Leadership and Counseling Psychology: Dilemmas, Ambiguities, and Possibilities

Sandra L. Shullman[1]

Abstract

In this article, I introduce the scientist–practitioner–advocate–leader model as a strategy for addressing the rapidly changing context for psychologists and psychology. The concept of counseling psychologists as learning leaders is derived from the foundations and values of the profession. Incorporating leadership as a core identity for counseling psychologists may create new directions for science and practice as we increasingly integrate multicultural identities, training, and diverse personal backgrounds into social justice initiatives. The article presents six dilemmas faced by counseling psychologists in assuming leadership as part of professional identity, as well as eight learning leader behaviors that counseling psychologists could integrate in their management of ambiguity and uncertainty across various levels of human organization. The article concludes with a discussion of future possibilities that may arise by adopting leadership as part of the role and core identity of counseling psychology.

For many years, perhaps since its inception, counseling psychology and counseling psychologists have struggled with identity (Delgado-Romero, Lau, & Shullman, 2012; Forrest, 2008). Are we educators or clinicians? Scientists and/

[1]Executive Development Group, LLC, Columbus, OH, USA

Corresponding Author:
Sandra L. Shullman, Executive Development Group, LLC, PO Box 14425, Columbus, OH 43214, USA.
Email: sandy@edgp.com

or practitioners, big C (clinical) or little c (counseling) psychologists? While the field of counseling psychology has struggled with identity, psychology in general has experienced an amazingly parallel process of identity confusion and dissolution. Psychology concepts and protocols are adapted, renamed, and taken on as part of other fields without explicit recognition of the knowledge foundations. Those who practice and conduct research in counseling psychology present themselves professionally as psychotherapists, counseling and career educators, and counseling or vocational researchers—homogenizing titles that can reflect persons from many professional disciplines or certifications. Initial, ongoing efforts to map all publications in science indicate an emerging pattern where psychology as a discipline is experiencing absorption by other disciplines such as psychiatry, neuroscience, economics, and business, using psychological research and knowledge as foundational to their disciplines (Boyak, 2004). Counseling psychology runs a somewhat parallel process, especially in relation to education and learning disciplines. Within psychology itself, psychologists trained in counseling psychology have adopted a variety of names to reflect their specialty areas (Delgado-Romero et al., 2012). Evidence of the far reaches of counseling psychology lies in the myriad settings and disciplines within which counseling psychologists work.

The scientist–practitioner (Boulder) model instituted in the 1940s and 1950s (Peterson, 2007) has recently begun morphing in counseling psychology into the scientist–practitioner–advocate model of the 21st century (Fassinger & O'Brien, 2000), a promising development reflecting the fact that more recently minted counseling psychologists have brought together their multicultural identities, training, and personal backgrounds to actively advocate for major social justice issues of our time.

Counseling Psychologists as Learning Leaders

As a counseling psychologist who lives in the world of leadership development, I am most encouraged to see the reemergence of the advocacy role (the very origins of counseling psychology in the mid-20th century). There are, however, some even broader issues that must be addressed to make such advocacy and continuing scientific and practice roles truly relevant for the 21st century. For future relevance in enhancing and maintaining the field of counseling psychology, I encourage counseling psychologists, especially those at the doctoral level, to consider adopting the more broadly defined role of "learning leaders" as part of their professional identities—persons who see themselves and are seen by others as potentially providing leadership in virtually every setting where counseling psychology, human development, learning, and change can be applied.

The need for counseling psychologists to take on the role of learning leader as part of their professional identity derives substantially from the very roots and values of counseling psychology. The notion of a learning leader is well supported by the foundations of counseling psychology itself. These include the field's (a) emphasis on assets and strengths of human endeavor, (b) understanding of human behavior as resulting from a person–environment interaction, (c) focus on education and career development as lifelong learning processes for individual effectiveness, (d) use of briefer interventions to unlock already existing human potential, (e) appreciation of people holistically as having both strengths and development issues to address, and (f) evolving appreciation of the strengths of diverse, multicultural, and international perspectives. In fact, when examining the roots and values of counseling psychology, there seem to be great parallels between them and current concepts of leadership: (a) integration of strengths-based leadership development approaches (Kaczmarek, 2006; Smith, 2006); (b) contextual and multicultural understanding of leadership effectiveness (Chin & Trimble, 2015); (c) emerging definitions of leadership as enabling learning, development, empowerment, and/or transformation processes (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Hodgson & White, 2001); (d) increasing the need for accelerating leadership role effectiveness (Aviolo & Hannah, 2008; Backus, Keegan, Gluck, & Gulick, 2010); (e) perspectives on leaders as multidimensional, authentic beings (Gardner, Cogliser, Davis, & Dickens, 2011); and (f) rapid development of multicultural and international leadership challenges and competencies (Chin & Trimble, 2015; White & Shullman, 2012).

With psychology as a whole at risk of being absorbed by other disciplines, counseling psychology would seem an obvious place to look for leaders and leadership for the discipline. In fact, there has been an emergence of counseling psychologists within the American Psychological Association volunteer leadership structure over the past 20 years or so (see Fassinger & Shullman, 2017 [this issue]) and in a number of emerging leadership development programs in psychology. However, formal volunteer roles are only one way to look at leadership. Other concepts may provide a broader perspective on the issue. For example, thinking of a counseling psychologist as a scientist-practitioner-advocate-leader creates a different understanding of possibilities for taking action, based on professional knowledge and skills. It presumes a bona fide evidential basis of knowledge, a defined set of skills and competencies applicable to a variety of challenges, and a willingness to act, at least minimally as an individual, to create a socially just environment. The addition of the leader aspect to the accepted scientist–practitioner–advocate model places the focus on counseling psychologists' responsibility to act, and their willingness and ability to work towards as well as with others, to create a collective result with

a larger effect than could be created by any single individual. This would also perhaps imply a willingness to take such a role beyond the confines of our professional disciplines and apply such responsibility and action directly to the contexts affecting the lives of people in everyday life.

Dilemmas for Counseling Psychologists

What stops or has traditionally stopped counseling psychologists (and psychologists as a whole) from largely assuming such a leadership role as part of professional identity? I have identified six significant dilemmas that have contributed to what appears to be our collective reluctance in our field to see counseling psychologists as (learning) leaders. By dilemmas, I mean a series of six difficult choices or persistent problems, usually requiring at any one point in time a choice between at least two equally conclusive alternatives (Kitchener, 1984). These dilemmas identified for counseling psychologists as learning leaders involve: (a) person versus environment, (b) passion versus paycheck, (c) respect versus tolerance, (d) tradition versus innovation, (e) values versus assumptions, and (f) deep mastery versus broader growth.

Person Versus Environment

Most counseling psychologists spend the majority of their careers working mainly with individuals, small groups, or students in classrooms. Despite our work on person–environment interaction, most of us spend our time in relatively few contextual settings. In general, I believe that counseling psychology (and psychology in general) has overly focused on the individual to the exclusion of context and environment. Had a variety of contexts and environments been an active focus of counseling psychologists' work during the past 50 years, we would now be better positioned to work more effectively as a discipline with multiculturally and internationally diverse populations and challenges. We would have perhaps designed better or different intervention and treatment delivery systems, with an enhanced focus on family, neighborhood, workplace, and community contexts. We might also have found a way to include religion and spirituality in context rather than viewing it at times as conceptual competition for psychological views. Gerstein and Shullman (1992) introduced the notion of organizational counseling psychology to address the need for counseling psychologists to think beyond the individual counseling room. The author speculates that the absence of a broad variety of contextual experiences for many counseling psychologists has possibly limited the field's conceptual possibilities. Without the imperative to lead, many counseling psychologists have remained fully content in the safe confines of

the classrooms, counseling rooms, and other limited environs, while the context for human behavior in everyday life multiplies exponentially.

Passion Versus Paycheck

Although there are many dedicated and passionate counseling psychologists serving as psychotherapists in the field, many have followed the reimbursement trail, much like following bread crumbs rather than leaving bread crumbs for others to follow. I have heard many colleagues say over time "I would actually rather be doing 'X,' but I can't get reimbursed for it." This is not an unsympathetic position. Unfortunately, what is financially rewarded at any given moment can both stymy passion over time and actually result in reduced remuneration, as professional services and activities are challenged by increasingly harsher and sharper technological and economic modeling. I speculate that, if counseling psychologists had paid more attention to context in addition to individual identities, there would currently be more options for areas of practice. For example, we might have developed an entire conceptually comprehensive spectrum of care, intervention, treatment, and development, and might not be as hampered by focusing on what is reimbursable by insurance in a medical system, based on privilege rather than need.

Respect Versus Tolerance

All too often in our field, we discover lesser respect or perhaps even merely tolerance for clients, students, and colleagues beyond our more familiar settings of comfort and convenience. The author has overheard colleagues talking quite reluctantly and sometimes even disrespectfully about expanding the scope of their work role through engaging with people and settings for which they have no experience and understanding, such as hospitals, businesses, and rural settings. In contemplating such options, these expansions of traditional work arenas are either looked upon with skepticism or sometimes treated naively as if all contexts were interchangeable. It would seem that, at times, when we are contemplating stretching our reach in work settings we might be too ready to rely on a general tolerance for human beings working within our zone of comfort, rather than striving for the fundamental respect that only comes from an interactive understanding of individuals within specific contexts and experiences. Counseling psychologists as learning leaders would learn to actively engage as practitioners and researchers with client populations in their full contexts, finding the basis for both true respect and understanding, rather than settling for tolerance of clients, students, or research participants. If the learning leader concept of counseling psychology

compelled us to approach other parts of our world with an openness to learning rather than fear, we would find more alliances for our goals, more possibilities in our approaches, and more resolve for perseverance in addressing seemingly intractable issues. For example, Tucker, Williams, Roncoroni, and Heesacker (2017) used a shared community leadership model for their work on health disparities, working with and training community leaders as partners to do their work in the community.

Tradition Versus Innovation

With this dilemma, I am reminded of Thomas Kuhn's (1962, 1970a, 1970b) perspective in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* about the scientific community's (a) conspiracy to maintain the status quo in the face of emergent theories, as well as its (b) unwillingness to see the subjectivity in objectivity-based processes. (Parenthetically, we can recall that it was not until 1992 that Galileo was officially pardoned for heresy by the Catholic Church for stating in 1633 that the earth rotates around the sun.) Counseling psychology has enjoyed a relatively stable tradition based on Midwestern U.S. views of life and culture until recent years, following the emergence of multicultural and international foci in counseling psychology. Innovation usually requires perseverance in the face of resistance. The traditions of counseling psychology have been strong and have perhaps unintentionally resulted in discouraging or slowing down innovation in the field. For example, a common response by practicing psychologists to discussions of new counseling approaches, specific applied contexts, or more controversial areas of study (like abuse or harassment) has been the immediate questioning of the ethics of newer approaches, or collective lack of curiosity about approaches to counseling beyond the tried and true. Perhaps we as counseling psychologists have been fearful of stepping into unknown areas to try new things in a responsible and systematic way, fearing risk of failure or criticism. Some of us have even been reluctant to share with other colleagues new things that are actually being tried. (I have personally participated in private conversations about this very issue.) The need to fit in with established ways of doing things in the search for a professionally legitimate identity (e.g., big C, little c) may well have unnecessarily impeded innovation.

Values Versus Assumptions

Counseling psychology provides a strong set of professional and disciplinary values as part of most training; however, values serve mainly as hypothetical constructs until strongly tested. There is a significant amount of counseling

psychology culture considered "nice," which can come with a reluctance to confront or create conflict in the face of conflicted values. In my experience, counseling psychologists often try to "nice" a situation, which can lead to a watering down of direction, perspective, or results. Although this may be the outcome of overdoing a strengths-based emphasis on interpersonal skills and collaboration, it can lead to unintentional compromise of progress. By counseling psychologists having a professional identity as a learning leader, they could be empowered or emboldened to find a stronger role in such situations, perhaps leading to stronger, more effective, channels of action. For example, might the field of counseling psychology be in a much clearer position with respect to masters-level training today if counseling psychology had seen itself as providing learning leadership for these issues 20 years ago? Another example might involve how counseling psychologists view concepts of confidentiality. Might there be conditions for which confidentiality is not the best approach, and could even be routinely harmful to client welfare? In the rapid emergence of a technologically based world, the notion of privacy as we have known it, especially in functions of daily life, may well disappear in due time. What development of alternative interpersonal mechanisms or processes can counseling psychologists lead to create or gain the trust and respect of students, clients, and research participants?

Deep Mastery Versus Broader Growth (Specialist vs. Generalist)

This last dilemma has been ever present in all communities of knowledge workers and is probably as old as the development of science and organizations themselves. This dilemma compels us to ask, on the one hand, "Should we learn to do something really well and as deeply as possible?" or, on the other hand, "Do we look to the right and left of our current view to see the impact of other approaches or foci in the world?" For example, counseling psychologists, like other psychologists, are being pressed to specialize in the modern healthcare system. In the era of specialty panels, specialty credentials, evidence-based practice, and pay-for-performance approaches, counseling psychologists have gravitated to where we see we can fit, often selecting client foci or research areas aligned with continued reimbursement—we follow the money. Although prevention has been a core area for counseling psychology, for example, there has been a void in leadership in U.S. psychology to establish prevention as a critical part of the U.S. healthcare system.

   Some of this tendency for specialization may be hard-wired and certainly reinforced in much of our training. Psychological science and science in general has long been populated by the stories of specialists laboring methodically for years and years to perfect, accept, or reject a limited hypothesis or

set of constructs. Arthur Clarke (1972), famous for "2001: A Space Odyssey," formulated three laws of prediction, two of which are relevant to this point:

1. "When a distinguished but elderly scientist states that something is possible, they are almost certainly right. When they state that something is impossible, they are very probably wrong" (p. 14).
2. "The only way of discovering the limits of the possible is to venture a little way past them into the impossible" (pp. 20–21).

When the author refers to broader growth and perspective, it is in reference to real innovators of the past century like Albert Einstein and perhaps Steven Jobs. Many of these innovators appear to have resided at times at the interactional space of two theories, two disciplines, or at the corner of the "possible and impossible." They mentally ventured into interactional spaces between and across boundaries where others have heretofore feared to go because it was outside existing established expertise. The parallel to counseling psychology as a discipline is a collective reluctance to lead and embrace new approaches, favoring the strategy of sticking with the tried and true. We have hung our hats on psychotherapy and traditional counseling approaches far longer than current environmental trends would indicate to be effective. For example, why are we so collectively worried about the capacity of artificial intelligence or big data to create effective counseling and advice? What could we be doing if we could apply our counseling psychology skills sets to broader scale issues or larger-scale interventions? Our counseling psychology science-based discipline, unlike perhaps other counseling-related disciplines, not only allows us, but compels us as leaders, to use our scientific approach and methods to both systematically describe and measure our existing anchors as well as suggest and pursue departure points. We have allowed highly inflated schisms between scientific psychology and the practice of psychology to inhibit counseling psychologists from integrating our best concepts and approaches. And this may have cost us a lot as a discipline, a science, and as practicing counseling psychologists.

Facing and Embracing Ambiguity

These dilemmas raise points of ambiguity where the way forward is unclear. Thus, feelings of professional uncertainty may have inhibited counseling psychologists' opportunities to really explore new approaches and venues for the science and practice of counseling psychology. Where do counseling psychologists have the opportunity to develop a new approach to practice, work effectively with a population within its own context, provide services to those

with no access, or ask research questions that take them out of the university or traditional avenues of grant funding, data collection, and research publication? From an economic viewpoint, there are already too many people who can do much of what we do in practice, and even in some areas of research, can do it with less training or for decreased remuneration.

Despite much effort, there is still limited scientific evidence to support our wishful notions that doctoral-level counseling psychologists can do substantial counseling work better than a variety of masters-level practitioners, or that no one else can do it well enough (Baldwin & Imel 2013; Wampold & Imel, 2015). But the need to resolve the ambiguity—that pool of options without defined conclusions or pathways—tends to turn counseling psychology back to the tried and true, the known, the certain.

This challenge of leading in circumstances where ambiguity is heightened has many parallels in other areas of endeavor. Many leaders of for-profit and nonprofit organizations struggle daily with major decisions about direction and strategy where there are no obviously right or best answers. A number of avenues appear on the horizon and what can look like the best approach today may look very different in a matter of weeks or months. Therefore, one of the major leadership challenges of the future for virtually all leaders is learning to deal with accelerated change and almost constant resulting ambiguity. Learning to manage the concomitant feelings of uncertainty and doubt that accompany such ongoing ambiguity is key to mobilizing the human resources necessary for groups and organizations to act effectively. Learning to lead ongoing processes and cycles fraught with ambiguity and uncertainty, could positively affect virtually every aspect of modern life. The ability to both lead such processes and redesign them in real time for the future may well be key to the future success of counseling psychology.

It is, indeed, time to embrace a scientist–practitioner–advocate–leader model for counseling psychology. Such a model would be one where training would integrate and encourage the development of a somewhat different set of skills, which I refer to as *learning leadership skills*. These skills are based on the premise that counseling psychologists can be the progenitors of new learning, development, growth and change models, processes and approaches. The scientist–practitioner–advocate–leader identity can give counseling psychologists major roles to play in researching big questions, developing new interventions, and determining organizational approaches to systems of healthcare, education, business, organizations, and community. Counseling psychologists with such skills can lead wherever they can and think they should go, without apology. Counseling psychology needs to embrace the ambiguity, uncertainty, and challenge of this enormous moment in our country's history regarding health, education, work, and general welfare and be

prepared to lead, not just follow or adapt, to evolving or devolving systems of care, learning, labor, and sustenance.

Learning Leadership Behaviors for Counseling Psychologists

What are some learning leadership behaviors? One place to start thinking about a set of learning leader behaviors could come from the general leadership skills required to address ambiguity in general. The leadership skills needed are those required for managing ambiguity and uncertainty at multiple levels of human organization—individual, group, organization, community— and skills of agile learning. Based on research by Hodgson and White (2001) and later White and Shullman (2010), there are eight skills that have the potential to address these significant future possibilities for counseling psychologists: (a) curiosity and motivation by mystery, (b) risk tolerance, (c) future scanning, (d) tenacity, (e) personal enthusiam and excitement of others, (f) flexibility, (g) simplifying, and (h) focus. These will be described next.

Curiosity and Motivation by Mystery

This skill set involves an abiding curiosity to do things differently, better, or to figure out why things work well in different systems and situations. These skills help to generate and address broader, more significant questions in counseling psychology and psychology in general. What else besides face-to-face counseling could be, or could become, a primary medium of intervention for helping others? How could we train people to become really effective counselors in half the time that this training now takes? Do we need human beings to do effective counseling? What parts of counseling psychology are transportable across cultures and what parts are not? How do we really prepare for a global counseling psychology? Part of this motivation by mystery is the willingness to engage in difficult learning because it may require confronting the fear of failure, losing perceived knowledge-based status, or learning to do professional things in first time trial learning. As counseling psychologists, many of us have excelled at traditional schooling and testing, and through our graduate training learned masterfully how, when faced with something we do not know how to do or answer, we can find ways to keep heads down, stay in our relative comfort zones, and hope others will address the issue. Sometimes we have retrospectively described from a safe distance the behavioral processes involved in others' successes and failures.

Engaging our curiosity and motivation by mystery may help to lead us away from our individual and collective tendencies to dwell on fear of

failure, or from our need to be seen as professionally competent at all times. Enhancing our motivation by mystery could serve as a vehicle to enable us to engage in truly difficult learning or be more actively willing to address seemingly intractable problems and challenges. Instead of avoiding the questions that are too complex as they often appear in the real world, we must learn to keep those questions in the forefront. We need to fill our graduate training faculties, programs, research labs, and practice offices with people who are excited to explore their lack of knowledge rather than those who will keep producing the same knowledge and approaches over and over again with great certainty. As Margaret Meade once noted, "We are now at a point where we must educate our children in what no one knew yesterday, and prepare our schools for what no one knows yet" (Zehner, 1994, p. 3).

Risk Tolerance

The second of these learning leadership skills is risk tolerance. In this context, risk tolerance means sometimes making decisions when necessary despite incomplete information, as well as tolerating the risk of failure. (This is not intended to suggest that presuming or drawing premature scientific conclusions is appropriate.) Risk tolerance implies an understanding that there is a risk at the onset. This creates some parallel to courage. To be courageous, one must know there is potential danger. Perhaps counseling psychologists may be less than willing to take risks because much risk has been eliminated from our day-to-day lives. Many of the risks people currently seem to take are restricted to leisure activity, where risk is "an experience we seek—one that we will pay handsomely to have at times—such as bungee jumping, skydiving, extreme sports" (Hodgson & White, 2001, p. 48). This may be because our personal and professional lives are freer of risk. Many of us can now work from multiple sites or are working in areas with predictable groups of people. Barring unanticipated upheaval, the roles many counseling psychologists assume at work are relatively stable. Going against this trend, we are currently being barraged with more information than we can possibly take in, introducing levels of ambiguity for knowledge-based professionals. This may indicate a need to upgrade intuition skills to navigate this information avalanche.

Future Scanning

Another critical counseling leadership issue is being a *future scanner*. This is a skill underlying the dilemma of balancing depth with breadth of knowledge and understanding. Werner von Braun described basic research as

"what I am doing when I don't know what I am doing" (Von Braun, as cited in Arendt, 1981, p. 360). Is the field of counseling psychology training people to ask probing questions at the right times, even in areas outside of their acknowledged expertise, even when detailed or technical knowledge is lacking? Are we helping ourselves and others better see connections between ostensibly disparate areas? Are we encouraging the creation of what our professional lives could look like in the future? For example, rather than waiting for the electronic world to completely obliterate confidentiality as we have come to know it, are we training counseling psychologists to design successful learning interventions that might not depend on confidentiality? Can we find alternative methods to address the issues that currently drive the need for confidentiality?

Tenacity

A fourth leadership skill set revolves around tenacity. Tenacious, well-trained counseling psychologists would be scientist–practitioner–advocates–leaders who act like proverbial "dogs with a bone," who are at home with conflicting ideas, approaches, and immediate reality, and who love the "thrill of the chase." Are we training psychologists to proactively respond when someone says that something could not possibly be done or when something has never even been tried before? In light of recent resource challenges in institutions of higher education, for example, are we learning and applying skills to create newer interventions or research that is more fiscally supportable or sustainable, especially when some of the work may be considered adversarial or irrelevant to current approaches?

Personal Excitement and Enthusiasm of Others

A fifth key counseling leadership skill focuses on creating both personal enthusiasm and excitement in others and in other disciplines for what we are about. Are we able to be personally invigorated ourselves and also invigorate colleagues in the broadest sense? For example, if you took your current income and livelihood out of the equation, would you still be seeking to do counseling psychology as you are today? Do counseling psychology students look to their faculty and mentors in the field as a source of energy and optimism, or is our field overly focused on reminding everyone, including ourselves, how hard and complex everything really is and why we cannot do anything about it? Winston Churchill (also possibly Abraham Lincoln) was credited with once having described success as "stumbling from failure to failure without a loss of enthusiasm" (as cited in Langworth, 2008).

Flexibility

A sixth proposed leadership skill for counseling psychology is flexibility—a necessary skill, as no one can know the future with certainty. Counseling psychologists should be good agents of change, influencing others about the need to change by reaching out, listening, and working with those who are less enthusiastic. We have historically prepared many counseling psychologists to work in isolation or in very small groups, forming few alliances, often eschewing large groups or organizationally focused behavior. We are now just beginning to prepare our newer psychologists for roles in areas such as integrated practice, group practice outside of counseling centers, and interdisciplinary treatment and research teams. We must disavow the tendency to want to go it either safe or alone, and be willing to give and take with others—to be both determined and flexible as day-to-day social and behavioral science professionals.

There are a number of serious issues facing counseling psychology today. How does counseling psychology stay relevant and flexible when strong programs are closing? How do we develop new approaches when federal resources for such efforts are drying up? If future counseling psychologists cannot find internships or competitive job placements, what can and is the field prepared to do? What if we cannot continue in counseling psychology as we have in the past? Can we both create and sell the change we want or need to make?

Simplifying

An important skill set for the future counseling psychologist leader will involve the ability to simplify—the ability to make the complex simple. This is not at all about oversimplification where complex matters lose their meaning. It is rather about the ability to get to the essence of things, communicating that essence with clarity to multiple audiences, and also creating symbols and metaphors that facilitate the communication of that essence in meaningful and memorable ways. The concept, for example, of emotional intelligence, albeit somewhat scientifically controversial, conveys much in two words to many audiences. It clearly conveys the idea that talent does not rest alone in cognitive versatility and school grades, and that something emotional may weigh in equally with its cognitive cousin. Much of the organizational and business world now uses such a concept to communicate the need for both task and relational skill in effective leadership and business outcomes, concepts that have been available since the 1950s but have more compelling meaning in broader audiences when presented in terms of "emotional intelligence."

With the overwhelming amount of information available today, the skill of detecting essence becomes even more significant because there is a greater need than ever to translate the work of counseling psychology to increasingly broader audiences without losing the sources and foundation from whence such information came. Perhaps the field of psychology in general has been overly successful in giving psychology away. One can point to numerous examples of disciplines where developments in psychology in general or counseling psychology specifically has been taken by others, reformulated for essence and translated into more user-friendly terms. The days of being mesmerized by highly trained professionals spewing multisyllabic terminology are gone. All terms can now be googled—it is the timeliness and relevance of the application and the simplicity and essence of the translation that will make such situations successful for counseling psychologists in the future. Most of the public now has a working understanding of the term "psychobabble." Simplifying skills can give counseling psychologists powerful leadership opportunities to direct conversations, dialogues, agendas, strategies, and plans for action.

Focus

The last of the ambiguity-centered learning leadership skills is the skill set of focus. Henry Ford (likely misattributed) is given general credit (along with several other candidates including Henry James, Vince Lombardi, and Hanna More) for describing obstacles as "those frightful things you see when you take your eyes off your goal" (Clinton, 2000). In the current environment of continuing economic, social, and political challenges, counseling psychologists must have the ability to keep ourselves, our discipline, and our communities compellingly focused on what is right, and what is important, and what are the best possibilities. The ability and willingness to focus on the "critical few" requires that counseling psychologists embrace some inevitable conflict, learn the precious value of time, and make at times difficult choices about what we will or will not do.

If counseling psychology sets its sights on a fewer number of significantly defined goals for the field, might we collectively challenge the status quo and take our field further? Might we be in a better position to recognize what we have to offer in various systems of human endeavor? For example, knowing that it is likely that one half of all current professional jobs across occupations may well not exist anymore in the not-so-distant future, do we not want to play a leadership role in giving attention and focus to those dynamics that could create that future? How might we create a system where everyone has easy access to a counselor from their homes? How do we create behavioral systems that prevent disease?

Possibilities

I am suggesting that rather than wait to respond to the immediate challenges we see for the field of counseling psychology, the field can take on the concept of counseling psychologists as development and learning leaders and embrace a broad definition of leadership as part of the role and core identity of counseling psychology—a scientist-practitioner-advocate-leader model.

If we can truly learn from our experience and embrace the unknown as our destiny rather than trying to stop, control, or ignore it at every turn—if we can act as learning leaders in practice, if we can get out of our comfort zones about how you come to know and do things, if the field actively asks bigger questions or takes on larger scope issues, if we look outside of ourselves to see what is coming next, if the field digs into our major challenges with a singularity of tenacity and focus, if we come forward and learn to enthuse others at both individual and organizational levels to share our challenges, if we make appropriate midcourse corrections as we embrace the change all around us, if we make what counseling psychologists do both essential and understandable to those we serve and work with in even a few focused areas, counseling psychology will become the face of psychology of the future. Counseling psychologists can take on a mantle of leadership where we see ourselves leveraging learning, growth, development, and change at all levels of human organization. With that sense of leadership agency, counseling psychology can both create and change the future in ways we have not yet imagined as scientists, practitioners, advocates, and leaders.

Author's Note

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

Funding

References

Arendt, H. (1981). *Vita activa, oder, Vom Tätigen Leben*. Munich, Germany: R. Piper.

Aviolo, B. J., & Hanna, S. T. (2008). Developmental readiness: Accelerating leader development. *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research*, *60*, 331–347. doi:10.1037/1065-9293.60.4.331

Bass, B. M., & Riggio, R. E. (2006). *Transformational leadership* (2nd ed.). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Backus, C., Keegan, K., Gluck, C., & Gulik, L. M. V. (2010). Accelerating leadership development via immersive learning and cognitive apprenticeship. *International Journal of Training and Development*, *14*, 144–148. doi:10.1111/j.1468-2419.2010.00347.x

Baldwin, S. A., & Imel, Z. E. (2013). Therapist effects: Findings and methods. In M. J. Lambert (Ed.) *Bergin and Garfield's handbook of psychotherapy and behavior change* (pp. 258–297). New York, NY: Wiley.

Boyak, K. W. (2004). Mapping knowledge domains: Characterizing PNAS. *PNAS*, *101*(suppl 1), 5192–5199. doi:10.1073/pnas.0307509100

Chin, J. L., & Trimble, J. E. (2015). *Diversity and leadership*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

Clarke, A. C. (1972). Hazards of prophecy: The failure of imagination. In A. C. Clarke (Ed.), *Profiles of the future: An inquiry into the limits of the possible* (Rev. ed., pp. 12–21). New York, NY: Bantam Books.

Clinton, W. J. (2000). Commencement address at Eastern Michigan University in Ypsilanti, Michigan. *Weekly Compilation Of Presidential Documents*, *36*, 18–19.

Delgado-Romero, E. A., Lau, M. Y., & Shullman, S. L. (2012). A view through the kaleidoscope: Themes and patterns in the history of counseling psychology. In N. Fouad, & J. Carter (Eds.), *APA handbook of counseling psychology* (pp. 3–29). Washington, DC: APA Books.

Fassinger, R. E., & Shullman, S. L. (2017). Leadership and counseling psychology: What should we know? Where could we go? *The Counseling Psychologist*, *45*, 927–964. doi:10.1177/0011000017744253

Fassinger, R. E., & O'Brien, K. M. (2000). Career counseling with college women: A scientist-practitioner-advocate model of intervention. In D. Luzzo (Ed.), *Career development of college students: Translating theory and research into practice* (pp. 253–265). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Forrest, L. M. (2008). The ever evolving identity of counseling psychologists: Musing of the Society of Counseling Psychology President. *The Counseling Psychologist*, *36*, 281–289. doi:10.1177/0011000007313552

Gardner, W. L., Cogliser, C. C., Davis, K. M., & Dickens, M. P. (2011). Authentic leadership: A review of the literature and research agenda. *The Leadership Quarterly*, *22*, 1120–1145. doi:10.1016/j.leaqua.2011.09.007

Gerstein, L. H., & Shullman, S. L. (1992). Counseling psychology and the workplace: The emergence of organizational counseling psychology. In S. D. Brown, & R.W. Lent (Eds.), *Handbook of counseling psychology*, (2nd ed., pp. 581–625). Oxford, England: John Wiley & Sons.

Hodgson, P., & White, R. P. (2001). *Relax: It's only uncertainty*. London, England: Financial Times Prentice Hall.

Kaczmarek, P. (2006). Counseling psychology and strength-based counseling: A promise yet to fully materialize. *The Counseling Psychologist*, *34*, 90–95. doi:10.1177/0011000005282371

Kitchener, K. S. (1984). Intuition, critical evaluation and ethical principles: The foundation for ethical decisions in counseling psychology. *The Counseling Psychologist*, *12*, 43–55. doi:10.1177/0011000084123005

Kuhn, T. S. (1962). *The structure of scientific revolutions*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Kuhn, T. S. (1970a). Logic of discovery or psychology of research? In I. Lakatos, & R. A. Langworth, (Ed.). (2008). *Churchill by himself: The definitive collection of quotations*. New York, NY: PublicAffairs.

Kuhn, T. S. (1970b). *The structure of scientific revolutions* (2nd ed.). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Mead, M. (2001). The school in American culture. *Society*, *39*, 54–62. doi:10.1007/bf02712620

Musgrave (Eds.), *Criticism and the growth of knowledge* (pp. 1–24). Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

Peterson, C. A. (2007). A historical look at psychology and the scientist-practitioner model. *The Counseling Psychologist*, *50*, 758–765.

Smith, E. J. (2006). The strength-based counseling model. *The Counseling Psychologist*, *34*, 134–144. doi:10.1177/0011000005282364

Tucker, C. M., Williams, J. L., Roncoroni, J., & Heesacker, M. (2017). A socially just leadership approach to community-partnered research for reducing health disparities. *The Counseling Psychologist*, *45*, 781–809. doi:10.1177/0011000017722213

Wampold, B. E., & Imel, Z. E. (2015). *The great psychotherapy debate: The evidence for what makes psychotherapy work* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.

White, R. P., & Shullman, S. L. (2010). Acceptance of uncertainty as an indicator of effective leadership. *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research*, *62*, 94–104. doi:10.1037/a0019991

White, R. P., & Shullman, S. L. (2012). Thirty years of global leadership training: A cross-cultural odyssey. *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research*, *64*, 268–278. doi:10.1037/a0031654

Zehner, A. L. (1994). *How they work in Indiana: Business education partnerships*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana Department of Education.

Author Biography

Sandra L. Shullman, PhD, is a managing partner of the Executive Development Group, LLC, based in Columbus, OH, which is engaged in training leaders globally. She has taught for the Fuqua School of Business at Duke University, is part of the Duke Corporate Education Global Educator Network, and has taught for the HEC Business School in Paris, Doha, Shanghai, and Beijing. She is a Fellow of the Society of Counseling Psychology and Divisions 1 and 31 of the American Psychological Association (APA). She is a founding faculty member and executive committee Chair of APA's Leadership Institute for Women in Psychology, and she currently serves on the APA Board of Directors.