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Theory of Securing

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Abstract

This article outlines the theory of securing. It explains the feelings of insecurity of ordinary people and how they secure themselves. Securing is a basic social psychological process of "becoming" where the person's selfhood is formed by how they continuously deal with their feelings of insecurity. This process has two interrelated stages: (1) instantaneous relieving and (2) honesting. When they engage instantaneous relieving and increasingly trapped in a vicious cycle, they become a lesser version of themselves. However, when they transition into honesting, they recover and continuously realize a better version of themselves. This theory has implications in helping professions and future research on personal growth and optimal functioning.

Keywords: feelings of insecurity, instant relief, self, becoming, honesty

Introduction

To feel secure is central in our lives. Our sense of security is easily affected and volatile. Feelings of insecurity are distressful and as the magnitude of these feelings increase over time, they become more painful to bear. Thus, feelings of insecurity are a main concern in life. The theory of securing explains how a person continuously resolves this main concern by securing themselves and thus determining their selfhood and their place in the world. This mid-range grounded theory is generated by generalizing the theory of pain resolving (Oh et al., 2016) outside of the substantive area in which the theory emerged.

Methodology

The goal of this classic grounded theory study is to extend the grounded theory of pain resolving in addiction and recovery (Oh et al., 2016) outside the substantive area of addiction and recovery. When generalized and transferred outside of the substantive area of addiction and recovery, the theory of pain resolving was modified by new data. Theoretical sampling was carried out on relevant literature that supplied secondary data "to provide as broad and diverse range of theoretical ideas" (Glaser, 1978, p. 150) on the extended area as possible. The literature that is used as secondary data in this study includes publications within and outside of the substantive area of addiction and recovery, those that share people's struggles and distresses in life either as an individual or a group within personal, relational, professional, and entrepreneurial domains. As the

internet is an abundant source of available secondary data to extend and expand the original theory, these publications were sourced from the internet. These publications include online articles that contain personal stories, reflections and opinions. A total of 143 online articles were sourced and collected from internet websites using Google search. The search was guided and directed by theoretical sampling. These online articles were sourced from various websites as per Appendix 1. Secondary data were also sourced from academic articles (i.e. Bigus, 1996; Carmona & Whiting, 2021; Shepherd, 2003; Wojciszke & Struzynska-Kujalowicz, 2007) and books (i.e Bromley, 1993; Brown, 2012; Forsyth, 2010; Maslow, 1971; Rogers, 1961, 1963; Sarno, 2001).

Theoretical sampling determines the direction of data collection where the process of data collection is "controlled by the emerging theory" (Glaser, 1978, p. 36). When the literature was reviewed, selective coding was carried out using main concepts from the original theory while "staying open [to new codes that may emerge and] keeping in mind the current categories" (Glaser, 1978, p. 47). Together with constant comparative method (Glaser, 1998) and memoing where "memos track the growth of conceptual ideas as they emerged" (Glaser, 2014, p. 60), new and existing concepts emerged, expanded and modified. Concepts and ideas in the new memos were constantly compared with the concepts in the original theory leading to a modified core variable to extend the original theory (Oh et al., 2016) to fit a wider range of people.

Memos that contain the outline of the full theory were constantly written to integrate new concepts and ideas that emerge to the original theory. Further insights were gained from these memos which led to new ideas, codes and data collection. Data collection was stopped when saturation of data was achieved. Memos were sorted and a modified outline of the mid-range theory emerged. Writing-up of the full theory was carried out in order to finalize the theory and "stop unending conceptualization [and] data coverage" (Glaser, 2012, p. 1) of the infinite accessibility and availability of data on the internet.

Pain resolving as the core variable identified in Oh et al. (2016) was modified with the emergence of *securing* as the core variable of the mid-range grounded theory. Following the emergence of feelings of insecurity as the main concern with security attributes as its concept, *securing* emerged as the action carried out by people in resolving their feelings of insecurity. According to Glaser (2007), new categories and properties arise to modify the theory to provide grab, fitness, workability, and relevance. Thus, from this study, new categories and concepts such as feelings of insecurity, security attributes, and securing (as the core category) emerged to modify concepts in the substantive grounded theory of pain resolving in addiction and recovery. They "do not change [the] meaning of the theory, they just extend and modify it and give a broader generalization" (Glaser, 2007, p. 80).

Securing

An ordinary person's major concern in their life is their feelings of insecurity where they perennially feel unassured and vulnerable because they perceive a lack in their mix of security attributes due to insecure experiences that occur throughout their lives. Thus, the person resolves this major concern by securing themselves continuously. Security attributes are personal characteristics and resources that are essential for a person's functioning and they specify the person's selfhood. The person's selfhood refers to their distinctive character. Alger (2014) stated: "Identity is a grouping of attributes, qualities

and values that define how we view ourselves, and perhaps how we think other people see us" (n.p.) and a loss of identity results in "increased levels of generalised anxiety, low self-esteem, depression, a loss of self-confidence, social anxiety, isolation, chronic loneliness, all of which threaten our ability to connect with other people" (n.p.).

Thus, securing is a basic social psychological process of "becoming." When the person is securing themselves, they are continuously resolving their distressful feelings of insecurity through gaining the security attributes that they perceive themselves lacking due to the insecure experiences that occur throughout their lives. Their selfhood is formed based on the mix of security attributes that they currently possess and how they secure themselves. As a result, the mix expresses their identity, existence and potential. Their identity refers to who they are, their existence, their life, and potential--what they could possibly achieve and who they could possibly become. Rogers (1961) observed that it is a person's "tendency to actualize himself, to become his potentialities, to express and activate all the capacities of the organism" (p. 351). Any lack that they perceive in their mix of security attributes could be seen as their potential.

Each person is differentiated by their own distinctive mix of security attributes. These security attributes are inter-related and are associated to the person's (1) survival, their continuity of life; (2) connection, their bonds and interactions with others; (3) career and work, their job, vocation and occupation; (4) finance and possession, their assets; (5) education, their formal and informal training; (6) well-being, their health and fitness; (7) ability, their skills and capability; (8) image, the impression they present to others; (9) power, their capacity to direct and regulate themselves and influence others, (10) passion and purpose, their goals and interests; (11) validation; their social acceptance and respect, and (12) goodness; their virtues and morals. These security attributes are valued by the person and resources that help the person to function. The person's selfhood is self-organizing based on their mix of security attributes. It is activated by the person's securing process.

Securing has two inter-related stages: (1) instantaneous relieving and (2) honesting. The person has a natural tendency to engage in instantaneous relieving. However, a person may consciously implement honesting as a strategy to resolve their feelings of insecurity without getting trapped in instantaneous relieving.

When the person engages in instantaneous relieving, they gain instant relief for their feelings of insecurity. They utilize a combination of instant relievers to obtain the security attributes that they perceive themselves lacking due to the insecure experiences that occur throughout their lives. The instant relief is short term, and temporary. They feel more insecure as they persistently and increasingly perceive a lack in their mix of security attributes due to the insecure experiences that occur in their lives. They may experience continual losses in their mix of security attributes as they continue to pursue instant relief. Consequently, they are trapped in a vicious cycle. As a result, they progressively become a lesser version of themselves where they increasingly feel insecure, disempowered, dysfunctional, display immaturity, and disconnected as time passes. Rogers (1961) stated that they have a "static, fixed, unfeeling, impersonal type of functioning" (p. 66). They are not able to "engage with the world from a place of worthiness" (Brown, 2012, p. 37) and are "disengaged from active participation in normal social networks" and "finally excluded from their social networks" (Bigus, 1996, p. 15). Death may be the person's instant reliever when their feeling of insecurity grows

more painful as their perception of lack and loss in their security attributes persists and increases.

Meanwhile, honesting is a strategy where the person consciously implements. While instantaneous relieving is fixated on short term relief for the person's feelings of insecurity, honesting as a strategy focuses on longer term resolution for the feelings of insecurity. It is a strategy where the person is being honest by connecting with trusted-others in order to support their recovering process. A person transitions from instantaneous relieving to honesting when their increased distressful feelings of insecurity led them to gain a moment of clarity that engaging in instantaneous relieving had brought them false feelings of security. It has increasingly made them feel insecure once these feelings of security wear out. Thus, they realize that their efforts in engaging in instantaneous relieving are futile. They may also realize that they might experience less distress if they seek help. In honesting, the person faces their feelings of insecurity and their vulnerability fully with their trusted-others with whom they have connections. They gain the security attributes that they perceive themselves lacking and/or lost through their connection with their trusted-others. Rogers (1961) observed that "helping relationships" (p. 40) are formed and they "usually are intended to facilitate growth" (p. 40). By implementing honesting, the person is increasingly free from instantaneous relieving and supported in their recovering process. In the recovering process, they continuously realize a better version of themselves. They increasingly feel secure, empowered, functional, display maturity and connected. Rogers (1963) described a "fully-functioning person [that emerged from a] helping relationship" (p. 22). A person may implement honesting without being trapped in instantaneous relieving when they have clarity that they need to seek help from trusted-others.

A person could also experience their feelings of insecurity as a unit of interconnected persons. Members of a unit experience, influence, contribute and reinforce one another's feelings of insecurity, ways of resolving these feelings (either instantaneous relieving or honesting) and selfhood in order to mutually form the unit's collective feelings of insecurity, resolution methods (either instantaneous relieving or honesting) and selfhood and vice versa. A unit is commonly a family, couple, group, organization or community. Thus, the securing process that is undergone by the person may apply to the unit which operates like an individual person interacting with their external environment. Forsyth (2010) identified the unit as a group with social identity that has "two or more individuals who are connected by and within social relationships" (Forsyth, 2004, p. 3). It has "a sense of we and us, as well as a sense of they" (Forsyth, 2010, p. 4).

The Major Concern: Feelings of insecurity

A person feels insecure when they perceive themselves lacking in their mix of security attributes due to the insecure experiences that occur throughout their lives. They are dissatisfied with their mix of security attributes and subsequently perceive and experience a deficiency and loss. Brown (2012) observed:

everyone is hyper-aware of the lack. Everything from safety and love to money and resources feels restricted or lacking. We spend inordinate amounts of time calculating how much we have, want, and don't have, and how much everyone else has, needs and wants. (p. 24)

Feelings of insecurity are a person's distressful feelings of being unassured and vulnerable. They are comprised of a mix of the feelings of (1) inadequacy, not good enough and lesser; (2) un-belongingness, alone, unaccepted and unloved; (3) unsafety, unprotected; (4) worthlessness, low self-esteem; (5) emptiness, aimless; and (6) hopelessness, uselessness and powerlessness. Manifesting from these feelings are (7) distressful emotions and physical sensations. Common distressful emotions that a person experiences are shame, guilt, fear, anxiety, depression, resentment and anger. Together with these emotions, the person experiences aroused and tense physical sensations. These physical sensations are also part of the physical distress that the person experiences. Selva (2017) noted: "People get 'butterflies in the stomach' onstage or on a first date, while others who anger easily are described as 'hot-headed'" (n.p.).

Insecure experiences that occur throughout the person's life largely trigger and exacerbate their perception of lack in their mix of security attributes. These insecure experiences could be personally attributed and of by "others." Insecure experiences that are personally attributed are losses and deficiencies that originate from the person. Jordan (2018) shared: "I don't mean to be negative, but there is no cure for faulty connective tissue. No cure for your own DNA" (n.p.).

The insecure experiences by "others" undergone by the person are due to "others" that have intimate, close, familial, and social interactions and connections with the person. They may include judgment, abandonment, humiliation, enmeshment, abuse, aggression, controlling, rejection, non-approval, betrayal, and losses that are attributed to others. These insecure experiences by 'others' can also be set off and worsened by "others" who are engaging in instantaneous relieving due to their own feelings of insecurity and perception of lack in their mix of security attributes. The utility of instant relievers of "others" when "others" engage in instantaneous relieving are actions that could trigger these insecure experiences undergone by the person. Instant relievers are objects that people are engrossed to obtain the security attributes that they perceive themselves lacking due to insecure experiences that occur in their lives. As a result, they gain instant relief for their feelings of insecurity. As time passes, the increased feelings of insecurity lead the person to experience emotional pain. Insecure experiences that occur early in the person's life and throughout their lives could be traumatic to the person. Emotional pain forms a substantial part of the pain that is experienced by the person. Pain is the overall distress that the person experiences in their lives. It includes their physical and mental distress.

Physical and mental distress are physical and mental illnesses, diseases, disabilities, changes and conditions that are discomfiting, hurting, diseasing, disabling, and debilitating to the person. The physical and mental distress experienced by the person may be insecure experiences that are personally attributed. This may also lead them to perceive a lack in their mix of security attributes, especially the security attribute that is associated with their well-being and thus leading them to feel insecure. Physical and mental distress may also be experienced by the person as a result of the utility of instant relievers when the person is engaging in instantaneous relieving. In the case of Helena in Childline (n.d), she shared that she was cutting herself to cope with her emotional pain due to sexual abuse.

Self-injury is a harmful way to cope with emotional pain, intense anger and frustration. While self-injury may bring a momentary sense of calm and a release

of tension, it's usually followed by guilt and shame and the return of painful emotions" and "possibility of fatal injury (Mayo Clinic, 2018, n.p.).

Sarno (2001, p.32) reported: "My work dealt with pain disorders that are direct result of anger-rage repressed and suppressed" by the person. The person who encounters insecure experiences by 'others' may also experience physical and mental distress. Furthermore, these insecure experiences by 'others' may also be contributed by the utility of instant pain relievers by 'others' who are also gaining instant relief for their own feelings of insecurity. For example, Helena would suffer physical and mental trauma due to the physical and sexual abuse of her teacher. And this abuse could be a result of the teacher's own preoccupation with sex activities with minors as a relief for himself.

Stage 1: Instantaneous relieving

When a person engages in instantaneous relieving, they are vicious cycling in gaining instant relief for their feelings of insecurity by utilizing a combination of instant relievers to obtain the security attributes that they perceive themselves lacking due to the insecure experiences that occur throughout their lives. Vicious cycling denotes a circular trajectory that traps the person in their distressful feelings of insecurity.

Instant Relief

The person gains instant relief for their feelings of insecurity by acquiring false feelings of security through (1) medicating, (2) escaping and (3) gratifying. These false feelings of security are the mix of the instant and temporary feelings of (1) comparable-to-or-better-than-others, (2) wantedness, (3) away-from-threats, (4) pride, (5) filling-into-the-void, and (6) anticipation. Manifesting from these feelings are (7) pleasurable emotions and physical sensations. Common pleasurable emotions and physical sensations that the person experiences are excitement and numbness.

When pleasurable emotions and physical sensations are experienced, the intensity of the unpleasant distressful emotions and sensations from the person's feelings of insecurity are taken off and blunted. It is "to take the edge off" (Brown, 2012, p. 87). Joyful feelings and sensations are also inadvertently taken off and blunted when the person gains instant relief for their feelings of insecurity. Brown (2012) revealed: "Numbing vulnerability also dulls our experiences of love, joy, belonging, creativity, and empathy. We can't selectively numb emotion. Numb the dark and you numb the light" (p. 86).

Medicating, escaping, and gratifying to acquire a false sense of security are inter-related processes of gaining instant relief for the person's feelings of insecurity. When the person is medicating, they are ameliorating their distressful feelings of insecurity by utilizing a combination of instant relievers to obtain the security attribute that they perceive themselves lacking due to insecure experiences that occur in their lives. A gamer was observed to be seeking connections with others by being active in online games because "strains on social relationships in the offline world made online relationships in World of Warcraft (WoW) more enticing" (Carmona & Whiting, 2021, p. 2177). Escaping involves a person distracting and diverting themselves from facing their distressful feelings of insecurity, the perception of lack in their mix of security attributes, the insecure experiences that triggers the perception of lack, and the gaining of the security attributes that they most need. Instead, the person gratifies. When a person is

gratifying, they obtain a security attribute in excess and may subsequently neglect other security attributes. A gamer confessed:

I just wanted [WoW] to be a fun way to spend some time with new people, then I realized my mistake. Neglecting wife and family, job started to suffer. I had to rectify it, which meant alienating all the important online relationships I have made. (Carmona & Whiting, 2021, p. 2178)

Thus, the security attributes that they gratify are obtained disproportionately from with the rest of the other security attributes. Subsequently, they may continue to feel insecure when insecure experiences that occur throughout their lives trigger the perception of lack in their mix of security attributes.

Instant Relievers

Instant relievers are objects that the person is engrossed in order to obtain the security attributes that they perceive themselves lacking due to insecure experiences that occur throughout their lives so that they will gain instant relief for their feelings of insecurity. The utility of these objects are inter-related. The person utilizes a combination of instant relievers.

This combination of instant relievers commonly includes (1) substance, mind-altering chemicals; (2) activity, doings; (3) people and relationship, neediness and clinginess; (4) self-importance, exaggeration of superiority or inferiority; (5) perfection, faultlessness in outcomes; (6) irrationality, unreasonable beliefs and expectations; (7) denial, resistance of facts; (8) deception, concealment of truth; (9) avoidance, disengagement; (10) aggression, hurting of self and others; (11) fantasy, imaginations; (12) control, suppression; and (13) death, contemplation and attempt to end life.

Brown (2012) shared:

For many of us, the literal chemical anesthetizing of emotions is just a pleasant, albeit dangerous, side effect of behaviors that are more about fitting in, finding connection, and managing anxiety". She continued: "For me, it wasn't just the dance halls, cold beer, and Marlboro Lights of my youth....—it was banana bread, chips and queso, e-mail, work, staying busy, incessant worrying, planning, perfectionism, and anything else that could dull those agonizing and anxiety-fueled feelings of vulnerability. (p. 87)

Their utility of these instant relievers ranges from the continuum of using to obsessing. When they are obsessing over an instant reliever, they repeat the utility of, fixate on, crave, pursue, and/or pre-occupy themselves with an instant reliever impulsively and compulsively. The person's using of an instant reliever progresses to obsessing over the instant reliever when the utility of the instant reliever increases over time and the person is getting more trapped in the vicious cycle. The combination of instant pain relievers that the person utilized varies according to the number of types and magnitude of instant relievers utilized by a person at any point of time. This combination self-organizes when the person is progressively adding and substituting the utility use of an instant reliever with another instant reliever that is of similar, or different type and of varying magnitude and potency over time. This self-organization of the utility of a combination of instant relievers is determined by the changes in the level of feelings of insecurity and the person's tolerance of the utility of the instant relievers in

obtaining the security attributes that they are persistently and increasingly perceive to be lacking so that they will gain instant relief for their feelings of insecurity. Thus, a person's tolerance of the utility of an instant reliever has increased when a higher level of or more potent instant reliever is required to obtain the security attributes that they have persistently and increasingly perceive to be lacking. This is to gain the similar level of instant relief as experienced previously due to insecure experiences that occur. When adding and substituting are carried out, the utility of an instant reliever is reinforced by the utility of another or similar instant reliever. Chin (2015) shared:

I continued to search for ways to ease my panic—acupuncture, massage therapy, crystal healing, energy work, breathing exercises, a handful of therapists, a personal gym trainer, smile therapy, and retail therapy (I even attempted to hire a dog sitter to sit with me)—and while some of these things offered their own small reliefs, I was still besieged with panic attacks. (n.p.)

This self-organizing utility of a combination of instant relievers activates the person's selfhood too to self-organize based on their current mix of security attributes to be a lesser version of themselves. This lesser version of themselves increasingly feel insecure, disempowered, dysfunctional, display immaturity and disconnected.

Vicious cycling

Vicious cycling denotes the following circular trajectory. The person experiences a (1) reprisal of their feelings of insecurity, the perception of lack in their mix of security attributes, the insecure experiences that trigger the perception of lack, and the utility of a combination of instant relievers. Consequently, as time passes, they will (2) downward spiral where they increasingly feel insecure because they persistently and increasingly perceive a lack in their mix of security attributes due to insecure experiences that occur in their lives. There are also times where the person continues to perceive themselves lacking and/or lose the security attributes that they desire and/or they have already had when they continue to obtain these security attributes by utilizing a combination of instant relievers. The false feelings of security that come with security attributes that they have gained are only temporary. For example, a person who self-harms in order to cope (Mayo Clinic, 2018) by gaining power over their painful emotions will continue to lose power over their emotions where the painful emotions return. Over a period of time, this will lead them to feel more insecure and painful because the perception of lack of the security attributes still persisted and increased with the adding and substituting in the utility of a combination of instant relievers. They progressively become a lesser version of themselves that increasingly feel insecure, disempowered, dysfunctional, display immaturity and disconnected.

Next, (3) an amplifying causal looping of the person's feelings of insecurity, perception of lack in the mix of security attributes and utility of a combination of instant relievers would emerge. Finally, the trajectory includes an (4) inter-generational and social transfer of feelings of insecurity, perception of lack in the mix of security attributes, and utility of a combination of instant relievers of "others." Similarly, "others" also utilize a combination of instant reliever to gain the security attributes that they perceive themselves lacking so that they gain instant relief for their feelings of insecurity. The exposure of utility of a combination of instant relievers of 'others' to the person will lead the person to undergo insecure experiences by "others." This will trigger the person to perceive a lack in their mix of security attributes and subsequently they

feel insecure. Consequently, the person utilizes a combination of instant relievers to obtain the security attributes that they perceive themselves lacking due to the insecure experiences by 'others' in order to gain instant relief for their feelings of insecurity. This pattern is also observed when the person transfers their feelings of insecurity, perception of lack in their mix of security attributes and the utility of a combination of instant relievers to the people around them when these people are exposed to the person. These people have intimate, close, familial, and social interactions and connections with the person. These people could be "others" that trigger them to perceive a lack in their security attributes and another person that the person interacts with. The transfer between parent and child is intergenerational while social transfer occurs outside of parent and child connections and interactions.

Stage 2: Honesting

When the person is consciously implementing honesting as a strategy, they are being honest by connecting with trusted-others in order to support their recovering process. Most people would need trusted-others to empower them to be honest with their feelings of insecurity, false feelings of security, perception of lack of security attributes, insecure experiences that trigger the perception of lack and the utility of a combination of instant relievers. They are often unclear and subtle to the person. The person could be utilizing a combination of instant relievers such as denial, deception and others to obtain the security attributes that they perceive themselves lacking for gaining instant relief for the feelings of insecurity. Rich (2011) stated: "Dishonesty lives as a blind spot. We don't recognize ourselves as being dishonest because we have a library of built-in stories to justify our actions. And we believe them" (n.p.). Thus, support from trusted-others are required to help the person to gain freedom from the vicious cycle they are trapped in. Cole (2016) revealed: "They can see things you cannot [and their] feedback gives you new things to contemplate, poses questions, and probes at deeply rooted behavior patterns...it is simply a process [and] the path that allows for the most growth" (n.p.).

Thus, honesting is not only a binary strategy but also a moment-to-moment, long-term and lifestyle-based strategy aimed at empowering the person to consciously face their distressful and painful feelings of insecurity, gain the security attributes that they perceive themselves lacking, resolve the insecure experiences that trigger the perception of lack and consequently, free themselves progressively from instantaneous relieving. In order to face these feelings of insecurity, the person embraces their vulnerability and works on them with their trusted-others. Thus, there is a need for a person to connect with trusted-others. Brown (2012) identified "vulnerability [as] uncertainty, risk, and emotional exposure" (p. 29). She asserted that while

going it alone is a value we hold in high esteem in our culture The vulnerability journey is not the kind of journey we can make alone. We need support. We need folks who will let us try on new ways of being without judging us. (n.p.)

Some people may resort to self-help in order to be honest with themselves. Self-help commonly through reading and reflecting could be a form of honesting as there is a connection with a trusted-other. This is because the person reads and reflects on the material that is prepared by and attributed to the trusted-other. Cadwalladr (2015) quoted Brene Brown a "celebrity self-help queen" who said that she does not know what self-help means and asserted that "I don't think we're meant to do it alone" (n.p.).

However, the connections formed between the person and the trusted-other are commonly indirect, impersonal, untailed and lacking two-way interaction. They may run into a greater risk of misunderstanding and misinterpreting what they had read. It may also hamper the person's clarity and ability to be real. This is because there is absence of a personal connection with the trusted-other. At some point in time, they may connect with trusted-others in-person to be more honest about their experiences. In Sarno (2001), James Campobello, a reader of the *Healing Back Pain* book, wrote to the author Dr. Sarno, a back pain specialist to share his experiences on how the book had "saved [him] from a life of disability" and has corresponded with Dr. Sarno ever since and had been "free of pain or restriction" (pp. 194, 196).

Trusted-others

Trusted-others empower the person to be honest. The empowerment received from trusted-others is the various support for betterment that is gained from connecting with trusted-others. Trusted-others include a trusted person, group, a spiritual entity or a combination of these three. Trusted-others are those that are deemed to be more superior and better than the person due to the characteristics that they possess. A spiritual entity is an incorporeal entity that is regarded, and venerated by the person as higher in goodness than themselves. A spiritual entity may usually be understood by the person as a power higher than themselves such as a deity, higher self, a religion, or spiritual principles. The person may accept other forms of spiritual entities based on their level of faith towards these entities. However, they may resist the trusted-other especially the spiritual entity due to their (1) self-will and the illusion that they are in control, (2) blame towards the higher power for causing their lack, (3) the belief that the higher power is judgmental and punishing, or (4) not believing in the higher power. This resistance will lead the person to reject the spiritual entity as their support. Thus, a spiritual-based trusted person or group will often introduce the spiritual entity as a trusted-other to the person. Spiritual-based trusted groups and persons will commonly lead the person to connect with their spiritual entities as their ultimate empower-er. The person can connect with an assortment of trusted-others that have specific resources required by them in order to be empowered in being honest with themselves, gaining the security attributes that they perceive themselves lacking and resolving the insecure experiences that trigger the perception of lack.

A trusted-other has the following characteristics to empower the person: (1) open acceptance without judgment, (2) the security attributes, feelings of security, and peace that the person aspire to possess from or through the trusted-other, (3) compassion, (4) genuineness, accuracy in representation, and (5) superior knowledge and experience. These characteristics are also the tangible and intangible resources of the trusted-other. These resources determine the person's faith towards the trusted-other. Faith is the perceived level of relevance of the trusted-other to the person's recovering process. It is based on the resources that the trusted-other possess and required by the person to gain the security attributes that they perceive themselves lacking. Faith increases when the person gains the security attributes that they perceive themselves lacking through the trusted-other. In connecting with a trusted-other, the person will go through a cyclic trust process that consists of the following stages: denying, accepting, discovering, and trusting the relevance of trusted-other. In the denying stage, the person does not see the relevance and rejects the trusted-other when the trusted-other is introduced to them. As their feelings of insecurity grow more distressful, they have no other choice but

to accept the relevance of the trusted-other. Consequently, as they progress to the discovering stage, they become more aware of the relevance of the trusted-other as they work with the trusted-other in exploring and gaining the security attributes that they perceive themselves lacking and resolving the insecure experiences that trigger the perception of lack. Finally at the trusting stage, the person has more faith in the trusted-other as they have gained the security attributes that they perceive themselves lacking and resolved the insecure experiences that trigger the perception of lack. James Campabello, a former sufferer of chronic pain advised his friend (Sarno, 2001):

You must either believe that it can work for you, or you must be so desperate that you will try very hard to do it even if you don't believe in it. I did not believe in it [at first]. My nature is very skeptical...However, I was desperate... So even though I didn't think it could help, my wife convinced me to try it. You can do the same thing..You might as well try—what have you got to lose? (p. 196)

The person's faith towards the trusted-other determines which stage they are in and their progress or regress in the cyclic trust process. This process is not linear as the person may commence, progress and regress in any stage of the process according to the level of faith they have in the trusted-other. A reduction of faith due to the failure in gaining the security attributes that they need through the trusted-other leads the person to disconnect from the trusted-other thus ending the helping relationship. This cycle repeats, when the person tries to connect with another trusted-other where they establish a connection with the new trusted-other.

Being honest

Being honest includes 1) gaining clarity and 2) being real. Both these sub-processes are interconnected and the person would usually connect with trusted-others in order to carry out these processes. Maslow (1971) observed that a client is helped "to unfold, to break through the defenses against his own self-knowledge, to recover himself, and to get to know himself" (p. 50).

When a person gains clarity, they capture a moment of insight about their feelings of insecurity, the security attributes that they perceive themselves lacking, the insecure experiences that trigger the perception of lack, the combination of instant relievers that they utilize to obtain these security attributes in order to gain the instant relief, the security attributes that they may have neglected and their selfhood. Insight can be captured suddenly or gradually. The higher the degree of openness and faith of the person in the trusted-other could result in a more sudden and swifter capturing of insight.

Being real consists of (1) admitting and accepting, (2) expressing authentically, and (3) doing the right thing. The person admits and accepts the unpleasant and painful truth of themselves. Rogers (1961) stated:

The curious paradox is that when I accept myself just as I am, then I can change...we cannot change, we cannot move away from what we are, until we thoroughly *accept* what we are. Then change seems to come about almost unnoticed. (p. 17)

They admit and accept that they had been utilizing a combination of instant relievers to obtain the security attributes that they perceive themselves lacking due to the insecure

experiences that occur in order to gain instant relief for their feelings of insecurity, and consequently this action had led to their increased feelings of insecurity. They also admit and accept that they have neglected the security attributes that they needed most for obtaining those security attributes that provide them instant relief for their feelings of insecurity.

When a person expresses themselves authentically, they are genuine about their feelings of insecurity, the security attributes that they perceive themselves lacking, insecure experiences that trigger the perception of lack, and the combination of instant relievers that they utilize to obtain these security attributes in order to gain instant relief. Rogers (1961) noticed that there is congruence when one "is genuine and without 'front' or facade, [and] openly being the feelings and attitudes which at that moment are flowing in him" (p. 61). Kierkegaard (1941) in Rogers (1961) said "to be that self which one truly is" (p. 166).

The person does the right thing to gain the security attributes that they perceive themselves lacking and to resolve the insecure experiences that trigger the perception of lack. However, they may lack clarity in doing the right thing. Plante (2009) noted:

We usually know what the right thing is for ourselves and others but we typically struggle with doing it. We often tend to cut corners, not be as honest as we should be, eat too much, drink too much, say things to those we love (and those we don't) that we often later regret. (n.p.)

The person would usually connect with their trusted-others in order to gain greater clarity in doing the right thing. Some common right things to do may include making amends, deciding on choices and taking responsibility for their actions. By making amends, they mend their relationships and may gain connections as a security attribute that they may lack.

Connecting with trusted-others

By connecting with trusted-others, the person is relating and belonging with their trusted-others. When the person is relating and belonging with trusted-others, they work on themselves by (1) seeking help and (2) learning from the trusted-others, (3) getting involved and (4) staying open with trusted-others, and (5) letting-go with the presence of the trusted-others. They seek help by reaching out to the trusted-other. Next, through learning from the trusted-other, the person learns about the security attributes that they perceive themselves lacking, insecure experiences that trigger the perception of lack and to resolve these experiences, their selfhood, and to gain the security attributes that they perceive themselves lacking without utilizing instant relievers. When they learn to connect to others through their connection with their trusted-other, they also gain connections as a security attribute. The openness of the person to the trusted-other is commonly expressed as open-mindedness, presence, awareness, willingness, spontaneity, humility, and being reachable and teachable. Finally, letting-go involves the person surrendering their feelings of insecurity and utility of instant relievers in order to gain the security attributes that they perceive themselves lacking. They do so in the company and guidance of the trusted-other.

Recovering

Honesting as a strategy supports the recovering process that most people go through. Recovering is a life-long, moment-to-moment, and lifestyle-based process of gaining the security attributes that they perceive themselves lacking due to the insecure experiences that occur throughout their lives. By doing so they recover and heal from their distressful and painful feelings of insecurity. As a result of this process, the person continuously realizes a better version of themselves where they increasingly feel secure, empowered, functional, display maturity, and connected because they continuously gain the security attributes that they perceive themselves lacking, resolve the insecure experiences that trigger the perception of lack, are at peace with the unique mix of security attributes that they possess and aim to be a better version of themselves. The unique mix of security attributes that the person possesses is proportionate, balanced, necessary, essential, nurturing, and fitting to their present needs. This recovering process is asymptotic where the person feels the most secure and could be the best version of themselves as they could in any one time. Thus, they could only continuously work to be a better version of themselves. Helena in Childline (n.d) shared:

It was two steps forward one step back the whole way, but I reminded myself that I fought to get this far, and I just kept going. At 23, I went into full-time education, went on to do my degree and now work for a charity. I consider myself a healthy person now and I have been for many years, but the impact that it had on my life has been enormous. (n.p.)

When the person increasingly feels secure, they experience a mix of feelings of (1) adequacy; good enough and satisfied; (2) belongingness, loved and accepted; (3) safety, being protected (4) worthiness, self-acceptance; (5) wholeness, purposeful; and (6) hopefulness, empowered. Manifesting from these feelings are (7) joyful emotions and physical sensations. A common joyful emotion that a person experience is happiness with its warm and activated or relaxed physical sensations. Selva (2017) revealed: "happiness is the one emotion that fills the whole body with activity. This might indicate a sense of physical readiness that comes with a happy state" (n.p.). These feelings of security are also usually experienced as peace, contentment, positivity, and balance by the person while they are still working on their feelings of insecurity.

The recovering process has two mutually reinforcing stages that lead the person to continuously gain the security attributes that they perceive themselves lacking and subsequently, continue to be a better version of themselves. These stages are: (1) staying clean and (2) going beyond. Staying clean involves the person working to abstain from the utility of a combination of instant relievers in order to gain the security attributes that they perceive themselves lacking. Going beyond involves the person moving on by (1) continuously improving and developing themselves; (2) being grateful; and (3) impacting others. They continuously improve and develop themselves by maintaining their feelings of security, being a better version of themselves by perpetually gaining the security attributes that they perceive themselves lacking, resolving the insecure experiences that trigger the perception of lack and being at peace with the unique mix of security attributes that they possess. Next, they are being grateful of their mix of security attributes and the trusted-other that had empowered them to gain the security attributes that they perceive a lack. And finally, they are impacting others where they are taking on the role of a trusted-other, giving back to others and getting into a virtuous cycle.

Regressing in the recovering process happens when the person re-engages in instantaneous relieving. The reasons for this regressing are as follows: (1) The person feels insecure as they perceive a lack in their mix of security attributes due to the insecure experiences that occur, however they are (2) complacent and since (3) recovering is no longer their priority, they stopped to implement honesting, and consequently they re-engage in instantaneous relieving. Increased feelings of insecurity and losses in their security attributes due to instantaneous relieving may lead them to gain a moment of clarity and thus return them to implementing honesting.

Limitation

This theory is delimited by the core category (i.e. securing) and its sub-categories (i.e. instantaneous relieving and honesting) as the solutions that most people take in order to deal with their main concern (i.e. feelings of insecurity). While the theory fits, is relevant, and works to extend its concepts to a wider range of people, there will be populations of people that the theory may not provide adequate coverage. Thus, the theory could be modified further with new data as they emerge to further extend the generality of its concepts. Finally, although these solutions and major concern could be applicable to a significant group of ordinary people, there may be other major concerns and solutions that could emerge from other studies.

Implications

As there is fit, workability and relevance, this theory could be put into practice when contextualized by professionals in healthcare, rehabilitation, professional psychology, social work, therapy, coaching, teaching and other human development services to help ordinary people either as individuals or as a unit (e.g. family, couple, group, organization or community) to gain clarity of their feelings of insecurity. Further action and approaches could be designed and adopted to help and support these individuals and units in their distresses in life. Specifically, the theory could be used to assess clients and patients in behavioral and mental healthcare and to plan treatment for their condition. By assessing the security attributes that clients perceive themselves lacking and form plans to empower them to gain those security attributes, clients could resolve their distress and work to be a better version of themselves. Thus, this theory has implications in future research concerning personal growth and optimal functioning.

Conclusion

Securing as a mid-range theory proposes the role of our feelings of insecurity in forming our selfhood. When these feelings of insecurity are explored honestly with trusted-others and rightly acted upon with their guidance, we continuously become a better version of ourselves. However, if we are not able to free ourselves from the natural tendency to engage in instantaneous relieving, we progressively become a lesser version of ourselves. Maslow (1971) was apt to stress that "when in doubt, be honest rather than not" (p. 50). However, being honest is not an easy feat. Most of us could attest to the role of a person, group or entity whom we could trust (e.g. a mentor, professional peer, physician, instructor, teacher, tutor, coach, therapist, consultant, religious person, support group, organization or God as a higher power) in helping and providing us counsel to free ourselves from various distresses that happen in some point of our lives. Thus, trusted-others empower us to be a better version of ourselves. This is illustrated by the concept of a "fully-functioning person [that emerged from a] helping relationship"

(Rogers, 1963, p. 22). Without trusted-others, our natural tendency for instant relief will lead us to our peril where we are trapped in a vicious cycle. Thus, the key to our recovering process is our trusted connections that have the necessary resources and characteristics that empower us to be honest with ourselves, gain the security attribute that we lacked and continuously become a better version of ourselves.

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Appendix

The 143 online articles were taken from the following websites: Recovering Couples Anonymous (www.recovering-couples.org), Smart Recovery (www.smartrecovery.org), Dual Recovery Anonymous (www.draonline.org), Your Brain on Porn (yourbrainonporn.com), Debtors Anonymous (www.debtorsanonymous.org), My Debt Story (mydebtstory.com), Poverty And Social Exclusion (www.poverty.ac.uk), Vanguard News (www.vanguardngr.com), Entrepreneur (www.entrepreneur.com), Emotions Anonymous (www.emotionsanonymous.org), Obsessive Compulsive Anonymous (www.obsessivecompulsiveanonymous.org), Schizophrenics Anonymous (www.sardaa.org), Anxiety and Depression Association of America (www.adaa.org), Chronic Pain Anonymous (www.chronicpainanonymous.com), Pain Concern (www.painconcern.org.uk), Life in Pain (www.lifeinpain.org), Support After Suicide

(www.supportaftersuicide.org), White Wreath Association (www.whitewreath.org.au), Childline (www.childline.org), Mayo Clinic (www.mayoclinic.org), The Ehlers-Danlos Society (ehlers-danlos.com), Psychology Today (www.psychologytoday.com), verywellmind (verywellmind.com), (PsychCentral (psychcentral.com), Save the Children (savethechildren.org), Hope Street (hopestreet.org), Enjuris (enjuris.com), Trauma Survivors Network (traumasurvivorsnetwork.org), ACES Too High (acestoohigh.com), Counselling Directory (counselling-directory.org.uk), Kurious (kurious.ku.edu.tr), The Huffington Post (www.thehuffingtonpost.com), The Guardian (theguardian.com) Preserve Articles (preservearticles.com), Forbes (forbes.com), Bustle (www.bustle.com), Elite Daily (www.elitedaily.com), Scientific American (www.scientificamerican.com), NBC News (www.nbcnews.com), PositivePsychology.com (positivepsychology.com), BBC (www.bbc.com), SBS News (www.sbs.com.au), Medium (medium.com), AP News (apnews.com), World Economic Forum (weforum.org), TED (ideas.ted.com), Lifehack (lifehack.org), Goalcast (goalcast.com), Tiny Buddha (tinybuddha.com), World Vision (worldvision.org), People (people.com), National Geographic (nationalgeographic.com), UNHCR (unhcr.org), and Thrive Global (thriveglobal.com).