

and their identification as distinct therapeutic phenomena that can be used to produce emotional change is valuable. Each task is defined or described. The way that change occurs is detailed, and the therapist operations are outlined. The phenomena are explained from the constructivist experiential approach.

The detailed presentation is appreciated even though at times the connections between theory and practice are weak, and the examples following the presentations are not a perfect fit. For example, in the systematic evocative unfolding section the authors outline how the counsellor facilitates the client to reenter a scene that was emotionally-laden but they fall short in describing how the counsellor judges the extent of the client emotional shift or arousal necessary to move to the next stage of interventions. If I were to use this technique I would not have a clear understanding of how and what I am to do to assess the client's emotional engagement.

The third part of the book, a few pages long, presents research conducted to verify, validate, or explore the theoretical tenets or the counselling elements of experiential therapy. The section is informative and provides the readers with a picture of the stage of research in this area of counselling.

All in all, this is a well-thought-out and readable book. The language is very good and the presenting style very adequate. The organization is excellent and the numerous examples, the specific suggestions, and the presentation of both the theoretical and applied aspects of working with emotions make this book a necessary one that every counsellor who values emotions and wants to use them in their practice should read. The authors have done an excellent job in organizing material, presenting ideas and suggesting a theory and a therapy that values emotions.

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Linde, Charlotte. (1992). *Life Stories: The Creation of Coherence*. New York: Oxford University Press. (softcover) 256 pp.

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Approached from a linguistic perspective, a life story involves the oral narratives (and associated discourse units such as chronicles and explanations) a person tells over a lifetime that indicate the kind of person one is and that are significant enough to be retold over extended periods of time. Through interview accounts from thirteen persons of how they ended up in a particular occupation (since career is such an important topic in life stories), Linde investigated the way persons attempt to make life stories coherent. While her investigation of coherence was primarily concerned with linguistics, it has considerable relevance for career counselling.

Coherence is important because life stories are a basic resource for "creating and maintaining personal identity" (p. 98); they "express our sense of self, who we are and how we got that way" (p. 3). However, the coherence of a life story is precarious. As a sequence of oral narratives, a life story is discontinuous (told on different occasions to different people) and open to

varying interpretations and to the emergence of future events that might alter the story. Over time, some stories are apt to be added, deleted, refined, elaborated, and revised. Change is necessary to accommodate new audiences, new events, new values and understandings of a developing point of view. One particularly significant time for story telling is during career counselling. At stake is whether a person will leave counselling with a coherent narrative understanding of life and occupation or whether one leaves with a sense of discontinuity and incoherence. In short, will a person be able to shape a career direction with a sense of self intact?

According to Linde, there are three levels in the creation of coherence. In the first level, the very structure of narrative fosters coherence. From a beginning point to an end, narrative clauses order a sequence of events. The narrative sequence is punctuated by evaluative commentary that conveys the point of a story. To foster coherence, a counsellor might allow (e.g., warmth, acceptance), encourage (show interest), and empower (e.g., lifeline, guided fantasy) a person to tell one's story in a full, rich way, stimulating elaboration by questions, paraphrases, and the like. A counsellor would also help clarify, expand, sharpen and refine evaluative commentary. For example, suppose a person relied primarily upon chronicle, in which evaluative commentary applied to events in isolation, but not to the sequence of events as a whole. To wrench meaning from fragments, a counsellor would have to help grasp the whole sequence and evaluate its meaning.

The second level involves principles of coherence that emerge from the social context of telling a story. A principle is a social criterion for what makes a story an adequate account. First, an adequate account requires appropriate causality, a chain of causality that the audience would accept as a good reason for the movement of events toward a particular occupation. In general, adequate causality involves sufficient agency (e.g., one enters an occupation because of ability, interest, or character traits) and/or temporal richness and depth, showing reasons for an occupational direction that are rooted much earlier in life. Second, an adequate account requires continuity, or at least, discontinuities call for special attention to smooth the account. For example, given two discrepant occupations of a person's work history, the narrator might treat the discrepancy as only apparent, argue that it is only temporary, or show that one led to the other, among other strategies. More substantially, to foster coherence at this level, a counsellor might help a person to recognize personal contribution and agency in shaping a career, and anchor the present and future in a coherent account of the past.

In the final level, an account is supported if it is consistent with cultural systems of coherence. Specific coherence systems include various expert or authoritative systems of beliefs, such as Freudianism, feminism, behaviourism, and the like. The most pervasive system is common sense or what we take to be common sense. A Freudian account might feature early childhood experience while a feminist account might feature gender socialization. These systems of coherence appear in Linde's work like resources. One could use a prominent coherence system to challenge, support or extend an account. Indeed, one could use a coherence system to challenge or support other coherence systems.

Linde's work is a clear, detailed, and engaging examination of the way persons attempt to construct coherent narratives to make sense of their lives and express a consistent meaning. For career counsellors, it is of value in specifying what coherence involves and how it can be cultivated in interviews. One possible implication concerns training and practice. Consider micro-skills training and its variants. One is trained to attend and respond to smaller units such as a spoken sentence or short series of sentences. However, a counsellor is not yet trained to attend and respond to larger units of discourse such as a life story. From the vantage point of oral narrative, micro-skills can be regarded as significantly unguided. Linde's work provides a vivid reminder that communication calls for synthesis in larger units as well as analysis, and provides a well-founded beginning for developing another set of competencies.

Every chapter of her work is rich with possibilities for counselling. For example, to tell one's story establishes a reflexive distance between self as narrator and self as protagonist in the story one narrates. It introduces the potential wisdom of a spectator into the relatively narrow perspective of a participant, a breadth and depth of perspective that is potentially capable of consolidating the identity and value of a person or supporting a revision of one's life story. The distance appears as a latent potential for a variety of constructive uses.

Within career counselling, several scholars have investigated life story as a regnant plot of life. While Linde recognized an inner life story, she did not focus clearly upon the relation of this tacit narrative frame and oral expressions of it. For example, is an oral narrative a mirror of a personal plot, a social reconstruction, or a way to make implicit and dimly sensed meanings explicit and vivid? Regarding these sorts of issues, Linde's work lacks richness and depth, probably because her command of life story is limited primarily to linguistic contributions. However, what Linde does do is focus upon an area of relative neglect. While others have investigated the composition behind diverse expressions, Linde directly investigated expression in a social context. Regarding these expressions, her work provides a rich basis for further investigations and applications, and an important corrective for previous studies of the underlying unity of composition.