

Intersubjectness as a Resource to Maintain Mental Health

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Introduction. Intersubjectness is a trait of human interaction that is characterized by the agency evolving. As a result of being related in intersubjectness the participants of the interaction become more reflexive, creative, responsible and active. The integral characteristics that shows growth as a result of intersubjectness is agency. In other words, intersubjectness is an interaction that builds mutual development of the participants. The examples of intersubjectness include, but are not limited to situations when people are inspired by the interaction with the others; when the facilitation process is on; when true, non-manipulative help takes place. Being a strong factor in developing the human potential, intersubjectness helps to maintain and strengthen the mental health.

Purpose. The aim is to investigate intersubjectness and its potential for human development and maintaining mental health.

Methodology. The current trends in psychoanalysis suggest a phenomenon known as intersubjectivity (Blackstone, 2006). There is a critical difference between intersubjectness and intersubjectivity. As long as the latter is a form of connection of two unique subjectivities, the intersubjectness is based on agency of a person and his/her ability to put the initialization of activity within oneself. The intersubjectivity is a term used in psychoanalysis, the intersubjectness is now developed within the thesaurus of L.S Vygotsky's cultural-historical psychology and the agency approach. In our research we try to combine qualitative and quantitative methods. The questionnaire of intersubjectness has been created and is now in process of standardization. The experimental situation of the modified game of checkers has been studied.

Results. We searched for the experimental situation that could reveal the basic characteristics of intersubjectness. So we modified the game of checkers – at first the students played the usual game, and afterword they played with the aim to achieve win-win situation: there should be two checkers on the board in the end – one black, one white. This turned the situation from competition to cooperation. We also asked the students about their level of satisfaction after each game. As a rule, the modified variant of checkers gave more satisfaction. Very often students chose to play this modified variant instead of the classical one. Thus in this experimental situation we could model the intersubjectness, as the participants had one goal, it was cooperative, not competitive, and this variant of game gave much joy and satisfaction. So intersubjectness is a complex process of human interaction, and it can be hypothesized that intersubjectness is a resource to maintain mental health. We develop as personalities in the interaction with others, and most complex and facilitating interactions, such as intersubjectness, make a strong contribution to the improving of mental health and psychological wellbeing of a person.

Limitations and strengths of the study. The limitation of the study is the number of participants (12 so far), but the investigation is to be continued on the bigger sample. Another limitation is connected with certain subjectivity in the interpretation of the experimental results. The strength of the study is that it includes real experiment and analyzes real behavior of people in certain situations. Another strong feature of the research is that it is based on L.S. Vygotsky's cultural-historical theory, and the experiment is both diagnostic and developing.

Social value. The value of the research is connected with the possibilities to explore the potential of human development and the higher, more complex forms of interaction. In the beginning of the 21 century we should study not only the diseases and negative aspects, but also the farther frontiers of human nature (A.Maslow).

Conclusions. The intersubjectness can be viewed as a powerful resource to maintain mental health and develop one's personal potential. We should search in the sphere of interpersonal relations for the better possibilities of psychological help for those who need it. Studying intersubjectness shows us that the strategies of cooperation, mutual help and enriching relations have a good impact on the person's wellbeing and can be a starting point of the future psychological growth, which means being closer to mental health, not illness.

So, the concept of intersubjectness can be an important one while reflecting on the psychology of mental health. Some experimental researches have already started, and it tends to be a promising area of understanding the personal development potential.

Keywords: mental health, psychology, personal development, creativity, activity.

References.

Blackstone, J. (2006) Intersubjectivity and nonduality in the psychotherapeutic relationship *The Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*, 38 (1), 25-40.