

March 26 Wednesday

WORKSHOP 1A

Raising awareness of human and sustainable development issues among guidance professionals

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The proposed workshop aims to promote the inclusion of sustainable and decent development issues in the practice of guidance and counselling professionals. It is based on the Network's recent proposal "Life Designing Interventions (Counselling, Guidance, Education) for Decent Work and Sustainable Development" available in the "Position Paper of the UNESCO Chair of Lifelong Guidance and Counselling for Life-Designing Interventions in the Anthropocene context".

The aim is to jointly develop concrete proposals for tools, approaches and methods that could help move in this direction. After a presentation of the position paper, which is largely based on the notion of "active forms of life", group work will enable us to identify existing tools in current extension practice and to identify common ways of working. Concrete proposals for existing tools and approaches can be made in advance and during the workshop. A summary will then be drawn up, leading to a collective practical proposal for action. This proposal will then be discussed as a possibility for structuring joint research within the network.

WORKSHOP 1B

Building a Culture of Hope and Possibility Using Therapeutic Experiential Activities: A Lifespan Perspective

Donna San Antonio (Lesley University)

Therapeutic experiential activities, including outdoor adventure, community service, and cultural exchanges, have been used as a way to foster a sense of community, enhance personal insight, generate environmental stewardship, and develop interpersonal understanding. As we engage in counselling relationships during the Anthropocene era, we grapple with personal and collective trauma, as well as environmental, political, and economic precarity. Gass, Gillis, and Russell (2020) detail how carefully planned and skillfully implemented adventure therapy programs can have positive effects on participants. Adventure therapy is also referred to as eco-counseling, nature therapy, and wilderness therapy. The experience of nature as a place of healing has been known across all cultures and across all time. It is grounded in the principles of experiential education, and practitioners are guided by Vygotsky's zone of proximal development and Bandura's self-efficacy. We are learning more about the ameliorative effects of activities that bring a sense of unity and awe (Monroy and Keltner, 2023). However, there is little known about what we carry with us long into the future after these experiences. This workshop will discuss the findings from ten in-depth interviews and two focus groups with

people that participated in an activity-based counseling program many years ago when they were adolescents. As we listen to their stories, we discern key themes regarding the long-term influences of adventure experiences on vocational, relational, emotional, and physical well-being. One theme that was repeated by all research participants was expressed in this way: It gave me hope; hope that I could be myself and be all right. In this workshop, the presenter will briefly describe the key principles of therapeutic experiential practices and will outline the research methodology and key findings. There will then be small and large group activities and discussion, moving from personal life reflection toward collective problem-solving and action. We will discern how desired outcomes, practices, and activities may differ across groups, ages, contexts, and cultures. The goals of this workshop are for participants to be able to identify the key practices, beliefs, and values that foster vocational, relational, emotional, and physical well-being in order to scaffold hope and possibility during precarious times.

References

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Gass, M., Gillis, H. L., and Russell, K. C. (2020). *Adventure Therapy: Theory, Research, and Practice*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Monroy, M and Keltner, D. (March 2023). Awe as a pathway to mental and physical health. *Perspectives in Psychological Science*, 18(2): 309–320.

Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.

WORKSHOP 1C

Drawing Hope for Elderhood: Exploring Transitions in Aging

Raquel Stephenson (Lesley University)

As the global population ages, the impact on vocational planning and transition may extend well into elderhood, challenging norms and expectations about retirement. Adopting a lifelong learning mindset is a useful approach in navigating this transition, and, when coupled with art making has the power unlock aspects of identity not yet explored, yielding deeper understanding of ourselves and others.

Guichard's (2009) proposed that self-construction is based upon a person's subjective perspective of their past, present and future. Similarly, Stowe & Cooney (2015) advocated for a life course perspective that emphasized lifelong developmental processes and the arc of change and continuity, considering development, history, and relationships throughout a person's life. While Diehl & Wahl's (2020) lifespan developmental perspective underscored the interconnectedness and equal importance of each developmental stage, emphasizing the dynamic relationship between the social-physical-technological context and the historical-cultural context of a person's life. My work in creative aging and art therapy (Stephenson, 2021)

aims to utilize metaphoric exploration via art to deepen self-awareness and foster empathy with ourselves and others. As counselors, utilizing art making for our own purpose of self-discovery is a powerful means to not only uncover meaning, but restore hope and resilience to move through challenges.

Workshop participants will be guided through an artmaking experience aimed to explore their feelings about life course design as it relates to their own aging. Art experience is not needed! Basic drawing materials will be offered, and participants will be invited to use these tools in a visual exploration of this topic. We will share what emerged from the artwork and new self-discoveries. Lastly, we will consider how our experiences might influence the practice and training of counsellors working with older people. An additional benefit is that making art among others can be a powerful way to build community, providing support during times of transition.

References

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Guichard, J. (2009). Self-constructing. *Journal of Vocational Behavior* 75, 251–258. doi: 10.1016/j.jvb.2009.03.004

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