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Articles

Attending to Clients' Psychological Needs During Career Construction Counseling

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Attending to clients' psychological needs during career counseling merits more attention in career theory and practice. We describe how the elaboration of clients' needs during career construction counseling supports clients' problem formulation. After reviewing the literature on the psychology of needs, we present and illustrate an intervention strategy with a case example. Counseling vignettes from the initial counseling task of problem formulation illustrate how to facilitate clients' narrative symbolization of their emotional experiences and associated needs. We explain how this strategy contributes to deepening clients' understanding of their problems and facilitates both the rewriting of a career narrative and the construction of new career plans. Analysis of the possibilities and limits of this practice merits attention in career counseling process research.

Keywords: needs, career construction counseling, problem formulation, career counseling process, counseling tasks

The concept of needs applied to human experience usually refers to a lack of some gratification, either physiological (e.g., hunger, thirst; Hull, 1943; Maslow, 1954) or psychological (e.g., affect, recognition; Dawis, 2002; Savickas, 1995). The concept of psychological needs is central to understanding human motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Maslow, 1968; McAdams, 2008; Murray, 1938) because it addresses the question of why people do what they do. This is a familiar question for career counselors, guiding their efforts to support people in understanding why they make choices and design their lives in the way they do. In fact, clients' elaboration of their needs allows them to construct a sense of purpose and intentionality (Gonçalves et al., 2009; White & Epston, 1990). From the 1950s through the 1970s, many practitioners used a test battery to measure the motivational constructs of needs,

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values, and interests. According to Rounds and Armstrong (2014), the most popular measures of needs and values were the Edwards Personal Preference Schedule (Edwards, 1954) and the Study of Values (Allport & Vernon, 1931; Allport et al., 1970). With the popularity of Holland's vocational typology that subsumes the three motivational constructs in descriptions of vocational personalities and their operational definition in the Self-Directed Search, the use of separate inventories has languished (Gottfredson, 2002).

Understanding clients' psychological needs has garnered increased attention with the advent of the psychology of working framework (Blustein, 2006) and in counseling with narrative approaches to career construction (Hartung, 2013). In particular, career construction counseling (CCC; Savickas, 2019) highlights clients' needs as a core dimension to explain both the narrative elaboration of life experiences and the construction of career plans (Savickas, 1995). Therefore, we explain the importance of helping clients to explore their needs during the initial phase of CCC, especially as they focus on formulation of career problems. In so doing, we add to previous CCC conceptualizations wherein the narrative elaboration on needs is emphasized in the second phase of the intervention, during the task of rewriting the life narrative. Our contribution reinforces clients' exploration and elaboration of their needs as part of career counseling in general.

First, we present the concept of needs in both personality psychology and vocational psychology. Second, we present CCC and the perspective from which needs are evoked and elaborated in this practice. Then, we propose a new strategy with which counselors may help clients formulate their problems and clarify underlying needs as well as use examples from an illustrative case study in CCC. Finally, we discuss the case and the implications for future studies.

Needs in Psychology

The concept of needs is one of the dimensions to be considered regarding the sources of human motivation, along with cognitions, emotions, and external events (Reeve, 2001). Understanding human motivation was a major concern for different psychological theories during the first half of the 20th century, such as psychoanalysis, humanism, behaviorism, individual psychology, and logotherapy. Each theory explained what animates human behavior from a specific perspective. For example, Freud (1920/1961) emphasized intrapersonal conflict in searching for pleasure, avoiding anxiety, and dealing with reality constraints. Maslow (1954) and Rogers (1961) concentrated on self-actualization. Skinner (1953) focused on being regulated by external contingencies. Adler (1931/1998) highlighted the search for mastery and overcoming inferiority feelings. Frankl (1946/2006) emphasized the search for meaning in life. This diversity of theoretical perspectives presents a challenge when it comes to developing an integrative way to conceive of human motivation and personality.

The integrative perspective of personality elaborated by McAdams and Pals (2006) helps to describe how motivation and needs have been conceptualized in different theories of psychological functioning. Their integrative perspective proposes three layers of psychological individual-

ity: (a) dispositional traits, (b) characteristic adaptations, and (c) autobiographical narratives. These three layers are the result of influences from both the evolutionary process and the individual's cultural and social context. The first layer, more stable and closer to human biology, describes universal characteristics such as temperament and personality traits. The second layer, social-cognitive and less stable, refers to motivational dimensions of personality, such as goals, values, and coping strategies. It is in this second layer that McAdams and Pals situated psychological needs as motives. The third layer, the most flexible and culturally shaped, refers to humans' ability to compose and share life narratives that construct a narrative identity (McAdams & Pals, 2006).

Basic physiological and psychological needs are the product of the process of human evolution, presenting a strong biological imprint (McAdams & Pals, 2006). From the evolutionary perspective, survival and reproduction constitute the most basic and universal needs. In a similar vein, Hull (1943) and Maslow (1954) considered how physiological and safety needs shape human behavior. Still using a logic of universal needs, but postulating about psychological innate needs, Maslow (1954) posited about love, esteem, and self-actualization needs, whereas Deci and Ryan (2000) considered relatedness, autonomy, and competence basic psychological needs. From these perspectives, there is an organismic tendency toward self-actualization, and need fulfillment fosters well-being and development. However, it is expected that individuals each manifest these central needs in different ways, depending on the relational and cultural context in which they move (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Maslow, 1954).

In the second layer, different theories defined needs as motives directing human action. Murray (1938) and McClelland (1980), for example, proposed that individuals differ regarding what motivates them; there is no universal. Needs are viewed as forces that energize behavior, not necessarily in positive directions as is the case in aggression. Murray generated a list of 20 psychogenic needs, such as achievement, affiliation, dominance, aggression, order, and autonomy, which Edwards (1954) measured in his inventory. McClelland (1987) developed a model with the main motives of achievement, power, affiliation, and intimacy. He also considered avoidance motives, such as anxiety avoidance, forces that energize behavior. More recent research has addressed implicit motives of power, achievement, and affiliation (Schultheiss & Brunstein, 2010; Steinmann et al., 2015). All these perspectives acknowledge that contexts and historical times shape motivation, because they create different opportunities for and constraints upon need satisfaction.

In the third layer, McAdams and Pals (2006) addressed needs as idiographic meanings that individuals ascribe to what they feel they lack, which in turn moves them in the direction of certain goals. Reflection enables the (re)construction of one's needs through a coherent narrative about some incomplete past experiences that preoccupy the individual in the present and directs her or his attention to find an occupational solution in the future (Savickas, 2013, 2014). CCC views needs elaboration as a starting point for a thematic thread in a person's narrative about movement in life. During a Career Construction Interview (Savickas, 2019), practitioners listen for stories that represent clients' motives. They listen especially for representations of needs in early recollections,

for values in role models, and for interests in preferred television shows and websites. Narrating one's life story facilitates the construction of thematic meaning that connects experience across the past, present, and future. Through narrating one's life story in an integrative way, a person organizes prior events around life themes—that is, central preoccupations and how a person looks to solve them (Csikszentmihalyi & Beattie, 1979). In this third layer, needs elaboration is understood as a process that connects self and culture, in that the cultural scripts influence how people may construct plots to their own stories in a way that is individually and socially meaningful.

In summary, a person is driven by many needs that range from basic physiological and psychological requirements common to all human beings to a variety of specific motives. Needs are symbolized narratively through idiosyncratic meanings and themes that continue throughout life. In all three layers, needs relate to a person's search for fulfillment, be it by the drive for physiological and safety satisfactions, search for gratification of motives in social roles, or quest for integrity and meaning in life.

Needs in Career Psychology

Different career theorists have explained how needs relate to vocational behavior and career development. To facilitate understanding of needs conceptualization in career psychology, we will group the different approaches using the three layers noted above, ranging from universality to singularity.

From a universal and basic needs perspective, Anne Roe (1956), grounded by Maslow's (1954) needs theory and Freudian psychoanalysis, posited that the search for need satisfaction and tension release is central to explaining human motivation. Roe asserted that childhood experiences in the family are critical to fulfill a person's needs and shape the development of interests. Still, from a Freudian psychoanalytic perspective, Bordin et al. (1963) considered the core role of intrapersonal conflicts in human functioning to explain vocational behavior. Intrapersonal conflicts were understood as underpinning difficulties in career decision-making, whereas conflict resolution implied helping clients find occupations that best gratified their needs and impulses. The psychology of working theory (Duffy et al., 2016) also considers needs as a core and universal nutriment of human functioning, yet from a different perspective, inspired by self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000). In this framework, needs are seen as antecedents of work fulfillment and well-being. According to the psychology of working theory, decent work should allow people to satisfy their survival, social connection, and self-determination needs.

From the perspective of needs as adaptation processes, the person-environment fit approach to vocational behavior (Dawis & Lofquist, 1984) positioned needs as a core concept to explain the process of work adjustment. The theory proposes that workers have needs that can be satisfied in the work context whereby work adjustment results from (but not only from) a correspondence between personal needs and work environment. This process is dynamic because personal (e.g., needs) and environmental characteristics can change, and, therefore, continuous efforts are required to reestablish the adjustment and, con-

sequently, improve work satisfaction. In turn, the life-span, life-space theory of career development (Super, 1990) conceptualized needs as a personality characteristic, such as values, interests, and self-concepts. In this framework, satisfaction in life and work is dependent on the degree to which an "individual finds adequate outlets for abilities, needs, values, interests, personality traits and self-concepts" (Super, 1990, p. 208). In explaining personal characteristics related to career development, Super viewed the role of needs as more fundamental than values, which are generalized interests. The last project that Super worked on at the end of his career was a model that he called the "needs-values-interest" model (Dagley & Super, 1990).

The relevance of working with people's narratives to understand motivational constructs in an idiosyncratic way is present in Super's (1985) work. Savickas (1995, 2003) elaborated on this singularity and narrative perspective in his approach to the role of needs in narrative organization of personal experiences. Needs were conceptualized as what individuals feel they lack, which in turn moves them to seek experiences that make them feel more secure. That is, needs are viewed as creating the tension that prompts movement in directions to secure what is missing (Savickas, 1995, 2013). If needs are understood as tension, then values can be associated with intention, because values are relatively stable goals and global directions that allow needs satisfaction in social context. From this perspective, values can be seen as directing individuals toward their goals, and interests may be thought of as what captures attention, as roads to achieve their goals and fulfill their needs (Cardoso, 2012; Massoudi et al., 2018; Savickas, 2014). In narrative terms, the close interaction among needs, values, and interests structure life-theme dynamics that move the person from tension to intention to attention and, in due course, extension into the occupational environment. The concept of life themes is also present in other narrative approaches to career counseling, such as the storied approach (Brott, 2001), the Career Systems Interview (McIlveen, 2015), narrative career counseling (Cochran, 1997), and Life Career Assessment (Gysbers et al., 2009). The centrality of the life-themes concept in narrative approaches to career counseling points to the importance of deepening our understanding of the role played by needs in CCC.

CCC

CCC (Savickas, 2019) is a narrative approach that aims to facilitate the (re)construction of clients' career narratives and, consequently, career decision-making and life designing. In the process of (re)writing the career story, clients' narrative elaboration of their needs, values, and interests is fundamental to integrating self-construction dynamics (Cardoso, 2012) into career construction. The self-making process requires that counselors facilitate clients' connecting their needs, values, interests, and goals. Fundamentally, this involves integrating the remembered past, experienced present, and anticipated future life episodes into a continuous and coherent career narrative that enhances self-organization. This process enables career plans to emerge as new possibilities for self-construction (Savickas, 2011).

CCC evolves throughout three phases, each one characterized by specific counseling tasks. In Phase 1, clients' problem formulation is

the first counseling task. The resolution of this counseling task fosters the first movements of clients' distancing from their own problems. In CCC, problem formulation prompts clients to move from an internal to an external perspective from which they can reassess events and emotions. The move to an external perspective enables clients to reflect on their concerns by creating distance between the self who is considering an experience and the self who actually experienced it. The process of self-distancing from problems and concerns has continuity during the next counseling task involving supporting the exploration of career constructs (e.g., needs, aptitudes, interests, goals). This task is facilitated by using the Career Construction Interview (Savickas, 2019), a semistructured sequence of questions in which counselors inquire about five topics to evoke life episodes: (a) childhood role models to explore clients' values; (b) favorite TV shows, magazines, and websites to assess manifest interests; (c) current favorite story from a book or movie to facilitate narrative elaboration of plots and themes that can be of help in understanding clients' intuition about possible solutions; (d) favorite motto or saying to articulate next moves in enacting a solution; and (e) early recollections to explore clients' perspectives on, preoccupations with, and needs regarding their current career issues (Savickas, 2019). The evocation of clients' self-constructing episodes, as well as the exploration of career constructs emerging throughout this process, allows clients to continue the process of distancing from career problems, that is, to solve the third counseling task of this phase (Cardoso et al., 2019).

Phase 2 of CCC begins with support of the reconstruction of career micronarratives into a macronarrative. In this counseling task, counselors support clients in exploring meanings contained in life episodes previously narrated. In this process, clients elaborate on life themes, allowing them to link life episodes into a continuous and coherent career story. This process eases the resolution of the next counseling tasks of this phase: moving to a new perspective and making career plans (Cardoso et al., 2019).

In Phase 3, counseling tasks involve the revision of actions intended to implement career plans, facilitating clients' reconceptualization of their changes, and encouraging action in the real world. CCC concludes as clients consolidate their transformation through a metareflexive process in which they elaborate on the changes achieved and the factors underpinning such changes (Cardoso et al., 2019).

Needs Evocation and Elaboration in CCC

On the basis of both the nature of the CCC tasks and the conception of life themes described, it is possible to assert that clients' needs are usually explored in the first phase of CCC, during the exploration of career constructs, and, mainly, in the second phase when counselors support clients in rewriting the career macronarrative. Indeed, fostering the integration of life episodes into a career story requires that clients elaborate on the relationships among needs, values, interests, and goals—usually prompted by counselors during this counseling task. Nevertheless, clients' needs might also be evoked and elaborated during problem formulation and, thus, to deepen narrative elaboration of self-experience and, in the second phase of CCC, to facilitate the

identification of life themes and rewriting of the career macronarrative. Moreover, Savickas (2015) made practical suggestions to facilitate clients' elaboration on their career problems that pave the way toward putting evocation and elaboration of clients' needs in the service of both the task of problem formulation and that of reconstruction of clients' grand narrative of their career.

Considering the relevance of problem formulation to career counseling outcomes (Cardoso & Sales, 2019), and that the work of facilitating needs clarification during the initial phase of career counseling has already been suggested but was not examined in detail, we further elaborate this topic. Following Savickas (2015), in the approach we are proposing, we emphasize that the evocation of emotions associated with problematic situations is critical to foster clients' needs awareness.

The fields of neuroscience (Damásio, 2017) and psychotherapy (Conceição & Vasco, 2005; Greenberg et al., 1993) have recognized the relationship between emotions and needs. Usually, positive emotions, such as joy, reveal a situation in which a person's needs were met in contextual opportunities. In contrast, negative emotions, such as sadness and shame, suggest that some needs were not fulfilled in someone's environment (Greenberg et al., 1993). The close relation between emotional experience and personal needs suggests the importance of asking clients to get in contact with their emotional experience moment by moment in CCC, in particular, and in career counseling, in general. The following case exemplifies the usefulness of helping clients to formulate their problems by evoking unmet needs through the symbolization of emotional experiences.

Case Example

Counselor and Client

The counselor (the first author) was a Brazilian White woman, holding a PhD in psychology and career counseling, with more than 10 years of experience as a career counselor and supervisor of graduate and undergraduate psychology students at a university career development and counseling center. The client, Barbara (a pseudonym), was a 28-year-old Brazilian Black woman who was feeling dissatisfied with her job as an administrative assistant. She was taking a technical course in administration that was also not satisfying. Barbara sought career counseling to determine how she could make a transition to achieve a more satisfying career and life. She was worried about being almost 30 years old and not feeling that she had a direction in life.

Intervention

Barbara participated in four weekly 1-hour CCC sessions, during 4 consecutive weeks, at a university career center as part of a career counseling process research project. The research project was approved by the Research Ethics Committee of the Institute of Psychology of the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul and followed the ethical guidelines of the American Psychological Association. The participant gave her written informed consent. The session transcripts were translated from Portuguese to English by one translator and revised by a second

translator, both of whom were fluent in Portuguese and English. The vignettes that follow describe the intervention throughout the three stages of the process. The counseling task of supporting problem formulation is described to a greater extent than are the other stages to clarify how the counselor helped the client to narratively elaborate her needs through the symbolization of emotional experiences. The following vignettes describe how the awareness of needs developed during problem formulation was used to define the life theme, rewrite the life history, and coconstruct new career plans.

Session 1: Evoking Needs During Problem Formulation

To facilitate Barbara's problem formulation, the counselor used the Personal Questionnaire (Elliott et al., 1999) as a personalized outcome measure. The client was asked to make a summary about her main problems and concerns, formulating short sentences to address problems and rating each problem regarding the degree of concern she experienced on a 7-point scale (1 = *not at all*, 2 = *very little*, 3 = *little*, 4 = *moderately*, 5 = *considerably*, 6 = *very considerably*, 7 = *maximum possible*). This procedure was conducted after the client and counselor had freely discussed what moved Barbara to seek career counseling. As exemplified in the following vignette, after the dialogue on career problems, the counselor invited the client to list her major problems using the Personal Questionnaire:

Counselor: Barbara, let's try to write down the main concerns that bring you to career counseling now. This will help us to make it clear what you seek and to have a record of this beginning point. Would you agree to do that? [process directing]

Barbara: Sure. The first problem is that I am dissatisfied with my work. . . . Besides, I am undecided about what I want for my career. . . . I feel anxious because I would like to be more independent from my family. I am also worried about financial insecurity when I think of making a transition.

The counselor wrote down these four problems using Barbara's words and asked her to score each one according to the degree of discomfort she experienced. Her rating was a 7 for both "dissatisfaction with work" and "indecision about which career path to follow." The other problems worried her a little less (she rated them a 5). Next, the counselor and client began a deeper exploration of the most poignant career issues mentioned. The task was carried out in an experiential mode to facilitate a fine-grain analysis of self-experience. The experiential process begins when the counselor suggests the client reevoke an event or situation in which the problem under analysis occurred and describe it as vividly as possible. The contact with such experiences is aimed toward facilitating the emergence of the wholeness of self-experience in that episode and, thus, toward easing contact with the emotions included. As the description of these episodes evolved, the counselor asked the client to focus on the emotions experienced and the meanings contained in those emotions. The following example is illustrative:

Counselor: You feel dissatisfied with your work, and this seems to be one of the major problems now, right?
Barbara: Yes.
Counselor: Can you remember situations in your job when you felt particularly dissatisfied? [empathic exploration]
Barbara: Hmm . . . when I do activities that I've already mastered, it's always the same. When I am doing payrolls, I get stressed 'cause I'm not very thorough. . . . I work most of the time alone, I think this also makes me feel bad.
Counselor: Uh-huh. How do you feel in these situations at work? [exploratory question]
Barbara: Bored, frustrated . . . it seems like time doesn't pass.
Counselor: I see. If this boredom and frustration could speak, what would they say about what you miss the most? [exploratory question to deepen emotional experiencing and point to unmet needs]
Barbara: I miss the movement, seeing people.
Counselor: You miss moving, being with people . . . what else? [empathic understanding and exploration]
Barbara: Many times I propose things to improve our work and I am not heard by my boss. I think I also miss recognition.
Counselor: Yes, you also miss recognition of your value as someone who helps people. [empathic understanding]
Barbara: Exactly! And since it is an environment with many undereducated men, I have to be tough. Looks like I can't express myself more freely, I can't use my nails as I want or draw attention with my makeup.
Counselor: I understand. You don't feel free to be yourself at work, you feel pressured to be tough. [empathic understanding] There are a lot of things that matter to you that are not being respected. [empathic conjecture] Can you put into words what you would want to feel better? [exploratory question to reflect about needs]
Barbara: I want to be more authentic, express myself in my own way without all these judgments.
Counselor: Yes, sure. What else do you want?
Barbara: I want to interact with people, I want to feel recognized, I want to have more challenges, to learn new things. [Her vocal tone expresses enthusiasm, a livelier perspective of herself.]

At this point in the session, problem understanding was deepened as Barbara identified what bothered her in her occupational routine and elaborated on her emotional experience, and through this process, she gave voice to her needs (e.g., authenticity, social interaction, recognition, challenge, intellectual stimulation). The counselor then tried to foster narrative elaboration on her needs, asking her, by contrast, to remember fulfilling experiences.

Counselor: Could you think of situations when you felt recognized, interacting with people, free to express yourself, learning new things?
Barbara: When I dance, I feel valued. I like to draw attention, to be recognized by people as someone who dances well. In dancing, I have fun, and I like when I encourage others to dance.

Counselor: Can you put some words to your feeling? [exploratory question]

Barbara: When I dance, I feel happy, fulfilled . . . I feel the most special person I'm seen. [She laughs and makes an expression of shyness, indicating joy and possibly a moral judgment.]

Counselor: You feel joy when you connect with people and when you are valued for doing something well that you like. [empathic understanding] From your expression, it seems that being seen is something you enjoy and perhaps also feel shy about. [empathic conjecture]

Barbara: Yes. Sometimes people may judge me as someone who is arrogant.

Counselor: Sometimes you feel afraid of looking arrogant in others' eyes? [promote responsibility]

Barbara: Yes, I guess I am ashamed of saying out loud that I like to be the center of attention.

Counselor: I see, maybe what you need to feel good may challenge some ideas you learned about what is right and wrong. [empathic conjecture]

Barbara: Yes, I guess I learned somehow that it is not right to like to be seen.

Counselor: I understand, it is important to recognize that. We will have the chance to reflect more about it during our sessions. [empathic understanding] I would suggest that we keep hearing the voice of what is important to you now. What do you think? [process directing to follow needs exploration]

Barbara: OK. I am realizing that I enjoy being recognized for doing something well, something beautiful. I feel happy when I move in the rhythm, when I have fun.

Counselor: Looking at your dance experience, we can think that is also important for you to have fun, to feel competent, to find beauty in life, is that correct? [empathic conjecture]

Barbara: Yes, this is really important to me. I want to feel competent, do something beautiful, to have fun.

Highlighting the contrast between what is lacking and what is needed is a way to foster the awareness of the client's core problems and the solutions she sought. That is, it is a way to start to draw the first sketches of the life theme. After having a deeper understanding of her needs through the exploration of a fulfilling experience, the counselor encourages a synthesis, inviting the client to start a reflection about how she could connect the awareness about her needs with her actions:

Counselor: After feeling the joy that you experience when you do what is important to you, let's think about how could you bring your life closer to what you need.

Barbara: Now I understand more clearly how far my work is from what I need to feel good. So being here and thinking about a change is already something I can do in that direction. . . . Besides, a friend suggested that I take dance classes since I like it so much. I'll think about it.

It should be noted that the use of this strategy to explore positive experiences of personal fulfillment is also relevant with clients who have difficulty verbalizing negative experiences. In these cases, the exploration of positive experiences is the easiest way to introduce them to the exploration of internal experience. To start from what they want and seek (values) facilitates the symbolization of what they lack (needs).

Session 2: Exploring Needs Through Life Stories Told in Phase 1 of CCC

In Session 2 of CCC Phase 1, the counselor used the Career Construction Interview (Savickas, 2019) to elicit life story episodes and related career constructs (e.g., needs, values, interests). In most of the episodes, there emerged for Barbara a theme of overresponsibility and the need to express herself freely. For example, Barbara referred to role models who had in common being artists, romantic people, and relaxed people. Accordingly, her values and interests related to human behavior, aesthetics, and humor. Finally, during the description of early recollections, Barbara mentioned an episode when she was a 9-year-old girl and had to take care of her mother, who had a serious disease. She said, "I had to grow up early." In contrast to this story, she told about family experiences in which she could "play as a child." Another of Barbara's early recollections was being at school with her friends imitating dancers on a TV show. She could not play the lead role in the game, because she was invited by her friends to play the role of the Black child, which was a secondary role. The counselor asked how she felt in these situations, and she said, "It was funny but also frustrating. I wanted to be at the center of attention and at the same time this was supposed to be wrong." The reference to those contrasting episodes led her to spontaneously realize that throughout her life she had missed feeling relaxed and free.

Focusing moment by moment on the process, the counselor was aware of the different expressions of the life theme. To expand the client's awareness of that theme, the counselor encouraged an extended description of needs by using empathic reflections, such as "Sounds like . . . there is again the need to be yourself" or "Again, I feel in you that frustration when you want to be the center of attentions and, at the same time, feel that this is wrong." In this way, the narrative elaboration of life themes, grounded in the awareness of emotional experience and personal needs, is fostered beginning with the first phase of CCC, as was evident at the end of the Career Construction Interview, when the counselor asked Barbara, "What does all this say about you? How does it make you feel?" She said, "I am feeling heard. I usually don't think about my past, and now I remembered about my old passion for dance, some pressures from my family and colleagues that made me overly serious. I feel like I am linking some pieces."

Session 3: Rewriting the Life Story in Phase 2 of CCC—From Needs to Life Themes

Barbara's narrative elaboration of her needs during Phase 1 of CCC facilitated her awareness of life themes during Phase 2 and, consequently, the rewriting of a unified and coherent life story during the third ses-

sion. The following vignette illustrates how the counselor smoothed the process by helping Barbara to link needs and values in different moments of her life story:

Counselor: Do you see any connections between what you missed and the things you admired in your heroes?
Barbara: Oh, yes, they expressed what I also wanted to do, they acted as I wanted to be.
Counselor: How is that?
Barbara: Being free, recognized, relaxed.
Counselor: And how do you relate this with your current moment? With what brings you here? [connects past and present]
Barbara: Now I am living exactly the same, I am at a job that makes me feel restricted, that I cannot be who I am. I am only keeping up with my duties, but I am not having fun. I am here to make plans that are more in line with myself.
Counselor: I see, it sounds like this pain you are feeling now, it is something you already felt before. [empathic conjecture to highlight her emotional experience and foster narrative coherence]
Barbara: Yes, I remember how I felt oppressed in school, it's the same feeling. I guess that's why I am struggling so much at my work.
Counselor: It has been a long time since you've wanted to be yourself, to feel free. [reflection on life theme]
Barbara: Yes, it's an old project [*laughs*]. I can't keep it in silence anymore.
Counselor: Sure, you are saying out loud, we can hear very well [*smiles*]. How do you feel to hear your voice?
Barbara: I am so enthusiastic. I am feeling alive.

Barbara and her counselor also considered how this life theme about the "girl who had to grow up early and wanted to feel free to take care of herself" was emerging in other life domains, including in the relationship with her family. The process allowed Barbara to understand how her interests in human behavior, interacting with people, and using creativity were solutions she found to engage in social and artistic projects and gratify her needs for authenticity, competence, and relationship to others. Barbara recognized that artistic endeavors, such as dance, could be a career path that would enable her to meet her needs and manifest her interests. She also considered the fields of leadership and psychology as interesting possibilities.

Session 4: Planning to Realize Needs and Reflecting on the CCC Phase 3 Process

The third phase of career counseling, which occurred mainly in the fourth (and last) session, was dedicated initially to encouraging Barbara to enact her career goals, reflecting about possible barriers and coping strategies. She spoke about the visits she had made to three dance schools, an exploratory task settled on with the counselor in the previous session. Barbara interviewed professionals and students, attended dance classes, and felt that her abilities were recognized by the teachers. She loved every detail of what she was learning at the dance schools, confirming the feeling that

she was on the right track. For financial reasons, it would not be feasible to simply quit her job. She would take the entrance exam for the bachelor in dance and, in parallel, seek to work as a receptionist in a dance school, or in other organizations with a more flexible and artistic culture.

Barbara came to this session with her hair loose, saying, "My dance teacher complimented my hair." She felt she was flourishing and assuming herself as she was. The emotional tone of her narrative changed to a more positive one, and Barbara said, "After all, the answer was not complex, but something that had always been with me throughout my history that I was not recognizing." This statement exemplifies what CCC refers to as the "unthought known," or what the client knows at some level but has not yet put into words. She considered as a possible barrier that there were few Black female dancers in her context, and that she could face some prejudice, yet she was trying not to worry about that. The counselor shared the information about a group of Black women in dance who were working to inspire and educate girls from disadvantaged contexts. She appreciated hearing that and said that she would also like to work on a social project to contribute to Black feminine empowerment.

The last task of the third phase involved reflection about her process during career counseling, which was facilitated by revising the list of problems from the Personal Questionnaire (Elliot et al., 1999) that had been drawn up during the first session. Barbara perceived that the degree of concern had decreased for all her recorded problems, from 7 and 5 at the beginning to 2 and 1 at the end. Completing this task at the end facilitated her narrative about change, as she said, "Going back to what I came to get at the beginning and to see what I have developed so far was extremely helpful. I am pleased to see that I now have plans related to myself. I felt understood and supported, this was fundamental for me."

Discussion

We sought to explain and demonstrate how supporting clients to narratively elaborate their needs during the problem formulation task of CCC fosters self-organization and, consequently, the construction of new career plans. Eliciting clients' needs during the initial phase of the process constitutes an opportunity to deepen understanding of career issue causes and consequences. Clients begin to understand the psychological foundations of their career problem, that is, to reflect on what they lack and what they want. The emergent new narrative paves the way to future narrative reflection on core life themes that is essential for rewriting the life narrative with coherence across time and career contexts. Barbara's case is illustrative. The exploration of her career problems made possible the verbalization of the need to be authentic, to relate to people, and to receive recognition. The emergent new order was revealed at the end of the problem formulation task, when she said, "Now I understand more clearly how far my work is from what I need to feel good."

Reinforcing the importance of exploring clients' needs during the task of problem formulation, research on narrative evolution throughout CCC has shown that understanding the causes and consequences of career issues is fundamental to fostering the construction of new career plans

(Cardoso et al., 2014, 2016). In fact, understanding what is lacking leads, by contrast, to the awareness of what is needed (Savickas, 1995). The new perspective of the self is the first sketch of the new order. Past (needs) and present (current career issues) become linked. This link will be reinforced and enriched throughout the next counseling tasks of CCC, allowing the rewriting of the career narrative and the projection of new possibilities for self-construction in different career roles (Savickas, 2011).

The case of Barbara also shows a practice focused on symbolization of emotions to foster narrative elaboration of needs underpinning career problems. This procedure is grounded in research on the role of emotions in meaning making and shows that feelings of positive or negative valence allow personal experiences to be perceived as satisfying or unsatisfying, which is fundamental to support decision-making (Damásio, 2017). In the case presented, the process of focusing on emotion to facilitate meaning making occurred in three steps. In the first, the counselor, sensitive to working alliance quality, invited the client to describe prototypical problematic situations and episodes of personal fulfillment. Next, to evoke the emotional experience associated with such experiences, the counselor asked questions such as "How does that make you feel?" or "What did you experienced in that episode?" In the third step, the client was invited to narrate the meanings contained in the emotional experience described using questions such as "What thoughts emerge associated with that emotion?" or "What does this emotion tell us?" Finally, as new meanings emerged, the counselor used empathic or exploratory reflections to encourage the client to elaborate on and extend the description of the emergent novel narrative (Cardoso et al., 2020).

The transformation of Barbara's self-narrative also showed meaning making as an ongoing process of synthesizing information from different layers of the self. Preconscious information contained in the layer of characteristic adaptations, including the experience of needs and associated emotions, was evoked by the counselor through an emotion-focused strategy. The emergent information, at the layer of life narratives, was symbolized and reflected on, allowing Barbara to deepen her understanding of her career problems as well as elaborate the first sketches of her life themes. Built on a strong emotional experience, the new meaning provided a powerful anchor for rewriting the career narrative during the second phase of CCC. In that sense, during the task of rewriting the career narrative, counselors support clients in reflecting on the links between needs revealed during the initial task of CCC and life themes emerging in the second phase of the intervention, when clients' answers to the Career Construction Interview are analyzed. For example, counselors may use exploratory reflections to promote such links (e.g., "It seems that the theme of your early recollections has a parallel in the one underpinning your career issues"). The construction of "meaning bridges" by linking needs in different situations and moments enables clients to distance themselves from self-experience and, reflexively, to identify patterns and regularities across different times and situations (Cardoso et al., 2020), which is fundamental for the construction of narrative continuity and coherence. Moreover, this self-narrative, also called narrative identity (McAdams, 1993), is a metacompetence in that

it enables a person to develop intentionality by integrating the remembered past, experienced present, and anticipated future.

The case of Barbara also shows the interplay between the working alliance and counseling tasks in fostering clients' change during career counseling, which is in accord with career counseling and psychotherapy literature (Iwanaga et al., 2019; Wampold, 2015; Whiston et al., 2016). Indeed, with cases such as Barbara's, characterized by a problematic self-narrative dominated by themes of caring for others, avoidance of self-expression, and lack of recognition, the experiential approach used facilitates the deepening of self-expression in the relationship with the counselor, which is a powerful corrective emotional experience. That is, the contact with emotional experience and associated needs leads clients to face issues troublesome to them, to play a new role, which is a strong transformational experience that has an impact on the reorganization of the life narrative. In the end, Barbara's words, revealing more than a thousand photographs, expressed meaning making as a relational process: "Going back to what I came to get at the beginning and to see what I have developed so far was extremely helpful. I am pleased to see that I now have plans related to myself. I felt understood and supported, this was fundamental for me."

Considering that the practice we describe is still in an exploratory stage of its development, research is needed to understand its possibilities and limitations for career counseling efficacy. Thus, future research should depart from clients' perspectives on helpful events during career counseling to analyze the usefulness of our proposal for an emotion-focused strategy to facilitate narrative elaboration on needs, both during CCC specifically and during career counseling in general. The effectiveness of our proposal might also be tested using experimental designs. This would allow analysis of the contribution (or not) of our proposal to increasing career counseling effectiveness by means of a comparison between a group in which this practice is used and a control group in which this practice is not used. This type of study is core to deepening understanding of the mechanisms of change associated with positive outcomes in career counseling (Spokane & Nguyen, 2016). Process research could analyze career counseling components (e.g., working alliance) that may facilitate clients' elaboration on their needs. Given that in some contexts career counselors have time limitations in delivering interventions, researchers could also investigate the usefulness of some of the principles and strategies described here in briefer career interventions.

Conclusion

We highlighted with a theoretical review and an illustrative case study the relevance of considering the role played by psychological needs in vocational behavior and career development. Second, we underscored the importance of clients' needs exploration during the task of problem formulation to achieve gains that will be further developed in later stages of the intervention. Third, we innovated CCC and career counseling in general by proposing an emotion-focused practice to facilitate clients' narrative elaboration of self-experience. Finally, we pointed out the rel-

evance of the working alliance for meaning making in career counseling, which was illustrated both by the vignettes showing the counselor's care in preserving the quality of the working alliance and by Barbara's words describing the therapeutic relationship as a corrective emotional experience.

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