

Preface

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These are exciting times for the field of person-centred counselling and psychotherapy. Over the last few years, we have witnessed major developments in our approach: an increasing in-depth exploration of its foundations and its underlying philosophy, a rapid diversification – with the emergence of such forms as ‘classical’, ‘dialogical’ and ‘Pre-Therapy’ – and cross-fertilization with related orientations like existential and experiential therapies. We are witnessing a growing intensity of international collaboration and networking through the establishment of the World Association of Person-Centred and Experiential Psychotherapy and Counselling (WAPCEPC) and its journal, *Person-Centred and Experiential Psychotherapies*. Moreover, where once the focus of person-centred writings was primarily on therapeutic practice, we are seeing a rapidly expanding interest in such fields as anthropology and epistemology, developmental psychology, organizational transformation, peace studies, political theory and psychotherapeutic research, with person-centred writers and therapists at the forefront of many of these fields. The person-centred approach to psychotherapy and counselling, increasingly one of the best empirically supported approaches in the realm of therapy, today has a depth and enjoys a variety of theoretical explanatory models that would make it the envy of many other therapeutic disciplines. In fact, the paradigm-change provoked by person-centred thinkers, from the frame of ‘treatment of patients’ to the ‘mutual encounter of persons,’ has influenced the orientation and the development of theory and practice in many other schools of therapy, with an increasing emphasis on the relational foundations of all counselling and psychotherapeutic practices and a growing respect for the rights, choices and potentialities of all clients.

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In this *Handbook of Person-Centred Therapy*, we have aimed to capture this contemporary person-centred spirit, integrating it into a uniquely comprehensive, detailed and vibrant exploration of our field. With original contributions from many of the leading, avant-garde international figures in the contemporary person-centred field, we hope that the book will be a unique companion to students on all advanced-level person-centred courses, as well as to a wide range of professional practitioners: both those within the person-centred field and those outside who would like to learn more about our work at its cutting edge. Furthermore, the *Handbook* is an inclusive and state-of-the-art summary of the person-centred approach which will serve as a basis for many further explorations, developments, research and further academic engagement.

In capturing the spirit of the contemporary person-centred approach, contributors to this book come from a diversity of positions within the person-centred universe (see Chapter 9, this volume, for an overview of these positions). We have contributions, for instance, from those who are affiliated to a 'classical' model of client-centred therapy (e.g. Bozarth, Freire), those at the forefront of a newly emerging 'encounter', 'dialogical', or 'interpersonal' orientation (e.g. Barrett-Lennard, Cooper, O'Hara, Schmid), those who stress organismic and holistic thinking (Cornelius-White, Wyatt), those developing creative ways of clinical work and theory (e.g. Warner), those more closely aligned to a medical model of therapy (e.g. Finke, Teusch), and those leading the way in the development of 'Pre-Therapy' (e.g. Prouty, van Werde). While contributors from each of these positions present somewhat different perspectives on the theory and practice of person-centred therapy, we see this diversity as a great strength of both the field and the book.

Having said that, as may have been noted above, the editors of this book are particularly aligned with a newly emerging relational approach to person-centred therapy, and this emphasis is evident in a number of the *Handbook's* chapters. Here, influenced by the writings of dialogical and postmodern philosophers, there is a move away from the early one-sided emphasis on independence and autonomy, towards a balanced perspective with an appreciation of the inherently relational nature of human being, growth and therapy. In this respect, the book not only represents a consolidation of developments in the person-centred field, but also the foundations for a major new way of conceptualizing and practising person-centred therapy, which should be of interest to practitioners or students who wish to incorporate person-centred thinking into their work.

One of the most important dimensions of this *Handbook* is its internationality and interdisciplinarity. This follows from our understanding of the person-centred approach: that by embracing plurality and diversity we gain a much better picture of the human being and the therapeutic endeavour. Besides the United Kingdom, our authors come from a wide variety of countries, language groups and backgrounds. Their work represents diverse philosophical, psychological, scientific, medical, sociological, empirical and clinical perspectives.

With respect to the issue of diversity within person-centred therapy, we should also say something of what has not been included in this *Handbook*.

Within the field of humanistic therapy, one of the most exciting developments over the last few decades has been the ‘experiential’ therapies: in particular, ‘focusing-oriented therapy’ and ‘process-experiential’/‘emotion-focused’ therapy (see Chapter 9, this volume). These therapies have emerged from, and are closely aligned with, the person-centred approach, even though there are differences regarding the foundations, the theory and the practice. A great deal of collaboration has taken place with these two fields, not least through the WAPCEPC and the *Journal of Person-Centred and Experiential Psychotherapies*, mentioned above. Nevertheless, for the purposes of this *Handbook*, we have not attempted to cover the field of experiential therapies in depth, though it is touched on in several places. This is primarily because it would be impossible to do it justice in the space; and also because an excellent handbook of experiential therapies already exists (Greenberg et al’s *Handbook of Experiential Psychotherapy*, London: Guilford, 1998). As editors of this volume, however, we fully welcome dialogue with those who take a more ‘process-guiding’ approach to therapy, and look forward to extended discussion and exploration in years to come.

With respect to the format of the *Handbook* and its chapters, we have attempted to achieve a balance between the coherence of a consistently structured text and the creativity and individuality that a less formal structure allows. While in some parts of our book, then, each of the chapters contain common sections (such as ‘core concepts’, ‘from theory to practice’), chapters in other parts of the book have a more flexible structure. Readers will also note some variations in the style and emphasis of our contributors, as well as the orientation of the authors, as highlighted above. Throughout each chapter in this book, however, readers will find a comprehensive and critical exploration of the aspect of person-centred therapy under discussion, and one that points readers to further sources through which to expand their knowledge and practice. Here, the core principles at the heart of this *Handbook* are those of critical openness and inclusivity: to the range of ideas and developments within the person-centred field, to the limitations and challenges of our approach, and to the potentialities that exist to help us take this field forward. For us as editors, such principles must be at the heart of this *Handbook*, for we see them as the very essence of the person-centred approach.

Throughout the chapters in this book, there is also an emphasis on illustrating theoretical or practical ideas with actual therapeutic dialogues or cases, to ensure that the real humanity and meaning of the writings is brought to life and to give an idea of the practice.

This book begins with a short introductory piece by Carl Rogers – previously unpublished in the English language – which is a condensed version of a talk given to psychotherapists at the Medical Faculty of the University of Vienna, Austria, on 2 April 1981. In this introductory piece, readers can learn how Carl Rogers introduced person-centred therapy to colleagues from other orientations. In unpretentious yet challenging language, he presents the actualizing tendency as the basic axiom, personal growth as the basis for a theory of personality and the fundamental importance of a facilitative relationship. To put this into practice he highlights three of his six necessary and sufficient

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conditions for constructive change in psychotherapy. It is astonishing how clearly and seeming simply the founder outlines what he considers to be the basic and distinguishing characteristics of his approach to psychotherapy.

The book is then divided into four parts, with a brief introduction at the beginning of each part to give an overview of its chapters. The first part of the book looks at the theoretical, philosophical and historical foundations of the person-centred approach. The second part builds on this by examining the fundamental principles of person-centred practice, critically examining all six of Rogers' 'conditions'. The third part of this book looks at how person-centred conceptualizations and practices can be applied to specific client groups in specific therapeutic settings. Finally, the book considers professional issues for person-centred therapists such as ethics, supervision and training.

As editors, we hope that this book will provide readers with an integrated, comprehensive understanding of the contemporary person-centred field, in all its creativity, diversity and depth. More than anything, though, we hope this book will motivate readers to develop and further their own theory and practice and in doing so, to take the field forward in ever more innovative and exciting ways.

The editors are particularly grateful to Catherine Grey and the team at Palgrave for all their support and encouragement in the production of the book. Thanks also go to Pete Sanders and Lisbeth Sommerbeck for their earlier version of Chapter 11 on psychological contact. Chapter 1, Rogers' introduction to the basic conditions of the facilitative therapeutic relationship, was transcribed by Aglaja Przyborski and Peter Frenzel, and titled and abridged by Peter F. Schmid (first published in German translation in Frenzel, Schmid and Winkler *Handbuch der Personzentrierten Psychotherapie*, Cologne: Edition Humanistische Psychologie, 1992). Finally, the editors would like to thank all the contributors to this handbook for their enthusiasm, commitment and creativity in bringing this project to life.