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Interdisciplinary Applications of the Person-Centered Approach

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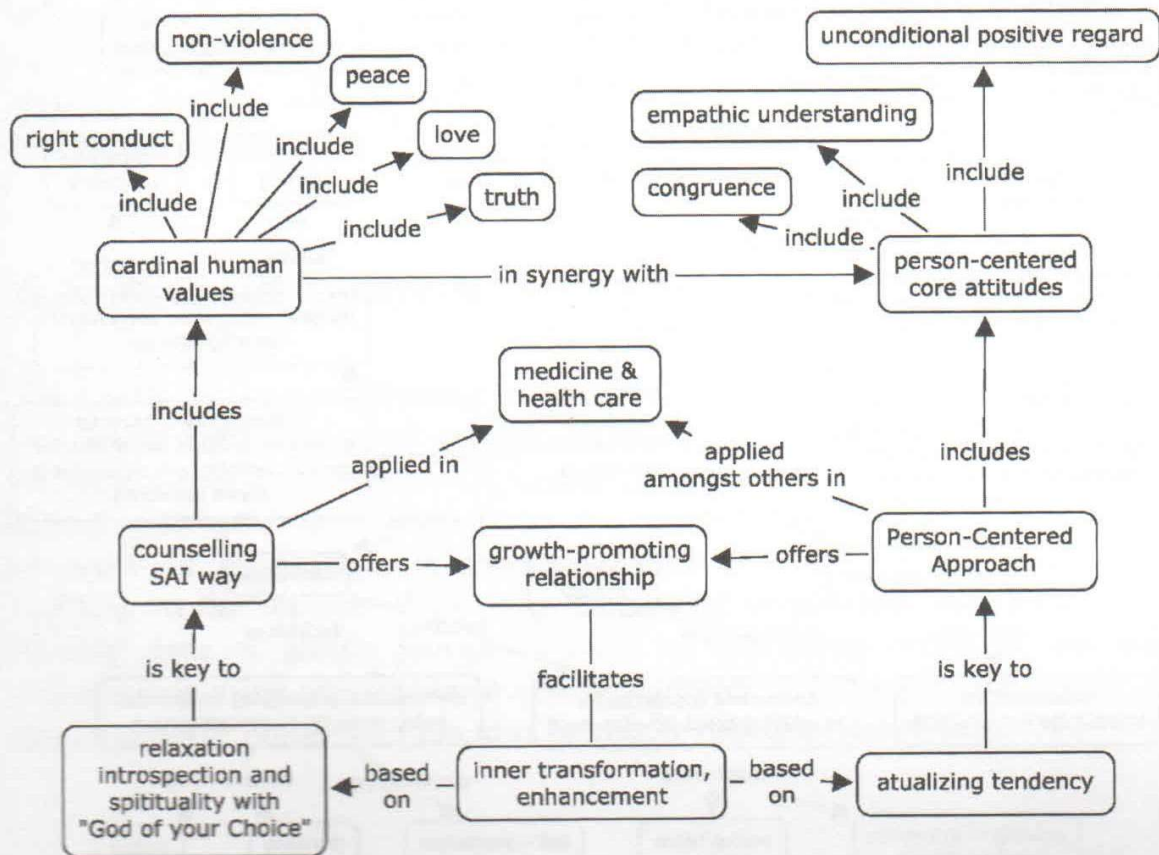


Fig. 2 Concept map showing the “bridges” between notions of counseling the SAI way and the PCA (see Rao and Umesh, Chap. 7)

Counselling the SAI Way

Umesh Rao and Gita Umesh

1 Introduction

A staggering 222 million out of 833 million people living in rural India are illiterate, attributable partly to their low socio-economic status. People in this marginalized group when stricken with serious illnesses—a brain tumour or heart disease—cannot afford modern medical care; the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Medical Sciences (SSSIHMS) is often their only hope. Founded by Sathya Sai Baba in 2001, this “Temple of Healing,” as it is commonly called, provides tertiary-level care for patients suffering from serious cardiac and neurological illnesses necessitating major surgical interventions. This care is totally free enabled by unsolicited donations from diverse sources touched by the selfless work being done. Patients and accompanying attendants are typically characterized by having experienced high levels of stress and trauma.

Modern medicine needs a spiritual dimension to patient care for progressing from curing to healing, which necessitates addressing the body, mind and spirit (e.g. Benson 1996; Puchalski 2001; Rao 2010). In the SSSIHMS hospital, “Counselling the SAI Way”—Spirituality Awareness Integration in Counselling—addresses the spiritual dimension of patients using the PCA as a therapeutic framework. Being complementary to normal hospital care, SAI counselling is a short-term therapy focused on inner transformation or “the actualization process” in the patients to help achieve healing. SAI counselling provides emotional support and spiritual care to patients suffering from serious cardiac and neurological illnesses necessitating major surgical interventions. Patients are counselled before surgery, post-surgery and before discharge. A psycho-spiritual patient profile is maintained.

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