Chapter 1

Personal Development and Clinical Psychology

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Introduction

This is a book on personal development for the twenty-first century. Our aim is to to provide thinking and writing that can appeal, and be useful, to a wide readership – a readership that lives and works in changeable times and has to make sense of multiple epistemologies, governmental and organizational objectives and dictats, theoretical models, financial constraints, challenges to traditional ways of working, new ways of working and expanding roles and more responsibilities and accountability than ever before. We hope to provide a book that encompasses all of this *and* has clarity, direction and inclusivity. So that, whilst acknowledging the individual and idiosyncratic nature of personal development, we hope we also offer thoughts, suggestions and strategies/methods that can be adopted, adapted, changed, considered and debated by most.

Historically, writing around personal development has focused on the individual and therapy and has been within more reflective-practioner models. This book aims to move beyond this – to explore personal development within different realms, within different therapy models and within the different roles of a clinical psychologist. We will offer guidance around these areas and hope that personal development can be embraced within the clinical psychology profession.

There are clear drivers for clinical psychologists to develop personally. In 2004 there was an increased emphasis in the training accreditation criteria for clinical psychology courses to include learning outcomes for

Personal and Professional Development (British Psychological Society 2004). There has also recently been an emphasis within the NHS on Personal and People Development (Department of Health 2004). However, there is very little guidance as to what this may mean and/or how it may be approached and achieved.

This book aims to fill this gap in the literature and to provide a clarity around the concept of personal development, particularly acknowledging the multitude of roles clinical psychologists may have within their working environment. Traditionally, personal development has been linked, in a symbiotic manner, with professional development. In this book, the aim is to arrive at an understanding of what, in its own right, is meant by personal development and make it possible to put that understanding into practice. However we do recognize that the personal and the professional are closely linked, and over the course of a career are likely to become merged. This separation *and* interlinking may become clearer by considering the answers to the following two questions: what have you learnt about yourself in the role of a clinical psychologist (the more professional emphasis)?; and, what have you learnt about yourself that it is important to know given the work that you do (the more personal emphasis)?

While the focus is on the profession of clinical psychology many of the ideas can be utilized with any professional group working in psychological or physical health. The book aims to bring together the views and voices of many different stakeholders in clinical psychology including service users and carers, trainees, supervisors and trainers. In the tradition of clinical psychology a wide variety of approaches are used, employing a number of different methodologies (questionnaire survey, focus group, Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis and metaphors). Different styles of writing are also utilized, from the formal and academic to personal reflection, mirroring the range and richness of thinking and writing about personal development. The result of these various discourses and methodologies is a clear construction of our understanding of what personal development means for clinical psychologists in the twenty-first century and a model of personal development processes. We offer this in the hope it will aid the reader to create their own individual and idiosyncratic understanding and model – using individual experience, personality, preferred and new strategies, models, theories and concepts, beliefs and identity – to help individuals move forward in their personal development journeys.

Uses of the book

This book does not offer a quick fix, 'how to do it' approach to personal development. We believe that personal development is an individually constructed process that is different for everyone. However, the book offers guidance on developing personally that can be used for a number of different functions:

1   Individual personal development

The book can be used before, during and after training to help individuals understand their own personal development. It offers some clarity around definitions and processes, and the Model of Personal Development Processes (Chapter 4) can be used to guide an individual towards personal growth and application.

2   Developing others (for example, supervision or mentoring)

The book can also be used to help guide others. This may be particularly helpful when an individual within supervision or mentoring, for example, is stuck within a personal development process; in this situation the book may help clarify the barriers and provide guidance for moving forward.

3   Training others (for example, trainee clinical psychologists)

The book can be used as a core text in clinical psychology training, providing useful information and models and strategies for use with trainees. It can help guide clinical psychology training courses on their approach to personal development and the methods employed. It can also provide useful teaching materials to guide individual teaching sessions and individual meetings with trainees.

The Book

The book begins in Chapter 2 with an historical overview of personal development in clinical psychology on a number of different levels. A brief history of some contextual factors important for the profession of clinical psychology within the NHS is provided, bringing the reader up to date with more recent paradigms within our profession and the reasons why personal development has become more important to our profession. A personal history of development is described and is linked to a journey of promoting personal development within the clinical psychology training community,

emphasizing the importance of personal development within the many different roles of a clinical psychologist. This chapter also illustrates the integration of personal development into clinical training. Hopefully, Chapter 2 will help the reader understand and appreciate the different emphases that have been placed on personal development over time and the current need to consider personal development within a multiplicity of roles. Finally it is hoped that the reader can being to understand some of the struggles and resistances individuals face in their personal development journeys and to see the roots of the questions as to its relevance and evidence base.

In the third chapter an attempt is made to examine and elaborate the concept of personal development and its importance. Current definitions are too limited and have a tendency to focus only on intra-psychic growth and on the role of therapist. This chapter utilizes psychological theories, knowledge and an understanding of psychological methods, skills and techniques to 'unpack' personal development and indicate how it might be put into practice. The imperative to engage in personal development is underscored by considering the many national and professional codes of practice, guidelines, training accreditation criteria and pieces of documentation, all of which emphasize, if not urge, such engagement.

Chapter 4 presents the Model of Personal Development Processes developed by the editors. It demonstrates that it is possible to describe the processes involved in an accessible way and utilizes a worked-through example as illustration. The model starts with the factors that may prompt an individual to consider that some energy needs to be given to personal development. The model has been developed in partnership with trainee clinical psychologists on both the Leeds and Sheffield training courses, and the feedback is that the model is understandable and helpful. The chapter ends by examining the barriers to personal development and potential ways in which these might be overcome.

The fifth chapter examines the service user and carer perspective on personal development. The limited literature on this topic is reviewed. A focus group of service users and carers is desribed and the transcript analysed using Thematic Framework Analysis. The service user and carer perspective is clear about the personal and professional characteristics and attributes they need clinical psychologists to demonstrate as well as the nature of the therapeutic relationship in which they wish to engage. The chapter ends with a contribution from a service user reflecting on her own therapy and the importance of the therapist's personal development.

In Chapter 6 the authors focus on the need always to hold in mind an understanding of power, its operation and its consequences. How power and identity are linked is shown, and also how the way we use language can determine worth and value, on both an individual and societal level. Social disadvantage and privilege in the shaping of identity is also considered. There is a suggestion that clinical psychologists should examine their practice in terms of the way we think and talk about our work and the people we work with, and how this may collude with or maintain social injustices and oppression. The authors include parts of a conversation about their experiences that illustrate some of these points.

The next three chapters focus on methods of personal development, supervison, therapy and personal development groups. In Chapter 7 supervision and personal development are considered. The place of supervision at the heart of personal development is emphasized alongside how detailed contracting can help establish a useful, meaningful and honest relationship. Some of the challenges to bringing personal development issues into supervisory conversations are addressed, and how some models of therapy can determine how this is approached. Insight is offered into opportunities for development through supervision, and for facilitating this development, particularly but not exclusively, in training supervision. The chapter ends with a review of relevant research findings.

In Chapter 8 personal therapy and its relationship to personal development are discussed. The (limited) literature is reviewed that suggests that therapists value personal therapy as a resource in terms of increasing self esteem, making deeper and more satisfactory relationships and improving professional practice. However, there is little evidence of personal therapy improving client outcome. The author then describes her own qualitative research study, exploring *how* personal therapy influences professional practice. The conclusion of the chapter is a recommendation that clinical psychologists should consider the benefits, if not the necessity, of personal therapy at some point in a career.

Personal development within a group setting is the focus of Chapter 9. A review of the literature is provided by one author and some conclusions and personal reflections are offered. This is followed by two experienced clinical psychologists writing about their experiences of personal development within group settings since qualification. The final part of the chapter addresses the considerable variety of responses to personal development groups, and the mixed reaction from trainees, and offers some *potential* explanations for differing viewpoints.

Chapter 10 turns to the issue of how personal development might be assessed. The importance of developing a culture within the training community that promotes and demonstrates personal development at all levels is stressed. The conflicts and tensions that arise when one tries to assess what is an individual and idiosyncratic and often internal process are considered. The complexity in assessing at the point of selection for training is discussed. Then an example of how one course is currently assessing personal development is described in detail. This is offered as a talking/discussion point and not, in any way, the answer to what is a very difficult and ongoing challenge.

A survey of clinical psychology training courses exploring how they approach personal development is the focus of Chapter 11. It is clear that courses are wrestling with how to meet the new emphasis on personal development in the 2004 training accreditation criteria. The survey reports the activities that are deemed to best promote personal development. This is followed by a chapter focussing on the trainee experience, and six recently qualified clinical psychologists reflect on their experience of personal development during training, including how courses approach personal development and what helped them develop personally. These experiences are then compared to the results in Chapter 11 and used to give guidance for both trainees and trainers.

The book ends by summarizing the emerging themes throughout the chapters. These include the current context, power and identity, service user and carer perspectives and the individual and idiosyncratic nature of personal development. Ideas for 'where next?' are also considered. The final chapter ends with the personal reflections of both editors on the process of writing the book.

Personal Statement – Jan Hughes

I felt an imperative to produce this book. Having had a career-long interest in personal development I have felt over the years that there has been some resistance to personal development and I have wondered whether one of the reasons for this was a lack of a framework for people to grasp and help them make sense of the process. I was aware of much work being done in my own local area in training, which seemed to be helping people and trainees in particular. But I was aware that this would potentially never be seen by others. My particular fear was that Sheila would

retire and so much would be lost. I hope that this book will help her legacy live on.

Personal Statement – Sheila Youngson

When Jan first mooted the idea of this book, my response was 'absolutely not', knowing the time and effort that would be required. Jan, knowing me well, simply spent the next time she was stuck in a tedious meeting writing the plan of the book, which she then put before me and asked again. Thus she gave shape to her idea and made it surmountable and enticing all at the same time. Clever woman!

I have both a personal and a professional interest and investment in personal development, and various parts of my 'story' are included in this book. I believe that all clinical psychologists have an ethical responsibility to address their personal development needs throughout their careers. Strong words, I know, but I stand firm by them. Our profession requires us to work with people in considerable psychological and emotional distress; it requires us to take responsibility for making decisions that have huge and significant consequences for individuals and those who care for and about them; it requires us to manage and support and advise other workers; it requires us to know ourselves and develop that self knowledge, so that we do not unwittingly visit on others our own unresolved difficulties, tensions, confusions, assumptions and judgements. Thus I believe there is an imperative to engage in personal development as this is a significant step towards ensuring effective practice and psychologically healthy and robust practitioners.

REFERENCES

British Psychological Society (2004). *Criteria for Postgraduate Courses in Clinical Psychology*. Leicester: British Psychological Society.

Department of Health (2004). *The NHS Knowledge and Skills Framework (KSF) and the Development Review Process*. London.