The Psychology of Working in Practice: A Theory of Change for a New Era

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This article advances the psychology of working theory by developing a parallel change-based paradigm to guide interventions at the level of individuals (i.e., the psychology of working counseling) and systems (i.e., the psychology of working systemic intervention). The change paradigm presented in this article includes (a) a needs assessment encompassing survival, social connection/contribution, and self-determination and (b) input on the mobilization of agentic action that includes critical reflection and action, proactive engagement, social support, and community engagement. The needs assessment and agentic action aspects of this approach can be used to foster change in individual counseling, advocacy, and systemic intervention. Case examples reflecting a systemic intervention and an individual counseling vignette are presented along with implications for research, such as explorations of the impact of these change models on client outcomes and systemic change efforts.

Keywords: psychology of working, theory of change, systems interventions, psychology of working counseling, career theory

For most of the 20th century, career counseling has focused on supporting people as they navigate transitions from school to work, between work and nonwork contexts, and between various jobs and careers (Savickas & Baker, 2005). Such a focus has promoted a wide array of ideas, research paradigms, and practices across the globe that have fueled the professions of career counseling and related fields, such as school counseling, counseling/vocational psychology, career guidance, career coaching, and rehabilitation counseling (Arulmani, Bakshi, Leong, & Watts, 2014; Savickas & Baker, 2005). For the most part, the practice of career guidance has emphasized career choice and development issues, which has been helpful to many clients and students across the globe but has not encompassed the full scope of individuals and communities with little to no volition in their work options (Roberts, 2012). In response to the circumscribed focus of career development, various critiques have emerged, coalescing around the agenda of attending to all who work and who want to work, including those who have been marginalized in society and within traditional career counseling discourses (Blustein, 2006; Richardson, 1993). Within the past 2 decades, Blustein and his

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colleagues have advanced the psychology of working theory (PWT; Blustein, 2006, 2013; Blustein, Kenny, Di Fabio, & Guichard, 2019; Duffy, Blustein, Diemer, & Autin, 2016), which provides a conceptual pathway toward an inclusive and critical perspective for research, public policy, and practice. In this article, we introduce a new practice paradigm emerging from PWT, which we believe has broad relevance to the full range of career practitioners, advocates, and scholars.

To date, a number of individual counseling implications and systemic intervention strategies, known as inclusive psychological practice (Blustein, 2006; Blustein, Duffy, Kenny, Gutowski, & Diamonti, 2019), have been developed from PWT. Applications of this approach have encompassed interventions related to career decision-making (Blustein, 2006), economic constraints (Blustein, Kozan, Connors-Kellgren, & Rand, 2015), unemployment (Blustein, Connors-Kellgren, Olle, & Diamonti, 2017), and career development education (Kenny, Blustein, Liang, Klein, & Etchie, 2019). However, the complexity of contemporary working coupled with a rapid expansion of theory and research emerging from PWT provides the context for a new statement about practice, broadly conceived to encompass both individual counseling and systemic changes. In this article, we adopt a theory-of-change perspective in relation to PWT to generate a parallel paradigm of counseling for individuals and systemic change for the institutions and contexts that serve to support and/or constrain access to decent work. With the intention of enhancing the clarity, scope, and impact of practice applications of PWT, we introduce the psychology of working counseling (PWC) as a new counseling paradigm and the psychology of working systemic intervention (PWSI) as an analogous framework to inform systemic change.

The Role of Theory in Career Development Practice and Systemic Change Efforts

In a seminal review by Osipow and Fitzgerald (1996), the role of theory in career development, and psychology more broadly, was conceptualized as producing "new understandings about the universe; a good theory clarifies events and leads to further predictions" (p. 2). In the career development context, theories provide a guide or map of the interrelationships among various aspects of behavior and contextual factors (Swanson & Fouad, 2015). When considered collectively, existing career development theories focus on explanation and prediction, with the goal of fostering research and practice. For many theories, a clear outcome is that the knowledge attained via research will lead to evidence-based interventions that promote a diverse array of work-based goals for individuals.

A theory-of-change perspective has roots in many branches of counseling and psychology, including psychotherapy (e.g., Prochaska, DiClemente, & Norcross, 1992) and organizational development (Burke, 2017). Within traditions in counseling and psychology that have embraced social justice values, the idea of a theory of change has also become a benchmark in theory development (Prilleltensky, 2008). Rather than focusing on changing people to adapt to circumstances, scholars from community and critical psychology have proposed that change efforts

need to focus on systems that sustain policies and practices that diminish, damage, and/or marginalize people and communities (Martín-Baró, 1994; Prilleltensky, 2008).

Building on a systemic change mission, social justice movements in counseling and psychology have sought to create theories that would optimally have psychopolitical validity by considering both the psychological and political contexts that frame psychosocial functioning (Prilleltensky, 2008). Attending to psychopolitical validity promotes an awareness of the ways in which access to power and the agency to pursue and realize desired goals relate to economic and social privilege. In a related contribution, Prilleltensky and Stead (2013) argued that intervening in the work and career contexts engenders two tasks—to help clients and communities adapt to existing systems and/or to challenge the status quo. In this article, we seek to go beyond the traditional focus of career intervention on adaptation by developing a change paradigm that also seeks to challenge systems in a way that will reduce oppressive structures (Hooley, Sultana, & Thomsen, 2018; Prilleltensky & Stead, 2013).

Psychology of Working: A Transformative Theory

The primary objective of PWT is to align current vocational research and practice with a social justice agenda promoting greater (a) inclusiveness within career development/vocational psychology and (b) equity in the distribution of resources that contribute to decent and dignified work for all (Blustein, 2006, 2013; Blustein, Kenny, et al., 2019; Duffy et al., 2016; Kenny et al., 2019). In constructing this new approach to understanding and intervening in the work lives of people and communities, Blustein and colleagues have articulated several core assumptions underlying the PWT framework. First, it is assumed that work has the capacity to be an essential aspect of positive human functioning; specifically, PWT researchers view access to decent, dignified, and stable work as a basic human right and as integral to a person's capacity to survive, to connect to others and the broader social world, and optimally to thrive in a life of meaning and purpose (Blustein, Kenny, et al., 2019). Second, work is viewed as inseparable from the context of the worker. That is, individuals' cultural background, family context, and social identities (e.g., racial, gender, and social class identities) are thought to influence their experience within their work environment, and vice versa. Therefore, PWT is largely focused on disparities in access to decent work across social contexts and identities (Blustein, 2006; Duffy et al., 2016). Third, the definition of work has been expanded to include unpaid work that encompasses caregiving work (Blustein, 2006). Finally, researchers using the PWT framework assume that the labor market of the 21st century will continue to undergo rapid change and seek to describe the experiences of diverse groups of workers navigating this new occupational landscape (Blustein, Kenny, et al., 2019). Given these assumptions, PWT scholars have devoted considerable efforts to challenging ideas and systems that perpetuate disparity based on social identities and economic privilege.

In a major effort to deepen and broaden the impact of PWT, Duffy et al. (2016) developed a theoretical model to guide empirical examination of predictors and outcomes of decent work. With decent work as the central variable in PWT, Duffy and colleagues positioned contextual variables as the foremost drivers of decent work, with well-being both within and outside of work as the ultimate outcomes. Decent work is defined by a cluster of job characteristics that the International Labour Organization (ILO; 2008) identified as minimum standards necessary for a basic sense of adequate functioning at work. Those standards include (a) physical and psychological safety, (b) adequate access to health care, (c) adequate compensation, (d) adequate free time and rest, and (e) organizational values that support one's family values (Duffy et al., 2016).

Duffy et al. (2016) proposed two main contextual variables of economic constraints and experiences of marginalization as the primary predictors in the model. That is, people who face greater economic constraints and higher levels of marginalization are hypothesized to experience significantly reduced access to decent work. In addition, two mediating psychological variables have been identified as important factors for individuals as they manage the contextual and developmental challenges of seeking decent work. The first is work volition, or one's perceived freedom to make occupational choices (Duffy, Diemer, Perry, Laurenzi, & Torrey, 2012), and the second is career adaptability, or one's ability to use psychosocial resources to respond to the developmental tasks related to planning and implementing work-based goals (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012). The theory proposes that social and structural forces associated with reduced access to economic resources coupled with experiences of systemic and interpersonal discrimination (e.g., racism, gender discrimination, heterosexism, classism, and ableism) result in barriers to occupational choices and limited adaptive strategies to overcome those barriers.

Regarding outcomes of decent work, PWT hypothesizes that decent work leads to work fulfillment and general well-being through the satisfaction of three sets of basic needs. The first are survival needs, which refer to such resources as food, shelter, and health care. The second are social connection/contribution needs, which reflect the basic human need to connect and contribute to a larger community. Finally, PWT proposes that decent work leads to well-being through self-determination needs, or the need for one's behaviors to be congruent with authentic and meaningful goals (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Together, these three sets of needs are hypothesized as key ingredients in promoting work-related (job satisfaction, work meaning) and general (mental health, physical health) well-being. (See Duffy et al., 2016, for further details and the propositions of PWT.)

Research has begun to build substantive empirical evidence for the utility of PWT (e.g., Autin, Duffy, Jacobson, Dosani, & Bott, 2018; Douglass, Velez, Conlin, Duffy, & England, 2017; Duffy et al., 2018; Kossen & McIlveen, 2018; Tokar & Kaut, 2018). Additionally, PWT tenets rest on a foundation of previous empirical work linking contextual variables, work volition, career adaptability, and well-being (e.g., Duffy et al., 2012; Zacher, 2014). Self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000), which serves as a central component of PWT's hypotheses regarding the prediction of well-being from access to decent work, is

supported by decades of empirical findings demonstrating the importance of need fulfillment in predicting positive vocational outcomes (e.g., Vansteenkiste et al., 2007) and well-being (e.g., Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Although PWT provides utility in explaining predictors and outcomes of decent work, the core intention in developing this model is to provide an empirical foundation for effecting change at both the individual and systemic levels. Therefore, Duffy et al. (2016) proposed four variables that may moderate links between contextual variables, decent work, and ultimately, well-being: proactive personality, social support, critical consciousness, and economic conditions. The three former variables may be targets for intervention at the individual and institutional levels. Economic conditions, although obviously complex and a more ambitious target of change, is a variable that can be affected by larger systemic intervention.

A Theory-of-Change Approach to Individual- and System-Level Interventions

The theory-of-change paradigm that we present in this article expands upon the inclusive psychological practice perspective that has defined the core of PWT-based counseling and systemic interventions to date (Blustein, 2006). Inclusivity is integrated at various levels by including those who have been marginalized by society and have had less choice in the workplace, by affirming work outside of the traditional marketplace (caregiving), by considering the intersectionality of work and nonwork roles, and by acknowledging the intersection of work and mental health interventions. Inclusivity also entails efforts to address the broader systemic issues that constrain client choice and sustain systems of inequity, which may entail an expansion of the counselor role to assume responsibilities as a social or political advocate or social change agent. In addition to expanding their own role as social justice agents, counselors can support clients in their efforts to understand and effect systemic change.

In addition to PWT-informed counseling strategies and models, several other perspectives complement and/or enhance existing approaches that are designed to be inclusive and focused on the full scope of people engaged in working. Perhaps most relevant to this discussion are Richardson's (2012, 2019) contributions that reflect an integrative perspective using narrative approaches and a social constructionist framework to affirm the importance of work and relationships in life and in the counseling process. A particularly compelling aspect of Richardson's work that informs the theory-of-change approach detailed here is her focus on agentic action. Building on related ideas in career development (Lent & Brown, 2013; Young, Domene, & Valach, 2015), Richardson (2012) defined agentic action as acts and initiatives that are "characterized by purpose in which people pursue their aims in response to the circumstances of their lives" (p. 215). Agentic action might be reflected by a client being able to take perspective on interactions at work that have significantly limited advancement and learning new strategies for managing relationships at work that are more effective.

Assessment and Change:
A Parallel Paradigm for Counseling and Systems Change

Our intervention model for both counseling and systems change is based on a parallel structure that includes two interrelated components: (a) a needs assessment that informs a course of action for individuals and systems change efforts and (b) a focus on sources of agentic action derived from the PWT literature that describe the means by which individuals and systems can change. (These components of the assessment and change model are summarized in Tables 1 and 2.)

Needs assessment. Building on the existing PWT-based counseling interventions (Blustein, 2006; Blustein, Duffy, et al., 2019; Kenny et al., 2019), the needs assessment part of the change model serves as a means to conceptualize the nature and etiology of individual and systemic concerns. Within the framework of counseling and career interventions, the assessment of an individual's capacity to fulfill the needs for survival, social connection/contribution, and self-determination provides an informative means of formulating a meaningful set of therapeutic goals and processes (Blustein, 2006).

Within a systemic context, the needs assessment functions to identify the role of systems in creating or diminishing the conditions that support the fulfillment of the needs for survival, social connection/contribution, and self-determination (Duffy et al., 2016). In considering change at the systems level, we propose that counselors and advocates assess how well these individual needs are met via the full array of institutions and systems that control access to decent and dignified work. Consistent with the PWT model, the needs assessment might also identify the mediating mechanisms, such as work volition and career adaptability, that can be undermined by systemic oppression and inequality. As reflected in Table 1, a systemic analysis of the capacity for systems to meet these fundamental needs may lead to action designed to confront and change relevant institutions, as detailed in the following sections.

Sources of agentic action. The sources of agentic action for both individuals and systems are derived from an integrative synthesis of the change elements in PWT and supporting empirical evidence from several

TABLE 1

Needs Assessment: Individual and Systemic Implications

Needs Fulfilled Through Work	Systemic Implications	Individual Implications
Survival	Extent to which systems support sustainable lives	Extent to which people are able to survive via work and existing social/economic resources
Social connection/ contribution	Extent to which systems support relational connections and the capacity to contribute	Extent to which people are able to connect with others and contribute to the social good
Self-determination	Extent to which systems support self-determined work lives	Extent to which people are able to engage in self-determined work lives

TABLE 2

Sources of Agentic Action

Cluster and Defining Element	Systemic Example	Individual Example
Critical reflection and action		
Critical consciousness; critically informed action	Confront antiunion ideology of neoliberalism	Adaptive understanding of unemployment and reduced self-blame
Proactive engagement		
Proactivity; adaptability	Identifying and acting to confront human rights abuses at work	Taking action to create a maximally rewarding work life
Social support and community engagement		
Relational support; social contribution	Creating workers' circles	Generating emotional and instrumental support from others in job search

strands of research summarized earlier in this article. From a systemic perspective, the role of the macrolevel factors (economic constraints and marginalization), addressed in the following section, is essential. Tools to identify and transform these major contributors to work-based problems for individuals and communities can be gleaned from the sources of agentic action. As reflected in Table 2, we have developed three integrative clusters, which reflect themes (akin to second-order factors) derived from the individually based predictors and moderators in PWT. Each of these sources of agentic action is derived from the empirical research in career development and related fields. A summary of the supporting literature for PWT is found in the seminal publications in this area (Blustein, 2006, 2013; Duffy et al., 2016) as well as related literature infused in the sections below.

The first cluster, *critical reflection and action*, is primarily informed by the critical consciousness construct (Blustein, 2006; Diemer, Rapa, Voight, & McWhirter, 2016), which reflects the capacity to read the overt and covert aspects of society, with the intention of identifying the systemic causes of injustice. This source of agentic action refers to the capacity to reflect on the overt and covert systemic contributions to psychosocial experiences and broader macrolevel events in one's life and context and to act in a purposeful and intentional manner in response to this knowledge. Empirical research supports the essential role of critical consciousness in providing individuals with the capacity to critically analyze the root causes of injustice and to respond proactively to contextual barriers (see Blustein, Kenny, et al., 2019; Diemer et al., 2016, for reviews).

The second cluster, *proactive engagement*, reflects the role of work volition, proactive personality, and career adaptability, which individually and collectively tap into individuals' internal resources to manage and change aspects of the environment. Proactive engagement provides the psychological fuel and direction for people to approach and manage their life and work tasks. The work volition and adaptability aspects of proactive engagement reflect the traditional career development attributes that facilitate motivational action for individuals in resolving

developmental and contextual tasks, such as planning for the future, goal setting, exploration, and self-efficacy. Proactive personality entails the infusion of a personality attribute of self-determination that can be nurtured by counseling and other forms of social support (Duffy et al., 2016). Extensive empirical research has been amassed supporting the evidence that various constructs that fall under the rubric of proactive engagement serve to promote initiative and persistence in helping people to achieve their goals (Duffy et al., 2016; Lent & Brown, 2013).

The third cluster, *social support and community engagement*, captures relational support and social contribution, which are manifested in this change model as collaboration, community organizing, and social support. Relationships provide the soil through which individuals can be nourished. Supportive relationships have been empirically associated with progress in career development; enhanced capacity to manage such stressors as unemployment; and, in the community and work contexts, with greater capacity to mobilize social change (Kenny, Blustein, & Meerkins, 2018).

Creating Change in Systems: PWSI

The question of how to foster systemic change has been challenging to answer in part because of the broad array of highly complex systems that support and sustain institutions (Hooley et al., 2018; Prilleltensky, 2008). This challenge notwithstanding, we believe that advocates, social change agents (including, but not limited to, counselors), and clients can use the sources of agentic action as conceptual tools to inform systemic change efforts. The most obvious point of departure for systems-based intervention is to enhance economic opportunities and reduce marginalization through intervention at the macrolevel. The first of the macrolevel factors, economic opportunities and constraints, refers to the social and economic resources that contribute to one's capacity to survive and thrive in school, work, relationships, health care, and other life domains (Duffy et al., 2016). Marginalization is another macrolevel piece of the systemic puzzle that can be addressed in tandem with economic constraints. In PWT, marginalization is understood from an intersectional perspective (Moradi & Grzanka, 2017) and reflects the categorization of groups of people by social identities and the corresponding distribution of resources and power based on the status of these identities.

At a systemic level, changes in economic constraints and marginalization are clearly complex and encompass a discussion of political and economic systems that undergird nearly all aspects of one's context. Challenging the status quo in relation to economic constraints and marginalization is daunting and may feel overwhelming to counselors seeking to use the PWSI model that we are advocating. However, the first step in creating the challenge to this systemic structure is fostering awareness, which is one of the intentions of this article. Conversations about the nature of the economic systems that frame work and career are increasingly emerging in our field and in the broader public discourse, with books and journal articles dealing with these systemic forces becoming increasingly evident in our literature (e.g., Blustein, 2019; Blustein et al., 2017; Hooley et al., 2018). The complexity and nuances of these debates include critiques of

the empowerment of large-scale private enterprises, such as multinational corporations, at the expense of individuals and communities, and at the expense of individual-level and small-scale entrepreneurship, which is often marginalized in neoliberal policies (i.e., policies that favor corporations and the free market system, often shaped around a discourse of reducing government regulations; see Harvey, 2005; Hooley et al., 2018, for reviews). Challenging the system can include a wide range of activities such as voting for candidates who affirm human rights and decent work, joining with existing organizations that are resisting neoliberal public and economic policies, advocating that our professional associations become more politically active, running for office as a supporter of workers' rights, and protesting unjust labor policies, among many other initiatives. Furthermore, as summarized in Blustein et al. (2017), new institutions that support workers are coalescing in many regions of the world, such as a solidarity economy (enterprises that eschew profit and commodification of workers). In addition to seeking change at the distal macrolevel, counselors should also attend to creating the conditions that expand economic opportunities and reduce marginalization within their own work organizations and local communities.

Sources of agentic action at the systems level. The sources of agentic action, which are presented in the three aforementioned clusters, provide individuals with conceptual and practical tools to create purposeful and intentional changes in the systems that frame their work lives. The critical reflection and action cluster serves as a foundation for agentic action by providing a means of understanding the nature of systemic forces within the various sectors that influence access to decent work. A thoughtful critique of existing structures can be informed by critical consciousness, which may be manifested in identifying how systems have been structured to support the status quo, often at the expense of those who are marginalized (Diemer et al., 2016; Duffy et al., 2016). A critical perspective on the nature of institutions can promote an analysis by individuals (including counseling clients who benefit considerably from a critical perspective as well as counselors and citizens in general) of the ways in which public policies, economic structures, and labor practices shape and constrain opportunities for many, particularly those whose identities and social classes have consigned them to limited opportunities. For example, the gradual but pernicious denigration of labor unions in the United States reflects one of the major causes of wage compression and inequality (Piketty, 2014). Similarly, the use of a "liberal discourse" to promote neoliberal policies reflects a powerful, yet insidious, action that has resulted in a massive transformation of life in the United States and in other regions of the world.

The next cluster, proactive engagement, optimally can provide individuals with the sense of purpose and initiative to take action against institutions and policies that constrain access to decent and dignified work. Building on work volition, proactive personality, and career adaptability, proactive engagement captures the capacity to be critically agentic and adaptive. Proactive engagement optimally will provide the psychological and ideological impetus for clients, counselors, and concerned citizens to confront unjust systems. For example, proactive engagement at the systemic level might be reflected in the identification of the broader

impact of unemployment on individuals and social systems. Rather than simply explain the heightened mental health problems of long-term unemployment by resorting to individual-level causes, scholars such as Wilson (1996) and Paul and Moser (2009) have used scientific research that resulted in identifying how systems are responsible for psychological and social distress when people struggle to obtain work.

The third cluster, social support and community engagement, taps into the relational aspects of agentic action. Individuals often find it difficult to engage in systemic change efforts on their own, which underscores the importance of relationships as a source of emotional and instrumental support. In addition, engaging broader community support is an essential ingredient in creating social change. An example of the role of social support and community engagement is a worker's center, which refers to organizations designed to help low-wage workers by mediating dialogues with employers, providing social and instrumental support, advocacy, education, training, and connections to other social services (Bobo & Pabellón, 2016). Another aspect of social support and community engagement is the need for employers and other institutions to embrace a community-of-care perspective about the role of individual workers in organizations (Blustein, 2019). A theory-of-change approach informed by PWT would counter this view and explicitly raise the importance of human rights and decent work as integral aspects of work for all (Blustein, Kenny, et al., 2019). In the next section, we describe an illustrative case of change at a systemic level.

A PWSI Exemplar: The ILO

Background. The ILO exemplifies a systemic change approach that applies the three sources of agentic action outlined above (critical reflection and action, proactive engagement, and social support and community engagement) in its efforts to expand access to decent work. The ILO was created as an international organization at the end of World War I based on the premise that social justice is an essential foundation for lasting peace. The ILO is now an agency of the United Nations that brings together, with equal voice, governments, employers, and workers from 187 member states (ILO, 2018). Through its Decent Work Agenda, the ILO (n.d.) has exerted agentic action to address macrolevel factors by setting labor standards and developing policies and programs that reduce marginalization and enhance economic opportunity and access to decent work on a global level. In this regard, the ILO focuses on challenging the complex systems that support indecent work, rather than adjusting to it.

Needs assessment and agentic action. The Decent Work Agenda builds upon extensive needs assessment and exemplifies the components of agentic action, including critical reflection, proactive engagement, and community support and engagement. The many studies carried out through the ILO have been instrumental in applying a lens of critical reflection to identify those who are most marginalized and to expose the systemic issues that underlie work scarcity and injustice in the workplace and beyond. In this regard, the Decent Work Agenda has prioritized four strategic objectives to remedy systemic barriers and increase access to decent work, including (a) promoting policies and

conditions that increase and sustain employment for all; (b) enhancing social protections for workers and their families; (c) promoting worker rights, including the right to have a voice and to organize for social change; and (d) fostering social dialogue among government leaders, employers/work organizations, and employees (ILO, 2008).

The Decent Work Agenda exemplifies proactive engagement in its focus on enhancing workers' rights and voice both within and outside of the workplace and other organizations. As a result of ILO efforts, for example, migrant workers in Jordan are now represented in industry-wide collective bargaining and agreements that have improved safety, health standards, and worker wages and benefits (ILO, 2018). The ILO uses proactive engagement to assert its voice and take action to challenge systemic injustice and achieve societal change. In bringing together employers, employees, and governments from 187 nations, the ILO illustrates the power and effectiveness of collaborative action, social support, and community engagement to achieve social justice goals. The agentic actions of the ILO, encompassing critical reflection, proactive engagement, and community support, have been powerful by setting labor standards and policies that reduce exploitation and by increasing social protections for the most marginalized populations across the globe, including children, women, and older adults. For example, ILO efforts have resulted in the implementation of more than 200 projects that have reduced the rates of child labor by more than 30% across 110 countries from 2000 to 2017. Social protections, including access to health care, maternity benefits, unemployment insurance, and pensions for older adults, have expanded across many nations during the same time period (ILO, 2018).

Creating Change in People's Lives: PWC

The PWC model we propose here derives from nearly 2 decades of research and practice application (Blustein, Kenny, et al., 2019; Duffy et al., 2016). The PWC model is designed to create a broad and inclusive framework for individual and group counseling that will provide clients with the tools to create meaningful changes and adaptive developmental progress in their lives. The needs assessment process, described earlier, is essential for counselors working with the PWC model in that it informs the applications of the sources of agentic action in the counseling process. By assessing a client's capacity to survive, the counselor will be able to make the most fundamental decisions about an initial course of action. If the client is not able to meet the basic needs for food, shelter, safety, and health care, the counseling work will need to focus on helping to connect the client to sources of survival, which may include a shelter, access to food stamps, and other resources that may be available. The fulfillment of survival needs, naturally, does not occur in a dichotomous fashion. As reflected in earlier discussions of social class and career intervention (Blustein et al., 2015), a focus on short-term survival issues does not preclude developing longer term plans that can be explored via survival-based jobs and actions as well as other tools within the career development literature. For example, a client who needs to take temporary work to make ends meet may be able to learn about new fields and opportunities by seeking short-term assignments that allow for exploration and further skill development.

In a similar fashion, assessing how well a client's life provides access to social connection/contribution and self-determination may inform the goals and processes of counseling. PWC has considerable relevance to career choice and development issues. Each of the sources of agentic action can be mobilized to help clients explore themselves and their options, facilitating a thoughtful examination of ways to engage in purposeful and meaningful work (Swanson, 2013). However, a unique aspect of PWC is its utility for career- and work-related problems, such as marginalization at work, unemployment, and indecent work conditions, that do not fall under the rubric of career choice, development, and adjustment issues.

Prior to applying the sources of agentic action to PWC, we want to underscore that our contribution, like all effective counseling interventions, is framed about an affirming and sensitive therapeutic alliance. As detailed throughout the PWT literature on counseling and psychotherapy, we strongly advise counselors to develop empathic and authentic working alliances with each client based on the core ingredients of evidence-based career counseling and psychotherapy (Blustein, 2006). The nature of the working alliance optimally would entail a thoughtful connection to the client, encompassing genuine listening and concern coupled with the capacity for the client and counselor to take perspective on the relationship and on the dynamics of the client's challenges. Another important feature of PWC is that the counseling process is not necessarily highly structured; in short, the model that we are espousing is not based on a precise treatment manual or workbook. Each client's issues, need fulfillment status, and goals differ, evoking the need for a counseling model that provides guideposts for the counselor, and not necessarily specific steps that are followed in a regimented fashion. This approach shares some of the guiding principles of Richardson's (2012, 2019) contributions, which have advocated for a model of counseling for work and relationships that is constructed around the rich literature on relationally oriented psychotherapy and narrative counseling.

Sources of agentic action for individuals. Critical reflection and action are powerful tools that counselors can use to help clients explore themselves and their contexts. A key aspect of managing work-based challenges is developing a narrative about the nature and trajectory of one's life circumstances and the role of agency in managing a given set of challenges and tasks (Richardson, 2012; Savickas, 2019). In PWC, we propose that counselors help clients to frame their work-related issues from a compassionate, critical, and systemic perspective. A particularly compelling example of the importance of the narrative that clients create around their work lives is found in the struggles of long-term unemployed adults, who often blame themselves for their plight (Blustein, 2019; Sharone, 2013). Critical reflection and action can inform an empathic exploration about how a client understands the nature of job loss. If the client is engaging in self-blame that seems inaccurate and punishing, the counselor may be able to gently infuse a more contextual analysis of how work is distributed in a given community, which can be profoundly liberating and affirming for a client.

Proactive engagement is an essential aspect of PWC, as reflected in the observation that many elements of this source of agentic action are

evident across other prominent career counseling models (e.g., Lent & Brown, 2013; Richardson, 2012, 2019; Savickas, 2019). Indeed, helping clients to engage in exploration of self and educational and vocational options is an essential aspect of career choice and development counseling. In the broader world of inclusive PWC, facilitating proactive engagement provides clients with the tools to move forward in taking action with respect to the challenges that they face. Given the commitment to simultaneously consider PWT needs, proactive engagement may entail a focus on meeting survival needs for some clients, whereas for other clients, the focus may encompass developing a self-determined career infused with meaning and purpose. PWC uses dual-level goal setting, focusing on short-term needs and long-term aspirations; in this context, the traditional career choice and development focus on meaning and purpose can be seamlessly integrated into PWC.

Proactive engagement may also entail helping clients to identify their own sources of agentic action that have worked well in the past. Mapping a client's history can reveal important resources that have helped to generate proactive engagement. For example, a client who is feeling stuck in developing the capacity to engage in new behaviors that might enhance work-based options may have a history of self-determination and well-being in the relational domain. A counselor might be able to tap into this client's history to help internalize the confidence to engage proactively in the work context. Proactive engagement can also be useful for clients who are facing discrimination or prejudice at work. In this case, best practices in assertiveness and self-care may help clients to fight back against injustice in ways that are maximally adaptive, authentic, and effective.

The application of social support and community engagement in PWC builds on the growing literature of relationally based counseling (Kenny et al., 2018; Richardson, 2012). Infusing a focus on social support and community engagement can be manifested in developing an effective therapeutic alliance, which can provide a secure base for clients to explore and take risks. In addition, helping clients to develop and deepen their social support networks is an essential task in nearly all forms of counseling and psychotherapy, and it serves a similarly critical function in PWC. A common example of the role of social support is found in working with unemployed clients, who often become isolated without the structure of work (Paul & Moser, 2009). In addition, relationships help individuals to learn about themselves and to feel supported in the face of challenges, as reflected in the ways that people learn about themselves and their impact on others by discussing their relational successes and struggles in counseling. This sort of self-knowledge can be useful in promoting adaptive career decision-making (cf. Kenny et al., 2018). Moreover, social contribution is an integral aspect of PWC and may provide people with a sense of meaning, even in jobs that may not be inherently interesting (Blustein, 2019). The community engagement aspect of this source of agentic action can be manifested by helping clients to connect to support systems that may provide comfort and instrumental input, such as support groups for long-term unemployed adults.

Integrating mental health and career counseling. Prior to describing a case to illustrate PWC, we address the role of our model in relation to the ongo-

ing discussion of integrating mental health and career counseling (Blustein, 2006; Richardson, 2019; Zunker, 2008). The PWT movement has been clear in advocating for a seamless connection between work and nonwork roles in theory, research, practice, and policy. Therefore, we view PWC as an integrative approach that can be used in cases that include concerns in both personal and work-based contexts. Of course, not all career and work-based counseling cases require an integrative mental health–work approach. Furthermore, not all career practitioners are trained to provide mental health counseling; however, PWC can help the counselor to explore the full range of issues that a client presents, which can inform the referral process for clients who may need additional support. To illustrate the potential of PWC in an individual context, we next present the case of Marcela, a fictional account of a client based on aspects of clients we have worked with in the past, who presents with complex work and mental health issues.

A PWC Exemplar: The Case of Marcela

Background. Marcela is a 28-year-old, single, second-generation Mexican American woman from a working-class family and lives in the Southwest of the United States. She holds a bachelor's and a master's degree in computer science and has been working in a technology firm for the past 3 years. Marcela reports a complex relationship to her work. She very much enjoys her day-to-day tasks and feels that she has found a career that matches her skills and interests. She reports that, over the past 3 years, she has immensely enjoyed her daily work and experiences a sense of accomplishment from successfully completing influential projects.

However, factors related to her work environment have caused her to feel uneasy and alienated from her coworkers. Marcela indicates that she is one of only a handful of women in her department. Furthermore, Marcela explains that she has developed an uncomfortable relationship with her direct supervisor. She reports that several months ago, her supervisor began texting her personal cell phone; initially the content was work related, but he soon began asking her personal questions and sharing details of his own personal life. Marcela explains that her supervisor's texts escalated in the personal details he shared, and recently, they became sexually suggestive. Marcela shares that she does not feel comfortable reporting the incident because she fears that she may face negative interpersonal consequences with colleagues, as her supervisor is well liked and respected within their field. In addition, Marcela discloses that she often questions herself, wondering if she has misinterpreted the messages or is overreacting.

Marcela revealed that she is considering leaving the company to avoid confronting her supervisor but worries that she may not find another job that is as fulfilling and pays as well as her current job. She is also beginning to question her choice of computer science, wondering if the field is too male dominated for her to feel safe.

Needs assessment. In conducting a needs-based assessment, the counselor should consider Marcela's survival, social connection/contribution, and self-determination needs. Regarding survival needs, it is especially important to consider Marcela's economic background. Specifically, given Marcela's childhood economic constraints, she may desire or be expected to support family members financially. Furthermore, should she leave her current position, she likely cannot rely on financial sup-

port from family members. Marcela's current position seems to be adequately supporting her survival needs, and it is important that the counselor validate her concern over sustaining fulfillment of survival needs. Regarding remaining PWT needs, Marcela reports a high level of self-determination and social contribution. However, she lacks close relationships at work; the male-dominated environment and inappropriate messages from her supervisor have alienated her and impeded her from developing meaningful social networks.

Agentic change. In working with Marcela to cope with this difficult environment, the counselor uses PWC to provide an organizing framework for helping her to change her environment and also optimize her coping strategies. First, it is essential that Marcela's counselor address critical consciousness by explicitly defining sexual harassment and discussing common experiences of sexual harassment of women in the workplace (e.g., fear of reporting, questioning one's own reactions). Marcela may also benefit from discussions regarding how her ethnic identity may intersect with her gender to compound experiences of marginalization at work. The counselor might address both critical consciousness and proactive personality by brainstorming with Marcela possible ways she might advocate for and assert herself. Marcela might also benefit from a discussion of sources of support both within and outside of the workplace. Are there ways Marcela might connect with women or supportive male allies from other departments within the company? Identifying allies may help Marcela not only in addressing the sexual harassment she is experiencing but also in finding a sense of connection and belongingness on the job. For example, Marcela might explore whether there are any existing advocacy or affinity groups for women or for specific ethnic groups at her workplace, which might not only offer support but also strive to raise awareness among management, human resources, and workers in general. In the absence of such workplace initiatives, Marcela might be inclined to take action to organize a workplace educational or advocacy group.

Finally, should Marcela conclude that there is little room to safely assert herself in her current position, the counselor might focus on adaptability and volition. For example, are there ways in which Marcela might limit the amount of time spent with her supervisor? Are there options to transfer to another department? The counselor might assist Marcela in exploring alternative positions within her field. Throughout this process, the counselor acts as a guide to facilitate agentic action by Marcela to support her basic needs. In addition, the counselor, who in this case is trained in both mental health and career counseling, will focus on Marcela's mental health functioning. The situation that she is facing is very stressful and is likely to evoke considerable distress and anxiety. The counselor would integrate evidence-based treatments for stress management coupled with a focus on enhancing Marcela's sense of agency so that she can reexperience and internalize the strengths that helped her to attain her professional position. If the counselor is not comfortable or trained in an inclusive mental health–career counseling approach to PWC, a referral to a qualified mental health professional would be indicated as an adjunct to the work-based interventions.

Implications for Research and Further Theory Development

Akin to other, more established theories of change (e.g., Prochaska et al., 1992), the validity and value of PWC and PWSI will be judged, in part, by their usefulness in predicting actual change. What is unique about the PWT literature is its focus on creating change both within an individual and within an organization, field, and society at large. On an individual level, standard therapeutic intervention studies could be used to track how counseling sessions guided by core PWC propositions compare in efficacy and effectiveness with other types of career counseling approaches.

Tracking changes in organizations or fields would be done in a similar fashion, but with research that is more expansive in terms of inclusion and scope. For example, particular organizations such as career or employment centers may view PWC as a model that is an optimal fit for their specific clientele. Here, PWC experts would work with these organizations to develop practice approaches that best fit their particular setting. This PWC model may then be used by all counselors within that particular organization, and data could be gathered by clients, counselors, and administrators within this system assessing the effectiveness of the PWC along with organizational factors and economic conditions that support the implementation of effective PWC practice.

From the perspective of PWSI, the research trajectory is challenging but necessary to create the conditions for decent work for all. Ultimately, the goal of PWT is to see individuals who face high levels of marginalization and economic constraints have equal opportunities to secure decent and fulfilling work. More broadly, PWSI would necessitate a critical and broad lens in conceptualizing research studies that can benefit society at large. Blustein, Kenny, et al. (2019) outlined some examples of specific research contributions that career development practitioners and scholars can make to these sorts of broad-based problems. Included in these recommendations are projects that will examine the impact of basic income guarantees on well-being and the identification of specific features of work contexts that support decent work. One broad-based agenda that has particular relevance for the change models presented in this article is an exploration of the intersecting nature of individual change and systemic change. For example, how does change in individuals affect the ways in which they relate to systems?

Although the research agenda that will be inspired by these new change models will be daunting, we contend that scholars, practitioners, and organizational leaders aspiring to reach the goal of societal change via interventions grounded in PWT principles will indeed have a meaningful impact on this change occurring.

Conclusion

We believe that PWT holds great promise for career development scholars, practitioners, and activists. The needs of our societies are changing, and tools that can transcend our traditional focus on career choice, development, and adjustment issues are essential to meet the shifting landscape of our clients and communities. As reflected in Table 3, which lists practical suggestions culled from this article, we offer a model of fostering

TABLE 3

Ten Practical Suggestions

Psychology of working counseling
1. Develop a caring and reflective alliance with the client that provides the foundation for perspective taking and change.
2. Conduct a needs assessment that attends to survival, social connection/contribution, and self-determination.
3. Help the client to explore issues from a systemic perspective, encompassing a critical perspective that identifies the full array of factors shaping behavior and life circumstances.
4. Explore ways for clients to become change agents in their own lives and in their organizations and contexts.
5. Provide support for clients in achieving their goals in counseling and help clients to enhance and deepen their social support networks.

Psychology of working systemic intervention
6. Consider the work of counseling as involving individual interventions as well as ongoing activism to support human rights and the Decent Work Agenda.
7. Develop individual critical consciousness and foster critical consciousness among others as a tool in examining the impact of broad systemic factors in shaping individual lives and careers.
8. Examine the big picture of systemic causes for problems in accessing and sustaining decent work.
9. Mobilize support in your life to help generate activism within your work organization and broader community, ensuring that human rights are reflected in your professional life.
10. Connect with colleagues in professional associations to advocate for social justice in your work as a counselor and in the contexts that frame decent work.

change that fits both individuals and systems. We envision this model as providing viable and flexible tools for enriching counseling practice and informing systemic change efforts. The needs assessment and sources of agentic action provide complementary guideposts that can be used with other psychotherapy/counseling theories and systems change models. We hope that the material provided here will help to enrich efforts in our field to ensure that people have access to counselors who are skilled to work with the full array of clients and client problems and that our systems can be changed to support and sustain decent and dignified work for all.

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