

## SPECIAL SECTION

This section has been added to encourage publications by individuals who are just beginning to write for journals. We hope that this will encourage some who are more hesitant to submit for publication to send materials. The section is primarily to encourage students and practitioners to submit their works.

The first two articles were the first experiences of students to investigate the phenomenon of the large community group. Their reports suggest some of the throes of attempting such an examination. The third article synthesizes some of the work in play therapy which is overall very similar to person-centered principles.

# MEASURES OF PERCEIVED GROUP LEADERSHIP AND PERSONAL EXPRESSIVENESS: REPORT ON FOLLOW-UP SURVEY AT 1996 WARM SPRINGS CONFERENCE

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This report examines the follow-up survey mailed to participants of the 1996 Warm Springs Person-Centered Conference that focused on expectations, perceived leadership roles during community meetings, and degree of personal expressiveness during workshops. The survey was conducted as part of a research methods course in the doctoral program in counseling psychology at the University of Georgia under the direction of Professor Jerold D. Bozarth.

The role of leadership and perceived roles of leaders/facilitators in person-centered community groups has been a topic of recent concern. Bozarth (1995), Stubbs (1995), Sturdevant (1995), and Wood (1994) to name just a few have written of the need for further research in this area. Bozarth (1995) has positioned that it is ideal not to have facilitators in person-centered community groups, or at least if they are present, that they not do very much except be themselves. Pursuant to this, the researchers decided to attend the Warm Springs Conference to evaluate the participants perceptions as to whether or not there was a designated group leader in community meetings.

The conditions under observation here, leadership and expressiveness, are central to groups adhering to a person-centered approach. Bozarth (1988) outlined several functional manifestations of designated facilitators operating in person-centered groups. Central were the themes of "trusting group wisdom," being a participant as well as a facilitator, and relinquishing control of outcome, direction, and mood. This degree of balance between infusing one's self into the group process while maintaining the identity of a leader has been illuminated by Page & Berkow (1994) as the qualities of difference and similarity (p. 235). Page sees successful leaders as finding ways to use both the differences and similarities as a means to facilitate co-construction of direction in group process. This coauthorship of the group experience is further crystallized by Bozarth (1995) when he states that, "... facilitators/conveners create this freeing atmosphere by trusting the process (hence, acting in ways that promote freedom), not interfering with struggles, accepting each individual in his or her right as a human being, and by being open to whatever outcome might occur" (p. 6).

This still leaves unanswered the question whether there are or are not facilitators/leaders in person-centered groups. Dr. Bozarth will certainly point out that every effort was made by the Warm Springs organizational staff to not identify anyone as such. The fact that Dr. Bozarth's name was on the pre-conference publicity was facilitated by necessity so that participants would have a centralized place to send registration materials. Wood (1994) reports a similar arrangement at person-centered conferences in South America. Specifically, that "There was no discernible leader – not appointed, elected, nor elevated by virtue of the strength of personality or reputation" (p. 18). Alternatively, Stubbs (1995) reports that participants in person-centered groups made frequent reference to perceived leaders, however, these participants ascribed no particular characteristics to the leaders that would emphasize their importance in the group.

### METHODOLOGY

A research team affiliated with a class in the University of Georgia Counseling Psychology Doctoral program has initiated three projects connected with the Tenth Annual Workshop on the Person-Centered Approach held at Warm Springs, GA on February 12-18, 1996. All of the projects focus on the components of leadership and expressiveness demonstrated in the workshop. One team is analyzing observations and impressions of participant-observers regarding leadership and expressiveness. A second project is reporting on the findings of a questionnaire that was distributed at the end of the workshop designed to collect information on the components of leadership and expressiveness demonstrated during the workshop. This paper will report the findings of the follow-up survey sent to participants aimed at determining their opinions of leadership demonstrated during the workshop, and the degree of expressiveness they experienced during the workshop. Questions about their satisfaction with the conference and the impact on their theoretical approach were also included in the survey.

### RESULTS OF THE DATA

The follow-up survey was sent to all participants who attended the workshop accompanied by a certificate acknowledging their participation and a letter requesting they complete the attached survey. Six participants responded; four females and two males. The mean age of the respondents was 48.6 (one respondent did not indicate her age). The attendees were allowed to attend varying amounts of sessions. The respondents attended varying number of morning, afternoon, and evening sessions as indicated by the table below.

Morning	Afternoon	Evening
4	4	4
6	4	4
3	3	3
5	5	5
2	1	1
4	4	3

The average number of morning, afternoon, and evening sessions attended was 4, 3.5, and 3.3, respectively. The average number of total sessions attended was 10.8.

The survey consisted of three sections of data: demographic information, open-ended questions about expectations for the workshop and other additional comments, and a section of questions about the participants' experiences at the workshop with replies in a Likert scale type format. The demographic information is presented in the preceding paragraph. The answers to the open-ended questions will be discussed below. The answers to the Likert scale format were assigned a value from 1 to 5, and were then analyzed by obtaining a mean and standard deviation

value. The following tables explain the assigned values and include the means and standard deviations.

Question Content	Extremely Positive	Somewhat Positive	Neutral	Somewhat Negative	Extremely Negative	Mean	Standard Deviation
Assigned Value	5	4	3	2	1		
Overall Experience?	5	1	0	0	0	4.83	0.41
Exemplify Person-Centered Approach?	5	1	0	0	0	4.83	0.41
Impact on Your Approach?	2	1	3	0	0	3.83	0.98*
							n=5

*Expressiveness*

Question Content	Extremely Free	Mostly Free	Somewhat Free	Rarely Free	Not at all Free	Mean	Standard Deviation
Assigned Value	5	4	3	2	1		
Felt Free to Express Yourself?	3	2	1	0	0	4.33	0.82
Degree You Expressed Yourself?	2	0	3	0	0	3.8	1.10*
							n=5

*Leadership*

Question Content	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Not at all	Mean	Standard Deviation
Assigned Value	5	4	3	2	1		
Leadership assumed?	0	1	2	1	2	2.33	1.21
Leadership consistent with Person-Centered Approach?	4	0	0	1	0	4.4	1.34*
							n=5

Two of the open-ended questions addressed participants' expectations for the workshop. One asked them to list their expectations, and the other asked if their expectations were met. The list of expectations included:

- "Looking for unstructured, learning, experiential event."
- "Hopes would be more appropriate to me than 'expectations.' Only that it would exemplify the PCA core conditions – maybe congruence, empathy, and genuineness – but most importantly, unconditional positive regard."
- "Good conversations, interacting experiences."
- "To have a clearer understanding of the person-centered approach."
- "Exploration of self and others; feel empathic understanding; unburden others problems."
- "I expected to relax, and I did not have any other expectations."

Responses to the question whether their expectations were met included:

- "Yes. The event was unstructured and experiential"
- "My hopes of spending a number of consecutive days in an atmosphere characterized by the core conditions were certainly met."
- "Yes"
- "Yes – I got to see the approach being used."
- "Yes. I was truly satisfied."
- "My expectations were met. I had a wonderful experience. I felt re-introduced to client-centered therapy."

The open-ended question seeking additional comments garnered two responses:

- "I would recommend this workshop to others. I will attend next year."
- "This experience really changed my life at that time. I felt re-introduced with Rogerian theory. I loved the Warm Springs experience."

## INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION

Despite the fact that this is a very small sample, helpful information can be obtained from interpreting the data in this study. In examining the results of the questions in the Likert scale format, we grouped the questions together based on the replies offered. Responses were of three categories. The first was a positive-negative continuum for the questions inquiring about their overall experience, if the workshop exemplified the Person-Centered Approach, and if the workshop had an impact on the individual's theoretical approach. Scores on these responses were in the neutral to positive range, with a mean of 4.83, 4.83, and 3.83, respectively. Scores near 5 indicated a positive response. The means of the first two questions (4.83 each) indicate a strong positive response to the questions evaluating the overall experience and if the workshop exemplified the Person-Centered Approach. Five of the six respondents answered extremely positive, indicating agreement that the experience was a positive one that exemplified the Person-Centered Approach. The mean for the third question asking if the workshop had an impact on the individual's theoretical approach was 3.83. This is still in the positive range of the continuum. This question merits some discussion in light of some potential differences in the respondents. The survey failed to determine the amount of experience in the counseling field each participant had prior to the workshop. There was a wide variety in this area among the

participants, ranging from students new to the field (and this approach), to experienced counselors with many years of involvement in this approach. It would have been interesting to separate the respondents according to experience and examine the impact on their theoretical approaches. An explanation for this mean score in this sample could be that some of the respondents were experienced practitioners well versed in this approach. The workshop would not have had as great an impact on them as on students new to the field of counseling.

A second category of questions inquiring about expressiveness had replies ranging on an extremely free-not at all continuum. These questions asked if the participants felt free to express themselves, and the degree to which they actually did express themselves. Scores on these responses ranged from somewhat free to extremely free, with the mean for these two questions being 4.83, and 3.8, respectively.

The third category of questions in the Likert scale format involved the issue of leadership at the workshop. These questions ranged from always to not at all, and asked if leadership was assumed, and if the leadership at the workshop was consistent with the Person-Centered Approach. Scores on these responses ranged from not at all to always, with the means for these two questions being 2.33, and 4.4, respectively. Responses to the first question in this category, dealing with the issue of whether there was an assumption of leadership by individual(s) during the workshop yielded a lower mean score of 2.33.

In examining the data, there is also greater variety in the responses obtained. Two people responded "not at all," one responded "rarely," two responded "sometimes," and one responded "often." The discrepancies in the answers to this question opens up some room for speculation as to how to explain these differences in responses. Possible explanations include: respondents could have attended different days, and different perceptions/definitions of leadership, (which may have been based on a possible difference in experience with this approach alluded to above). These discrepancies could be a result of the differences in attribution of leadership. Some may define leadership as someone with a designation of leader, an assigned leader. Others may attribute leadership to members of the group that influence others by their actions in the group. Still others may designate as leaders those members who have achieved some level of recognition in their field, regardless of the individual's participation in the group.

The second question in this category asked if the level of leadership demonstrated in the workshop was consistent with the Person-Centered Approach. The responses to this question yielded a score of 4.4, indicating an overall agreement that the level of leadership demonstrated at the workshop was consistent with the Person-Centered Approach. In considering the two questions in this category together, the results of this survey indicate that the respondents believed there was a relatively low level of leadership demonstrated at the workshop, and that this was consistent with the Person-Centered Approach.

In examining the responses to the open-ended questions regarding expectations for the workshop, several observations can be made. Some of the expectations seemed to indicate higher levels of understanding of the Person-Centered Approach. Some responses indicated simply a desire to relax, or have good conversations. An interesting addition to the survey would have been to include questions to determine if the participants had attended this workshop before, and thus had a better idea as to what to expect.

The second open-ended question asked if the respondents' expectations had been met. All respondents answered this question in the affirmative, some with greater enthusiasm than others. This may reflect on the experience of the entire workshop. This workshop is typically highly experiential. The positive feedback can be affirming, but this study would have been improved if care would have been taken to determine what aspects contributed to the positive experience.

The last question was an open-ended one to elicit additional comments. The two responses were in the positive, again validating the workshop as a positive experience. This would have been more helpful if attempts were made to elicit more specific aspects of the workshop that were positive or negative.

### SUMMARY

This survey was intended to elicit information regarding expressiveness and leadership pertaining to the Person-Centered Workshop held at Warm Springs, Georgia. Findings suggest that the overall experience was a positive one, and that it did exemplify the Person-Centered Approach. It was indicated that there was some positive impact on the respondents' theoretical approach. The respondents felt reasonably free to express themselves, and did so at the workshop. Although there were some discrepancies in the view of whether leadership was assumed at the workshop, the overall belief was that there was a limited degree of leadership demonstrated, and that this was consistent with the underpinnings of the Person-Centered Approach. Responses to the other questions suggest that the experience for the participants was a positive one wherein their expectations were met.

Limitations of this study include the small sample size. This limits how the results can be generalized to the population at large. Another limitation was the limited scope of the questionnaire. The questionnaire would have revealed more meaningful data if certain aspects were included (experience level of the participant, prior attendance, degree of familiarity with this approach, to name a few). This survey instrument could also be improved upon in the area of wording of questions and responses. Some participants may have been confused by the wordings, as indicated by some comments.

The review of the literature in this area and the results of this study indicate the need for further research on the role of facilitators in Person-Centered Community Groups. A further recommendation is that the on-site interview format be used in favor of follow-up survey method.

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## **Policy Statement**

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