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Social Psychology

Counseling and coaching: Similarities, differences, and relevance in times of uncertainty

Gabriela Techio¹

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1887-9303>

Daniela Boucinha¹

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1584-018X>

Alyane Audibert^{1,2}

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4987-2120>

Manoela Z. de Oliveira¹

 <http://orcid.org/0000-0003-0243-5115>

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¹ Pontifical Catholic University of Rio Grande do Sul (PUCRS), RS, Brazil

² The Superior School of Advertisement and Marketing (ESPM–Sul), Porto Alegre, RS, Brasil.

The transformations that characterize the job world and relationships entail an important impact for the professions dedicated to helping and caring for people. Today, the changes can no longer be understood as isolated events, but as part of these professionals and their clients' daily lives. Therefore, it is important for people working with counseling and coaching to develop skills to assist their clients in facing an unpredictable reality, marked by inequity, migration, competitiveness, and precariousness.

In this context, the book "Counseling and Coaching in Times of Crisis and Transition" was produced. In the work, coordinated by Nota & Soresi (2018), some models and best practices are discussed that can help people cope with future challenges. Therefore, it represents an important contribution for professionals and researchers who focus on the subject of counseling and coaching. The book is organized in three parts and consists of sixteen chapters plus a closing session, along with innovative counseling and coaching models and practices, which – at low cost – can help people cope with the challenges of life.

The book argues that the practice of career counseling and coaching is based on the constructivist perspective, making use of the narrative. Narrating one's career trajectory allows the individual to identify and connect events of the past, present, and future, signifying one's life history. The authors introduce the concepts of reflection and reflexivity, considered essential meta-skills in the current context, which allow us to re-signify moments of difficulty through internal conversations and with interlocutors. By exposing the facts and by allowing comprehension from other points of view, the clients develop expectations of more positive outcomes and more adaptive behavior in the face of a context marked by changes and uncertainties.

Throughout the book, interventions are presented in the area of career counseling and coaching that propose individual and group activities. The goal is to help individuals be the actors in their own lives, emphasizing the importance of autonomous action and investments in the implementation of strategies that stimulate the establishment and achievement of professional goals. In that sense, the authors address the Social Cognitive Career Theory and the new Career Self-Management model, which is designed to outline personal agency mechanisms. Despite the focus on young people, the work emphasizes the importance of early interventions, such as the construction of courage in childhood, emphasizing

its role in human development as a crucial resource for the individual's psychosocial well-being. In addition, the authors highlight that interventions with children, as well as with students, are more effective when involving parents and teachers.

The involvement of third parties in career counseling and coaching processes is also recommended in health care cases. The book features two chapters that discuss the importance of counseling in this area and its potential impact for adhering to palliative treatment and care and for dealing with severe diseases such as cancer. The authors describe actions that can help improve communication with patients and their families, the ability to cope with emotions, with decision taking, and the ability to help people be aware of their feelings about their own health, illness, disability, treatments, life, and death. Therefore, the objective is to promote a safe space, where the clients can express their concerns and emotions regarding the diagnosis and that helps individuals and families in understanding the disease and managing the situation.

The book also highlights the contribution of professionals working with the career theme to socially excluded groups and suggests interventions based on the search for quality of life. The focus is on prevention and promotion of psychological and physical health, aiming for personal and professional development. The authors propose preventive actions that include society as a whole and commit to damage reduction and citizen empowerment. These actions seek to avoid the influence of discourses that discourage people from taking up spaces that do not conform to social expectations. Moreover, they attribute to career counseling and coaching the role of facilitating a space for dialogue and innovation, encouraging an optimistic view through an approach that promotes reflexivity and the development of inclusive spaces. The topics covered are gender inequality, the inclusion of people with special needs in higher education and in organizations, the training of parents of disabled children and the problem of minorities in a multicultural context. In such cases, career counseling and coaching work on the ability to adapt to change, the recognition of the support network and the deconstruction of stereotypes that hinder the creation of contexts of equality.

In addressing the use of career counseling and coaching as a tool for personal and professional development, the authors point out their differences and similarities and stress the importance of separating between good and non-good processes. The book presents the Career Construction Theory, suggesting that this

model should sustain both practices. The authors also emphasize encouraging the integration of practices, generating new models, tools, and methods to support professionals who are dedicated to helping individuals in their challenges throughout the life cycle. To improve professional performance, it is important to get feedback from interventions performed during and after the service provided. In addition to customer feedback, times of exchange are necessary among the professionals themselves, in order to compare their effectiveness and identify new skills and interventions to be developed.

The objective of the work was to invite anyone interested in counseling and coaching to look at their practices in the light of the need for innovation, proposing countless reflections and intervention possibilities, always favoring the preventive aspect. In addition, there is a clear need for actions to be adapted to the context where they will be applied. Finally, the book encourages researchers and practitioners in the areas of counseling and coaching to serve as agents of change by introducing original solutions to the challenges that emerge in a society characterized by its constant transformation.

Authors notes

Gabriela Techio, Postgraduate Program in Psychology, Pontifical Catholic University of Rio Grande do Sul (PUCRS); **Daniela Boucinha**, Postgraduate Program in Psychology, Pontifical Catholic University of Rio Grande do Sul (PUCRS); **Alyane Audibert**, Postgraduate Program in Psychology, Pontifical Catholic University of Rio Grande do Sul (PUCRS) and Superior School of Advertising and Marketing (ESPM-Sul); **Manoela Z. de Oliveira**, Postgraduate Program in Psychology, Pontifical Catholic University of Rio Grande do Sul (PUCRS).

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Manoela Ziebell de Oliveira, Grupo de Estudos sobre Desenvolvimento de Carreira – GEDC, Programa de Pós-Graduação em Psicologia, Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio Grande do Sul, Av. Ipiranga, 6681, Prédio 11, Sala 938, Porto Alegre, RS, Brazil. CEP: 90619-900.

E-mail: manoela.ziebell@gmail.com