Counseling for Work and Relationship (CWR)

AN APPROACH TO PRACTICE

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Outline of Presentation

1) The goal of practice

2) Two epistemological perspectives ➔ a set of theories that ground and inform practice

3) Narrative theory

4) Two readings of narrative theory ➔ two approaches to practice

5) Unpaid care work as a disruptive discourse

6) Conclusion
The Goal of Practice is Central

1) To help people co-construct their lives through work and relationship (market work, unpaid care work, relationship)

2) To help people co-construct **meaningful** lives **going forward** through work and relationship

- To help people construct lives they want to live
- Makes explicit an orientation towards the future
Two Epistemological Perspectives

- Objective view – from the outside – developmental science

- Subjective view – from the inside – sociocultural psychology

- CWR – grounded in sociocultural psychology (narrative theory) and informed by developmental science (life course theory)

- A work in progress
Narrative Theory

- Narrative is a way of thinking that enables people to make sense of their subjective experience.
- A set of principles about narrative and human development.
- Counseling practice – how people make sense of their lives.
Narrative Theory

- Narrative as a common denominator across theory, research and practice
  - **Theory**
    - Narrative is central to human development
  - **Research**
    - Understand human development through the stories people tell about their lives
  - **Practice**
    - A focus on the narrative dimension of counseling practice

- Enables multiple connections across these categories
Narrative Theory

Theory

Research → Practice
(1) The First Reading of **Narrative Theory** - CWR

- About lives unfolding in time (Ricoeur)

- The *story lines of the future* emerge from the telling and retelling of the stories of the past, *in the present, through action*

- Focus on agentic action

- **Informed by life course theory**
  - Agentic action across life contexts
  - At different points in the life span, different life contexts are more or less salient

- **Work and relationship counseling**
(2) The Second Reading of **Narrative Theory - Psychotherapy**

- About lives unfolding in time (Ricoeur)

- The story lines of the future emerge **from the telling and retelling of the stories of the past, in the present**, through action

- Psychotherapy is about restorying a life

- Psychotherapy theories are narrative structures that facilitate the restorying of lives (Hansen, 2006)
Counseling/Psychotherapy

- The story lines of the future emerge from the telling and retelling of the stories of the past, in the present, through action

  - To help people reconstruct and co-construct stories of the past that limit them as they co-construct meaningful lives going forward through work and relationship

  - Does not split past and future

  - Does not split inner worlds from the social worlds in which people are embedded
Unpaid Care Work as a Disruptive Discourse

- Not how people think about their lives – a challenge to prevailing narrative structures

- Rationale
  - Adaptive
  - Social change
    - Gender equity and sustainable capitalism