

A Person-Centered View of Diversity In South Africa

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Abstract

The work of Carl Rogers and Ruth Sanford in South Africa during the 1980's was continued in the form of person-centered diversity awareness workshops. This article describes action and qualitative research on participants' experiences during and after these workshops. Post workshop interviews indicated that organizational change agents and consultants were exposed to new ways of facilitating learning opportunities which are not based on using classroom techniques and methods, but on their own realness, respect for and ability to put themselves in their client group's frame of reference. The results highlighted South Africa's never-ending journey of healing and the showed the need for South Africans' to integrate race and gender splits, subgroup and individual identities, and denigrated and idealized parts of the self.

Background

Clay (2002) described the South African scenario of dramatic political and social change and transformation as a new area into which humanistic psychologists waded fearlessly, addressing the dangerous situation of facilitating dialogue between opposite factions. This research addressed specifically how the values inherent in the Person-Centered Approach (Rogers 1973; 1975b; 1982) seem to be facilitating growth within and between people.

Carl Rogers and Ruth Sanford visited South Africa in the 1980's. In the midst of racial tension, they presented Person-Centered workshops in large and small group format, had interviews with many influential people and groups, and appeared on television news programs (Rogers & Sanford, 1991; Sanford, 1991). Their work was carried on by various institutions, including the Department of Industrial and Organizational Psychology at the University of South Africa in Pretoria, during times of extreme political and social change and transformation (Cilliers, 1991; 1992a; 1995a; 1995b; 1996a; 1996b; 2000; Cilliers & Terblanche, 2000; Cilliers & Wissing, 1993; Rothmann, Sieberhagen & Cilliers, 1998).

Organizations Taking the Lead

The management of organizational diversity endeavours to facilitate the owning of responsibility for the development of people and groups towards becoming more understanding of differences and similarities in race, ethnicity and gender. This process is filled with a variety of ideas, perspectives, and strong feelings of discomfort, disrespect, intolerance, fear, anger, resentment, and hurt (Abdelsamad & Sauser, 1992; Kenton &

Valentine, 1997; Leach, George, Jackson & LaBella, 1995). In South Africa, mechanistically designed programs addressing racism (Laubscher, 2001; Oakley-Smith & Winter, 2001) and employment equity (Collins, 1995; Richards, 2001) have failed because of underlying assumptions that diversity can be “trained” and because the “instructors” did not understand the dynamic nature of diversity or the relevance and value of experiential learning.

On the other hand, person-centered psychologists in the country who have been exposed to Rogers and Sanford’s ideas believe that diversity issues can be addressed from the psychological well-being perspective that realness, openness, honesty, respect and empathy, lead to a real experiential encounter of the other. Sanford (2002) explained, “it is important to remember we are here not to establish a training program but to facilitate the growth of facilitators and those who would become facilitators in a person-centered way of being” (p. 38). Rogers (1982) indicated that the task of such an endeavour should be thought through and the responsible facilitators should seriously question their motives in doing this kind of work. They should also continuously develop their own selves and their skills in providing a trusting and respectful environment in which participants can experience the freedom to learn. Rogers (in Schneider, Bugental & Pierson, 2001) cautioned that his work should not be trivialized into mere organizational applications. For example, Kramer (1995) illustrated how active listening is easily forced into a tool to enhance productivity (rather than a skill to build relationships) and Cilliers (1991; 1992b; 1995b) illustrated how the concepts of empathy and facilitation are used superficially in training, management, and organizational development.

Diversity

Diversity refers to any mixture of differences and similarities (Thomas, 1996) between individuals and groups, such as race, gender, ethnic or cultural background, age, and sexual orientation (Leach et al, 1995) that contribute to distinct social identities (Arredondo, 1996; Griggs & Louw, 1995). In terms of organizational behavior, diversity refers to every individual variable that affects a task or relationship (Thomas, 1996). This means that diversity has an impact on the products and services developed by the workforce and on personal, interpersonal, and organizational activities (Abdelsamad & Sauser, 1992).

Reece and Brandt (1993) describe primary and secondary dimensions of diversity. Primary diversity dimensions are core individual attributes that cannot be easily changed, such as age, gender, race, physical appearance or traits and sexual orientation. These form self-image and the filters through which a person sees the world. The greater the number of primary differences between people, the more difficult it is to establish trust and mutual respect and the greater the chance of culture clashes that have a devastating effect on interpersonal relationships in the organization.

Secondary diversity dimensions are changeable or modifiable individual attributes, such as communication style, education, marital status, religious beliefs, work experience, and income. They add complexity to an individual’s self-image. The interaction between the primary and secondary dimensions shapes an individual’s values, priorities, and perceptions. Effective relationships among diverse employees in an organization are possible when differences are accepted and valued.

The modern organization faces complex interpersonal challenges (Griggs & Louw, 1995). The implementation of diversity initiatives in an organization typically follows a logical sequence (Reece & Brandt, 1993): education and awareness, capacity building, and culture change. This research focuses specifically on the first two steps in this process, and in so doing, it creates the climate for culture change to be facilitated in larger organizational contexts.

The Workshop in Diversity Awareness

From a person-centered perspective, the exploration of diversity implies a specific quality in relationships (Rogers, 1975a) and the stimulation of the self-actualising tendency (Kirschenbaum & Henderson, 1993; Rogers, 1975b; 1982; Thorne, 1992). This process includes the interaction between facilitator and group, building a trusting relationship and climate, and individual employees' realness and readiness to risk crossing boundaries between self and difference and to address stereotypes. The primary task of the workshop was to provide participants with opportunities for self-insight and the learning of facilitation skills to empower them to act as growth-facilitators in their organizations in various diversity settings. In order to meet its primary task, the workshop consisted of two parts: 1) an experiential part based on encounter group experiences (Rogers, 1975b) structured on a large scale as a community experience and on a small scale a small group experience; and 2) a didactic training part consisting of an integrated facilitation model based on various human potential movement models, such as Carkhuff (2000), Egan (1975), Ivey, Ivey and Simek-Morgan (1997), structured as a role-play in triads.

The basic assumption of the workshop reflected Rogers' (1975b) hypothesis about the three core dimensions of realness, respect, and empathy within the facilitator and the resulting growth and understanding of self within the client. These were operationalized as follows (Cilliers, 1984; 1996b; Cilliers & Wissing, 1993): *Realness* involves the degree of correspondence, congruence and transparency between what a person says or does and what he or she truly feels and means. The facilitator does this in an honest and sincere way without affectations. *Respect* may be defined as a profound recognition and appreciation of and regard for the value of the other person as a unique creature having rights as a free individual. It is manifested in warmth, unconditional positive regard, and in the quality of the attention given to that person. *Empathy* refers to a person's ability to arrive at a conscious and accurate understanding of another person's deepest feelings and intentions in terms of the person's own frame of reference and to explicitly communicate this understanding to the other person.

The workshop, structured over three days, consisted of 21 hours of events and six hours of informal processing during coffee and lunch breaks. The events were:

Community experience. This event consisted of all participants with one facilitator for every 10 participants present. The goal was to provide an accepting and respectful climate and opportunities for participants to create a community of persons with equal rights in which all individual and group voices, experiences, and feelings could be heard, free experience is allowed, and learning can take place. The event simulated a community in which contact is relatively impersonal, trust is difficult to build, there is no fixed agenda, behavior is not interpreted, a wide range of feelings can come to the fore, and acknowledgment of one another is difficult (Brodley, 2002).

Small group experience. This event consisted of a maximum of ten participants with one facilitator. The goal was to provide opportunities for participants to explore individual and group experiences and feelings by telling their stories and relating them to the here-and-now. The event simulated a work group in which contact tends to be relatively personal and trust relatively easy to build.

Role-play in triads. The integrated facilitation model was explained and participants were taught basic attending (listening) and responding (summaries and reflections) skills. Participants were asked to form triads with participants who differ from them in terms of at least three primary diversity dimensions. Each member of the triad got an opportunity to act as a facilitator and a client. This role was based upon Sanford's (2002) description: "I am clearly aware that I am present primarily to facilitate a climate in which the other or others will find it possible to grow toward a full realization of their potential. If I have issues of my own or deep concerns of my own, I will have found or will find ways in which to gain the support and the clarity that I need. I will not put it on the group and I will not put it on my client if I am aware" (pp. 37-38). The third person observed and gave feedback according to the model. The workshop facilitators rotated between the triads, listened to parts of the conversations, and reflected on experiences during the discussion periods.

Reviewing and application of learning. This event consisted of maximum 10 participants and one facilitator. The goal was to provide opportunities for participants to individually process learning during the workshop and explore how to implement their learning in their organization.

Empirical study

The aim of the research was to report on the experiences of and the learning about diversity during and after the Workshop in Diversity Awareness presented from the Person-Centered approach. An action and qualitative research design was used (Camic, Rhodes & Yardley, 2003; De Vos, 2002; Henning, 2004). It was expected that the experience of diversity in person-centered conditions would enhance understanding of the dynamics of difference within organizations in South Africa. The workshop as described above, was presented by the Department of Industrial / Organizational Psychology of the University of South Africa in Pretoria 40 times over the last 17 years. The facilitators were all department staff members, South African registered Psychologists, and had specific training in the person-centered approach with the focus on group processes.

Each workshop averaged 18 attendees for a total of 755 attendees—organizational change agents and consultants from different types of large and small, international and local, government and community operations in South Africa. Males, females, all South African race categories and ages from 21 to 68 were present. A random sample of 86 individuals was selected for interviewing.

A one hour, tape recorded, semi-structured interview was used with the aim of ascertaining the experience of the participant during and after the workshop. It consisted of the following three questions:

- 1) "Please tell me about your experience of the workshop"
- 2) "What have you learned about diversity in South Africa?"

3) “How can you apply the learning in your organization?”

The interviewer encouraged the exploration of answers by reflecting on already given material (Rogers 1975b, 1982).

One month after the workshop, individuals were randomly selected and interviewed. An appointment was made to meet at a place of mutual convenience. Because of distance, six interviews were conducted over the phone and 15 were sent out and received back via e-mail.

The transcribed interviews were analyzed and themes derived. The analysis was done by means of content analysis (Strauss & Corbin, 1990), specifically open coding, a process of breaking down, examining, comparing, conceptualizing, and categorizing data into themes (Camic, Rhodes & Yardley, 2003; Jones, 1996; Kerlinger, 1986). Having the results checked by two psychologists who knew the techniques well ensured trustworthiness.

Results

The participants’ experiences were captured in the following seven themes: 1) learning about new ways to facilitate learning opportunities; 2) from being imprisoned by the past to coming out of prison; 3) sub-groupings formed in accordance with primary and secondary dimensions of diversity; 4) the tension between being part of one’s (ascribed) sub-group and being an individual; 5) the power-play: a means of positioning the different subgroups in the “new dispensation” (the structural and experienced social order in “the new South Africa”); 6) integrating the denigrated parts and the idealized parts within the Self; and 7) a never-ending journey of healing.

Learning New Ways to Facilitate Learning Opportunities

Referring to the experiential and encounter group nature of the workshop, many participants found the lack of the classroom structure difficult to cope with. Some mentioned that they expected instructions by “the experts” about diversity. Instead they were confronted by their own discomfort in a situation that required them to talk about their own immediate experiences. In hindsight they realized that it could not have “worked” in any other way. One participant said, “In our organization we do diversity work by only instructing people about the customs of the different culture groups such as the Xhosa, the Zulu, and the Afrikaners. This now seems so mechanical and means nothing to me any more. I realized that this is because people are not speaking and listening to one another.” Another participant said, “After the so-called diversity workshops in my organization, we have a social event where—this is what I realize now—people stand around only mixing with their own culture groups. There is no integration of groups. The blacks stand together and so do the whites and others. Maybe this type of experiential workshop will stimulate connection between groups and create a sense of mutuality in my organization.” Another participant said, “This type of workshop makes the issues so real and put them in your face. I can see no other way to deal with the realness of diversity to expect changes in the workplace.”

Most participants revealed that their concept of facilitation had changed. One comment was, “In my organization the word is used as a fancy substitute to tell and instruct others—everything except what we have experienced in this workshop.” Another

participant said, "I now realize the power of the facilitator role when I really listen to people and allow them to find their own meaning of what is happening to them as well as to discover and explore the feelings within themselves and between them and others. The possibilities are endless!"

Many participants spoke about how they planned to and had already implemented the Rogerian model of facilitation of diversity awareness in their organizations. Some individuals kept contact with the university facilitators after the workshop to discuss their progress in these endeavors. Some arranged work sessions with these facilitators and with themselves as co-facilitators. The evidence suggested that the workshop participants were able to facilitate insight into and conflict resolution around diversity issues between individuals, within groups and between groups in their organizations. One comment was, "I really struggled the first time I was in the role as designated facilitator in a workshop. The only way I could cope was to be as real about myself and my anxiety to perform as possible. The participants helped me in being congruent!" Most participants mentioned trying very hard to "get it right," to do facilitation in the correct manner. They seemed to be very demanding of themselves and felt that if they cannot live the core dimensions all the time, they have failed. This was also mentioned by Sanford (2002) as typical of one's first exposure to the person-centered approach. One participant said, "I now see the core dimensions as a way of being rather than a recipe to follow. In a way, being congruent is a way to own my feelings of incompetence, and I talk about this with my mentor."

Coming Out of Prison of the Past

The workshop provided participants with the opportunity to look at what they and other individuals and groups are experiencing and carrying. Unresolved past discriminatory experiences are experienced as baggage. One respondent said, "Something that puzzled me is that we keep on living in the past. There is so much baggage that we are carrying from generation to generation and this baggage is actually nurtured, keeping us from working together. Why can't we leave the past in the past? What must happen before we can move on? Maybe that is the major issue with this country in that there have been a lot of things that were not just discrimination. How can we get rid of this baggage and move on?" Another participant said, "Despite rapid change, we carry our stuff from our history with us which makes connection across difference difficult."

There was a realization among participants that the baggage from the past is keeping South Africans from working together and what is needed is to get rid of the baggage and move on. One respondent said, "We need to confront and address unresolved issues from the past. We cannot sweep things of the past under the carpet, we have to deal with it." This was also seen as moving from death (past) to here and now, and the experience was framed as exciting and empowering. The suggestion was made to move away from denial to confronting issues and talk them through.

Of specific importance was the role of the white male, which has changed over the last few years. Because they collectively represented the previous apartheid regime and therefore the shame of the past, white males were pushed aside, felt disempowered, disconnected, and were often not heard by others. During the interviews done within the last two years, they appeared significantly more involved. More evidence is that there was an increase in white males attending the workshops, because they were now appointed in

organizations in positions responsible for diversity projects. (Previously the tendency was to appoint black people to manage diversity programs in organizations, “so that they can take care of their own issues.”) The white males reported on their sense of urgency and enthusiasm about this “one in a life-time“ and “eye-opening” experience as if this is a last opportunity to work on reparation. They seemed to feel quite present and “free,” aware of themselves (using “I” and “me”) as well as making connections with most other racial groups. It was hypothesized that the white male has made a turnaround from an insignificant outsider, to taking up his role as an insignificant part of the South African social system.

White males described a conflict between two roles. The first could be called an “inside” role that related to their subjective, sometimes self-obsessed, experience as an individual, which was sometimes filled with pain, depression, and exclusion. In this role they were aware of the influences from the past and attended to content in discussions about what the “system is expecting from you.” Then, as if some sort of “coming out of prison” happened, a second role came to the fore that could be described as an “outside” role which related to becoming aware of choices in participation, leading to looking more objectively to processes, being aware of what is happening in the system with other people and what their expectations were. This was done by becoming aware of deeper feelings and learning how to accept and process them. One participant reported using friendliness to stay in control and gain acceptance at the cost of increased loneliness. Another reported that he “came out” as more “un-individualistic,” aware of and exploring personal and organizational boundaries, which served as a coping mechanism with depression. It was hypothesized that the white male is repositioning himself through a process of introspection and adapting his role to being someone who wants to connect and be involved in meaningful relationships, while at the same time still experiencing punishment, frustration, confusion, and anger. It seemed that the white man is building new connections. One respondent said, “I think it would be startling to link with other people without their preconceived ideas, scripts and fantasies.” There was a realization that this repositioning can only take place if the white male understands his own and other’s feelings and behaviour.

The above intrapersonal conflict in the white males also played out in an interpersonal conflict. Because of limited resources in many organizations, white males seemed to react with more hostility toward other white males than before. One participant said, “I became aware of how other white males responded to my self-disclosure, how skeptical and competing they were, and then they would tell their story to be more spectacular than mine!”

Sub-Groupings with Primary and Secondary Dimensions of Diversity

Participants identified sub-groupings using the primary dimensions of race and gender, highlighting obstacles to making real connections across these differences. One participant said, “At the start, the race issue was prominent, but it seemed to be getting solved as we moved along. What worried me is that the gender issue—particularly the women have a lot of problems with it still. It maybe that race was the most important issue for the group as a whole to address and it was addressed first, and then after that was sorted out to move onto other issues such as gender diversity.” Another participant

said, “We group together whites, blacks, and females.” Following are some of the distinctive characteristics of each sub-group.

The black male. The older males seemed to act on behalf of the struggle of the past. They were often very prominent at the beginning of the workshop and became more silent as time went on, as if they had become tired. They seemed to reflect the new stability in the country where “just being there” may be enough. They were proud of being Africans, a title not to be shared with whites. The younger black males were experienced as active and acting powerfully and assertively, with a lot of competition playing out between them.

The black female. The older females often acted as mother figures to the group. The younger ones saw their elders as role models who looked after them during difficult times. One of the older females expressed anger at both black and white males for the past oppression—the black domestically and the white politically. The younger females were more silent than the younger males, but seemed to be and verbalized being empowered. One expressed her need to take advantage of all possible opportunities and in so doing, she excluded whites. They “must stay out of my way.”

The colored male. The older male seemed to use his energy to network with everybody in terms of future job opportunities. This anxiety and future orientation made it difficult for him to be present in the here-and-now. He found himself in the middle and pulled by both sides (black and white). One participant said, “I don’t represent all the coloreds, but I feel pulled to act on behalf of all coloreds. The same happened with the Indians.”

The colored female. They seemed to have quite a difficult time within the new structures of the country. They referred to “struggling to find all my parts,” and felt rejected based on the color of their skin. One participant reported on how childhood memories of being rejected as a colored person were evoked in this experience, “The workshop once again made me aware of how I am seen by others and that awakened a lot of feelings inside me. The most important was that childhood rejection of being colored. It made me so angry, probably the most angry that I was in my entire life.”

The Indian male. Very few attended the workshops. During the last three years, two participants attended and one was interviewed. He referred to his difficult position of being seen as on the margins, “minding his own business” (as in managing a family business) and trying to move out among people representing differences with whom he never had collegial relationship.

The Indian female. They seem to be caught up between tradition and the new demands to be powerful and part of the new dynamic society. They expressed their anger and pain of not belonging or being acceptable. They were not seen as being black enough in the “new South Africa.” One participant said, “From day one I was told that I am not black. I lived my whole life knowing that I am black.” The workshop offered her the opportunity to firstly vent her intense feelings and secondly to understand more about the diversity dynamics amongst individuals and races.

The white male. Historically they were in power and busy with the management of the country, which kept them away from contact with other races. This could explain their inability to make contact with others in the “new South Africa.” They reported feeling disempowered, often not heard by others, and operating from the periphery. One participant said, “At a certain time during the workshop I was really down, and it felt as if

there is no future for white men in the country.” Some reported being pushed into offices at work which are out of reach from others and which makes contact difficult.

The white female. They had difficulty adapting to the new role of blacks. Historically they had contact with black men as “garden boys” and females as “house maids.” Both were now their colleagues and sometimes their managers. They expressed disillusionment and anger toward white males for allowing the discrimination of the past. One participant said, “Interesting for me was the anger I experienced against the white males who with their big mouths sat in the group and didn’t say a thing. During tea break and lunch they have a lot to say, but when they are back in the group, they are silent. It is as if they are afraid of the black males.” In reaction, the females try to link with the black males who were accepting the reaching out on one level, but also rejecting on another level, leading to confusion for the female.

Working with all race groups and both genders, it happened on a couple of occasions, that the powerful black males kept quiet for long, the white females would take a stand, followed by the black (including the Indian) females, and when the discussion were almost exhausted, the black males would enter in a powerful manner and take over the discussion, taking about their past struggles. In terms of gender, some participants reported that the workshop was too short to attend to unresolved conflicts among women. One participant said, “My illusion of women totally exploded into bits and pieces. I thought this would be a group where we all share the same things, feelings and warmth. It was nice in the beginning but then the pretense disappeared. . . . The thing of women being warm and nurturing disappeared.” The experience of participants that the diversity around race is worked with more than that with gender could be interpreted as using the one to cover up the other. One participant expressed this complexity, “I realized that this thing of diversity is more complex. You have conflict between different parties, say men and women, and it doesn’t matter what color they are, it doesn’t matter what their conflict is because they are women and men, and so it is with other diversities as well.”

It is proposed here that the human need to split the world into white and black, male and female, and so forth make real connections difficult and leads to distrust between subgroups. One female participant said, “What I experienced was that men stood together and the women were to an extent separated. There was also little conflict amongst the men but quite a lot between the women.” The women seemed to experience a lot of conflict and also expressed their experiences of separateness more than the men. About the assumptions between subgroups, one participant said, “What I learned is that people in South Africa especially from different race groups have assumptions about one another. Some of them are correct but some are not true. This causes that we misinterpret each other, which widens the gap between people.”

Tension Being Part of One’s (Ascribed) Sub-Grouping and Being an Individual

It appears that participants oscillated between seeing each person uniquely and as a member of a group. One participant said, “. . . how difficult it is to be an individual, but also to be part of a group.” Being part of a particular sub-grouping has certain advantages. Perceived group membership allows for the formation of an identity. By clinging to one’s perceived subgroup, one’s identity and comfort zone is established. One participant said,

“So what one can learn is the issue of grouping together, people find safety in a group whether it is on the basis of color of being a woman or a man.”

Being part of a subgroup also had particular consequences for individuals. It appeared that individuals were expected to support subgroups that form with regards to primary diversity dimensions (race and gender) and refusing to do so led to anger from the entire group against the individual. One participant said, “The community meetings showed me that it is normal for people to group together according to certain characteristics. The funny thing is that these groups expect the rest of the group to back them up. At one stage the coloreds and Indians were extremely cross with me because I did not back them up when they wanted me to.” During the community meetings (representing the larger society) some participants experienced a push toward joining their own people (sub-grouping). One participant said, “they said go back to your people.” The experience was that the person is not allowed to decide where he or she belongs—the individual’s uniqueness was challenged or ignored due to an assigned sub-grouping based on one primary diversity characteristic. It was also as if there was a particular hierarchy that could influence a person’s group membership at any give time.

Another consequence of belonging to a sub-grouping could be as one participant said, “Sub-groupings symbolize things to other people. Like I would symbolize a young black male and people react to you according to what you symbolize.” Another white woman said, “I never realized to what extent I am playing a role, and that people are reacting to the role and not to me. . . I did not realize till that last day when it came out in the small group that they were reacting to the white bitch and actually telling the white bitch and not me. That helped me to understand why I was being rejected the whole time—even though I thought that I was working very hard.”

The fact that one is judged and treated according to group membership created anger within some participants. One participant said, “The idea that people relate to you according to what you represent and the color of your skin totally pissed me off.” It seemed that participants oscillated between seeing other participants as individuals and experiencing the same participants in terms of their particular group membership with its concomitant stereotypes. One participant said, “I made a close connection in the small group with a black woman and I think I became dependent on her. Then in the next community session she sided with the black group and that floored me and I reacted on behalf of my white group which she then could not understand.”

Connections amongst individuals may have been negatively influenced by their group membership, especially their race group membership. Group membership could also have created a tension within individuals with regard to being part of a sub-group and being an individual. One participant, a black man, said, “What I have learned was that I was brought up approaching people, the world as a collective. We are part of the collective trying to achieve certain objectives. What I have learned is more the individual stance—to talk for myself. It was very difficult for me to see myself apart from the collective, and it created a barrier for some time. As the workshop continued it became easier and I was surprised that sometimes my ideas and feelings differed from those in my reference group. But tension remained between what I experienced and that of my reference group.” It seemed that this participant is moving from being part of a collective to being an individual, in other words finding his own identity, which includes both a group, and an individual identity.

The Power-Play—Positioning the Different Subgroups in the New South Africa

Participants referred to power-plays among the racial groups. These seemed to be struggles to find meaningful positions above others so that one's voice could be heard and one could feel important. The power-play appeared to serve the purpose of establishing the new positions of the different racial groups within the country. One participant mentioned that the blacks and whites were the power players, while coloreds and Indians formed the background. On the other hand one participant said that it felt as if he was in the middle and involved in power a struggle, while others (probably blacks and whites) wanted to see where he will fit in. One participant said, "It felt like I am in the middle. If I attend to one side, the other would ask—when are you going to listen to us again? Precisely the same happened when I went to the other side. It was like a power struggle to see where I fit in." The idea of "where I will fit in" appeared to refer to whether he would side with white people or with black people. The negotiation and competition around where the colored man will fit in suggest that he belongs within the new South Africa. However, his exact position must still be negotiated. Being in the middle probably illustrates how this participant (a colored man) has to struggle with other participants' stereotypes of him.

Another purpose of the power-play related to fighting for belonging within the new South Africa—the question is not what is the group's position, but rather, does the particular subgroup belong within the new South Africa. One white woman participant said about an Indian woman, "It was as if she was struggling to find a place for herself in South Africa. . . . It was like she didn't have a place in the country. . . . It is as if she is carrying this on behalf of her group." Perhaps this fight for belonging is far wider than having a place in the new South Africa. It may be about emotional belonging in a country with a history of outcasts—from Europe, the Great Trek, the Anglo Boer War, slavery, missionary work, and apartheid. The part of the rejected one may have become an element within the South African psyche.

The power-play also provoked a competition for scarce emotional resources, in particular the space to listen to and hear the pain of others. Within most of the workshops, it seemed imperative to first focus on the pain of black people. Then, it appeared difficult for participants to listen to the pain of an Indian woman. It also appeared difficult for black people to listen to the pain of any of the others. One participant said, "Indians and coloreds rejected by both black and white. Thus, they are in a difficult position—things have changed but are still the same, they only have a new boss."

This comment highlighted how, within South African society, there is a need for oppressing the other. This could be interpreted as the South African need to separate into the oppressed and the oppressor. Whites had been the oppressors in the past, and now black people are the oppressors. Indians and coloreds remain the oppressed, somehow caught in the middle. This served as evidence of how a primary dimension of diversity, in this case race, is used to separate the world into the oppressed and the oppressor.

In the separation of the oppressed and the oppressor, there seemed to be an assumption that the oppressor is the idealized one, while the oppressor is really the rejected one. In collective terms, it is suggested that race groups are split into idealized parts of the self and rejected parts of the country-as-a-whole. The rejected part is

stereotyped as the colored and Indian participants. This gives evidence of the experience of pain in all sections of the society and that, as one participant mentioned, "Things have changed, but are still the same."

Integrating Denigrated and Idealized Parts within the Self

Recognizing the disowned and denigrated parts of oneself seemed to have been an overwhelming and unpleasant experience for many participants. Some participants considered this to be necessary for their own development and actualization, while others mentioned the fear of "going mad" in the turmoil of trying to make sense out of it all. One respondent said, "The workshop symbolize Eva to me. A book I read of Eva, a child of a Hottentot and a Dutch minister. Eva was a mix and finally lost her mind because it was so difficult for her to live in two worlds. I saw her everywhere, this struggle to live and cope in different worlds." The participants seemed to suggest the process of firstly recognizing and then integrating the different parts of the self, such as the struggle to live and to cope with the different worlds within. Perhaps these different parts referred to the denigrated and the idealized parts within the psyche.

Although the process of healing was recognized, some participants referred to how hard it is to ask for forgiveness. One participant said, "A lot of emphasis was put on saying sorry. I couldn't understand it and no one could tell me what I did wrong. You know one session I sat and I realized that we were part of the system. We really discriminated against nonwhites, and that was a big learning for me. The whole thing of saying sorry for what has happened."

This statement by a white person apologizing for the past, was about discrimination against blacks and also about connecting more fully to one's own group. Apologizing was about being accountable to the other for one's group membership. Perhaps it was also about taking responsibility for the unpleasant, denigrated parts of the self that one has ascribed to one's own group. For example, it was not only the white *group* who had discriminated, it was the white *person* that has discriminated and now realizes this. This process also addressed the needs of black people. One black male participant said that he experienced anger and frustration with others' denial of their responsibility with regards to apartheid. He felt a need that those who were considered "guilty" should be accountable for the crimes of apartheid.

A Never-Ending Journey of Healing

It seemed that there was a need for creating and recreating guidelines of interaction between white and black, male and female, young and old, and even employee and manager. One participant said, "What came out is the level of anger that still exists. That is so powerful and overwhelming. The workshop provided an opportunity to go back to that anger and that was very astonishing."

It appeared that the workshop provided an opportunity and a trusting environment for the exploration of anger, hurt, and pain over issues of diversity. One participant said, "What was good is that although I was experiencing these emotions, we could work through it and laugh together about things." One participant said, "The more we as a society, face these emotions, anger, the more we can work through it."

This resolution of imprisoning baggage through recognizing, processing, and owning feelings seemed to be an unknown process for most South Africans. A way of approaching this may be as one participant said, "it is powerful to realize what we represent, and the role that we play regarding what we represent." Another way was to own up to responsibility. As one participant said, "I realized that people must take your part for what happened and the other person must also take their part for what happened." This responsibility included seeing and listening beyond stereotypes, as one participant said, "I realized that things aren't about race and religion. In the end it goes back to the individual."

A few participants proposed that issues from the past and working across differences can be addressed by nurturing the intimacy, love, respect, and trust with those who appear to be different. One participant said, "If we could just love people, just love people, but something happens to it." Another participant said, "It is about connection and trust. It is not about sameness and otherness. It is not about trying to find a common ground or middle path. The joy is in being diverse and to trust other people to live out their differences. And the funny thing is that this made me more tolerant toward my own group as well as to other groups." It seemed that in linking with others and nurturing intimacy across difference, diversity could be celebrated, and in celebrating and exploring diversity with all its complexities, a real connection could be made with individuals from the other sub-groupings, as well as with individuals from one's own group.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The evidence suggested that some participants have started experimenting successfully with this model of facilitation. The university department is keeping contact with many of them, and it can be reported that the range and quality of inputs in organizations are good.

The interviews revealed that the workshop was a meaningful yet difficult realization of the intensity of diversity issues in the country. The most profound realization was that if these issues are not talked about and the accompanying feelings not expressed and processed, the individual, organizations, and maybe also the nation will get ill. The workshop participants' efforts to "undo" stereotyped perceptions and their efforts at reparation, placed them on a journey of healing. It seemed clear that without this difficult confrontation with the owned perceptions and feelings, the participants would not have become aware of the manifesting issues, let alone own their own part in it.

This research lead to the formulation of the following hypothesis: Diversity and its accompanying behavior as illustrated in the research described here can best be studied and understood when facilitated from a caring, trusting, respectful, and experiential paradigm, such as the person-centered approach. It is recommended that organizations become more aware of diversity and its accompanying experiences, perceptions and feelings and that this research model be evaluated in rural communities in South Africa.

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