of learning: Learning is not a passive process like new information is being put into the brain like drinking milk. Even in adults the brain remains flexible and able to establish a new connection. In certain structures of the brain, even new neurons may grow (f. e. in the Hippocampus). Eric Kandel won the Nobel prize for medicine and physiology for his studies about learning processes, that showed that these connections can establish even in the (simple) brain of adult animals (aplysia). A lot of scientific publications have shown the enormous flexibility of adult neurons in the human brain as well. This knowledge is not originally new, as scientists like Donald Hebb were describing such processes (LTP: long-term potentiation) in the 1950s.

It is a fact that learning can provoke brain changes even in the adult brain, as shown by Pascual-Leone in the context of piano playing²²: Within a few weeks, a measurable increase of "cortical output maps" occurred for the trained hand.

²⁰ Spitzer, M. (2007). Lernen. Gehirnforschung und die Schule des Lebens. Heidelberg: Elsevier.

²¹ PUBLIC DOMAIN https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Nuremberg_Funnel_-_ad_stamp_1910.jpg

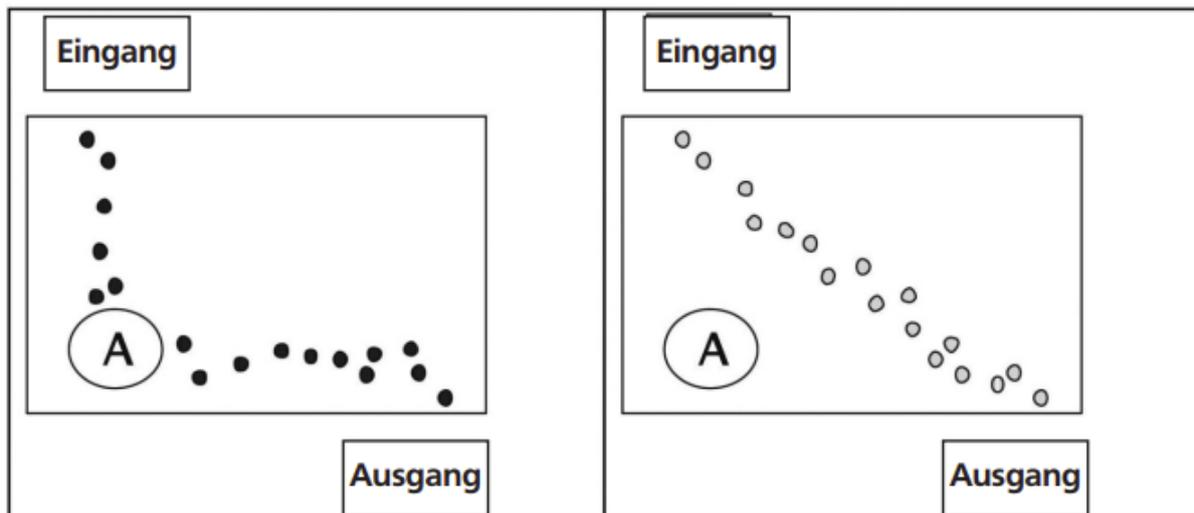
²² Figure from: Pascual Leone, A. (2001). The brain that plays music is changed by it. Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences, 930, 315-329.



source of figure: see footnote 13

It is a key element for the EDECO training to consider the effects of mental training and that the adult brain is flexible. Practically all professional sportsmen use mental training, meaning the pure imagination of activities: not doing practically, but imagining the movements mentally has its fixed place in professional sports. Pianist Artur Rubinstein said, that "mental rehearsal" is a good way to reduce practicing at the piano.

This can be compared with establishing new paths in a snow-field²³.



source of figure: see footnote 14

If we stay within the common paths (left), it is easier for walking, but we cant make new learning experiences. If we try the shorter alternate route (right), it will be demanding at the beginning, but with the effort, we are making new experiences that will help us in the future. The factor TIME is

²³ Abbildung aus: Benesch, M. (2011). Die Psychologie des Dialogs. Wien: Facultas.



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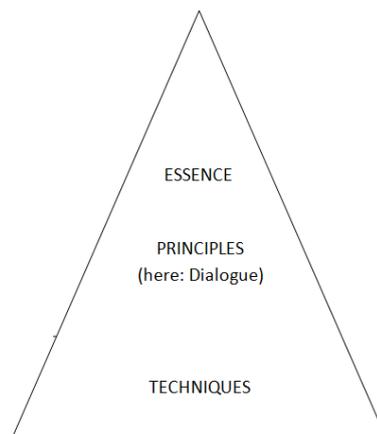


important (in the whole EDECO project): Establishing new paths takes time, therefore the training was planned to happen for a time span of about one year, including virtual meetings not to lose track. New procedures mostly need time to build up, and then to become an integral part of the person's mindset. The Watzlawick-paradox of "Be spontaneous!" is mentioned somewhere else in this handbook: You can't be spontaneous when ordered to do so, and you can't establish new procedures, or even insights when ordered to do so.



Dialogue sensu David Bohm and William Isaacs

The term "dialogue" as used within this project is more a technical term than a term of everyday language. Within the last decades, a huge amount of literature has been published, inspired by US-american physicist David Bohm. Dialogue is a communication approach with defined rules and is meant as a kind of interdisciplinary approach, and its main purpose is to reveal hidden truth in people's minds. Our thinking is a thinking in so-called Mental Models, or prejudices (but without the negative connotation this word usually has), as we have to categorize our perceived information of which most does not reach our active, conscious mind. Dialogical learning means the learning of (new) insights, it does not mean learning processes we usually have within our schooling system. The US-american author and inventor of the term "organizational learning", Peter Senge, provides the following scheme.



Technique means: What are we doing

The principle means: What are the guiding thoughts/insights

Essence means: State of common being together

Senge wants to make clear that techniques can be learned by a group, f. e. through practical exercises. Principles have to be understood – that's a "higher", more abstract level that can't be reached that easy. And the essence is a certain state of mutuality that can't be learned nor reached by force, a state that might be reached based on the lower steps. Essence is a state difficult to describe. Examples can be illustrated by looking at a philharmonic orchestra or a successful sports team, where you find this "team-spirit", where everybody knows what to do, in harmony with all the others. It "happens", and the word spirit refers to something abstract, that is between the team members but cannot be touched. At the level of techniques, the team members can learn to make music or to play with the ball together. At the level of principles the team members can develop insights like "we have to do compromises", and if a kind of "team spirit" develops, everybody knows what to do to reach better results than the individuum. With the dialogue sensu Bohm it's similar: The dialogical techniques, which can be trained, should lead to certain principles (like: it is not important to "win" a

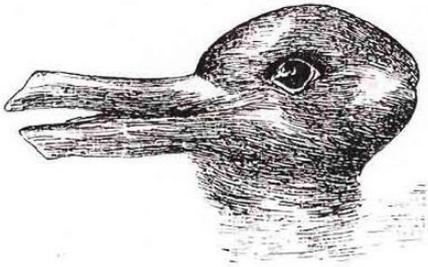


discussion - important is to share diverse views and, attitudes so that something mutual can arise), and in the end, it could come to a certain "dialogical spirit" among the participants.

In the EDECO project, the dialogical techniques and principles were used for mutual learning processes. In the literature, there are a couple of described techniques and principles, like (see: Martina & Johannes Hartkemeyer, William Isaacs, and others):

- Create a “safe space”—a space where it is safe to reveal our deep truths.
- Adopt the stance of a learner – We are learning individuals and therefore should never lose our curiosity and motivation to gain new insights and make new experiences.
- Radical respect – respect is more active than tolerance and refers to the motivation to watch the world from the perspective of other persons.
- Openness—I am willing to bring openness for new ideas and other perspectives, and be open to questioning my personal beliefs as well as society’s belief systems.
- Speak from the heart—I speak, truly, about what is really important to me and not to theorize or to make a “good” impression.
- Listen deeply—I listen to the other person with empathic openness. Listening deeply is an active process.
- Slow down— to become aware of what is happening in my inner world, to see what are my reactions and what may be the reason for my, maybe very emotional, reactions.
- Suspend assumptions and certainties— it should be possible to observe own beliefs and prejudices. We observe them from an outer perspective to gain a helpful personal distance.
- Embrace the paradox of differences— I become aware that we don’t live in a world of “black and white”. From this perspective very seldomly there is a clear truth or non-truth – it depends on the perspective of the viewer.
- Observe the observer— I am observing my own feelings and thoughts, as “a thought observed changes”.

In the context of the EDECO project, it is important to consider a direct interaction of cognitions and body sensations (embodiment). Therefore a lot of exercises and reflections referred to this interdependence (see f. e.: somatograms). Building, resp. strengthening a connection between body and mind should support the wanted processes in a counselors mindset, namely (among others) to address the "Self" (see: Extension Memory explained with the PSI-theory).



An extremely important distinction made by David Bohm is between "thinking" and "thought", and "feeling" and "felt". When we are thinking or feeling, there are two main processes: Bottom-up and Top-down. Bottom-up means the direction from pure stimuli (visual, auditive, ...) up to the brain (cognitions), Top-down means the direction from the brain down to the "pure" body level. An observer can perceive the head of a rabbit or the head of a bird, but the stimuli (from bottom-up) are always the same, "just" the cognitions/interpretations (from top-down) are changing.

According to David Bohm THINKING is the present process, happening more or less automatized, that leads to THOUGHTS. Thoughts are the products of the thinking processes. The RABBIT or the BIRD are the products of these quick processes. Bohm: "We have the idea that after we have been thinking something, it just evaporates". Somewhere these bottom-up and top-down processes meet and mix.

The same is valid for FEELING and FELTS. FEELING is more the actual, automatized process, FELT the "emotional product". When you are listening to your national anthem, you may feel something like proud joy, US-Americans usually feel the urge to stand up and put their hand over their heart,... FELT is a kind of emotional product out of automatized processes and is more or less unaware. But we have the ability to get more aware of these processes (recognize these THOUGHTS and FELTS) and to "treat" them. DIALOGUE sensu David Bohm aims to develop this awareness. "FELTS are stored FEELINGS, THOUGHTS are stored THINKINGS".

Why is it important to get better aware of Felts and Thoughts? Because they influence our cognitions, feelings, and behaviour in a significant way. If we are better aware of them, we gain flexibility in our (professional) life.

To illustrate this, we can f. e. take a look at Marvin Minsky's idea of the investment principle²⁴, which states, that our oldest ideas have a kind of advantage over the ideas that come later. The earlier we learn a skill, the more methods we can acquire for using it. Each new idea must then compete against the larger mass of skills the old ideas have accumulated. Minsky refers to the concept of evolution: Fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds, mammals, bats - they all contain their brains inside their heads. Once established (this pattern of centralizing so many functions in the head), many aspects of anatomy depended on it, despite other concepts would have served at least as well (for example for a woodpecker: a bird that had to develop special protection systems for its brain, otherwise it would knock itself out!). This metaphoric view could provide an explanation why thoughts remain somehow stable and get automatized. "To change a single detail of that code would cause so many proteins to get tangled up that not a single cell could live" (a genetic code that "builds" the brain inside the head).

²⁴ see: footnote 2



Practical considerations

The role of verbal language

Verbal language is an extremely important means of internal and external communication. Internal means that we usually use a mix of images and words when we anticipate something, reflect, prepare for communication, etc. In the EDECO-project language had a significant part, and this importance can be shown easily when we use the so-called surface- and deep structure from linguistic concepts (Noam Chomsky). The surface structure is what we can observe with our eyes (if we write down what we are hearing), it is the sentence itself. The deep structure needs a kind of abstract analysis, as we have to think "Why is the person saying exactly this sentence, using these words, using this structure". There are hidden processes, and it can be very supporting and helpful to get clearness about these hidden processes when reflecting, building hypotheses, etc.

The idea is that counselors working on their inner state should get aware of and analyze these hidden structures. Why? First, it allows access to inner, often unaware, psychological structures that can be revealing, and second, the conscious use of certain verbal patterns supports the process of synchronization between the inner states of counselor and client.

Well-known and often described²⁵ are the following hidden structures that can help to reveal elements to get a better understanding of what's happening. The idea is that when analyzing what we or the client is saying, we can gain more direct access to our hidden thinking processes; see the following example:

Counselor: "The behavior of the client always makes me angry". Here we have two elements that need a deeper look at: a) generalization: always. Is it really "always"? When we analyze it deeper, we should be able to identify specific situations, and looking at these should lead to a deeper understanding; b) deletion: which behavior? It is not his "behavior" as a whole. It's part of his behavior, and maybe even just in some context. Our everyday language is - compared to a scientific, well-defined language - often very unclear, unspecific, and therefore should be considered professionally.

In the EDECO project, we have a look at these verbal elements from the position of "synchronizing the inner states of client and counselor", as the technical view of communication models, like the 4-ears-model by Schulz von Thun, are, from our view, not sufficient enough. They are too complicated, and we as humans are not able to keep the overview²⁶ as the communication-relevant elements are too high in number and interactions. We follow a more dialogue-based approach that focuses more on the things "that happen between people" (according to Martin Buber) and should

²⁵ see f. e.: Richard Bandler & John Grinder (2011). *Metamodell der Sprache und Psychotherapie*. Paderborn: Junfermann.

²⁶ there is a lot of literature about that, see f. e.: Maja Storch & Wolfgang Tschacher (2015). *Embodied communication*. Göttingen: Hogrefe.



be viewed from a more philosophical perspective²⁷ (and see the dialogue-section in this handbook where the terms observe, consider, become aware of are mentioned).

Language patterns and Synchronization

Experiencing one's inner state is something extremely complex, as most of the stimuli we feel are happening on a sub- or unconscious level. It is the opposite of a static process, it is an extremely dynamic process. That's one of the reasons why the EDECO project-based so much on the PSI-theory as this is a dynamic approach, in which the so-called "self" as part of the Extension Memory plays a major role.

Languages are a means to experience a stronger Innerfocussing. We can distinguish between a normal state and a state of intensified inner focussing²⁸. In the normal state our attention is aiming to our external world, and it is more analytical. The attention is broad, and we talk more ABOUT our experiences using our language in a more objective kind. The state of intensified inner focussing is different, as our attention is aiming at our inner world. We talk not so much about our experience, we are re-experiencing and use our language more in a subjective kind ("re-experiencing" and not so much talking about the experience) - it is a kind of making the experience again.

This distinction is important, as in a state of inner focussing we are closer to our emotions, it is not so much an "either-or", but an "as-well-as"-thinking (not so much serial, but parallel thinking). One of our hypotheses is, that when we are more in the intensified inner focussing, that can be supported by adequate language patterns, we can connect better to our self (Extension Memory sensu Kuhl) and gain different experiences. These are experiences that are not reachable so much by our analytical mind.

Our mind is working all the time, but we are not aware of most of the content. A state of strong inner focussing is a state of high control - it is NOT a state of losing control, as we are concentrated on a smaller field (compare with the FLOW sensu Csikszentmihalyi). In Flow our awareness is well ordered, as our thinking, intentions, feelings, all our senses are aiming the same.

We think that if we support the counselors as well as the client's movement to a better inner focussing (along with some other appropriate variables mentioned in this handbook), we can reach a supportive state of dialogical being together, or, in other words, a synchronization of the inner-states. This could work as a kind of basis also for the more analytical part of the counselling process. Here there are some examples of how we can support to reach such a state of better inner focusing:

- away from the objective language towards a more subjective, narrative language

²⁷ see f. e.: Kenneth Paul Kramer & Robert C. Morgan (2019). Martin Bubers Dialogue: Discovering who we really are. Eugene (Oregon): Cascade Books.

²⁸ see: Manfred Prior (2019). Hypnosepaket. 3 Seminare mit Demonstrationen und Übungen. ohne Ort: Therapie-Film.



- talk more in the present-, not so much in the past-tense
- use all senses, keep it colourful
- open talk ("vague language" - see below)
- reduced tempo in the conversation
- lead in small steps to the inner experience

Vague language (sensu Milton Erickson) uses words and phrases that are general and broad so that we have a maximum of freedom to feed our expressions with our own experiences. For example, when asking "do you feel the warmth of the water", the person's mind probably will start to focus on temperature, in certain degrees, as the underlying assumption of this question is that the water is warm. If our experience is connected to swimming in a cold mountain lake, this question would lead to a kind of confusion, that might lead the person's inner focus away from the experience. When - on the other hand - asking "do you feel the temperature of the water", the person is free to think about any "water experience", as water must have a certain temperature, might it be warm, neutral, or cold. This might help the person to stay focused on the experience he has in his mind.

Our language is highly metaphorical. Most people build a lot of inner images, pictures, and we are used to taking certain images that are very fantastic, and not really fitting with our analytical way of thinking. We are stepping into the "narrative" world, that can be extremely abstract, or, in some way, non-realistic. Douglas Hofstadter gives an example²⁹ of the linguistic path from the term "mother" to the term "mother of democracy" ("Greece"), which is extremely abstract but nevertheless understandable from a certain age.

When we are using a certain language pattern, of which the vague language is just one of many examples, the probability of reaching a state of synchronization (clients and counselors inner-state) is higher³⁰, and this is an experience probably most (if not all) hypnotists would share. Without gaining a state of interpersonal balance and synchronization, we hardly get access to the client's self, and probably the most important means to get there is language and the use of a variety of language patterns.

²⁹ Douglas Hofstadter (2018). Die Analogie: Das Herz des Denkens. Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta.

³⁰ Wolfgang Tschacher & Maja Storch (2017). Embodiment: Die Wechselwirkung von Körper und Psyche verstehen und nutzen. Göttingen: Hogrefe.



The role of body language

A lot has been told and was written about body language and its role in human communication. In the EDECO project, we consider it from the point of synchronization, as body language can cover a significant part of this process. We all have a natural sense of the importance of body language. If you observe an adult approaching a let's say 4 years old child, most people will make themselves smaller (they bend down), will slow down their movements, and the tonation of their voice will rise up, etc. In other words: they make themselves more similar on a somatic level.

These programs are burnt deeply into our minds, so it is not surprising that such factors keep their influence on us as adults. We are trained to decode body-language signals on a mostly unconscious level and to interpret them in a given context. And, of course, we can get trained to use these signals for manipulating people in the bad sense of the word. But if we take the dialogical approach sensu Bohm, Buber, and others seriously, we would not even think to manipulate people for our own goals. The dialogical approach (for a counselor) is always for the benefit of the client.

Body language plays a huge role in building up a certain atmosphere of trust and getting to know each other. There is a lot of literature about this topic, which we refer to. Just to make clear: We as counselors should never underestimate the significance of body language for the work with clients.

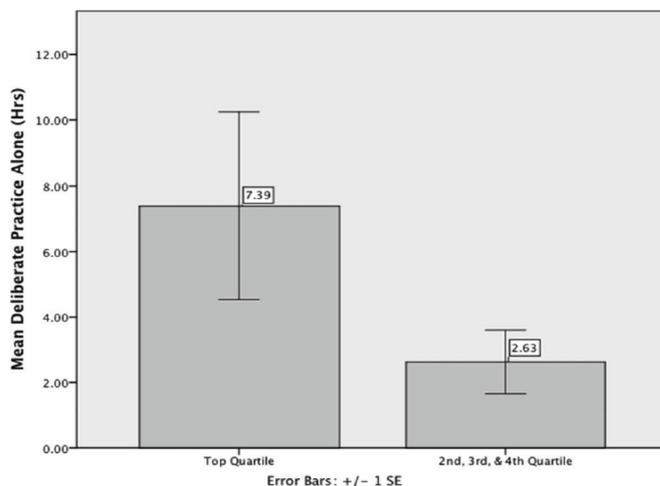


Importance of spending time to improve counselors skills

In EDECO we used two sources of evidence: scientific theories and studies, on the one hand, practical evidence from the work as counselors on the other, and in our view even case examples should not be ignored as long as we put them in a certain frame with all its weakness and pitfalls (which is true for statistical evidence derived from huge studies as well). But one factor is evident, and that's probably true for all fields of human competence: If trainees are not willing to invest time and energy, there hardly will be an improvement. David Bohm impressed the principle of the STANCE OF A LEARNER, meaning that we never should stop learning. A counselor should spot every encounter with a client as a chance to improve, to develop, or - as Bohm said - "there is no space anymore in a filled glass": If we think that we have learned enough, there is no space for further development, and we hardly will be good counselors, trainers, teachers, etc.

A study by Chow et al. (2015) deals with the question, what factors are that make a psychotherapist effective. "Therapist characteristics (e. g., years of experience, gender, age, profession, highest qualification, caseload, degree of theoretical integration) did not significantly predict client-reported outcomes. Consistent with the literature on expertise and expert performance the amount of time spent targeted at improving therapeutic skills was a significant predictor of client outcomes" (Chow et al., 2015, p. 337).

See the following figure³¹: The top quartile group of therapists invested about 2.8 times more time to DELIBERATE PRACTICE alone in a typical work week than did the rest of the therapists. Deliberate practice is defined as "individualized training activities especially designed ... to improve specific aspects of an individuals performance through repetition and successive refinement".



³¹ Daryl I. Chow & Scott D. Miller (2015). The role of deliberate practice in the development of highly effective psychotherapists. *Psychotherapy*, 52(3), 337-345.



Radar -assessing the development of Inner State

To address the challenging task of assessing the development of Inner State we developed an effort to build an easy-to-use, concrete, and visual tool for counsellors. As an example, and an inspiration there were the experiences of Employment Radar³². The tool is called “Radar” visually creating a 360-degree perspective “wiping” like radar over the landscape along the key dimensions. The Radar has as a method a capacity of crystallizing complex phenomena into relatively few dimensions and giving a holistic view. The trainer team identified 9 dimensions after a series of draft versions. The final Radar also included the “wild card”, left to be defined freely by the participants of the training.

The EDECO Radar dimensions

The Radar dimensions for EDECO training were formulated as follows:

- a. I understand the significance of my inner state.
- b. I understand that my inner state influences my counselling.
- c. I understand that my counselling practice influences my inner state.
- d. I am active in developing my inner state.
- e. I understand the significance of silence in my own life and in my work with clients.
- f. I understand the significance of authentic dialogue.
- g. I feel that connecting to deeper parts of myself/subconscious supports my inner state.
- h. While being open to others, and my clients I am capable of setting the boundaries between me and others.

We recommend counsellors to do their own Radar repeatedly which may help them watch their development.

³² The Employment Radar is 360 degree self-assessment tool for jobseekers used in Finnish Public Employment Services. It allows the client to evaluate his/her job search readiness on 8 dimensions. The 9th dimension is a “wild card” where the jobseeker can express other factors affecting the situation.

Spangar, T., Arnkil, R., Keskinen, Vanhalakka-Ruoho, M., Heikkilä, H. Pitkänen, S. (2013). Making counselling process transparent. Employment radar as a new prototype for monitoring and assessing guidance services with Finnish Public Employment Services. Publications of Ministry of the Economy and Employment. (In Finnish). Publications of Ministry of Labour and the Economy,32/2013



Benefits of a learning-diary

As was described above the individual learning process may be encouraged by continuous regular self-reflection activity. This activity brings many benefits, e.g.

- It is a way how to focus attention on the conscious level and aims really on learning.
- It is a great tool for self-direction,
- The learner may watch the progress – she/he can consider how much he really uses the new knowledge, is she/he using it as much as possible or is there something more that can be done to make the implementation easy-going.
- The learner may reconsider his/her learning/training aims.

We may recommend using the following questions or activities on regular basis. And it is highly recommended to write your answer:

- i. What were the most important learning points for me today?
- j. I surprised myself when/how/because I...
- k. My “aha” moments today were:
- l. How can I use this in my professional life?
- m. What can I use in my private life?
- n. The hardest for me was:
- o. The easiest for me was:
- p. What do I have to train much more?
- q. I feel that I failed today in: What did I learn from my failures?
- r. I feel that I succeeded today in:.... What did I learn from my successes?
- s. Draw a sketch about today.



Golf – example of meeting the learner on an emotional level

From the very beginning of EDECO training reaching the participant's inner state going beyond rational and analytical thinking and reaching the emotional and bodily experience was set as a key principle in creating the training programme. One of the methods was trying out to play golf. It was assumed that the participants would probably have not played golf before. Thus, practising golf would lead them to a situation where they had to face something unfamiliar, something new to them and they would feel the situation as ambiguous as well as something that cannot be managed only on a rational level. Emotions would inevitably come into play.

Why golf?

Golf is known as a sport that is a very mental game where psychological factors and the player's "inner state" is a finally decisive factor in playing it successfully. Thus, in golf training, today psychological coaching has become more and more important. However, also in golf, there is a tension between analytical, rational vs more psychologically oriented ways of practicing the game. The analytical and rational approach emphasizes golf as a set of techniques that the golfer must keep in mind and practice in a systematic way. The psychological approach puts focus rather on the processes going on in the player's mind and the approach is holistic.

The golf psychologist Rotella³³ describes the mindset good golfers have to adopt: "You have to give up things that are dear to you: your conscious brain, your desire to control everything you're doing, your desire to make things happen instead of letting them happen" (ibid., ps. 74). This is especially difficult for educated persons who are used to developing "higher-order thinking skills" (analysis, evaluation, synthesis) (ibid., p.68). Practicing golf in EDECO training aimed at a personalized experience of holistic mindset.

Participants' experiences

In all, the participants felt pleasantly surprised by the exercise. 80 % of them felt afterward, that they could try golf in their everyday life in the future. Most importantly, they felt that they really learned to do golf although they did not have earlier experience of it. They managed to go into a relaxed mental mood with relatively short coaching by the golf coaches they managed to hit the ball.

The most important lesson by the golf practice was that the participants overcame their expectations of golf as a technically challenging sport, learnt to relax and found the connection with their bodily reactions. The golf experience became an important part of the training and an introduction to the

³³ Rotella, B. (2012). *The unstoppable golfer. Trust your short game, achieve greatness.* London.



themes of the training: In the final feedback of the training the participants gave several comments on it:

- ... golf training was a very unusual incorporation of movement and body sensitivity into counselling context...
- ... I have nice memories of golf. I cleared my mind during it and concentrated only on my thinking and body, which helped the thought process.
- For me the golf activity was the best one - I experienced AHA moments. It included work with a body, with a mind, I found the best connection with the topic of Inner state. The discussion during the walk to the golf place was also very good - preparing (framing) for the golf activity.
- Yes, definitely. Golf was a great exercise for me, it worked as a metaphor for my learning process. I think it also helped me to better know myself, what I like more (fast energetic or slow more precise etc.)

Based on our „golf experience“ we may encourage counsellors to try a kind like a Golf activity and try to reflect it in a similar sense. You can find some questions for your own reflection in the part of Appendix of this Handbook. Golf was chosen also due to practical reasons, but it would be possible to choose any other adequate technique, like archery, etc.



Training and developing Inner-State factors

In this section you find a list of "trained" factors, that should be part of an "inner-state"-training curriculum. These trained factors can be considered exemplary and be adopted to the needs of a specific target group.

Slowing Down / Relaxation / HRV

The speeding up in our modern world is an often discussed fact. Digitalization, globalization, speeding up in market cycles, etc. have been discussed permanently, accompanied by an extreme growth of information that overburdens the individual. Some authors claim that just in the 20th-century mankind experienced a multiplication of productivity of around 50 times.

The dialogical approach demands slowing down, for many reasons. For example, slowing down supports the process of reflecting own thoughts and thoughts of others, it supports the process of suspending (meaning looking at own thoughts and examine them like a kind of scientist, and so gaining new insights), and it enables us to listen deeper to what our partners are saying.

Suspending assumptions and examining them is one of the core competencies of a counselor as seen in the EDECO project. As most of our inner processes happen more or less, or completely, unconscious, thoughts and feelings can be seen as an - at least partly - independent process that is not being guided by the "I". If a part of the body is moving, we can realize that, especially when we put our focus on that. According to David Bohm, these considerations can be put to our inner processes of thinking and feeling as well (to a certain degree; but the question if something that happened to us can remain completely unconscious is being discussed controversially. See for example the work of US-american psychologist Elizabeth Loftus). While the body is proprioceptive, the mind is not, and we must and can learn to observe our thinking processes. David Bohm writes, that it should be possible to better learn to observe our inner (thinking) processes in a similar way as we can do with our body sensations from internal and external stimuli, and this can happen by putting attention consciously to it. This needs slowing down and often relaxation techniques, as our emotions easily interfere with such intentions. Important to note is, that we should NOT suppress our (negative) emotions, but to observe these and learn to draw our conclusions out of such processes, and transform them into something positive, creative.

Learnable methods of relaxation should be appropriate to support counselors ability to undergo the mentioned processes, as they inherently support an inner focus: hypnosis, for example, is an approach completely aimed at inner focussing, as are self-relaxation techniques in general. Relaxation techniques served mainly two purposes in the EDECO-project:

- a) support inner focussing and the attached processes as described here
- b) support mental health and stress-/burnout prophylaxe



A broad variety of scientific proof about the long-term benefits of self-relaxation- and self-relief-techniques has been given. Prior et al.³⁴ for example showed that the higher the subjective stress level, the higher the risk of premature death.

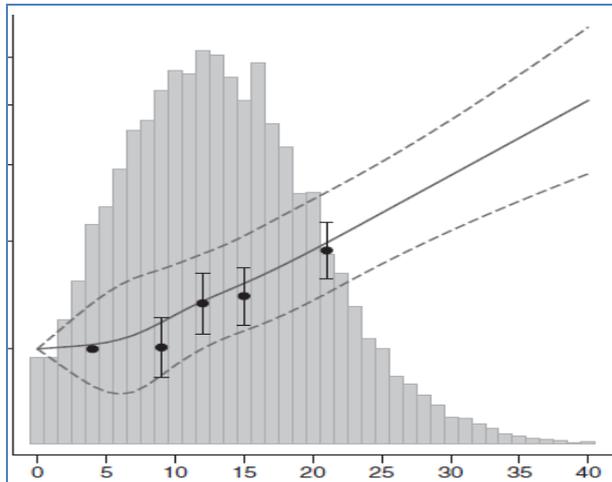


Figure from: Prior et al. (2017)

But, and that's an important covariate, there seems to be a significant difference in HOW we personally think about stress. Jamieson et al.³⁵ showed in a study conducted with around 29.000 people, that the way HOW we think about stress has a measurable effect. People who think that the amount of stress they experience has a strong (harmful) effect on their health has a higher risk of premature death. The effect is not strong, but considerable (around 3 versus around 5 deaths per 100).

Additionally, it seems to be very important if we judge the presence of stress positively or negatively. When we program ourselves with thoughts like "I feel the symptoms of stress (like: heart-beat increased), but no problem: it provides the body better with oxygen than", the somatic consequences were healthier compared to the judgments like "I am ignoring the stress". The first leads to vasodilation, a phenomenon tried to reach with stress-relief-approaches like autogenous training.

In a state of relaxation we see a synchronization of heart-beat and breathing: when breathing in we have a bit higher heart-beat than when breathing out (this phenomenon is well known and called respiratory sinusarrhythmia). In the project, we showed some techniques that might support the heart-rate-variability (HRV)(measured with an external device provided by a trainer). The HRV is characterized by the mentioned synchronization that can be shown by measuring the pulse rate.

³⁴ Prior et al. (2016). The association between perceived stress and mortality among people with multimorbidity: A prospective population-based cohort study. *American Journal of Epidemiology*, 184(3), 199-210.

³⁵ Jamieson et al. (2012). Mind over matter: reappraising arousal improves cardiovascular and cognitive responses to stress. *Journal of Experimental Psychology*, 141(3), 417-422.



Such techniques are used also in military armies, like the US army. A study conducted by Ginsberg et al.³⁶ with soldiers suffering from posttraumatic stress disorder showed that such synchronization processes can be trained and lead to a better balance over time.

³⁶ Ginsberg et al. (2010). Cardiac coherence and posttraumatic stress disorder in combat veterans. *Alternative Therapies*, 16(4), 52-60.



Ambiguity-Tolerance

Tolerance of ambiguity means the ability of a person to (positively) process ambiguous, also: opposing, information (it is a generalization of ambivalence). We consider this one of the most important abilities, and especially for counselors.

The official motto of the EDECO project "Dialogical mind goes beyond any technique" refers a lot to the ideas of David Bohm, Peter Senge, William Isaacs (and Martin Buber), as for example the concept of Personal Mastery sensu Senge means a very important element for every counselor: the ability to coach yourself and develop personal strengths. As Senge writes: those who reach a high level of personal mastery, have the ability to consequently reach his aims, he is approaching life like an artist who is creating something new - such a person can do this, as he reacts openly to new happenings and never stops learning.

One of these significant abilities is tolerance of ambiguity, as we as humans are almost all the time confronted with ambiguous stimuli we have to process that is difficult. People with a high ambiguity-intolerance react with a higher level of indisposition to contradictory stimuli than people with a high ambiguity tolerance. But, and that's something important to consider: dealing positively and constructive with contradictory information, that is absolutely normal and common in our life as counselors, gives a lot of opportunities for learning and self-development. In other words: gives opportunities to get "better" as counselors. As counsellors, we must avoid the "black-and-white"-thinking, as they easily lead to prejudices and bad mental models, that would decrease our potential to think creative paths and solutions.

An image that was used in the project to deal with this topic was the push-me-pull-you created by British author Hugh Lofting. This has two reasons: first, as humans, our thinking mostly is characterized by images, and second, when people got used to a certain image, showing it itself activates memories, stories, feelings, etc. that can be used in a creative way.

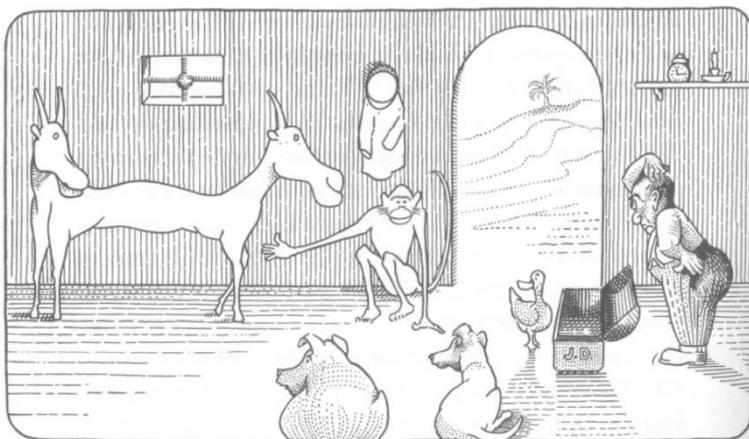


Figure from: Hugh Lofting (1995). Dr Dolittle und seine Tiere. Hamburg: Dressler.



Within the PSI-theory the ability to deal with contradictory information is placed in the Extension Memory (EM). The EM processes information mainly parallelly as it is not focused on details (like its antagonist, the Object-recognition), and therefore important for - among many others - the way how people deal with ambiguities. We think that this ability to deal with contradictory information is one of the most important competencies for a counselor, and therefore put a lot of time and training energy to support participants in strengthening their Self, which is, in Kuhl's PSI-theory, "placed" in the EM³⁷. The Self is able to process information in a parallel way (and does not - like the Object recognition - work in a serial way). This means, for example, that a well-developed Self is able to find decisions that are not based on the "either-or"-principle (no "black-and-white"-thinking). It follows the multiple constraint satisfaction, that is a precondition for the integration of different, contradictory information. It should be considered that a well-developed self is NOT staying in a kind of comfort zone where everything is easygoing - the opposite is true. Integrative competence shows when the counselor is able to confront himself with unpleasant, or even dangerous, stimuli (using the Object recognition system) and therefore can proceed and integrate that information into the "whole" life experience and use it for something good.

Thinking/Thought - Feeling/Felt

To be aware of what is going on in our inner state, we can use David Bohm's theory for the identification of interconnections of thought and feelings.

We often perceive thought as something given, something that exists independently of ourselves. A counsellor who knows how to work with her thoughts can influence her inner state factors like e.g. inner peace, deep respect to her client (in other words – working with her prejudices), vulnerability.

When a counsellor takes thought as independent, she is usually not aware of the fact that she can change it and therefore can adjust her inner state towards being more dialogical.

A counsellor needs to be aware that thoughts and feelings are interconnected. To change an emotion, it can be sufficient to change the thought and to change the thought, it can be sufficient to change the emotion.

The thought and feeling change processes are not as easy to master. It is because the thought lacks proprioception. Proprioception is an awareness of its own movement. The thought doesn't know that it moves (unlike us when moving our hand). Therefore we perceive the thought as something existing independently of us and the possibility to change doesn't even occur to us. What we do not acknowledge, we cannot do anything about.

A counsellor needs to be aware of having the thought and make the hidden patterns obvious to work with her inner state.

³⁷ Attention: We should not fall into the trap of reification. There is no "place" where we find an object like the "self", but we consciously use a kind of everyday language as this makes it easier to transport the main ideas and thoughts that build the base of the training.



Meeting the blind spot

Thinking means using Mental Models. Mental Models are a) categorizing the information, and b) reducing the enormous amount of stimuli we perceive, meaning: we must (!), we are forced to fade out information and most are not (consciously) aware of that. Maturana and Varela³⁸ use a well-known example to show this mental phenomenon that's happening on a clearly somatic basis all the time: the blind spot experiment.



If we close the left eye, fix the cross with the right eye, and keep a certain distance to the figure, the dot will disappear completely. That's happening as the projection of the dot meets that part of the retina where the visual nerve is leaving the eye. But the interesting fact is this: we do not feel that blind spot in our vision, as our mind is constructing a perception around that "not perceiving". We are not perceiving that we are not perceiving!

What is happening here on a somatic level, is happening all the time in our mind: we are not aware that we are not aware, and that we construct our world in an extremely subjective way. There are external stimuli, and there is our inner world of subjective interpretation³⁹. This inner world is influenced by a lot of filters (cultural, somatic, biographical, social, etc.).

Due to didactical reasons, it might be helpful to show videos and other concrete, colourful material to deepen the transfer of concepts and ideas. An example is given here: the video about the cargo cult:

³⁸ Humberto Maturana & Francisco Varela (1984). *Der Baum der Erkenntnis*. Bern: Scherz Verlag.

³⁹ see f. e. the three world theory of Karl Popper



Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dVZ9bPRTiIA>

During WW II the Americans built air bases on Melanesian islands, where the native populations never saw airplanes before. For them, it was like a miracle: big machines delivering goods from the sky. So certain beliefs aroused, a kind of "myth-dream". The indigenous societies knew a so-called "big-man" political system, which was characterized by exchanging gifts. The local people developed a belief that the foreigners were bringing gifts from their deceased ancestors, or that they have stolen these gifts from them (different cargo-cult-beliefs have been described).

The point is: On an individual as well as a societal level, we are not aware of so many beliefs, mental models, biases, etc., that form our perceptions and therefore our convictions. Individually as well as societally we have our blind spots we usually are not aware of!

For the inner state of a counselor this is a highly important point that must be reflected and questioned deeply. Dangerous are those mental models we are not aware of, and the sources for bias are numerous. In psychological science, there is the effect of "bias blind spot" well known. It is the tendency of an individual to be convinced of not being vulnerable to bias. In other people, we easily spot a perception bias, but for ourselves, that's not the case.

There is a special spirit when we perceive how we perceive - when we realize that there's a blind spot in our visual field, despite we never have noticed that blind spot, as our mind was constructing something we never have been aware of!



Figure from: Maturana & Varela (1984)

Giving a structure: Internalizing concepts of the PSI-theory

For a trainings-program like that developed in the EDECO project, it is important to provide some structure that supports people to understand and internalize the theories, concepts, and examples. Perceiving on an analytical level is one thing; to get it on a level, that is closer to "feeling" the necessity or relevance is another. When we are dealing with counselors competencies that have to be "felt" (the analytical mind is not enough), we have the problem of the cognitions interfering with our emotions (or: body-based feelings, feelings, etc. - the terms you find in the literature are not consistent).

The US-american film theorist Noel Burch suggested these well know four stages of competence, that are extremely relevant in this context:

- Unconscious incompetence
- conscious incompetence
- conscious competence
- unconscious competence

One of the training aims is to make people aware of what they don't know and reach a status of doing well despite it is not in the focus anymore (unconscious competence), that is an extremely ambitious aim! Nevertheless, we as humans are used to it, as all our learning undergoes such a process. Even at the beginning of our lives, we are following this pattern: we are not aware that we are not able to walk. Then we do our first steps and are aware that we cant do it. In the end, we have learned it so



well that we are walking without even noticing that we are walking and that it was a very difficult process to reach this stadium of unconscious competence.

In a training, some material to support such steps should be provided, for example, the already described somatograms, or an exercise called "wonder-wheel"⁴⁰ developed by Julius Kuhl and Maja Storch. This comprehensive exercise should support people to communicate better with their Self, to better deal with contradictory feelings and cognitions, and to find creative solutions. It is a multilevel-step process that needs some effort and good-will but regularly shows good results in coaching-/counselling settings.

Another possibility to support creative processes is the use of role models, often "extreme" role models. For example, we used the life and work of Austrian psychiatrist Viktor Frankl, who survived some years in Nazi-concentration camps and was able to take his extreme experience and transform them into something good for the time after his imprisonment. The idea behind that is most of us will never make such extreme, deadly and harmful experiences, and therefore can take such people easily as a role-model for our (smaller) problems and aims; despite we don't want to build a hierarchy of severity of problems, but the idea is clear.

Vulnerability

Once we are in the learning process, we can experience being vulnerable, have a kind of anxiety to try something new. Or a counsellor can have not enough self-esteem. Or while being really open and honest to ourselves, we can discover something about herself/himself which surprises her/him, it could touch us, even hurt us. Counsellors on their development way may feel vulnerability in many stages and situations. Some of them expressed that they are not ready to face this situation. They feel the lack of self-esteem, are afraid of doing mistakes. These expressions lead us to a topic of vulnerability as a relevant topic to be considered which develops our inner state.

We have found the concept of Brene Brown useful. She is an American researcher, working in the field of social work. She works with terms as:

- Shame
- Perfect and imperfect
- Vulnerability
- Authenticity
- Creativity
- Courage.

⁴⁰ Maja Storch & Julius Kuhl (2017). Die Kraft aus dem Selbst. Sieben PsychoGyms für das Unbewusste. Bern: Hogrefe.



She says that in our culture we associate vulnerability with emotions we want to avoid such as fear, shame, and uncertainty. Yet we too often lose sight of the fact that vulnerability is also the birthplace of joy, belonging, creativity, authenticity, and love.

She offers another view on vulnerability. She considers it as a gift and a measure of courage.

Brown describes that people try to be perfect, trying to avoid shame, so they rather avoid mistakes, and their effort to be perfect could lead to paralyzation and anxiety. She recommends coming back to each other, to have a wholehearted life. Then we open our way to creativity and joy of life. More inspiration is to be found in her book called the book, called e.g. Gift of Imperfection.

The topic of vulnerability could be quite touching and challenging for us. That's why Brene Brown discusses some tools how to handle. And she finds as a very useful work of another American current researcher, Kirstin Neff. She devoted her career to self-compassion and related topics. She explains how self-compassion helps to well-being, proactivity, etc. We as counsellors are supposed to be compassionate to our clients. But as it is said, before we can be compassionated (feel with somebody) to our clients, we have to be self-compassioned with ourselves. It opens us a way to our feeling and empathy.

We suggest counsellors discover more about her research on the website. Neffs connects the topic of self-compassion with positive psychology and gives arguments why it is worthful to devote yourself.

ISEK – Inner State Reflexivity Tool

EDECO focuses on counsellors' sensitivity to what is taking place in their mental world, 'inner state', during the counselling process and in other spheres of their lives and how these factors affect them professionally and personally. The Inner-State Reflexivity -Tool (ISEK) was developed at the beginning of the training to help the counsellors to grow more sensitized to the key elements of their personal Inner State.

The importance of counsellor's self-reflexive processes

In EDECO training it was soon understood that there is a need for a systematic method to help the counsellors to develop their capability of observing the development of their inner state. ISEK-inner state *reflexivity* (emphasizing the focus in counselling to be as much in the counsellor's 'monitoring' of his/her inner state as helping the client solve his/her career concerns), and '*tool*' (indicating that there is a need for mediating process from the concept of 'inner state' to 'inner state counselling practice').



The concept of Inner State is a new perspective on practicing career counselling and requires persistent and systematic rehearsal. And it takes time to learn to identify counsellor's most important personal elements of the Inner State of each counsellor. It does not happen overnight. Furthermore, it is important to notice that the counsellor's Inner State, vary from one counselling process to another and according to the counsellor's "mood" or state of mind at the moment. It takes time to learn to tell the more sustainable elements from the more fluctuating ones.

ISEK was developed potentially to be used as a practical method also after EDECO training in a flexible manner and changing according to the counsellor's own Inner State developmental tasks.

Elements of ISEK

The ISEK method was developed by the trainers in reciprocal interaction with the participants. The ISEK in the form at the end of the training encouraged the participants to identify which element of their own Inner State is important for them and then reflect on it from various perspectives. After having given a name for their personal key Inner State factor they were asked to mark in a "circle of balance" where they were at the beginning of the training, during the training, and where they think they will be at the end of the process. They were asked to assess how important they see the named Inner State factor, draw a drawing on it and analyze the drawing. After the drawing, they were encouraged to "walk-around" it and reflect on it as well as share their ideas with their colleagues. The ISEK provided also a colour spectrum where the participants could place the Inner State factor as well position it in the list of bipolar scales of adjectives. The somatogram method was used as a method of bridging the mind (related to the factor) with its "location" in the body. Self-reflections were also enhanced by spontaneous reactions triggered by music.

ISEK and its potential development

ISEK as a method became an important method whereby the participants could reflect the development of their Inner State. As a "counselling method" ISEK, when introduced to a real counselling process with the client, demonstrates what counselling methods with a focus on the counsellor's Inner State may look. It is important that they help the counsellors to work at the same time on an emotional level, aware of their embodiment process, and cognitive level. The methods may use a variety of stimuli: visual, scaling, metaphor, embodiment methods, music, etc. Perhaps most importantly, there is no limitation to any single perspective.

The ISEK developed in EDECO may be seen as a first step in the counsellor Inner State self-reflexion methods. The development should be encouraged further to develop it at the individual counsellor level and vary according to each counselling process.



SocioDynamic Case Examples as a tool for reflection

In SocioDynamic (career) counselling the methods have twofold purposes. First, they provide the client the new ways of dealing with their relationship with working life. Secondly, they act as methods for communication between the counsellor and the client. They constitute a platform for counsellor-client interaction. Especially the latter perspective brings SocioDynamic approach close to the various aspects present in the counsellor's inner state. In EDECO training Peavy's case example of his counselling process with Mark⁴¹ was used and analyzed from the perspective of inner state and PSI-theory.

Use of the case study of Mark

We encourage counsellors to analyze First-to read and second to reflect on it. Several guiding questions were set to help their reflections. As the idea of the synchronization of the counsellor's inner state with the client's inner state constituted an important perspective on understanding the interaction between the counsellor and the client, the participants were asked to identify the key elements that stood out for them in Peavy's case description.

Regarding PSI-theory more specific questions are recommended:

'Could you identify elements of OR, EM, IM, and IBC during the process? Give some examples?' and ...

.... ,Analysed from the PSI theory perspectives, were some elements (OR, EM, IM, IBC) more dominating at different phases of counselling, e.g. at the beginning vs. in the middle phase vs. the end?'

We offer to focus on analysis of the potential relationship with PSI-theory and the SocioDynamic approach:

If you think about PSI theory, what is in it that you would like to add to Peavy's SocioDynamic approach?'

and vice versa:

Is there something that you would like to incorporate from Peavy's approach to PSI theory?

⁴¹ Peavy, R. V (2004). SocioDynamic Counselling. A Practical Approach to Meaning Making. Chagrin Falls, OH: Taos Institute.



Outcomes

We suppose that there could be identified several *factors enhancing the synchronisation* process like “starting from ‘where the client is’”; the counsellor is open-minded and respectful and showing his attitude of taking Mark seriously although having also humour and playfulness in the play; considering readiness of Mark; counsellor using open questions; counsellor encouraging reflection and dialogue; active listening.

Regarding *the elements of PSI-theory* you may inspire with THE reflection of the participants of the training who wrote us: the *OR* dimension was seen to reflect in the description of what concrete activities Mark has done since their last meeting and when Mark describes his hobbies in detail. *EM* was seen to reflect in questions like: What was it that you found so interesting? *IM* reflected itself in the counsellor-client agreeing process of the goals of the counselling. *IBC* was reflected in the empathic iterations by the counsellor.

Regarding the relationship between the Sociodynamic and PSI-theory we suppose that the SD approach could benefit from “knowing by emotions and embodiment” and the conscious way of the counsellor using “PSI boxes”. And to the question of what might be useful in the SD approach to PS, the answers were “trust to the client”; “Life context, working together with the client, activities as a way in building and developing the synchronisation.”

In all

The use of the case study of Mark turned out in EDECO a useful method to examine the different elements of the counsellor-client synchronisation process. SocioDynamic case examples, described in Peavy’s self-reflective manner, may create a useful bridge to examine also the elements of personality theories, like the PSI theory.



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Appendix

Examples of Handouts that counsellors may use for their development of Inner State. Some of them are prepared for work in a pair of counsellors or in a group of counsellors which bring added value to the learning process.

Handouts should be DESIGNED and ADAPTED regarding the needs of the specific target group



Example 1: Approach to the invented term "inner state"

A) My "_____ **identity**": What are the relevant "parts" of it?

B) My "_____ **identity**": What are the relevant "parts" of it?

C) Differences of A and B:

Please work on the following two tasks:

A SYMBOL for my personal INNER STATE:

Conclusion: I would (functionally) describe what is important for my INNER STATE ("Self", "Identity", ...) in the following way:



Example 2: Learning diary to be used regularly and voluntarily

MY LEARNING DIARY	
	
My name:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• After each training day, answer at least three of the following questions for yourself.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">t. What were the most important learning points for me today?u. I surprised myself when/how/because I...v. My “aha” moments today were:w. How can I use this in my professional life?x. What can I use in my private life?y. The hardest for me was:z. The easiest for me was:aa. What do I have to train much more?bb. I feel that I failed today in: What did I learn from my failures?cc. I feel that I succeeded today in:.... What did I learn from my successes?dd. Draw a sketch about today.	



Example 3: Reflection of the golf experience

POST-REFLECTIONS OF GOLF

1. What was your experience like?
2. Did you find a difference when you hit a relaxed shot taught to you by the coach?
3. Do you think there is a lesson to be learned also for other things that you try to learn?

Messages from experienced golf trainers (according to Rotella & Cullen (2012). The unstoppable golfer.

1. Golf is not ultimately about techniques, it is about mental orientation to the game
2. Good golf players very of the have difficulties explaining why they shot the ball as they did
3. Good golf playing is very much unconscious “flow” based on the unconscious level. So, in order to be a good player, you have to go unconscious – “just do it”
4. How? E.g. take a (casual) look at the target R & C call this a “soft look”, 2. “throw away expectations”, 3. “give up control in order to gain control”, 4. the body should be on “autopilot”, 4. enjoy the process more than the outcome, 5. accept always the outcome of your shot, 6. remember that in any case golf will be a game of mistakes.

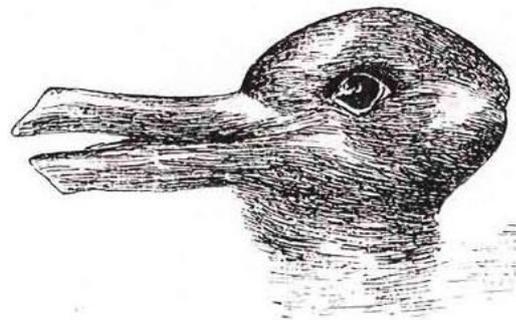


Example 4: Thinking/Thought and Feeling/Felt sensu Damasio



THINKING / THOUGHT and FEELING / FELT

When we are thinking or feeling, there are two main processes: Bottom-up and Top-down. Bottom-up means the direction from pure stimuli (visual, auditive, ...) up to the brain (cognitions), Top-down means the direction from the brain down to the "pure" body level.



You can perceive the head of a rabbit or the head of a bird, but the stimuli (from bottom-up) are always the same, the cognitions/interpretations (from top-down) are changing.

According to David Bohm THINKING is the present process, happening more or less automatized, that leads to THOUGHTS. Thoughts are the products of the thinking processes. The RABBIT or the BIRD are the products of these fast processes. Bohm: "We have the idea that after we have been thinking something, it just evaporates". Somewhere these bottom-up and top-down processes meet and mix. The same is valid for FEELING and FELTS. FEELING is more the actual, automatized process, FELT the "emotional product". When you are listening to your national anthem, you may feel something like proud joy, US-Americans usually feel the urge to stand up and put their hand over their heart,... FELT is a kind of emotional product out of automatized processes and is more or less unaware.

Problems may arise whenever we are not aware of these automatisms!

But we have the ability to get more aware of these processes (recognize these THOUGHTS and FELTS) and to "treat" them. DIALOGUE sensu David Bohm aims to develop this awareness. "FELTS are stored FEELINGS, THOUGHTS are stored THINKINGS"

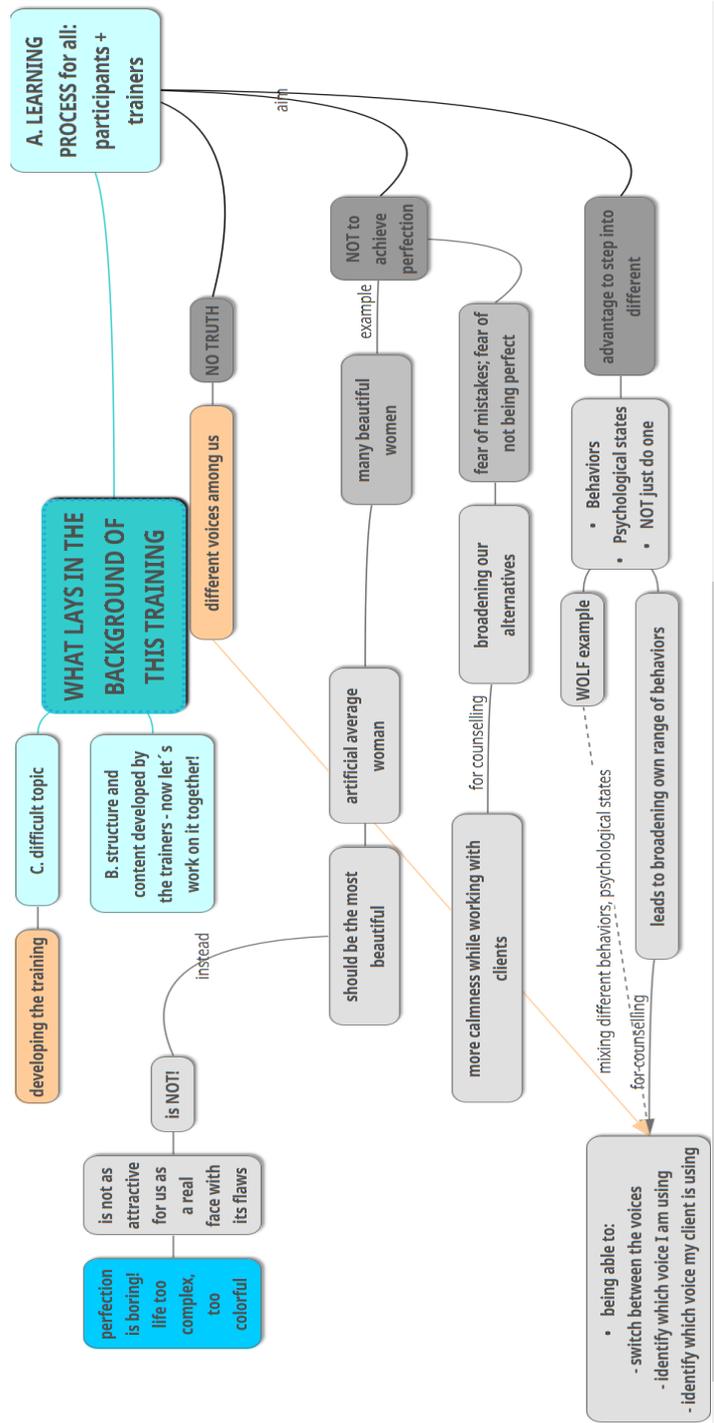
Why is it important to get better aware of Felts and Thoughts? Because they influence our cognitions, feelings, and behaviour in a significant way. If we are better aware of them, we gain flexibility in our (professional) life.



Example 5: Story of the project visualized

Example 6: SD group-work guidelines

<p>HANDOUT Group work guidelines</p>	<p>REFLECTING CHALLENGES OF RELATING COUNSELLOR'S INNER STATE TO THE COUNSELLING PROCESS</p>
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instruction	1. Write down 2-3 pitfalls or challenging situations in counselling where you have had challenges in defining the boundaries during the counselling process (e.g. how intimate and close you should go, your values differing from the client's values, etc.). Do you identify similar challenges presented here or some other pitfalls ("traps") you have faced in your work?
instruction	2. Be prepared to share your experiences with others.



Example 7: Exercise Active Listening

Active Listening (“Ski lift” exercise)

Build up a “group” of TWO people of different nationalities. Either find a place to walk inside the house or leave the house and walk around.

1. Part I (10 min)

Person 1 tells about something that is important for him/her. Person 2 listens WITHOUT interrupting or commenting.
Then Person 2 tells the “story” with his / her own words, while Person 1 is listening without interrupting or commenting

2. Part II (10 min)

Change the roles from listener to speaker.

3. Part III

Person 1 and person 2 exchange about how they have experienced the following five different roles:

- a) Telling “my story”
- b) Listening to the other persons “story”
- c) Expressing the other persons “story” with my own words
- d) Listening to how the other person has expressed “my story”
- e) What is the influence of my THOUGHTS (remember the difference of: think – thought) when listening to somebody

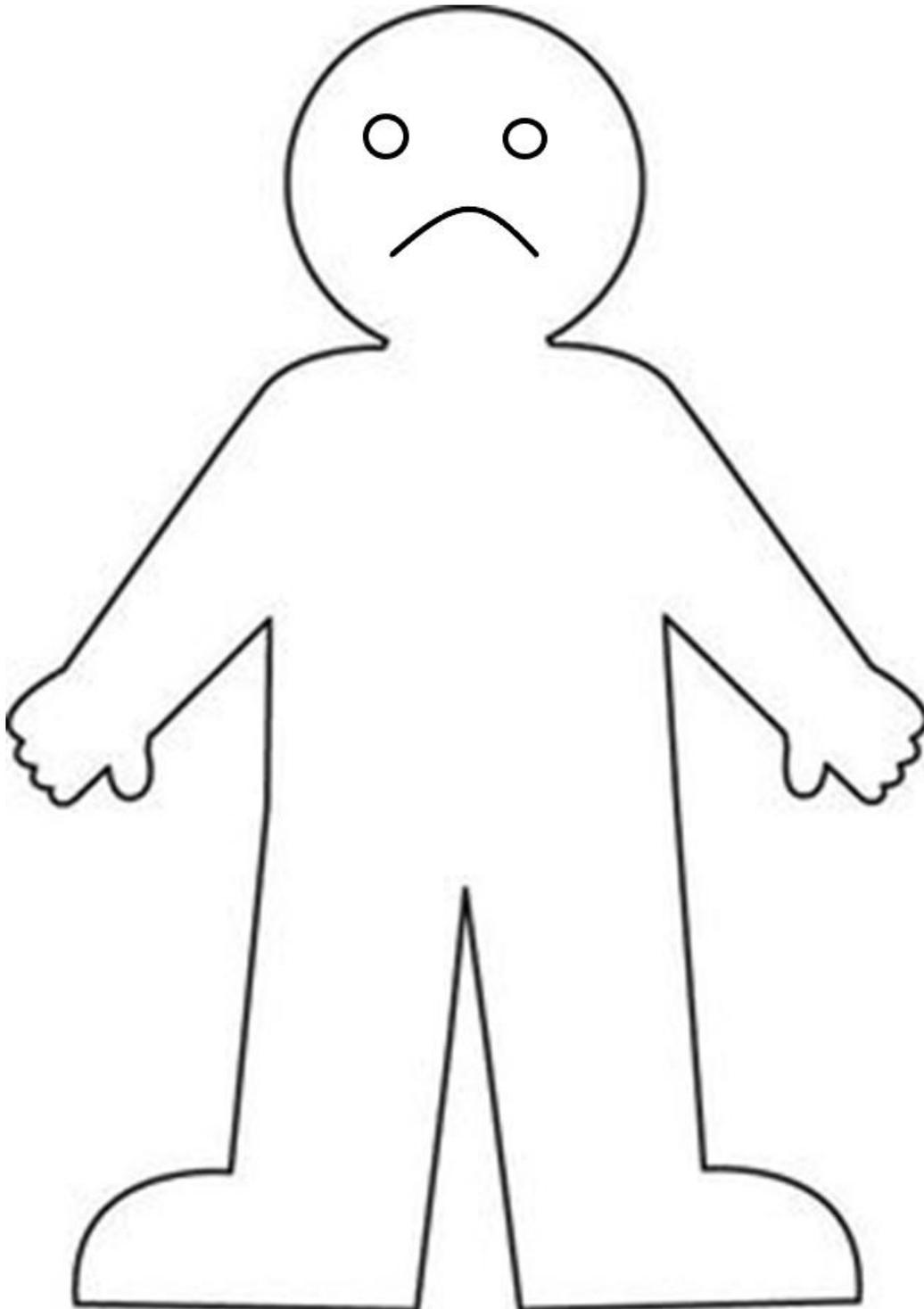
4. Participate in the group exchange



Example 8: Somatogram for negative somatic markers sensu Damasio

SOMATOGRAM

Please draw your **negative** somatic markers.





Example 9: Exercise Imaginary gift

EXERCISE – OVERCOME FIXED PATTERNS IN OUR MINDS:	IMAGINARY GIFT
Purpose:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CONNECT TO OUR SUBCONSCIOUS. • TRAIN YOUR SPONTANEITY. • OPEN YOURSELF TO THE APPROACH OF OPPORTUNITIES. • It helps you to see situations as opportunities, not “me vs. them”. • It helps to get rid of obstacles to your learning process.
Instruction:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Duos • Pretend you have a gift, you will give it to the partner, s/he opens it and says the first thing that comes to her/his mind (nothing prepared ahead). • The giver says: I knew you wanted... because... • Switch.
Reflection:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name purposes for which you could use it with your clients.



Example 10: Reflection of the PSI-theory test sensu Julius KUHL

EXERCISE REFLECTION of the PSI-theory Test

You have already reflected on the results of your test when you answered the questions there. You used your rational mind.

Now we want you to reflect with the help of your unconscious.

1. Relax for 5 minutes while listening to some pleasant music.
Try to empty your mind.
2. You have 2 options for how to reflect on the results of your PSI-theory Test. It does not matter which one you use first.
 - a) Drawing
 - b) Writing a minisaga

Ad a) **Drawing**

- Use whatever you want – pen, pencil, colored pencils, you name it...
- Doodle for about three minutes.
While mindlessly doodling, you are resetting your mind and connecting to your unconscious.
- First picture: Express strengths you have as a counsellor and you found out about them from the PSI-theory.
- Second picture: Express developmental points you have as a counsellor and you found out about them from the PSI-theory.

Ad b) **Writing a minisaga**

- Use paper and pen.
Writing in a classic way connects us to our unconscious.
- Write a story, a minisaga of your life from the perspective of the findings from the PSI-theory.
- Maximum 150 words.
- Write without auto-censure, write freely. Write about feelings, snapshots from your life...