



## 8th UpCare training: Evaluation of the concept of "self".

### ***According to Tudor....***

The individual's ability to evaluate his or her own capabilities, abilities and limits, with as little distortion as possible, is a key tenet of the concept of self-concept.

### ***Identity***

The Evaluative Model, examines healthy self-concept, creative self-esteem and the individual's effort to improve his/her less powerful abilities (Vassiliadou 2005).

It is important for each individual to look for those personality traits to determine their self-concept, qualities unique to them such as abilities, desires, temperaments, habits and tendencies of the self.

For these efforts to be effective, the individual needs to treat the positive attributes that he or she can further develop as a dynamic database.

### ***Comparison as a tool for Personal Development***

In order to be able to make an assessment of the self I need to use a benchmark a measure as in all sciences. The degree of development of a positive attribute is derived by comparing it to a counterpart that is at an ideal degree of development.

**It is a way of seeking self-awareness.**

### ***Basic conditions of a comparative process***

1. The measure of comparison must be highly and effortlessly acceptable to the individual
2. To be easily understandable because it is ideal (according to personal principles and values)
3. It must be beneficial to make this choice of benchmark



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### ***Evaluative Self-Esteem***

People use models-templates-archetypes as comparative measures.

Nowadays, with the crisis of values and standards, people are driven to confusion. The lack of archetypes has increased the difficulty of reaching self-awareness. The confusion of evaluation models is constantly worsening. (Brandt, 1998)

(Brandt R.A Theory of the good and the right. Prometheus Books. New York,1998)

### ***Terms of Evaluative Self-Esteem***

- A. Comparison of the positive characteristics of the individual with those of his/her social environment.
- B. Comparison of the individual's positive characteristics with "ideally developed" characteristics/qualities, which are used as archetypes in the individual's behavior from a psychosocial point of view.

Table 2, Mental Health Promotion and Education, M. Vassiliadou, 2004

### ***Role Models***

Today's projected personality models promote the 'perfect' image through

- External appearance
- Knowledge
- Perfect personal life
- Acquired
- Social and professional acclaim

### ***Inadequacy of adaptable comparative schemes and models***

It is natural for people to face difficulties when trying to evaluate in an objective way their individual characteristics. Each person has to choose his or her own measures of comparison in order to be able to build his or her own identity and assess personal characteristics such as for example honesty, kindness, courage, loyalty, generosity, etc. (Snodgrass & Thompson, 1997).



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### ***Negative criteria for defining "self"***

The characteristic feature of modern society is the effort of individuals to perfect their personality image in order to gain social prestige and improve their personal and professional status.

**People often make the mistake of trying to conceal the imperfections or weaknesses they believe they have by not expressing their true thoughts and feelings (Conville,1991).**

Excessive and uncontrolled expression of maladaptive thoughts and feelings prevents proper self-evaluation, as such behaviors can cause social devaluation. (Beck et al 1990).

### ***Barriers to the self-improvement process***

Basic difficulties in achieving a balanced and realistic self-esteem are mainly found in the existence of **maladaptive schemas**, on which the individual bases the perception and understanding of his/her personal characteristics and the comparison with the characteristics of others.

A trap is often to exaggerate their abilities by demonstrating their supposed strengths and gifts in a negative way: they aim for their own superiority by underestimating the abilities of others. (Blackburn & Eunson 1989)

In this way a superficial personality is built, as the self in its authenticity avoids being exposed for fear of being stigmatised.

"follow your heart"

"be yourself"

Many times people prefer to give credence only to the biological factor of their development, as if there is no other intervention from the environment or education (avoiding criticism due to choices and free will).

"that's who I am and whoever I like"



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### **Assessment of positive personality traits**

"For the process of self-assessment to be beneficial or less traumatic for the individual, the recording of positive personal characteristics is considered necessary" (M. Vassiliadou, 2004).

The quality of a personality depends on the positive elements that build its construct. That is, it is a function of the balanced and harmonious interweaving of all virtues, because the overdevelopment of one virtue at the expense of the others could be rather useless for the individual (Vassiliadou, 2005).

### **Strategies for a beneficial definition of 'self' and evaluative testing of current models**

Models or archetypes projected by the social environment are not always appropriate for healthy development as they may be utopian and consequently inappropriate (distancing from authentic self and frustration). Therefore, it must first be investigated whether they offer a positive and effective pattern of behaviour in the long term.

- A. examine and review my needs. I ask myself if they are realistic and in any way adaptive.
  - B. I define my positive attributes as a skill that if utilized will meet my needs.
  - C. I select and strengthen those skills that will help me cope with difficulties and promote the quality of my life.
- An effective way of leading individuals to a form of proper personal development guidance is the whole of spiritual culture, history, philosophy, literature, religious background.
  - Not only does it clarify what is harmful and what is not, but realistic and beneficial solutions are proposed.

### **Self-esteem**

The importance of self-esteem is inextricably linked to the concept of mental balance. It is not intrinsic and is acquired through continuous self-improvement efforts.



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In short, it is the self-perception of the personality elements that define our identity.

Self-appreciation or over-appreciation can be detrimental as on the one hand we tend towards a personality with avoidant elements, while on the other hand we tend towards narcissistic traits.

### ***How do we improve the process of self-esteem?***

1. Define the more or less positive personality traits
2. Compare the set of positive elements with the set of negative or less positive personality traits
3. Assessment of the individual's intention to improve the less positive personality traits

The individual must be able to acquire self-esteem through self-improvement (continuous improvement of positive aspects) without taking it for granted, without acquiring it unquestioningly and without exploiting it (Vassiliadou 1998).

### ***Barriers to the process of self-improvement***

- Difficulties in relation to 'being'
- Difficulties in relation to 'having'

These are maladaptive patterns, thoughts ideas, beliefs, where the sense of self-esteem is based on acquisitions and social and professional achievement. More simply, I rate myself as competent if I maintain an inflated bank account or own 10 houses.

### ***Difficulties in relation to "being"***

Beliefs related to maladaptive self-concept, examples:

- "Man is born, not made"
- "Either I am perfect or I am nothing"

In both cases, individuals account for their personality traits in a non-flexible way, believing that improvement is probably impossible or not worthwhile if it does not lead to perfection (Sperry 1999, p. 117).



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### ***Perfectionism***

The cognitive psychotherapeutic model holds that any error or failure creates feelings of frustration in the subject, in which case it is seen as evidence of his or her defectiveness or lack of basic skills (Beck et al 1990).

Both perfectionism and unproductive or inflexible self-assessment constitute serious disadvantages that hinder self-improvement, the basic prerequisite for achieving self-esteem (Vassiliadou 2005).

### ***Underestimation***

- Self-doubt of the individual's sincere desire to improve his/her positive characteristics
- The inactivation of an individual, who becomes introverted due to his/her belief that he/she is not 'perfect', having thereby found an excuse to be unproductive

**In both cases the individual must choose between productive activity and damaging passive inactivity. Solutions:**

- "To productively exploit the feelings of dissatisfaction caused by the assumption that one has certain weaknesses and to try to improve them by developing corresponding abilities"
- "To leave oneself in the state of unpleasant feelings caused by the sense of self-defectiveness and to give up any attempt at self-improvement" (M. Vassiliadou, 2004)

### ***Covering false-needs and the search for the concept of happiness***

Mental Health Promotion aims to improve personal qualities that relate to the satisfaction of people's bio-psychosocial needs (Maccoby 1988). Therefore, the individual must first calculate, as accurately as possible, his/her realistic needs, in order to then assess the potential of his/her abilities to meet those needs.

Typically, people in the struggle to meet unrealistic needs e.g. struggle against ageing, meets other important needs such as developing sociability or creative skills.



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### ***The self-esteem of "having"***

"Either I have everything I want or I want absolutely nothing"

"There are people who have it all"

In cases where "self-sufficiency needs", "having", have been seen as leading to well-being, individuals find themselves confused, since they cannot feel satisfied even when most of these needs have been fulfilled.

Life offers individuals who are lost in the quest the opportunity to carefully reexamine their motivations and develop alternative capacities. Deep satisfaction depends on how close I am to my authentic self.

### ***Evaluative improvement of the components of identity***

Self-evaluation is achieved when comparison is done in a productive way. This depends on the will of the individual:

- To listen to others with patience
- To develop empathy so that he or she can immerse meaning
- To judge and weigh with leniency anything that is perceived as negative
- Accept all other characteristics that he or she judges as positive, without feelings of competition or envy, but in a spirit of courage and love
- To know that he has the capacity by his own nature to develop abilities, in order to be able to achieve his goals and objectives

### ***Steps for evaluative self-criticism***

- Evaluate efforts to develop or improve actual abilities rather than evaluating them, per se, of assumed abilities
- Assessing competencies required to fulfil needs that have been correctly identified and defined
- Effective combination of competencies
- Acceptance of the principle of 'discrimination' (promotion not demonstration of competences)

Table 8, Mental Health Promotion and Education, M. Vassiliadou, 2004



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### ***Creative self-criticism***

When promoting healthy self-esteem or creative self-criticism is necessary.

#### **Terms of creative self-criticism:**

- Simultaneous with the decision of self-control is the fight against weaknesses
- It requires the improvement of abilities and virtues such as courage, patience, love, modesty, kindness, etc.
- It requires unremitting effort for self-improvement and not self-flagellation.

Table 9, Mental Health Promotion and Education, M. Vassiliadou, 2004

### ***Adaptive, realistic and beneficial self-concept***

#### **Fundamental Principles:**

- Understanding that there is no individual without weaknesses and disadvantages
- The understanding that there is no individual who has never felt pain, contempt or failure
- Understanding that everyone has the right to dream and be optimistic about the future.

Table 10, Mental Health Promotion and Education, M. Vassiliadou, 2004

1. Everyone faces feelings of devaluation due to their weaknesses, and as a result they prefer to remain in obscurity and anonymity.
2. Everyone has the ability to cope with difficulties in a productive way and can manage even the biggest loss to turn it into an advantage.
3. All are capable of self-improvement, education and are able to overcome life's difficulties.



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