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Establishing a counselling and psychotherapy training and educational college – a holistic approach

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**Establishing a Counselling and Psychotherapy
Training and Educational College
– A Holistic Approach**

Context Statement

Doctorate in Psychotherapy by Public Works

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Student Reference Number: F2-DPW17101/25502

Submitted to Metanoia Institute November 2018

Dedication

This study is dedicated to all my past, present and future educators – my husbands, my parents and siblings, my children and their children, my ancestors, my teachers, therapists, supervisors, mentors, and friends and to all who expanded my awareness and understanding.

It is especially dedicated to the past, current, and future adult learners at ICPPD. Without you this reflexive audit could not be realised.

I am very grateful to all staff, members of various Boards, and friends of ICPPD, for the continued commitment, dedication and care you bring to all at ICPPD.

Sending you all loving kindness and gratitude!

Imagination is more important than knowledge. For knowledge is limited, whereas imagination embraces the entire world, stimulating progress, giving birth to evolution. It is, strictly speaking, a real factor in scientific research.

Albert Einstein (1924)

Abstract

This context statement supports my position as a therapist and an educational entrepreneur who founded The International College for Personal and Professional Development. My claim is that this College is based on ground-breaking work that can empower people who avail of its courses and the services of its graduates.

I consider what it means to live in a time when the rate of change exceeds our ability to adapt to it. I am making the path as I walk it, in the work I have done and do with ICPPD. It is based on how through heuristic enquiry, I make meaning of the experiences that gave birth to the College and my work as a therapist and educator today.

The purpose of this Context Statement is to reflect on the Public Works produced through my various roles with a view to distilling insight that will transform my own practice as Academic Director and the practice of similar professionals in the field of therapy. The knowledge generated is intended to support me to rethink my practices and inform change both for myself and for ICPPD.

Today, ICPPD is recognised nationally, as an academic third-level provider and by professional training bodies as making a distinct contribution to the field of counselling and psychotherapy in Ireland. It holds at its heart an explicit holistic ethos, humanistic values, and principles, and learning experiences which are evidenced and woven throughout this context statement. The dissertation highlights both the joy and personal cost of living a holistic professional orientation within the context of ICPPD. It unpacks the challenges of this approach and points to new practices that ensure sustainability of the work at ICPPD.

This reflexive audit validates a combination of professional knowledge, expertise, and leadership as I present myself and my works for consideration for this Doctorate in Psychotherapy by Public Works.

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The staff at Metanoia Institute for the opportunity to undertake this project.

The academic, administration and support staff at ICPPD for their continuing support and diligent work in establishing alongside me, a third-level training and education college in the Midlands of Ireland.

The amazing people on various ICPPD Boards who gave and continue to give freely their resources to support excellence in standards and good practice.

The adult learners, who trusted themselves, who walked over the threshold at ICPPD and are our ambassadors in the field of holistic counselling and psychotherapy.

In appreciation of my dear mentors who listened to me, supported me, and reassured me of my ability to complete this study, especially my critical friend Tom Geary who challenged and supported me to the final fence.

To my close friends for their on-going encouragement and support to create my dream and vision.

To my family of origin, extended family, and my ancestors, you have had the most influence on this work.

To my beloved offspring, Thomasina, Kevin, Elaine, Brian, Lisa, Sarah, their Partners, and my eighteen Grandchildren for their continued support, patience, and love for me and to my stepfamily for bringing more to our lives.

To my husband Tom, for being there – thank you my sweetheart!

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Chapter 1 – Introduction

Introduction

In this context statement, I position myself as an established psychotherapist and educational entrepreneur who founded The International College for Personal and Professional Development, (hereafter referred to as ICPPD) in 2009. The College is recognised nationally by academic and professional bodies, as a reputable third-level provider of holistic counselling and psychotherapy and complementary training and education programmes that make a distinct contribution to the field of counselling and psychotherapy in Ireland. ICPPD's 'holistic' element is unique and contributes to counselling and psychotherapy practice through the training programmes offered and the graduates offering their services in their communities throughout Ireland. Throughout this context statement, I process my personal and professional and entrepreneurial journey and progress through the lens of heuristic investigation as advocated by such authors as Moustakas, (1990), Hiles, (2001) and Sela-Smith, (2002.)

I am deeply committed to sharing my resources of knowledge and learning gleaned from my experience, of mistakes and achievements with my fellow professionals in this field and with a broader readership.

On reflection of my life's experiences to date, and my professional studies in Counselling and Psychotherapy, I asked myself, what I could do to educate and empower people to develop as individuals and as professional Counsellors/Psychotherapists. The answer manifested itself in the setting up of a college that would help people to believe in themselves and their professional competency to deliver a high standard of counselling and psychotherapy services. This reflective audit demonstrates a fusion of my professional knowledge and expertise.

In this context statement, and thesis by Public Works, I aim

- to demonstrate my capacity for critical reflection and evaluation of the contexts, influences and understanding of my holistic philosophy towards life and human nature.
- to provide the reader with a clear understanding of the development of my professional entrepreneurship and passion, culminating in the establishment of ICPPD
- to trace the development of ICPPD and its distinguishing focus on the holistic approach to counselling and psychotherapy
- to demonstrate how I keep faith in my vision and make it accessible to others, and how I have accomplished this thus far
- to increase my own self-awareness as founder of the organisation i.e., to examine what I have and am doing and why I am doing it
- to demonstrate and critique the movement from myself, as the individual founder of ICPPD to a collegial model of academic management and governance and the building of an organisation
- to highlight the challenges of developing and delivering programmes in counselling and psychotherapy
- to explore possibilities, in keeping with current evolution and theory and practice within the field of counselling and psychotherapy.

I anchor and reconcile my vision with literature researched and the use of heuristic inquiry method. This expedition has been revealing in several ways. I share these disclosures in the following chapters.

Russell (2009) cites Descartes, as one of the central figures in modern western philosophy, whose central contribution is summed up in the statement 'I think therefore I am'. One of the unintended off shoots of this contribution was the division of the human person into parts i.e., mind and matter, cognition and being. The Public Works presented and submitted with this thesis have as their starting point the very opposite of Cartesian thinking. They focus on the concept of 'Being'

Fromm (1982) and Marcell (1949). The Public Works are anchored (at their core) in the unity of the human being from a holistic view. Maller, Butler, Hoerber, and Derksen (2019) advocate that this holistic approach is centered on the person's ethos, its embracing of indigenous traditions and celebration of individual creativity, and an understanding of individual uniqueness and "it is capable of seeing people within the context of family, neighborhood, spirituality, community, nation, world, history, economics and politics." Dunn (2019: 83) says "holistic counselling psychology is a field in evolution"

A holistic approach is not a dualistic approach, mind/matter nor a collection of parts but multidimensional view of the person. It is an appreciation and sense of awe and wonder of the human person and that there may be dimensions still to be discovered.

Holistic counselling and psychotherapy, with its philosophical roots, it's awareness of social justice, and its focus on the body, mind, emotions, and spirit of each individual, comes alive in its practice and Dunn (2019: 91) continues "each counselor need not be an expert on all aspects of theory or practice, but taken as a whole, holism invites an extraordinary breadth of contribution and intervention approaches."

Maller et al (2019) espouse that holistic counsellors in practice can include "contemplative psychology, somatic psychology, transpersonal practices, arts-based practices, ecopsychology, the use of ritual in practice, integral psychology and community psychology for social change" and that part of the skill of the holistic counselor is "choosing with the service user the best and most useful interventions."

The elements described above are integrated into ICPPD's training programme through modules i.e., Body and Trauma Psychotherapy, Psychosynthesis, Expressive Arts, Holistic Approaches, Gestalt Approach and Person-Centered Approach.

The BA (Hons) L8, in Holistic Counselling and Psychotherapy Programme's (in Public Works Folder) underlying philosophy, the learning outcomes, various modules, experiential methods of learning, reflective practice, clinical practice and research focused on a narrative and auto ethnographic genres contribute to a unity of purpose in the education and development of learners undertaking this

programme. (See Appendix 17) for a reflection from a learner on their development as a holistic counsellor/psychotherapist in training.

The education milieu created by lecturers and Learners is one of personal openness and discovery through creative and dynamic learning experiences. Learners are immersed in a holistic approach from the outset. The concept of the human being, shared with Learners (in the various modules) is not simply that there are many parts to the person, but it is the life-giving interaction of these dimensions. This is evidenced in the extensive range of modules reflecting their various views of the human person, some focus on the past, others the present, others again focus on the future. The carefully selected modules while taught as distinct units of learning are brought together in explicitly identified overarching themes, highlighting the distinctive multidimensional and holistic nature of the programme itself.

The feedback from host Clinical Practice Placement Managers have highlighted in their feedback (see Appendix 13) the distinctive ‘roundedness’, comprehensiveness, and holistic tenor of the emerging graduates of ICPPD. This is one of the distinctive contributions of the professional effect of the education and development of counsellors/psychotherapists at ICPPD.

Viewing IACP’s website and seeing the number of ICPPD graduates who are accredited members, is also evidence of the impact of ICPPD’s programmes on the professional arena of counselling and psychotherapy in Ireland.

Heuristic Research/Inquiry

For my thesis “Heuristic Research” and “Heuristic Inquiry” are interchangeable terms. I wanted to find a method congruent with my therapeutic approach to reveal my use of the various theories and deep reflection undertaken and the integration that has occurred from this study. In discerning and critically evaluating the appropriate methodology for this context statement, it seems that Heuristic Research as proposed by Moustakas (1990), Hiles (2001) and Sela Smith (2002), explains and analyses the overall trajectory of the establishment of ICPPD, and the Public Works presented.

The word heuristic means “serving to discover or find out”. Moustakas (1990) organised a methodological frame for this kind of investigation called heuristic

research rooted in phenomenological philosophy and he states that his profound understanding of heuristic methodology was influenced by Maslow (1956, 1966, 1971); Jourard (1968,1971); Polanyi (1964, 1966, 1968); Buber (1958, 1961, 1965) Bridgman (1950); Gendlin (1962); Rogers (1985); and his own work (Moustakas, 1968, 1981, 1988). This is what is 'experienced' and interpreted by the "I" in the Upper Left quadrant of Wilber's (1995, 1996, 1997) matrix where he proposes the interior, intentional and subjective needing to be represented in any knowledge system. Heuristic inquiry has been applied to the general process of higher order thinking to include reflection and judgement when dealing with composite issues (Reeves, 1993). Heuristic research differs considerably from other methodologies in that it views the researcher as a participant. As such, it allows the researcher to experience the intensity of the phenomenon. In reading about heuristic research, I was excited by its methodology that permits a researcher to pursue "self-experience" within an academic frame.

Heuristic research (Moustakas, 1999: 8) involves "self-search, self-dialogue, and self-discovery; the research question and the methodology flow out of inner awareness, meaning, and inspiration". It follows that the self of the researcher is present throughout the process and, while understanding the phenomenon, the researcher also experiences growing self-awareness and self-knowledge. Heuristic processes incorporate creative self-processes and self-discoveries. In challenging Moustakas, Sela-Smith (2002: 21) reminds us that this method is heuristic self-enquiry and that a pitfall is when the researcher shifts from the place of experiencing to describing the experience and that the self-search within the experience is replaced by "what I interpret as a phenomenological explication of the definition of an experience."

In Etherington's book (2004), Hiles writes there is an "expanding range of methods of inquiry [research] now being made available" and one such methodology is "heuristic inquiry within the area of human science." (2001: 1). Hiles (2001) links heuristic inquiry with transpersonal research within the area of human science. This connection is of interest to me and to the establishment of ICPPD as a training college with philosophical transpersonal underpinnings that supports the

humanistic, holistic ethos of body, mind, spirit that underpins all offerings at ICPPD. This will be explored in chapter 9.

Heuristic inquiry is a unique research method that places human experiences above numbers and is deeply rooted in tacit knowledge that leads to a deeply subjective and creative connection between the researcher and experience (Sela-Smith, 2002). Through a compassionate approach, the researcher moves towards an open discussion with co-researchers and facilitates an emotionally connected scientific investigation (Anderson, 2000).

Heuristic Research, Psychotherapy and Counselling

In choosing this method Aveline (2006: 6) sees psychotherapeutic processes as non-linear and 'heuristic' so Moustakas' (1990, 1994) heuristic method seemed particularly appropriate as I wanted to use the principles of counselling as a guiding philosophy. Orlans (2004) describes research as illuminating an issue with critical precision and reflective awareness, which feels congruent with psychotherapy and Elton Wilson and Barkham (1994: 50-51) state "almost all psychotherapy consists of an inquiry into the client's experience." Van Ooijen (in Goss & Stephens, 2016: 172) accepts "practitioners are continuously employing, monitoring, evaluating and testing hypothesis at the moment-to-moment level with individual clients."

This Context Statement integrating the above aims directly weave and augment the authenticity of the Public Works submitted, and my aim in submitting this Context Statement is to supplement and make explicit any gaps left by my Public Works to ensure award standards are met. (Please note where Level 8 on the National Framework Qualifications is referred to in my public works being presented, they denote Honours Degree level in the Irish context).

My intention is to demonstrate my passion, knowledge and understanding, cognitive and practical skills, research, and developmental capacity. In developing excellent training and education programmes at ICPPD, that are evaluated by external and internal assessors to ensure methodological rigour, I am grounding a vision that leads to leading edge practice, capable of valuable impact in the field of counselling and psychotherapy.

I reflect on my diverse careers to date and how these are relevant to my claim. I provide evidence of my thinking about external key events, impactful challenges, major achievements, leadership, and changes made in my organisation, within my professional field, and on a personal level. I explain how I have arrived at my current level of authority, influence, and my ability to be a change agent in the field of counselling and psychotherapy.

I also critically evaluate and link past learning with more current understandings that have become important in the field of helping and healing. I provide a rationale for the establishment of ICPPD, as a training and educational institute, and I suggest this is a natural and organic progression, following the setting up of a holistic centre and counselling and psychotherapy service previously. The publication (Moran, 2009) is also contributing to helping and learning within a community and national context.

An application of specialist knowledge within my professional context is made by providing examples of how my capabilities have been developed and how these lessons, are used as learning and integration in both my personal and professional life.

Preparatory work for the justification statement and now for this context statement has been interesting in both intellectual and emotional contexts. As I reflect on my life trajectory, I am cognisant of Behar (1996: 13) who writes about authors losing the defensive position of 'scientific observer' and the skill required to write 'vulnerably'. Behar (1996) continues that while it may not require a full-length autobiography, it does require a keen understanding of what aspects of the self are the most important filters through which we perceive the world and, more importantly, the topic being explored.

Heuristic Research and tacit knowing

Moustakas (1994) developed a staged approach to Heuristic Inquiry that drew substantially on tacit knowing, of relevance here, is the initial engagement phases, my immersion, incubation, and illumination experiences as I traced my way through my collection of public works (2009-2018). I intuited that there lay somewhere in

these documents a richer narrative and nuggets of wisdom worth writing and telling.

A tacit knowing has resided with me for as long as I remember. I have throughout my life entertained internal conversations about my experiences, feelings, and life events. This is coupled with my trust in my intuitive processes. I intuitively know what is best for my life and my professional career before knowing it in a cognitive conceptual representation. I have imbibed messages from my formative years specifically in relation to the role of women in Irish society and am reminded of Denzin and Lincoln (1994a: 52) “the world of human experience must be studied from the point of view of the historically and culturally situated individual”. Interestingly this is not a restrictive script as I was surrounded by females in my extended family who strove to express their autonomy. This is deeply imbedded in my tacit knowledge ‘store-room’, and I draw on it frequently in my personal and professional life. The same is true of my intuitive knowing; this domain of knowing has served me well all my life.

The concept of indwelling is integral to understanding tacit knowledge also. It is understood as the tendency to turn inwards to understand oneself and one’s life and is closely connected to my propensity to self-dialogue mentioned above.

My life script about full engagement, commitment, and perseverance at all costs, as I moved from childhood to adulthood, to elderhood now, requires balance. Being steeped in my culture and its influence on my philosophy is imbibed in the fibre of my body and I integrate my understanding of this tacit knowledge into all my roles, as wife, parent, therapist, and educator. I am mindful these days to look out-wards for expertise, support, and explicit structure to support the work at ICPPD.

My tacit knowledge has a shadow side, I am keenly aware that my quest for autonomy leads to over independence at times. Rooney et al. (2005), in writing about organisations, and the disadvantages of tacit knowledge versus explicit knowledge approaches states; when tacit is made explicit, it can be disseminated, discussed, debated, and improved. When made explicit deficiencies can be identified, and best practice promoted. My aim is to move towards healthy interdependence and shared knowledge. This is the nugget of insight identified

from seeing my Public Works and achievements mapped out clearly. I realised in a deep-felt sense way, the cost of this to myself. This awareness has significant impact for ICPPD, as it plots its journey presently and into the future i.e., greater delegation, clear role definition, clearer boundaries and I now prepare for my future retirement. My tacit knowing when shared appropriately allows for all of us to flourish.

Heuristic Research as a methodology

Heuristic inquiry is not a process without order and requires engagement in a disciplined pursuit of fundamental meanings connected to significant human experiences. Both passionate and disciplined dedication to the studying of human experiences is necessary to ensure trustworthiness. Moustakas (1990) states there are six concepts related to heuristic research. These concepts assist the researcher to reflect on their hunches, thoughts, images, and deeper knowledge and connect to the greater meaning of the phenomena being researched (Braud & Anderson, 1998).

In using a Heuristic process, I am challenged to rely on my own resources, which include the full scope of my observations, thoughts, feelings, senses, and intuitions; to accept as authentic and valid whatever will open new channels for clarifying a question, problem, or an enigma. I am aware that I need to draw out all that is present in context and content. Moustakas (1990: 13) says “in an active and lively unfolding drama and brings one's knowledge and experience into poetical depictions. Heuristic research is a demanding process; it requires rigorous definition, careful collection of data, and a thorough and disciplined analysis.” Hiles (2001: 2) agrees that “Heuristic inquiry is an extremely demanding process...In essence, it is a research process designed for the exploration and interpretation of experience, which uses the self of the researcher.” Hiles states that it reflects Moustakas basic philosophy that in “every learner in every person there are creative sources of energy and meaning that are often tacit, hidden, or denied” (Moustakas, 2001).

Limitations of Heuristic methodology

Although heuristic methodology has many strengths, it also has limitations. A key consideration is that heuristic inquiry is mostly characterised with little, or no

control or restraints placed on its procedures. For example, Frick (1990) pointed out that although creative freedom often represents a positive element in the heuristic research, it could lead to irresponsibility of the researcher and undeveloped research. The process of validation makes the heuristic methodology a very demanding process that requires the researcher to engage in a lengthy and possibly exhausting process. Unprepared researchers may run into problems of struggling with accurately depicting experiences of the phenomenon and missing out on capturing important meanings of the experiences.

Indeed, there were times when I struggled with focusing on and developing the deeper reflection and implications involved and failed initially to make the implicit more explicit. Due to its subjective nature, heuristic methodology challenged the depth of my ability to remain a researcher. I had to remind myself that the goal of my research was to capture the meaning of the journey in establishing a college rather than describing the events. Heuristic methodology requires the researcher to have a solid knowledge in the philosophical roots of heuristic methodology, which may be a difficult process for inexperienced researchers (Creswell, 1998). This was one of the biggest challenges I faced while doing my context statement. Upon deciding that heuristic methodology would support this study, I engaged in a lengthy learning process about the guiding philosophy (Creswell; Douglass & Moustakas, 1985; Moustakas, 1990; Polanyi, 1964). Exploring the philosophical principles of heuristics was beneficial because this knowledge allowed me to challenge my vulnerability and doubt in looking at myself and my own experience. It allowed me to have the courage to change my worldview, and to find the real gifts in other people's views and contributions.

There are several qualitative approaches that have been developed that highlight the use of personal experience, such as mindful inquiry (Bentz and Shariro, 1998), reflexive action research (Lees, 2001) transpersonal research (Braud and Anderson, 1998) heuristic inquiry (Douglass and Moustakas, 1985; Moustakas 1990a, b) and autoethnography (Ellis 2004).

Heuristic Research and Phenomenology

Phenomenologists would consider a description or account of a phenomenon from all angles and perspectives to be able to separate off those aspects of the

phenomenon that were contingent on circumstances and those which remained constant i.e., the essence. A phenomenological reduction *leads back* to the *essence* of the phenomenon by peeling off the layers of assumptions and projections that have obscured this essence (McLeod 2015: 26). What is being attempted here is challenging, disturbing, radical, and critical. Husserl's (1900/1901) message for researchers who are seeking to understand human experiences is that it is necessary to be willing to question and transcend one's pre-existing ideas about the phenomenon being investigated to achieve a deeper level of understanding. From this perspective qualitative research needs to be viewed as an intellectual and personal journey, in which the enquirer 'brackets' all and every assumption they might hold in the hope of finding something new, and real at the end. McLeod (2015: 105) writes that ethnography can be defined as the study of the 'way of life' of other culture or group of people. McLeod (2015: 102) claims that the key point here is that

the *epoche*, the act of suspending the taken for granted assumptions of the everyday natural attitude, is a radical act that is perhaps better understood as a discipline that takes time to master, rather than as a technique that can be 'manualised' and switched on and off.

This has been my experience as I opened to the 'peeling off', of my assumptions and convictions. Ethnography is the longest established qualitative approach within the social sciences, since the prior origins of phenomenology and hermeneutics can be viewed as rooted in philosophy and theology.

Personally, this was a huge challenge for me; in fact, it took me three years to really hear what was being asked of me. This demonstrates to me the level of resistance to change, my defences, inability to hear other perspectives, and brings me to a place of humility, and a willing stance of 'not knowing' and a place of openness, curiosity and even wonder, and an eagerness to meet surprises that expands my learning. I hold an image of a miner's pan/sieve and the nuggets that remains from my heuristic inquiry and sifting in chapter 2. This is in line with what Husserl and other phenomenologists are saying that, to arrive at an authentic understanding of any process or event, it is necessary to remain open to all aspects of that experience.

Moustakas was interested in phenomenology and in the key tenet of humanistic psychology that each person has within them the potential for growth, creativity, and meaningful self-expression. The combination of these ideas led him to evolve a method that sought to facilitate disciplined Husserlian self-exploration of topics that were of existential significance to the inquirer. Douglass and Moustakas (1985: 43) see the difference between phenomenological and heuristic research as: 'phenomenology ends with the essence of experience; heuristic retains the essence of the person in experience'. There was also a holistic aspect to the Husserlian approach: no specific domain of experience could be examined without an appreciation of the nature of personal experience (McLeod, 2015: 86). Phenomenology seems to have an easy affinity with counselling and psychotherapy.

The Power of Heuristic Research

The power of heuristic research is in its recognition of the significance of self-searching and the value of personal knowledge as essential requirements for the understanding of common human experiences. There is no substitute for direct, comprehensive, accurate first-person accounts of experience. Moustakas (1990: 90) suggests that

The distinctiveness of experience and explication into its unique qualities and themes and depicted through description, example, literary expression, narrative, and artwork, the researcher has gathered what is required to construct the universal portrayal or essence.

Hiles (2001: 4) concurs that the heuristic process is a "way of being informed, a way of knowing" and (2001: 13) "I am creating a story that portrays the qualities, meanings, and essences of universally unique experiences" and "the heuristic process is autobiographically, and with virtually every question that matters personally there is also a "social and perhaps universal significance." (2001: 15). Here I ask myself – What is my experience of a calling, a vocation that appears to be fulfilling my destiny? I let go to the process of inquiry.

An important contribution of heuristic research has been according to Moustakas (1990: 99) "its contribution as a process of discovery in investigations of the symbolic growth experience." Symbolic growth refers to a sudden, dramatic shift in perception, belief, or understanding that alters one's frame of reference or

worldview. Rogers (1968) observed that in research it is essential that research procedures “keep the scientist as a human being in the picture at all times.” Jung expressed the same idea when he observed (1964: 2) that there is no more urgent topic to research than the human realm of experience, action, and expression, especially the significant and exciting life events and the extraordinary experiences that can entail. Douglass & Moustakas (1985: 42) state that “each heuristic study is a unique, creative challenge aimed at revealing the intimate nature of reality and thus requiring methods that fit the particular investigation.”

Challenges of Heuristic Research

There is a challenge in that this research methodology demands the total presence, honesty, maturity, and integrity of a researcher who not only strongly desires to know and understand but is willing to commit endless hours of sustained immersion and focused concentration on one central question, to risk the opening of wounds and passionate concerns, and to undergo the personal transformation that exists as a possibility in every heuristic journey (Sela-Smith, 2002). It is also important to note that Sela-Smith (2002: 8) cautions that “personal myths let us see and experience what we have already decided is our world view” and that the question of true or false is not applicable, but rather “whether the individual’s tacit knowledge helps or hinders” and that “it is probable that incomplete, inaccurate, or misinterpreted information will be a part of the embedded personal knowledge.”

It is proposed by Sela-Smith (2002) that once access is made through the subjective and with new information and new experience that new meaning can propel transformation. This method of inquiry requires the researcher focus on the feeling dimension of personal experience to discover meanings embedded therein. A potential limitation is that heuristic methodology places importance on the subjective experience of the phenomenon in question. As such, it increases the researcher’s bias. The synthesis of the meaning and the essence of the phenomenon in heuristic methodology are solely based on the researcher’s interpretation. The researcher has a direct experience of the phenomenon of interest, which may subjectively influence the study and interpretation of the findings. It was important for me to hold an ongoing ‘awareness in the background’ and I reminded myself to tell the truth of my story as it was, while remembering

that my passion and conviction, required a detachment for alternative awareness, information and knowledge, perspectives and learning to emerge.

As a heuristic researcher I am seeking to understand the wholeness and the unique patterns of my experiences in a scientifically organised way and this process is guided by a conception that knowledge grows out of direct human experience and can be discovered and explained initially through self-inquiry. I am aware of Hiles' voice (2001: 3) that the focus in this research is on the "transformative effect of the inquiry on the researchers own experience. This is often achieved by a process called discernment." Sela-Smith (2002: 11) referencing Moustakas' (1990: 20) referencing Polanyi (1983) says that "at the base of all heuristic discovery, is the power of revelation in tacit knowing." The heuristic process begins with a question from within the researcher and instead of rigorous planning and controlling the steps, the researcher must according to Sela-Smith "release control and discover whatever the stage has to offer."

In this thesis, the six phases of heuristic research according to Moustakas (1990), the initial engagement, immersion into the topic in question, incubation, illumination, explication, and culmination of the research in a creative synthesis, will guide the unfolding investigations and provide an explicit view of ICPPD as an organisation and my work there to date. I am also aware of the argument by Sela-Smith (2002: 27) when reviewing Moustakas' phases that they turn into external steps with hermeneutical and phenomenological requirements and that the final document "requires making lists, constructing methods, and following data collection procedures in a prescribed fashion" and that the "validity in subjective discovery-research is not possible by comparing to others' experience."

I present my story, in alignment with the premise (Moustakas, 1990) that during the initial engagement process one encounters the self, one's autobiography, and significant relationships within a social context. In doing this excavation I meet a goal of heuristic research while coming to a deeper understanding of what Sela-Smith (2002: 12) is "calling out from the inside of the self to be understood." I encounter myself as researcher and present my autobiography, significant relationships within a social context.

My hope is to make obvious the immersion process which includes spontaneous soul searching, self-searching, pursuing intuitive clues or hunches, and drawing from the mystery and sources of energy and knowledge within the tacit dimension. For over a decade, after initially hearing the call within me to start ICPPD and then the internal urge became as Moustakas (1990: 43) posits, “the song into which the researcher breathes life...because the question itself is infused in the researcher’s being.” I continue to endeavour to articulate and understand the meaning of the unanswered question that my husband and others asked – What is this all about for you? Why are you doing this? Sometimes I wished to articulate what I exactly understood from my intuitive prompts, but I was unable to verbalise these experiences. There were no thoughts, only instincts. Polanyi (1966: 4) explains that “tacit knowing” is the fact that “we can know more than we can tell.” I am comforted by Moustakas (1990: 43) when he writes that the “heuristic researcher is not only intimately and autobiographically related to the question but learns to love the question.” He references Kierkegaard (1965) as aptly stating, the researcher must strive to be humble and not hold a single presupposition, to be able to learn more. This is a process I continue to struggle with.

Heuristic enquiry is a story of self-transformation and according to Sela-Smith (2002: 35) is the “bi-product of living through a crisis in such a way that learning can be passed on to those who hear, read, or see it.” She contends that heuristic inquiry results in transformation and the creation of a story that “generates potential for transformation in others and in society is the strength of the self-inquiry method”. I envision this outcome for this Context Statement and the associated Public Works.

Identifying with the focus of inquiry was the first step in my journey. Moustakas suggests that this refers to one’s ability to immerse oneself in the question, accomplish complete connection with it, and finally achieve a deeper understanding of it through an open-ended investigation, self-directed learning, and the engagement in the active experience (Moustakas, 1990). Therefore, one must have a direct experience of the phenomenon in question to be able to relate with experiences of others. According to Moustakas (1990: 27)

intuition is one of the most important attributes when finding knowledge and the task of the initial engagement is to discover an intense interest, a passionate concern that calls out to the

researcher, one that holds important social meanings and personal, compelling implications.

The next step was engaging in a self-dialogue as a process in which the researcher enters the dialogue with the phenomenon that is being examined (Moustakas, 1990). It was an important beginning step for me because it represented recognition of my own connection to the experience of the establishment of a third level college. To be able to engage in self-dialogue, I choose to journal and make art about my own thoughts, feelings, and memories over the years. I will present excerpts of these personal research notes in this thesis and provide further examples in Appendix 1. A tacit knowing – a private, personal, and subjective explicit knowledge (Polanyi, 1958) was also required. Moreover, tacit knowledge represents all internally possessed achievable knowledge that we cannot describe or explain.

Tacit knowledge for me was initially, the sense of knowing I was required to do something. I could not explain the sense of urgency I had to begin the setting up of a school that would graduate competent, ethical counsellors/psychotherapists with an embodied holistic ethos. I could not rationalise doing this with no finances in place to support it. I could not describe the strange feeling I had in my stomach at the thought of such a project. I only knew I had to do it. Polanyi (1964) distinguished between subsidiary elements of the tacit knowledge, which attract instant notice, and focal elements, which are inherently implicit. Furthermore, when tacit knowledge becomes explicit, the full description of the phenomenon is likely to take place (Alderson, 1998). Without being able to explain it, or answer the question that my husband was asking, in December 2009, we met with an academic to begin the process of employing academic expertise. ICPPD as a company was registered in February 2010 and in July 2010; I signed a 4-year lease on a building in Athlone and began a journey into the unknown. I was scared and excited. That night I wrote in my journal: “Is this real, am I on an existential mission of purpose and meaning, or am I deluded and suffering a mental health disorder?”

In the immersion phase, the researcher becomes one with the subject and question. According to Moustakas (1990), the researcher must live the question. To be fully connected with the question, the researcher engages in “spontaneous self-dialogue and self-searching, pursuing intuitive clues and hunches, and drawing from the

mystery and sources of energy and knowledge within the tacit dimension” (1990: 28). I came to understand the phases of the study was like the stages of the therapeutic relationship, where the therapist finds out the clients concerns and historical data and attempts to create a focused dialogue for further exploration.

I was becoming rapidly immersed with the question of what and why I was undertaking this project. I began looking at the world through a new and somewhat different lens. I became aware of my lack of academic expertise, financial backing, understanding of the processes of academic validating institutions and how out of my depth I was, and felt. I became sensitive to how the future workload might impact all my relationships and time with self and others. I also acquired empathy and compassion for other self-employed entrepreneurs in establishing a private business. I became truly immersed into the world of academia, quality assurance, marketing, and programme development. This experience was heightened during times of programme validation and accreditation with national bodies. It was an exhausting process, and my immersion was so strong for over ten years that I finally realised I needed to offer my position of Academic Director to someone else or completely burn out.

Incubation Phase

The period of incubation generates a renewed understanding of the topic and may allow new awareness to emerge (Bloomgarden, 1998). The incubation process allows “the inner workings of the tacit dimension an intuition to continue to clarify and extend understanding on levels outside the immediate awareness” (Moustakas, 1990: 29). Incubation period for me was the process in which I retreated from a concentrated focus and another level expansion of knowledge took place through deep and conscious reflection. Providing a thesis which offers critical thinking and deep reflection on the establishment of ICPPD and its journey to date has introduced and brought me to a new level of awareness, insight and understanding. I will demonstrate and provide examples of this expanded awareness and knowledge in the following chapters. Intuition was one of the vital features of searching for knowledge (Moustakas, 1990). It allows the researcher to recognise the immediate knowledge and it increases the likelihood of highly developed perception and understanding. Being able to understand my own experience as I

undertook the development of a counselling and psychotherapy training college was only possible when I valued my intuition. I have learned a new respect for knowledge, and I have learned to respect my own inner world and consciousness.

In this incubation phase the researcher moves away from intense immersion with the question and becomes detached from it. The incubation period for me was difficult as I continued to work full time at ICPPD, with part-time remuneration. It was also an interesting time and several, mostly personal events led me to make life changing decisions that supported a 'letting go' of ICPPD, an entity that was now part of my being on all levels. I was not prepared for the grief that followed. Polanyi (1964) stated that a discovery does not happen through intentional searching. Instead, it takes place when we retreat from the intense search and immerse in incubation. It was during this time that I began to fully understand the experience that I have had myself and with others as we had worked toward the creation of ICPPD as a reputable third level provider of counselling and psychotherapy training and education in Ireland. During this period, I relied on indwelling, defined as "the heuristic process of turning inward to seek a deeper, more extended comprehension of the nature or meaning of a quality of theme of human experiences" (Moustakas, 1990: 24). My personal therapist, supervisor and peer supervision group were important supports for me during this study and this time of deep reflection, and transition. They also challenged me on blind-spots, incongruities, thus contributing to the validity of the research.

Moustakas (1990: 29, 30) anticipates that the next phase will

open the door to a new awareness, a modification of an old understanding, a synthesis of fragmented knowledge, or an altogether new discovery of something that has been present for some time yet beyond immediate awareness" and that this illumination process may be an awakening to new constituents of the experience, thus adding new dimensions of knowledge.

Bloomgarden (1998: 52) agrees that "new questions can emerge in the process of illumination which expand the research dimensions and meaning or highlight the need for modification of an old understanding." As the researcher becomes more receptive to the tacit dimension of knowledge and intuition, the illumination phase unfolds freely (Moustakas, 1990). I plan to demonstrate how modification of old understandings and a more conscious discovery of something that has been present

for some time yet beyond immediate awareness will bring further insight, enlightenment and synthesis of knowledge and meaning, what Sela-Smith (2002: 17) refers to as “the self and the world are experienced in brand new ways.” Moustakas (1990: 44) sharing Bridgman (1950: 83) has emphasised that “science is what scientists do... there are as many scientific methods as there are individual scientists.” Polanyi (1962: 143) on new insight writes,

Having made a discovery, I shall never see the world again as before. My eyes have become different; I have made myself into a person seeing and thinking differently.

Moustakas advises that the entire process of explication requires that the researcher explicates the major components of the phenomenon, in detail, and is then ready to put them together into a whole experience. Explication refers to the process of deep examination of themes and qualities that have surfaced during the illumination phase. Moustakas (1990) points out that in the explication phase, the researcher engages in focusing, indwelling, self-exploration, and self-disclosure, which in turns allows the person to recognise the uniqueness of experiences. In explication, the complete picture of the phenomenon begins forming. In addition, new views, alternative explanations, and new patterns are identified. Lastly, final corrections and modifications are made, and a comprehensive picture of the phenomenon is shown.

Experiencing this phase was a wonderful adventure for me. Throughout my studies I had been faced with illness, time constraints due to unexpected extra workload and difficulty coordinating my schedule. I recently made decisions both personally and professionally to give myself the time I needed to do justice to this thesis, and I am relieved. Giving myself this period of retreat, I spent many weeks and time away from my usual work and family commitments. This space presented me with the opportunity to allow inner processes to be known and invited me into body, mind, spirit dimensions and connection with holistic wisdom. Indwelling allowed me to gain insight consciously and purposefully. This fits very well with my humanistic philosophy of counselling and psychotherapy and the need for connection, creativity, focussing on felt sense, relational depth, awareness and insight, authenticity, meaning and purpose. It was interesting to notice I was creating a

picture puzzle, and now in hindsight, new patterns, ideas, alternatives were identified, and I recorded my personal growth, insight and change in my journals.

Final Phase of heuristic research

The final phase of heuristic research is the process of creative synthesis. It represents the final integration of the data, qualities, and themes discovered in the explication phase (Moustakas, 1990) and “this synthesis embodies an inclusive expression of the essences of what has been investigated” (Sela-Smith, 1992: 67). Creative synthesis can be presented in the form of a narrative, poem, painting, story, or some other creative form. In heuristic inquiry, personal documents, diaries, logs, poetry, artworks and so forth, are collected to support the data (Moustakas, 1990). It is not a mere summary of what went on in the study. Moustakas (1990: 11) also states, “in heuristic investigations, I may be entranced by visions, images and dreams that connect me to my quest.” Throughout my experience of the monumental task of establishing a college, my dreams, images, and musings revealed their creative, hidden, metaphoric meanings and I undertook a unique process of collecting data and reflective knowledge from the expressive art processes of artwork, journals, voice, music and movement.

Creative synthesis is the complete depiction of a human experience in all its wholeness. My deepest desire is that this Context Statement with the submitted Public Works will provide a qualitative depiction of the heart and depth of my experience of situations, events, relationships, feelings, thoughts, values, and beliefs. Hiles (2001: 5) writes that “invariably the research question is deeply personal in origin” and “there is a very striking similarity between the methods of heuristic inquiry and the practice of counselling and psychotherapy, particularly with respect to the use of the self. It is therefore a method of research that particularly resonates with inquiry into counselling and therapy related issues.” Johns (1996: xi) speaks to personal development being a process, life-long and career-long “it must and will happen incidentally before and after any training course, through all aspects of life and work.”

In the explication process the researcher recognises that meanings are unique and distinctive to an experience and depend upon internal frames of reference. I wondered what my creative synthesis would look like and how I might reach a

sense of closure. I was finally able to make peace with the question asked by my husband over 10 years previously. Writing the creative synthesis was both rewarding and bittersweet and I elaborate on this in the final chapter

My focus in this heuristic quest is a re-creation and depiction of my lived experience as expressed by Moustakas (1990: 39) "from the frame of reference of the experiencing person" and these processes are congruent with Schopenhauer's (1969: 248) reference to lyric poetry, the depicted is "also at the same time the depicter" and I am aware this requires vivid perception, description, and illustration of the experience. Hiles (2001) drives it further when he espouses that the works of writers, poets, artists, spiritual leaders, and scientists can all be usefully treated as the creative products of heuristic inquiry. Marshall and Rossman (2006: 115) mention that in qualitative research data collection and analysis typically go hand in hand to build a coherent interpretation. The researcher is guided by initial concepts and developing understandings that she shifts or modifies as she collects and analyses the data. Erlandson et al (1993: 111) state that "the analysis of qualitative data is best described as a progression, not a stage; ongoing process, not a one-time event."

In my descriptive, narrative depiction, I disclose my faith, issues, past experiences, relationships, and memories in connection with my heuristic journey and the establishment of a counselling and psychotherapy training and education college; and I think the depiction contains sufficient data to discover the essence and meanings of the topic. As it has been previously pointed out, this heuristic self-inquiry is designed to have one participant. Thus, it may have the limitation in acquiring validity or reliability as a social science investigation, I needed to consider the epistemological limitations also. The process of heuristic self-inquiry can principally be unique in pursuing subjective experiences even though the theme or topic can be universal in human experience. Marshall and Rossman (2006: 202) point out that a "qualitative study's transferability or generalizability to other settings may be problematic" and limited in this qualitative inquiry where there is tracking of the unique personal self-experience. There were many times when I felt tired of reconsidering the data and there were times when I wanted to give up and forget the whole idea of getting my thesis finished. I learned to appreciate the

contradiction that structure can be found in a highly subjective research method. Heuristic methodology is a subjective but structured research method and if one is ready to face the depth of work required to complete it, while remaining curious as to the learning outcomes, the challenges may be overcome.

Polanyi (1969: 118) describes that “great powers of scientific intuition are called originality, for they discover things that are most surprising and make men see the world in a new way.” This is the goal of heuristic inquiry. Self-transformation is expected in this method of enquiry. I aspire to what Sela-Smith (2002: 18) calls

the story that contains some new whole that has been identified and experienced as a result of the union of the deep-unconscious and the waking consciousness, between the internal and the external” and “the researcher is the “mid-wife” who is there to assist its emergence.” and I hope that there will “be something that resonates deep agreement within the observer...a sense of connection and transformation that cannot be falsified.

Regarding a creative synthesis, which according to Sela-Smith (2002) is the “story with embedded transformation” and she challenges Moustakas (1990) that this spontaneous creative synthesis “seems to disappear as a research manuscript is formed to fit the requirements of objective positive science.”

Based on the outline given in the Metanoia Institute’s Learner Handbook using Heuristic Research as the guiding principles for this Context Statement is an appropriate methodology. In saying this I am conscious from the literature reviewed, that Sela-Smith (2002) evaluating Moustakas’ work narrates that “paradoxically, he creates a methodology structure for a process that he himself states must take place free from methodological structures if it is to be authentic.” I identify with Etherington (2004) also coming from an integrative humanistic model, underpinned by person centered philosophies and like her I still value the skills, theories, and understandings of moral and ethical issues of my training, and, I am moving away from “individualistic” notions of self, informed by humanistic ideas towards relational models, and postmodern and social constructivist thinking and practices. Reflexivity involves the distinctive interpretive horizon: ‘the meaning of the findings of this study may have been shaped by me...’ and reflexivity is a vehicle for expressing the social justice commitment and standpoint of the researcher and

for examining the political assumptions built into a particular academic discipline or research methodology (McLeod, 2015: 50). I am mindful of the aim of social constructionism is to develop an understanding of social life. The central idea within constructionism is that human beings are engaged in a continuing activity of creating and recreating social reality through the ways in which we interact with each other. Social constructionism can be viewed as a critical stance which seeks to challenge and deconstruct prevailing assumptions. Fontana and Frey (2000: 657) write “interviewing and interviewers must necessarily be creative, forget how to rules, and adapt themselves to the ever-changing situations they face”, Thereby creating a sense of “conversation rather than interview.” Etherington (2004) demonstrates how reflexive conversations help us all construct meaning and create “reflexive knowledge.”

Personal Experience

There is a long history within psychology of the idea that systematic exploration of personal experience can form the basis for scientific inquiry. The phenomenological movement in philosophy and psychology takes as its starting point the personal lived experience of what phenomenon is being investigated. The founders of psychoanalysis, Freud, and Jung derived many of their insights from recording and scrutinising their own dreams and fantasies. Within contemporary counselling and psychotherapy (McLeod, 2015: 204) it is routine for both trainees and experienced practitioners to undertake personal therapy in which they reflect on the patterns in their own lives and relationships, and how these connect with their therapy practice. Much qualitative research practice involves a process of self-reflection, participants are invited to answer interview questions or keep a diary, they inevitably need to observe and make sense of their own thoughts and feelings.

In choosing heuristic inquiry as my research methodology, I am aware of traditional research methodologies impressing upon us the importance of excluding ourselves from the research lest we contaminate by our presence. I recognise that as a researcher I influence the research process and I plan to be conscious of my assumptions so that I may evaluate and understand my bias. Richardson, (2000); Ellis and Buchner, (2000); Dentin, (2000) accept that qualitative research maybe

rigorously valid when the researchers process is transparent and used as part of the data.

Research interviewers have been criticised in the past for producing ‘silently orchestrated’ conversations (Speedy, 2001) and Mishler (1986, 1991); Kvale (1996, 1999) query the disallowing of any view of the power relations in research. Narrative analysis according to Etherington (2004) views life as constructed and experienced through the telling of stories and does not seek to find similarities of conceptual themes, but instead tries to capture the messiness, depth, and texture of lived experience. Narrative and heuristic inquiry encourage a focus on metaphor, imagery, and symbolic language (Etherington 2004: 50)

My intention is to fit this methodology to the purpose of this research and to create a “complex, quilt-like bricolage, a reflexive collage or montage” (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000: 6) underpinned by a heuristic journey of discovery. Over the years I've struggled with being what is perceived as ‘academic’, and during this heuristic research I conclude that listening to my inner voice, is being ‘academic’.

By being both subject and object of this research I became occasionally ‘triggered’ by my own material and became ‘flooded’ with feelings and was unable to think clearly. During these times I consulted with my personal therapist and my critical friend and took a short break from the work. The idea of a critical friend was first suggested by Stenhouse in 1975 (Kember et al., 1997). Bulent et al. (2021) advocate the concept and importance of critical friendship as “a key characteristic of self-study methodology”. I found having a critical friend provided me with relevant data at times, and someone who increased the validity and reliability of the research and provided pivotal support by asking challenging questions and presenting constructive criticism (Alan, 2016). Systematic feedback, reflecting, reviewing, and reframing, provided me with opportunities to examine data from different perspectives and through different lens, and thus, contributed to the “process of coming to know” (Pinnegar and Hamilton, 2009) through critique and dialogue. In this way my critical friend is an “advocate for the success of the study” (Costa and Kallick, 1993: 50).

According to Etherington (2004) heurism, and other reflexive methodologies have been criticised as encouraging “self-indulgence, narcissism and solipsism”. In the

earlier stages of this thesis, I could be accused of this until I understood the importance of balance and that heurism invites me to filter my experiences. The underlying ontology and epistemology of heurism has been criticised as imprisoning the data and its methods as simulating realist approaches (Martin, 2003). Another criticism (Speedy, 2001) is its inward focus that does not address “the more outgoing dialogic and culturally embedded relationships between researchers and researched”. Etherington (2004: 62) agrees that such criticism is valid considering more recent narrative and reflective approaches that encourage us to locate ourselves, our participants, and the topic within a “historical, cultural and social context” and therefore bridge our internal and external worlds.

Conclusion

I aim to conclude this work, with the distillation of the fullness and wholeness of the experience of undertaking this reflexive audit, my overall learning, growth, and transformation. Most of all I hope on completion that there is evidence of self-dialogue, a search for self, and that transformation has taken place and that it may transform others who read it. This thesis would be less rich and diminished if it did not include the spiritual dimension and the support of others and other institutions that had a part in the development and establishment of ICCPD as a training college of excellence. These elements will be addressed in later chapters. This context statement is supported by robust Public Works documents previously submitted. In chapter 2, my personal story is related.

Chapter 2 – My Personal Story – Early Life Influences - Philosophy – and Evaluation.

Introduction

In the following account, I aim to demonstrate my capacity for critical reflection and evaluation of the contexts, influences and understanding of my personal philosophy to life and human nature. I aspire to provide some understanding of the development of my professional entrepreneurship culminating in the establishment of the educational institute ICPPD, with its academic and professional focus on holistic, creative, and spiritual expression as evidenced particularly in the BA degree in Holistic Counselling and Psychotherapy programme in the Public Works. Finally, my intention is to demonstrate my passion, how I keep faith in my vision and make it accessible to others through a counselling and psychotherapy institute.

This section is the outcome of engagement, immersion, and incubation from the Heuristic Approach. It is interesting for me to witness where it has taken me, as I trace the influencers of my life journey from my beginnings in 1954 to the Managing Director position, I now hold in ICPPD.

My early life experiences

My early formation as a person, my roots literally began when I was born into an Irish republican agricultural, traditional family. Being born on a farm presented me with life's lessons of natural cycles and a need for community.

Every season presented a time for working with nature, connection and communion with family and neighbours. This resonates with Alvesson and Skoldberg (2017: 146) who in discussing existential hermeneutics write that we are permanently fused with our world, as we live in it, even before our conscious reflection and examination of same, and that "We are continually and without our own consent, thrown, as it were, into an existence in the world where we have to find our way."

My early life experiences concur with comparative mythology and Campbell's work (1949, 2008), where he portrays the Hero's Journey as a search for one's soul, a monomyth, like Jung's archetype, which springs from the universal in the collective unconscious and reflects universal concerns. Campbell used the universal theme

occurring in all cultures, in every time as a guiding inspiration and map to illustrate the quest for change and growth.

However, the following adaptation of Campbell's diagram from Murdock, (1990: 4-11) further elaborates on this inner journey to individuation and self-actualisation from the perspective of feminine psycho-spiritual development. Murdock claimed that the quest motif does not address the archetypal journey of the heroine, and that for contemporary women; this involves the healing of the wounding that exists deep within her and the culture that encircles her. She developed a model (Figure 1) which describes the cyclical nature of the female experience.

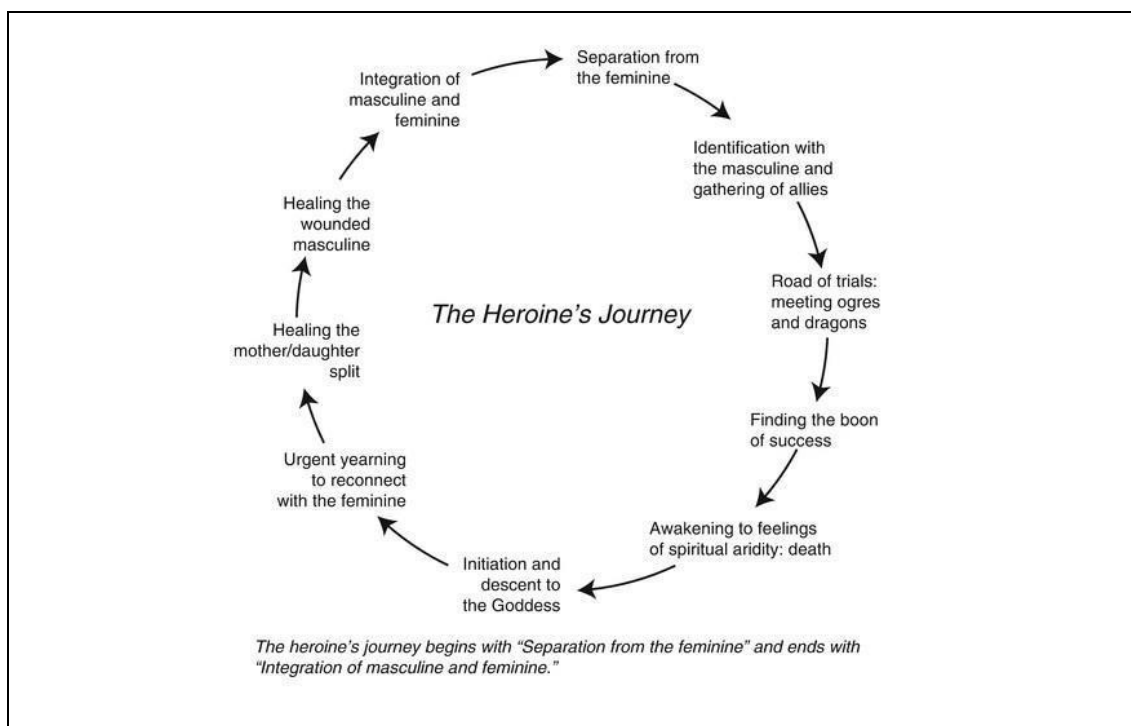


Figure 1- Maureen Murdock's Heroine's Journey (1990)

Murdock in describing her heroine's journey informs us that for the Heroine, the initial Journey begins with a separation from feminine values, and the seeking of recognition and success in a patriarchal culture. We then turn inward to reclaim the power of the sacred feminine. According to Murdock, (1990: 4-11) the final stages of this cycle involve an acknowledgement of the union and power of our own dual nature for the benefit of all people. She, like Campbell draws on cultural myths and illustrates an alternative model to that of patriarchal hegemony. She advocates that as women we do not discard what is learned in the quest and that we use it to

integrate and become interdependent and to thus preserve the health and balance of life on earth.

The wounding that was and is to some extent still ingrained within me from the culture that encircled me in my earlier years, was predominantly patriarchal and experienced by me from both within my beloved church and family. The message internalised was that women were inferior and there to serve the male. (Moran, Journal 2018). As a contemporary woman I reflect on and identify with Murdock's writings. It was later in my life, as a divorced woman, feeling rejected by my church that I returned to, and celebrated the pagan and Celtic agricultural fire festivals of Imbolc, Bealtaine, Lúnasa, and Samhain.

Discussing the dishonouring of the pagan way of being and the interconnectedness of all, a life where one appreciates the holiness of everything and honours this with rites and images, I am reminded of the words of Moore (2001: 112) when he asks us to consider that there is more than we perceive by the senses and can measure by the language of quantification, and "what a deadening reduction to do away with the entire realm of spirit in the name of control and understanding."

In this creation spirituality, there was a homecoming for me. I met the Divine Feminine, the herbalist and the healer, the midwife of potentialities, the wild woman, the nurturer, and the destroyer within. The embodiment of the sensual and sexual energies supported how I needed to portray myself in the world and this was a life-giving experience. This all helped me to integrate the patriarchal and matriarchal foundations in my history, religion, tradition, and conflicts within myself.

Now I am at a stage in my life, when I am not sure of anything, except the power of kindness, compassion, and generosity. I find myself embracing both the concrete situation of my life and my interior pilgrimage as well. This echoes ancient themes common to all human beings. The grace of my mistakes and failures and choices and decisions made and not made have also shaped my life today.

My broken heart, at the time of my marriage ending in (1995) opened me to a deeper hospitality to myself and others. (A referendum took place in 1995 and a law

was passed in Ireland in 1996 to allow Divorce). My earlier value and 'arduous work' ethic, inherited from my father, and the courage to be 'myself' inherited from my mother, supports my perseverance and the need to do my part in the creation of my love story on earth. My faith and early influences have shaped my personality, and this is imbued in all I do. It is interesting to note that according to May (2007: 75) when he espouses that "Influence is a process which works chiefly in the unconscious."

My spirituality at present is moving towards a desire to live in my heart. I wish to live with originality rather than conformity within the multi-dimensions of my life. This offers a rich and fertile ground for personal and professional growth, manifestation, and transformation. Moore (2001: V1) expresses my difficulty in finding words of expression, as follows:

One important aspect of finding one's original core is the realization that the deeper one goes into the self, the more poetic one's language and ideas become.

The natural rhythms of life, honouring this philosophy of life, following this spiritual path, and attaching to nothing, has supported me at times of struggle both in my personal and professional journey. I have found that as constantly developing creatures, seasonal beings of light and shadow there is a continuous metamorphosis and an amalgam of deep pleasure and pain that reaches the very foundations of our existence. Remembering, revealing, even noting it myself, honours my resilience and survival skills and my trust in the process of life happening perfectly.

I recall the folk tale of Aladdin's Lamp, and how when rubbed the genie, possibly described by Moore (2001) as wisdom, genius, daimon, angel, appeared to grant a wish. This story reminds me that when I bump into life's difficulties, there is an attendant spirit of intelligence waiting to guide me. Rumi's words, translated by Barks (1995), "if you are irritated by every rub, how will your mirror be polished", echoes from within. Van Deurzen (2009: 50) concurs when she writes that a leap of faith is to trust that life will give us experiences most apt for learning to live, and that "the contradictions of our life come to their climax eventually". Referring to this human journey and a therapeutic culture, Van Deurzen (2009: 27) writes that

the idea that when we as humans are faced with life issues, that there is always “this additional quality of persistence in human beings, based on hope, allowing us to overcome our trials and tribulations”. Tillich (1966: 15) says that “Truth is found in the midst of struggle and destiny, not as Plato taught, in an unchanging beyond”. I also keep in mind that nothing is static, including my beliefs, culture, dreams and Van Deurzen (2009: 39) reminds me “that will change, new ideas will replace the old ones and show the incorrectness of our perceptions”.

Appendix 2 depicts the key life experiences that have shaped my life to date. They are illustrated as 7-year life cycles and include my subjective experiences, educational journey, employment record, spiritual path, and professional development. My personal, cultural, and religious influences have ‘coloured’ my assumptions and views. As an elder I am required to stand back and get a ‘higher-vision’ view of my life, my bias and prejudices or as paraphrased from Hawkins and Shohet (2008: 78) where they advocate double-loop learning, this is where my first frame of reference concerns explicit, expressed and often adheres to official objectives and strategies, second loop learning digs below the obvious to explore attitudes, values, and assumptions.

I realise my life has been provincial and lacks the broader perspectives that comes with the anonymity of city and international living. I am mindful of my views which, some may consider, could possibly lack an expansive perspective due to lack of time for external stimulation, critical discussion, and argument these days. Regardless of geographical location, I yearn to be part of a group of questioning people.

Professional Status

My professional status as a counsellor, psychotherapist, supervisor, facilitator of therapeutic workshops combined with my educational experiences as a lecturer, academic director and managing director continue to support my personal need for self-discovery and, as an educator and manager, I seek to teach what I need to learn. This is in accordance with the view of Meir and Davis (2007) who say that counsellors need to work at increasing their self-awareness as well as their knowledge of counselling procedures. Furthermore, Edwards and Bess (1998: 98) argue that the development of a therapist’s self-awareness must carry as much

weight in their professional education and training as the accumulation of knowledge about theories and methodologies.

Having left school to commence employment in the Civil Service at sixteen, I returned to adult education at thirty-six, and have continued as a life-long learner since then, my educational journey and timeline illustrates evidence of this.

The fundamental philosophy that influences how I see myself, others, the world, helping and healing, counselling and psychotherapy, brokenness and woundedness, how I see the whole human being, education and the training of holistic counsellors and psychotherapists is distilled through my life experience of trusting the processes of the organic cyclical nature of life, death, and rebirth.

The belief in the ability of myself and others to endure the heroic journey of initiation, vulnerability, resilience, and the abundant supports that are around us and sustain us as we emerge through the birth canal of growth and development comes from my life experiences and the lives of clients, I have worked with for over twenty-five years and supervisees for fifteen years.

The natural urge to create, to midwife, to craft, to nurture, challenge, and support and to propel myself and others continues to guide me both personally and professionally and is a core belief and theme throughout my personal and professional life and timeline.

I will tease this out further and provide a rationale for my personal philosophy that is synthesized in my philosophy of psychotherapy and cannot but be transferred to the educational development of trainee therapists and programme delivery. I reflect on my life experiences, and identify the various strands and themes, people, patterns, and situations that influenced my choices and have brought me to where I am today. In the words of Bugental (1987) (in Calcagno 2006: 82) "by being attuned to our inner sense we achieve greater integration, greater vitality and a greater sense of aliveness." Bugental writes that when we try to maintain a static or inflexible view of ourselves that we miss the reality of life as it is occurring and so my views on myself and my vision for ICCPD continue to change in line with my ever-changing experiences with life.

Personal synthesis, understanding of my personal philosophy, choices, and their impact on me in my personal and professional development.

My parents were my primary influences in my early life and visiting them and living with us regularly were younger aunts and uncles on my father's side and my grandmothers lived close by also. As the oldest grandchild and niece living in Ireland, I was given positive attention and I grew up with an inbuilt belief at my core that I was lovable, capable, clever, resilient, and creative. Later life itself challenged this idea and brought me to my knees several times where I learned about humility and compassion for myself and others and the importance of having unconditional support at these turning points in life.

My childhood experiences of women's circles, I didn't know this at the time, consisted of my mother, my grandmothers, aunts, several neighbouring women who lived alone. My experience of decorative willow patterned tea sets, or English bone floral teacups, colour, flowers and plants, the beauty of tapestry and design, cakes, and conversations, all contributed to a philosophy that emerged from these influences. I knew an appreciation of creativity and beauty and the importance of a safe place to laugh and cry and the importance of mutual support as women. I continue to love being part of the mutual support offered in women's groups and I enjoy the thrill of facilitating women's circles that include personal development courses and other educational groups.

As the oldest member in my family of origin, the daughter of an indisputable patriarch and a strong mother who endorsed choice, as a young woman, I embraced an on-going quest for autonomy and authenticity. This drive has always been at the heart of my conscious and unconscious choices. Socrates (The Greek philosopher 300-400 BC) espoused that wisdom began with wonder. Being born on a farm there was always a 'naturalness' in accepting the magic, the invisible world, while living in the grounded reality of birth, and death, abundance, and scarcity, alongside a woven belief of a benevolent, hopeful energy that takes care of all. This allowed the curious child and embryonic dreamer in me to imagine my potential into being, while the adult me, remains grounded in a pragmatic embodiment in the world, embracing creativity and a holistic self.

My father, being the eldest and patriarch of his family from the age of eleven, influenced my upbringing and particularly work-related choices. His ethos of 'hard-work' was and continues to be the instigation to follow my dream but most of all to embrace the commitment, dedication and perseverance required to accomplish it, even sometimes to the extreme and to a loss of balance. This is a tendency I regularly need to monitor.

Born into a family where the Seannachí and Amhranaí, (the Gaelic for storyteller and singer) were valued as part of an ancient oral tradition, remains a positive childhood memory of family gatherings. This meant that creative expression gave permission to verbalise radical, revolutionary ideas and the unspeakable, like the fool in the king's court. This empowered a freedom of speech in me. It also gave voice, expression and affirmation for leadership, experimentation and innovation within a family that supported such endeavours. Successful outcomes were secondary to the courage required and applauded for trying. This promoted a culture where risk-taking was commended.

My mother was of the Protestant religion and converted her religion to marry my father. This was a courageous act of love in 1953 in Ireland. A long and happy marriage followed, despite the undercurrent of religious tensions and systemic hostilities, which somewhat echoed three hundred years of conflict in Northern Ireland and its troubled times. The influence on me was a strong belief and submissiveness to the patriarchal Catholic Church, dedication to a deity, immersion in rural life and associated traditions, and above all a strong devotion to family and community. My mother was also an advocate of life-long learning, and all of this hugely impacted me.

I was shaped by a grandmother steeped in Celtic ways. This grandmother, as a young widow, who with her eleven-year-old son (my father) reared nine children. She was 'queen' of her family. Later, I followed in the footsteps of these women, in my development as a person and a living archetype.

In 1993 as part of my on-going adult education and development I began a 2-year Foundation Course in Counselling and Psychotherapy. This was a revelation to me. At a time when my life seemed to be 'falling apart', my marriage, my business, my

health, I found myself exposed to new perspectives, understandings, and the theory of Maslow (1908-1970), Rogers (1902-1987) and humanistic authorities on self-love and self-actualisation. This had a transformative impact on me and choices I made at this time.

In 1994 I began attending a counsellor and the empowerment and insights gained brought me home to a 'knowing' I had become disconnected from. While the challenge to take responsibility for my life and well-being was a painful process, the self-awareness I gained, as described by Yalom (2008) was a supreme gift, a treasure as precious as life.

In 1995, I commenced my professional training as a therapist and was challenged to live the ethos I was learning about theoretically. At our first class, we were asked to reflect on the question – Are you prepared to implement in your life, what you would expect your future client to? In 1995, (pre-divorce Ireland) I left my twenty-year marriage, with six children, left my home, spiritual community, family, and friends and moved to a town, in search of something more. I went in search of self. I did not see it as such at that time.

This initiation was deeply challenging, physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. It took at least four years to come to terms with the losses involved, until eventually there was the emergence of a more authentic self, accepting of vulnerabilities, my own and others and a claiming of unique qualities and gifts that required expression in the world. The words of Jungian analyst Woodman (1992: 115) resonate deeply with me when I tune into that time in my life and the distillation of my experiences when she writes that "It takes a strong ego to hold the darkness, wait, hold the tension, waiting for we know not what...and if we can wait and hold, in its own time it will be born in its full radiance."

I decided to educate myself academically and professionally while embracing my Celtic origins and absorbed a knowledge that supported my body mind and spirit; this was my conscious and unconscious response to a personal earthquake and an experience of holistic healing.

I remember in my therapy exploring, being a pioneer, there was no other separated woman, in my locality or in my circle of friends at that time, parenting alone in a rural setting that was terrifying and life-giving at the same time. I am grateful to the therapist for her non-judgemental consistent support and acceptance back then, which helped with my confusion and loyalty to a family system and beliefs that no longer served me. These sessions instilled in me a love of counselling and psychotherapy that I later wished to provide for others. I have summarised the emerging themes that influenced and continue to influence me today in Appendix 3.

The transference to educational development and delivery of training and adult education in counselling and psychotherapy.

These values which emerged from influences in my early years later shaped me in my work as a psychotherapist, supervisor and an educator of counsellors and psychotherapists. Maslow (1943) held the view that the self-actualising tendency might be phrased as the desire to become more and more what one is, to become everything that one is capable of becoming, this was reflected later by Rogers when he suggests “how hungry people are to know something of the person who is speaking to or teaching them” (1961: 4) and when proposing his theory of self-actualisation he believes that life has a “blind power for tremendous capacity for destruction, but with its overbalancing thrust toward growth, if the opportunity for growth is provided” (1961: 5).

I have oriented my life, consciously and unconsciously, from the lessons learned and unlearned, from the ground on which I stand, and my philosophy of life emerged from these influences and others.

As an elder, psychotherapist, educator, and leader today, I am integrating, not only the counselling and psychotherapy skills I have learned, but also the expressive arts therapy, spirituality and a personal synthesis lived. Mackewn (1997) advocates that as human beings, any holistic approach to counselling needs to address and involve body, mind, and soul in their fullest range.

I unashamedly, embrace a 'holistic approach', and its all-inclusive, rounded, full, embodied concept. This philosophy supports me in the world and continues to invite me to explore further the dimensions of balance, wholeness, feminism and mysticism and the linking of ancient primordial wisdom with science. I am open to changing my perspective as I move forward in life and continue to learn.

Holistic Approach in ICPPD

At ICPPD, our fundamental ethos and holistic approach is offered through our programme in Psychosynthesis Psychotherapy. After studying this approach on my master's degree and experiencing it in my personal therapy, and studying in Casa Assagioli, Florence, Italy, I was fascinated by the vision of Assagioli for a therapeutic philosophy that embodied wholeness as a body mind spirit synthesis and accepted both as a human and transcendent reality, the actuality and awareness of both dimensions. At ICPPD, a holistic approach is adopted whereby the physical, emotional, intellectual, volitional, and spiritual dimensions of the person are honoured and nourished. I am reminded of Berry (1990) who likens 'eating to an agricultural act'. This connects me to our ethos at ICPPD and my vision of a Heads, Hearts and Hands, Learning Community, where at an Induction session with first year learners, we go to the kitchen and make soup and bread, all symbolising empowerment of self and others, and a nurturing, inclusive community that recognises the primacy of a body, mind, spirit, environmental journey. This carries a distinguishing feminine approach to learning and offers a model of adult education that supports wholeness.

This is my sacred vision beyond the material, an invitation to exploration of diverse ways and expression, including the critical inquiry required by academia, all-encompassing a lived and breathing spirituality. I use the word 'sacred' to denote a philosophy of humility, reverence, and respect for everyone's life-purpose and meaning.

The words of Assagioli are as relevant today as they were almost sixty years ago.

I make a cordial appeal to all therapists, psychologists and educators to actively engage in the needed work of research, experimentation and application. Let us feel and obey the urge aroused by the great

need of healing the serious ills which at present are affecting humanity; let us realize the contribution we can make to the creation of a new civilization characterized by a harmonious integration and cooperation, pervaded by the spirit of synthesis (Assagioli, 1965: 8).

As counsellors and psychotherapists, we know from key thinkers in this field that psyche pain and heartache, is better facilitated by therapists in touch with their own humanity and their spiritual truth, therapists who continue to integrate their anima and animus. Cooper (2012), in referring to research by McMillan and McLeod (2006) and Knox & Cooper (2010) writes that, according to client feedback, therapists engaging at relational depth are genuinely caring, offering something 'over and above', are competent, safe, trustworthy, warm, open, and adaptable. Well-known therapists and clinical practitioners Satir, Banmen, Gerber, and Gomori (1991) also support the therapist's "use of self" as an important aspect of the therapeutic relationship while Lum (2002) considers "use of self" as the single most important factor in building the therapeutic relationship. Edwards and Bess (1998), state that the therapist needs to be aware of their real self and use it in the therapeutic relationship. Wosket (2006) promotes the value of the therapist researching their own clinical practice to improve effectiveness and proposes that training programmes pay little attention to the "use of self". Rowan & Jacobs (2008) investigate what they claim to be the central questions in therapy: who is the therapist?

Therefore, in the training and education of counsellors and psychotherapists, self-awareness, self-discovery is paramount to uphold identification with a bigger picture for adult learners in the field of counselling and psychotherapy. Holistic counselling and psychotherapy aim to empower a client to discover and access their own inner wisdom and healing capacity – and in doing so the therapist, too, will embark on a remarkable and enlightening journey of self-discovery, personal and professional growth, and academic distinction. The encounter, therapeutic relationship between the client and therapist is paramount and an honest, non-judgemental approach which allows full expression and exploration by the client of their difficulties is important. This is explored further in Chapter 9.

Kesson (1998) agrees with education theorist Miller (1990: 59) that

the emergent holistic perspective dissolves the traditional dichotomies between mind and body, between spirit and matter and he speaks to the central tenet of a holistic worldview, and the basis for the term holistic being and its emphasis on the integration of the inner qualities of human life with the outer physical, social world.

Forbes (1996: 4) in his paper, Values in Holistic Education, at the Conference on Education, Spirituality and the Whole Child writes about, youth culture, the computer culture and a new extended seeing of cultures and wholes within a global setting. He goes on to state

the old dichotomies of head and heart, science and religion, beauty and function seemed to be about fragmentation, and we needed to see things in larger wholes. 'Truth' needed to be unshackled from the claims of the traditional authorities.

My continuing vision is of an academic academy, a model, integrating the whole of life that is nurturing, mothering, fathering, holds the energy of the hearth of the home, and is a parallel process to the fundamental relationship. A holistic model of training and education is one that replicates a holistic therapy session, training programme and lifestyle. An overall model that heals an alienated, fractured part, and builds a link between the wounded healer and the fundamental connection with each other and the earth, where there is an allowance for other intelligences, humility, and co-creational enterprise.

I remain passionate and determined to hold this essence in the face of institutional regulations and the focus on measuring theoretical standards, which we as a college agree with and support also to provide our learners with the academic qualifications required. This is the marriage of pragmatism and idealism, resulting in the empowerment of self and others and supports what Senge (1999) calls a "learning organisation" and in which personal growth is defined in terms that any holistic educator would applaud.

An authentic approach, such as humanistic or integrative, seeks to be more personal, with the personality of the therapist being involved in the client's healing through meeting, being in the world and using a real authentic relationship with boundaries. It can be described as a deep connection that facilitates the therapist in confirming the deepest thing within the client, in the form of accepting their whole

potentiality, a state of profound interaction between the therapist and the client. Transpersonal models do not seek to replace other models but instead, aim to expand the view of human nature. The developments in transpersonal counselling and psychotherapy (Baldwin, 2013; Buber, 1923, 2013; Mearns & Cooper, 2017; Rogers, 1980, 1995; Rowan & Jacobs, 2002, 2008; Wilbur, 2001) is strongly aligned to my philosophy of life and gives additional support and validity to my own and to ICPPD's philosophy of the person and psychotherapy.

The inclusion of the word 'holistic' in the title of all programmes offered at ICPPD was a considered attempt to encapsulate a transpersonal movement that evolved from 'inside out' rather than an integrative focus which gathers an eclectic mix of theory and tools to use. Perhaps the ultimate synthesis is the marriage of concepts and the integration of exterior and interior intelligences, knowledge and experiences, masculine and feminine aspects and both hemispheres of the brain. The inclusion of 'holistic' and its ethos is our unique selling point at ICPPD. I elaborate on the term 'holistic' and its broader meaning in Chapter 6.

I have given my narrative of how my philosophy of life and the person I am becoming was formed and in so doing I have shaped an institution along similar lines, and I am reminded of Van Deurzen (1998: 9) who writes "The way in which I tell my story is the way in which I create a self" and she says that how I create this story is important, "My existence is historic. It creates a story." I embrace the existential notion of a non-fixed and non-determined self that continues to re-orient itself. McAdams (1997, 2015) speaks to the way in which we become the person that is reflected in the stories that we tell about ourselves.

In the above narrative, I have engaged with, immersed myself in remembering and incubated on all levels the various strands and influences on my growth as a person and as a professional as promoted by Moustakas (2012), Sela-Smith (2002) and West (2001). My story matters to me and makes sacred the wounded woman finding meaning in the journey. In this life-review I am shedding what no longer serves me and claiming what is rightfully and has always been mine. With the symbolic image of a 'gold miners pan' (image below, Figure 2) I have taken the time to 'sift', evaluate and explicate the core influences and themes of a lifetime of living

and embodying these life experience and learnings. Using this image, I am left with the following words – love, passion, courage, creativity, resilience, perseverance, vulnerability, curiosity, connection, community, authenticity, nature, presence, spirituality, bi-focal lens, transpersonal and mythology along with - unquestioned assumptions, unfinished business, contradictions, polarities, blind-spots, enmeshment, and unworthiness remaining in the pan as the nuggets that I have distilled from documenting my account of engagement, immersion, and incubation.



Figure 2 – a minor's pan/sieve – my metaphor for heurist inquiry

The findings of this research are illuminating for me as I discover and accept distortions, imbalances, and dis-identify from some of my convictions, and open to other perspectives, alternatives, and change, while still holding the core purpose central to all. An example of this was appointing a person as Academic Director to replace me. While I knew this was the right action, I was not prepared for the grief of letting go and trusting another to care for our organisation and the learners. It was important to support this person and to hold a space for change to occur. It was also a painful process for me.

In questioning my assumptions, I reflect on the 'hard work' ethic introjected from my father and how this 'nearly killed' me over the years and has resulted in the value of self-love and self-care being diminished and how I now am more mindful of this trait.

I am also aware of how I learned from my mother to 'suffer silently' and I find it difficult to have a 'voice' at times, to express my vulnerability and ask for help and even more so, to express and make visible my strength and position of power and authority.

A message conveyed from my father was, that 'powerful women' were not 'nice women', and this inculcated in me like my mother, a submissive and at times a manipulative and rebellious stance. There is an insight for me in noting that among the women in my family, that, sensitivity, softness, kindness, heartfulness in a woman, is seen as 'too emotional' and so a harshness and even opinionated attitude is our adapted expressed response. What contradictions! I have been somewhat 're-shaped' as I engaged with my own personal therapy and my broader interest in education and embraced Rogers' conditions of worth. I now see my strength and my vulnerability as attributes to be respected.

An assumption that there were 'levels of respect' a hierarchy, an order of superiority was instilled in me and in us as a family system and an inbuilt sense of 'over' responsibility' possibly due to being the oldest offspring, left me with a 'drive' to succeed at all costs, to 'prove' my worth and gain the love of my parents and others. This manifests in my adult life and still as an elder in a need for recognition and acknowledgement while simultaneously being unable to claim it. This coincides with my current position as Managing Director at ICPPD, where there is an acknowledgement in this title, and yet it is new, evolving, and uncomfortable for me at the same time.

The most enlightening and illuminating insights for me in this chapter are the realisation that, in this submission to date I have not shared the following: I left my marriage, with my children, and all we had were duvets in black plastic bags and school uniforms. The only other item I brought with me the evening I left my home and marriage was the 'potato pot'. This was a big pot for boiling the potatoes for six growing children. As I reflect in this moment, I am full of wonder and awe at the unconscious power of the psyche. An Irish woman's psyche which includes memories of the famine and survival, and an ancient feminine whisper of the need to feed the children.

Later I realised I was suffering from PTSD, and this brought me to counselling and psychotherapy. I find this arc, from this place of desperately needing support, how Rogers' core conditions and humanistic concepts and principals experienced by me, in the beautiful spirit of the therapist I met at that time, has brought me to the place of leadership within the counselling and psychotherapy college I established, and within the field of counselling and psychotherapy in Ireland.

Another insight I am embodying in this moment is the lack of financial security I have known all my life. Concurrently, I have a sense of 'knowing' I will always have enough to get by, and I now include the memory of that first Christmas after separating, when 'Santa' was done, and I didn't have enough money to buy dinner for Christmas day, we were fed by the hamper I gratefully and humbly received from the charity St. Vincent de Paul. This supports my tacit knowing that I will survive, and I carried this faith into the establishment of ICCPD, after all, it had sustained me throughout the most vulnerable times in my life and this lived experience continued against the odds for the first eight years in the life of ICCPD. Today as an elder, I still hold this view of money as energy. I also have an appreciation for times when I have enough, and I enjoy these times and the lack of anxiety and stress involved.

My earlier experience of therapy shaped and influenced my philosophy of psychological restoration, and my view of what counselling and psychotherapy 'should be'. As a humanistic practitioner this study has required, I detach and discern a broader perspective of the needs of a client in psychotherapy. Theorists of integrative psychotherapy Norcross (2011: 9) referring to Paul's (1967) iconic question "*What* treatment, by *whom*, is most effective for *this* individual with *that* specific problem, and under which set of circumstances." Norcross (2011: 9) referring to Osler, (1892) father of modern medicine said, "it is sometimes much more important to know what sort of patient a disease has, than what sort of disease a patient has." Personally, I can only speak to the times I was 'met' in my therapy sessions by realness, this evidences Wampold and Imel (2015: 176) when they conclude following robust research that "the essence of therapy is embodied in the therapist".

Regarding 'unworthiness' I know that after leaving my marriage, when I went to Church and Mass I was overwhelmed with emotion every time I prayed "Lord, I am not worthy to receive you..." I have struggled with a sense of 'unworthiness' all my life. There is a contradiction here also in that I inherently had a 'felt sense' that I deserved to be treated, and to treat myself with love and respect.

I arrived at the above understandings and findings from deep conversation, factual discussions, and scientific enquiry with a critical friend as advocated by Alan (2021: 316) who espouses that "critical friends provide pivotal support by asking challenging questions and presenting constructive criticism" and (2021: 321) "provide objective perspectives" and "an opportunity to examine the data from a different perspective and through a different lens and thus the researcher critically approaches their own practices." This deeper reflection and explication helped illuminate further awareness and movement in my life.

Creative Synthesis

Creative synthesis occurs in reflecting on where I find myself today and the question of an unconscious calling, a vocation of some kind. I now propose that perhaps the arena of expression expands around an initial calling. In my case of wanting to make a difference, as a dreaming and curious child, as an adult wanting to mirror what was possible in moving beyond emotional abuse, as an adult learner demonstrating that lifelong learning was possible and later as a wounded healer and therapist, then a tutor, then founder of ICPPD, academic director of programmes and training therapists, and now as manager I continue building a beloved adult learning community. I am reminded again of the final element of the heroine's quest and cycle, according to Murdock (1990: 4-11) involving an acknowledgement of the union and power of our own dual nature for the benefit of all people.

In alignment with a psychosynthesis perspective – we are one, each of us is a cell in the body of the organisation or in the world we live in, and our challenge is to build relationships that unite us and our environment. I believe that our lives are a constant process of holistic transformation that we cannot stop, and this includes positive and negative influences, situations and the emergence and expanded learning and development from these experiences.

I now wish to acknowledge my journey without apologies and, this is emancipatory in nature. What if I am living my fate? Writing this now, carries humbleness, wonder and pride and some inner knowing that I always knew I could achieve more. The Irish mystic and poet John O'Donohue (1999) 'speaks' to me when he says that each of us brings something alive in the world that is uniquely ours.

Heuristic Inquiry

Heuristic inquiry can be traumatic as it is a methodology of the heart (Pelias, 2004) that is retold on behalf of the person involved and asking for consideration. This research has a leaning towards auto-ethnographic research and some of the complexities of such an approach are outlined for completeness. Autoethnography "studies 'us' in relationships and situations" Ellis (2007: 13) and any contribution "told in loving detail" (Holmes Jones, 2005: 765) highlight the various definitions and contradictions associated with autoethnography disclosure.

While it is widely recognised that social scientists and anthropologists have been doing autoethnography for several decades (Dollard (1935) critics (Coffey, 1999) of self-disclosure and autobiographical reflection refer to it 'as self-indulgent and narcissistic'. Atkinson (1997) criticises it for being a romantic construction of the self. Defined by Ellis and Bochner (2003: 209) as "an autobiographic genre of writing and research that displays multiple layers of consciousness, connecting the personal to the cultural" and Sparkes (2000: 21) as "highly personalised accounts that draw upon the experience of the author/researcher for the purpose of extending sociological awareness". Is this type of research only evocative (Ellis and Bochner, 2003) or can it also be analytical (Anderson 2006)? Holmes Jones (2005: 764) sees it as "writing a world in a state of flux and movement between story and context, writer and reader, crisis and denouement" and Chase (2005: 60) as a "narrative inquiry where the researchers turn the analytic lens on themselves".

Conclusion

My experience in writing this thesis is in line with Anderson (2006: 378) who sees autoethnography as “complete member researcher status, analytical reflexivity, narrative visibility of the researcher’s self, dialogue with informants beyond the self and commitment to theoretical analysis.” It became clear to me during this reflexive study that the researcher presents as intrinsic to the epistemology, my experiences, interpretations, and critical reflexivity are accepted as (Cunliffe, 2004) knowledge, linking personal to cultural and thus blurring the distinction between researcher and researched. This was my experience as I endeavoured to balance remaining true to the truth of my reality and remain open to critical learning moments, defined by Horsfall et al, (2001: 4) as

often complex, often chaotic, sometimes messy, even conflictual, full of critical moments when our inner voices or the outer world, with its structures and conventions intrude...are those times when researchers are impelled to negotiate between theories and conventions about research and their lived experience of it.

In alignment with heuristic enquiry, I engaged and immersed myself, and incubated the emerging insights and the revelations gained e.g., allowing my vulnerability to be seen, my pride and inability to ask for help, my sense of fierce commitment and dedication and over responsibility and the impact of this on me and on others, that goes along side with my passionate and altruistic energy and generosity of spirit, my ability to manifest a goal through hard work.

As I write I am considering the risk I take in sharing this analysis, I now wonder about the nature of this revelation, and self-disclosures throughout this context statement. Morse (2002: 1159-60) refers to a problem inherent in students writing about their own experiences as conceptual broadsiding, where the personal experience derails or impedes and “unwittingly moving away from the immediate focus of the study”. Further to this, Behar (1996: 24) states the “auto” reveal should be “essential to the argument, not a decorative flourish, not exposure for its own sake.” Heuristic enquiry leans towards an introspective narrative and Krieger (1991: 50) suggests

it may not be best to organize an account around an intellectual idea, when the subject is one’s own experience. It is

desirable to structure a description in terms of emotional content of an experience.

A characteristic of a reflective audit is a sense of vulnerability and nakedness in writing about self and others and this should be something desired within the narrative while being mindful of what King (2003: 10) writes, "once a story is told, it cannot be called back. Once told, it is loose in the world." This story continues.

Chapter 3 - My Educational and Professional Development Journey and Evaluation

Introduction

My training as a therapist and then becoming a trainer of therapists, to now creating a college of counselling and psychotherapy training and having professionally accredited graduates in the field influencing others, all supports my personal development and a self-actualisation tendency that will not be ignored. Corey and Schneider-Corey (1993: 29) referring to Maslow's idea of self-actualisation invites us to consider the process of becoming a self-actualising person and suggests four basic characteristics of "self-awareness, freedom, honesty and caring, and trust and autonomy."

Figure 3 illustrates my educational journey and my love of learning to date.

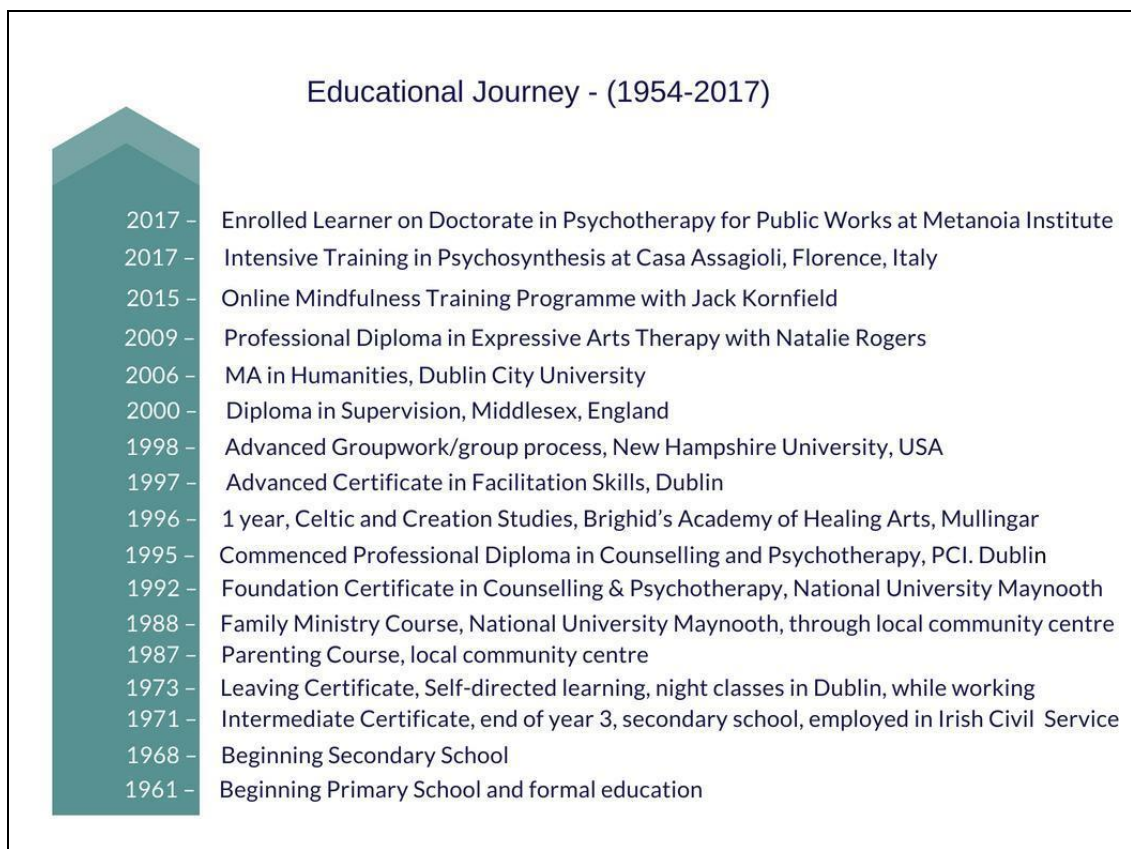


Figure 3 - Educational Journey 1961 - 2017

Maslow's self-actualisation theory

Maslow's (1954) self-actualisation theory recounts my journey as a seeker, finding myself at an impasse, looking for help in my personal life, questioning traditional

dogma and structures, feeling the existential constraints and underlying nudge that there was more to me, in my life was earth-shattering. I began to explore and own past mistakes and resources. I found an openness to new and exciting challenges and opportunities for personal growth. This painful time was truly a process of transformation for me.

Maslow's hierarchy and motivational theory relates to my returning to education having left school at sixteen, and this began a love affair with learning that continues to this day. Personal development courses and personal counselling positively supported my inner stirrings and unease. Then attending parenting courses, to learn more about myself and how to relate better to my loved ones were a natural progression.

Finally, I embrace fully the yearning and essence and the inexpressible, indescribable call to a vocation that even to myself I cannot fully explain. I am drawn to a quote from Maslow (1954: 93) who stated "A musician must make music, an artist must paint, a poet must write, if he is to be ultimately at peace with himself. What a man can be, he must be."

A Foundation-level course in Counselling in 1993, provided me with further knowledge, skills, and competency to live a more fulfilled life as a woman, wife, mother, daughter. There was an awakening to a freshness, a person-centred approach, and the blessing of an empowering tutor who encouraged an inner flicker of hope and a creative force waiting to be developed and accessed. This was a time when anxiety, confusion, fear, and effort was my constant visible companion. I did not have a conscious knowing of a muffled, ancient, unearthing, exhuming, and disentombing taking place also. During this time, I began to write poetry as a form of self-expression.

Moore (2001: 88) articulates it perfectly when he proposes that we may have to let life happen in a way that challenges our plans, our values, and our hopes "...we may have to surrender, as do artists of all kinds, to a looser life and a more liberated imagination" we may have to say words and make things while "not knowing what is going on."

Having faced times in my life when I wondered if I could keep going, if I had the energy and ability to stay in this world, then I would meet within me a resilience, an inner hand on my back which whispered, “one step at a time, all is well”. Even then words from an earlier biblical story (Gospel of Mathew 6:26) came to mind – ‘you are my beloved daughter’, and ‘I have not forsaken you’ and ‘look at the birds of the air and the lilies in the field, I take care of them’.

I recollect phrases from the poem *The Invitation* (Mountain Dreamer, 1999: 02) which I read at that time in my life, “I want to know if you can get up, after the night of grief and despair, weary and bruised to the bone, and do what needs to be done to feed the children.”

Figure 4 depicts my professional development to date. On reviewing my overall life experiences and significant times of change, growth, and transition, I am very aware of an ongoing organic desire, to progress my professional status as a psychotherapist and educator.

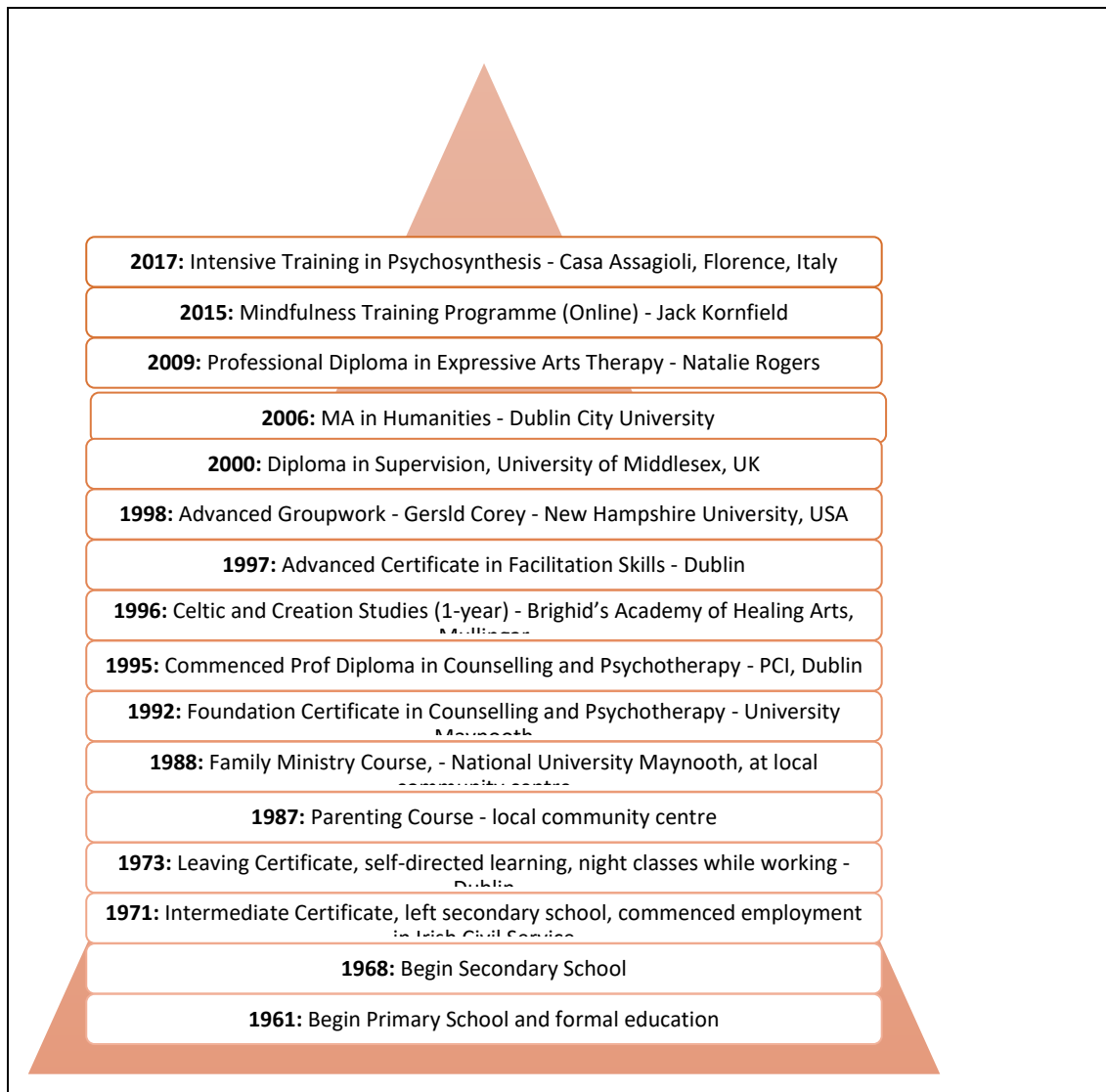


Figure 4 - Professional Development to 2017

Following completion of the foundation level course in counselling, the next stage of my professional journey was being accepted onto a professional Diploma in Counselling and Psychotherapy. With this new beginning came the end of my marriage as I took responsibility for my life and with deep sorrow did what I would hope my future clients might do. This was a crisis and an opportunity. Personally, this time was a confrontation with my false self as I met the possibility of embracing my growing authentic self. While in my personal life I was devastated with loss, I also felt uplifted and enjoyed my new-found friendships and interesting discussions at college.

I displaced the focus on my children's development and happiness for the exciting prognosis of what I might become. I regret abandoning my family for myself; I also know this was my only choice at that time if I was to continue 'living'.

My Professional training

My professional training, with its emphasis on humanistic approaches, Rogers (1979) Person-Centred therapy with its core conditions, Perls et al. (1994) and the Gestalt Approach with its here and now focus, along with Gendlin (1978) and Focusing were a calling to a new career and other life fulfilling options. Integrity, ethical awareness, personal therapy, new relationships, which later included a new love, all offered me excitement, hope, energy, enthusiasm, and a blossoming which rippled out to family and others.

This resulted in the establishment of a counselling service in the Midlands of Ireland called New Beginnings Counselling Ltd. At this time my work and position in GROW Ireland, (which is a government funded International 12 Step Approach to Mental Health Organisation) was difficult due to an inner conflict between offering direct support within this organisation, and my ever-growing appreciation for the work of counselling and psychotherapy. On completion of my training, I gave up this position to commence my clinical practice. This was truly a new beginning for me.

The logo for the counselling service was a butterfly and cocoon, symbolising 'transformation'. Sometimes in those early days I despaired and was full of self-doubt as I waited for clients to call for an appointment. As the sole provider for my family, I used my creativity and offered talks and short Personal Development Courses in the community and to women's groups throughout the Midlands. This kindled a trickling of clients and my work as a therapist began. As a family we barely survived financially.

Over five years later we moved to a new house and *New Beginnings Counselling* became *New Beginnings Counselling and Psychotherapy Holistic Centre Ltd*. My husband and I continue to work there over twenty-five years later offering counselling/psychotherapy and supervision sessions. Because of my growing interest and commitment to ICPPD, my current practice is small, but fruitful, and my husband continues the work of helping and healing at *New Beginnings*. I believe that the reason that we have seldom advertised, and yet our counselling service became a recognised and valued addition to the local community and surrounding

areas is due to our ongoing dedication to our own personal growth and attempting to live our philosophy.

We also offer Mindfulness and Meditation and Inner Child Healing workshops at *New Beginnings*. These workshops are an experience of nurturing and care. Participants arrive to coffee served in fifty-year-old China cups and home-made scones served at our kitchen table. Lunch is vegetarian. The workshops take place in a womblike dome Figure 5, purposely built for the current Inner Child work and future Women's Circles, it is our privilege to hold this sacred space for fellow human beings to use for exploration and personal growth.

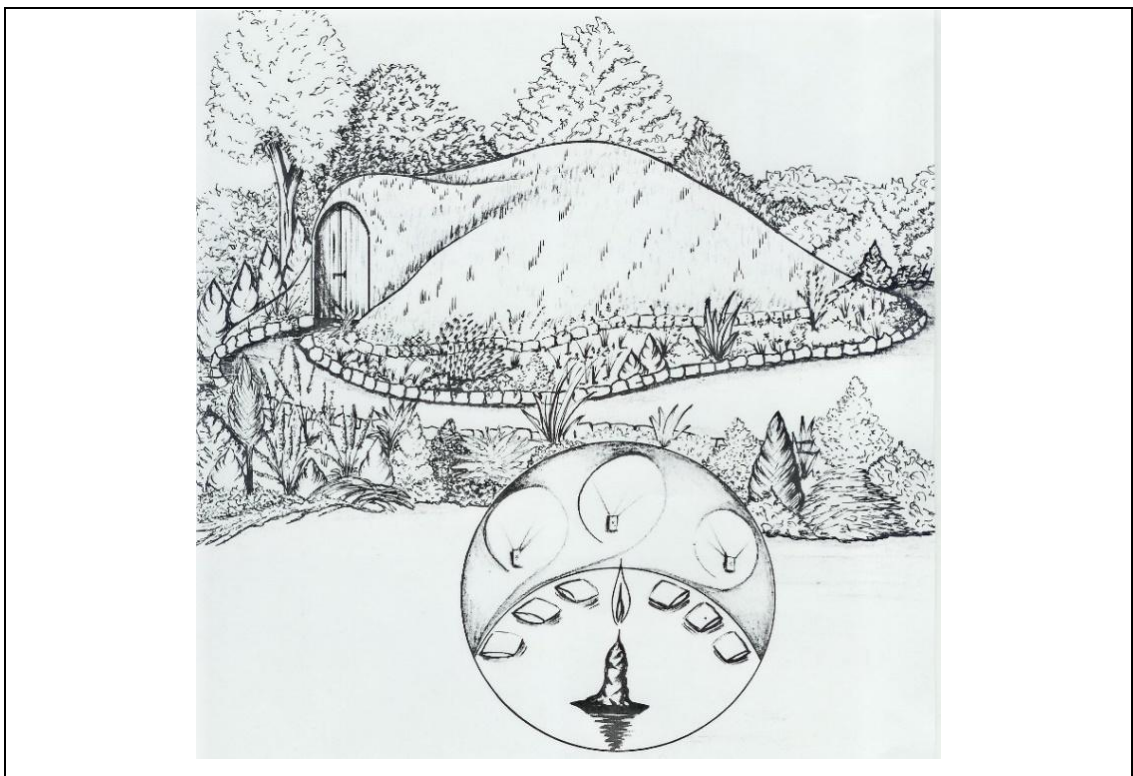


Figure 5 - Meditation/Inner Child Workshop Room at New Beginnings Holistic Centre

Over the years, it is a revelation and a joy to apply my espoused theory of counselling and psychotherapy into clinical practice, to transfer the learning to the counselling room and in doing so I integrated a personal philosophy.

On completion of my core training, I worked with clients in private practice and in community centers, I later became an accredited professional. Five years later there was a natural progression to supervision training and further opportunity for learning, and personal and professional growth. On-going academic training and

professional accreditations added to my credibility as a professional within the field of counselling and psychotherapy in Ireland.

International supervision expert and trainer, Michael Carroll was one of my supervision trainers and in his publications (Carroll, 1996, 2014: 190) he complimented me by including my personal philosophy (written in class). Whilst I now see the naiveté in my writings, my innocence and vision remain today, more than twenty years later.

The Philosophy of Supervision

Carroll writes, that when training supervisors, he often asks them to write in the form of a letter, their philosophy of supervision, explaining what supervision means to them. He then suggests that they repeat this exercise over time as their philosophy evolves in the light of practical experience. In using my class letter, he quotes my aspirations:

I want to offer you a space where vulnerability is accepted, where there is respite from perfectionism, achievements, and the demand for results, where there is rest, time, and space for reflection. A place to stop, to get off the treadmill, be heard and nourished and challenged to be who you truly are, to develop your potential. I want you to be safe to push the barriers of your comfort zone, so there can be growth. I want you to have the freedom and spontaneity to shout with excitement and enthusiasm at your success and to acknowledge without shame your worst scenarios. Supervision is an encounter where spirit meets spirit. (Moran in Carroll, 2014: 190)

I go on to say that when this meeting happens there will be trust, humility, modelling and shared learning; there will be an ancient art at play, guides come to educate, challenges present themselves, there is honest and loving feedback. The senses of taste, smell, touch, sight and sound, knowing and wonder become sharper and are appropriate channels. There is a real sense of connection, a reservoir of deepening levels of awareness and personal responsibility, a mystery waiting to be explored. Also, an eagerness to meet, a quickening of life forces, magnets which draw teacher to teacher.

Today as I revisit this piece, I am emotional as I ask myself, "Do I still 'sit' in this place of love or has 'fear' crept in and taken the seat of wisdom?" I attend monthly

individual supervision and monthly peer supervision not only as a professional requirement; it is also a professional resource to me in my many roles at present. I meet a mentor monthly to support my academic activities. The question I ask myself these days when I 'speak to' my insecurities, vulnerabilities, uncertainties, latest ideas, desires, contracts, and strategic plans are – “Is this soul-making or soul-destroying?” This dissertation is an unravelling of this professional crux which has a strong personal resonance for me. I have learned and realised as a female leader and facilitator of learning, that I need to honour my innate prerequisite for relationship to and with all. It is important for me to not dishonour my heart-centred vision. This includes further questioning of “What does my head say? What does my heart say? What does my gut say?”

During this time, there continued to be an urge within, and there were external invitations to further spiritual development and many 'retreats' at home and abroad ensued to appease this longing for expansion, manifestation, and healing.

Following the death of my beloved mother, I inherited a small amount of money, and I published three distinct kinds of affirmation cards, *Ring A Rosie*, *Inner Wisdom*, and *Creative Companion* and two guided meditation CDs, *Dear Precious Being* and *Guided Relaxation and Meditation*. Around this time, I also became a grandmother.

I began tutoring on a counselling and psychotherapy training course with two training colleges and there was an expectation that I would achieve a master's level degree to support my work as a lecturer. I applied to two universities for a prospectus for the following academic year, as it was October and the new academic year had begun. One of the institutes contacted me and after an interview on a Friday evening, I commenced my 1-year full-time course as a third level university student for the first time in my life at 50 years of age. I enjoyed every moment of this year. (The reason for my late entry was due to an applicant from Ghana, being unable to gain a visa, and there was one place left on the course, and I happened to enquire at the right time for me.)

The classes were held in All Hallows College, Dublin. This had previously been a seminary for priesthood. With beautiful grounds, a church, and an ethos of religious

community, I felt welcomed back to church after feeling rejected following my separation and divorce. I integrated my childish view of a patriarchal God, with a Divine Feminine and during this year I forgave myself and others and I grew up. My delight at sitting at the feet of academic experts, opening to the need for research, being in the company of like-minded adult learners as we explored well-worn and new topics with fresh eyes and with the hermeneutic of suspicion, was palpable. I received a distinction grade for my MA thesis titled, *The Re-Emergence of Self after Marital Breakdown and Divorce - A Psycho-Spiritual Perspective*. I remarried that same year. It was a year to remember.

I returned home and published therapeutic 'letters' I had written under a pseudonym, Saille Fearn. Saille being the name for Willow tree and Fearn the name for Alder tree in the Ogham alphabet. This is an ancient Irish language based on trees and inscriptions, thought to date back to 1st century AD. *Dear Precious Being* (Figure 6) was published in 2009. (Moran, 2009).

Two excerpts provided in Appendix 4 and Appendix 5 gives an indication of its genre.

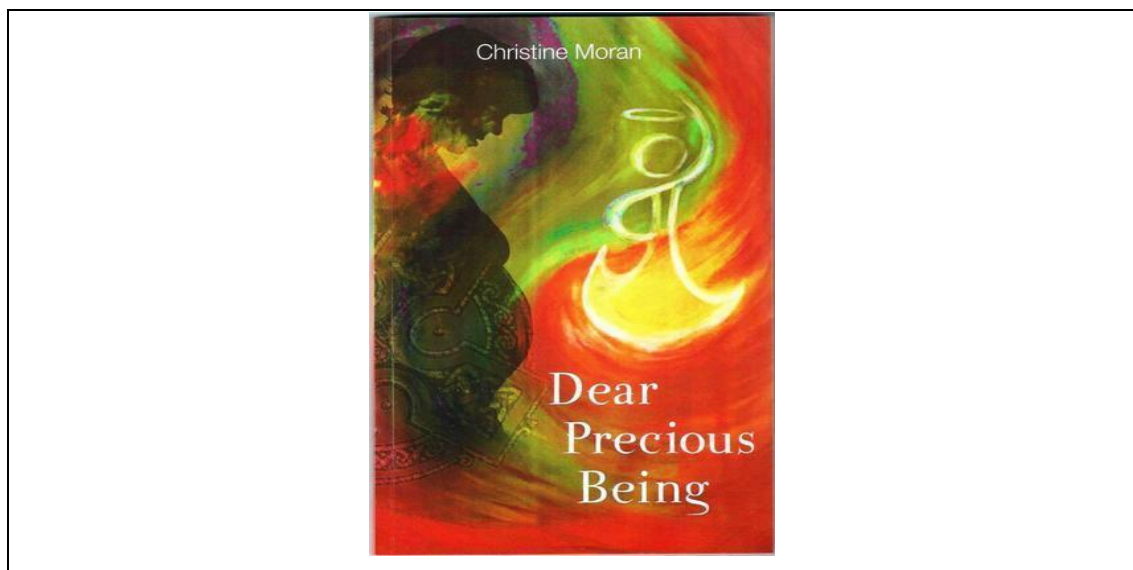


Figure 6 - Book Cover for Dear Precious Being published 2009

Life Stories

Bager-Charleson (2010) writes about McAdams and his focus on 'life stories' and the way we sequence events in our life into a coherent story. According to him we are often unaware of our framing of events and cultural values and beliefs play a

significant role here. McAdams (1993: 11) refers to our stories as personal myths, by which we seek truth and meaning in our lives, which we ‘tacitly even unconsciously, composed over the course of our years’. Bager-Charleson (2010: 61) concurs with this, “We are all tellers of tales. We seek to provide our scattered and often confusing experiences, with a sense of coherence by arranging the episodes of our lives into stories. This is not the stuff of delusion or self-deception.” Carroll (2014: 170) when writing about his research on clinical supervision records that

Storytelling is our human ways of communicating our experiences... supervisees tell the stories of their work in supervision. They weave their practice into narratives that explain to themselves and to those who listen what happened with their clients” and “critical self- reflection is the process by which I come to know the template behind my way of telling stories.

Education has always been a part of my story and has remained a high value for me. Reflecting on my educational journey from a heuristic inquiry perspective (Sela-Smith, 2002, Hiles, 2001, and West, 2001), I am aware that in the role of researcher I want to honestly portray and disclose my educational journey to date and to inspire others that life-long learning opportunities are an option for all. I withdrew into periods of incubation and questioned my natural ‘openness’ to sharing my experiences and my genuine wish to encourage and instil hope in others. In the parallel process of counselling and psychotherapy, I rarely self-disclose unless it supports the client in their life. This highlighted the importance of what Gutheil (2010) considering ethical aspects of self-disclosure in psychotherapy, identified the most relevant principles as; Beneficence and Nonmaleficence.

In-Depth Study of my lived experience

In this thesis I am also relating to the absorbing, sometimes difficult experience of in-depth study of my lived experience as a person, a therapist, an educator, and manager. Van Ooijen (2016: 171 in Goss & Stevens) writes

it is impossible to separate the person of the psychotherapist from their practice or research, this inquiry was about ‘me as a person’ as well as ‘me as a therapist/researcher.

Orlans (2004) describes research as illuminating an issue with critical precision and reflective awareness, which feels congruent with psychotherapy. This chapter constituted an inquiry into the development of my 'internal supervisor' (Casement, 1985) aiming to help me function 'with more immediate insight' (Cayne and Loewenthal, 2006: 118).

Conclusion

I am beginning to see the connection between my education and my understanding of how it has shaped my understanding of psychotherapy. Richardson (1998: 345) considers writing as a method of inquiry, a method of discovery and analysis and that new aspects of our topic and our relationship to it can be further unearthed and how "form and content are inseparable." My "felt sense" is gaining momentum and I want to imbue programmes at ICPPD with core elements from my own embodied knowledge alongside that of the propositional knowledge in this field. The facilitative approach of andragogy and 'education' in its true sense of adult life-long learning comes to mind. I recognise the pattern of my growth as a professional and entrepreneur and the 'shadow' side of my ambition and determination i.e. the cost of self-care and family time and connection.

I am enjoying this reflective practice and the process of learning and developing through examining my practice, opening it to scrutiny and studying texts from the wider circle. Effective reflective practice encourages the seeking of understanding and interpretation of principles, justifications, and meanings (Morrison 1996) and I am invited to be a reflexive as well as a reflective researcher.

I ask myself why I am undertaking this Doctorate – and after reflection I suggest the following:

- To gain greater awareness and insight into my practice as a psychotherapist, tutor, and leader
- To add to greater understanding of the education of counsellors and psychotherapists
- To contribute to the broad body of reflection and writing in this field i.e., workshops, papers, and conferences to professional bodies of relevant stakeholders.

Creative synthesis comes in the form of humility and a sense of privilege as I grow older and retrospectively recall my life. I am aware that while rest is mandatory especially as I get older, there is no time for self-pity and weakening of purpose. Each day I get to reconfirm my decision to proceed with each living experience presented. According to Erikson (1997: 129) this tension of proceeding and giving in, is the very root of success and every step we take is “a test of syntonio sovereignty and will power.” In the next chapter the beginnings of the ICPPD will be illustrated.

Chapter 4 – The International College for Personal and Professional Development– The Beginning

Introduction

Having left school at sixteen and gone to work in Dublin in the Civil Service, I had continued my studies by attending night classes and thus passed my Leaving Certificate. Getting married at twenty and having six children by the age of thirty ended my formal education. I was invited into a new arena of discovery and during this time I was asked to do some substitute teaching in the local national school. This surprised and delighted me.

Being home with my children provided opportunities to be creative and imaginative. There were stories and songs about each child, memories of creative experiences and imaginary journeys undertaken, that later I came to know in therapy as visualisation exercises. I am reminded of Dewey's (1859-1952) pragmatic approach and wisdom that knowledge and education is a living thing, always developing and depending on new perspectives and that we learn from reflecting on our experiences. I set up a playschool in our home to subsidise the family income and provide stimulation for me and my children. Later I was asked to provide this in the community, this felt like a personal achievement at that time.

Due to the nurturing and supportive experience when completing my MA studies, and my introduction to Psychosynthesis and the Creative Expressive Arts, I had seen the importance of integrating a pastoral component and the need to offer an education and training that encompassed whole brain development and a body, mind spirit philosophy.

Back in 2009, I shared my vision with another therapist I respected who asked, "Why don't you set up your own college?" a friend sold her home and gave me a loan of €20,000.

ICPPD was registered as a company on 17th February 2010. I am reminded of Rilke (1934: Letter 3) when he wrote his inspirational words of advice on giving birth to

your images. “They are the future waiting to be born...fear not the strangeness you feel. The future must enter into you long before it happens.”

I had been previously involved in designing, delivering, and assessing various modules on training courses in counselling and psychotherapy, so this new venture of starting a counselling training school presented a positive challenge to me. I contracted an educationalist to support the academic writing as I felt this was not my strength. I find myself emotional as I write this part of my story. I am appreciating my struggle as I then crossed the threshold into a world, I knew little about and felt that I did not have the knowledge or language to articulate myself.

Challenges

Having previously been involved in small businesses I was somewhat familiar with legal, company, banking, and commercial regulations. My third level educational experience had until then comprised of module development and distillation and classroom delivery. Now I found myself overwhelmed by different challenges. These challenges included developing an organisation, employing staff, contracts, communicating with academic bodies, technology and a new unfamiliar language and arena.

I was and continue to be a psychotherapist and supervisor, offering myself as a non-judgemental, compassionate vehicle, present to meet the needs of clients and facilitate their connection to their wisdom and answers. I found myself struggling in a world where learning outcomes and assessment, where policies and regulations i.e., QQI and IACP and quantifiable evidence dictated progression.

Vision of a dynamic learning space

My vision of a dynamic learning space was supported by previous research and learning gained from the works of Dewey (1934), Lewin (1946), and Knowles (1984). Furthermore, Kolb (1984) offered a learning cycle with four stages that supported the different style of teaching and learning needed in any group and creates a broad theory that supports the idea of life-long learning. Boreham (1987) proposes that the concept of experiential learning really means learning by reflection on the experience. I had experienced the ‘power’ of experiential learning as an adult

learner in higher education and in counselling and psychotherapy training from a facilitative perspective and from this I understood andragogy. I was introduced to paralogy through the work of Corneli & Danoff (2011) and the idea of creating a thriving adult learning community at ICPPD was supported by further insights from Wenger's (2008) work and the modes of "belonging" that she later called "identification". She espouses that learning be a journey through landscapes of practice involving engagement, imagination and alignment and proposes a movement from hierarchical organisations to fostering horizontal communities and networks. This has transformational potential for the future of learning.

Over the past ten years, I have lost and been lost as I floundered in this unfamiliar environment to remain embodied and focussed on my vision. In my personal journal, I wrote:

What is my vision for ICPPD? What is the underlying ethos? Am I fulfilling an inner and outer destiny? My philosophy of counselling and psychotherapy, all shaped by my earlier influences, past and current life experiences support me now. I have a blossoming trust in an unknown process that is irresistible - is heart centred, creative, human, compassionate, individual, and universal. Perhaps this is my psychosynthesis and transpersonal calling. Uncertainty also rises in all levels of my being. Is this a neurosis linked to my need for attention, recognition, success, or something more sinister that I am unaware of? (Moran, 2010)

I wrestled with questions back then and I continue to reflect on my motives and remain curious and find comfort in a quotation by Hawkins and Shohet (2008:9) who advise that it is essential for all in the helping profession to "honestly reflect on the complex mixture of motives that led them to choose their current profession and role."

I find myself still asking related questions in times of doubt and panic. I have, and continue to use, creative expression in my journal. These pieces of writing, spontaneous poetry and images have brought themes and explicit insights for exploration in my personal therapy, which I attend regularly to process the challenges presented to me in my work and family life.

In the therapeutic encounter I am challenged and supported to critically reassess my ideas, values, and assumptions, make meaning and deep connections, and

transfer my new insight and understanding into my relationship with self and others. It is supportive that Rowan (2000: 205) wrote that humanistic education means the therapist goes on learning throughout life and that this is because “the process of self-actualisation, which we start on in therapy, never ends. Eventually, it goes beyond therapy, if we let it continue, into spiritual territory.”

At a validation panel visit in 2018, a panel member enquired informally as to what explanation we might give to the high 96% retention of learners at ICPPD, I am sure it is the learners overall experience – set within a combined approach that includes personal and professional challenge and support, a curriculum that offers an holistic approach to counselling and psychotherapy and most of all a teaching and learning strategy that meets the learner where they are at and invites them into the bigger picture of possibilities. To support ICPPD’s holistic approach to learning and healing Majava (2005) undertaking research on a new intellectual framework in psychiatry and psychotherapy, concluded that a psychosomatic orientation may dramatically expand and enrich our psychotherapeutic attitudes, and that the capability of our symbolic functions adds to our understanding, bringing richness to human culture; carrying the elements of narration, myths and the arts to our clinical rooms, and turns our offices into the theatres of the mind.

ICPPD Holistic Ethos

In this thesis I present ICPPD’s clear holistic ethos and the teaching and learning principles, that effective counselling requires both conscious reasoning and unconscious intuition. This is mirrored in the classroom at ICPPD by tutors who are required to be practicing therapists. This type of integrated, holistic vision is key in the development, delivery, assessment of all programmes at ICPPD and the learners then experience effective learning where conscious reasoning and unconscious intuition, structure and spontaneity are respected equally as part of adult learning and development in the training and education of counsellors and psychotherapists. The Public Works (Folder 17:9) submitted provides evidence and samples of feedback from learners received at the end of every module.

This emphasised holistic discipline (is further explained in Chapter 6/9) is distinctive at ICPPD and differentiates ICPPD as a *College with a Difference* – which is our

distinctive orientation and is portrayed as such in our image and mantra on social media and other publicity in relation to ICPPD.

Conclusion

In concluding this chapter, I reflect from a heuristic approach (Moustakas, (1990), West, (2001) and Hiles, (2001) on the beginnings of ICPPD. I had completed training in Celtic spirituality, a master's degree in Holistic Development for Pastoral Ministry which included Psychosynthesis and Creative Arts modules and then later I attended a person-centred Expressive Arts training with Natalie Rogers. During all of this time and later, I created artwork; poems and stories in my journal and the process of creating these provided insight and expression and spontaneously focused me on exploring and examining my interest in establishing ICPPD and designing programmes in psychotherapy. There was excitement at the journey ahead and there were worries and fears which at times made me hesitate to reassess the situation and regulate my anxiety.

Moustakas (1990: 10) says that in the heuristic process, "what appears, what shows itself as itself, casts a light that enables one to come to know more fully what something is and means." This collides with a shamanic dream I had at this time, where I journeyed to the underworld and met my power animal – a female giraffe who gave me guidance "see through your eyes, look around, take note and then rise up to look out through my eyes, and see your world from a different and higher perspective." I interpreted this as an invitation to further develop the wisdom of my inner supervisor.

Initial Engagement of ICPPD

In this initial engagement phase of ICPPD, self-dialogue and tacit knowledge were essential guidance for me. The symbolic images, creative writing, and the dreaming left me with questions, which drew me further along. I explored in supervision, in therapy, in my journal, with friends and loved ones to find answers while still in a process of self-dialogue. Bolton (2001: 201) encouraging reflective practice says we "we don't travel far in reflective practice: just make a good deal more sense of where we are." This kind of reflection can be undertaken by the "whole practitioner

in a holistic process – one which is aesthetic and creative and does not flinch from the rage of human experiences” Bolton (2001: 201). Moustakas (1990: 17) writes “the process of self-dialogue makes possible the derivation of other body of scientific knowledge that is useful”. This process is guided by a “conception that knowledge grows out of direct human experience and can be discovered and explicated initially through self-inquiry.” West (2009: 187) questions when using reflective research approaches, if it is even possible to “bracket one’s presupposition” and references Rennie and Fergus (2001) advocating what they call “embodied categorizing” that “allows one’s subjective bodily sense to take the lead”. While West “welcomes such a holistic and indeed intuitive approach” to categorisation, he says it is hard to defend this as “objective.” West (2009: 194) further cautions that spirituality and therapy cannot be “objectified” as we cannot completely detach from the data, and that acknowledgement of our position is better so that “our research reports can be understood in this context”.

In the immersion phase that took place in this early stage of the development of ICPPD I was engrossed in both the practical element of finding a building to lease, register a company and remain focused on my inner landscape which Moustakas (1990:25) describes as “an inner attention, a staying with, a sustained process of systematically contacting the more central meaning often experienced.” My counselling and psychotherapy training and self-awareness supported me to stay grounded at that time, and since then when overwhelm threatens my well-being.

Incubation Phase

The incubation phase occurred naturally in my heuristic inquiry. I started documenting my dreams of a training college for therapists, the mission and ethos. I created a vision board, imagined the venue, and had a felt sense of classrooms full of trainees discussing the fundamentals of counselling and psychotherapy which included expressing a body, mind, spirit integration. I participated in a women’s circle for support while I gestated this fledgling idea.

As I explicated what was important in the process to progress my vision, I overworked, overthought, and over felt while remaining in the movement that was

occurring. This meant at times I was tired and overwhelmed and needed to pause for a day or a week to regain my equilibrium, strength, and confidence.

Illumination Phase

The illumination phase included clarity in knowing what I wanted to create. The realities of what this involved forced me to expand my perception of myself, my therapy training, my academic ability, and shine a light on the challenges and difficulties ahead, particularly academic, and financial lack. Moustakas, (1990: 11) says “in heuristic investigation, I may be entranced by visions, images, and dreams that connect me to my quest. I may come into touch with new regions of myself and discover revealing connections with others. Through the guidance of a heuristic design, I can see and understand in a different way.”

At this time, I was working and struggling with a staff member who not only had a different expertise but also a different communication style. I explored this concern from the concept of Jung's shadow, and I understood my old patterns of avoidance of conflict, and I realised that I did not easily appreciate differences, that I was cautious in embracing what was unfamiliar to me e.g., Quality Assurance. I grappled with policies and procedures for safety against my beloved organismic values, variables, and processes. I now appreciate how one can support the other. I learned to open to other perspectives and embrace the gift of difference.

During this early period at ICCPD, I was in training, practicing, and developing workshops and courses on mindfulness and meditation. I loved the teachings of Thich Nhat Hanh, and a Mindfulness and Mindful-Living programme was one of the earliest offerings at ICCPD and it is still today a popular CPD Distance Learning course.

Music, songs, and chants played at ICCPD and at home, reminded me to remain true to the vision of an academy of learning with breadth and depth. Images of circles and mandalas were prominent in my journal. I tacitly knew I was on the right path as clues appeared in the form of prominent trainers in the field of counselling and psychotherapy in Ireland contacting me to volunteer as members of academic board. On another occasion of financial insecurity, a woman approached me with a

substantial loan to support my work and the establishment of ICCPD. Throughout all this time I questioned myself and my purpose.

The Explication Phase

The explication phase included openness to a spiritual journey that involved the passing onto others the loving relationship and healing I had experienced in therapy. Based on raw data from journals, dreams, metaphoric stories and more I continuously dwelled and focused on the process of establishing a training college, while at times full of unexpressed fear and anxiety. I was aware and regretted the loss and impact of my immersion in this project and yet I could not seem to know of any other way at that time. I was also aware of my denial of impending losses and focused on the project at hand, the establishment of a counselling/psychotherapy college, ICCPD. Moustakas (1990) quotes Reads' (1987) dialogue with nature as an example of the heuristic self-searching "let go and fall into the river. Let the river of life sweep you beyond all aid from old and worn concepts. I will support you. Trust me." And "Can you trust me enough to let go of the known and swim in an unknown current?" (Reads, (1987: 26) as cited in Moustakas, 1990: 13).

This aligns with Sela-Smith's (2002: 79) view of resistance in heuristic research. She writes in criticism of Moustakas' method that "most inquiries presented no evidence of the type of freefall surrender to the process that was described as a jumping into the river, and a leap into the darkness." My experience was, a leap of faith, into an unknown space and with it the trembling of body, mind and emotions and a trust in spirit. A resistance I was aware of at that time was the need for academic rigor and engagement with programme validation bodies, my resistance was mostly due to an introjected untruth i.e., as I opened to the reasoning of quality assurance procedures and national and international academic standards, I felt a strong desire to engage with these processes to see where they would take me and ICCPD. I began asking others for perspectives, input, and expertise. This helped me overcome my resistance, hesitation, and inadequacies. As I continued to invest all of my energy and resources in setting up ICCPD, I was not fully aware of the strong attachment I was internalising and the immersion process that was occurring. ICCPD was now my 'life', my 'baby' and I was 'blinkered' in my emotional

investment, my use of it as a creative channel, and my strong protective tendencies towards it. I was enmeshed and it was swallowing me up and, I was not aware of it at the time.

As I complete my return to and remembering of this time, I am emotional. It was not an easy time as I came face to face with my vulnerabilities and old patterns that were now unconscious again, and the realisation of carrying a huge burden of responsibility, to financial institutions, learners, staff, and validation bodies. I daily wrestled with fear and faith. This continues for me today, to lesser degrees, and the changing times I continue to live in, require me to integrate a synthesis and a holding of all.

In Chapter 5 the Building of an Organisation in the context of social change in Ireland and heuristic research will be discussed.

Chapter 5 – Building an Organisation in the context of social change in Ireland

Introduction

Mental health is an integral and essential component of health. The World Health Organisation on their website state:

Health is a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.

This is in alignment with the holistic philosophy of ICPPD that health is not just the absence of illness, but the availability and potential for the person to have a healthy body, mind and spirit and contribute and be of service to others. The WHO (2018) advocate that an environment that respects and protects basic civil, political, socio-economic, and cultural rights is fundamental to mental health. Without the security and freedom provided by these rights, it is difficult to maintain a high level of mental health. It is generally agreed that “poor mental health is also associated with rapid social change, stressful work conditions, gender discrimination, social exclusion, unhealthy lifestyle, physical ill-health and human rights violations” (WHO, 2018, [http:// www.who.int](http://www.who.int)).

The Relationship between Counselling/Psychotherapy and Society.

The relationship between counselling/psychotherapy and society is one in which therapy is continually reconstructed in response to changes in culture and society. Qualitative research of which heuristic approach is embedded in, is a form of knowing that is particularly attuned to the study of how aspects of social life (such as counselling and psychotherapy) are constructed and reconstructed. McLeod (2018: 17) proposes that for the most part the types of counselling and psychotherapy that are practiced today are the products of modernity and reflect the “values and worldview that have driven the expansion of modern industrial society: rationality, the primacy of scientific knowing, individualism, globalism, progress, militarism, avoidance of risk, heterosexism, mastery”. It is becoming increasingly apparent to many people that this constellation of beliefs and constructs or myths, are central aspects of humanity: emotionality, faith, spirituality, community, tradition, mystery, respect for the natural environment,

and diverse sexualities. The reconstruction of therapy according to McLeod (2015: 16) involves “finding ways of incorporating these areas of experience into therapeutic practice”. Here, the contribution of qualitative research and particularly heuristic approach, lies in its capacity to approach research topics from a perspective of openness to different voices, a willingness to examine the historical ‘archaeology’ of therapeutic knowledge and an ability to challenge and deconstruct prevailing therapeutic language and assumptions.

The Narrative Approach

Etherington (2004) on choosing a narrative approach, refers to Mishler, (1999) who advocated that, understanding the narrative of how our socialisation and life choices have impacted the creation of our identities, and how recognising the importance of locating individuals within their local environments, while also recognising that these, in turn, are situated within, and influenced by, wider historical and socio-cultural contexts.

Social Changes in Ireland since the 1960’s.

O’Connell (2021: 2-3) in her autobiography was born in 1954 and “by the time I reached my 13th birthday in 1970 society was beginning to change” in Ireland, and there was a generation who would question their religious and social mores. While the women's movement was active in America and Britain it did not “save me from the dictates of the religious and societal morality that pervaded the country at this time and were especially cruel to women.”

She states that growing up in 1960s Ireland meant that lives were lived through the regimes of home, school and church. In the early 1970s “you couldn't get a condom in Ireland for love or money even if married you couldn't get a condom to prevent pregnancy in Ireland without going through the shameful ritual of having your GP request you get permission from the bishop through the sacrament of confession” (p.38). In 1970s Ireland women had little or no choice regarding their bodies, or the actions and decisions they could make regarding their bodies (2021: 39). The unmarried mothers’ allowance wasn't introduced until July 1973 (2021: 59). Finding herself an unmarried mother, she writes (2021: 128)

what had been ingrained in me from the time of my birth, the message of original sin, the idea that we constantly needed to confess and be cleansed, along with my experiences in the 1970s, colored my perspective on what was happening, so that I was in constant defensive mode. I was like a warrior going into battle all the time and it was exhausting.

Mother and Baby Homes in Ireland

The publication of the mother and baby homes Commission of investigation final report in October 2020 brought into the public eye the reality of the lives of some women in Ireland. O'Connell further states (2021: 132) that

even now, with all that is in the public domain, it still remains difficult for women to speak about their personal experiences, to take their past out and have it openly scrutinized.

She says that even after the publication of the report, patience is needed in allowing women to come forward and talk. A culture of silence has committed them to a prison of 'not telling', and while more and more "voices are welcomed there are still those who live back in the era of not letting the neighbours know" (2021: 134).

Gaffney in an article published in the Irish Times, which examines how shame and guilt were foisted on women in the name of religion, have a long-term effect. In her article "the land of mother and baby homes" published (16th January 2021) she offers an understanding of just how deep the shame of being an unmarried mother goes, and how far it follows the women who were incarcerated. Gaffney remarks that shame "is a more primitive feeling, a feeling of being exposed, stripped naked, degraded" and that "it evokes the most primal of human fears, the fear of being cast out of our community". O'Connell (2021: 35) continues that fifty years later and "here I was, still feeling somehow responsible for everything that had happened back then" and "I realise how deeply that shame had infiltrated my whole psyche, even to this day".

What is remarkable for me writing this thesis are her words (2021: 137) "I began to see how my story and the story that had been constructed as far back as the setting up of the Free State, and even earlier, had collided, becoming inexorably enmeshed, almost inseparable". Referencing Inglis (1998) in the Irish Times, O'Connell (2021: 138) writes

all of this provides an interesting insight into how these ideas formed a nation that could be controlled by the church as well as the state. For those who didn't comply with this version life was very difficult, e.g., when we think of the number of married women who could not attend their children's baptisms and even, at times, funerals, if they had not been churching in accordance with Catholic Church teaching.

Our story brings meaning to our lives

Jung (1959) posits that without our myth, without our story, we are unrooted. The policies of church and state, which kept such rigid control of a whole nation, through fear, shame, and excess guilt, have resulted in generations who are without roots. We need to tell our story. Writing our story brings meaning to our lives. The Greek philosopher Aristotle (382- 322 BC) was one of the first to propose this idea. He also suggested that in writing our memories, the actions of our lives, we not only bring meaning to our own lives, but we also make our histories shareable.

My mother was the first woman to wear a 'trouser suit' in the parish. She wore it to Mass and caused a commotion, other men asked my father – "who wears the trousers in your house". I am including the above to give the reader a view into the world I grew up in also, and how Irish women were emerging and starting to take their equal place in society.

Therapy Professions and Health Care Policies

According to the Identification of Research Priorities for Therapy Professions in Ireland (Funded by the Department of Health and Children and managed by the Health Research Board Research undertaken by the University of Ulster July 2010), several reports have identified the importance of the therapy professions in helping to address the policy imperatives in Irish health care. However, to make a meaningful contribution to this agenda, the therapy professions must have a body of knowledge and skills that pertain to their work and are based on the highest-quality research. The reality of adequate research in the therapy professions had been acknowledged in previous reports from sources such as Mant (HRB, 2006) and

the Department of Health and Children (DoHC, 2008b) and there had been a call for research priorities to be identified specifically for the therapy profession.

Demographic Trends and Therapy Professions over the last two decades

The size and make-up of the Irish population has changed in important ways over the last two decades and these trends look set to continue. Such 'demographic' trends have implications for almost all areas of Irish life, but health and health care are particularly sensitive to the make-up of the population. Effective planning for the consequences of these trends will be crucial in determining how successful we are in coping with the associated challenges. The Identification of Research Priorities for Therapy Professions in Ireland (2010) is the first attempt to tease out and quantify the impact of demographic change on the demand for and delivery of health care in Ireland. As in most other affluent nations, life expectancy in Ireland has been increasing strongly in recent decades. This is to be celebrated and attests to real improvements in Irish society. Nonetheless, older people require both more health care, on average, than younger people and a different combination of services. Population ageing is not the only demographic challenge we face, however. Recent inward migration combined with improvements in life expectancy mean that Ireland simply has a significantly larger population, and this will exert increasing pressure on Irish health care resources. This is the task of this report, the last in a series of three commissioned by the Health Research Board (HRB) and Health Services Executive (HSE) on the impact of demographic change on the demand for and delivery of health care in Ireland to 2021. Population change is the outcome of three processes: fertility, mortality, and net migration and each have important implications for the provision of health services.

Irish Birth Rates

Ireland's fertility rate peaked in 1965 and remained high until 1980 after which it declined markedly. Rates did rise again in the mid-1990s but have been declining again since 2003 and there is a clear long term downward trend. This fertility decline is most marked among women aged 20 to 29 but has been compensated for, to some extent, by increasing fertility among women aged 30 to 39.

The central projection of the project assumes an initial increase in births to 2014 followed by a decline to 2021. (HRB and HSE, 2010). The absolute number of deaths occurring in the state has been declining since the early 1990s with a sharp fall in deaths after 1999.

Patterns of Migration

The change in the pattern of migration over the last 15 years has been remarkable. Inward migration trebled between 1996 and 2006 from 40,000 to 122,000 with the proportion of migrants with no previous connection to Ireland increasing substantially, particularly in the final two years of that period. Our central projection assumes that economic factors and changes in the pattern of European mobility will lead to a decrease in the number of migrants between 2006 and 2021. Recent economic shocks have seen immigration fall precipitously but we project immigration to converge with the projected downward trend by 2014.

Mental Health Issues.

The Mental Treatment Act of 1945 had a decisive influence on the provision and development of psychiatric services in Ireland. With its description of the “district mental hospital” and the “Dundrum Central Criminal Lunatic Asylum” it brings up a sense of anxiety in me as I remember the secrecy and fear of people in the community when I was growing up in case, they would need the services of ‘the big house’ or the ‘asylum’.

Zahid and Mansoor (2012) in their article report amendments were made to the Act in 1953 and 1958. The Mental Health Act 2001 was signed into law in July 2001 replaced the 60-year-old Mental Health Act 1945, was fully implemented on November 1, 2006. Its purpose was to provide a modern framework within which people who are mentally disordered and who need treatment or protection, either in their own interest or in the interest of others, can be cared for and treated. It also put into place mechanisms by which the standards of care and treatment in our mental health services can be monitored, inspected, and regulated. Countries that have signed international human rights conventions are obliged to respect, protect, and fulfil the rights enshrined in those conventions.

The European Convention for Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedom, backed by the European Court of Human Rights, provides more binding protection for the human rights of persons with mental disorders residing in the countries that have ratified it.

According to the HSE website, it is estimated that one in four or five of us will experience some mental health problems in our lifetime. “Mental health problems can range from a low or sad period to a more serious depression, with a small number of people going on to experience severe mental health problems”. Most people with mental health problems can be treated by their GP and are referred to HSE Mental Health Services when necessary. The HSE provides a wide range of community and hospital based mental health services in Ireland, and these services have seen dramatic changes and developments over the past twenty years. These changes continue, as we move from the hospital model to providing more care in communities and in clients' own homes. Graduates of ICPPD are employed as counsellors/psychotherapists with the National Counselling Service, as part of the counselling services in Trinity College Dublin, National University Galway (NUIG) and other Irish institutes of education, in Family Resource Centres throughout the country and in GP centres.

In its Transformation Programme, the Health Service Executive (HSE) committed to the development of the “integrated health system” (IHS) to be achieved through a redirection of health services from acute hospitals to primary and community care. The view that community-delivered care represents better value for money with the potential for better quality of care for patients is a key driver for this policy objective. The above projections and statistics could never have imagined that in 2022 there would be an influx of refugees from Ukraine to Ireland as we open borders to allow people fleeing war to enter. This is the backdrop to ICPPD today as we prepare for re-validation of the BA in Holistic Counselling and Psychotherapy (the initial submission which was validated by QQI was presented in the Public Works folder in 2018). Module descriptors are being reviewed by tutors and the Programme Development Team and social, educational, and political changes and their implications for psychotherapy are being considered as part of this process.

Daly and Craig (2018) in a report (HRB Statistics Series 39 Activities of Irish Psychiatric Units and Hospitals) and reviewing the data from 2009-2018, write that “despite the increase in admissions from 2017–2018, there has been a 16% overall reduction in admissions in the ten-year period from 2009–2018, and that

admissions numbers have declined steadily since reaching a peak in 1986, however this decline seems to have “slowed down in recent years with the increase in admissions from 2017–2018 contrary to the trend over the last number of years.

The National Drug Treatment Reporting System (NDTRS) in their updated bulletin on the cases of treated problem alcohol use in Ireland from 2010 to 2016 report that in this seven-year period 53,763 cases were treated for alcohol as a main problem. One fifth of those treated for problem alcohol use, also reported poly-drug use, like previous years. Cannabis was the most common additional drug used followed by cocaine. Benzodiazepines were the third most common additional drug reported among cases treated for problem alcohol use. The proportion of cases reporting benzodiazepines as an additional problem increased from 17.6% in 2010 to 28.6% in 2016. All of this evidence points to the need for qualified supportive professionals in the field of addiction counselling, and while ICPPD’s focus is on holistic counselling and psychotherapy, there is a need for the families and others affected by addiction and mental illness to have support in the community.

The Gay Marriage Referendum

Another milestone and impact on Irish society was the Gay Marriage Referendum. The Irish Times (23rd May 2015) confirmed that “Ireland becomes first country to approve same sex marriage by popular vote” quoting the Minister for Health Leo Varadkar “It’s a historical day for Ireland,” he told RTÉ, a “social revolution”, and “Mr Varadkar revealed publicly during the referendum campaign that he was gay” and that the “Archbishop of Dublin Diarmuid Martin said it was now time to focus on other myriad inequalities in Irish society.”

ICPPD Programmes in response to social needs

The creation of programmes at ICPPD take into consideration the rapid social change that has occurred since the inception of ICPPD i.e., mental health provision,

multi-culturalism and changing attitudes to sex and sexuality. Throughout the programme well-being themes at all levels are considered and resources and tools for self-care and health are promoted and examined e.g., in year 1 of the BA in Holistic Counselling and Psychotherapy degree course, the practice and use of mindfulness, and cognitive behavioural techniques are explored and learners' competencies in such approaches deepened. In year 2, learners are expected to examine their relation to loss and bereavement as a universal issue and this includes the loss of identity and culture. In year 3, learners create a genogram in the module on Family and Systemic Approaches to discuss generational patterns and movement, such as addiction, mental health issues and emigration. In year 3 and year 4 the modules, Abnormal Psychology and Mental Health Issues and Understanding Psychopathology allow learners to look without judgement and shame at their own beliefs, and areas of stigma, prejudice, bias, and mental health issues. This exploration pathway supports learners in acquiring the professional competencies to work with such issues in their future practices. The area of social change and its impact has been an issue highlighted by our External Examiner last academic year. The feedback recommended that ICPPD provide training in - diversity, gender, and sexuality for its tutor panel and for learners on our core training programmes to keep in touch with current issues in the clinical setting. This is being arranged at present and is in line with the WHO (in March 2018) advising that multiple social, psychological, and biological factors determine the level of mental health of a person at any point of time and that violence and persistent socio-economic pressures are recognized risks to mental health and the clearest evidence is associated with sexual violence.

Other separate short additional workshops offered at ICPPD to support learning and clinical practice include – Working with Suicidal Clients, Sex and Sexuality, Therapeutic Journaling, Sage and Aging, Sibling Bereavement, The Holistic Psychotherapist, Resources and Tools to help with Anxiety and Domestic Violence and Abuse.

Our complaints procedures were tested this year also, when a learner complained that an exercise on a Personal Development Module was insensitive to some people in the community. This exercise has since been modified. The learning from this

process was that we are part of a multi-cultural population and hence the further need for training in diversity and education and better understanding of diversity. A workshop on this topic has been approved and arranged for all learners to support their clinical work in year 3 and year 4 of the core counselling and psychotherapy training. As psychotherapists often work with power, sex, sexuality and diversity, cultural and relationship issues, there is a need to include these in the curriculum within training and education of therapists. Following this complaints process, the chair of academic board recommended that all tutors focus on and critical reflect on their teaching and learning mode and models of practice to include exploring a pluralistic approach as advocated by Cooper (2005) and McLeod (2015) which emphasise meeting the specific needs of specific clients. All of this is welcome and feeds into ongoing review and development at ICPPD.

Impact of Covid 19

Another revolution in Ireland has been the impact of COVID 19 on delivery of education and provision of services, where both were forced to embrace online media. Cannon (2022: 12) in an article on the changing face of supervision in Ireland considers the learning edges and positive outcomes brought about through COVID and on reflection writes that “challenges, critical reflection and the knowledge that with time and patience something new will emerge that can aid us in adapting to a changed working life” and that this “journey has been marked with many parallels” which have influenced us in small and large ways “in reaching a new era in the world of therapy and supervision.” ICPPD offers a Professional Diploma in Supervision across Professions – A Holistic Approach, and this training is accredited by IACP. This year this programme has been delivered fully online.

I cannot leave this section without referring to mental health and the need for professionals in the counselling and psychotherapy to embrace self-care. Finnegan (2002: 19) describes self-care as “a proactive, self-actualizing tendency, an active process of maintaining, promoting and recovering one's health and well-being in ways that acknowledge the significance of embodiment and heart-mind entrainment.” Maslach's research (2003) indicates that burn-out is a response to chronic emotional strain and stress of social interaction with people in pain leading

to emotional overload and exhaustion. Finnegan (2002: 22) writes that dealing with the effects of vicarious trauma requires strong self-care practices and that therapists working with child sexual abuse, sexual assault, domestic violence, violent crime, accidents, war, torture, natural disasters, people trafficking, and other vicariously experienced traumas are unlikely to escape and need a strong discipline of self-care. This is an ethical requirement and is part of the Professional Development and Ethics and the Law modules on ICPPD's core training (Public Works submitted).

Heuristic Research

The purpose of this heuristic research regarding the context and social worlds at the time of the establishment of ICPPD is to investigate and illuminate the lived experience of our learners and graduates and the communities they serve. The Research Projects undertaken in year 4 of the BA in Holistic Counselling and Psychotherapy is the capstone module and demonstrates the integration of their learning of theory, skills, personal and professional development, policy, and reflective practice. The learners are supported by the module tutor and their engagement, immersion with, incubation, explication, illumination, and creative synthesis in their research project is a journey of twelve months. Learners are involved in peer-work and the year culminates with individual presentations of the dissemination of the findings of their research to the adult learning community at ICPPD. Appendix 8 illustrates the variety and richness of topics researched within ICPPD last academic year). This is a wonderful supportive event, a synthesis of learning, an opportunity for learners to extract and share information, literature, current trends and topics and their readiness to address the difficult issues raised above because of having completed the four-year programme.

Conclusion

As I conclude this chapter, I have insight that psychotherapy trainees and the professional education programmes run the risk of individualism by virtue of seeing their work predominately in one-to-one situations and caseload. The exploration of people as social beings is explored specifically in the Group Process modules in each year of the programme. Societal changes and mental health strands are woven

through the four-year curriculum in a spiral like model i.e., whereby the specific themes of sexuality, ethnicity, diversity is continually visited and revisited over the duration of the four years. The challenge to the programme is to ensure that these cross curricular themes are carefully designed, delivered, evaluated, and coordinated in an explicit manner.

I would like to place the timing of establishing ICPPD in context within an Irish social setting. In the past two decades Ireland has undergone significant changes economically, socially, and culturally. As a nation we went from 'boom' period in our economy to 'bust' in 2008. This brought great challenges to industry, communities, and households. Many young people emigrated for employment, leaving local communities with insufficient numbers to field a football or hurling team. Many homes were returned to the banks as the mortgages could not be paid on them. Unemployment reached 15% of the work force at its highest. The Church was grappling with scandals in relation to neglect/abuse and sexual abuse of minors. Family life came under pressure and now there are many diverse groupings referred to as family. The referendum of 2015 gave same sex couples the constitutional right to marry. Repeal of the Eight Amendment took place in 2018 giving women greater autonomy over their own health and wellbeing. Increased use of technology in all aspects of life, but particularly in social networking, brought its social challenges including online bullying and greater access to pornographic images.

Writing in the Irish Times, Cullen, summarises the findings of a 2016 review of the prevalence of mental health concerns in Ireland, noting that Ireland has one of the highest rates of mental illness in Europe,

- "Some 18.5 per cent of the Irish population was recorded as having a mental health disorder, such as anxiety, bipolar, schizophrenia, depression, or alcohol or drug use, in 2016.
- Mental health problems cost the Irish economy over €8.2 billion annually, according to a new OECD report.

- Ireland has one of the highest rates of mental health illness in Europe, ranking joint third out of the 36 countries surveyed in the annual *Health at a Glance report*
- Rates of depression were also well above the European average for both men and women in Ireland. However, the suicide rate here was below average.
- Some 28 per cent of Irish children aged between 11 and 15 years reported being bullied in school, while 14 per cent were cyber bullied.

These figures were close to the EU average.” (Cullen, 2018)

It is against this background that ICPPD emerged. With the disintegration of local community networks and growing individualism, a broad range of support groups began to emerge with greater numbers attending counselling and personal development programmes for support that hitherto was provided by stable family, community, and the dominant churches. The stigma previously associated with attendance for counselling seemed to have eroded quickly and services such as Jigsaw (responding to young people’s mental health issues) and ASSIST (Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training) providing training to a broad range of disciplines on the front line responding to people presenting with depression and anxiety issues. Our own New Beginnings Counselling Service was a response to the unfolding multi-cultural and changing Irish society.

As a woman in these changing times in Ireland, being separated, divorced and re-married, I came to terms with stigma, rejection, and acceptance within my family of origin, neighbourhood, and community. I grew ‘through it’, and my innate entrepreneurial potency and ability, supported my independence as a woman, my self-esteem, finances, and my ‘new’ Irish family.

As I look back to where I began and with the landmark scandals of the churches in Ireland Cloyne Report (2011) and Ferns Report (2005) and child sexual abuse and mother and baby home scandals it was a courageous endeavour to include the spiritual dimension in counsellor/psychotherapist education in 2009. The holistic approach is a more neutral stance on which to explore such development without it being caught with such negative, hurtful, and painful history.

In chapter 6 the use of International in International College for Personal and Professional Development and heuristic inquiry will be discussed.

Chapter 6 – Use of International in International College for Personal and Professional Development

Introduction

When ICPPD was being recorded in the Company Registration Office, I had initially wished to use the word 'Irish', but this was not available as it was incorporated into another counselling organisation's name. I originally wished to locate the name of the organisation in its Irish roots and mythology. At the other end of the continuum was the possibility of including a more macro, global perspective in generating the organisations name. The word International was offered, considered and we accepted it. The use of International was an aspirational and expansive image and metaphor and while we did not see an international campus, or a marketing campaign for international learners, it was accepted as a source that might provide us with visiting expertise and qualifications that could be invited to support the small insular arena of counselling and psychotherapy private providers in Ireland. It also honoured my philosophical underpinning of counselling/psychotherapy namely its emphasis on the Person-Centred Approach. Motschnig-Pitrik et al. (in Cornelius-White et al. 2013: 387) propose that PCA provides an arch or a bridge that can be travelled on to other modalities of counselling i.e., psychology and education theories, spirituality, mysticism, and cognitive approaches. Motschnig-Pitrik et al. further maps out a very comprehensive diagram identifying the range of scientific fields that are interrelated with the PCA. In this sense the word International seemed a very appropriate fit for inclusion in the organisations name. Our most popular programmes at ICPPD are, the 4-year BA in Holistic Counselling and Psychotherapy, Introduction to Holistic Counselling and Psychotherapy, Diploma Expressive Arts for Professionals, Professional Diploma in Supervision across Professions incorporating *an Integrative and Holistic Approach*, (the wording for this programme has now been changed to - *A Holistic Approach only*), A Certificate in Personal Development, and a Certificate in Psychosynthesis for Professions.

ICPPD- International Dimension

ICPPD as a College is conscious of the benefits of promoting an international dimension, and its ambitions in this regard have been reinforced at the College

through engagement with an international cultural and CPD programme. Since its establishment, ICPPD has each academic year invited and hosted several international events, experts, and guests to facilitate training and master classes for our learners. Appendix 8, presents a full list of International Guests/Lecturers at ICPPD 2010-2020

These international experts (as well as several national speakers and workshop facilitators) have provided additional professional development and upskilling to tutoring staff as well as learners e.g. several tutors attended the 4-day intensive training in Group Facilitation offered by Gerald and Marianne Corey, and several modules on our main programme were supported by the additional expertise offered e.g. Clinical Practice Module - where learners were encouraged to attend an evening 'Conversations with Bobby Moore and Robin Shohet on 'Supervision' and Gerard Grace's workshop complemented and enhanced the Loss and Bereavement Module.

ICPPD has/had other international links with – Breda Ennis, Artist, Italy - David Boadella Biosynthesis, Switzerland - The Association for the Advancement of Psychosynthesis, USA, who have vetted and included ICPPD's Professional Certificate in Psychosynthesis in their list of recognised international training programmes in Psychosynthesis. Tom Geary, ICPPD's External Examiner (2017-19) with his strong links with counselling scholars i.e., Brian Thorne, Campbell Purton and Judy Moore of University of East Anglia has shared his knowledge with academic staff and advised on several international publications and resources. Donna Bell, ICPPD's quality assurance mentor and QQI expert, and chairperson of ICPPD's QA and Risk Management Committee travels from Northern Ireland to support our work.

Due to the geographical size of Ireland and its location on the edge of Europe, and Tutors at ICPPD being selected for their professional and academic expertise, many have trained and worked professionally in various clinical placements, colleges, and universities across the world, and this is reflected in their CVs, as provided in the Public Works Folder No 7, Appendix 05 Submitted to Metanoia.

My professional training and academic qualifications incorporate both national and international achievements. I have attended short intensive trainings and conferences in USA, Canada, Australia, Thailand, Germany, Italy, and England. I delivered a keynote address to the European Association of Counselling Conference in Serbia and was a member of the European Standards and Awards Committee of the European Association of Counselling. The aim of this level of participation in international events was to ensure that I could bring back my insight and share it with tutors and learners. Thus, ensuring that the organisation was at the cutting edge of contemporary research and thinking internationally.

ICPPD Part-Time Programmes

ICPPD offers part-time programmes, which do not satisfy visa requirements; therefore, ICPPD does not receive applications from visa requiring learners. As stated above, ICPPD does not target international learners, however, we continue to have learners who are living in Ireland and who are originally from, Germany, Latvia, and Poland, being the most popular ethnicities enrolled. This reflects Ireland's growing multicultural population.

I would like to refer to the research project proposals by learners and the challenges by tutors to continually motivate learners to see their research topics through the lenses of international literature, research and current trends and emerging developments in the field of counselling and psychotherapy. The titles of the research projects presented last academic year comprised of topics that are as broad in their national and international scope for research and learning, and equally as unique as the individual learner's personal interest. The work undertaken also reflects the broad holistic perspective and approach at ICPPD itself. Appendix 8 has been referenced above as a listing of topics researched by learners last academic year.

As I reflect on the Research presentations, they are all metaphors for the overall journey of education and training at ICPPD as a national and international counselling and psychotherapy provider.

Having reflected more deeply and critically evaluated the inclusion of International in the title of ICPPD college. I will now analyse this through the lens of heuristic research as proposed by Moustakas (1990) and Sela-Smith (2002) West, 2001, Hiles, 2001.

In the initial engagement of the title as stated, the word international and its effect on public and staff perception was not considered at any length and was as stated already, aspirational at best. International guests and links were planned and incubated to support the title and make it more appropriate for ICPPD. These international guests enhanced ICPPD's offering especially as a fledgling unknown organisation.

After immersion in the topic as part of this thesis, it is enlightening to appraise how a name can influence both public and internal perception, imagined or otherwise, and how this can benefit or hinder the reputation and credibility of an organisation.

Naming ICPPD

As I synthesise and become clearer on the importance of how the name of an organisation denotes what occurs within, in hindsight, the word inter-related would have more appropriately represented what we do at ICPPD. 'Inter-related' is a difficult word to 'carry' and as it is the dynamic within the concept of holism, the word 'holistic' would have been a better illustration than the word international. According to Absolon (2010) indigenous peoples have worldviews and means of relating to the world. Stemming from this worldview comes the understanding that 'we are all related' and Marsden (2006) states that indigenous wholism implies a balance within all aspects and elements of the whole, which is achieved through interconnections, interdependence, and interrelationships. Vogel and Einzig (2021) advocating ecosystems supervision, claim it combines enquiry in depth into who we are as individuals and as professionals with exploration in breadth of the systems and networks within which - and which shape how - we operate, and that "all of us, all the time, are embedded in interlocking and interdependent systems." Like a holistic approach, ecosystem supervision attends to the mind, the body, the heart, and the spirit.

ICPPD Logo

The ICPPD logo denotes this interconnectedness and a call to deeper humanity, care for all living beings and for the earth that holds us. At the end of each information leaflet promoting our programmes, are the words – “Our vision is to encourage and support you on your path to wholeness.” All our substantial programmes at ICPPD have Holistic in their title and ICPPD is the only third level Irish education institute with validated and accredited degree programmes in holistic counselling and psychotherapy and so ‘Holistic’ would possibly be a word of choice if seeking a company name for our counselling and psychotherapy training and education college.

Conclusion

The International College for Personal and Professional Development, ICPPD, is now registered and known within the field of counselling, psychotherapy, and supervision training and education in Ireland. Changing the name of the College may come in for consideration in further reviews and evaluations if it is a pertinent issue at that time.

In chapter 7 the concept of Entrepreneurial Leadership, Ability, and Conflict of Interests will be discussed.

Chapter 7 - Entrepreneurial, Leadership Ability and Conflicts of interest

Introduction

The learning outcomes for this thesis, including its focus on counselling and psychotherapy training, and the submitted Public Works documents that provide the supportive evidence for this, also support an exploration of the entrepreneurial aspect of self and its resulting ability for leadership and organisational development.

Appendix 6 illustrates my innate desire to work for myself, to create work for myself as a self-employed person. This began when I was seven years old, (with an idea to sell or swap my comics/books in school) and continues to this day with my new company (2021) www.dearpreciousbeing.com to support my private practice, supervision, and specific programmes I hope to facilitate in the future. The motivation for me is in the joy of the creative process itself.

Programmes in ICPPD

ICPPD, is a third-level private college based in Athlone in the Midlands of Ireland, with outreach centres in Dublin and Galway. It is a Holistic Counselling and Psychotherapy training and education college. With the support of my husband, I founded ICPPD eleven years ago and from 7 enrolled learners in year one, there are now over 200 learners enrolled in this academic calendar year. Courses offered at ICPPD include, a 30-hour **Personal Development programme**, an **Introduction in Holistic Counselling and Psychotherapy programme** (Public Works Folder 3), 3-year part-time **Professional Diploma in Holistic Counselling and Psychotherapy** (Public Works Folder 4), **3 year, part-time Bachelor of Arts Degree in Holistic Counselling and Psychotherapy** (Public Works Folder 5), (since submission of Public Works, ICPPD in 2019/20 now offer a **4 year, Level 8, Honours, part-time Bachelor of Arts Degree in Holistic Counselling and Psychotherapy** and a **1 year add-on part-time Level 8, Honours, Bachelor of Arts Degree in Holistic Counselling and Psychotherapy**), **Professional Diploma in Advanced Supervision across Professions – a Holistic and Integrative Approach** (Public Works Folder 4, Doc 2), **Professional Diploma in Expressive Arts Therapy** (Public Works Folder 4, Doc 3), **Professional Certificate in Psychosynthesis** (Public Works Folder 3, Doc 3) and **Professional**

Certificate in Understanding Gender and Sexual Diversity (Public Works Folder 3 Doc 4). A suite of **6 short online therapeutic courses** (Public Works Folder 3 Doc 7) and CPD, Continuing Professional Development **therapeutic workshops** (Public Works Folder 3 Doc 6) are also offered. ICPPD is gaining a reputation as a college with a difference, and now has a recognised credibility as an institute of excellence for professional and academic standards. Currently ICPPD is exploring options of providing a master's degree in Psychotherapy – A Holistic Approach, as a progression route for learners, adding further academic credibility as an educational institute and expansion as an organisation.

Paraphrasing Clark's findings in her research while interviewing successful women in business, where she found the following 'keys' unlocked their door to success:

1. Intentionally build a company and its culture with forethought - know exactly what type of company you want to create.
2. Stay laser-focused on the customer.
3. Understand that while working hard, you need independence to manage home, family, and other commitments to have a meaningful life.
4. Training and development, life-long learning, personal development, on-going professional training, embracing change, being adaptive.
5. Her final comment was on how the culture in women-run businesses reflected their founder's beliefs, values, and ways of getting things done.

Holistic Training

I can concur with the above as I set out to establish ICPPD as an academic institute of excellence. I knew exactly what kind of 'holistic' training and college, as, of and for learning I wanted to create. It had to be genuinely learner centred. As a woman, wife, mother and grandmother, relationships are very important to me. Lifelong learning, my professional career, and an innate urge to create and manifest this in the world, and self-realise, is also my calling. I continue to grapple with attending to both in any given moment.

As an entrepreneur my wish is to turn my passion and desire for purpose and meaning beyond myself into a successful, impactful organisation that makes a difference to the staff that support this vision, the learners who enrol as trainee

holistic counsellors and psychotherapists, and in turn for their prospective clients seeking support in times of distress. My challenge is to hear my calling and create this business venture, feed my soul, walk in beauty, contribute to the world while acknowledging and accepting my vulnerabilities and the sacrifices I make daily. My biggest challenge is exemplifying and living my truth, walking my talk!

Creating ICPPD and building a viable and sustainable business and educational institute has been a risky and scary proposition. It began with a leap of faith, a willingness to make mistakes and sacrifices for the long-term benefit of all concerned in nurturing a new organisation. Not taking wages or remuneration for the first five years was very challenging on many levels of being. This decision was a choice, a necessity so my fledgling dream could become a reality. Even now, my wages do not reflect the work I do at ICPPD. While my sacrifice or generosity supported the organisation at one level it had major implications for the organisation when budgeting for a staff member to replace me in my role, and there was a realisation that other payments were required now.

Managing the dance of engaging and enrolling learners (Public Works Folders 1 & 2) and ensuring their financial protection, having professional and commercial integrity, while continuing to build an organisation, an academic institute offering programmes, seeking academic validation and professional accreditation, was exhilarating and soul-threatening at times. It was and continues to be a humbling and above all, a learning experience. The price 'to be my own boss', 'to make a difference in the world' and remain committed to an ethos and goals, have required, what Hildebolt (2010) postulated are the required attributes of a professional entrepreneur, namely, Technical Expertise, Hard-work, Personal Characteristics and Social Skills.

Having faith, being open to risk-taking and being able to tolerate uncertainty without it paralysing me with anxiety has supported my ability to create a business model, hold an unclouded vision and continue to move forward with integrity. I favour the ancient concept of stewardship. I have a sense that I am 'holding' and taking care of this for the next person, next generation, for all of us. The continues daily struggle to survive as an organisation for over ten years, left me feeling

burdened and with a need to protect, and ensure that 'slippage' was prevented, thus a need to control as much as is possible within the parameters of human resources and respect for other employees and other roles. This was a daily dilemma to navigate.

Without the support of my husband and family, dedicated staff and consultants, faithful voluntary board members and 'messengers', ICPPD would not have survived, succeeded, and thrived. Because of intriguing events and 'coincidences' I have an awareness that I am meant to be doing this work at this time, and I have a trust that a higher vibration is at work somehow.

Holistic ethos in management, quality assurance and administration

This holistic ethos is also evident in our management, quality assurance and administration staff and their approach to learners and each other. While being mindful of boundaries and academic and professional requirements, policies, and procedures there is a permeating attitude of support and approachability and genuine care and appreciation for the human condition. This has been noted by learners and by external examiners who have reassured all of us that, keeping 'the soul and essence' does not deteriorate the quality of learning or excellence in standards demanded through assessments (Public Works Folder 13 Doc 1 & Folder 17 Doc 3).

The work and effort of making profit was and is secondary, it took ten years to break-even as a viable business. This demanded my full attention to ensure ICPPD met all legal and other requirements while simultaneously trusting and working to build an institute of learning, that all might be proud of. Our audited accounts in 2019/20 shows a slight profit for the first time, (Public Works Folder 18 Doc 1). This has been challenging and included re-mortgaging our home and many personal loans. It involved sleepless nights and elevated levels of anxiety and stress as we continued to believe in our mission. For this 'dream' to manifest, the time, effort and energy taken has had a 'price' as I reflect with some sadness and regret for the loss of time and connection with my beloved husband, family, and friends. I am humbled and grateful for their continued love and support.

A voluntary financial advisory sub-committee who met each week and guided me was an invaluable support and eased anxiety at that time. As I continued to cultivate and nourish this small enterprise, originally of one staff member and seven learners, our reputation and number of learners expanded, and we currently have almost 200 enrolled learners in the academic year 2017/18 (Public Works Folder 13 Doc 7).

At last, personally, I received payment for the work I did at ICPPD in my role as tutor and Academic Director. My role and position have changed over the ten years from President to CEO, to Academic Director and tutor, to now Managing Director. I will speak to the conflict of interest involved later in this chapter.

This business template is not encouraged due to the enormous stress and financial strain on single shareholders. Having an investor, securing capital and banking arrangements, significant research and a robust business plan and having other resources and expertise in place prior to commencement of a commercial venture of this size is vital to the well-being of directors and personnel involved and makes for a more enjoyable adventure.

I have many times been surprised by joy during the past eleven years, when good and generous people with specialised expertise, knowledge and experience have made contact to offer their support usually for free, to support our venture. Tutors and staff have been chosen for their expertise and reputation and often 'arrive' at the right time (Public Works Folder 7 Appendix 5).

For a visual glance at ICPPD as an organisation, see Appendix 14, 15, and 16 which are the latest 2021 Organisational Charts, and they clearly illustrate the growth and demarcation of roles and responsibilities at ICPPD as we expanded as an organisation over the past few years. I have managed the complexity and contradictions of earlier conflicts of interest and the blurring of boundaries, and this has improved procedures and practices for all involved. Without a doubt there are conflicts of interest. Prior to engaging with this enquiry, I felt I managed them well, through transparency, creating boundaries, and the underlying belief that ICPPD was not established to make profit, but to support humanistic values, educate a certain type of therapist, to make a difference in the community. This has and

continues to be the philosophy and ethos at ICPPD. In my 'blindness' I forgot the perception of others and I realise now how multiple roles, emotional investment and simply working too hard and a lack of self-care can also affect my professional judgement.

Because I am the founder and driving energy of ICPPD for many years, I held firm on my expectations of what should happen and how it should happen; the shadow side of this is that staff may not have felt able or strong enough to challenge me in my roles and responsibilities. I may not have sat long-enough with them to hear them and so I missed wonderful opportunities for team building. I understand fully that both my husband and I carried and continue to carry the financial risk and responsibility for this, and this, clearly demonstrates the need for the division of commercial and academic processes and the difficulty and imposition of 'wearing more than one hat' (de Bono, 1999).

Conflict of Interests

As I reflect, I am remembering that I applied for a loan through the chair of ICPPD Board of Directors to part fund these doctoral studies. One third of my initial fees were granted and paid for by ICPPD, with a further one third in the form of a loan and I paid for the last part from my own personal finances. I felt that this project would enhance the college as well as me. I repaid the loan. In hindsight I might have considered to fund this fully myself to keep clear boundaries in place. My reality at the time was that all my/our personal loan facilities were being used to fund loans for the college, and I had no access to money. I also had no personal savings. This is an example of the complexity of running a private organisation with little finances and staff and the pressure it puts on all involved. On further reflection I should have considered external support from a sponsor or applied to IRC for consideration for funding. I could have postponed my studies until I had saved the required fees (there was no possibility of this happening due to lack of wages and personal finance). All these options I can see more clearly now but they all carry the consequence of much later enrolment onto this programme, if ever. I was keen to build my own research capacity and contribute to establishing a stronger critical mass of tutors at ICPPD. It appears that my personal and institutional goals coloured

my judgment and that my eagerness to progress professionally inhibited me from seeing all the consequences of my actions i.e., in seeking and accepting funding from ICPPD. this has been a learning curve and has taught me a significant amount in the field of professional boundaries and their impact as many levels within the organization.

This is an example of the complexity of running a private organisation with little finances and staff, and the pressure it puts on all involved.

I am the initiator and founder of ICPPD. In the beginning I held the position of President. This was perceived as a conflict of interest by the Quality Assurance expert, and I then became the Academic Director. During an eleven-year cycle, I found myself working in many roles including Chief Executive Officer and Marketing person when required. I loved my academic director position, where I was in direct contact with learners and tutoring staff, where I could transfer the wonder of critical inquiry and bring our ethos and vision alive.

It is interesting to reflect on these earlier days and first seven years as I struggled with the many roles and expectations and the hard work entailed to 'keep ICPPD afloat' as a business and an educational academy. I am amazed at the energy required and the taxing challenges that were outweighed by a conviction and belief in the natural progression of the human organism as I was propelled onwards. This mostly included twelve-hour days, six days per week and this continued until recently.

Hawkins (2005) affirms that failure is a rich compost for the growth of new learning and Bateson (1972) points out that all learning emerges from trial and error. The growth of ICPPD has included several failures that were painful personally and professionally, particularly the failure to progress the initial Level 8 programme (2016) to validation and the effort and cost of resubmission, its impact on myself, the organisation and all involved as we recovered from the disappointment (Public Works Folder 13 Doc 5). Appendix 13 acknowledges dilemmas and struggles encountered while developing ICPPD as a training organisation.

These errors, dilemmas and impasses were resolved through dialogue and the support of quality assurance procedures and right action. This was stressful at the time and some of these tests and encounters occasionally continue to be problematic at a personal, colleague and organisational level and are fertile ground for learning.

My chief failure, if one may call it that, was a lack of attention to my own self-care and lack of defined breaks to renew and replenish my resources, thus failure to model to other staff healthy work boundaries. This was not conducive to my inner moral compass and at times the dishonesty and incongruence were painful and required tender care and authentic reflection as I often challenged myself with compassion to live an authentic life. Hawkins (2005: 57) concludes that failure is essential, and the importance of “the value of the learning that ensues is greater than the cost of the failure.” I have learned to face failure, take the learning, and engage with the next stage of life as part of embracing leadership. I think that leadership is an attitude. I admire Hawkins’ (2005: 57) further comment on leadership, “Taking on leadership involves giving up the right to blame others or make excuses.”

This mix of personal, professional, academic, interpersonal, internal, and external difficulties challenged me every day, as I became a learner at ICPPD. There were days when I wondered about my health, stamina, confidence, esteem, ability to continue. Each time on reflection and with the support of my wise mentors, I concluded that there was only one option, and that was to keep going. It is important to view all this while understanding my history, an appreciation of where I have been, why I have stumbled, what I have accomplished and who cleared the way for me. From the outset of this project, I have thought holistically about how to accomplish it. These issues are linked to a complex interplay strongly influenced by the systems in place both within ICPPD and in the context of the academic and professional bodies that uphold standards. Roberts (1999: 230) invites executive leaders to ask themselves and reflect on seventeen questions about learning initiatives within organisations, I have selected five that were most relevant to myself and ICPPD –

- Do I truly understand what I am doing, and its consequences?
- Am I prepared to rethink our organisation's purpose?
- Am I willing to accept the ambiguity, and the lack of clarity?
- What do I believe is the essence of my business?
- What do I, personally stand for?

In reflecting on these questions, I am reminded that while I had a level of confidence in my ideas and in my leadership, I also made many mistakes. I wondered several times if I could sustain my passion and enthusiasm in the face of failed attempts and difficulties and fractured relationships.

ICPPD Board of Directors has recently employed a College Manager to oversee operational, financial and management issues. This is a positive move as ICPPD becomes an entity and releases me from some responsibility and work.

It is of note that ICPPD was established during an economic recession in Ireland and now it is beginning to financially grow, mostly due to the reputation of its programmes and the staff at ICPPD. The organisation is coming into a time when we can consider employing extra staff to support administration and structure payments for tutors that recognises their contribution to the organisation.

Holonomics

I have become aware of the work of Robinson & Robinson-Moraes (2014) who write about Holonomics, a new way of seeing in business, where people and planet matter. They use the Hoberman Sphere as metaphor for understanding the hidden connections, the relationship between parts and whole, from mechanistic thinking to expanded consciousness to synthesis thinking, where we know and understand something in its fullest sense, in its wholeness.

The ethos of Holonomics is focused on money-making and finances to help the earth and people and not to exploit people and earth. This is supported by folk psychology, which seems to hold that both happiness and meaning are two important qualities of a good life (King & Napa, 2004). The idea of Holonomics fits harmoniously with our ethos at ICPPD. It is the accepted universal truths of all traditions and cultures that support core ethical values of trustworthiness, respect,

responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship. They contain mankind's deepest moral aspirations and form the basis of our lives as individuals and as societies. In my opinion, there is a distinct feminine, matriarchal, relational, integrative quality to this model. I am also aware that my reflection during this thesis has changed from a need to move away from a patriarchal model to a matriarchal model, and I now see the more holistic model that holds and includes both.

The essence of ICPPD is its ethos and reputation and its quality relationships with our learning community and stakeholders including the validating bodies (Public Works Folder 17 Docs 1-13). Personal values represent a major influence on the organisation's values. The following metaphor and image of a tree (Figure 7) illustrates somewhat my values and therefore the transferred values of ICPPD. It is interesting to research Alvesson & Skoldberg's (2017: 157) understanding of how metaphors illustrate a symbolic realism, they write that in the 1980s and 1990s metaphors aroused interest as a focus for understanding organisation analysis and as an inspiration for new theoretical ideas, they argue, that we create our concept of 'organization' by "seeing it as something, that is by using a metaphor, and that the metaphor used is of decisive importance to our understanding of the subject matter as well as to thinking and theorizing in general."



Figure 7 - Apple blossom at our home at New Beginnings Counselling and Psychotherapy Centre

As ICPPD expands and grows, I promote a shared vision, and I ask myself am I ready to make space for others to 'fully' contribute and 'fully' influence its future. Being stagnant is not an option, I support what Roberts (2011: 237) promotes in the dance of change, a leader who has "taken stands for creating a workplace that helps people find fulfilment, get stretched, receive a certain amount of tough love, and raise their families with dignity."

On reflection on my part in building this organisation, this research thesis through Public Works has afforded me the opportunity to identify key documents that marked the establishment and development of ICPPD. I was committed to putting these documents under the microscope and the practices by which I developed and wrote them. I was committed to understanding my various roles more clearly. McNiff (2010: 122) highlights when writing about the significance of research on personal and professional growth "I begin to ask questions about the kind of influences I am having on myself and on those I am working with."

McNiff's views resonate closely with that of my experience of doing this research i.e. I began a process of self-critique. McNiff states that critique is akin to stepping outside oneself looking at myself as a stranger to enquire what I should be doing and how I ought to do it. This research was undertaken to hold myself accountable and is in keeping with the ethical standards set by professional bodies IACP in this field. I also undertook this research because I have developed a stance that is described as, being morally accountable for what I do. Other scholars in the field of reflective practice, Kolb (1984) Schön (2011) Etherington (2004) Moon (2004), have greatly shaped my understanding of reflective practice and reflexivity. Schön coined the concepts of 'reflection in practice' and 'reflection on practice' The concepts put forward by me in this thesis arose mainly from 'reflection on practice'. After events and experiences, I would take stock; reflect if that was the best way to achieve one of my professional goals. This could be described as 'keeping the spotlight' on me in my various roles, as Prendiville (2004) put it.

Self-Reflection and Self-Critique

The process of self- reflection and self-critique have taken place in a context i.e., ICCPD and it is here that I have particularly drawn on the work of Nevis et al. (1996), and Senge, (1990) for their frameworks and concepts. I have also leaned on the work of Corey & Corey (2011) for insights on professional boundaries. The later has particular significance for me as there were times in the development of ICCPD I sensed being entangled in a net because of the multiplicity of roles that I was juggling i.e., Academic Director, tutor in certain modules, Programme leader, shareholder/director responsible for financial stability and supporting Marketing and recruitment of learners. This was all necessary at that time when the organisation had three part-time staff who were growing the overall organisation and several tutors delivering programmes.

From previous sections of this audit, I think it is evident that I was strongly driven in establishing ICCPD by personal and professional aspirations. Senge (1990) develops an image of a three-legged stool representing core learning capabilities of teams. The first leg of the stool represents inspiration, second leg personal mastery and third shared vision. Because of my own professional development, I felt competent to create learning spaces in which other people i.e., learners could engage similar competencies in counselling and psychotherapy to that of my own. My aspiration to do this was enhanced by my ability to share my vision i.e., holistic approach to counselling with learners. The second leg of Senge's stool was based on reflective conversations, dialogue with those who shared my aspirations and wished to join ICCPD in teaching the discipline of counselling. This took place through sharing my 'mental models' of what effective holistic counselling looked like. Learners were recruited and staffs were appointed to engage in this collaborative teamwork. Here is where Senge's third leg of his Learning Team stool could have enlightened me earlier on this project. He emphasised viewing teams of workers i.e., tutors and administration staff at ICCPD within a framework which he referred to as 'Understanding complex systems thinking'. The latter is an insight that I gained from being crisscrossed over several roles. It took time and this research to push me to asking - How are my actions creating my reality and how can I change it? The documents in my Public Works submitted and the Organisational Charts, Appendix

14, 15, and 16, highlight how I initiated the transition from being involved in all the strands of the ICPPD organisation to delegating and establishing distinct key roles within the team and movement from an individual to collective ownership at ICPPD.

This transition brought with it a great sense of relief, a sense of having to readjust but most importantly it is bringing me back to my original aspiration to teach creatively and imaginatively, what I love most, namely modules that are core to holistic approach i.e. Holistic Approaches and Person Centred Approaches (year 1 on BA (Hons) in Holistic Counselling and Psychotherapy), Gestalt Approach and Loss and Bereavement (year 2) Psychosynthesis Psychotherapy (year 3) and Humanistic Approaches and Integrative Psychotherapy (year 4) and Person-Centred Expressive Arts Modules.

In his work on systems thinking Senge (1990) asked a very pertinent question which is relevant to my involvement with ICPPD; “Does the ICPPD organisation have a learning disability?” In my enthusiasm to establish and enact my aspiration and vision I now see from this research that, yes, the team has some disabilities and that I am contributing to them (out of my awareness). This comes as a surprise but as a welcome revelation. Nevis et al. (1996) developed a Three-Dimensional Model of Transformational Change that complements the work of Senge. In this model Nevis et al. (1996: 37) refers to increasing one’s awareness of the gap between desired and actual performance. He is referring to organisations, but this has a personal connection to my previous multiple roles within ICPPD. I sensed a gap between what I was hoping to achieve and the personal cost to myself. This realisation and challenge were that my desired and actual performance may be in conflict within myself. Corey & Corey (2011), when addressing the issue of boundaries in the counselling field, pose the question; “Do you believe that multiple relationships in this field are inevitable and may or may not be problematic?” On reflection, my multiple roles within the organisation afforded me the opportunity to share my aspirations across the system but it is not sustainable from my own health and well-being and likewise for the organisation and for learners. My research has generated new insights from reflecting on my practice, and in turn, I am rebounding this new gained knowledge back on my practice. I am implementing institutional, personal, and professional change. Namely that various key roles within such an organisation

should be clearly demarcated and populated with different personnel from across the team. I am aware as I write that change is required again and that other staff will lead this movement toward new developments.

Through the lens of heuristic Inquiry

Through the lens of heuristic inquiry, from my engagement with this topic and chapter and sitting with the uncomfortable feelings and painful awareness of it being time to let go, and my future retirement from management and leadership roles at ICPPD. I have incubated the positive and negative realisations of my reality and I have explicated and gained new insights. I am reminded again of my image and metaphor of the 'miners pan' and sieving to find the 'nuggets'-

- I own my own process and script and how it supports me and gets in my way.
- I realise it is time to prepare for my retirement from managerial roles and work, I now have a clear plan as to how and when that might happen, and there is a feeling of 'rightness' in this.
- I will remain for the immediate future as a tutor on the modules I love teaching
- My self-care is now my priority, and I am scheduling appropriate breaks, I plan to take time for me to renew and replenish following submission of this work
- I also now have a very clear view of what is core to my vision of starting this training college – and this is my biggest explication and illumination. My dream of a college offering holistic counselling and psychotherapy training, where the whole person was at the core of the therapeutic process, has now been further condensed, redefined, and changed to - a college that continues with dedication to humanistic values and principles with the core principle now being the Self of the therapist as focus – the self as an instrument of change and the therapeutic use of self (Wosket, 2006). This truly aligns on all levels of my being, with the unapologetic statements that I make at our Open Information Evenings, and every time I am in a class setting with learners – “at ICPPD we make no apology for the demands and

requirement for ongoing personal development and personal therapy during and after your training course”. I will elaborate on this in a later chapter.

- I am also realising that the Humanistic College for Personal and Professional Development might have been a more authentic name for the organisation rather than the ‘Holistic’ or International College for Personal and Professional Development.

So much new awareness for me today!

Conclusion through the lens of Heuristic Research -

During workplace stress, feelings of failure and inadequacy can arise. I identify with (Devenish-Meares, 2015a) that so often, the stressed anxious or suffering worker is avoiding self-care. I remember being so overwhelmed that reflecting on, let alone making caring sense of my predicament seemed impossible. Moustakas (1990) examined the heuristic inquiry approach to encourage researchers to engage with the subjective and complex nature of being human. One thing I am aware of that as a researcher and manager, tutor, and practitioner I am deeply and personally engaged, with my limitations, bias, and subjectivity of the topic, in this case ICPPD.

Looking more closely at myself through a heuristic lens, I now see that older beliefs and perspectives, avoidance of self-care, and not putting my close and important relationships first, have not led to insightful outcomes, let alone transformation (Djuraskovic & Arthur, 2010). When I have conflict with a work colleague, I can automatically take a mental shortcut to self-blame and condemnation, because it is a well-established inner pattern rather than “actively engage transformative and healing choices associated with self-care” (Devenish-Meares, 2019). This has had repercussions that not only impacted me but also the valued staff at ICPPD. This methodology according to (Devenish-Meares, 2019) is relevant to personal issues, because it is highly intuitive, focused on enmeshment or fixation and paradoxically takes the person on a deeper reflection into a phenomenon, yet in a non-enmeshed way even as it expands choices and options for healing (Moustakas, 1990). This includes intuition as a way of knowing underlying dynamics and becoming aware at a deeper level as I notice and modify older viewpoints or develop new ones (Tejuosho, 2017).

On reflection, I would like to explore the relevance of heuristic inquiry as a psychospiritual process at work. According to (Devenish-Meares, 2019) researching workplace stress, compassion fatigue and burnout, says humility, detachment and self-compassion are supports for self-acceptance, and (Cheavens, Feldman, Gum, Michael & Synder, 2006) write that this is needed especially when inner conversations are lacking in hope. Yet, Hawkins and Shohet (2012: 21) say that such self-talk could be about making sense and meaning of the “disturbance, distress, and dis-ease” of where they find themselves. This means that one can become more self-aware and bring new perspectives, a spotlight to bear on what is occurring (Breevaart, Bakker, & Demerouti, 2014, Thompson & Waltz, 2008). This process of inquiry could improve one’s psychospiritual health, as I become a “perceiver of patterns” and use heuristic inquiry (Moustakas, 1990) as a personal method to incubate and illuminate what is happening on an interior level to come to a new awareness. Kellner (1999: xii) advocates that the more perspectives one can bring to their analysis and critique, “the better grasp of the phenomena one will have” and the better one will be at “developing alternative readings and oppositional practices.” The heuristic process is epitomised (Kenny, 2013) by the paradoxical processes of conscious and intuitive engagement, it also leads to immersion and incubation of issues that may seem unrelated but could provide new options.

In a difficult situation with a colleague, where there was obviously a difference of view and deep misunderstanding between us regarding our roles and responsibilities, I built in deliberate pauses which allowed an illuminative process, and this permitted me to use self-compassion, humility, and meaningful detachment to occur. I also got in touch with regret which was associated with myself and the other person and a deep desire to learn and do things differently next time. In this way the heuristic process is similar to Rohr’s (2010: 185) “standing away” theme and to Roger’s (1995) non-judgmental witness. Working to accept myself and overcome negativity, speaks to (Neff, 2003(b): 87) the need to “know and forgive one’s failings and foibles” and self-compassion is not about avoidance of knowing but rather paying attention in a tender way (Thorne, 2016).

Humility is about explication, because it is about truth as incomplete or unpalatable as it is (Funk, 2005; Devenish-Meares, 2016c). I found it challenging to face and own my behaviour, unintentional as it may be, as it impacts another negatively. During these painful times of engagement, I saw the possibilities of Rohr's (2007) spiritually related ideas of humility and the saying "this is not all of me", and Assagioli's (1965) approach of "I am more than" my pride, mistakes, behaviour, ego, controlling sub-personality etc. I was forced once again to embrace my humanity, "a limited and imperfect being" Moustakas' immersion phase is similar, in that he espouses a non-judgmental self-exploration, which like humility is about seeking the truth about ourselves. This is as Coulehan (2010: 201) refers to as "honest self-awareness and reflection." This is a kind approach to how I see myself, accepting, judging, and treating my experiences holistically and it is in alignment with the comprehensive body, mind, spirit model of Bates et al, (2010) who support reframing experiences and considering personal choices. Heuristic exploration is recursive, non-linear, and multi-directional. I am acutely aware from the dispute with my work colleague that much lies within me that is unconscious. I found myself immersed in this difficult situation and in Moustakas' (1990) process this is about coming to tacit awareness and focusing on the situation and on my part in it. During the incubation phase I needed to stand back from the intensity and observe.

During this time, I journaled, spent time in nature, played with my grandchildren, sat by the fire, went to personal therapy and supervision, spoke with my critical friend and others. After I allowed a reflective space a bigger picture of the issues and new perspectives emerge. This explication included for me – I find it hard to put my needs first and to voice what I need and expect, I find it difficult to state how I truly am, I find it hard to let go, I am very hard on myself and on others. I went deep inside my own experiences to learn to do things differently next time and to incorporate Irvani's (2007: 9) saying "self-love, when authentic, indicates empathic understanding, awareness, compassion, and acceptance of oneself and others."

I wonder if heuristic methodology could be described as a holistic process of body, mind, heart, and spirit inquiry? Of course, this is my natural bias, and as researcher I watch possible impositions of my standpoints. I am more mindful of remaining open and curious to learning, to peer-review and feedback, attending supervision to learn

more, to hearing the voice of a critical friend and using my reflective journals as part of the inquiry process.

In chapter 8 the distinctive Holistic Ethos and Philosophy at ICPPD will be illustrated.

Chapter 8 – Distinctive Holistic Ethos and Philosophy at ICCPD

Introduction

Do *holistic* and *wholistic* mean the same thing? Can you use them interchangeably?

The word *holistic* comes from *holism*, a somewhat young term, introduced by philosopher Smuts (1926). He defined *Holism* as “the tendency of nature to form wholes—or organisms, and systems—from the ordered grouping of single units—alias molecules, atoms, and subatomic particles.”, Smuts thought of the universe in terms of “wholes,” unceasingly interacting with each other, blending, and merging into even greater “wholes” in perennial motion. To him, *holism* was the evolutionary drive at the core of all creation. He coined *holism* from the Greek *hólos*, meaning “whole.” The idea of wholeness was pivotal to his theory as it is to anything “*holistic*.” It echoed the Aristotelian notion “the whole is greater than the sum of its parts” which also underpinned the 20th century revolutionary Gestalt approach and is often used, these days, to explain synergy and collaboration. Smuts’ philosophy was modified, developed, and quickly adopted into other fields, including the medical field among others. In terms of providing health care, the use of the term “holistic” dates to the time of Hippocrates, over 2,500 years ago. Believing it was insufficient to focus on one aspect of a person, Hippocrates emphasised the importance of establishing equilibrium within individuals, viewing the person as a whole being made up of many parts working in performance with one another.

“Wholistic” and “Holistic”

According to Oxford English Dictionary, “Wholistic” was first used in 1941, while “Holistic” was first used in 1926. *Wholistic* developed as a variant of *holistic*. The variant likely arose from the fact that, not only is a *wholistic* a homophone of *holistic*, but the meaning (and root) of *holistic* is concerned with “wholes.” The English word *whole* does not come from the Greek *hólos*; *whole* ultimately derives from the Old English *hāl* (“sound, uninjured”). English Language & Usage Stack Exchange explains that the two words have distinct meanings. Wholistic refers to the whole, a whole item or whole body of a person or

thing including the entire structure which includes the body, mind, and the spirit in the case of a human being. The word holistic is connected to and defined in terms of wholism which focuses on the total entity and the interdependence of the diverse parts of this totality. Holistic is the formal academic spelling of the word, while 'wholistic' is an Anglican version of the spelling. Both spellings are informally recognised and both have the same effectual meaning.

According to Merriam-Webster dictionary, when used, *wholistic* too is firmly anchored in the concept that "the whole is greater than the sum of its parts." Like *holistic*, it's used to describe an all-inclusive approach that looks at all aspects of a subject as interwoven elements of one broader, synergistic entity. Even so, many dictionaries still may not list it as an acceptable variant spelling. And yet, despite not being academically recognised, *wholistic* is not necessarily wrong. *Holistic* and *wholistic* can be used interchangeably. Of the two, *holistic* is considered the standard spelling and is used much more frequently, even more so in academic and medical writing.

Schoonover-Shoffner, (2013) states the professional term in nursing referring to integrated whole person care is "holistic" (American Nurses Association and American Holistic Nurses Association, 2013). For years, Christian nurses have struggled with the term "holistic," concerned about the alternative therapy view that sees the body as a dynamic energy field rather than an integrated biopsychosocial spiritual being created to live in relationship with God and others. To clarify between these two different worldviews, Christian nurses have used the term "wholistic." A search for articles and books using the term "wholistic" reveals many authors use both terms to mean the same thing, although some suggest holistic encompasses wholistic because holism refers to the interaction/interdependence of the parts, whereas wholism only refers to the whole of the parts. Schoonover-Shoffner says holistic nursing is caring for the whole person, believing people are much more than the sum of their parts. But the term holistic also is used to refer to a worldview that espouses "There is a unity, totality, and connectedness of everyone and everything" (Dossey & Keegan 2013: 71) and persons are energy systems with specific centers of consciousness (Chakras) used to channel energy (2013: 417-438).

For the purposes of this context statement, I am using the term holistic throughout with awareness that contemporary writers in this field are using the word holism but are referring to wholism. I am embracing the three-fold notion of this concept as examined below namely that holism is a comprehensive way of viewing the human person, body mind and spirit and the interrelatedness encompassed, that it can be used to describe a way of growth for the person and that this involves wholistic listening on the part of the counsellor. My world view, both personally and professionally, has emerged from the influences of my earlier years. This is one aspect of what I intend when I speak of a holistic approach to life which also shapes my practice as a psychotherapist and as an educator of counsellors and psychotherapists. This is the holistic approach to healing and helping embodied in all the programmes at ICPPD.

Origins of “Wholism” and “Holism”

In this section I am critically considering Wholism and Holism and how it relates to programmes offered at ICPPD. My goal is to highlight a knowledge set that informs the reader of relevant literature and research that examines the contributions and limitations of this approach. In this context statement I explore what Holistic Counselling and Psychotherapy, and what the training of such therapists might look like and how it is distinct from other approaches and schools of therapy.

I begin by researching the origins of ‘wholism’ and ‘holism’ and link it to an Irish indigenous context. Absolon (2010: 74 and 78.) writes that, “Indigenous peoples have worldviews and means of relating to the world... we acknowledge our past, present, and future” and goes on to say, “The context of our past has changed, yet we remain. We are Indigenous and we carry our ancestors’ stories, teachings and knowledge.” Dunn (2019: 5.) reminds us that, “The roots of holistic practices derive from ancient wisdom and traditional healers”. Mijares (2003) explains that some of these healing practices were outgrowths of ancient spiritual paths such as Indigenous spiritualities, Buddhism, Hinduism, Christianity, Judaism, Daoism, paganism, and Goddess practices. This is endorsed by DiStefano (2006) who traces several branches of holistic healing back to ancient Egypt, Greece, and Rome, as well as other parts of the world. In defining this concept, Dunn states that “Holism is

a broad, complex idea, and there is a great range of thinking about its definitions, theories, principles and components.” Dunn (2019: 7), in exploring the concept of ‘wholism’ writes, “Aristotle (384-322 BCE) believed that things should be understood in terms of wholes, instead of breaking down structures into individual parts, or what is now considered reductionism or atomism” and he includes Durkheim’s beliefs that “society was more than the collection of single individuals; instead, societies formed unique cultures through people interacting (Allan 2005)”.

The holistic approach is originally rooted in the development of Smuts work (1926) who coined the term “Holism”. Smuts defines Holism as “(1) the theory that certain wholes are to be regarded as greater than the sum of their parts (compare to *reductionism*); (2) the treating of the whole person including mental and social factors rather than just the symptoms of a disease.” (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*, contemporarily, the Oxford English Dictionary 1929: 673). For Smuts, holism elevates the synthetic over the analytic and the organic over the radically discrete element, in the early twentieth century.

Shannon (2002) agreed with Smuts’ concern with the trend in Western science and other fields toward fragmenting systems into smaller and smaller parts. DiStefano (2006) refers to Smuts as using the term *holism* to describe a “philosophical idea that emphasizes understanding the whole system, rather than specific unconnected events or phenomena”. Dunn (2019) refers to Pyles and Adam’s book, *Holistic Engagement: Transformative Social Work Education in the 21st Century* in which they discuss pedagogies of holistic teaching in social work education. Dunn supports this concept by noting that influential leaders and writers like the Dalai Lama and Thich Nhat Hanh have spoken on how to bring about individual, community, national and even global healing based on holistic ideas and practices.

Regarding holism, Dunn (2019: 8) referring to the indigenous models, states that “this approach promotes the understanding of holism as an interconnected field of study in terms of values and approaches”. Similar, to the ideas of holism, systems theory, and the work of Bronfenbrenner (1979), who proposes that events are interrelated and make up a whole. Appendix 14 illustrates Bronfenbrenner’s well-established diagram 1979. Change in one part affects other parts and life is

continuously changing. Systems theory stresses the importance of how different systems impact the individual, community, culture and their interrelations at micro, mezzo, and macro levels. Dunn (2019: 8) challenges systems theory and states that “the focus is on inputs and outputs and understanding all aspects of the system in a mechanical way, rather than understanding the subtle interconnections of the mind, body, emotions, and spirit”.

Common Principles of holism

In summarising Dunn (2019), there are several common principles of holism, which include – Connection, Interdependence, Linkages and Integration, Reciprocity and Mutuality, Wholeness, Balance, and Harmony, Change and Social Change. This is reflective of the description of our log on the ICPPD website, Figure 8, “Our logo is the circle in which are seven interlocking discs. The circle illustrates and symbolises the idea of cycles, a continuous journey. The interlocking discs depict the holistic emblem of connection, inclusion, nurturance, empowerment, integration, community, and interconnectedness. It also represents the many aspects of the self and the concept of balance and wholeness, and more. This supports the holistic ethos and philosophy of ICPPD”. I am further supported by Dunn (2019: 75) when he says, “My use of the spelling wholism indicates ‘whole’ as in wholistic, complete, balanced, and circular.” Absolan (2010: 74-87) concurs with this thinking, “Indigenous wholistic theory is whole, ecological, cyclical and relational”.



Figure 8. ICPPD Logo

In writing about wholism versus holism, Dunn (2019) acknowledges the various interpretations and writes that Western medicine focus on the whole body while

holism acknowledges the total being and the interconnection between parts. This tension in the field is important to recognise.

Regarding the term '*healing*' which is used on ICPPD's promotional literature, it is important to say that the Merriman Webster Dictionary defines healing as "making sound or whole" and "returning to balance". Waldron (2008) explains that healing is often considered a lifelong process. McCormick identifies the healing path and outlines the role of spirituality in healing, the role of nature, the role of cleansing, the role of culture in healing, the model of the circle and Medicine Wheel (native American wisdom tool and resource), the concept of balance, the role of connection, and the role of ceremony in healing (2005: 293-294).

Holism and Health

Wilson (2016) explains that a holistic path to healing includes the physical, through eating healthy foods and leading a healthy lifestyle; mental, by learning to detach from a rollercoaster of mental states; the emotional, by letting go of feelings that do not serve us; and the spiritual, by touching the deeper self, which is mysterious and powerful. Moodley and Shireen, in Dunn (2019: 67) state that, "Mental health professionals in the West are certainly influenced by the culture and dominant epistemologies of their professional training and practice... Many cultures from around the world do not advocate a Cartesian body mind dualism - on the contrary, these non-western cultures have evolved epistemological tenets within which the body, mind, emotions, and spirit are seen as a unified whole". In contemporary Ireland, the dominant Eurocentric model and approach needs to change to better meet the needs of our increasingly multi-cultural population with its rich complexity and traditions.

My understanding and application of the holistic approach refers to mind, body, spirit and how these are impacted by culture and society. It focuses on indigenous traditions and individuals' creativity. "It is capable of seeing people within the context of family, neighbourhood, spirituality, community, nation, world, history, economics, and politics" (Maller et al. in Dunn, 2019). The aim of holistic counselling and psychotherapy is to appreciate the complexity and context of the unique lived experience of each person including experiences related to "developmental and

acute trauma, social privilege, bias, and oppression, as well as issues pertaining to spiritual meaning, purpose, vision, creativity, and non-normative states of consciousness” (Maller et al. in Dunn, 2019: 85). Today, it is mostly accepted by mainstream psychology that our standards for mental health and our way of diagnosing pathology have been deeply biased by our often-uncritical acceptance of dominant cultural norms. This is now acknowledged by the American Psychological Association (APA, 2008: 2 and 88).

Holistic Approach to Counselling and Psychotherapy

One aspect of the inter-weaving of a holistic approach into counselling and psychotherapy can be seen in the work of Jung when he connects the personal with the transpersonal. Likewise, an increasingly holistic approach to counselling and psychotherapy can be seen in the 1960’s and 1970’s with the recognition of innate human potential in the humanistic approach. This became a third strand of counselling, pioneered by Maslow (1943) and Rogers (1942, 1959, and 1961). Their work emphasised the organic natural self, with incongruence developing because of the natural self being subjugated to the conditions of worth from significant others. Moss (2001) emphasised that an empathic focusing on needs, with positive regard, would nurture a self-motivated process in which clients would have a better chance of reaching their full potential.

Contemporary writings on holism in the field of counselling fall into three distinct but overarching strands i.e., physical, social, emotional, and spiritual dimension of the person, processes of development that incorporates all the above four dimensions and wholistic listening. Millar and Warner (in Feltham & Horton, 2012) attribute the concept of ‘indivisible’ to Adler’s work when he refers to behaviour, thoughts, goals, and emotions. Van Deurzen (in Feltham & Horton 2012) refers to Holism as the coherent whole, and that we cannot understand aspects of ourselves in isolation from the whole, it is different from the sum of its parts.

Mearns & Cooper (2005) and Wyatt in Cooper et al. explored the idea of wholistic listening. A ‘special dance’ is required by the therapist: a slowness to allow the client’s story to unfold, a spontaneity and authenticity, a willingness to not know and be vulnerable and most importantly a capacity for the client to affect the

therapist (Wyatt, 2007: 150) This is a distinctly unique way of listening and is specific to the broad family of humanistic counsellors. More recently the impact of this type of listening is considered in its effects on the therapist. Compassion fatigue and empathy fatigue are being documented and more broadly discussed in this field by Skovholt and Trotter-Mathison (2011) and Stebnicki (2008). Maller et al. in Dunn (2019: 91), propose that, once an assessment is complete, counsellors can choose from a variety of specialisation and theories to connect with and move into interventions. Holistic practices can include “contemplative psychology, somatic psychology, transpersonal practices, art-based practices, eco-psychology, and the use of ritual in practice, integral psychology, and community psychology for social change”. He further says that part of the skill of the holistic counsellor is choosing with the service user the best and most useful interventions.

Norcross and Goldfried (2005) have written that psychology has moved towards an integrative approach to counselling that recognises the common factors across various theoretical approaches, and that this supports a more effective and inclusive model of helping and healing. Other thinkers in this field use the term ‘whole person’ and ‘whole self’ (Toland 2012, Rowan & Jacobs 2003). There is scope for research to quantify how holistic and creative methods of treatment such as Mindfulness, Art therapy, and Psychosynthesis Psychotherapy might provide the *“HSE’s aspiration to provide holistic interventions as set out in a Vision for Change,* (Department of Health and Children, 2006: 79).

Limitations of the holistic approach

I am aware that there are limitations to this approach, namely that it may be cumbersome for the therapist to make a specific assessment of the client’s issues if such a diverse range of aspects of the self are being held by the therapist. Additionally, that when the work with clients is on such a broad canvas, therapeutic processes could be very time consuming and long term in contrast to Cognitive Behavioural and Brief Solution Focused Therapy approaches. Maller stresses this point when he says, “A whole-person approach requires a whole-person assessment; it often takes more than a few sessions to fully understand the

complexities of the life lived, and the hopes and aspirations for the work to be undertaken” (Maller et al. in Dunn, 2019: 91).

Another critique relates to how the holistic approach addresses clients from a multi-cultural background. Even though there is evidence that the holistic approach has been influenced by Eastern Practices in its development (Maller et al. in Dunne, 2019) and Absolon (2010), it could be stated that the wholistic approach is a modality of counselling that has evolved mainly from the western world and ways of thinking i.e., humanistic counselling modality. This may not be best situated to addressing clients from diverse population. In the last decade, the Irish population has become less homogeneous and clients from diverse cultural backgrounds are accessing counselling services. McLeod (1998: 162) emphasised the importance of culture in counselling when he stated that “a second response to the issue raised by an awareness of cultural difference has been to construct an approach to cultural difference that places the concepts of ‘culture’ at the centre of its image of the person rather than leaving it to be tackled as an after-thought”. The holistic approach may need to address this emphasis more comprehensively.

Yet another critique relates to gathering quantitative data pertinent to research in the practice of holistic approach to counselling. Cooper (2010) considers that while research in this field is more descriptive and qualitative and this is valuable, it may be viewed as a weakness in the outcomes of this approach.

Further critique of heuristic approach:

Holistic psychotherapists look to intervene on three levels: the body, the emotions, and the mind/soul. Therapists often use bodywork techniques to focus a person’s attention on areas of tension in the body. A level of trust is established between the therapist and the client in therapy, the psychotherapist can help the client to release bodily tension. Verbal forms of psychotherapy are used in the process of understanding the emotions arising from the release of the bodily tension. The therapist and client explore these emotions and the role they play in the person’s life. The goal is the reintegration of the repressed emotions as part of the person’s whole self. The third level of mind and soul are often the most difficult to reach and therapy may continue for years before this level is reached. An existential approach

is appreciated in which the therapist and client collaborate in an endeavour to connect the client to a deeper meaning in the world and strike a balance in taking care of their mind, body, and spirit. Holistic counsellors and psychotherapists cite a major limitation to the three-level intervention discussed above as – many people find it difficult to reach the mind and soul level. One possible reason for this is the lengthy amount of time it may take to work through the emotional level.

For a holistic counsellor/psychotherapist to gain the confidence and expertise to work with clients from a holistic perspective of body, mind and spirit, the focus is on the therapist themselves and on the theoretical element of training.

The need for the therapist to have engaged in personal development, self-awareness, personal therapy, journaling, group work, transpersonal training, somatic training requires the therapist to engage deeply with their own process and this can be seen as an impediment where a trainee would like a 'more academic approach' to learning or where a training programme is not designed specifically to meet these needs. Ongoing modules in Group Process, throughout a learner's core training programme at ICPPD, Personal and Professional Development modules, Family and Systemic Module, and experiential learning prepare learners to engage with what Aponte and Kissil (2016) devised POTT, Person of the Therapist model, for this type of work with clients. This model "prepares therapists to be more fully available personally and professionally to clients in the therapeutic relationship" and emphasises the very essences of what we want to help our clients to understand "that acknowledgement and acceptance of human vulnerability creates a pathway for healing and growth" (Aponte & Kissil, 2016: 100, 106). The POTT model is about the use of self that emanates from the personal depths of the individual who is conducting the therapy. Self-insight, self-access, and self-management "cannot be simply willed" (2016: 4) and as therapists, we need to be able to work "with all of who we are within the various component task of the therapeutic process at the appropriate clinical moment" (2016: 5). Knowledge and understanding and adherence to the professional body's Code of Ethics, related to the principles of non-maleficence and limitations among others, offer safety for all concerned. It is clear to see how this approach might be considered too arduous or even unnecessary by some people.

My vision in setting up this academic institute was to enhance therapeutic training and offer a model of adult education that supports wholeness. All our current administration and management staff (6) are female. It is interesting for me to reflect on the gender distribution on ICPPD's current Academic Board and Board of Directors and to notice a changing dynamic and composition of male dominant members. I am fully cognisant of the value of both male and female energies, and I am grateful to the many men who continue to support me, both personally and professionally. I am also mindful that as human beings we endeavour to integrate our male and female energies. In my experience the arena of counselling and psychotherapy is predominantly female as denoted in our enrolments, where 80% are women (Public Works Folder 13 Doc 7). This lack of balance has its own subtleties and intricacies. This percentage mirrors our tutoring staff at ICPPD who are also predominantly female.

My ideal venue and premises are a building surrounded by nature, with community gardens where workers in tune with the environment grow food and herbs and there is evidence of my vision of a Heads, Hearts and Hands Learning community. Inside ICPPD, with paintings and framed images we create our own art gallery. A space with cushions is a meditation corner. As well as providing an e-library of journals and books for learners, we create a reading room to enhance the learning and research taking place (Public Works Folder 15 Docs 8 & 9). In carvings and sculptures of the sun, moon and stars, plants, and flowers, we have the cosmos represented. I wanted to create a space of hospitality that carries an energy of inclusivity, kinship and belonging. There are sets of delicate porcelain delph alongside the many mugs in our kitchen at ICPPD. Each year at integration evening, the President of ICPPD, management and tutors serve our final year learners some refreshments in beautiful cups (Figure 9). This ritual symbolises our delight and represents beauty, service, and gratitude.



Figure 9 - ICPPD tutor serving final year learners at Integration Evening 2016

I keep a table as a visible symbolic image of our sacred dream on which fresh flowers, candle and background spiritual music are reminders of our interconnectedness to all sentient beings. The hallway at ICPPD is also adorned by the framed academic and professional accreditations and photos of graduates taken at ICPPD annual Award Ceremonies. Can I create a space for adult learners, trainee therapists to experience a sense of mystery and an invitation to self-discovery and growing self-awareness which is supported and balanced by rigorous academic studies, critical inquiry, learning outcomes and assessment? The term 'reflective contract' (Schön, cited in Bager-Charleson, 2010: 50) is used with reference to a relationship that is 'open for mutual learning'.



Figure 10 - A gift from a staff member to ICPPD 2017

Apart from the obvious holistic presence in the physical learning environment, (Figure 10) the distinctive ethos at ICPPD is translated into the education of counsellors and psychotherapists and is experienced through the andragogical, and paragogical experiential style of facilitative learning. Each class begins with a learner bringing the group together with a 'Reflection' (Public Works Folder 18 Doc 11), which is at the discretion of the learner and is usually an appropriate reading, music, meditation. The class representative on behalf of the group or the tutor, creates a visual altar to symbolise unity and connection as in Figure 11



Figure 11- A class 'altar' - the many hats, masks we wear and the bitter sweetness of life!

The tutors begin the day with a Contract for creating a conducive learning environment that creates a climate for experimentation and meets the needs of learners. This is followed by a 'check in' which provides learners with the opportunity to express their distress or request for support or concerns of individuals within the group and this supports individual and group cohesion. The day ends with a 'check out' which is a time for each learner to reflect on insight and learning gained.

Modules with a holistic emphasis

Various modules within the courses lend themselves to a holistic emphasis. In the **3-Year Bachelor of Arts in Holistic Counselling and Psychotherapy** programme the Personal Development, Holistic Approaches, Person Centred and Gestalt Approaches with Psychosynthesis Psychotherapy modules particularly, support expression of a creative, integrative synthesis of body mind spirit awareness and embodiment (Public Works Folder 5). In the training at ICPPD, the focus is on the growing self-awareness of the trainee as an agent of change including the therapeutic use of self. Learning and excavation that expands this discovery is paramount and seen as essential in counselling and psychotherapy training and education. Francis (2017), summarising Dewey advocates that education must respond by being flexible and by provoking intelligent, experimental inquiry.

While training and education at ICPPD is mainly humanistic and experiential, all programmes also carry a transpersonal 'edge' which I believe enriches the learners' knowledge, competencies, and personal development. This transpersonal element is offered distinctly through our module on Psychosynthesis. This is a dynamic approach and philosophy, founded by Assagioli (1965) which supports the learners' engagement with concepts of consciousness and a 'higher self' and posits ideas of 'I am more than', 'the seeds of wholeness are in everything', 'sub-personalities are my crew', 'I am the conductor of my orchestra'.

Soul-making is a word used in Psychosynthesis Psychotherapy. Hillman (1975) wrote about the 'realm of soul' and the 'imaginal world', and Moore (2001) regards the word 'soul' as useful in entering the subtle realm. Assagioli (1988) founder of Psychosynthesis used exercises in transpersonal workshops to help participants

connect with their superconscious and 'higher self'. Feedback from ICPPD graduates, tutors, clinical supervisors, and clinical practice placements concur that the holistic element is evident in the training and that it improves the quality of practice and service to clients and to people in the community (Public Works Folder 17 Docs 1-5). All the programmes at ICPPD are imbued with transpersonal strands and in addition specific courses are offered that have the transpersonal focus at their core. The following are examples of this.

ICPPD offers a **Certificate in Psychosynthesis for Professionals**, which is of interest to therapists and professionals interested in deepening their personal development. (Public Works Folder 3 Doc 3) This ICPPD course is included on the website of the Association for Advancement of Psychosynthesis, USA. Parfitt (2019) explores 'the magic' of personal and spiritual self-development that can be achieved through the 'the essential components' of Will, Imagination and Love, while challenging the supposed disparateness between 'Western' and 'Eastern' psychospiritual practice. Parfitt draws from psychosynthesis practices to offer ways in which we can restore balance and promote the fuller expression of our potential and unique creativity and acknowledges the work we must do to obtain self-knowledge. He argues that the discoveries we obtain through each type of inquiry into human nature can help us walk life's path. Psychosynthesis is a unique discipline of psychotherapy and for Parfitt (2019: 2) it is a discipline that engages not just the mind but also the body and the spirit, making it a "truly holistic system". The Psychosynthesis Trust in London (posted 20/12/2021) when advocating a sense of inter-connectedness, quote Assagioli (1974: 97) "a person is always in a social context; he is never an isolated unit" while honouring our need for meaning and connection, the spiritual aspects alongside our biological and social needs. Because of the holistic and the transpersonal element of our programmes we have also seen a greater number of participants drawn to our programmes, in search of meaningful ways to engage, not only on their own psychospiritual journey, but also in their career choices.

At ICPPD, the creative arts are encouraged and appreciated as a non-verbal expression and a route to access the deep recesses of the psyche. **The Diploma in Expressive Arts for Professionals** is a popular programme delivered at ICPPD each

year for professionals who wish to incorporate expressive arts into their portfolio of work and learning (Public Works Folder 4 Doc 3).

Some years ago, I had the privilege of attending an Intensive Training in Person-Centred Expressive Arts with Natalie Rogers, founder of Person-Centred Expressive Arts and the daughter of the founder of Person-Centred approach, Carl Rogers (Figure 12).



Figure 12 - Christine Moran with Natalie Rogers and a collage of ICPPD learners' creations

In her eighties, her energy and stamina were amazing. As a role model, she respected herself and others; I witnessed empathy, congruence, and acceptance on her part. What I learned most from her was that PCA is an embracing inclusive empowering approach which also includes having firm boundaries, and being congruent, this is not easy to balance. It was a wonderful experience to work with the founder of Person-Centred Expressive Arts, who incorporated the philosophy she promoted into her living day. I feel privileged to have had the opportunity to train with her and I endeavour to pass to others, the expressive arts with its elements of sound, movement and creative expression and call to well-being and wholeness.

ICPPD offers a **1-Year Professional Diploma in Supervision Across Professions – A Holistic Approach – IACP Accredited** (Public Works Folder 4 Doc 2).

This popular programme is gaining a reputation because of its content and approach to learning and supervision. Three International guests' Dr Bobby Moore, Robin Shohet and Dr Geraldine Holton also teach a weekend each on this programme. Their humanistic, spiritual, and reflexive facilitative styles of teaching are appreciated by participants and by ICPPD. While the focus here is on creative approaches to supervision, it should be noted that this is balanced by evidence-based teaching and learning requirements of academic validating and accreditation bodies. Indeed, this continues to be our challenge, to hold our visible and explicit holistic focus and use of the word in the titles of our programmes.

I agree with MacDonald (1987) in his contemporary curriculum discourses when he says that science, critical theory, and the mytho-poetic are all contributing methodologies to a larger hermeneutic circle of a continual search for greater understanding, and (Kesson, 1998: 112) writing about holistic education concurs with his view, "if it realizes its own potential, which is to develop the capacity to reason critically and compassionately, incorporating and transcending dualistic and suppressed forms of consciousness to achieve a more fully developed mode of awareness, then it will serve us well as we move into the 21st century."

In my life, work and in this study, I continue to refer to 'spirit', 'heart-centred' and the 'transpersonal'. I am continuing to etch out ways of how to articulate a definition, and to relate through my experiences. I perceive and understand 'transpersonal' as described by Fabry who writes that to maintain or restore health that we must consider all three dimensions, and that the spirit like the body and the psyche is part of every person, he says, that the spiritual dimension, which Frankl (1966) calls the noos, contains such "uniquely human attributes as our will to meaning, our goal orientation, our creativity, our imagination, our intuition, our faith, our vision of what we can become, our capacity to love beyond the psychophysiological, our capacity to listen to our conscience beyond the dictates of the superego, our sense of humour" (Fabry, 1980: 81). He further posits that it also contains our self-detachment or ability to step outside and look at ourselves and our self-transcendence or ability to reach out to people we love and causes in which we believe. In my journal at this time, I wrote "ICPPD is being unearthed recently; it is like a tent almost pulled from its ground pegs that are under stress and strain.

There is chaos, and there is a gift. If we can hold the current tension and uncertainty and create space for processes of evaluation we can stabilise and strengthen the structures, procedures and processes that will provide clarity and improvement for all”

Transpersonal Psychology

There have been difficulties in defining transpersonal psychology since the beginning of the transpersonal psychology in the late 1960s. For example, Hoffman (1988: 342) advocates that transpersonal psychology is an approach founded and introduced within humanistic psychology by Maslow in the 1960s, which seeks to “incorporate human spirituality into a comprehensive model of human nature and its potential. Also known as the Fourth Force”. Lajoie & Shapiro (1992: 91) having studied over two hundred original citations of previous definitions, offered the following as a precise and contemporary definition of transpersonal psychology: “Transpersonal psychology is concerned with the study of humanity’s highest potential, and with the recognition, understanding and realization of unitive, spiritual and transcendent states of consciousness.”

There is a growing appreciation by leading thinkers and researchers including Laszlo (2007) and Wilbur (2007) of an evolving consciousness, working through each one of us individually and collectively. Depth psychologists postulate a higher self that extends beyond the individual and some holistic educators refer to the souls of tradition and religions, most speak in terms of some universal order or archetypal mythology or what Huxley (1946) called “the Perennial Philosophy”. Spirituality has been described by Faiver et al. (2001: 2) as that which “connects us to other people, nature, and the source of life. The experience of spirituality is greater than us and helps us transcend and embrace life situations.” According to Young-Brown (1989: 106) when we inquire deeply into what gives us greatest satisfaction and happiness, it seems to be in expressing our highest qualities, which are also of value to the world. The following partial list of transpersonal qualities from Young-Brown is grounded in the theory of Psychosynthesis and is complementary to the aspiring ethos of ICPPD. On the classroom walls at ICPPD there are murals with the following inscriptions - Beauty, Creativity, Gratitude, Truth, Peace, Wholeness, Wisdom,

Compassion, Humour, Understanding, Responsibility, Power, Universality, Cooperation, Trust, Service, Courage, Enthusiasm, Freedom, Love, Synthesis, see Appendix 15.

Conclusion

Over the past five weeks I have been reflecting on the above and distilling what is distinctive or specific to the Holistic approach to counselling and psychotherapy. Engaging with the origin of holism and wholism and then immersing myself in the topic brought me to a place of uncertainty and even confusion, and then interpreting and deducing the insights below, provided me with clarity and a creative synthesis.

Insight 1: The holistic approach to counselling and psychotherapy (HAC&P) focuses on the **creative dimension** of the person, the possibilities and dynamics that may be experienced in therapy and their application to life outside the therapy room. I have referred to this disposition that was part of my own culture and upbringing, and professional training. This creative dimension is woven throughout every module delivered at ICPPD.

Insight 2: The HAC&P is centrally anchored in Roger's less explored condition of **presences**. The theme of engagement and attunement are allied concepts. These concepts have considerable currency in recent writing in this field. Greenberg and Geller (2012) and separately Siegel (2010) have very clear ideas on these concepts. Trainee therapists at ICPPD are encouraged to explore the concept and meaning of 'becoming a person' and the value of 'being' as important as 'doing' in the therapy room. Gestalt module in 2nd year brings learners into presence with awareness of their body, mind, and spirit. The art of mindfulness and meditation is included in Holistic approaches in year 1 of the BA programme.

Insight 3: The HAC&P is open to the **transcendent** and spiritual aspects of life and is much more explicitly open to this phenomenon in the counselling encounter than Integrative and Pluralistic approaches. The work of Roger's (1995) is supportive with this concept which is subtly integrated throughout all programmes at ICPPD and can be identified in Psychosynthesis Psychotherapy and Holistic Approaches modules.

Insight 4: The **'felt sense'** from the work of Gendlin (1982) is also quite central to our specific work at ICPPD and his work sheds considerable light on my critical analysis and discussion also. Focusing is included in the Person-Centred Approach module in year 1, and links well to Gestalt approach in year 2, and to the modules on Body focus and Trauma work in our current 3rd and 4th Year Modules. The therapeutic use of self and the therapist as an instrument of change in the overall training of therapists at ICPPD is woven through the programme and includes an exploration of six counselling orientations and how self-development is understood through each lens and the learner/trainee is developing what Sedgwick (1993: 121) calls a "subjectivity he can trust." Rowan and Jacobs (2011: 109) in discussing training of therapists write that training institutes that limit their theoretical stance, in dismissing other schools as "wrong" do a disservice to their trainees, their clients, as well as to a truly academic approach to theory. There is much to be said for a more integrative approach that includes a transpersonal element.

These concepts bring depth, for integration and this is what is distinctive to HAC&P and deserves consideration. The above four insights are at the core of the work at ICPPD and the Public Works Documents that are central to my thesis.

As I further reflect, I now have a new curiosity for both Holistic and Integrative and Pluralistic approaches in counselling and psychotherapy and I am holding all perspectives to the light for examination. I wonder if Integrative is 'doing something, from outside in' and holistic is 'being something, from inside out' and I wonder if holding both perspectives fit into a pluralistic approach. I will further explore the theory and practice of a holistic approach in counselling and psychotherapy in the following chapter.

Chapter 9 – National Award and recognition of influence on counselling and psychotherapy training and education in Ireland

Introduction

Carl Berkeley was an inspiring man and founder member of The Irish Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy, IACP. After his death, IACP agreed to present an award in his honour to professionals within the field of counselling and psychotherapy for their outstanding contribution to the development of the counselling profession by creating or influencing counselling projects or counselling development work at local and national level. The criteria as per the IACP website www.iacp.ie states –

Awardees should meet, establish, and promote the highest professional and ethical standards and may be recognised as leaders in their field. Eligible nominees will be knowledgeable, demonstrate creativity and succeed in stretching the boundaries defining the parameters of good practice. www.iacp.ie

In 2016, I was nominated by the IACP Midlands Regional Committee and was the recipient of this prestigious national award. The Carl Berkeley Memorial Award 2016 was presented to me at the IACP Annual Conference and AGM. (Appendix 11) for IACP Introduction to Award recipient). The Midland regional committee nominated me because I was a founding member of the Regional IACP Committee, I held the positions of Secretary and Chairperson and during this time I initiated Networking Evenings twice a year. This successful event still takes place at regional level and has been replicated by other regions since then.



Figure 13 - Christine Moran accepting the Carl Berkeley National Memorial Award at the IACP Conference in 2016

It was an honour to receive this acknowledgement from my peers, former students, colleagues, and others in the field, for work undertaken at regional level and then national recognition for establishing a reputable training and educational institute, ICPPD. The trophy symbolising the integration of male and female energy, took its place in the hallway of ICPPD for the following year, reminding all at ICPPD, that as a team we can achieve excellence.

This accolade was instrumental in supporting my pursuance of this doctoral study and for that, I am immensely grateful. The award added to the profile of my professional work and of ICPPD as a college 'with a difference' offering credible programmes in the field of counselling and psychotherapy in Ireland.

Since receiving the Carl Berkeley Award, I have been invited by the National Executive of IACP to speak on Education in Counselling and Psychotherapy at networking meetings throughout the country. Through my involvement in the European Association of Counselling, EAC, and as a member of a sub-committee of EAC, Programme Training Standards Accreditation Committee, PTSAC, my main contribution was my experience of designing academic and professional programmes for academic validation and professional accreditation at third level by national bodies. I was a keynote speaker at an EAC Conference in Serbia (Public Works Folder 18 Docs 4 & 5). This was a personal and professional achievement for me as I travelled alone on that occasion and I encountered my 'technical, personal, and professional ability and disabilities' during this journey.

I continue to be a supporter of the Midlands IACP regional committee. I am currently a member of IACP's Providers Consultancy group. This group was structured officially after suggestions from myself as Academic Director of ICPPD (and others I assume) regarding dissatisfaction with the lack of consultation and an obvious lack of understanding of the dynamics in delivering a training course and its implications.

Mandatory student membership required by IACP was another dilemma highlighted by me. This was perceived by us at ICPPD as a lack of freedom and choice of other national professional bodies for learners. The above requirement has been amended by IACP.

ICPPD Professional Qualification

ICPPD has also been the first educational and training institute in Ireland to receive professional accreditation for our Professional Diploma in Advanced Supervision across Profession – A Holistic Approach. To become an accredited IACP supervisor in Ireland from 2019, the supervisee must complete an IACP accredited supervision training programme. The ICPPD supervision course has been accepted by Supervisors Association of Ireland, (SAI) a specific organisation to provide membership to cross-professionals as supervisors. The richness from the input and the calibre of the International Guest lecturers supports our holistic model in line with all course offerings at ICPPD.

The progression of learners, the involvement of members of various boards and other stakeholders, the impact of ICPPD as a training college delivering quality programmes, the care and support of learners and the focus on providing a superior learning experience in the classroom is supported by feedback received from stakeholders. The importance of ethical awareness, personal and professional development, self-awareness, self-care, and an appreciation for the profession of counselling and psychotherapy is evidenced by research and feedback conducted as part of completing this work (Public Works Folder 17).

Philosophy and research in counselling and psychotherapy -

The unique personal and professional relationship that develops between client and therapist contains within it the potential to assist the person to be fully human in the sense of getting closer to the values and relationships that reflect their idea of the good life, and to participate meaningfully as a citizen (McLeod, 2015: 16). However, the intensity of this relationship also “introduces the potential for manipulation”. Qualitative research in therapy contributes to new understandings of the power relationship between client and therapist (McLeod, 2015:26). What is being attempted here is challenging, disturbing, radical, and critical. I am carrying forward my understanding of phenomenology as developed by Husserl (1960) and described in Chapter 1. The message for researchers who are seeking to understand human experience is that it is necessary to be willing to question and transcend ones pre-existing ideas about the phenomenon being investigated to

achieve a deeper level of understanding. He said however in an important sense, all qualitative research is informed, to a greater or lesser extent, by phenomenological principles. Another way of looking at the implications of phenomenological ideas for qualitative research is that in an important sense it is all about *openness*. What Husserl and other phenomenologists are saying, in the end, is that to arrive at an authentic understanding of any process or event, it is necessary to remain open to all aspects of that experience. The concept of openness is given particular emphasis as a central principle for qualitative research practice (Dahlberg, Drew and Nyström, 2008).

Ontology and Epistemology

Two key concepts that supported me in my heuristic inquiry into my Public Works are ontology and epistemology. Both will be addressed here. Ontology refers to ways of understanding the basic nature of persons, their core being. It sheds light on the ways of understanding i.e., that views people as existing within multiple horizons of meaning, as striving to make sense of their experience, as constituted by their cultural and historical context, and humans engaged in dialogue. This concept supported me in exploring in depth the contexts out of which my Public Works emerged. Epistemology, on the other hand, refers to the way in which people gain knowledge about the world and come to regard some beliefs as true and others as false. Epistemology is a body of philosophical writing that has examined the value and limitations of an interpretive approach to knowledge creation. A hermeneutic methodology for social sciences relies on both ontological and epistemological hermeneutic principles (McLeod, 2015: 30).

Heidegger, 1927 and 1962 argued that phenomenology and hermeneutics should both be seen as integral, complementary aspects of any satisfactory way of knowing about human existence. He used the concept of 'everydayness' to describe what he was interested in. Husserl wished to transcend 'everydayness'; Heidegger wished to understand it, to create a 'clearing' in which the true nature of everyday life could be seen (1927: 35). His aim was to develop an appreciation of the 'essence' (in phenomenological terms) of everyday life and everyday understanding itself. At the heart of his work was the struggle to make sense of the essential nature off *being* itself: what does it mean to *be human*?

Additionally, ontology refers to ideas about the ultimate basis of reality - what do we believe the world is made of? Epistemology (principles of how to gain knowledge of that world and concrete investigative procedures) and this line of argument leads inevitably to the necessity of making sense of the concept of reflexivity according to Lynch (2000: 26). Reflexivity, or *being* reflexive, is often claimed as a methodological virtue and source of superior insight, perspicacity, heart awareness, but it can be difficult to establish just what is being claimed (Lynch, 2000: 26). Phenomenology requires a kind of withdrawal from the world and a willingness to lay aside existing theories and beliefs. This is risky and takes an act of courage. It can be viewed as a journey during which one “leaves familiar places and then returns and sees these places in a fresh light (McLeod, 2015: 24).

McLeod (2008) referencing Sela-Smith (2002) who considers “the self-search within an experience is replaced by what I interpret as a phenomenological explication of the definition of an experience” and Sela-Smith (2002: 70) means here that “those who have sought to use a heuristic approach in their research tended to slip back into the phenomenological roots of the approach rather than adhering to the more radical research agenda, focused on the ‘I-who feels’,” outlined by Douglass and Moustakas (1985).

Holistic Counselling and Psychotherapy

As founder of ICCPD, I bring with me an appreciation of humanistic approaches to counselling and psychotherapy, both from my lived experience as a client and as a therapist trained in an integrative orientation with a strong emphasis on person-centered, humanistic schools of therapy.

The fundamental and guiding principles of humanistic education are the development of the whole person; the intellectual and emotional are deeply rooted in humanistic psychology. Humanistic educators are facilitators of learning and foster an environment of trust with the learner, thus providing a safe and encouraging relationship. This chapter seeks to illuminate how ICCPD training and education programmes are recognised and influence the field of counselling and psychotherapy in Ireland. The objective in using the heuristic model of research (Moustakas, (1990), Sela-Smith, (2002), Hiles, (2001), West, (2001), Etherington

(2004), is to arrive at meanings and essences that are inherent in the lived experiences and to gain a deeper understanding of a way of “being”. Holistic educators go beyond themselves in acts of love, and as the artist “loves” and becomes invested in their work, so too does the holistic educator become connected with their learners. Holistic education is concerned with the development of the whole person: the physical, emotional, spiritual aspects of the individual (Miller, 2000). According to Kirschenbaum (2004), Rogers’s work was significant to the practice of psychology but was also beneficial to other professions. Rogers (1983) contended that educators need to be caring, genuine, understanding facilitators and educate the whole person. Humanistic philosophy highlights the importance of the educator as a facilitator of learning who fosters an environment of trust and cooperation with the learner thus providing a safe and encouraging relationship.

Psychology and Holism

Psychologists, during the positivistic era tended to side-line the individual’s full human potential by not recognising their transcendental values of creativity, wholeness, truth, ethics, beauty, and spontaneity. The reductionist belief or foundation can be traced back to defining the cause or the subconscious thought driving the individual’s behaviour (Garrison, 2001). According to McSharry & Draper, (1997) holistic is the harmony between mind, body, and spirit. Fontaine (2000) writes that the philosophy of holistic health is optimal health, which includes all aspects of the body systems: body, mind, and spirit. Moyers (1993) found that psychology has recently embraced the fact that there is a relationship between the mind and body and the field of psychology is now recognised as part of the health care system (Shulberg, Pillions, & Houck, 1998). The founders of humanistic psychology recognised the impact of emotions, feelings, morality, ethics, aesthetics, intra-personal, interpersonal, and transpersonal relationships. Fischer (2003) asserts that one way to advance humanistic psychology in the 21st century is to conduct qualitative research that addresses the lived, holistic experiences of humans. Mackenzie and Rakel (2006) found that transpersonal psychology is philosophically grounded in humanistic psychology, and while Jung was the first psychologist to use terms “transpersonal” and “unconscious” as interchangeable or

synonymous terms, Maslow (1943) is given credit for being the co-founder and coining the term transpersonal psychology.

Spirituality and therapeutic relation element of holism

The concept of spirituality, that which gives meaning, purpose and value to a person's life and transpersonal leanings align itself with the depth of presence and therapeutic relational element of the humanistic approaches, and holistic interrelatedness that is subtly woven throughout the BA (Hons) degree in Holistic Counselling and Psychotherapy at ICPPD. This is evidenced in the mix and scope of modules, syllabus, and recommended reading within the 30 modules. Among these are Person Centered Approach, (Rogers, Thorns, Mearns, Gendlin, Natalie Rogers). Existential approaches of Yalom and Frankl's Logotherapy, Kabott Zinn's mindfulness and meditation with Thich Nhat Hanh are on the syllabus in year one. In year 2, Gestalt Approaches (Perls, Clarkson, and Polster) and Psychodynamic perspectives with Freud and Jung are the theoretical approaches studied. Family and Systemic Approaches (Satir, Bowen) and the exploration of a genogram) and Psychosynthesis Psychotherapy (Assagioli, Parfit, Ferrucci, Rowan) support the transpersonal, spirituality and holistic approaches. In year 4, Trauma and Body Psychotherapy (Reich, Lewis, Van deer Koll) and care of the body and healing from trauma all ask the learner to consider the deeper meaning of life.

Relational spirituality is the experiences of spirituality which occur in a relationship between two or more persons (Leonard and Schmidt, 2020). They also espouse that these experiences may include a sense of relationship with the Divine or transcendent. Spiritual experience tends to convey a sense of profound meaning and purpose and connectedness with creation, life and other human beings, and a corresponding sense of responsibility for one's own part in it all. Rogers' (1981) 'core conditions', and the quality of presence, in his excerpt shares "... It seems that my inner spirit has reached out and touched the inner spirit of the other. Our relationship transcends itself and becomes part of something larger. Profound growth and healing and energy are present." illustrates this extra spiritual dimension in practice. Thorne (1991) on the quality of 'tenderness' being present perhaps as an outcome of the core conditions says that it seems there are times,

however brief, when two human beings are fully alive, and give themselves and each other permission to risk being fully alive, that at such a moment, “I have no hesitation in saying that my client and I are caught up in a stream of love...For me as a counsellor, it is accompanied by a sense of joy which, when I have checked it out, has always been shared by the client.” Mearns (2002) speaks to how when two human beings engage at sufficient ‘relational depth’, only the term spiritual will adequately begin to express the essential nature of this experience. This has also been my experience as a person and as an educator of therapist i.e., during moments of deep engagement and connection that is shared with another human being and is why I am ‘pulled’ towards a humanistic and holistic approach to life and in counselling. Research undertaken by Vieten and Scammell, (2015) conclude that in terms of application or consequence, a high proportion of trainee therapists surveyed seem to recognise the importance of spirituality as both content and process in therapy, and report that they feel that training courses should cater for this dimension in greater depth. Research carried out as part of this chapter with clinical placements, Appendix 17, where ICPPD trainees and graduates practice provide similar results that supports a holistic approach to helping and healing. This evidence further illustrates the influence of ICPPD on a national level, where there are graduates working as holistic counsellors/psychotherapists/supervisors throughout the country.

A limitation to this type of therapy is that this intensity in therapy is not for everyone, and the therapist (supervisor) is required to remain sensitive to the needs of clients and only discuss spirituality and transpersonal matters when the client introduces the topic or where professional judgement deems it appropriate.

Psychotherapy as a subjective art

Psychotherapy is a subjective art as much as a science and is quite different to other learning disciplines. Seashore (1975: 1) lists growth aspects that learners are not aware of when entering counselling and psychotherapy programmes as understanding that “more time would be spent on survival than on growth” and that as a learner you have to “re-examine, renegotiate, or just plain retreat from most of the significant relationships in your life” and that “growth and regression

just might be intertwined “ and that for learners with a family, that although they filled out the application as an individual, they were “enrolling their family in a change program.” This is my personal experience and I now see and hear our trainees speak to their experience of training as a therapist also.

Psychotherapy values mirroring and validation, meeting clients exactly where they are to create an environment conducive to the emotional material, and creating a safe space to explore one’s vulnerability, access deep unconscious material and gifts. Incongruencies in psychotherapy training flows into the profession in practice and it is important to value the time and effort over many years of training and not to disavow knowledge or diminish the expertise this profession brings to a multidisciplinary approach to well-being. Morstyn, (2010) questions the need for evidence-based psychotherapy, following standardised manuals and guidelines and states that “it sacrifices a search for truth in psychotherapy, for an illusory search for certainty”. According to Morstyn (2010: 225) the practice of evidence-based psychotherapy raises serious ethical concerns about “pseudo-relationships being passed off as authentic”, which could lead to missed opportunities to engage mentally ill patients in treatment and to the reinforcement of their detrimental sense of alienation. Research has indicated that psychotherapy is moving toward an integrated approach to therapy (Norcross, 2005b) and historical development from emphasising a singular approach to therapy to the current integrative psychotherapy movement.

The Therapy Profession

Trainees at ICCPD, are encouraged and asked to decide which approach seems to match best with their own personality, therapeutic style, and methods of conceptualising the many different types of life challenges people bring to therapy. Constructing their own holistic, approach to therapy is a very important professional step; they must also get a vision of what they must do to become an effective therapist. Norcross (2005:585) who believes that “every therapist who becomes an effective professional has to learn how to reflect on their therapy experiences”. The therapy profession has moved in the direction of theoretical integration rather than allegiance to a single therapeutic approach (Prochaska &

Norcross, 2010) and the ultimate outcome of doing so is “to enhance the efficacy, efficiency, and applicability of psychotherapy” (Norcross, 2005b: 3-4). Theoretical Integration, Common Factors, Technical Eclecticism and Assimilative models are among the four main approaches to integration. It is worth noting that there are multiple approaches to psychotherapy integration and one could state that the emphasis has moved in recent years to that of Cooper and McLeod (2011) overarching concept of a pluralistic approach to counselling and psychotherapy.

It is interesting to note that research (Prochaska & Norcross, 2003, p.545) advocates that psychotherapy will become “more directive, psychoeducational, technological, problem focused, and briefer in the next decade” and long-term approaches are “predicted to decrease”. Norcross (2005b: 594) disagrees that there will be an increasing emphasis on problem focused therapy. Many government supported programmes for youth and families are requiring a “strengths-based rather than a problem-focused orientation” and that this is being caused by recent empirical studies showing the value and importance of positive emotions. He says that if researchers develop “a diagnostic manual that is based on positive client emotions, there will most likely be “a decrease in clinicians’ emphasis on problem-focused disorders.” He says that it is clear, that “psychotherapy integration will become the most frequently cited approach to therapy” and that the cognitive behavioural school will continue to be the most dominant because it has provided the most empirically supported evidence for its effectiveness.

I agree that an advantage of integrative therapies is that they allow therapists the flexibility to meet the needs of clients who have different presenting issues and come from a range of cultural contexts. Ethical guidelines for counsellors and psychotherapists appear to be headed in the direction of requiring therapists to know evidence-based research “what techniques actually work with what clients with what problems” if they are to exercise an “appropriate standard of care for their clients” (Norcross, 2005b: 609).

Future training of counsellors and psychotherapists at ICPPD

Where does this leave the future training of counsellors and psychotherapists at ICPPD? I agree with Norcross that graduate training is only the first step in

becoming a therapist. Yalom (1989) pointed out that theories of psychotherapy are developed to reduce the counsellor's anxiety in dealing with the complexities and the uncertainties of the therapeutic process. All theorists seem to agree that firstly, a trainee should be able to have a working knowledge of the theories from which they will draw and a basic description of why each theory is important and relevant as a mental health counsellor or psychotherapist, and secondly after the trainee has developed a working knowledge of the counselling theories, they need to consider their worldview, assumptions, philosophy of life and their basic way of understanding the world. This involves a great deal of work including, much self-introspection, experience, and training.

Their worldview will have a significant impact on how they conduct counselling. Norcross (2005b: 600) maintains that the effective therapist is essentially a reflective therapist (one who looks inward to discover who they are becoming as a therapist) in the tradition described by (Schön, 1983, 1987) who emphasised the role of self-reflection in the training of professional practitioners and proposed the need for technical rational knowledge i.e., the learning of counselling theories and the learning of treatment protocols and professional artistry i.e., sensitivity to the dynamics of the therapeutic relationship, timing of interventions, and the instilling of hope.

Schön's reflective practitioner model has implications for both therapist training and practice. Self-reflection produces a deeper sense of knowing than traditional didactic teaching. Baldwin (1987), states that the use of self is vital in developing a therapist's knowledge and practical application of effective therapeutic work. Tester (1992) defines the use of self by the therapist as the utilization of personal characteristics that contributes to assisting the client toward positive change in therapy. Eeinkraut (2008) enhances the points made by Tester by arguing that the self of the therapist encompasses several features, such as experiences, moral judgments, intellect, and theoretical understanding as well as identity. Rupert (2008) goes as far to say that the therapist uses of self is the foundation to which effective positive change develops in a client whilst in therapy and MacLaren (2008) argues that this must be combined with the sound understanding of theoretical approaches to help facilitate positive change in a client.

My view from experience is that when effective therapy takes place then there is a coupling of theory and the use of self, that enhance each other and there is a relationship between the two. Nutt-Williamson and Hill (1996) argue that the use of self in therapy maybe a hindrance in the therapeutic process. Omylinska-Thurston & James (2001) give little insight into how effective person centered counselling view the use of self or congruence and Pagano (2012) illustrates how transference and counter transference in the psychodynamic approach is evidence of the use of self in this school of therapy, but highlights that this concept is still a developing one for this school of therapy.

On assessment in psychotherapy training, it is interesting to explore how to foster the emotional insight needed for authentic growth, rather than assessment and academic criteria. Creating a training environment where learners could bring their vulnerable and emotional self and where there is space for rupture and repair surely matches with the task of mirroring the progression to clinical work in future practice. Valuing these sorts of reparative support structures could increase learner engagement and meaningful learning opportunities. Upahi, Issa, & Oyelekan (2015), state that assessment should be relevant, authentic, and approximate skills in real-life situations.

Self-Reflection in ICPPD

At ICPPD a self-reflection component is developed throughout the core training and there is an awareness of how the explicit theories studied and the trainees' implicit theory, combined, both invite, and support the trainee's movement and growth toward their own individual orientation. Good supervision and ongoing personal development and networking with peers and colleagues are in my view a necessary format for self-care and continual professional development. Norcross (2005(b): 603) concludes that training programmes might consider developing more formal models of "examining therapists' implicit beliefs as well as creating methods to assess them" and that the journey towards psychotherapy integration should encompass "integrating both therapists implicit and explicit theories into a coherent framework" and not just "integration of explicit psychotherapy theories that have been learned through didactic methods".

Spinelli (2015) referencing (de Beauvoir, 1986: 9) reminds us from the beginning, that existentialism defined itself as a philosophy of ambiguity. The principle of uncertainty exemplifies this conclusion and according to Spinelli “all the prior knowledge, values, assumptions and beliefs regarding self, others and the world in general may be opened to challenge, reconsideration or dissolution in multiple ways that might surprise or disturb”. Payne (2010) concluded that personal development and self-awareness in the trainee therapist is to be applauded based on literature researched.

Johns (1996) claims that trainees need to be open to a process of change, and Grimmer and Tribe (2001) propose promoting this through mandatory personal therapy since it gives insight into the role of the client. For some, Aveline (1990) the idea of coercing trainees to have therapy goes against counselling ethics. Gibb (1964) states that a person learns to grow through an increasing acceptance of him and others, requiring a non-judgmental attitude in the facilitator and, it must be said a feeling of safety. Payne (2010: 8) supports this view and says a more non-judgmental attitude, is crucial when working with the client populations who are marginalised and judged in our western society. According to Payne the personal development group remains a mystery, unquantifiable in aim and outcome but with “hugely potent effects which surely need to be harnessed and harvested for the benefit of the trainee and their future clinical practice.” Payne recommends programmes aiming to train therapists find ways to assist trainees to make links in their learning between the personal development experience, theoretical understanding, and clinical placement practice.

This brings the focus to teaching and Robertson (2002: 112) writes that when teaching is construed as “facilitating learning” rather than “imparting knowledge”, it becomes an “educational helping relationship” the professional roles of “expert” and “evaluator” do not involve inherent conflict, in contrast to the roles of “facilitator” and “evaluator” which do and so, teachers can experience a “conflicted” educational helping relationship. Experiential teaching and learning is provided at ICPPD and the module descriptors included in the Public Works (Folder 6: 1) give examples of the modes of delivery and assessment methods to evaluate learning outcomes.

The future of counselling and psychotherapy

Is the future of counselling and psychotherapy linked to eco-systems, environmental and planet issues? The exploration for an upcoming masters' degree programme at ICCPD has included a discussion around how ecosystems approaches might be included. Hillman (1995) said that the idea that depth psychology merges with ecology translates to mean that to understand the ills of the soul today we turn to the ills of the world, its suffering, and (Perluss, 2007) reflecting on the use of nature in therapy and uniting psyche and nature within a symbolic consciousness opens the door to a new awareness of self in nature.

Heuristic inquiry forms a research method well aligned to the way psychotherapy values knowledge, particularly the inclusion of the unconscious and this matches particularly well to my personal values and world views. Heuristic method is a form of research designed to uncover underlying means of important human experiences and contains important values that align with literature on authentic growth, and the inclusion of human aspects, including emotions and beliefs which are largely unaccounted for in other research methods. The limitations of the research method included being too subjective and time sensitive. I have minimized these limitations through open discussion and dialogue with others and maintaining strict time schedules to dedicate towards the work.

Autoethnography is a recent addition to the range of qualitative methodologies that are available, and the central aim is not to provide a reflective, analytic account of some aspect of experience, but to allow the reader to enter the experience itself, and to create the possibility for the audience to construct its own interpretation and understanding of the material. The quality criteria for good autoethnographic work places an emphasis on how evocative the work is, and how well it conveys emotional experience. Researchers within this approach have experimented with a range of communication formats: poetry, drama, video, and artwork. In my journal I wrote "my feet are sweaty in my plastic cros this evening; I notice this is not the case when I wear my chunky handknit socks. My feet get to breathe, and this is better for me. It is important to discern and not dispose 'what is familiar' too quickly, or embrace 'what is new' too soon, because it is either expected, or is the latest 'norm'. I remind myself – don't throw out the baby with the bathwater.

Change brings genuine improvement for all involved. Check with my body, mind, and spirit for guidance.”

The auto-ethnographer aspires to the role of trickster who subverts established or establishment ‘truth’ and so adopts a more general deconstructive stance (McLeod, 2015). A question for the counselling and psychotherapy professional community is whether also ethnographic methods yield richer and more useful personal accounts in this area, than can be achieved through traditional autobiographical narrative. According to McLeod (2015: 211) all this is “controversial”. There are pros and cons in relation to the use of heuristic research and autoethnography on counselling and psychotherapy topics.

Limitations

A limitation is that studies can come across more as extensions of personal development activities, a type of self-therapy for the researcher, rather than as contributions to a shared body of knowledge within a profession. A different kind of limitation of heuristic and autoethnographic research lies in the identity of the author and inquirer. They are mainly written by students and academics, and perhaps do not effectively represent the voices and experience of people who are excluded and marginalized. One of the curious and paradoxical aspects of these genres is that, despite seeking to achieve genuine expression of the reality of lived experience, they invite doubt about their authenticity. And finally, it's hard to be clear about the kind of knowledge that is being generated by heuristic and autoethnographic studies.

What is on offer appears to be a contribution to a critical understanding, as subversive questioning of surface assumptions and established professional truths? But the position of the author, in many of these studies, is such as to throw the reader off balance. On the other side of the balance sheet are the many strengths of heuristic and autoethnographic research. Many of these studies are characterized by high levels of courage and honesty. They open subtle aspects of important topics and phenomena that tend to be beyond the reach of other methodologies (Braud and Anderson 1998). Carrying out such a study has the potential to make a positive contribution to the self-awareness and personal development of researchers. The

act of making testimony is a fundamental human need according to many people. The willingness to place value on 'not knowing' is considered by many therapists to be intrinsic to good practice (Anderson and Goolishian, 1992). There is also an inevitability about personal experience research: any attempt to side-line or ignore personal experience methods in qualitative research can be viewed as a manifestation of a false consciousness that seeks to deny the underlying nature of human science as an activity undertaken by persons who are reflective agents.

Heuristic Research

Etherington (2004: 48) states that reflexive methodologies seem to be close to the hearts and minds of practitioners "who value using themselves in all areas of their practices (including research) and to also value transparency in relationships". In considering heuristic inquiry, I am aware that the choice of research topic often has according to Devereux (1967) "personal significance for the researcher whether conscious or unconscious", indeed, heuristic research (Stiles, 1993: 604) as defined by Moustakas (1990, 1994) necessitate us to have personal connection with the topic of enquiry, self-examination, and "significant personal learning and change". Can these approaches be effectively applied to the core issues in counselling and psychotherapy research around outcome, process, and theory building? Do personal experience methods have a role to play in relation to evidence-based practice? Can reflexive methodologies including heuristic research be effectively applied? It will be interesting to follow the ongoing unfolding of these approaches over the next decade.

Personally, blindly following my intuition along with trust and a faith in the processes has brought many challenges and life lessons. I have taken many steps into the unknown, without attachment to the outcome, referred to by Sela-Smith (2002: 70) as the "free-fall surrender to the process." It increased my courage, and my steadfastness to the goal and vision of establishing ICPPD even when I was terrified at times. It brought me to vulnerable places within myself, and to the strong places within also. I faced embarrassment and shame and grief when I made mistakes at work and failed in colleague relationships, like Brown's (2008: 5) definition of shame "intensely painful feeling or experience of believing we are

flawed and therefore unworthy of acceptance and belonging". It affected my body, mind, and spirit in both positive and negative ways. Mostly it reminded me that we are as Henes (2005: 95) proposed "the self is the sum of all of our parts, and holistically, it is greater than the sum of all of our parts." and that "the fluid Self transcends time and space, expanding and shape shifting, changing and adapting to accommodate the possibility of all possibility."

While Assagioli (1971: 210) posits in psychosynthesis and maintains that "nothing has to be condemned, or destroyed, or eliminated...we can benefit from and utilize every function and element of our psyche" provided we understand its nature and purpose, and "place in it its right relation with the greater whole" during the years, I have what Woodman (1993) described as "embodied essence" experiencing myself and others in our full humanity. My old daimon and processes continue to derail me at times.

The heurist method allows an opening to value the unknown and become aware of material in the unconscious, and this leads to what Rogers (1969) terms "significant learning", and it changes my behaviour towards myself and others. Henes (2015: 96) writes that "the holy elixir that we seek is the transformation of the painful, rejected, neglected, wounded, unsatisfied, unsatisfactory parts of the self, into the unified, organized, energized, golden glory and grace of the fulfilled Queen." It is through our sincere and complete participation in this process that we learn how to recognise, claim, and proclaim our own true power.

Conclusion

In concluding this chapter, the initial engagement was one of pride and achievement and honour. In immersing myself in the work and seeing the real effort required to set up a training college and succeed in national validation of programmes, I encountered tacit knowledge that brought me home to my body. Incubation meant I followed and continued to trust a 'higher' vibration even when it did not make sense e.g., limited or no finances in place and realisation of limited academic expertise and experience. During the period of illumination, I became aware of a deeper urge, a deeper process taking place and although there were several inner contradictions and conflicts, I explicated increased clarity and understanding and 'sat' with unknowing and uncertainty. In creating a synthesis and

meaning out of being awarded a national award for impacting the training of mental health professionals and making a difference in communities, families and to individual human beings that was humbling and magnificent at the same time. It felt real, I felt present on the day, and at the same time I felt like a channel being used to serve something greater than myself.

The stages of heuristic inquiry provide a valuable template for what researchers can expect if they undertake this kind of work: the possibilities and challenges associated with personal investment in a research question. It seems to be difficult to complete a heuristic study to the point of dissemination and publication. This is probably because heuristic projects are inherently un-boundaried and do not readily fit into academic schedules and publication formats (Hiles, 2001).

I ask myself at the end of this endeavour how will I be able to convey any new understanding to other people?

There have always been some social scientists whose research and writing is based on their own personal experience. Anderson (2006) discussed how several of the classic early studies in American sociology of the 1920s and 30s were grounded in the personal life experience of students and researchers. Autoethnography has a strong appeal for many counsellors and psychotherapists, and there is a growing interest that exists in the therapy professions around the role of narrative and storytelling (Angus and McLeod 2004). Perhaps in the future I may put 'these concepts out' in the form of conversations, blogs, articles, presentations at ICPPD/IACP and perhaps a published textbook going forward.

I am greatly interested following my research in this chapter as to how to assess personal therapy, group process, and personal development modules using heuristic inquiry and the further use of creative processes like art, poetry, storytelling, symbols, myth, film, video, and the use of dream and reflective journals.

In the next chapter— Professional and Academic Developments at ICPPD - with ongoing reflection and content on heuristic research will be discussed.

Chapter 10 – Professional and Academic Developments at ICPPD

Introduction

In the following section of this statement, I expand on other vital components of being involved with the journey and growth at ICPPD as I understand them, and the major achievement of establishing ICPPD as a third level academic college which continues to gain a reputation as an institute of excellence in the field of counselling and psychotherapy training in Ireland. For me, it is important to put this academic journey within a context of my vision, ethos, and philosophy. While I am the instigator and gatekeeper of ICPPD, I want to sincerely acknowledge other people's support, input, and involvement in the development of ICPPD.

My original dream of creating a business that would enable me to leave financial security for my six children was an old script that somehow said that leaving money to offspring denoted a successful career, even depth of care and probably has an unconscious link to the famine in our history. There is also the theory of generativity, the natural urge to actualise and leave a legacy to the world. My script is more in alignment with this latter idea today, as I see our graduates work as therapists and make a difference to the lives of others.

Organisational, Academic and Professional Timeline for ICPPD (2009-2018)

Our mission at ICPPD is, to achieve and maintain, a standard of Excellence in our programmes and Learners, and in our staff as Educators, through a combined commitment to a Humanistic, Holistic Approach for the Individual Learners.

For the purposes of this work, I am focusing on the years from 2013 – 2018 as outlined in criteria provided.

2009 – 2013 included,

- my dream, vision, consultations, mission statement, registered company
- website development www.icppd.com
- part-time admin staff member employed,
- lease on premises

- creating a space conducive to a holistic learning environment
- 10 Week Personal Development Course, 1 year, Foundation Course and 3-year part-time Diploma in Holistic Counselling and Psychotherapy designed by me. Programme Development is now part of Programme Development Team meetings, Programme Board and Academic Board meetings (Public Works Folder 13 Docs 12, 13, 14).
- therapeutic workshops designed and offered
- Learner Handbook developed (Public Works Folder 9) appropriate administration forms including feedback sheets created to support delivery of programmes (Public Works Folders 14). Tutors engaged for their expertise and familiarity with ICPPD's ethos.
- Setting up of Board of Directors, Academic Board and Programme Boards, appointment of External Examiner (Public Works Folder 13).
- Application to HETAC, to commence path to provider status and academic validation of programme.
- Designated Clinical Practice Co-ordinator appointed and the development of Clinical Practice Handbook, policies, procedures and associated forms (Public Works Folder 8).
- Application to NAPCP for accreditation of 3-year Professional Training Programme
- Development of organisation and management structures, academic governance ensuring operations at ICPPD are consistent with Professional and Statutory regulations.
- College Registrar employed part-time to develop Quality Assurance policies and procedures and development and on-going evaluation and update of Academic Quality Manual (Public Works Folder 12).
- Change of Leadership, from President to Academic Director, to support separation from commercial and academic enmeshment and strengthen ICPPD, the organisation.
- Financial Controller/accountant employed part-time to oversee budgets, and learner payment plans.
- NAPCP accredited Professional Diploma in Holistic Counselling and Psychotherapy programme.

- Programmes offered in Galway, as a new location and outreach centre.
- Organisational review by HETAC, approval as third level provider and agreed QA procedures.
- Dublin as a new location/venue for ICPPD after invitation from professional training expert to provide progression route and professional training to graduates from University College Cork.
- Marketing Executive employed to develop the promotion of ICPPD, and particularly a learner recruitment strategy.
- Further separation and appropriate demarcation between financial and academic operations, setting up of Finance Sub-Committee.
- Roles of individuals and groups responsible for oversight of education, training, academic and learners support activities identified in ICPPD QA Manual.
- I wrote suite of 6 short CPD Online Courses at ICPPD, ongoing to date at ICPPD, popular as CPD hours for therapists.

2013 Submission to HETAC, L7, Ordinary Degree, in Holistic Counselling and Psychotherapy for programme validation.

Application to IACP for professional course accreditation of 3-year part time Diploma in Holistic Counselling and Psychotherapy.

IACP accredited ICPPD's 3-year programme Athlone (Public Works Folder 13 Doc 6).

Formation of ICPPD Ethics Committee.

Marketing Consultant approved as recruitment specialist.

Design and development of Professional Diploma in Expressive Arts, and delivery of same in ICPPD, Athlone.

House-Keeping position identified, and person employed part-time.

2014 Validation by Quality Qualifications Ireland (formerly HETAC) of ICPPD's 3-year part-time BA in Holistic Counselling and Psychotherapy in Athlone and Galway.

Change of External Examiner, to meet QQI requirements.

VLE, Moodle and EBSCO Online journals to support academic processes (Public Works Folder 15 Doc 1, 2, 6).

3-year Professional Diploma commences in Rathmines, Dublin, last offering of this programme by ICPPD.

Design, development, marketing, and delivery of Professional Certificate in Psychosynthesis.

Design, development, marketing and delivery of Certificate in Mindfulness and Mindful-Living programme.

Development of '*Meitheal*', (meaning in English – Team) Tutors Handbook and '*Cuidiu*', (meaning - Help/support) Learners Newsletter (Public Works Folder 10).

2015 Professional Accreditation by IACP of BA in Holistic Counselling and Psychotherapy, Athlone, and Galway.

Move to new venue, new lease for 2 years, Suite 11, Inish Carraig, Golden Island, Athlone.

Supervision Diploma and training offered by ICPPD, in association with Bobby Moore Consultancy, in Athlone and Belfast, with link to Middlesex University.

2016 Self-Assessment/Evaluation Report to critically reflect on capacity and effectiveness of ICPPD to design, approve, deliver, assess, monitor, support programmes on an ongoing basis (Public Works Folder 13 Doc 9).

CEO part-time post approved.

Administration support, part-time staff member employed to support College Administrator.

Marketing Support part-time person appointed.

ICPPD, Academic Director, recipient of National Award by IACP, the Carl Berkeley Memorial Award.

Submission to QQI, of 1-year add-on Level 8, Honours BA Degree in Holistic Counselling and Psychotherapy for Athlone and Galway

QQI Panel visit, unsuccessful outcome in relation to above submission (Public Works Folder 13 Doc 5).

Dublin as a location/venue again for ICPPD after invitation again, as previously in 2012 from professional training expert to provide progression route and professional training to graduates from University College Cork and as before, the designing, development and delivery of same.

Design and development of ICPPD's Professional Diploma in Advanced Supervision, across Professions – a Holistic Approach and delivery of same in Athlone.

Application to IACP for course accreditation for supervision course.

2017 Successful IACP accreditation of Professional Diploma in Advanced Supervision, across Professions – a Holistic Approach and delivery of same in Athlone in October 2017 (Public Works Folder 4 Doc 2).

New tutors and new employment contracts (as employees of ICPPD) to support programmes and ethos of ICPPD, and to comply with employment law, after a Revenue audit at ICPPD (Public Works Folder 18 Doc 13).

Provision of e-library Dawson Era to learners (Public Works Folder 15 Docs 2 & 3).

Director of Programmes part-time employed to support Academic Director (to allow for Doctoral studies at Metanoia).

Development of Research Handbook, forms, development, and training for Research Supervisors at ICPPD (Public Works Folder 11).

Re-submission to QQI, of Level 8, 1 year, add-on Honours Degree programme in Holistic Counselling and Psychotherapy for delivery in Athlone and Galway 2018, using 'new' QQI template. Included in this submission were an updated QA Manual, Learner Handbook, Clinical Practice Handbook and Research Project Handbook (Public Works Folder 6 & 7).

Graduation of first cohort of learners from Quality Qualifications Ireland (QQI) validated Bachelor of Arts in Holistic Counselling and Psychotherapy, a Celebration of all learners and all involved in ICPPD (Public Works Folder 16 Docs 1-7).

2018 Visit by QQI panel of experts and a positive outcome with our Level 8 programme being recommended to QQI Executive Meeting (Public Works Folder 13 Doc 4).

Submission of application for professional accreditation for ICPPD's Diploma in Advanced Supervision across Professions – A Holistic and Integrative Approach to Supervisors Association of Ireland, SAI.

Appointment of Programme Leader for 'new' Level 8 programme to support lecturers and learners, delivery and assessments and monitor overall operation of same.

Strengthening of Academic processes including Programme Board and Academic Board (Public Works Folder 13 Docs 10, 12,13, 15).

Providing additional training in research for tutors and research supervisors.

Empowering Learner Representatives to continue to give feedback and nominating a place on Academic Board (Public Works Folder 17 Doc 6).

Approval of membership to participants of ICPPD's Diploma in Advanced Supervision across Professions – A Holistic and Integrative Approach by Supervisors Association of Ireland, SAI.

Delivery of Level 8, 1-year add-on year programme.

For evidence that the work is still ongoing 2019-2022, please see the following:

- 2019** Submission of template/documents to QQI for validation of 4-year *ab initio* BA (Hons) in Holistic Counselling and Psychotherapy. Visit by QQI expert panel and successful outcome. Validation of this programme and commencement of year 1 in both Athlone and Galway locations in September 2019. Appointment of new staff to replace previous staff (and training of these new staff members) – Registrar and College Administrator.
- 2020** Self-Assessment and submission of Re-Engagement Template/documents to QQI. Complete overhaul of all Quality Assurance policies and procedures and update of all documentation/handbooks. Re-examination of Governance at ICPPD and strategic plan to support the strengthening of all Boards and further clarification regarding all roles and responsibilities. Application to IACP for course accreditation for ‘new’ Level 8 4-year degree programme recently validated by QQI. Visit by expert panel and course accreditation approved.
- 2021** Recommendation by Academic Board to consider a master’s degree as a progression route for our graduates and to further the expansion and credibility of the college as a training and education institute. ICPPD were invited to consider a new location and venue in Dublin, and this is seen as an opportunity to increase programme provision and expansion as a college and the hope is to commence classes in Dublin in September 2022
- 2022** ICPPD has now commenced a scoping exercise to explore the content and delivery of a Level 9, Master’s Degree in Psychotherapy – A Holistic Approach. The hope is to submit an application for academic validation to QQI end of 2022 for commencement 2023/24.

COVID 19 and a movement to ensure all modules and programmes were completed online in 2020/21 had considerable impact on ICPPD. There was an overall wish from all involved at ICPPD to fully embrace online delivery as the only option to

survive the pandemic, both ensuring that learners continued and received their qualifications and we continued as a small organisation meeting commercial responsibilities. This was and is an amazing achievement and is to the credit of all tutors being practicing therapists and so meeting uncertainty and the need to adapt each day in their work with clients.

Now in 2022, our challenge is to decide what and where we find ourselves as a training college, but also as professionals in a field that has changed forever by the influence of online counselling and psychotherapy because of a global pandemic. IACP our professional accrediting body have recently notified all providers of the requirement next academic year 22/23 of a 70% requirement for 'face to face' environments in the classroom, in personal therapy, in supervision. This acknowledges the increase of 'online' requirements and services as the impact of COVID 19 on the profession, education, and mental health services.

The above timeline gives the reader a comprehensive understanding of the journey timelines and development of ICPPD as an academic institute. Engaging with a range of very diverse academic validation bodies was a new experience for me, one that seriously challenged me to expand my perspectives. My initial intention of training therapists now became educating adult learners. I was required by the academic validation body to incorporate and further consider my 'reflective practice' orientation to now involve examinations and explanations of different frameworks. Concepts such as evidence-based practice, assessing learning outcomes and efficacy research now became of key significance.

At ICPPD, especially, in my earlier encounters with academic validation bodies, I found the difference in focus particularly frustrating as we endeavoured to marry the requirements of professional bodies and a competencies-based expectation with an academic focus on knowledge and theory. Schön (1987: 10) stressed the importance of linking theory to practice and finding a marriage of applied science and artistry, of both 'classroom teaching and reflective practicum' he explains, "professional educators have voiced with increasing frequency their worries about the gap between the schools' prevailing conception of professional knowledge and the actual competencies required of practitioners in the field". Following the

current changes due to the pandemic, new research and theories will soon appear and shape this arena.

Defining Learning Outcomes

My continuing struggle and wrestling with examining and measuring what is often intangible in counselling and psychotherapy training as defined in learning outcomes is an ongoing undertaking. Harrison (2002: 273) concurs with the view that including personal skills in the curriculum, and how to develop and measure them, are central to many current debates in education and training in general and that in many ways they embody the 'traditional dichotomies in educational debate' and he finds it interesting how some educational practitioners have been able to bridge or blur the traditional divide thus "exploiting the connection between the concern of the vocationally inspired competence movement with the 'skills of transfer' and the concerns of education with developing the skills of 'learning to learn'".

He goes on to say that all of this contains a process of dealing wisely with change, which is both an expressed aim of education and a specified requirement of government and employers. Jessup (1991: 126) in writing about the context in which knowledge is assessed writes, "... It is critically important that learners can draw upon and relate the relevant aspects of knowledge when presented with problems and situations in their professional or occupational role. Failure to do so is one of the weaknesses in current professional and occupational training".

As I became an inquirer, an investigator and researcher I noticed a shift in my thinking and understanding. I gained a growing appreciation for quality assurance and policies and procedures as a means of fairness, equality, and consistency for all learners. My fears emerged and ensued as I grappled with the rationale for same, hoping the 'human being' or 'essence' would not get lost, or diluted beneath a robust emphasis on observable, measurable outcomes, and assessments.

While understanding the need for regulations, policies, and procedures I was sometimes at odds sometimes with the underlying principles. One area of dispute was with QQI panel (Quality Qualifications Ireland), our academic validating body,

where we agreed to compromise and have one module each academic year assessed as a formal examination. My preference was for on-going continual assessment as is the case with all other modules on our BA in Holistic Counselling and Psychotherapy programme. Coren (1997: 168) contrasting Psychoanalysis and Education wrote that analytic concepts assist us in understanding the complex nature of what we want from and what is demanded of us by education, he further says that “What is important is the relationship that is established between the two, the process of how these apparently irreconcilable opposites negotiate their differences and the obstacles that are encountered on the way”.

It is interesting for me to note now that in my written and verbal expression, I place the academic requirements prior to the professional criteria. This raises questions for me. Do I now see academic educational requirements more important than professional learner-based training? Have I succumbed to a societal need for proven ability through academic degrees and qualifications rather than the artistry of generating masters in the craft of healing and therapy? Am I combining both as best I can, through our mission statement, our guiding principles and most importantly through delivery of our programmes and the learning experience offered?

Applicants for the ICPPD Courses

Over 50% of applicants for places on our counselling and psychotherapy training courses already have a professional and academic qualification in cognate areas or otherwise. The remaining applicants bring a portfolio of previous combined academic learning and life experiences (Public Works Folder 13 Doc 7).

At ICPPD, training and education offered is ‘traditional’ general counselling and psychotherapy with our ‘transpersonal edge’. The responsibility of training and educating therapists is taken seriously and is continually discussed at our Programme Boards and Academic Board meetings (Public Works Folder 13 Docs 12 & 13).

Experiential learning is promoted at ICPPD. Being curious and hungry for knowledge understanding and skills will not be diminished according to Hawkins (2004: 234), when he writes that “our amazement will only deepen as we apply the knowledge

to understanding ourselves” and our quest for intelligence and acquiring more knowledge.

On commencement of counselling and psychotherapy training and education, the learner is seen and met as a trainee therapist. The syllabus is presented as theory, which is then practiced in the classroom and then discussed, and insight and learning reflected on. This is seen as transformational learning and tutors are encouraged to deliver in their own style and creativity is supported. Schön (1987: 343) confirms the importance of engaging tutors as agents of change and agrees that it is possible for faculty members to become committed to collective enquiry into teaching and learning and that,

Faculty members can find it exciting, even liberating, to make their own teaching into a subject for mutual exploration. And when they do so, their substantive research interests are engaged

I am excited at Schön’s proposition of mastering knowledge and skills by creating an environment where congruence and acceptance creates an open learning environment. A space where risks are encouraged, and learners are supported. An atmosphere where tutors initiate them into the ‘traditions of the calling’ and help them to see ‘what they need most to see’. On adult learning, Boud, *et.al.* in their chapter on promoting reflection in learning conclude that “...most research on learning has not sufficiently respected the unique perspective of the learner and has not taken into account the affective dimension...If professionals are to develop skills in reflective thinking it is important that they be encouraged to do so in their initial training” (Boud, *et.al.* 2002: 55)

Adult Learner and Tutor

Stanton, (1990) writing about models of curriculum development has an interesting idea that the role of the staff shifts from ‘teaching’ to what might be better called ‘tutoring’ and that working ‘alongside’ learners is considered by many professionals to be more effective than the more usual ‘presentational’ and even ‘confrontational style’. At a Programme Board Meeting at ICPPD a deliberate decision was made to use the word adult learner rather than student, and tutor instead of lecturer.

These are the learning spaces we try to create at ICPPD. The shadow side of this is when learners get strong in their self-expression and project dis-ease onto me as a mother figure, or the organisation as a systemic identity. This calls for reflective practice for all of us. This dissertation has acted as a core activity (combined with clinical supervision and consultation with relevant peers) in my own reflective process and has unearthed insight that would otherwise not be gained at any significant depth.

Modelling ethical behaviour, authentic conversation, and congruency in interaction with learners is seen as central to the development of trainees and learners on our courses at ICPPD. Brookfield advocates the need for tutors to be enquiring learners themselves when engaging in critical analysis of adult educational literature, he says that "... critical teaching (Shor, 1987), critical thinking (Brookfield, 1987, 1991), critical pedagogy (Smith, 1988) and critical reflection (Mezirow et al) emphasize the overwhelming importance to learners of their seeing the process of critical analysis modelled by educators..." (Brookfield, 1993, vol. 25 .2)

Rowan (2005) writing about an integrative approach, 'speaks to' and resonates with my 'knowing' and the vision of ICPPD as a training ground for therapists when he offers the following approaches as lending themselves to a committed integration to therapy:

- *Psychosynthesis*
- *Primal Integration*
- *Some Jungian approaches*
- *Core process therapy*
- *Process-oriented psychology*
- *Experiential psychotherapy*
- *Relational approaches*

He proposes that these integrative approaches offer a wide range of opportunities for work on all levels and are to be preferred if the therapist is willing to commit to the learning involved and then apply them in practice. Regarding training in these modalities, he says "...they do require a good deal more in the way of training, because they need much more flexibility on the part of the therapist, and much more acquaintance with a variety of techniques. To be genuinely integrative requires a great deal of commitment" (Rowan, 2005: 96).

Holistic Courses

I am aware of my growing confidence as an academic, for example, my insistence in having 'Holistic' in the title of all counselling and psychotherapy courses at ICPPD is 'under attack' and I see this as healthy argument between scholars. At our latest QQI expert panel interview, it was recommended that we change this to 'integrative' as a more acceptable, clear, and credible title. Due to reading Bager-Charleson's (2010) exploration of critical reflection and the requirement to hear other perspectives and see alternative options, I will continue to reflect and re-search the value of keeping this word and whether it is appropriate and 'fit for purpose' at this time. I am aware that this feels important to me as it connects to the bedrock of my beliefs acquired through my experiences, and I notice this, while remaining open to further exploration and future outcomes.

I am interested in the concept of cycles and the importance of on-going review and reflection on what to let go and how to continue to keep the 'soul' in my work and in our organisation at ICPPD. Barmark and Nilsson (1983) describe critical inquiry in terms of challenging one's own original infatuation and growing awareness of one's own projections and 'tinted' lenses. While I am aware of 'stepping back' and 'detaching from my preciousness' I equally am aware of trusting my 'gut' on important matters and I look back with some regret at times when all would have been better served had I had the strength and courage to remain steadfast to my intuitions.

As an emerging organisation, developing skills to survive was my priority, now as ICPPD grows to maturity, I must change and grow with the organisation. It can be difficult to embrace new 'systems' and let go of some which I have become attached to and invested in, because of the time and effort expended. Yet I am required to continue to unlearn and support the process of movement and evolving change. This philosophy reinforces the lived spirituality within the organisation.

Changes in the arena of counselling and psychotherapy

Since the conception of ICPPD I have been cognisant of upcoming changes in the arena of counselling and psychotherapy in Ireland. Government imposition in recent

times takes three forms: pending regulation, funding, and the requirement for evidence-based practice. The forthcoming introduction of statutory regulations and decision-making into a context which mostly was free of statutory influence, created hope along-side uncertainty, and debate for all involved in education and training and for all providing therapeutic support to clients.

I am mindful of this changing landscape and modification, and I embrace, consider, and critically appraise the impact of the imposing effects of government policy on our profession. I am curious when Lees and Tovey (2012) “argue that the generation of popular political energy has been based on four specific concerns, a concern about its influence on the control of the profession, its effect on clinical practice, its bureaucratic nature and its connection with the medical model” (2012: 71).

In this changing environment I am also part of a movement that has openness to a more dialogical attitude that unlocks the possibility of transforming the therapy profession into a force for change to improve our ailing healthcare systems. Cultivating and developing a holistic approach as part of a new vision equips our graduates to work with current trends in therapeutic settings. We also emphasise to our trainees that our core characteristics, which are primarily humanistic with its emphasis on human potential, individual therapeutic encounter, the role of relationship and use of self as an instrument of change augurs well in their future work as clinicians. Research undertaken with our graduates illustrate and provide evidence of their appreciation of these strong elements within their training and education at ICPPD (Public Works Folder 17 Doc 3).

Ongoing reflection through the lens of heuristic inquiry

Reviewing this chapter that includes the historical and factual trajectory of ICPPD’s development through the path of heuristic inquiry brings me to the essence of what I set out to do and the surety and surprises of where I find myself and ICPPD now. The vision remains the same, I now have more clarity as I reconnect with the essence of what I was trying to establish. Engagement with the historical journey brings me to a nostalgic remembering of the joy and excitement and energy as well as the debilitating inadequacy and struggles, the highs and lows of making the dream happen.

Immersion into this cycle of the practical project, tasks and effort required takes me 'away' into the busyness and dizziness of externality, validating bodies and national institutions. Incubating this creation was the phase of gestating the birth of ICPPD and what that required as a growing organization and from me on a personal level. On reflection the insights I have explicated personally include -

- my single mindedness and independence and its shadow side of stubbornness and not asking for and receiving help
- my resilience, perseverance, belief and faith in something, a calling to 'more' and to the self-actualizing tendency
- the need for a team effort and the furthering of a collaborative co-creation at ICPPD. This requires letting go of control and invitation to trust in others and a process.

This illumination process is not easy to 'sit' into. It requires a sense of esteem and self-validation and an ability to be truly humble in a shared humanity that allows for uncertainty and 'not knowing' also. Most of all I have learned to respect higher education, its requirements, educators and validation panels and their perspectives. I am dismayed by my arrogance and conviction of what I misunderstood of another profession that I knew little about.

The last outcome for me is the need to take time, to pause, to reflect, to detach from work, to connect with myself, others in the workplace and the essence of what it is all about. I now also see the need for team building, time to relax together, time for fun and laughter, time to connect to foster a sense of belonging and value for all of us.

I am now asking the question that my husband and others in their bewilderment asked of me over 10 years ago - What is this all about? Why are you doing this? What is this all for? If there is a creative synthesis and my questions are answered at the end of this thesis, I will be well satisfied.

In the next chapter I discuss an outline of the Public Works Presented - with on-going reflection and content on the heuristic research adopted for this research.

Chapter 11 – Outline of Public Works Presented

Introduction

Emerson (1803-1882) when writing about the secret of education wrote that it lies in respecting the pupil and remembering that they hold the secret to their learning.

At ICPPD we value that education is only partly a process of instilling or pouring in, and needs to be mostly a process of unfolding, leading, or bringing out, as in the Latin word 'educare'. If education is a process of discovery and uncovering and every person is unique, this then applies to adult learning and lifelong learning, which includes learning through various intelligences, a body of knowledge and a knowledge of body as specifically related to counselling and psychotherapy training and education. At ICPPD, we support pedagogy, andragogy and paralogy as ways of teaching and learning.

Therapeutic use of self.

As counsellors and psychotherapists, we know from research undertaken that a therapist in touch with their own humanity and truth better facilitate psyche pain and heartache. Therefore, in the training and education of counsellors and psychotherapists, self-awareness, self-discovery, and the therapeutic use of self is paramount to uphold an identification with a bigger picture for adult learners in the field.

Having engaged and immersed myself in the process of reflection relating to my Public Works an overarching theme emerged i.e., the 'use of self' in the psychotherapy process. This came as a surprise, but the illumination has shed a deeper level of understanding to my/our work at ICPPD. I practice the 'use of self' in the way I teach, and I encourage the teaching team to engage in the appropriate 'use of self' in their teaching. The flow of the modules in the BA Programme is a vivid testimony of learning that is intended to engage the learners in the 'use of self' both in their study and Professional Practice. Wosket (1999: 35) outlines clearly what she understands by 'use of self' when she states "There is a crucial difference which therapists need to learn between being used and being made use of. The former means allowing myself to be exploited, and the latter means to give myself

freely and willingly in a disinterested way that allows the client to make best use of me to promote their own growth and healing.”

This is very similar to Rogers (1979) hypotheses that emphasised the importance of the client experiencing a specific type of relationship characterised by i.e. emphatic, non-judgemental and congruence. The sequence of modules in the BA Programme, visits and revisit this theme of ‘use of self’ and is a distinguishing feature of our programme at ICPPD. Critics of Rogers and Wosket highlight the lack of taking account of the professional demands that this way of working with clients entails. At ICPPD we are continually addressing this through the modules on Personal Development, Person Centred Approach, Lifespan Development and the Journey Principle, Gestalt Approach, Professional Development, Advanced Counselling Skills, Holistic Approaches, Psychosynthesis Psychotherapy and Humanistic and Integrative Psychotherapy. We continue to engage learners on issues such as professional burnout, stress, overload, and resilience. All the above take place to ensure that authenticity and the transpersonal dimensions of the therapist client relations are fostered. Rowan and Jacobs (2003) place these latter dimensions to therapist client work in sharp contrast to what they term as an instrumentalist approach.

Sermabeikian (1994) laments, that in the spiritual realm, we face the larger view and the meaning of life itself in a way that is difficult to explain and comprehend. The questions that are shrouded in mystery remain a challenge to our clients and ourselves and suggest that we must follow Jung’s lead and embark on the journey to discover the answers to questions that are part of the struggle towards human development. Jung’s view of self must include the idea of individuation, by which he meant ‘becoming a single, homogeneous being, and, in so far as " individuality” embraces our innermost, and incomparable uniqueness, it also implies becoming one's own self (1959: 143). Individuation is not about individualism, but about actualising the unique self that exists inside me. It is about reviewing the possible versions of me that are not in true keeping with my essence. Person centered and Gestalt approaches according to O’Leary (2006: 27) are based on the premise that emotional, social, and spiritual development continues up to the point of death if individuals do not experience significant cognitive decline. In these approaches

healing is viewed as occurring through the therapeutic relationship. This relationship leads to “developmental growth provided that individuals are open to emerging experience”.

Use of self in the context of holistic approach includes body, mind, and spirit. At ICPPD and through my Public Works explicit focus is given to the transpersonal especially through the modules as follows: Person-Centered and Holistic Approaches in year 1, Gestalt and Psychodynamic perspectives in year 2, and Psychosynthesis Psychotherapy in year 3.

Psychotherapy and Spirituality

An empirical study (Hutton, 1994) of “How Transpersonal psychotherapists differ from other practitioners”, found that attitudes differ around beliefs that spirituality is important. The study found it depended on how the therapists were trained and the practitioner’s psychotherapeutic orientation. Hutton’s study also found that the personal stance of the therapist was a factor whether spirituality would be brought into the clinical practise.

Haughey (2016) in ‘Widening our Lens’ presented at the IAHIP Conference speaks to the integration of positive psychology in these changing times in Ireland. Writing about societal changes, developments in neuroscience, positive psychology, mindfulness, and the role of positive thinking, the use of homeopathy, eco-psychotherapy and tapping states, that it would be good if psychotherapy professionals keep an open mind regarding these new practices and that “we can’t be seen to be woolly or esoteric in our approaches”. The progress towards holistic views regarding health and mental health in Ireland is slow, but change can be seen as government policy stresses more interdisciplinary team approaches as being more efficient. (Kurti, 2018). Lynch (1999) speaks of a holistic health system that would lead to a whole person approach.

It is interesting that Schermer (2003: 170) says that we can hypothesise that the “therapist’s own spiritual awareness may positively impact upon treatment outcomes, regardless of technique” and that “the psychotherapist can certainly embody and convey new ways of thinking, feeling, and being to the patient.” He goes on to observe that theories and beliefs are only a limited part of the process,

that who we are maybe more important than what we say or think, that to learn is to grow, how being convinced is to stagnate and that the application of spirituality to psychotherapy should be conducted in a spirit of dialogue rather than a new enthusiasm. This is followed by his observation that a new openness to experience and expression with careful integration of diverse threads might become a richer fabric of research, understanding and practice. He anticipates that this is going to be a “multidisciplinary effort, bringing together systems and quantum theorists, neuroscientists, research psychologists, psychotherapists, psychoanalysts, cultural anthropologists, theologians, philosophers and others in a quest for integration and the opening of new paths to explore” (2003: 229).

The popularity of rediscovering indigenous traditions and rediscovered truths all echo the fundamental veracities found in other areas; the oneness of all life, the importance of a sense of belonging in one’s community, and how it fits into the environment and the sense of order and being part of a bigger cycle. This seems in agreement with systems thinking and all therapeutic epitomes of self-knowledge. Feminist historian, Eisler (1987) and anthropologists have written that inclusiveness and equal nurturing had been characteristic of cultures and religions across history and remained characteristic in some pre-modern indigenous cultures.

Holistic Education

Questioning of relationships based on structures of meaning rather than structures of tradition was one reason why holistic education has a central value to my understanding of a comprehensive education and training for counsellors and psychotherapists. Psychology talks of the dyadic response, attachment styles of children and the importance of empathy in learning relationships and how this is extended into adulthood. This is also seen in the therapeutic relationship in counselling and psychotherapy. We are challenged as therapists, educationalists, and human beings on an earth that is ‘loving’ to connect and relate in meaningful interdependent ways. Goethe (1840) wrote that we learn from those whom we love. This leads me to conclude that comprehensive linking of holistic education with structures of meaning and structures of education, the integration of ancient wisdom into current and future developments in counselling and psychotherapy

training – a holistic approach has something unique to offer in this field. This raises the question again – who is the therapist? What has shaped them? And the same question can be asked of the client, the supervisor, the educator?

Reflecting on what motivated me to apply for this Doctorate in Psychotherapy through the Public Works programme at Metanoia, or to set up ICPPD in 2009, I am cognisant of my erudition, upbringing, gender, culture, nature, nurture, attachment style, personality traits and life experiences of joys and sorrows. My integral values, influences, and beliefs have shaped me to be who I am, and what I do today, and I live with the mystery of the unknown.

I would like to present the setting up of ICPPD, for which I received a national award from the Irish Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy, IACP, for outstanding work in the field in Ireland at this time of upcoming statutory regulations. My ability to hold the essence of my vision, while meeting institutional requirements and standards was and continues to be of the utmost importance to me and to all involved at ICPPD.

Curriculum Development

Figure 14, below, illustrates and supports the robust submission of Public Works Documents. It delivers evidence of the energy, effort, determination, and commitment to the establishment of ICPPD as a private third level provider of quality academic programmes and a holistic experience for learners, graduates and all stakeholders involved.

- Folder 1. **Promotional Documents**
- Folder 2. **Learner Admission Processes**
- Folder 3. **Certificate Courses at ICPPD**
- Folder 4. **Professional Diploma Programmes at ICPPD**
- Folder 5. **BA in Holistic Counselling and Psychotherapy – Level 7**
- Folder 6. **BA (Hons) in Holistic Counselling and Psychotherapy – Level 8, 1-Year Add- on – Submission Document to Quality Qualifications Ireland, (QQI)**
- Folder 7. **Continuation of Folder 6, with Appendices and Attachments to QQI**
- Folder 8. **Clinical Practice Handbook (including associated Forms)**
- Folder 9. **Learner Handbook**

- Folder 10. **Tutor Handbook**
- Folder 11. **Research Project Handbooks (including associated Forms)**
- Folder 12. **Academic Quality Manual**
- Folder 13. **Samples of Reports and Minutes etc.**
- Folder 14. **Administration, Operational and Academic Forms**
- Folder 15. **Library and Learning Resources for Learners**
- Folder 16. **Conferring of Awards and Graduation Ceremony at ICPPD**
- Folder 17. **Research and Feedback from Stakeholders**
- Folder 18. **Other Relevant Documents**

Figure 14 - List of Folders containing Public Works Documents Submitted 16/11/18.

With reference to Public Works Folders 6 and 7 - Completed 'new' Application Template submitted November 2017, to Quality Qualifications Ireland (QQI) for an add-on, 1-year Level 8, Honours BA Degree in Holistic Counselling and Psychotherapy. This 1-year add-on Level 8, Honours degree was approved by QQI Expert Panel and recommended to the National Executive of QQI in March 2018. This programme was validated, and a cohort of learners commenced this programme in September 2018 in Athlone, County Westmeath and graduated in 2021. There is rich opportunity for further research on how they transfer their learning to their clinical practice settings, and to identify the strengths and the 'gaps' in the training undertaken at ICPPD.

These documents demonstrate curriculum development, aims and objectives, learning outcomes and assessments and will establish how we have integrated our model into the practical reality of putting courses together and the efficient delivery of same. The Public Works presented gives a picture of the journey of the learner from interview and enrolment to graduation and awards ceremony. The Public Works documents also provide samples of minutes, reports and are evidence of an institute that appreciates evidence-based research and feedback loops that support good practice and quality assurance for all involved. I have identified in Appendix 18, the Public Works that are singularly mine from those that are collaborative and the movement to a collegial model at present.

Upcoming statutory changes in the field, employment requiring national and international recognised academic qualifications, insurance companies and employee assistance programmes providing funding for brief therapy with measured outcomes and progression, are all impacting the arena of counselling and psychotherapy and are influencing training and educational institutes and (along with) validation and accreditation bodies. I ask myself - Is the therapeutic relationship becoming an I-it, rather than an I-thou relationship?

The bigger question in training is - are we training and educating learners and integrating, what Rowan (2005) names as 'the instrumental, authentic and transpersonal' aspects or still supporting individual schools of thought and training?

I had not fully realised and owned my innate love of holistic, humanistic and depth psychology, its philosophy and approaches and my agreement with a personal and universal search and need for authentic expression until undertaking this doctoral study. Philosophers like Heidegger (1962) and Jean-Paul Sartre (1948) have supported authenticity, Rowan (2005: 13) citing Sartre who says that "authenticity consists in having a true and lucid consciousness of the situation" and that "in assuming the responsibilities and risks that it involves, in accepting it in pride or humiliation, sometimes in horror and hate. There is no doubt that authenticity demands much courage and more than courage." I will re-visit in personal therapy, in the near future, how shame and humiliation, and horror are still embedded in my psyche; it is easier to go to this default then to express pride and self-appreciation. I am reminded by an inner voice, that pride is one of the seven 'deadly' sins, and that, pride comes before a fall.

Affirming my vision

My current research and reflection affirm my vision for ICCPD since its inception and for the immediate future. I am struck by Rowan (2005: 2) in researching the future of training in psychotherapy and counselling, writes about a new framework for training – instrumental, authentic, and transpersonal. This is something I will further research as a possible support to my vision and holistic ethos. On meeting quality assurance policies and conforming to external standards he questions if "the strength of the microscope was sometimes a bit strong and at times inappropriate

because therapy is only partly an academic subject". He argues that academia has "a hard time accepting the idea that a disciplined subjectivity is just as important as any kind of objectivity – and much harder to specify, weigh and measure."

I have often reflected on training and therapy itself with the focus on self-discovery being as Mindell (1995: 50) suggested, a furrowed field for psycho-spiritual development and she urged that we pay attention to the way in which it is unlearning, which takes us further, rather than more and more learning, and that "each discipline is simply a path to spiritual attainment. Perhaps becoming a therapist, then, is "also a spiritual path, if we learn to allow our underlying beliefs to surface through our work."

Personal development

Personal development is seen as key in the development of the self as an instrument for change. At ICPPD we do not apologise for our emphasis on personal therapy and self-exploration. Rowan (2005: 102) supports this ideal and says that it is better to aim at being the kind of therapist who has had many teachers and tried many modes and settles on their own style. He refers to Freud's perception that many therapists can "only operate up to the limit of their own resistance." I am mindful of his view that the requirement and role of personal therapy for trainee counsellors/psychotherapists is to raise the consciousness of the would-be therapist to the appropriate level for the kind of work that must be done. At ICPPD where the formation of holistic counsellors/psychotherapists is our focus, I continuously examine the impact of creativity, spirituality, and transpersonal perspectives on traditional training in counselling and psychotherapy and the field of psychotherapy nationally and internationally.

Although the psychological construct of 'self' dates to the advent of modern psychology, spiritual writers have been addressing similar content for millennia. ICPPD with its 'holistic' offerings, attract people who have a worldview already open to spiritual agency. Haynes (2016) takes the blending of spirituality and psychology advanced by Merton (1993), Jung (1960), Kunkel (2002) and Frankl (1966) and writes his purpose is to energise and crystallise interdisciplinary thought by "exploring the liminal space where the two disciplines have the most in common".

Like him I have spent many years studying psychotherapy and human development, I have engaged in decades of personal therapy to make sense of the intersection between the psycho-emotional and spiritual aspects of human experience and access to the wisdom available “through the integration of psychology and spirituality that is not available when one subject area is studied exclusively” (Haynes, 2016: 5). Merton (1993) like Rogers (1959) is famous for writings on the true self versus false self-dichotomy and on a personal note, I have lived with the various theories of counselling/psychotherapy, Celtic indigenous wisdom, creation spirituality for almost thirty years. As such these concepts have penetrated my understanding of human nature, the uniqueness of personality development and spiritual practices and concepts. Haynes (2016: 6) suggests that “epistemological flexibility and holistic thinking and being” are methods for transforming interdisciplinary practitioners, such as pastoral counsellors, spiritual directors, and spiritually oriented psychotherapists, in order that “they can offer care in a less bifurcated and more integrated way”.

The person of the therapist in the therapeutic encounter

Yeats’s image of the dancer being merged with the dance is very apt when we consider the person of the therapist in the therapeutic encounter (O’Leary and Sheedy, 2006). Who the therapist is, plays an important role in the process and cannot be separated from it? In fact, the “*being* of the therapist is probably one of the most essential factors in the therapeutic relationship” (2006: 167). They emphasise that therapists become aware of themselves and explore their internal world to discover their own strengths, limitations, and areas of potential development. (Perls et al., 1951; Polster and Polster, 1973) advise that insight is important insofar as it illuminates heretofore unknown aspects of oneself at the cognitive level. From a Gestalt perspective what is of particular importance to the professional development of therapists is the completion of their unfinished emotional business which, if not resolved, may lead to an inability to deal with similar issues in their clients. This issue was discussed in two papers Spurling and Dryden (1989); Norcross and Guy, (1998). Spurling and Dryden held that psychotherapy is a personal journey towards health on the part of therapists, and that it is this drive that is healing for the client. Norcross and Guy argued that

psychotherapy outcomes are inextricably linked with personal development and warned of the danger of working as therapists without undergoing personal analysis. The importance of personal development for trainees received attention in 1996 from Johns (1996: 19) and Corey (2007) stated that

personal therapy can be instrumental then in healing the healer. If a student counselor is not actively involved in the pursuit of healing their own psychological wounds, they will probably have considerable difficulty entering the world of a client. As counselors we can take our clients no further than we have been willing to go in our life.

Johns (1996) argued that purposeful personal development it is the most essential element of counselor training since it is inextricably linked to professional development, and that neither type of development is possible without awareness. These two authors echoed Bloomfield's (1989) assertion that is not what we do but how we are that is most important in therapy.

Therapist's Challenges

Van Deurzen (2015: 121) challenges us as therapists to be prepared to measure ourselves, to look at our work and our lives with critical awareness, aiming "for integrity and learning". She recommends "candid reappraisal and self-reflection", the giving up of "proud belief in your own knowledge and expertise" and the acceptance of situations in "their embarrassing detail and complexity, exposing errors with a large amount of self-compassion". In my experience, this is difficult. It requires humility and an ability to sustain my own and other people's scrutiny, along with the uncomfortableness of this exposure, and allows myself "be touched and moved by it". Van Deurzen (2015: 140) recognizes that bias and prejudice, mistakes and failings, are part and parcel of our existential reality and do not simply occur through "lack of training or insufficiency of personal analysis" they happen inevitably because we are all, beyond training and self-understanding, "bound by the same existential dilemmas as our clients". She further argues that it is precisely because we share the human condition in all its contradictions and imperfections with our clients that we can be of assistance to them. It is always salutary to find our feet of clay again (2015: 140). Therapy is about being human with other human beings and allowing them to let their humanity unfold. To be human means to err,

we must have no compunction and false pride over erring, and to “find peace with our errors and subsequent learning is strangely exhilarating” (2015: 142).

Tutors

This also resonates with me about who the tutors are at ICPPD. I am reminded of Palmer (2017) who wrote that “face to face with my students, only one resource is at my immediate command: my identity, my selfhood, my sense of this “I” who teaches – without which I have no sense of the “Thou” who learns. I ask myself as a tutor “who is the self that teaches?” I believe it is the most fundamental question to ask about teaching for learning and those who learn. Good teachers possess a capacity for connectedness. This connectedness according to Palmer (2017: 11) is held not in their methods but in their hearts – “meaning *heart* in its ancient sense, as the place where intellect and emotion and spirit and will converge in the human self.” Palmer (2017: 76) also proposes that to become a better teacher, I must nurture a sense of self that “both does *and* does not depend on the responses of others - and that is a true paradox”. He continues that I must take a solitary journey into my own nature and seek the help of others in seeing myself as I am – another of the many paradoxes that abound on the inner terrain.

I agree with Palmer (2017: 212) when he writes that modelling demands that we create academic programmes that are open to learner critique, challenge, and change, and that an educational programme that emerges from a “continuing collaboration of administrators, faculty, and students is much more likely to produce new professionals than one that leaves students disempowered.” The notion of the “new professional” revives the ancient meaning of the word when it refers to someone who makes a “profession of faith” during a disheartening world (Palmer 2017: 213). According to Palmer this is a person who can say “in the midst of the powerful force field of institutional life, where so much might compromise my core values, I have found firm ground on which to stand - the ground of my own identity and integrity, of my own soul – ground from which I can call myself, my colleagues, and my workplace back to our true mission”. Personally, this is breathtakingly inspirational while also terrifyingly challenging. It reminds me of my

earlier metaphor of the 'tent and the pegs in the ground holding the tent despite the uncertainty and wind circling it'.

Experiential and holistic approach

In designing any programme at ICPPD, I ensure an experiential and holistic approach always. I am aware in delivering various modules that I work from a holistic and transpersonal orientation. I use images, myths, ritual and ceremony, fairy tales, symbols, archetypical figures, and the imaginary world and include meditation, music, movement, sound, and artwork. This kind of therapeutic process was of course initially pioneered by Jung (1928) and Assagioli (1965) who promoted creative expression as a means of expressing the 'psyche'. These days, I am continuously researching in the classroom, in the counselling room and in supervision work, and as du Plock (2004: 32) advocates "good research is a living thing: it should leap off the page to revitalize some aspect of our way of beings as therapists."

I am reaching the conclusion again, that in the training room, like in the therapy room, a 'toolbox' is not necessary to start with, perhaps, best to go into a place of not-knowing and waiting, to create a spacious clearing, this is in line with Van Deurzen (2009) when she writes that an open mind is required in the search for true observation, while being mindful that "truth is complex and can be viewed from different angles". I am discovering that being authentic is central to personal growth and taking full responsibility for what we say and do and that it is the combination of challenge and support that is respected, that "learning is a process as well as an outcome" (Zuber-Skerritt 1992: 103) and that an understanding of learning styles is an essential factor in the "groundwork of an emancipatory pedagogy" (Fielding 1994: 394). We are all following a developmental path and the journey begins with permission to be real.

Learning and Higher Education

The current landscape of learning analytics in higher education is aimed at improving learning practice by transforming the ways we support learning processes. Viberg, Hatakks, Balter and Mavroudi, (2018: 98-110) write that "with an

increase of relationship mining methods and the rather stable use of methods for the distillation of data for human judgement, suggests that learning analytics research in higher education is shifting from prediction of, e.g., retention and grades, towards a deeper understanding of students' learning experiences." Their study presented an extensive coverage of research on the use of learning analytics in higher education, and they concluded that this research is still an evolving area of practice and research. They state there is a need for more frequent application of qualitative methods in combination with quantitative ones to help understand complex learning environments. This is similarly acknowledged by Ferguson and Clow (2017), who examined the evidence of learning analytics in the subjects of psychology and education. The increase of mixed methods of research for the year 2017 suggests that there might be a relevant development in this regard. Yet, to be able to claim that there is a stable trend, they advocate further investigation, and a need to examine opportunities, barriers, and challenges.

Conclusion

In chapter 12 my final reflections and musings support the preparation of completing this context statement and the process of letting go.

Introduction

This chapter reflects on the living through the heuristic process for the exploration within this reflexive audit and future implications for the programmes developed within ICPPD.

Each time we review our life story, we will find the story changes. The events may be the same, but different things will become significant, “you will be surprised at how your attitudes, responses and the themes of your story change overtime” (Cottrell, 2003:38). Heuristic inquiry which developed in some extent in parallel with humanistic psychology attracts researchers in the field of counseling and psychotherapy who are interested in exploring the “essence of the person in experience” (Moustakas, 1990: 39).

Stages of Heuristic Research

Undertaking this reflexive audit provided me an opportunity to review my learning journey and its influence while at the same time telling a story that offers encouragement to those who will take up the challenge in the next generation.

The stages of heuristic research set out by Moustakas - engagement, immersion, incubation, illumination, explication, and creative synthesis - according to Etherington (2004) echo more general theories of the human creative process that encourage us to reflect on and connect with tacit knowing, images, dreams, hunches, ideas that come between sleeping and waking, intuition, out of body experiences, synchronicity, and exceptional human experiences (Braud and Anderson, 1998).

This context statement which adopted a qualitative approach and was undertaken through the lens of heuristic process required me to trust “tacit knowing” (Polanyi 1996) and immerse myself in the data through journaling, “in-dwelling”, reading literature around the topic and engaging with my own material. Heuristic research required me to allow a period of incubation and to trust in this process, to wait for illumination. Making sense and meaning, would lead me to articulate to others what I was discovering and to eventually create a thesis representing a synthesis that reflected my personal knowledge, tacit awareness, intuition, understanding of

concepts, that would meet the criteria of this doctorate in psychotherapy through public works.

Sometimes I wondered if a more traditional orientation where I developed hypothesis which I could set out to prove or disprove would be a cleaner and clearer approach. In this heuristic process I sometimes felt overwhelmed with so much data, ideas, thoughts, and images and little understanding of how it might all come together as an academic scholarly product.

Experience of Self through this heuristic process

Clearing a space in my life to focus on the Public Works and myself, and paying attention to tacit knowing, intuition, images, and dreams and felt sense, I was able to experience myself in different ways personally and professionally. I have learned an increased ability to tune into myself, know myself more deeply, validate myself internally and simply 'be' with myself and situations that arise in my life more fully. I have learned more about myself and have gathered up 'parts of myself' and I am more connected to myself now. This heuristic journey of self-discovery helped me 're-collect', which according to Etherington (2004: 63) is "more than remembering" aspects of myself I was not fully conscious of, and this increased self-awareness, self-confidence and strengthened my sense of identity.

Reconstruction of therapy

McLeod (2008: 17) writes that the reconstruction of therapy has become more pressing, resulting from the impact of forces such as postmodernism, multiculturalism, consumerism, and changes in healthcare governance, and that the need for qualitative research has grown. It can be argued that the present era in counselling and psychotherapy research is beginning to move beyond legitimization, and verification and "into a stage of discovery, adaptation, and innovation in which the role of qualitative research will become increasingly important." He reflects on the lack of studies being published in journals from a heuristic research approach and questions that journal editors may be "resistant to the publication of this type of work" or that "authors may be reluctant to expose their own personal experiences and exploratory processes before a wider audience" (2008: 207).

During this heuristic inquiry I had an awareness of standing into the shoes of all involved in building an organization, and I endeavored to hold an element of detachment that allowed me to remain open and curious to all discussion and outcomes provided.

This challenged my fixed belief, assumptions, convictions for example e.g., personal therapy and my resistance based on my belief that the encounter and session is sacred and so not for evaluation by external bodies. I am now left wondering if and how we might develop a formula or model of reflexive reflective heuristic inquiry for mandatory Personal Therapy, Group Process modules and Clinical Practice sessions as part of training at ICPPD. This is very interesting, and I look forward to developing this further through academic processes at ICPPD. This will support the experiential learning which is important to our training while embracing research as a positive and necessary requirement for the future of professionals in the field of counseling and psychotherapy in Ireland. This way and this type of development carries within it a balance that supports a holistic ethos and preferred approach to therapy. I wonder from a research standpoint if that might add to current literature even? Curbing my excitement is McLeod's (2008) voice saying, about research outcomes in counseling and psychotherapy, and that the big question that members of the public, members of other professions, and policymakers ask is: how well does it work?

Etherington (2004: 48) states that reflexive methodologies seem to be close to the hearts and minds of practitioners "who value using themselves in all areas of their practices (including research) and to also value transparency in relationships". In considering heuristic inquiry, I am aware that the choice of research topic often has according to Devereux (1967) "personal significance for the researcher whether conscious or unconscious", indeed, heuristic research (Stiles, 1993: 604) as defined by Moustakas (1990, 1994) necessitate us to have personal connection with the topic of enquiry, self-examination, and "significant personal learning and change". Can these approaches be effectively applied to the core issues in counselling and psychotherapy research around outcome, process, and theory building? Do personal experience methods have a role to play in relation to evidence-based practice? Can reflexive methodologies including heuristic research be effectively

applied? It will be interesting to follow the ongoing unfolding of these approaches over the next decade.

Psychotherapy and the age of transnationalism

Van Deurzen (2015: 188-189) reminds us that being a psychotherapist in an “age of trans-nationalism requires us to have the breadth and suppleness of mind to be prepared to find that our views have been narrow minded and incomplete” and the verification of our work should be that we are able to remain open to contrasting views and be prepared to discover that some things are very different for different people and other things are definitely human and shared. The objective she maintains is not for us to harmonize and reduce the multiplicity of the human condition under one common denominator, but to learn from each other and recognise the diversity of human experience, which is “both mysterious and miraculous and makes life rewarding and challenging.” We must stop holding onto simplistic and reductionist single truths. To do so we need to admit that we are often ignorant about human living. This will free us up to begin again “from a standpoint of doubt, wonder and never-ending investigation”. This is a challenge I am eager to explore in my future work at ICPPD.

Qualitative and Quantitative research debate in Counselling and Psychotherapy

McLeod (2008: 288-289) believes that choosing qualitative or quantitative methods lead to a splitting of the field, and a lack of appreciation from each side of the value of the other approach. He writes that this is unfortunate because, for any therapy topic, it is likely that there are relevant qualitative studies and quantitative studies. The consequences of choosing one of the methodologies can be that the researcher over identifies with a single school and loses the flexibility of the bricoleur’. McLeod (2008: 290) concludes that in the future the focus will be on “global warming and funding for counseling may decrease” and he believes that “this represents a huge opportunity for the counseling and psychotherapy professions” in that government funded research tend to produce abstract, decontextualized knowledge (Seikkula and Arnkill, 2006). For the purposes of delivering therapy services that meet the real needs of people in communities, nuanced, contextualized knowledge is much

more useful. He continues that this is the “kind of knowledge that can be generated at low cost, by students, faculty, practitioners, and clients working together using qualitative methods.” Knowledge base for counselling and psychotherapy in which the balance is tipped towards qualitative knowing, is something worth working towards. According to him, good qualitative research depends on personal immersion in the phenomenon being investigated, to the exclusion of other concerns and interests.

References to various programmes and modules on the trainings at ICPPD (Public Works submitted) have been explored in this thesis. I would like to make one final attempt to ‘bridge’ between academic and scientific knowledge and the application in practice of the lived holistic experience. The module on Gestalt Approach in year two of the BA in Holistic Counselling and Psychotherapy programme (Public Works Folder 6: 1) is significant.

Gestalt Approach – A Bridge to Head, Hearts and Hands and a holistic approach to healing

The Gestalt Approach to therapy (which is the module I tutor at ICPPD) is a creative and holistic approach that focuses on every aspect of the individual’s experience equally. Joyce and Sills (2014) see awareness as both knowing and being and MacKewn (1997) thinks that there is no one objective truth, only a multitude of subjective perceptions, and that the aim is to reveal many aspects of the many perceptual possibilities. Corey (2017) writes that Gestalt therapy is viewed as an existential encounter, it is process orientated, not technique orientated and Yontef and Jacobs (1989) referred to Gestalt as field theory and along with holism are both interrelated with the humanistic theory of personality. Joyce and Sills (2018: 28) propose that in the clinical setting, the client is always seen as a holistic combination of psychological factors and physical factors. Yontef and Jacobs (2011: 329) state that " holism asserts that humans are inherently self-regulating, that they are growth-oriented, and that persons and their symptoms cannot be understood apart from their environment" and Corey (2009: 225) believes that “a key strength of Gestalt therapy is the attempt to integrate theory, practice and research" and in (2013: 196) Corey says to become whole with one's own self on a holistic level is “the ultimate goal when attending Gestalt therapy.”. The Gestalt approach which is

influenced by phenomenological method of Husserl which assumes the best way to acquire knowledge is to start from the immediate experience of an individual i.e., “the appearance of phenomena to consciousness” this is according to Brownell (2010: 31). MacKewn (1997) is of the view that there is potential for the growth for the client where the therapist creates the ground for dialogic relationship, where healing and development devolve from the intersubjective realm of dialogic self-disclosure that encourages a meeting in mutual humanity. Frost (1997: 68-69) speaks to the distinction between psychology (wholistic thinking) and theology (holistic thinking) says it is within the evolution of human understanding and, as a result is not reversible. Rather than go back, our understanding of psychology and theology must evolve collaboratively, and distinctively converging on the understanding of the person.

Efficacy of psychotherapy

Wampold and Imel, (2015: 84) representing the history of arguments for and against the efficacy of psychotherapy acknowledge the problems inherent with heuristic reviews of the literature and agreed that research was needed to examine the efficacy of psychotherapy so that “claims could be made based on empirical evidence rather than the quality of one's rhetoric” and they proposed that there are “pathways that create change in psychotherapy: the real relationship, expectations and specific ingredients.” (2015: 61). Wampold and Imel (2015: 59) referring to Frankl (1966) noting that all effective healing practices contain a “myth and a ritual” in other words one of the common factors is the systematic use of some set of specific ingredients, “delivered in a cogent and convincing manner to the client and accepted by the client.”

Prochaska and Norcross (2010) wrote about a concerted movement toward integration of various theories in counseling and psychotherapy, and this challenges me as a therapist in providing bespoke service rather than prescribed interventions for clients.

Heuristic inquiry as a qualitative research method

Heuristic inquiry as a qualitative research approach that represents a personal journey towards tacit knowing challenged me to use creativity, compassion, self-exploration, and introspection, and it provided me with the deep understanding of

the meaning and the essence of the significant human experience (Douglass & Moustakas, 1985). Heuristic inquiry taught me to honour the richness and complexity of my experience through capturing the meaning of my journey (Giorgi, 1970). I now use heuristic research as an ongoing practice in my life to inquire and reflect on issues that arise for me personally and professionally.

Moustakas (1990: 27) describes the early stage of heuristic research as the initial engagement where the researcher connects with and takes ownership of a burning issue. My initial engagement with the study grew out of my role as a professional counsellor/psychotherapist and supervisor, tutor, academic director, shareholder, and entrepreneur at ICPPD. My personal curiosity was rooted in the experience of my childhood growing up on a farm in the midlands of Ireland in the 1960s. It was difficult to evidence my integrity about my engagement in heuristic inquiry undertaken, so I adopted a reflexive, empathic approach and engaged a critical friend to support my work and challenge my blind spots. Being open to my unexplored process of internalized bias, convictions, naiveties, and arrogance is transforming me into a more empathic listener and person. Through examining my own responses to colleagues, I began to re-experience a place inside of me that would reach out, rather than dismiss individuals who have different perspectives. I became more aware of the extent of my beliefs and convictions and their impact on myself and others. This is an example of one of the illuminative experiences that I have come to. This new awareness contributed to the reflective process and as the transformation process of my doctoral study unfolded it became clearer that exploring how the humanistic philosophy and holistic philosophy were the guiding principles in my personal and professional life and are integral to the research and to the development and re-development of the 'holistic' ethos at ICPPD.

In this final reflection, I am deeply appreciative of my awakening in my own counselling and psychotherapy training many years ago, and its call to live with integrity. This led me to endeavour to live a value-based existence, which ultimately led to the creation of a value-based training institute. About myself as a trainer and educator and ICPPD as a provider of quality training and education programmes, I am inspired by du Plock (2004: 32) when he proposes that the full training itself is "a training in research, or a re-search as a personal journey of self-discovery and

continuous transformative process” rather than a discrete event and he goes further in stating that research must not, of course, remain only of personal significance if it is to have any impact on professional practice – it must be “disseminated, and evaluated by our peers, colleagues, and clients.”

My personal life these last months have been painful as I face my imperfections and shadow, the people I have disappointed, most of all myself. It is painful to acknowledge the price paid for setting up one’s own business. I understand Slater (2003) when he writes that self-knowledge is gained from hard work, confronting the views of others, or measuring ourselves against a standard and finding that we have not “achieved what we thought”. It has been enlightening in this context statement to describe the experiences of my world as completely as possible and without the assumption that I already know what I am describing.

Conclusion

I have felt the resistance to completing this chapter and have, to an extent, consciously and unconsciously delayed the inevitable. I have a real sense of Erikson’s stage of Generativity. I am living and negotiating this stage now. Slater (2003) in researching Erikson’s stage of generativity versus stagnation, writes that leaders of organisations, with a sense of generativity will be able to care about both the mission and the employees and he continues that central to generativity is keeping a sense of meaning and facing the fact that there is only one life and there is not enough time to start over and how as adults we must face our limitations and failings.

Chapter 13 – Conclusions and Letting go

Introduction

As I write there is a lightness in me. Up until now, I have wanted to hold on, to delay the inevitable. I have a sense that this cycle and circle is complete for now at least. I will spend time in this chapter gathering the insights and learnings. Those that have emerged illuminated and have been integrated and absorbed and both me, and ICPPD have been changed, transformed by this process. There are other intuitions and insights that need to be held for further heuristic processing and will need input from others also.

Psychotherapy and the age of transnationalism

Van Deurzen (2015: 188-189) reminds us that being a psychotherapist in an “age of trans-nationalism requires us to have the breadth and suppleness of mind to be prepared to find that our views have been narrow minded and incomplete” and the verification of our work should be that we are able to remain open to contrasting views and be prepared to discover that some things are very different for different people and other things are definitely human and shared. The objective she maintains is not for us to harmonize and reduce the multiplicity of the human condition under one common denominator, but to learn from each other and recognize the diversity of human experience, which is “both mysterious and miraculous and makes life rewarding and challenging”. We must stop holding onto simplistic and reductionist single truths. To do so we need to admit that we are often ignorant about human living. This will free us up to begin again “from a standpoint of doubt, wonder and never-ending investigation”.

Public Works submitted

I submitted supporting documentation that is representative of my Public Works at ICPPD. They are visible manifestations of the work, time and effort used to demonstrate my ability to lead a team that can design and deliver curriculum appropriate to an integrated and holistic perspective in the training and education of counsellors and psychotherapists. This syllabus with its stated aims, learning outcomes and appropriate assessments (Public Works Folder 6 & 7) has been nationally (and internationally through the Bologna Agreement) academically

validated by Quality Qualifications Ireland (QQI) and professionally accredited by the respective national bodies.

Now it is time again to examine, recycle and transform the learning gained from my experience of establishing an educational institute, specifically recognised to train and educate competent, ethical, compassionate psychological therapists who as part of their training have been introduced to a transpersonal element through creativity and spirituality, all of which is underpinned by humanistic principles and a holistic ethos.

ICPPD is finally, a viable business worthy of regard by the wider academic and business community (Public Works Folder 18 Doc 1). Difficulties both scholarly and economic have been transformed in Sedgwick's (1994) words to a level where it is 'known and utilised'. Bager-Charleson (2012: 4), citing Barber (2006), reminds me to stay focused on a holistic view of education and people and to continue to trust 'the process' and to "be aware of the whole holistic field; ...engage with the situation in an experiential, humanistic, vibrant, and authentic way; and account for macro scales of society and micro influences of the society."

Conflicts of Interest

I have earlier in this document outlined the dilemma of being a shareholder, with other roles and responsibility and the transition and ethical practice involved in streamlining and restructuring the governance and the building of an organisation, which now include many external chairpersons and experts on the relevant boards to ensure that equity, fairness, and justice is upheld.

It is natural for me to endeavour to design a business with soul where sensing, feeling, thinking and intuition is woven, where synthesis is encouraged to avoid separation and where all involved are part of an authentic whole and business is not separate to values. This coming year we will develop further strategic maps, with pillars and strategies that support wholeness, I see my task as listening more, observing, having humility and presence to hear and see the future.

Challenges and Dilemmas

I have been presented with several challenges and dilemmas to look at the light and shadow within myself within my practice as a psychotherapist at my leadership, the programmes, and their content, and within the organization of ICPPD itself. I have stood in the river with my miner's sieve and held the 'fool's gold and the gems of value' side by side, and have seen the value of, and place for both and for all of it. I explored assumptions in my life and asked critical questions as to the relationship between creative, spiritual, and mystical versus scientific limitations and evidence.

I recognise more mindfully the need to continue to explore the contributions and strengths and the limitations and weaknesses of everything, and how I must now attempt to communicate from a holistic perspective across all interactions at all levels, including the limitations of trying to convey what happens in counselling and psychotherapy in practice. Critical engagement and critical reflection are much more embedded in my academic work at ICPPD.

I have an increased appreciation for the two polarities playing out top dog and underdog and holding a dialogue with each other with the aim of resolution and integration. I am left with the invitation to 'hold space' for all in curiosity and interest, even and to trust the organism's desire to creatively synthesize.

I continue to look at the risk of the organization blocking out national and international debate on current trends because it is based on my philosophy as founder. I endeavor to create space to express my passion in this field and to express that I may be blinded by love and not see the faults inherent. I stay close to the assumptions on which I based my life and endeavor to be aware of what might be damaging for others. In this, there is a healthy frustration as a person, an educator and as a leader.

Regarding the theme of holistic tradition

I have looked at other programmes in Ireland, and while similar they do not have the same constellation or the same purposeful focus on holism, creativity and spirituality and the embodiment of these elements within training. I am now able to 'speak to' the impact of this focused use of the self, on our trainees, graduates, communities and on the profession on a national level. This has been enlightening

and provides us with a distinctive difference as a provider of training and education and a credible choice for learners interested in holistic approach and experiential learning.

The raw minerals in the 'miner's sieve' are being refined, polished, and graded and I need to feed these into further programme developments (Public Works Folder) in the form of deepening the understanding of 'therapeutic use of self' as was explored in chapter 9. Modules designed to meet QQI and IACP criteria are embedded because of my intention and a team of people examining the 'use of self in a counseling process'. This has been a core illuminative outcome from the heuristic process of research in this context statement.

The importance of ongoing evaluation of the influence and reviewing feedback from graduates and from placements is now central to programme development at ICPPD (Public Works Folder 17: 3). The notion of the 'edge' of knowing brought me to the edge of awareness and what I didn't know yet. I needed to display and capture the evidence I have been puzzled about, and after a reflective dialogue with my critical friend who posed the question of referencing and making this more explicit, I postulated and began to explore the comments made by external examiners, external supervisors, and clinical practice managers (Public Works Folder 17: 4). The ongoing feedback is that our graduates have a robust sense of connection of body mind and spirit, that our trainees and graduates have 'an edge' that is difficult to articulate. This was to some extent hypothetical, and I decided to undertake research with clinical placements asking them to make explicit what they understood as "the edge off awareness and how our learners are different". The feedback provided in Appendix 13 highlight that Learners work with undeveloped strengths. As well as presenting issues, they can convey to client all of them, body mind and spirit and are not solely working from a 'curing or fixing model'. This feedback further updates the public works and demonstrates the impact of ICPPD on psychotherapy locally and nationally. To balance this, the limitation for therapists who work from this perspective is to also hold a pluralistic view and be mindful to negotiate a contract to work with the client and from the client's standpoint.

Gathering the Harvest

My intention was to match this methodology to the purpose of this research and to create a “complex, quilt-like bricolage, a reflexive collage or montage” (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000: 6) underpinned by a heuristic journey of discovery. Over the years I've struggled with being what is perceived as ‘academic’, and during this heuristic research I conclude that listening to my inner voice, is being ‘academic’.

The following are explications, illuminations and creative synthesis that have emerged from my engagements, immersion and incubation using the heuristic research methodology of inquiry. They are not in order of importance but as they arose over the course of the various chapters and periods of immersion and incubation.

Chapter 1 illuminated how my tacit knowing when made explicit informs others and is an opportunity for me to share my expertise, experience, and learnings and this supports ICPPD and staff going forward.

In chapter 2, the most enlightening and illuminating insights for me in this chapter is the realisation that, in this submission to date I had not shared leaving my marriage, with my children, and all we had were duvets in black plastic bags and school uniforms. The only other item I brought with me the evening I left my home and marriage was the ‘potato pot’. This was a big pot for boiling the potatoes for six growing children. I was full of wonder and awe at the unconscious power of the psyche i.e., an Irish woman’s psyche which includes memories of the famine and survival, and an ancient feminine whisper of the need to feed the children. As a woman, I grasped the impact of indoctrinated shame associated with failure, marginalisation, and poverty, perceived or real.

In chapter 4, the awareness of how unconscious, enmeshed identification with work and with ICPPD was highlighted and the power of parallel processes at play.

Chapter 5 illumined how counselling training focuses on the individual and face to face – and the importance of remembering we are social beings within social contexts and to be mindful of this in future programme development and build an adult learning community including staff and all involved.

My most significant explication and illumination occurred in completing chapter 8. I now have defined terms of references and understanding for the concepts of 'holistic' and for 'the therapeutic use of self' as advocated by ICPPD. Holistic at ICPPD means the interrelatedness of all – body, mind and spirit and the relationship with and to all. This is closely linked to indigenous wisdom. I now have a clear view of what is core to my vision of starting this training college – My dream of a college offering holistic counselling and psychotherapy training, where the whole person was at the core of the therapeutic process, has now been further condensed, redefined, and changed to - a college that continues with dedication to humanistic values and principles with the core principle now being the Self of the therapist as focus – the self as an instrument of change and the therapeutic use of self (Wosket, 2006). This truly aligns on all levels of my being, with the unapologetic statements that I make at our Open Information Evenings, and every time I am in a class setting with learners – “at ICPPD we make no apology for the demands and requirement for ongoing personal development and personal therapy during and after your training course”.

I discovered that the Humanistic College for Personal and Professional Development might have been a more authentic name for the organisation rather than the 'Holistic' or International College for Personal Development.

The explication of putting my needs first and to voice what I need and expect, continues to be difficult, I find it hard to let go and I am now clearly seeing how these impacts and frustrates others. I have gone deep inside my own experiences to learn to do things differently next time and to incorporate Irvani's (2007: 9) saying “self-love, when authentic, indicates empathic understanding, awareness, compassion, and acceptance of oneself and others.”

One of the most challenging and empowering questions posed by my critical friend was – does ICPPD have a disability? I have deeply reflected on this question over the past few months and developed the question further to ask the same question regarding our programmes, our tutoring team, our staff and management, our learning environments and most of all myself. The amount of food for thought, content for further discussion and consultation, insight, learning and action now required is momentous. Some of the illuminations include –

- age, energy and experience of staff and management, and how to value and support retirement and resignations, balanced with encouraging development and opportunities for all.
- tutors and staff and all involved in ICPPD need to be informed by the founders of the organisation of the vision, of the ethos and the mission statement. All to be made explicit and then management staff trusted to uphold this.
- a strategic plan at organisational level is a key feature at present and it needs to include making the dream of a campus, a 'home' for ICPPD a reality
- a comprehensive strategic plan would also support managerial staff. The organisation has been driven by financial survival restrictions and so therefore has been led by pressure and expectations, was reactive under pressure and dealing with crisis, and demanding quality assurance issues with QQI and IACP and others.
- ICPPD learners have a voice and a channel for expression and feedback and are encouraged, it was quite shocking for me to face that this is not the case at management level at ICPPD. This is something to be restored and addressed immediately.
- self-care and respect need to be better modelled across all levels as the organisation grows and expands.
- programmes that meet the future presenting issues in therapy for a changing world – and how to broaden perspectives through input from broader panels and experts in the field and cognate disciplines
- to create an environment where constructive criticism and conflict of ideas is welcome, and where accountability in our interactions within our community is encouraged and the need to establish 'reparative support structures'
- because I breathed ICPPD for 10 years – I am 'blind-sighted' and I need to remember when receiving feedback not to take it personally, but hold a loving detachment, and see the gift emerging in a more collaborative energy

Insight gained in chapter 8 included the answer to the question – what is valued in ICPPD's trainings? ICPPD's holistic and humanist counselling and psychotherapy offerings hold the **creative dimension** of the person, the possibilities and dynamics

that may be experienced in therapy and their application to life outside the therapy room. **Presences** and the alignment and attunement with self and others is held as vital. **Transcendence** and spirituality are more explicit than in integrative or/and pluralistic approaches. The **Felt sense** is also central to our work at ICPPD – and includes the use of self, seen in the context as an instrument of change. I now have language to articulate what I called, a Head, Heart and Hands approach to wholeness and synthesis. All the evidence is available in module descriptors and documents in the Public Works submitted.

It is imperative as we grow in academic achievement and expand locations and number of learners that our ICPPD research library needs to be logged for our own learners and alumni.

The being of the therapist is the essential factor of the therapeutic relationship (O’Leary and Sheedy, 2006). Who the therapist is, plays an important role in the process and cannot be separated from it? In fact, the “*being* of the therapist is probably one of the most essential factors in the therapeutic relationship” (2006: 167). They emphasise that therapists become aware of themselves and explore their internal world to discover their own strengths, limitations, and areas of potential development. (Perls et al., 1951; Polster and Polster, 1973) advise that insight is important insofar as it illuminates heretofore unknown aspects of oneself at the cognitive level.

The notion of the “new professional” revives the ancient meaning of the word when it refers to someone who makes a “profession of faith” during a disheartening world (Palmer 2017: 213). According to Palmer this is a person who can say “in the midst of the powerful force field of institutional life, where so much might compromise my core values, I have found firm ground on which to stand - the ground of my own identity and integrity, of my own soul – ground from which I can call myself, my colleagues, and my workplace back to our true mission.” Personally, this is breathtakingly inspirational while also terrifyingly challenging.

My legacy and what I dream will continue until or even after I retire from central roles in ICPPD

As I conclude this dissertation by Public Works, I am aware that there is an ongoing 'shaking' of my thinking. This keeps me at the 'edge' of learning. In this reflective audit, my use of hermeneutic empathy to make interpretations has led me to rich and thought-provoking themes that touched the realms of anthropology, spirituality and how the collective culture in each authority adapts to schools of thought in psychotherapy today. True theism as described by Tillich (2014: 170-171) "transcends both mysticism and personal encounter, as it transcends both the courage to be as a part and the courage to be as oneself".

ICPPD now in some ways finds itself back at the beginning again, reviewing and reflecting on its vision, mission, ethos and the changed future of counselling and psychotherapy provision and services, and the training of competent therapists to meet the future mental health needs of the Irish people in a changed world. At our recent Academic Board meeting we agreed a new Teaching and Learning sub-committee, to support the contingency planning required for academic year 20/21. Training for tutors and staff that supports online delivery of classes has been identified and arranged. My current interest and research include how to ensure and transfer to a virtual classroom our signature holistic personal experience, and ICPPD's creative, dynamic experiential approach to learning.

The challenges provided by COVID 19 tested me and brought me back into the deep layers of enmeshment and tendencies of earlier days. My growing awareness gained, and the work of this reflective audit has taught me that I have now in place, an organisation with governance and structures and personnel with roles and responsibilities who can support me, our tutors, and our learners as we face the unknown future. I am invited to trust a process again.

Going through the cycle of heuristic approach makes several of the public works that were implicit, now explicit - The sequencing of modules, the impact and feedback on psychotherapy practice, my own role in devising these programs, and the organizational influence, and the more I immersed and incubated the more I am seeing, my unique part in developing ICPPD and my part in hindering the processes involved. There is an element of co-construction here also.

Being open about human experiences, nuances and phenomenological impact led me back to the essence of the setting up of ICPPD and the clear message I want to convey now is, that 'holistic' is more than the sum of its parts – body, mind, and spirit - it is the interconnectedness and inter-relationship of, and with all.

I have returned to the essence of my dream for a counselling and psychotherapy training college, and in peeling back assumptions, tracing backwards, and embracing a pluralistic perspective, I have returned to the organic circle and essence of connection, connection to one's own spirit and the spirit of others.

I have given a "thick" description of what happens in heuristic research and then went on to be open to phenomenological exploration and I completed cycles and circles of heuristic inquiry in each chapter aligning with holistic perspective, promoting the interconnectedness of all things and all of us. This includes me as a person, clients, learners, staff, and others across all domains; in holding a holistic framework that included holding the term learner, rather than student, and tutor, rather than lecturer. I continue to distill the meaning and purpose of a holistic framework in education and in the training of counsellors, psychotherapists, and supervisors in Ireland.

Contribution in the field of Psychotherapy in Ireland

ICPPD - I have reflected on the body of work I have created, and I offer these contributions that have emerged during the explication phase, that will support ICPPD as an organization, and as a training and educational institute going forward -

- Holistic - definition understanding and use of within ICPPD – the interrelatedness of body, mind and spirit and the development of the whole person
- The need to hold 'holistic' as core along with humanistic guiding principles where and when policies, processes and procedures are debated and formulated
- The need to embed the therapeutic use of self as the third guiding principle for the training of holistic counsellors and psychotherapists and constantly evaluating its future use as a guiding principle

- Ensure that ICPPD continues to hold and promote itself as *A college with a difference!* With its emphasis on creativity, transpersonal and body-work foci
- ICPPD welcomes stronger involvement and contribution to QQI and IACP initiatives and debates where policies are formulated, providing feedback when given the opportunity for implications for policy, teaching, practice, and management.
- Ongoing heuristic inquiry and reflection through investigation and contact with all stakeholders, especially, learners and clinical placements and including all voices as part of future planning and designing of programmes, to remain current in the field and meet the needs of training and education going forward
- Holding what is 'core and non-negotiable' now, (this may change in the future) while welcoming all sides in discussion and debate – there is now a need to build a team and tutor panel, and support this into the bigger picture of the adult learning community.
- The importance of networking as a team at ICPPD and in the field of counselling and psychotherapy in Ireland and elsewhere.

The Profession of Counselling and Psychotherapy –

What have I gained from this study that I can contribute to psychotherapy as a profession?

- I have a recognition and endorsement that holistic brings with it and engagement with creativity, and transcendence that holds the possibility for an ancient and new spirituality in the Irish population.
- I am sure that my work involves rekindling creative processes, evoking the ancient wisdom of the Celtic people, and bringing it into the current climate which includes ownership and embodying our sensuality and sexuality.
- All of this has implications for my own personal and professional practice, ongoing research, possibly with funding from Irish Research Council, and continuation to be involved in policies for counseling and psychotherapy training and mental health and well-being.

- Phenomenological and heuristic approach is a close match with the process of counseling and psychotherapy and enriches research using the holistic self as focus.
- The fragmentation of self and current recovery or living with COVID 19, trends in capitalism, consumerism, violence, and wars that endangers connection with self and others that lead to alienation of self, relationships, communities, nationally and globally.
- Future engagement and dissemination of research, policies, and developments by CORU, QQI, IACP and other national bodies that impact future practice in the field of counselling and psychotherapy.

Recommendations for building an organization

Emerging themes from the process of the study have provided the following pointers for owners who have the business of building an organization that supports the education and training of counsellors and psychotherapists -

- Financial backing and strategic plans
- Personnel with required and specific expertise
- Contracts with clear definition of roles and responsibilities
- Leadership that upholds the public manifesto and ethos of the college and organization
- Guiding principles and personnel that steer the organization in the direction it wants to go
- Management and tutors that are gatekeepers of the profession of counselling and psychotherapy and meet the criteria of specific academic and professional bodies
- A team of people that 'buy' into and are committed to the ethos of the organization
- Creativity and curiosity and openness to change and development
- Clear communication and the encouragement of difference, and a willingness to resolve conflicts
- Appreciation by the organization to the need for team-building events
- Scheduling of regular times apart from usual work-day and space - to retreat, to pause and reflect on 1) past mistakes and achievements, ongoing

dilemmas, problems and feedback and 2) time to explore future needs, plans, actions required, at organisational level, team and individual levels

- Networking within the profession and the wider educational circles
- Continuous learning and development of all staff involved

In the role of researcher there were times when I was consumed with a silencing overwhelm that cautioned me against sharing or disclosing the experiences and data that emerged from my 'miners sieve'.

The key themes and growth that emerged for me personally include -

- I encountered with tenderness my fears of inadequacy and relived memories from past experiences.
- I re-visited my belief of not being wanted, supported, or loved, and I challenged this script.
- I realised that ingrained childhood and cultural, church and family influences remain strong at some level, especially around shame and humiliation as a woman.
- I am voicing my disappointment, anger and hurt, and dealing more directly with conflict, and speaking from my heart more often.
- My hidden resource in the past when feeling a deep loneliness was to express myself through expressive arts – creative writing, poetry, movement, and sound and while this will continue to serve me, I have found during this last chapter that while I share my struggles with people, it is ok for me to also share more of my story especially my achievements and that this also can connect me to others.

I embrace and understand my own process as a person, and as a tutor, it helps build an emotional space for trainees to share their concerns. This thesis was a rite of passage delving into uncharted territory at times.

Using my heuristic research as a parallel process I paid particular attention to the relevance of the humanistic and holistic principles in my own self-discovery and how this is transferred to my work as a therapist, supervisor, tutor in a counsellor training and education college, academic director, and manager of an organization. A key and important outcome of this doctoral study therefore is the knowledge that experiences of humanistic and holistic principles need to be championed in

counsellor training to create a deeper understanding of the approaches that underpin all programmes at ICPPD. I am challenged to be more aware of my own holistic wellbeing at this time and to delegate work so I can live the life I dream.

This context statement opened a space to create new possibilities e.g., deeper understanding of holism and clarification of key concepts and terms, further research in heuristic inquiry, writing and presenting about holistic counselling and psychotherapy as an approach to healing, and developing concepts and ideas e.g., how to creatively harness learning and assess mandatory personal therapy, so that learners engage with, become immersed in, incubate their therapeutic and perhaps cathartic experience, explicate resources, illuminate a bigger picture and world view and finally come home to their essences

While this is the final chapter and the end of this context statement, I am careful not to conclude this thesis - one of the limitations of heuristic research is that it has been with me throughout the process and work and it is still with me and while I need to conclude the inquiry now, I feel it is never finished and I carry this forward in my personal and professional development.

Heuristic research methodology has allowed for the development of further learning and provided me an opportunity to influence the field of counseling and psychotherapy with my findings, through an urge for future writings and presentations on Holistic Counselling and Psychotherapy.

As I bring this work to a close, I am what Yalom (1980: 9) calls “fundamentally alone”, and my validation must come from within and not from others. I celebrate the freedom to choose and as he says I can “courageously take the helm of my life and steer in the direction I choose”. Personally, this is a new challenge as I enquire of myself, what is the best possible direction for me, as a person, as a psychotherapist and as founder of ICPPD in a time of change and opportunity for all of us.

The future of ICPPD as an organisation is no longer my sole responsibility. ICPPD is a reputable Irish Counselling and Psychotherapy training and educational college, a viable business, and an expanding and evolving organisation.

Journey through the thesis

My journey through this thesis has been a multi-layered experience co-constructed through self and other interactions; there have been lessons in learning as Meyerhoff and Ruby (1982: 1) describe as “consciousness about being conscious; thinking about thinking.” I felt compelled, probably due to my training as a counsellor/psychotherapist and my ongoing attendance at personal therapy, to share the layers of my journey in their complexities and contradictions, to offer an open, transparent, and honest account of my personal and research journey. A critical learning point for me, is ‘bearing’ what Clandinin and Connelly (1994: 423) speaking to the ethics of exposure and vulnerability of the researcher, says, “The researcher is always speaking partially naked and is genuinely open to legitimate criticism from participants and from audience.” Flemons and Green (2002: 93) refer to outing “you have to decide if you are ready to be outed or to put yourself out that way and consider the impact on personal identity.” I particularly link this concept with ICPPD and how others involved in supporting and building the organisation with me, will be impacted by this work.

Letting go, experiencing the loss of this rich process i.e., heuristic inquiry -

As I write I am aware of a resistance to finish this context statement and I acknowledge the upcoming detachment and grieving process that has already begun. I feel it in my bones.

My findings and insight gained from heuristic engagement, immersion, incubation, explication, and illumination, end now in a creative synthesis.

From a heuristic lens in the engagement phase I ask myself what brought me into my educational journey and its preface of progression to beginning at school. In the immersion phase I brought to this a deeper journey of lived experience of adult learning at a time of change with its losses and gains. The incubation phase focused on the seeds of wholeness in the situation and the actualizing tendency ripe for progress and potentiality and a curiosity of personal, professional, and spiritual growth. In the explication phase, I ask what key themes I took out of this exploration personally and professionally and academically. The illumination phase challenged me to ask how to articulate a deeper knowing and the synthesis phase brought a realization of the unknown. Moustakas (1990: 10) states that in the

heuristic process “what appears, what shows itself as itself, casts a light that enables one to come to know more fully what something is and means”. Many immersive conversations with my critical friend exploring and discussing and critiquing the deeper reflective questions, like naivety, compartmentalizing, broad siding, being blinkered, the shadow, and sacrifices made, all supported my striving for greater authenticity and aided me to remain true to heuristic inquiry.

I am moving beyond where Lansberg (1988) argues that the founder of an organisation, while being aware they should be developing a succession plan, avoids doing so because the person must face their own mortality at a time when they still feel valuable to the organisation. It also requires delegating authority to others to manage everyday details, something which the entrepreneurial person wishes to avoid, being in control. The dawning reality of growing older, declining physical and cognitive powers and being dispensable is not easy to accept.

I wonder if our programmes, our holistic ethos, and content will continue to suit younger learners and meet their career needs in a changing society that is becoming less familiar to me.

The words of Bateson (2001), anthropologist, writer and educator speaking at a conference on conscious aging ‘speaks to me’ when she says that in her view learning is a form of spirituality, and that learning requires humility, she adds, knowing you don’t know in order to learn something new, is a powerful connection to make and Goldman (2004: 197) agrees that you “have to know that you don’t know as you walk through the woods in order to see something new around you” and you have to know that “you need to be quiet and by yourself to let some new recognition grow within you” simply “being willing to learn is to go into a sacred space”.

Sela-Smith (2002: 13) accepts that when someone feels an internal draw and hears the call from the deepest recesses of the self, “it is impossible not to notice” and from this intuitive place the “subjective scientist feels the call to discover some internal meaning”. Clarkson (2004) writes that an approach that seeks to include the whole person cannot discount the spiritual aspects of self. Corey (2017) writes about spirituality being aimed at nourishing the human spirit and that these

spiritual values help many people make sense out of the universe and the purpose of our lives on earth, earlier Frankl (1966: 104) espoused similar values focusing on “the meaning of human existence as well as man’s search for meaning” and creative values when one recognises that “their work is unique and no one else can do it the way that particular individual can”

Like Reinkraut (2008) I have looked through the window at others and into the mirror beside the window to see myself and examine my values, moral perspective, confusions, and uncertainties. Rainer (2019) encourages us to love the questions themselves, like locked doors and like books written in a foreign language. I considered the limitations that might influence the presentation of my research and I continuously discern if I am self-indulgent, narcissistic, blindsided and if I am missing the focus of the study.

I found a ‘bigger picture’ for what was happening in Ireland and the psychological and social landscape that the creation of ICPPD and its programmes and public works ‘sat’ into in 2009. I have come to a greater appreciation of the societal factors that impact on psychotherapy and vice-versa. I am coming to the recognition that the Public Works could be greatly enhanced through a focused input on health policy and societal trends in Ireland as these unfold. Corey (2021: 201) asserts that the “organism must be seen in its environment, or in its context, as part of the constantly changing field”. All the development above is the ‘figure’ that emerges from the ‘ground’ of a fast-changing society on a global level. For us as an organisation, our future developments lie somewhat and somewhere, in the future directives from CORU, state regulations, QQI and IACP.

Concluding Remarks:

The ending or the beginning –

I began with questions (the voice of others in 2009) **Why are you doing this? What is this all about? What is this for?**

Yesterday I still was unable to answer the questions that have challenged me for twelve years, and I accepted that I may end this context statement, with the questions unanswered.

Today as I paused prior to this final paragraph, I sat in the garden, spent time with the daffodils and as I sat there in nature, and reflected, the following emerged with great clarity. So today the answer is as follows -

In 2009, I felt the impulse to bring a specific type of counselling and psychotherapy training into the field of education in Ireland. The tacit knowing was so strong that I embraced this challenge wholeheartedly and trusted the unknown mission. I held a vision and understanding of a specific holistic education and training that would engage theory, skills, reflective practice, creativity, transcendence. Programmes would hold the possibility for the integration of an ancient wisdom and new spirituality; this would come under the term 'holistic' supported by humanistic principles and understanding of the 'use of self' in relationships.

I imagined this type of professional, academic, validated, accredited, training and education of counsellors and psychotherapists making a difference to an Irish population. This leads me to conclude that comprehensive linking of holistic education with structures of meaning and structures of education, the integration of ancient wisdom into current and future developments in counseling and psychotherapy training i.e., a holistic approach, has something unique to offer in this field. This again raises the question - who is the therapist and what has shaped them?

The importance of the circle of connection to include attunement, presence, and availability, would be reflected by the organization, the staff, and the tutors in the classroom embracing and holding an experiential space for adult learning and the application of knowledge, competence, ethical, and compassionate practice, and its transference to the clinical setting with clients.

In hindsight I needed to make my vision and dream twelve years ago, more explicit to my husband and others around me. It would have been helpful to all if I had provided visual portrayals, mind-maps, progression routes, charts, concise mission statements, definitions and had more conversations with the people supporting my vision.

This is what is required now to re-structure the organization, to empower staff and prepare for my retirement. I now have a strong sense of what is required of me, and the first thing to do is to give myself reflective space and time and then to see if my husband is choosing to stand beside me, to complete this venture.

It is fitting the last outcome for me is the need to take time, to pause, to reflect, to detach from work, to connect with myself, others in the workplace and the essence of what it is all about.

I have never taken the time to celebrate any achievement or event in my life. The triumphant energy was shadowed by the need for the next urgent deadline or crisis. I have an opportunity today to have more fun and enjoyment from my one precious life and my lips are smiling in anticipation.

In this here and now, **connection** is the word that I hear in the depths of my being. This is what the meaning and purpose of life is about for me!

Hopefully my initial dream for ICPPD will continue to become a reality!

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APPENDICES 1-18

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