

BRIDGES, BORDERS & THE DANCE

**A Cooperative Inquiry Study of Multiple Role Relationships
within the Process Work Community of Portland, Oregon**

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Katje Wagner

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the experience of non-sexual multiple role relationships within the Process Work learning community of Portland, Oregon. It presents a continuum of viewpoints on multiple role relationships, including dominant, alternative and Process Work orientations. Adopting an interpretive, qualitative approach to research, within a cooperative inquiry framework (Bray, Lee, Smith & Yorks, 2000; Reason & Heron, 1999), this study aims to understand more deeply how individuals with various roles in the Process Work community (formal and informal students, local and long-distance, and diplomates with various degrees of seniority) view and experience multiple role relationships from their own perspectives. The study includes a series of meetings, in which members explored personal multiple role relationship experiences as well as those occurring within the group. Thematic findings illustrate that members experienced multiple role relationships as both challenging and successful. Problematic aspects include silence, multiple shifting identities, evaluation, rank and power, and transitional and therapeutic relationships. Benefits address the areas of personal development, integrated learning, professional opportunities, expanded roles and relationships, and sources of support. Outcomes point toward skills and metaskills useful in the effective negotiation of multiple role relationships. Implications and recommendations for the Process Work community, development of training curriculum, and the broader psychotherapeutic field are also discussed, as well as directions for further research.

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As I begin to meditate on the process of this study and writing this thesis, I am in awe of the origins itself—for I do not know when it began. I feel like *it*—my curiosity and wonder for relationship and its many forms, the love and struggle, and my hunger for the learning in it all—*it* has always been there. In that way, I must first acknowledge the *dreaming* that has drawn me through life to this spot where I can actually identify multiple role relationships as a realm for exploring *it*.

I want to thank this community—Army and Amy Mindell, our expanding circle of teachers, and the many amazing people who have all followed themselves and what calls them into realms of wondrous and difficult learning through relationship. In particular, I feel deep appreciation for Julie Diamond and Lee Spark Jones who opened the doors to this research. To my fellow researchers and participants in this study, thank you for risking to share your stories and dive in together. Lee Spark Jones has been by my side as my thesis adviser—literally an email away, relieving my inner torture with kindness, enlivening evaluation, and wisdom from having lived it. She helped me practice and embody our study. Dawn Menken, Salome Schwarz, and so many of my teachers and comrades in learning have helped me live and grow through our many different relationships with each other. Thank you. And Jan Dworkin in particular has been a bit of everything—thank you for bridging worlds with me.

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INTRODUCTION

Overview of Multiple Role Relationships

Multiple role relationships, also referred to as dual relationships, can be defined as “any circumstance in which a practitioner assumes one or more roles additional to that of practitioner” (Diamond & Jones, 2004). Such roles might include when therapists engage in relationships with clients as teachers or students, colleagues, business associates, or friends. Staying within the bounds of a certain role and identity as a therapist has become synonymous with good therapy. Allowing other roles, experiences, or relationships to cross those boundaries is currently viewed with extreme caution within the dominant paradigm of psychotherapy, to the point that the mention of multiple relationships is often met with a held breath, sideways glance, and raised eyebrows...all indicative of a (mostly unchallenged) norm that communicates their unethical and dangerous nature.

And for good reason – therapists must take into consideration the welfare of the client, effectiveness of treatment, avoidance of harm and exploitation, conflict of interest, and the impairment of clinical judgment when working with their clients. “Do no harm” echoes as a bedrock of ethical guidelines within psychotherapeutic circles. Harmful dual relationships typically occur with some form of exploitation or abuse, when using another for personal gain or forcing one's power over another who cannot

protect or advocate for him or herself (Zur, 2006; Process Work, 2006). Examples of harmful dual relationships include sexual contact with current clients and exploitative business relationships. It is widely agreed upon – among mainstream, alternative, and Process Work approaches alike – that sexual relationships between therapists and current clients are potentially detrimental and thus forbidden, due to possible conflict of interest, abuse of power and compromised judgment, as well as any other relationship that risks impairment, exploitation, or harm. Regardless of this general consensus, however, there still exists a deep-seated trepidation and thus underlying ban on *all* multiple relationships in most psychotherapeutic circles. How have we arrived here? How is it that a concept has been born and labeled “multiple role relationship” in an effort to constrain practitioners and protect clients from potential harm?

At its root, therapy translates to a process of attending to another in such a way that does no harm, instead providing or assisting in a cure or solution (Mish, *et al*, 2003). Implicit in this endeavor is that some harm may indeed have been done to the client at some point along the way, and that part of the job of the therapist is to attend to that harm, alert to the therapist's power relative to the client, perhaps in an effort to help liberate the client from patterns that harm has created, find a greater sense of meaning in the process, and in doing so develop the power to create new avenues for self expression. Since Freud or before, depending on one's view of the origins of psychology, therapists have been attempting to fulfill some version of this aim.

While none of the professional codes of ethics actually forbid non-sexual dual relationships, the atmosphere generated amongst psychotherapists is one of extreme

caution when presented with the possibility, along with predominantly anonymous replies to research and requests for disclosure due to possible legal consequences. Perhaps such an extreme climate serves as a response to loose attitudes and boundaries gone out of control to the point of severe emotional damage to clients (Lazarus & Zur, 2002). In addition, research on trauma, abuse and the misuse of power indicates that compliant behavior from clients may be due to trauma reactions, fear of reprisal, or subservience to authority, rather than actual consent and agreement (Diamond & Jones, 2004). Such examples have led professional associations to develop ethical guidelines that proscribe relationships which fall outside the clear boundaries of therapist and client roles.

However, not everyone within the psychotherapeutic field agrees with this understanding and approach to boundaries and the therapeutic relationship. As Lazarus and Zur state in “Dual Relationships and Psychotherapy” (2002), the first book devoted entirely to non-sexual dual relationships,

In our opinion, too many members of our profession compromise and undermine their true healing potential by forfeiting the benefits that selected clients can gain from a dual relationship (p. xxx).

Lazarus and Zur focus on the distinction between “boundary crossings” as opposed to “boundary violations,” emphasizing that multiple relationships that are approached with thought and care open the possibility for increased trust, therapeutic effectiveness, and enriched individual and cultural experiences. Many well-practiced and empirically researched therapeutic approaches, such as Behavioral, Cognitive, Humanistic, Family

Systems, Feminist, Existential, and Group therapy, value dual relationships as an integral part of their treatment (Remley & Herlihy, 2001; Zur, 2006). Various sub-cultures and ethnic communities approach relationships from a more communal orientation, and therefore view and judge boundaries and roles differently within therapeutic relationships. In addition, dual relationships make up a normal, expected and unavoidable part of life within small and interdependent communities, such as universities, gay and deaf communities. Further, Lazarus, Zur and others in support of alternative views on the place of dual relationships in psychotherapeutic contexts argue that hypervigilant regulations and fear of lawsuits exacerbate the potential for harm by creating inappropriate and unrealistic power positions, increase isolation amongst practitioners, and have in fact led to one of the worst ethical violations by placing “risk management” approaches to therapy over sound clinical considerations (Lazarus & Zur, 2002; Cleret, 2005; Williams, 1997; Zur, 2000 & 2006). Without being jailed by our own fears and excessively rigid rules, how do we as practitioners address these issues of boundaries, power and harm? How do we make space to explore a territory fraught with complication? What is truly therapeutic and educative? And what happens when we meet the boundaries of roles in relationship? This thesis aims to address such questions and issues as they arise in non-sexual multiple role relationships as experienced by members of the Process Work learning community.

Research Purpose

Due to the nature of Process Work's relatively small community and learning environment, multiple role relationships (MRRs) are a practical necessity of the Process Work training program and community life. As a small learning community, Process Work trainers and trainees often overlap in their relationships with each other as teachers and students, therapists and clients, supervisors and supervisees, colleagues and community members. MRRs within the Process Work community also reflect the background guiding principles of Process Work, which view multiple roles as an inevitable and potentially beneficial aspect of relationship life and training. The Process Work training program has recently re-assessed its ethical standards and guidelines regarding MRRs in order to accommodate requirements for state authorization of its degree programs. Until now, the experience of multiple role relationship within the Process Work community has not been explored in detail as a research topic.

Method. This thesis joins in the endeavor to further research on multiple role relationships within Process Work. In an effort to understand more fully the experience of non-sexual multiple role relationships within the Process Work community in Portland, Oregon, Julie Diamond and Lee Spark Jones initiated a comprehensive project on multiple role relationships, seeking to explore and articulate the Process Work model of MRRs, with the vision of shaping Process Work training curriculum in

this area.¹ (See Appendix for “Seedlings of Inspiration...What's Under that Rock?!” an interview with Jones about how the MRR research project began.) Along with six other members of the Process Work community, I was invited to join a research group in partial fulfillment of Diamond and Jones's original project. Adopting an interpretive, qualitative approach to research, within a cooperative inquiry framework (Bray, Lee, Smith & Yorks, 2000; Reason & Heron, 1999), this study explores the experience of non-sexual multiple role relationships in the Process Work community of Portland, Oregon. It aims to understand more deeply how individuals with various roles in the community (formal and informal students, local and long-distance, diplomates with various degrees of seniority) experience and view MRRs from their own perspectives.

Questions. The study has been guided by the following overarching questions: How are non-sexual multiple role relationships understood and experienced in the Process Work community of Portland? How are they problematic and/or beneficial? Also, what skills and metaskills allow Process Work trainers and trainees to negotiate such relationships effectively? The chapters that follow present a compilation and elaboration upon our cooperative inquiry study, explore challenging and successful aspects of our experiences of MRRs from research findings, and examine implications for training and community relationship.

1 In August 2001, Diamond and Jones began a multi-phase study of the Process Work model of multiple role relationship: Phase 1) a conceptual exploration of paradigms that inform the Process Work model of multiple role relationships, presented in an article entitled “Paradigms of Influence in the Process Work Approach to Multiple Role Relationships” (2004); Phases 2 and 3) two qualitative studies of multiple role relationship experiences in the Process Work community and in other psychotherapy institutes, which explore beneficial and problematic aspects of non-sexual multiple role relationships in psychotherapy contexts and investigate the skills and metaskills that allow trainers and trainees to negotiate such relationships effectively; and the final Phase 4) a project explicating more fully the Process Work model of multiple role relationships, based on findings from the three previous phases; with the aim of addressing implications for Process Work training in this area.

MRR Roots within Process Work

I feel an immense sense of appreciation for the Process Work training program, for the heart of our community, as I introduce this research topic. It lays open a territory I am not sure we quite recognize the significance of—the roots of multiple role relationship within Process Work, the tradition it links us to, and the foundation upon which sustaining concepts and visions are built. Multiple role relationship invites the challenge of *deep democracy* in practice, an opportunity to recognize our wholeness in relationship (Mindell, 1995). Perhaps we fell into this tradition, or were pulled into it by the deep powers of our *dreaming*, drawing us toward and furthering a lineage that was built upon multiple role relationships, before they were even identified as such. This practice of learning through relationship extends back to Jung's era and even before, long before, an ancient wisdom that values the unique mysterious potential that occurs when two people come together in various capacities with the intention of learning. As Diamond (2004) explains in “Where Roles, Rank and Relationship Meet: A Framework for Working with Multiple Role Relationships in Process Work Learning Communities,”

Facilitating another's learning and growth in the training of psychological practitioners, and through the therapeutic relationship, often involves a particular kind of intimacy. Trainer and trainee, therapist and client, engage in a powerful relationship of transformation, which involves more than the simple transmission of information and skills, and often requires the successful navigation of multiple roles (p.2).

Jungian analyst Joseph Wakefield furthers this recognition of the transformative nature of psychotherapeutic training, explaining the history of this tradition within Jungian psychology:

Overlapping roles at the Jung Institute resulted not only from the lack of available analysts, but also from Jung's theory of the psychotherapy process, notably its focus on the mutual transformation of the therapist and client, and the importance of contacting and living close to one's deeper self, beyond the social persona. Thus, while prizing introversion and individualistic focus, social interaction and relationship also played a large part in a learning community that accepted multiple role relationships and freely engaged in them (Diamond & Jones, p. 92).

This orientation toward training entails an exchange of wisdom, both intentional and intangible, both what consciously draws us together and defines the scope and focus of our time together, and also the invisible realms and fields that magnetize us and account for other simultaneous levels of relationship that connect us and ask to be known. Perhaps these background currents steer relationship long before our conscious selves catch up to their presence. Perhaps they are the organizing force behind the relationship itself, with its own power and agenda.

This window into the potentials that are present within relationship reflect the long-standing tradition of multiple role relationships. It is a level which implicitly values the multiple nature of learning and intelligence—that we learn not only through our neo-cortical (rational/cognitive) brain in a formal academic setting, taking in

information as a student from a teacher through books and lecture. Indeed, we also are relational beings and relational learners, that digest and integrate information through our limbic (emotional) brain, informally and through other roles, styles and contexts as well (Lewis, Amini & Lannon, 2000; Gardner, 1993). For example, one learns about intimacy and boundaries, not only through reading theoretical analysis of relationship processes, but by actually being *in* relationship and experiencing those issues *with* others, reflecting on their meanings and significance through actual lived experience.

As Sir Ken Robinson (2006) states, there are three things we know about intelligence:

1. that it is diverse – we think about the world in all the ways that we experience it (ie, visually, through sound, kinesthetically, abstractly, etc.);
2. it is dynamic – we are relational and interactive, and intelligence comes through the interaction of different disciplinary ways of seeing things;
3. and it is distinct – we are each unique in our expression of intelligence according to our various gifts and inclinations.

In “Teaching to Transgress,” bell hooks (1994) echoes this understanding of holistic learning in her appreciation of Thich Nhat Hanh, a renowned Vietnamese Buddhist monk and spiritual teacher:

[He] offered a way of thinking about pedagogy which emphasized wholeness, a union of mind, body, and spirit. His focus on a holistic approach to learning and spiritual practice enabled me to overcome years of socialization that had taught me to believe a classroom was diminished if students and professors regarded one another as “whole”

human beings, striving not just for knowledge in books, but knowledge about how to live in the world (p. 14-15).

In “The Gold at the End of the Rainbow: A Hermeneutic Study of a Therapist's Spiritual Experience,” Ellen Schupbach also speaks to this need for integrated learning in her discussion of putting theory into practice through relationship:

It is not information that is lacking, but the living examples of this information, and the activation of these concepts...Concepts in themselves, though interesting to ponder, are not ultimately satisfying to the whole being...The awe is in the walking of the path, the meeting in this moment in space and time between two people...Concepts can help to point to, describe, and possibly deepen experiences, but should never be confused with the experience itself, which they are meant to describe (2004, p. 146-147).

These examples illustrate how diverse fields and practitioners recognize the significance of learning through relationship.

The tradition of apprenticeship reflects these principles of multiple intelligence and holistic learning. One is not only studying a craft, art, science or spiritual tradition, but also practicing that tradition in relationship with a teacher who also becomes a mentor. Sometimes mentorship is assigned or sought out. This lineage recognizes, however, that often there is a greater force organizing and “deciding” whether or not a relationship is meant to be. In this way, we do not choose these learning relationships, but are chosen. Diamond discusses the heart of apprenticeship, explaining that

Apprenticeship means not only choosing a teacher or mentor, but also “being chosen” by a teacher, by dreams, or by a larger organizing entity ...Relationships are constructed only in part by the conscious intent of its members; the dreaming process also brings people together (2004, p. 7).

In “The Shaman's Body,” Mindell refers to apprenticeship as a shamanic calling:

There is no single shamanic calling that is enough. The spirit must be consulted and agree at every stage...and determines when and how training can continue...The personal powers of both the teacher and the student set up their meeting, and the same power chooses the task symbolized by that teacher. In other words, the task is a shared spirit, which in some cases may take generations to complete. It is as if student and teacher are part of a long lineage whose history and future extend backward and outward to infinity...The apprentice's and teacher's powers create their relationship and their task...The exact nature of the task depends upon your individual talents and weaknesses, the period you live in, and the aspect of your teacher's task that she has not completed...The task is bestowed by the spirit of the teacher, either directly or indirectly through dreams and love (p. 57-60 & 198-199).

This greater presence creates a shared connection, organizing the form and direction of the relationship.

Both the Freudian and Jungian analytic education models reflect this concept of learning through apprenticeship in their original approach of “tripartite” training.

Combining the roles of both teacher and therapist, the tripartite model includes the student's own therapy, supervision and presentation of cases, and course curriculum (Diamond, 2004). In addition to the tripartite model of psychotherapeutic training, this tradition of apprenticeship-style learning extends into many fields and practices in which teacher/employer/mentor roles combine as one, including craftsmanship, midwifery and healing traditions, shamanism and other spiritual practices, as well as adult education and even modern-day entrepreneurs (Diamond & Jones, 2004).

The intent of this cooperative inquiry research project is to explore how this tradition in its current manifestation as multiple role relationships is experienced within the Process Work community. It is important to not only recognize the roots of this tradition and how we as a training institute have come to utilize this model, but also to find out more about the lived experiences of those involved in multiple role relationships and its many manifestations. In doing so, we have the opportunity to identify the central issues that arise in multiple role relationship, to recognize more clearly its rich gifts and centrality to the learning and practice of Process Work, as well as the concerns, challenges and complexities it raises. My hope is that by giving space to reflect on this territory, we can draw learnings from our experiences that will guide us in the negotiation of multiple role relationships, the future training of Process Workers, and also contribute to the greater psychotherapeutic community's scope of understanding.

Subjective Experience of the Researcher

I came to Process Work through relationship dreaming. I am just realizing that now. I never thought about it before like this, or made a connection to Multiple Role Relationship as somehow mythic for me in relation to Process Work. In 1994, I was waiting tables in Santa Cruz, California. I made friends with Bruce Scott, a “regular” at Hobe's Restaurant, and eventually found out that he was a psychologist and writer. He invited me to a group he ran on personal growth and development. Bruce's way of being in the world, his teachings on self-awareness and relationship, resonated with me—I felt like some part of me knew this way of being deep down in my bones, like I was remembering something, and so excited to have it articulated. Later I came to learn that Bruce had attended the very first Process Work Intensive back in 1986 in Zurich, Switzerland, and referred to Carlos Castaneda and Arnold Mindell as his main teachers. Bruce turned from customer to friend, teacher and mentor. This multiple role relationship led me to the path of Process Work.

I have a background in performing arts, holistic health, an undergraduate degree in “Communications with an Emphasis in Gender Relations,” which brought together psychology, sociology, political science, and women's studies, and a Master's degree in Counselor Education. After graduating from college, I performed professionally for one year, then began to study midwifery, which I had been drawn to through an academic and socio-political interest in women's health. My learning experiences through midwifery took me further into women's and wholistic health, studying massage and many forms of bodywork, herbology, and eventually yoga.

Looking back, I can see how relationship has always been a significant part of my learning process, something I am now beginning to explore as a “learning style.” Although my dance teacher at 10 years old was definitely a first mentor for me, this relationship learning style did not become explicit until much later as a midwifery student when I began to recognize in myself a deep longing for apprenticeship. Apprenticeship is strong within the midwifery tradition—it is the main way traditional midwives learn their art and skill. “Book learning” will take you only so far—it is necessary to live and breathe the life of a midwife, to learn through careful observation and practice, but maybe even more so, through a kind of *osmosis*—unconsciously absorbing the skills and attitudes of midwifery, making relationship with the mother and baby during the prenatal period, being on-call 24/7, 'smelling' birth, how to help a baby drop down, the songs, the medicines, signs of danger, the thrill of welcoming a new arrival...never the same. It is not just a job—it is a way of life.

I now realize that I have been looking to apprentice in a “way of life.” An apprentice can be defined as

one bound by indenture to serve another for a prescribed period with a view to learning an art or trade; one who is learning by practical experience under skilled workers a trade, art, or calling; an inexperienced person, a novice (Mish, *et al*, 2003).

I can see how this apprenticeship dreaming wove throughout the next phases of my life: I traveled and worked with Bruce, I studied intensively with my yoga teacher (a spiritual and physical discipline that also has strong roots in apprenticeship), and I

eventually moved to Portland to study Process Work – without yet knowing that Process Work also echoes this tradition through its Jungian and shamanic lineage of multiple role relationships (see Diamond & Jones, 2004).

My apprenticeship is in a “way of life,” midwifed by various mentors. I am bound, following a calling, learning through practical experience the art and science of this “way of life” through my relationships with skilled practitioners of Process Work. These relationships take many forms—therapist, teacher, supervisor, thesis adviser, study committee member, colleague, community member and friend. All are guided by my dreaming and the practice of awareness.

I have found that my relationships in Process Work guide me toward my next steps of learning, propel me further into my personal growth and development. I have felt there is a teleological impulse that pulls me toward relationship and areas of learning that I might otherwise avoid. I am often drawn to certain qualities in others that are 'not-me', that I do not identify with or see in myself. I find that my relationships and love for these people grow stronger than my conscious or unconscious personal resistance to these qualities. I learn *through osmosis*—along with hard study and the practice of awareness. These relationships help me to get to know and integrate my projections, to become what I was once not, to grow and change.

And so I come to this research project with a definite orientation *toward* multiple role relationships. I have a history which supports them and a personal liking for the richness, intimacy and well-roundedness such relationships provide. In terms of Process Work and psychotherapeutic practice in general, I see relationship and roles as

core elements of the work itself, something we need to become agile and awake to. I feel that most people reach edges in development when new learning comes face to face with another person, and that most therapeutic change needs to be practiced and integrated through relationship in order to be sustainable. I also believe that relationship dreaming and the “strange attraction” that pulls us toward various learning relationships is truly mysterious and may provide the powerful stuff that gets us through impossible spots within ourselves and our lives. Through this study, however, I have also become more aware of the many issues involved in multiple role relationships that may not match or even counter my own experience and how I had been thinking about them. I have had to widen my lens in order to take in many different viewpoints and all that is contained within them, helping me to be more receptive and interested in fleshing out the territory in its entirety.

These are the biases and background I bring to this study, which inform my leanings toward relationship and its inherent multiple roles as a path toward learning. I address them here in order to help establish the soundness and trustworthiness of this study—to make transparent my subjectivity as a researcher, my self-awareness of those biases, and how I have addressed them. I was initially interested in this study because I recognized that I was experiencing many multiple role relationships throughout my Process Work training. (See Appendix for Write-Up of my personal MRR experience.) I was drawn to working, learning and relating with people in the community on multiple levels. I also felt the difficulties and complexities of these relationships, and wanted to learn more about these challenges—for my own understanding, and also for

the potential benefit to others and our community as a whole. When I first became involved in the project, I was simultaneously completing a graduate degree in a mainstream counseling program. This amplified my own sense of 'multiplicity'—I was living *multiple* lives in *multiple* roles with *multiple* perspectives on what it means to work with people. I have come to realize that multiplicity is an ongoing experience. I had previously been interested in and studied ethics as a possible area of research, which I now regard as valuable preparation for many of the concerns related to multiple role relationships. Beyond the boundaries of my personal experiences, this project offers me an opportunity to enhance my awareness by broadening my field of vision to the territory of multiple role relationships at large—and learn more about the experiences, issues, and underlying values mapping this mysterious territory.

Multiple roles

Multiple ways with each other

We lean, we dance

We lead, we follow

We wrestle and slice

Power and hidden gifts create the tension and flow

Grip and compel us

Reel us with confusion, send us cowering barely able to think

What are your powers, what are your learnings

What is this Mystery that demands we dance the dance?

Aims & Contributions

I have approached this research from a cooperative inquiry perspective, gathering with six other members of the Process Work learning community as co-participants and co-researchers to study our experiences of multiple role relationship. The data was generated from seven meetings over the period of 13 months, during which we outlined our approach and delved deeper into our explorations through several phases of action and reflection (as described in detail in the methodology chapter). With the permission and feedback from the inquiry group, I have furthered the research process by providing a methodological foundation for our study, analyzing the data generated from our time together, discussing the implications of our research findings, and synthesizing the experience in its entirety through this thesis project.

In bringing this project to fruition, I have several aims through the chapters that follow: I seek to represent the experience of our cooperative inquiry research group such that all members feel their experience has been given a voice and that the essential learnings and other salient murmurings of our study have been captured. This thesis provides readers with information that places MRRs into a greater context within the field psychotherapy in general and the Process Work paradigm in particular. It names, outlines, and puts into perspective various perspectives and dimensions related to multiple role relationships. The thesis brings together new learnings that provide handles, skills and metaskills, to assist in the negotiation of MRRs. It also contributes ideas to extend the research of multiple role relationships, and provides suggestions for the Process Work community and ways to incorporate these learnings into training

curriculum. As a whole, this thesis aims to stimulate thought and reflection about one's own experience of multiple role relationships, provide practical guidance to enhance their negotiation, as well as encourage discussion and invite further exploration. In doing so, I hope those who read this thesis feel that aspects of their experience are reflected in the voices expressed here, and are in turn inspired to contribute to our understanding of multiple role relationships in other creative research endeavors.

Overview of Chapters

This first chapter has provided a general introduction to the topic of multiple role relationships within the field of psychotherapy, outlining the purpose, method and questions guiding this project. I have discussed the relevance and roots of multiple role relationships within the Process Work learning community, as well as my personal interest and orientation toward MRRs. I concluded this introduction with an overview of the aims and potential contributions of this study.

Section One of this thesis lays the groundwork for the study, including the literature review and methodology chapters. Chapter Two reviews current literature on multiple role relationships, providing a discussion of both the dominant and alternative views, along with their main perspectives and arguments. It then addresses Process Work's orientation toward MRRs, and examines both the practical and theoretical value of MRRs within the Process Work learning community. The chapter discusses both role and rank theory as fundamental contributions to Process Work's approach, and provides an outline of Diamond's framework for working with MRRs from a Process Work

perspective. By reviewing the literature on multiple role relationships, I locate this study within the broader context of psychotherapy and demonstrate its significance to the Process Work community, thereby providing a rationale for the project as a whole.

Chapter Three presents the methodological framework of this study. It describes the cooperative inquiry approach to research, including evaluative and ethical considerations and how they were addressed throughout the study. The chapter then focuses on the actual steps of our inquiry process, including a description of our analysis process and my role within the project. It concludes with a detailed introduction to the participants, the roles that emerged in our research, and the initial multiple role relationship stories each participant brought to the study.

Section II includes the analysis and thematic findings of this study. Chapter Four presents “Difficult Territory,” which reviews the complexities and challenges found within members' experiences of MRRs, including multiple shifting identities, silence, evaluation, rank and power, and transitional and therapeutic relationships. Chapter Five outlines “The Stuff of Success,” those elements found to create successful and satisfying MRRs, including MRR paradigms, pragmatic needs and contributions, maturity, learning styles, rank and power, and dreaming connections. This chapter also presents new learnings and areas of growth identified by the inquiry group.

Section III synthesizes the research findings and outcomes, and points toward new directions. Chapter Six includes a discussion of the study's findings in response to the initial research questions, and addresses the significance of these outcomes in relation to current perspectives on multiple role relationships. Finally, Chapter Seven

concludes with an overview of the study and discussion of its limitations. This chapter then speaks to implications and offers recommendations for the Process Work community, development of training curriculum, as well as the broader psychotherapeutic field. The chapter ends with a discussion of directions for future research.

Definition of Terms

In an effort to reach a broad audience, I have written this thesis with as little Process Work linguistic idiosyncrasies as possible. However, the inquiry group members shared Process Work as a background orientation, therefore specific Process Work terms permeate the data to some degree. In addition, certain concepts are particularly useful and relevant to the topic of multiple role relationships. Thus, I provide definitions for the following terms:

Consensus Reality. The level of objective reality that is agreed upon by the majority as being valid or true.

Deathwalk. Within the spiritual warriorship tradition, the experience of coming up against one's community – or the unknown of life itself – which brings you face to face with the possibility of death, and requires impeccability and personal power to get you through.

Deep Democracy. A respect and appreciation for all voices and levels of reality as essential to our wholeness.

Dreaming. The force behind the manifestation of all levels of reality.

Edge. The border between known and unknown information, creating a block in

communication when, out of fear or discomfort, something is repressed that is trying to emerge.

Essence. The level of reality beyond polarity, which provides a non-verbal common ground of experience.

Field. The atmosphere of a relationship, group or environment, including the roles, feelings, and experiences which make up their interactions.

Ghosts. Marginalized parts of oneself or roles within a group (such as third parties, outer institutions, governments, critics, etc.), indicated by things that are referred to but not identified with directly or feelings that are unexpressed.

Metaskills. The feeling attitudes behind interaction and techniques, embedded in everything we do.

Non-Consensus Reality. The level of subjective reality that not everyone agrees upon or perceives the same.

Rank. Conscious or unconscious power and privileges stemming from culture, organizations, psychology, and spirituality.

Role. A position or viewpoint that depends on time and place, thus changeable according to context and inner experience.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, I present an overview of the current perspectives on multiple role relationships. I begin by introducing the dominant view within psychotherapeutic literature, upon which current ethical guidelines and standards are based. I then explore alternative views, their reactions and criticism of the dominant view, and the different perspectives they offer on the significance of multiple role relationships. I conclude by locating Process Work's orientation toward multiple role relationships within the context of these various perspectives and establish the main theoretical concepts that influence Process Work's approach to multiple role relationships. In doing so, I hope to provide a foundation for the many issues that arise within psychotherapeutic experiences regarding multiple role relationships, as well as position this research project in relation to the field of perspectives.

Dominant View

There exists a range of views and debate about the ethicality and acceptability of multiple role relationships. The codes of ethics for most professional organizations within the fields of mental health do not actually prohibit dual or multiple role relationships. However, the dominant view of multiple role relationships (MRRs) within the psychotherapeutic mainstream reflects a prohibitory climate that considers

contact with clients outside of the professional context potentially unethical, dangerous, and to be avoided at all costs (Pope & Vetter, 1991; Pope, 1990; Borys & Pope, 1989; Pope & Bajt, 1988; Pope, Keith-Spiegel & Tabachnick, 1986). (Refer to Appendix for relevant citations from APA, ACA, and Process Work Codes of Ethics.) For example, the American Counseling Association's (ACA) Code of Ethics (2005) states:

Counselors must make every effort to avoid dual relationships with clients that could impair their professional judgment or increase the risk of harm to clients. When a dual relationship cannot be avoided, counselors must take appropriate steps to ensure that judgment is not impaired and that no exploitation occurs.

The American Psychological Association (APA) extends its definition of multiple role relationships to include people closely associated with or related to the main person with whom a psychologist has a professional relationship, as well as promises to enter into another relationship in the future with the main person, a person closely associated with him or her, or related to that person. Similar to the ACA's Code of Ethics, the APA (2002) obligates psychologists to refrain from entering into a multiple role relationship

if the multiple relationship could reasonably be expected to impair the psychologist's objectivity, competence, or effectiveness in performing his or her functions as a psychologist, or otherwise risks exploitation or harm to the person with whom the professional relationship exists.

The APA Code of Ethics also requires psychologists to resolve problems if, “due to unforeseeable factors, a potentially harmful multiple relationship has arisen,” as well as

clarify role expectations and limits to confidentiality when they are “required by law, institutional policy, or extraordinary circumstances to serve in more than one role in judicial or administrative proceedings.”

As indicated by the Codes of Ethics above, professional, federal, and state regulations generally warn against other relationships outside of the roles of practitioner and client. The codes emphasize professional judgment, risk of exploitation, and potential of harm, and in doing so, implicitly link multiple role relationships with dangerous territory in which the practitioner cannot be trusted and the client is susceptible to abuse. The consequent climate of extreme caution stems from these fears of exploitation and harm. The main arguments against multiple relationships relate to the power imbalance within the therapeutic relationship, hypervigilance due to increasing lawsuits, as well as concerns about methodological interference and familiarity.

Power Imbalance within Therapeutic Relationship. The dominant views within literature on multiple role relationships focus on the significance of power within the therapeutic relationship. This argument emphasizes the therapist's power and authority relative to the client, and views the client as vulnerable, incapable of free choice, and thus susceptible to abuse and exploitation. This view argues that the power differential enables and encourages therapists to misuse their power and take advantage of clients, such that the potential for abuse and exploitation is increased and in fact likely.

The predominant view on power dynamics within the therapeutic relationship often puts forward the “slippery slope” idea, arguing that minor boundary crossings will

gradually and inevitably erode the professional relationship and “take counselors down an insidious path toward serious ethical violations” (Remley and Herlihy, 2001, p.159). This argument warns that the discrepancy in power within the therapeutic relationship makes even minor professional boundary crossings dangerous because clients are in a vulnerable position. Introducing other roles will inevitably snowball into the misuse of power, exacerbate the exploitation and harm of clients, and increase the likelihood of sexual transgressions (Pope, 1990).

Thus, the dominant view proscribes multiple relationships based on power differentials. Guidelines recommend setting up a strict therapeutic role and environment according to specific areas (such as time, place, space, money, gifts, services, clothing, language, self-disclosure, and physical contact), in order to establish tight boundaries and guard against exploitation. For example, Simon (1994) suggests the following “treatment boundary guidelines:”

Maintain therapist neutrality. Foster psychological separateness of patient. Obtain informed consent for treatment and procedures. Interact verbally with clients. Ensure no previous, current, or future personal relationships with patients. Minimize physical contact. Preserve relative anonymity of the therapist. Establish a stable fee policy. Provide a consistent, private, and professional setting. Define length and time of sessions (p. 514).

This perspective does not give attention to the negotiation of multiple role relationships nor offer discussion or skills to work with the complexities they bring. Instead, ethical

standards and guidelines provide alerts to steer therapists away from potentially difficult situations, with the intention of controlling practitioners' scope of power and protecting clients from a downward spiral toward a therapeutic relationship susceptible to exploitation and harm.

Legal Climate. Another factor influencing the dominant perspective on multiple role relationships stems from an increasingly litigious culture. Out of a growing fear that any questionable behavior within therapeutic practice will lead to lawsuits and interrogation by boards, ethics committees, and courts, this viewpoint advocates “risk management” principles to guide therapeutic decision-making. Risk management is an approach whereby therapists base their behaviors and interventions not necessarily on therapeutic rationale, but rather on whether or not they may appear improper in court (Zur, 2002). As Llewellyn (2002) explains in “Sanity and Sanctity: The Counselor and Multiple Relationships in the Church,”

There is substantial evidence that if an accusation of a dual relationship is made, the Board of Consumer Affairs will investigate the allegation and assume that an unethical dual relationship exists unless proven otherwise (p. 309).

In this way, practitioners are presumed guilty until proven innocent.

Remley and Herlihy (2001) echo the need for a risk management approach in “Ethical, Legal, and Professional Issues in Counseling,” advising that it is better to “keep your nose clean” rather than risk crossing boundaries, because once a therapist has been accused, it is too late to undo any small indiscretion from the past. They warn,

small and seemingly insignificant boundary crossings can be the very evidence that causes an ethics panel, judge, or jury to find against you when you have been accused of having done something wrong...[T]hey may come to the conclusion that you are incapable of understanding your profession's prohibition against engaging in multiple relationships that are harmful to clients (p. 159)

This climate of legal trepidation places practitioners in a defensive stance and compels them to make therapeutic decisions based on extreme measures of caution, including the absolute avoidance of all multiple role relationships.

Methodological Interference & Familiarity. The other main point contributing to the prohibition of multiple role relationships stems from methodological approach to therapy. The dominant view toward multiple role relationships is based on a psychoanalytic “rule of abstinence,” which states that practitioners need to maintain a position of neutrality and impersonal presence in order to foster the development of transference. Novie's definition of transference demonstrates its centrality in psychoanalytic goals:

infantile prototypes that re-emerge and are experienced with a strong sensation of immediacy and are directed toward the analyst within the analytic situation. This is the terrain on which all the basic problems of a given analysis play themselves out: the establishment, modalities, interpretation and resolution of the transference are in fact what define the cure (2003, p. 60).

This perspective argues that personal contact with clients, including self-disclosure, should be avoided because it contaminates the therapeutic relationship and interferes with the client's ability to focus on and work through intrapsychic material, as well as threatening the objectivity necessary for a successful therapeutic process. Along a similar line of argument, the dominant view warns against developing familiarity with clients (ie, through self-disclosure or extra-therapeutic contact) because it could expose a therapist's shortcomings and minimize his or her therapeutic power of influence (Lazurus & Zur, 2002b).

Research & Guidelines. For the most part, studies on dual or multiple role relationships in psychotherapeutic settings reflect and further the belief that such relationships are problematic and potentially dangerous (see Pope & Vetter, 1991; Borys & Pope, 1989; Pope & Bajt, 1988). For example, in a national study of psychiatrists, psychologists and social workers, Borys and Pope (1989) found that the majority of practitioners believe dual role behaviors are unethical and report rarely or never engaging in such behaviors. However, these studies often contradict each other and reveal the gap in what practitioners say and actually do. As noted by Diamond and Jones, “Overall, there is a lack of comprehensive, systematically gathered data concerning psychologists' beliefs about and compliance with ethical principles” (2004, p. 89).

There exists little in-depth exploration about what resources practitioners utilize in order to guide their behavior and make ethical decisions. Attention is given primarily to establishing boundaries, assessing risk factors when multiple roles become a

potential threat, and determining the appropriateness of whether or not to enter into a multiple role relationship. For example, in order to distinguish the potential for harm, Kitchener and Harding offer three postulates based on the following risk factors:

First, the greater the incompatibility of expectations in a dual role, the greater the risk of harm. Second, the greater the divergence of the responsibilities associated with dual roles, the greater the potential for divided loyalties and loss of objectivity. Third, the greater the power differential...the greater the potential for exploitation of the individual in the less powerful position (Remley and Herlihy, 2001, p. 153).

Gottlieb (1993) extends Kitchener's work in his frequently cited decision making model to assist practitioners in avoiding exploitative dual relationships. Based on seven assumptions regarding the risks and ethics of dual relationships, Gottlieb's model focuses on three areas which he deems central to ethical decision-making, including power, duration of the relationship, and clarity of termination. Only if potential dual relationships fall within a low to mid-range potential for harm are practitioners allowed to proceed; and then only with additional consultation from a colleague, as well as discussion and informed consent from the consumer. Similarly, Remley and Herlihy (2001) provide "safeguards" to be practiced by the therapist if the benefits to entering into a multiple role relationship are great and the risk is small, or the relationship cannot be avoided, including: informed consent; consultation; ongoing discussion with the client; documentation and self-monitoring; and supervision. These examples illustrate the general approaches which guide the decision-making and control of multiple role

relationships. However, the dominant views within the literature present little to no discussion about the actual experiences and negotiation of issues that arise when practitioners do engage in multiple role relationships.

Alternative View

At the other end of the spectrum lies a view that acknowledges the importance of addressing power inequities within multiple role relationships, yet simultaneously argues that non-sexual contact between practitioner and clients is an inevitable, unavoidable and even potentially beneficial aspect of therapy, training contexts and community life (Lazarus & Zur, 2002). The alternative perspectives found within the literature address the following points: distinguishing various types of MRRs that can arise in psychotherapeutic and training contexts; the need to recognize diverse approaches to therapy and the value of familiarity; the need for more in-depth discussion of the issues that arise within MRRs; and the place of MRRs within small communities and various sub-cultures.

Types of MRRs. Alternative perspectives seek to expand the discussion beyond condemnation, and explore the complexity and variation that exists in MRRs. In “Guidelines for Non-Sexual Dual Relationships and Boundaries in Psychotherapy,” Zur (2006) describes several different categories of dual relationships, including social, professional, business, communal, institutional, and sexual. He also notes that dual relationships can be avoidable, unavoidable, and mandated; concurrent or sequential; and involve low, medium, or intense levels of engagement. Zur offers this in-depth distinction, such that dual relationships are not generalized but instead recognized for

and considered according to their diverse and complex possibilities.

In “Dual Roles in Training,” Wakefield (1996) offers a descriptive and practical look at dual relationships within psychotherapeutic training contexts. In an effort to acknowledge the unavoidable nature of dual roles, examine the difficulties encountered there, and make training safer and more productive, he discusses the scope of MRRs as well as the attitudes and steps that can be helpful. Wakefield describes four different types of dual role relationships: (1) “primary” relates to commonly understood MRRs outside of the main therapist/client roles (such as evaluative roles, friends, business partners, pre-existing, and post-training); (2) “derivative” speaks to the less obvious MRRs that arise when colleagues or friends have previously been in therapeutic or supervisory roles with each other; (3) “unconscious” MRRs are due to projections that create an additional level of relationship; and (4) “by proxy” MRRs involve the (invisible) presence of another person (such as a student caught in a competitive dynamic between two supervisors). By describing in detail the variations of MRRs, their complications and how they might arise, Wakefield normalizes and brings more transparency to MRRs. He advocates sensitivity to the primary responsibility of training, respect of boundaries, and the need for clear expectations and rules protecting against misuse of power. In general, Wakefield and other practitioners representing alternative perspectives seek a more open dialogue amongst and between practitioners and clients about the various ways and contexts in which MRRs arise, along with the valid reasons and cautions for entering into them (Cleret, 2005; Lazarus & Zur, 2002).

Diverse Methodology & the Value of Familiarity. As explained above, the dominant perspective bases its concerns on a psychoanalytic approach to therapy which argues for anonymity and distance to maintain a pure transference relationship. Alternative views challenge this bias toward psychoanalytic theory within mainstream psychological ethical guidelines, arguing that professional ethics need to reflect a diverse representation of therapeutic modalities and the different boundary awareness they espouse. For example, family therapists often meet with one individual along with the family as a whole or various dyads within the family (Gladding, 2002). Humanistic counselors regularly engage in self-disclosure as a means of developing a strong working alliance with their clients, fostering genuineness and trust, which they believe creates the foundation and ongoing background to effective therapy (Remley & Herlihy, 2001). A cognitive-behavioral therapist might fly on an airplane with a client who is working on a fear of flying (Zur, 2002b). Feminist therapists believe in egalitarian relationships, holding equal respect for the client's power as well as their own (Capuzzi & Gross, 2004). Even from a psychoanalytic perspective, Hedges argues

There is an essential dual relatedness in psychotherapy in that transference, countertransference, resistance, and interpretation all rest de facto upon the existence of a dual relationship...[Thus] all beneficial aspects of therapy arise as a consequence of a dual relationship (Remley & Herlihy, 2001, p. 154-5).

In Zur's "In Celebration of Dual Relationships" (2000), he discusses the importance of familiarity between practitioner and client, in that people often choose

therapists because they know them and are known by them through more personal or community affiliations. Rather than customary professional boundaries, this more personal relationship can give people a sense of a practitioner's values, as well as facilitate trust. In this vein, Zur states that familiarity actually often shortens the length of therapy and can increase its effectiveness. Similarly, Tomm suggests that

dual relating invites greater authenticity and congruence from counselors and can actually improve their professional judgments because dual relationships make it more difficult for them to hide behind the protection of a professional mask (Remley & Herlihy, 2001, p. 154).

To further this perspective, Zur and others argue that the prohibition of dual relationships can in fact be dangerous, in that it exacerbates isolation among practitioners, increases silence and decreases accountability, thereby actually debilitating the effectiveness of treatment and furthering the chance of exploitation within therapeutic relationships (Lazarus & Zur, 2002; Cleret, 2005). These various perspectives illustrate how other methods differ in their theoretical approach to the therapeutic relationship, and demonstrate the need for including a diverse range of methodologies when discussing the place and efficacy of multiple role relationships in the therapeutic process.

Considerations & Guidelines. In “‘But It's Different in this Case': Is there a Case for Multi-Role Relationships?” Marie-Pierre Cleret (2005) offers one of the more honest and pointed discussions of MRRs and issues to consider prior and once deciding to broaden contact with clients and/or ex-clients. She explains that “the tendency of the

helping professions to react with condemnation and blanket rules on relationships with (ex)clients has left few options to those amongst us who want to explore the boundary” (p. 55). Cleret seeks to open the discussion on MRRs and offer reality-based information to educate and help practitioners make informed choices. She presents a broad range of issues and questions to consider in order to help practitioners weigh their decision as well as support the ongoing nature of accountable and ethical MRRs, such as: telling “hard truths” early on; honestly assessing if the other person is peer/friendship material; evaluating one's own and the other's maturity; and determining whether one is ready to change the level of mutual intimacy in the relationship.

Biaggio, Paget and Chenoweth (1997) also approach MRRs with an intent to foster ethical relationships and avoid problematic conduct, rather than do away with them altogether. For example, they propose three ethical guidelines for faculty to consider when engaged in relationships with students: (1) acknowledge the power and responsibility of the faculty role; (2) develop a frame for evaluating faculty-student responsibility of the faculty-student relationships; and (3) foster and maintain a climate that supports ethical relationships with students. They also offer a series of self-evaluative questions for the faculty to consider when engaging in MRRs (see Appendix D). As Cleret puts it, “Given the only available information on the subject is either terse notes on why it is unethical to have multiple roles with clients, or gory analyses of the pathology of practitioners who engage in such relationships,” these examples illustrate how alternative perspectives deepen the dialogue and offer more in-depth considerations and guidance to help facilitate the reality of MRRs (2005, p. 50).

Small Communities & Subcultures. Another important consideration when thinking about whether or not, and how, multiple roles may be ethical and advisable in therapeutic relationships arises with small communities and subcultures. Whether rural towns, specialized training contexts, or other “small worlds,” people's political affiliations, ethnic identities, sexual orientations, and special interests can draw practitioners and their clients into multiple role relationships. Far from being detrimental to the therapeutic relationship, this perspective points out that MRRs are often unavoidable and probable because of the size of a community, over-lapping values, and a greater understanding that shared worldviews and values can offer.

In particular, multicultural counseling experts argue that mental health fields need to examine the conventional conception of therapy and extend their approach beyond a one-to-one intrapsychic process (Sue & Sue, 2003). Multicultural considerations have the potential of expanding the idea of therapy to include practitioners acting as change agents by using their political and social powers to confront and change societal systems that create and perpetuate the problems their clients face. These writers emphasize that

Counselors who work with ethnic minority clients need to be flexible and willing to take on different roles, such as advocate, change agent, adviser, and facilitator of indigenous support systems, if they are to effectively assist these clients (Remley & Herlihy, 2001, p. 166).

These points demonstrate how working within small and/or multicultural communities generates logical and efficacious opportunities to relate in multiple roles and capacities.

In general, the alternative perspectives described here believe that fears about dual relationships have raged out of control, leading to excessively rigid rules and the missed opportunity of celebrating and learning from the rich and complex everyday existence of MRRs.

Process Work View

Diamond and Jones explore this continuum of perspectives in their article “Paradigms of Influence in the Process Work Approach to Multiple Role Relationships,” and help to clarify Process Work's orientation toward multiple role relationships (Diamond & Jones, 2004). According to their conceptualization of Process Work's position, “there is both theoretical and practical recognition of the value of a more flexible and contextually based approach to non-sexual multiple role relationships” (p. 90). The following discussion addresses both the practical and theoretical significance of multiple role relationships within the Process Work community.

Practical Value of MRRs. On a practical level, students and practitioners of Process Work tend to overlap in their relationships with each other due to the small size of the community. Similar to other small communities and learning environments, such as rural communities, ethnic sub-cultures, and gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender communities, for example, Process Workers interact in various roles of therapist and client, supervisor and supervisee, teacher and student, as well as other social and professional contexts. Because of the relatively small size of the Process Work community and its value of on-going training and development, these over-lapping

relationships occur during the years of both formal and informal study, as well as post-graduation.

The Process Work Code of Ethics (2002) recognizes multiple role relationships as an inherent and unavoidable aspect of life within small communities and subcultures, and thus a practical necessity within the Process Work training programs. Process Work is also alert, however, to the inequities that exist within therapeutic and evaluative relationships and recognizes the importance of creating ethical guidelines and constraints for MRRs, especially regarding sexual relationships and issues of power between practitioners and clients. The Process Work Code of Ethics clearly states:

Process Workers avoid multiple relationships that are harmful and/or exploitative and/or involve a conflict of interest...refrains from entering into [MRRs that] could reasonably be expected to impair the Process Worker's objectivity, competence, or effectiveness...or otherwise risks exploitation or harm... (Process Work Institute, 2002).

The code applies these guidelines to Process Workers' responsibility to both clients and students, and advises Process Workers to seek assistance through supervision, therapy and/or consultation when needed. The code also clarifies (as does the APA Code of Ethics, 2002) that those MRRs that would not be expected to impair effectiveness or risk exploitation or harm are not considered unethical.

Theoretical Value of MRRs. Process Work makes room for the practical necessity of multiple role relationships, as well as putting into place guidelines and constraints to ensure that the best interests of both clients and students are served. At

the same time, however, Process Work also examines and values MRRs from a theoretical perspective. Process Work views relationship in general, in addition to MRRs as one of its complex manifestations, as an essential part of human interaction (Diamond & Jones, 2004). This core principle is reflected in Process Work's Code of Ethics where it states:

Process Workers understand that relationships between and among people are an important vehicle for change. Process Workers engage people as partners in the helping process. Process Workers seek to strengthen relationships among people in a purposeful effort to promote, restore, maintain, and enhance the well-being of individuals, families, social groups, organizations, and communities (Process Work Institute, 2002).

In this way, relationship is central to Process Work's training programs, in terms of both studying and being able to facilitate the dynamics of relationship in couples or groups, for example, as well as being able to facilitate one's own conflicts in relationship (see Appendix F for description of “Facilitating Own Relationship Conflict” in the Diploma final exam).

In “Paradigms of Influence in the Process Work Approach to Multiple Role Relationships,” Diamond and Jones (2004) explore the main disciplines that inform Process Work's theoretical approach to MRRs, including the views of professional psychology addressed above, as well as Jungian Psychology, non-western spiritual traditions, and adult education (refer to their article in its entirety for a detailed

discussion of each area). The structure of Process Work's training program grows out of its roots in Jungian psychology and the European model of apprenticeship education, in which the therapist fills both an educational role as teacher and supervisor, as well as a therapeutic one. Through this tripartite model, therapy becomes a crucial part of educational development, “teach[ing] the candidate the specialized theory and methods of psychotherapy in an intimate and experiential way” (Diamond, 2004, p. 4). The other main principles inherited from Jungian Psychology include the mutually transformative nature of therapy, the collective unconscious, and the individuation process or life myth itself. These concepts, furthered by Arnold Mindell's ongoing theoretical developments, are reflected in Process Work's understanding of the intrinsic interconnectedness and therapeutic value of the therapist's inner, relational experiences and the client's dreaming process. As Diamond and Jones explain,

Interactional difficulties, regardless of rank differences, are seen to be potentially rich sources of growth for the individual's process...In the teleological paradigm of Process Work, the challenges of life events, including relationship difficulties and power differences, are also viewed as a manifestation of an individual's life myth...One of the main responsibilities of the Process Work facilitator, therefore, is to recognize the role that life myth and dreaming process play in navigating relationship difficulties and challenges, and assist the client in navigating them (2004, p. 93).

In a similar vein, the traditions of shamanism, Taoism, Buddhism, and Bhakti yoga

inform Process Work's spiritual orientation toward the development of awareness rather than a reliance on rules alone. These spiritual disciplines fuel Process Work's approach to life difficulties as a source of personal power, fluidity, detachment, devoted service to the divine, and a continual meeting of the unknown (Diamond & Jones, 2004).

Current trends in adult education models are also reflected in Process Work's understanding of multiple role relationships, including self-directed learning, critical reflection, "learning-to-learn," multicultural education and experiential learning. These adult education principles appear in several areas of the Process Work paradigm including: empowerment of the client/student as an active role in learning; client-centered, feedback-oriented approaches to development; and holistic methods that encompass "not just intellectual learning, but personal experience, and bring emotional, spiritual, and relational dimensions into the learning process," including challenging interpersonal situations such as multiple role relationships (2004, p. 96).

Role & Rank Theory. In addition to the theoretical disciplines which inform Process Work's approach to MRRs, within Process Work theory itself two main elements of relationship provide the central contributions to understanding and working with MRRs: role theory and rank theory. Because these areas have previously been unacknowledged and unaddressed by other research on multiple role relationships, Process Work is "uniquely positioned to be at the forefront of debate and discussion" about MRRs (Diamond, 2004, p. 1). Role theory comprises an interdisciplinary concept of the self that extends identity beyond the individual-in-isolation to an understanding of the individual-in-relation to socio-cultural norms and expectations (Diamond, 2004).

Role theory states that individuals do not make up parts solely unto themselves, but rather fill roles that are defined by a given context, system or “field.” For example, the context of a school evokes the roles of teacher and student; a family connotes the roles of parent and child, intimate partners, or brother and sister; an abusive system involves the roles of abuser, victim, witness and/or possible protector. These roles may reflect one's identity within a given context, yet are also a product of the field itself. In “Radical Intercourse” (1997), Goodbread elaborates on this idea through his concept of “dreaming up:”

The roles we take in therapeutic and other interpersonal relationships are much less personal than we usually imagine. Viewing dreaming up as something that one person's process 'does' to another's makes less sense than considering it as a product of the couple's dreaming field. It is a larger pattern that is trying to express itself through both people (p. 159).

It is this dynamic field, and the magnetic tensions it contains, that organizes people into the roles that we in turn play out.

Rank theory helps to further understand the significance of roles by showing how a role carries different status, power and privileges by virtue of its relationship to other roles and the meaning assigned to each role within a given system. Arnold Mindell presents Process Work's multi-leveled theory of rank in “Sitting in the Fire” (1995), which describes different types of rank, including social, structural, and material dimensions of power, as well as psychological, spiritual, and democratic/justice rank. (See also Diamond, 2004; Dworkin & Mones, 2005.) Social,

structural and material rank refer to external, or consensus reality (CR), forms power and privileges based on what the mainstream culture values and supports, often determined by factors such as race, gender, religion, health, class, age, sexual orientation, and positions established by a particular community or organization. Psychological, spiritual, and democratic/justice rank are more internally-based, or non-consensus reality (NCR), aspects of power related to how a person feels about oneself, a sense of connection to a greater source of life, or drive toward social change based on experiences of marginalization. This multi-dimensional understanding of rank addresses the more obvious hierarchies that exist as well as subtle layers of power that can often be felt but are difficult to name. Recognizing these different dimensions of rank assists in understanding and working with the complex and multiple layers of power that co-exist in relationship.

In “Where Roles, Rank and Relationship Meet” (2004), Diamond brings together these two areas of role and rank theory into a coherent framework for working with multiple role relationships from a Process Work perspective. Her discussion demonstrates how

All relationships consist of multiple and at times conflicting roles. Dual roles in relationship are the norm, not the exception, because individuals play many roles at once, even competing ones, which create a tension and conflict of interest (p. 9).

Similar to the multiple dimensions of rank addressed above, Process Work recognizes that roles exist both on the overt level of consensus reality (CR) as well as the

intangible realm of non-consensus reality (NCR). As Diamond explains, roles are “socially defined units of behavior containing status, function, and responsibility” (CR level), as well as “momentary manifestations of deep feelings and tendencies” (NCR level) (p. 16). Although one may officially occupy the role of therapist, for example, she may also experience many other roles in working with her client, such as “teacher” or “mother” – as well as see these same or other roles in her client. Attending to both of these levels of experience is what Process Work refers to as “dual awareness” (Goodbread, 1997).

In this sense, the job and challenge of being a therapist is in fact an exercise in multiple roles:

She has to juggle her role as therapist, with its rank, functions and responsibilities, along with the subtle feelings she picks up in the field, and make these useful for her client (Diamond, 2004, p. 12).

In order to assist in this complex task of working with both CR and NCR elements of roles and rank, Diamond presents process-oriented awareness guidelines outlining the components and responsibilities of both levels of reality. Her framework guides practitioners in fleshing out issues of rank, authority, function and duty within one's CR role. It also addresses how to work with the attributes of NCR roles, including rank, authority, non-locality, essence and personal experiences. (See Appendix E for a detailed chart of Diamond's “Process-Oriented Awareness Guidelines.”) Diamond's analysis extends the common understanding of how multiple role relationships are conceived, and in doing so provides a Process Work meta-theory and guidelines to

work with the issues that arise in MRRs of all sorts, as well as power in relationships in general.

Rationale for this Study

Based on both dominant and alternative literature on multiple role relationships, there is little exploration of how MRRs are actually experienced by those involved in these relationships. Perhaps in part due to the predominant proscription and legal consequences of MRRs, they are rarely discussed in an in-depth fashion. (Note the exceptions of Lazarus & Zur, 2002 & Cleret, 2005.) Research provides impersonal statistics (not necessarily reflective of the actual occurrence of MRRs), detailed cautionary arguments and consequences, however personal exploration speaking to the actual lived experience of these issues is bleak. Although much of Process Work literature has been inspired by relationships with teachers and therapists, the multiple nature of these relationships has gone unaddressed and has not been framed within a discussion of MRRs. Although Process Work is beginning to clarify its theoretical orientation toward MRRs, no research has been done to document MRR experiences within the Process Work training community. Because the Process Work community provides rich soil exemplifying the complexity and value of MRRs, it is a worthy and important area for a research project. This cooperative inquiry project is an attempt to fill in the gaps that exist within the Process Work in particular, as well as the psychotherapeutic field in general, by studying the experience of MRRs within the Process Work community from multiple perspectives.

In this literature review I have presented a broad overview of perspectives on multiple role relationships in order to lay the contextual foundation for understanding the various paradigms, concerns, and values that emerge within the psychotherapeutic field. I have discussed the dominant view, which proscribes MRRs based on concerns of power, lawsuits, and methodological interference. I have provided a discussion of alternative views and approaches to MRRs which challenge the mainstream perspective by considering different types of MRRs, diverse methodologies, discussions and guidelines in dealing with MRRs, as well as issues of small communities and sub-cultures. I have also provided an outline of Process Work's orientation to MRRs, including its recognition of ethical considerations, as well as a broader understanding of the practical and theoretical value of MRRs within the Process Work learning community. I have discussed the major theoretical contributions of role and rank theory, as well as Process Work's latest guidelines in working with the multiple nature of relationships, based on Diamond's recent research. This overview helps to provide a contextual foundation and rationale for this study. It also highlights the main issues and considerations that arise within the literature on MRRs, which will be revisited in the discussion chapter in order to relate them to this project's research findings.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The aim of this exploratory study is to investigate how multiple role relationships are perceived and experienced by participants, and to investigate beliefs, skills, and attitudes that contribute to effective negotiation of such relationships, from the perspective of study participants. Toward this end, we adopted a cooperative inquiry approach to investigation (Reason & Heron, 1999; Bray, Lee, Smith & Yorks, 2000). This chapter introduces cooperative inquiry as the methodological framework of this study. It discusses evaluative criteria and ethical considerations, and describes how they were addressed throughout the research process. The chapter then describes the actual phases of our group's inquiry process, including analysis and my role within the project. The chapter concludes with a detailed description of the participants, the roles that emerged in our group, and the initial multiple role relationship stories each participant brought to the study.

Methodology

Cooperative inquiry locates itself within the broad methodological frame of qualitative research, which has its philosophical underpinnings within the interpretive tradition. Cooperative inquiry is aligned with a qualitative approach to research, in that it examines “how the social world is interpreted, understood, experienced or produced”

by studying things in their natural environments (Mason, 1996, p. 4). Qualitative researchers use methods of data generation which are responsive to the social contexts in which the data are produced, and then make sense of, or interpret, that data in ways which reflect its complexity, detail, and context (Jones, 2005a).

What Is Cooperative Inquiry?

Cooperative inquiry is an experiential, practical, and action-oriented approach to qualitative research that seeks to actively involve people in developing their own ideas about issues that matter to them, in order to make sense of their world and work in practice. As Reason and Heron (1999) explain,

Cooperative inquiry is a way of working with other people who have similar concerns and interests to yourself, in order to understand your world, make sense of your life and develop new and creative ways of looking at things, learn how to act to change things you may want to change and find out how to do things better (p. 1).

Accordingly, within the cooperative inquiry approach, all members are encouraged to develop and participate in the research experience. Everyone is involved in deciding what questions to ask and how to explore the questions. Everyone participates in the research activities themselves. Everyone expresses their ideas about what is being discovered and how those discoveries influence the direction of the research. Everyone has a say in the conclusions that are reached by the group. In this way, the research is intended to be a truly cooperative experience, doing away with the split between 'researcher' and 'subject', and instead collaborating as 'co-researchers' and 'co-

participants’.

Cooperative inquiry was chosen as a research method and is especially suited for this project for several reasons. This method is designed for use by organizations and groups that wish to study themselves from the inside. As a form of participatory action inquiry, it is suitable for research that aims to effect change in the individuals, groups, or organizations under exploration, as well as to generate knowledge. Its basic assumptions are also highly compatible with core beliefs of the group under study: namely, the values of deep democracy and group process, allowing all of the voices in a group to be expressed in the interest of deepening understanding (Mindell, 1995). In this way, cooperative inquiry also democratizes power within the research process, by explicitly creating a learning space of equal participation. This method is also especially matched with our study, in that MRRs are built into the approach by virtue of all group members contributing as both researcher and participant simultaneously.

Consistent with a cooperative inquiry approach, the details of how a project is carried out, its time frame, the kind of participation that is required, and the way in which data are to be generated, interpreted and represented are decided by the group of co-researchers. The actual steps of research vary depending on the group and task at hand. However, cooperative inquiry generally involves several phases of “action and reflection.” The first phase involves convening the group, exploring the interests and concerns about the topic, identifying the focus of the inquiry, developing a set of questions or hypotheses, and developing a research design. The second phase involves application, in which the ideas in question are related and applied to everyday life and

work. The third phase is meant to deepen the experiences by elaborating and developing the ideas in question, dropping some of the preconceptions and/or discovering new directions, creative insights and interests. The fourth phase reassembles the group to revisit the original questions and reflect on how the members' personal experiences and learnings impact those ideas, rejecting some and raising others. The group then proceeds in cycles of action and reflection, extended over a longer or shorter time, depending on the kind of questions being explored and goals of the group. The main purpose of cooperative inquiry is "the generation of new knowledge and meaning that emerges out of an authentic process of collaboration and inquiry, through cycles of action and reflection" (Bray, Lee, Smith & Yorks, 2000, p.70). Change in the participants is the marker of success, in that it reflects learning. These new learnings are then meant to be shared and communicated with the public, testing validity by generating further dialogue, and perhaps resulting in new approaches to practice.

Evaluative Criteria

In this section, I outline the main evaluative criteria within the cooperative inquiry approach, and discuss how they were addressed in our study on multiple role relationships.

At its most simple, and perhaps most profound, Elizabeth Kasl (initiator of the Collaborative Inquiry 'thINQ' project) defines research as a process of learning: "there could be no finer definition of research than the making of new knowledge" (Bray, Lee, Smith & Yorks, 2000, p. 27). From this understanding, establishing validity, or

trustworthiness, in a cooperative inquiry approach to research relies on a commitment to understanding experience through various forms of critical reflection. How do we know what we think we know? How do we know that our interpretation of our experiences is valid? In other words, is it well-grounded, justifiable, relevant and meaningful? For the cooperative inquirer, validity is established through the method itself—through continuous cycles of action and reflection that test and retest perceptions and their articulation, addressing all voices in order to demonstrate an accurate interpretation of a collective experience.

The evaluative criteria of cooperative inquiry are based on establishing the validity of the research process, as evidenced by: diversity of participants and perspectives; group meaning making; counteracting threats to validity; documentation; equal participation and attention to power dynamics; commitment to the research experience; learning and change; and communicating with the public.

Diversity of Participants and Perspectives. In order to ensure diversity in our study, participants were invited based on a diverse representation of roles and experiences within the Process Work community, including veteran and green diplomates, local and distant students in both the Diplomate and Masters in Conflict Facilitation programs, as well as an unofficial student and community member. In addition, these individuals reflect diverse experiences related to gender, culture, professional identity, skills, and age which, according to cooperative inquiry criteria, “can help participants avoid the advocacy of preferred solutions and the effects of social and ideological homogeneity” (p. 108). The cooperative inquiry method values

diversity by acknowledging divergent communication and learning styles, with the understanding that these differences enhance the richness of the inquiry process, as well as contribute to the validity of the study itself. This understanding parallels Process Work's core value of deep democracy, making space for all levels of reality to be expressed, all voices to be heard, as vital to the 'collective truth' and health of the whole (Mindell, 1995).

Group Meaning Making. Validity stems from the method itself, thus cycles of action and reflection serve as a way to distill individual and group experiences and bring coherence. Cooperative Inquiry refers to this process of group meaning making as “phenomenology-in-several-voices” (Bray, et al, p. 103). Similarly, in our cooperative inquiry study we met as a group, sharing individual experiences, going further through group process and the insights and tensions provoked through meeting together, reflecting on and integrating our experiences in between meetings via email, and then returning together as a group to continue with the cooperative inquiry process. These cycles of action and reflection work together toward group meaning making, assisting co-inquirers to learn about and make sense of their experiences, and find the voices that best capture what is discovered.

Counteracting Threats to Validity. In order to guard against collective self-deception, two important threats to validity are addressed within Cooperative Inquiry, including defensive routines and groupthink. Defensive routines refer to “thoughts and actions used to protect the usual ways of dealing with reality among the members of the group” (Bray, et al, p. 105). Groupthink relates to a style of decision-making that

marginalizes contrary views and alternative courses of action, instead seeking and pushing toward concurrence. Cooperative Inquiry suggests counteracting these tendencies toward self-deception by including contradictory views and alternative explanations, allowing for and expecting cycles of both divergence and convergence, revisiting issues through repeated cycles of action and reflection, practicing devil's advocacy, utilizing outside experts, and acknowledging and recognizing defensive routines and groupthink when they emerge. Process Work's inner, relationship, and group awareness methods are powerful complements to cooperative inquiry validity checks, by including and addressing conflicts, secondary experiences, third parties and ghosts as valuable and necessary contributions to the learning process (Mindell, 1995). Diversity of participants and the various perspectives they bring, as well as a commitment to supporting marginalized voices, also helps counteract threats to validity.

Documentation. Documenting the group's work together—including differences, disagreements, and conflicts, as well as the chaos, moments of clarity, and insights—is another source of validation. The point is to make data as transparent as possible, in order that the wider audience is able to track the group's process and any conclusions they arrive at, as well as enhance the group's own ability as co-inquirers to accurately study and make meaning from members' experiences. In that vein, our inquiry group took ongoing notes and/or transcribed our meetings together, studied individual write-ups as well as group processes and dialogue, reviewed and discussed the data further via email, and continually reflected on and deepened our understanding of the area of focus through our group interactions. This collection of reflective records

provides a “documented trail of experience” which serves as “the database or text for learning from the experience” (Bray, et al, p. 90).

Equal Participation and Attention to Power Dynamics. Another key aspect of validation within cooperative inquiry is equal participation and attention to power dynamics. This standard is aligned with Process Work values (as addressed above) and this study in particular, in that the principles of deep democracy strive to include all voices. The focus of this study will attend to rank and power issues as related to MRRs in general, as well as their manifestation in the group interactions directly. Although everyone involved in the study was invited to participate equally as “co-inquirers,” our other simultaneous roles and relationships with each other in the Process Work community were also addressed and explored with the intention of bringing further awareness to power dynamics and other issues related to multiple role relationships.

Commitment to the Research Experience. Inherent in the cooperative inquiry validation process is a commitment to the inquiry as a “living and learning social organism” (p. 110). This involves nurturing the study and its members as a wholistic learning space, recognizing each other as whole people, and including check-ins, time-outs, final reflections and debriefings where appropriate, as a way to establish relationship, trust, and the ability to deal with conflict and distress. This approach often happens organically, as the needs of the group surface through various roles, and can deepen meaningful collaboration. Process Work's awareness and group facilitation skills serve as tools in this area, as well as the focus of the study itself by recognizing and addressing our multiple roles and relationships in life and with each other.

Learning and Change. The key to a successful cooperative inquiry group is learning itself, as demonstrated by markers of internal and external change. As a cooperative inquiry group, we aimed to increase our understanding and awareness of the complexities of the issues related to multiple role relationships in the Process Work community, as well as increase our appreciation for the various ways MRRs manifest and are experienced, along with the similarities and differences in those experiences. Our documentation, data analysis, discussions and this thesis all demonstrate our learning process and the growth it has provoked. Our final meetings provided direct feedback from members about the research findings, and also gave the group an opportunity to reflect upon their research experience together.

Communicating with the Public. The final area of validation involves communicating with the public arena. We have planned to communicate with others in a variety of ways including this thesis project, the possibility of writing an article to be published in a mainstream psychotherapeutic journal, as well as presenting our learnings to the Process Work community in the form of a public presentation. Sharing findings with the outside world makes research available to others, potentially enriching Process Work and other psychotherapeutic communities. It also furthers the learning process by opening up dialogue, potential challenges and debate, enhancing validity by “freeing the group from groupthink by allowing the members to examine the critique and either reject it or modify its conclusions” (p. 115). Writing for the public also assists in the analysis and meaning making process, providing a record for the group's development of understanding, as well as a structure for action and reflection.

Ethical Considerations

In this section I address four main areas that enhance the quality and ethical nature of our research project: assessment of benefit vs. harm; confidentiality; duality of roles; and informed consent.

Benefit vs Harm. The initial organizer of our project, Lee Spark Jones, issued invitations to potential co-inquirers based on expressed interest, as well as diverse representation of cultural background and roles within the Process Work community. One person declined, due to work commitments and lack of time; everyone else accepted (See Appendix B for interview with Jones). Due to the nature of cooperative inquiry, participants also act as researchers, making the impact of the interpretations and care for the vulnerability of participants part of the research process itself. Ongoing discussion of the research experience and its impact has been addressed and reflected upon as part of the methodological approach, as well as incorporated as part of the data and analysis process. The guiding principles and epistemological assumptions of cooperative inquiry have become part of the ethical nature of the research, in that awareness and deep democracy have guided and kept the impact on “participants” in check. In other words, our researcher-selves were “checking” on our participant-selves throughout the process by creating an atmosphere of full-participation and collaboration, caring for each other and all experiences, and using signal attention and the practice of awareness in order to address any potential harm.

Confidentiality. In regards to issues of confidentiality, all co-inquirers either received permission from their MRR partner to discuss their experience as part of the

research project and/or refrained from using the MRR partner's name and identifying characteristics. Any participant information included as part of the final written project (both co-inquirers and MRR partners outside of the group) has been kept confidential by using pseudonyms and removing identifying information as a way of protecting privacy.

Dual Roles. Duality of roles and conflicts of interest are often addressed as important ethical considerations within qualitative research. The intent of this research project has been to study the topic of dual roles itself—thus, we have sought not to eliminate dual roles, but instead to intentionally study and attend to the experiences of our multiple role relationships with each other, as well as any conflicts of interest which arose amongst us as co-inquirers. As members of the Process Work learning community, we all agreed to follow the ethical principles and standards that guide our training program, thus no one in the inquiry group was simultaneously in a therapeutic and evaluative role with each other. We also discussed our interests and reasons for participation, in order to make explicit our motivations, hopes, and any conflicts of interest that might arise (ie, I have utilized this material and experience in fulfillment of my Process Work thesis, as agreed upon by all co-inquirers; also, the participation of both students and diplomates raised the discussion of potential future and/or current evaluative roles, which will be discussed in detail in the analysis chapters).

Informed Consent. In terms of informed consent, all co-inquirers had the choice as to whether or not, and to what extent, they wished to participate in the research project. As co-inquirers we monitored the impact of our own and each others'

participation throughout the research process. We learned the importance of checking in about our limitations and concerns, addressing needs, and making adjustments as they arose. Throughout the inquiry process, we clarified our willingness, interests and abilities in regard to levels of participation in different aspects of the research process. We discussed these changes, as well as the feelings and new needs they provoked, and renegotiated commitments accordingly.

Again, because of the egalitarian and collaborative nature of cooperative inquiry, these issues were not be decided upon by someone else—we were the authority figures defining the ethical considerations that need to be addressed and how we would do so. Concerns related to power, vulnerability, privacy, and dual roles were indeed central issues of our research focus. As a research method, cooperative inquiry specifically addresses issues of power as related to the research relationship, seeking to create an atmosphere of equal participation and collaborative learning. Process Work has the potential of taking this one step further, by recognizing, addressing and processing the power dynamics of multiple roles as a constantly occurring phenomenon within all relationships (Diamond, 2004). As Jones points out in “Planning a Final Project: A Guide to Process Work Students” (2005b), “The researcher/participant relationship and associated power imbalances are at the heart of many ethical issues in research. Aiming for power relationships which are complementary and non-coercive contributes to the ethical quality of your research” (p. 23). Our awareness abilities as Process Work co-inquirers, tracking how these themes presented themselves within the group, have enhanced the ethical nature of our research process.

Current Study

The Inquiry Process

Inspired by the larger project on multiple role relationships developed by Julie Diamond and Lee Spark Jones, this cooperative inquiry study aims to focus attention on the experience of multiple role relationships by members of the Process Work learning community in Portland, Oregon. Individuals representing various roles within the community were invited to join the group in Winter, 2005. We met a total of seven times over approximately 13 months. Members gathered together in-person (for those who could attend) as well as via conference phone (for those at a distance). Members participated in varying degrees, depending on their interest, abilities, and other commitments.

During our first meeting (February 2005), Lee Spark Jones gave a brief summary of the research intention and cooperative inquiry approach. We introduced ourselves and discussed our motivations and interests in participating in the study. We explored possible ways of approaching the research process, as well as our goals and limitations. From this initial meeting, we decided to study a personal MRR experience as a starting point, and agreed to return to the next meeting with a write-up of one of our salient MRRs. We also set up an email string as a means of communicating in between meetings.

The following two meetings (April & June 2005) involved presenting and discussing the write-ups of our MRR experiences, which began to bring attention to the various themes and issues involved. We decided to limit our research to the experiences

within our own group (rather than interview others outside of the group, for example), in order to focus the study, create an achievable goal, and respect the constraints of members due to time and energy limitations. We agreed to return for our next meeting and have a group process to explore the themes that were emerging more deeply, as well as address the MRRs among us within the group.

The fourth meeting (July 2005) involved a group process in which we were all participant-facilitators. We focused our various roles and relationships with each other, naming and interacting with ghost roles that emerged, recognizing themes as they arose among us, and generally getting more personal with each other. Around this time, I had decided and received permission from the group to use this cooperative inquiry study as my Process Work research project. I began to take a more active role in writing and transcribing notes, and the group encouraged me to step forward as “project manager” to assist in the organization and facilitation of our group. After this meeting, I helped to organize a data review period for the next six weeks, during which time those who wanted and were able to participate read the initial write-ups and group process transcription in stages, looking for themes and patterns. We also began to deal with more challenging relationship issues that were emerging between us.

Our fifth meeting (August 2005) reviewed our past meetings and served as a discussion of the project in its entirety, revisiting our research purpose, method and questions. We also discussed findings from our previous meeting, went more deeply into some aspects, and addressed some of the issues emerging within our group.

Various members agreed to focus on different sections of the project (ie, methodology,

theory, analysis, etc.). As our project continued, however, I took responsibility for each section due to the lack of time/energy/interest of other participants, as well as my own need to commit to the project as my own.

The sixth and final meetings (January & March 2006) served as culmination and feedback groups. We addressed issues and feelings that had been dropped along the way, and I received support and suggestions in my efforts to analyze our data and bring the project together in its entirety. Members discussed overarching learnings, as well as reflections on the research experience as a whole. I also presented the main themes from my analysis, and received validation and encouragement from the group.

Analysis

The cooperative inquiry approach to analysis is flexible in that the form reflects the unique research questions and how each group chooses to answer them. This study has been guided by the following overarching questions: How do participants view and experience non-sexual multiple role relationships in the Process Work community of Portland? How might we learn from these experiences, both positive and negative? Also, what potential contributions do these learnings bring to the Process Work training program, as well as negotiating multiple role relationships in psychotherapeutic contexts general?

Our analysis process involved both group and individual efforts and was embedded into the research itself, in that cycles of “action and reflection” served to track the themes that were arising and also guide the direction of our next steps. At each group, both myself and one other member took notes. Several group meetings were also

taped, which I transcribed verbatim. The first round of data review involved several group members re-reading individual MRR write-ups and the transcription of the group process, taking notes on major themes and patterns, and discussing the findings both via email and group meetings. From this initial data analysis, I then reviewed the data again, this time also including group member's notes as a method of checking validity. I sorted the material according to recurring themes as well as outstanding moments, and named and colored categories as a method of organization. I also noted sub-topics within the same theme. Through several rounds of revisiting the data and categories, I was able to distill the themes and pull out quotes and interactions from our cooperative inquiry groups that captured major issues and sub-topics. I received feedback from the group for my initial findings, as well as ongoing check-in's with my thesis adviser, in order to assure that my analysis and articulation of our data accurately reflected group members' experiences.

My Role within the Project

As illustrated above, I have played multiple roles throughout this cooperative inquiry study: I have been involved as co-researcher and participant, “project manager” to assist the organization and facilitation of our group, as well as thesis-writer by utilizing the data and overall experience as my Process Work research project. Since the culmination of our cooperative inquiry group, I have been completing the analysis process and writing the other sections of this thesis project. Lee Spark Jones has provided me with ongoing guidance, support, and feedback, serving as my thesis adviser throughout the process.

Participants

This section outlines the main roles within our cooperative inquiry group as identified by participants, as well as the diversity that emerged within those roles. It also introduces the unique voices and issues each participant brought through our initial stories of multiple role relationship experiences. In order to assure a degree of anonymity, all members are referred to by pseudonyms of their own choosing.

Participants all came with an interest in the study and topic itself, yet from different angles and perspectives, roles and experiences. We were selected, in part because of our different roles within the Process Work training structure, to represent the multiplicity that exists and the importance of various voices contributing to our understanding of MRRs. The most obvious distinction was in status descriptors relative to Process Work identities—some of us were diplomates and others were students. This basic distinction soon took on many different shades of meaning and experience. We were not simply Process Work diplomates and students. Within these identities were significant variations that influenced our experiences of MRRs and the issues that emerged from our experiences, both outside of and within the inquiry group.

Roles Within Roles – A Spectrum of Possibility. Within the sub-group of diplomates there were variations in experience related to several factors: length of time since becoming a diplomate; centrality or marginality of participation within the Process Work community; relationships with other diplomates; as well as previous relationships before becoming a diplomate. All of the diplomates present identified as “less-senior” to those in the founding group, and one saw herself as a “green dip”

having recently graduated from the program. Some diplomates saw themselves as taking a central and active presence within Process Work community life, involved in many projects and activities, while others felt more distant or peripheral. Relationships with other diplomates – as friends, colleagues, intimate or married partners – also influenced the experience of their roles. Another significant distinction related to transitional identities, or MRRs due to changing relationship over time; for example, taking on a new role/identity as diplomate and colleague with someone who was previously and/or currently a therapist or supervisor.

The roles of students within the group also represented many variations in experience. One of the main distinctions related to official or unofficial status, in that most members were formally enrolled in a Process Work program, while one group member attended classes, workshops, and community meetings, and has professional involvements with Process Workers, without being formally enrolled in a program. Whether a student was enrolled in the Diploma program or Masters in Conflict Facilitation (MACF) also created variations in experience, as well as Phase and Gate of study, and whether studying locally or at-a-distance. The type of MRR involvement itself also created variations in experience within the role of student.

Further Dimensions of Identity – The Sphere Widens. While these two roles of Diplomate and Student established the main distinction within the group, our multiple roles and experiences within these two identities quickly began to demonstrate the complexity within MRRs. Because our study focused on MRRs within the Process Work community, our roles within the Process Work structure created seeds and sparks

for the issues that would emerge amongst us. However, our roles and identities outside of the Process Work community and training structure were very much present and influencing our experience of the MRRs amongst us as well. Professional status outside of the Process Work community often served as a main filter of our MRR experiences – whether or not we were working, in what capacity, and the authority and privileges associated with these other professional roles. Our cultural background and the experience of immigration (both CR and dreaming levels) also influenced our views and experiences of MRRs.

Out of our own MRR experiences within the Process Work community, we named several types of roles and relationships, including different combinations of:

- Therapist/Client
- Teacher/Student (both of Process Work and other areas)
- Peer Colleagues
- Supervisor/Supervisee
- Study Committee Member/Student
- Administrator/Student
- Client/Self-Employed Business Owner
- Friend/Friend
- Diplomate/Community Member (or unofficial student)
- Diplomate/Non-Process Work Professional
- Seminar Participants
- Diplomate Candidate/Volunteer Client
- Transitional Relationships (changing roles/relationships over time)

Initial Voices. The initial task we set for ourselves involved writing up and sharing one salient personal MRR experience within the Process Work community. Seven stories emerged which revealed the struggles, questions and leanings we brought to the exploration of MRRs. In order to provide a more thorough description of the participants and the subjective orientations we brought to the study, below I summarize

each participant's role relative to the Process Work community, along with our initial MRR stories.

“Perry,” a Phase II/Gate II Diploma student studying locally after moving from another state within the U.S., discussed a relationship with her teacher and supervisor, in which Perry was also her yoga teacher. She viewed the relationship and its struggles as part of her personal development and an “incredible learning tool” that enabled her to better understand Process Work through the “language” and metaphors of yoga and the body. Perry explained, however, that

As I faced more challenges in my supervision, I wanted to be held solely in my role as student and supervisee. [My supervisor's] rank was very much in the background for me...no matter that she was my yoga student, she was still all the while a big figure for me, as a teacher in the community, someone I respect and look up to, as well as my supervisor. So I often felt slightly uneasy and insecure...

“Sharmaine,” a MACF student studying from abroad, shared about an unexpected crisis situation in which she accompanied her therapist to the hospital. The experience made Sharmaine “deal with the fact that my therapist is actually human...with limitations and fears.” Rather than destroying the therapeutic relationship, Sharmaine found that the experience expanded her sense of possibilities and gave her

a new kind of respect and an actual real life example on how we deal with strenuous situations...[As a result of this experience] I didn't just respect the role [of therapist], but the person...Because when one is God, everything is easy, and a mere mortal would never actually get a chance to get on the same level. But when one is human, everything is possible. Difficult, but possible.

“Bashful,” who comes from an eastern culture and is a Phase I Diploma student who became Phase II during our study, discussed her experience in relationship with an

administrator who is also a diplomate within the Process Work community. Because Bashful was originally from another country and unemployed, she felt that this relationship was key to her livelihood, in that the administrator “encouraged me to develop [my] food trade” and “represents the INS to me, as I need certification from the school to be able to stay in the U.S.” Bashful also expressed a deeper connection in the relationship, in that “I feel we share a non-verbal communication and are on the same wave length in many ways.”

“Karen,” a diplomate who moved to live in Portland from another country, also emphasized a deeper connection in her MRR. She initially employed someone she met in the Process Work community in a professional capacity, later worked as a therapist with this person, then traded services when they were both doing work for each other, and eventually became friends, particularly after they stopped working together in therapy. Karen explained,

Throughout [our many roles], our friendship was growing, we got to know, respect and trust each other more deeply, we had a lot of fun together, we enjoyed each other's skills and admired each other a lot. We had a common spiritual understanding which at times was startling. We both found that we could talk about really deep spiritual concerns and experiences, and feel understood by the other.

“Susumu,” a community member and informal student of Process Work, also emphasized a feeling of mutual respect and collaboration in his MRR experience. He met with two diplomates to create and later give a workshop combining their various professional contributions. Susumu explained that although he had “no claim to Process Work credentialing,”

From the beginning, I was encouraged [by the other two diplomates] to

be a full participant and co-creator of the workshop. I experienced our process as fully collaborative, respectful...we used a consensus model of decision-making to slowly build our workshop.

Susumu even felt supported when he “risked being critical of [one of the diplomates] and usurping his authority.”

“Edgar,” the most senior diplomate in our inquiry group who is also originally from another country, discussed issues of transition within his MRR experiences and the more difficult aspects of collaborating and working with other Process Workers in various roles. He explained that

some of my most painful experiences came from participating in projects...being invited to contribute and having to relate with my supervisors [and] analysts on project issues that were complicated, in which they were involved in complex organizational/political issues of turf, power struggles over privileges and organizational views, etc.

Although Edgar emphasized that he appreciated and has also benefitted from his MRRs, he expressed how difficult the transition is from being a student or client to a diplomate while the therapeutic and/or supervisory relationship is ongoing, making him feel “constrained and *en garde*,” as well as raising concerns about boundaries and power imbalances.

“River,” a “green dip” (meaning recently graduated student) originally from another country, also addressed the difficulties within MRRs, but from the perspective of therapist and community member. She discussed her MRR with a client who also participated in a seminar and community meeting in which River was involved. The client abruptly stopped therapy with River after these events, told River not to contact her, and then publicly attacked River on an email string. River felt that “my role as

therapist froze me. She criticized me in public, but she didn't want to communicate with me. Which signal should I follow? It felt I was in a double bind.” River emphasized issues particularly significant to small learning communities, in that

the difficulty [of being] a therapist in a community is that you'll be seen not only in a therapy room, but in public...When it happens, which role am I asked for?...All these parallel worlds happen [at] once.

These participant summaries describe the inquiry group members' initial personal concerns and experiences within MRRs. These stories planted the seeds and ignited the sparks for the issues that would emerge throughout the cooperative inquiry process. Each member's story highlights the roles and themes that would become clearer and more salient as our research evolved.

Summary

In the first part of this chapter, I discussed the methodological framework for this study, including cooperative inquiry as a research method, evaluative criteria and ethical considerations. In the latter part of this chapter, I described the inquiry process of our study, our approach to analysis, and my role within the project. I concluded the chapter with a detailed introduction to the participants, including main roles within the group, diversity within those roles, and initial MRR stories. In Section II: Analysis & Reflections, I present the thematic findings from our cooperative inquiry process. Based on participants' experiences, Chapter Four describes “Difficult Territory,” the main factors contributing to challenges found within MRRs; followed by Chapter Five, which discusses “The Stuff of Success,” those areas facilitating successful experiences.

CHAPTER 4

THEMATIC FINDINGS: DIFFICULT TERRITORY

This chapter presents a thematic analysis of our cooperative inquiry experience. Through the cooperative research process, we discovered that we had many different experiences within multiple role relationships, related to personal history, the roles we occupied within and outside of MRRs, the experience of power and its lack, as well as conceptualizations and belief systems about learning and relationship itself. Within our various lived experiences of multiple role relationships, we found multiple shifting identities, significant overlaps, distinctions, and salient learnings, particularly with regard to problematic aspects of MRRs, as well as the ways in which they may be successful and beneficial.

This chapter identifies six themes which focus on the complexities and challenges of MRRs, as illustrated by quotations from participants in the cooperative inquiry research group. The initial over-arching theme of multiple shifting identities is followed by five more specific themes pertaining to the problematic aspects of MRRs, including silence, the evaluative presence, rank and power, transitional relationships, and the therapeutic relationship. Themes that address the successful negotiation of MRRs follow in Chapter 5.

Theme 1: Who Am I Now? – Multiple Shifting Identities

Group members discussed the complexity of identity and its changing nature. Members explored how roles are defined according to context, meaning that one's identity depends on association (who you are with) and location (where you are). For example, at home as a hermit or at work caring for others, one may not identify with being a student. While on one level one may always be a student, that role's activation depends on the surroundings, including time, place, and other people. At the same time, however, members expressed that these contextual boundaries contradict a parallel reality that roles are co-existing. Members noted that we are many things at once – meaning, for example, that although one may currently be in the role of student, that same person can simultaneously be a teacher, daughter, colleague, fellow researcher, woman, American, and so on. Or, to give another example, although a person is now in the role of diplomate, she may still experience herself as a student relative to senior diplomates or not as professionally experienced as her junior colleague.

Members found that not only do roles exist in multiplicity, but one's contextual role may not necessarily coincide with one's inner experience, as one member aptly described:

Within your external social position you can be in a particular role, and then because of personal life experiences...you're actually unbelievably messed up, confused, reactive, very vulnerable, you know, conflicted within that role...I completely acknowledge that I am an evaluator, and I also want to bring in the complexity of it, where I'm so much the victim of evaluation at a spiritual type of awareness level, that I'm a complete mess in that domain also. I'm so reactive and ready to pop off – just like now – and I'm not strong in that area. Karen

Group members also found that one's contextual role may not match one's perceptions

of the other person, meaning that we “see” and relate with others beyond the boundaries of context. Karen talked about her experience as a diplomate with River. Now fellow diplomates, they had worked together in the past as therapist/client, study committee member/student, and thesis advisor/student:

When we were working together, I [as therapist/advisor] always remember you [as client/student] are a psychologist...you're also a practitioner. And even though I can feel the sort of group hypnosis, the rank structure here, the local structure, something in me was rebelling against that because I saw you as a professional, actually as more of a professional than me, being here in Portland, being stripped of all my professional status. So that's a complicated extra thing too. Karen

In these ways, members addressed the complexity of roles due to multiple shifting identities and inner experiences that do not necessarily coincide with contextual descriptors. In addition to the over-riding challenge of multiple shifting identities, five other themes were found that contribute to the difficult territory of multiple role relationships.

Theme 2: Shh...Don't Talk – Silence and Silencing in MRRs

Inquiry group members referred to difficulties in speaking openly about their involvement in MRRs and ways in which they dealt with the challenges and complexities related to the lack of open dialogue. Many members of the inquiry group expressed hesitation and difficulty in beginning to talk about their MRR experiences. In various ways, both in roles of high and low rank, we faced issues that represented not only our personal experiences but also the territory of MRRs in general, including protection of self and other, confidentiality, privacy and censorship, as well as ethical taboos. This silence manifested as a barrier to even beginning to explore the topic and

created a difficulty in describing MRR experiences, as noted by one member's observations:

You mentioned the first relationship that you couldn't go into...What does it say about what we study that some of the issues can't come up into the open because...What is that we're avoiding? Why is it that we can't talk about it? That's an interesting point when you say there's something but I can't talk about it. That's part of the multiple relationship problem that there are kinds of relationship that remain secret or untouchable in a way. Edgar

Three main reasons for this silence were identified through the cooperative inquiry process: the taboo of MRRs within the helping profession; the lack of anonymity in a small community; and the desire to protect self and others from negative judgment.

Sub-Theme 1: MRR as Taboo. Members of the inquiry group found that there is a general feeling of stigma and taboo in the area of multiple role relationships, reflective of an underlying belief within the field of psychotherapy that MRRs are dangerous and a general feeling that you are doing something wrong by engaging in them. Members described a general atmosphere which communicates “you are not supposed to have them, they are dangerous territory, so if you do have them, keep them hidden.” One member Sharmaine, who works and studies within a university psychology program, described:

Even to start writing about something so personal is a huge edge for me. It is easier just to talk personal, without actually having to confront – literally – the words. There is something about writing and keeping a record of the feelings that scares me...Multiple roles in relationships are a huge taboo in mainstream psychology, and mainstream psychology is my background. Sharmaine

Because of this over-riding taboo, the experiences themselves are squashed and silenced.

Some members of the group also expressed hesitation in speaking about their MRR experiences due to legal and ethical implications, the difficulties of maintaining anonymity, fears about how the data might be used knowing that we have the intention of writing about our research and possibly publishing, and the consequent tendency toward censorship.

Sub-Theme 2: Small Community. Inquiry members also addressed the silencing aspect of being part of a small community. The Process Work training community is relatively small, with a feeling that “everybody knows everybody.” Participants recognized a difficulty in discussing relationship experiences and truly maintaining confidentiality, as described by one member's reluctance in describing a significant MRR:

I've been thinking about sharing a relationship which I have struggled with the most and learned from the most. But I don't think it is appropriate to talk about it, because I could not conceal the identity of the other person... River

As inquiry group members, we also faced this reality in deciding whether or not – and how – to participate, knowing that our identities may very well be recognizable.

Sub-Theme 3: Protection. Inquiry participants recognized that being part of a small community connects with the issue of protection in general. Members expressed a feeling of wanting to protect their own and others' privacy.

The difficulty to protect the other person's identity must be related to the difficulties of multiple role relationship...You have relationship with the person in so many different levels and the challenges lie there. It is almost inevitable that you need to reveal personal information if you want to talk about challenges in relationship. River

Edgar initially expressed nervousness upon hearing Bashful's story because of his

relationship with the MRR partner being discussed. The following group interaction highlights how protection and silence can perpetuate each other:

I feel a hesitation about Bashful going on because I feel protective of [her MRR partner]. I don't want to hear anything critical...yet I don't want to impede the process because it is necessary to hear. Edgar

Bashful in turn expressed that she felt “squashed and burdened,” not free to bring out her experience because of the multiple roles present in the research group. Another member pointed out,

Someone in very high rank in the Process Work community becomes protective and worried about what's going to be said, like who's gonna get hurt and what's going to be said. There is a really big danger of hurting the high rank people, but there's also a danger of squashing or hurting people by keeping things quiet and keeping low rank from saying what needs to be said. Karen

The group realized that we were facing a core issue within MRRs: that it is “easy to talk about the good part and almost impossible to talk about other feelings.” The themes that follow speak to the underlying issues of evaluation, rank and power, as well as specific types of MRRs that can present particularly difficult challenges.

Theme 3: Who Is Listening? - The Evaluative Presence

The group recognized a tendency to protect the vulnerability of those within MRRs, that they are personal and intimate relationships with an understandable need for care, privacy and respect. Because all inquiry members shared an understanding of Process Work theory, members used their understanding of role and field theory to further unfold the issue of protection (refer to Chapter Two for discussion of Process Work theory). In doing so, we also realized that MRR members are in need of

protection from “some thing” – meaning that the group (and field in general) does not only bring out the role of caring protector. The field also carries the role of ethical judge within and outside of the group, who evaluates and potentially condemns individuals and the various MRRs, as illustrated by one member's comments:

I feel like the information we share with each other is very vulnerable and very personal. And clearly by your account, and I'm sure with others it will be the same, it's a very intimate relationship. I think we're all very brave to do this...I feel this specter of ethical judgment – not from any of us right now – but that it could come up. As we just raise issues for consideration, I can't keep them out but I also want them to be warm...Don't judge me too bad! [group laughter] Karen

We found that protecting oneself against the evaluative eye tends to silence the expression and exploration of the relationship experience.

Many members of our group spoke about not feeling free due to an evaluative presence in MRRs, as well as the immediate experience or potential of being evaluated by other members of the group. Members discussed a high level of sensitivity to criticism from others, that in turn can activate their own self criticism. Participants expressed nervousness about what others might be thinking about what they were saying. Bashful described how “just a small word or flicker can make me feel down.” Group members described the impact of the evaluative presence as feeling weighed down, uneasy, self-conscious, restricted, frozen, monitored, insecure, and destroyed. Members expressed an experience of constant evaluation and self-consciousness, as described by Bashful:

I'm a fresh Phase II student, constantly monitored here, and I better become conscious of that...I want to get through this program...we have to watch ourselves. Bashful

The following interaction illustrates how the evaluative presence extends beyond current roles, time, and context and can exacerbate the feeling of constantly being evaluated:

Susumu: (To Perry) So one more hoop and you could be...you will be a diplomate...

Bashful: ...and she'll join the evaluator pool.

Perry: Am I already?

Edgar: (To Bashful) You already see her as a potential [evaluator]...

Bashful: I'm stupid if I don't.

The following three sub-themes extrapolate the difficulty of evaluation within MRRs, specifically addressing the complication of evaluation of personal development, the bias against evaluation, and the consequent unoccupied role of the evaluator.

Sub-Theme 1: Evaluation of Personal Development. Inquiry group members found that the experience of being evaluated is amplified by the emphasis on personal growth and development within the Process Work diploma program in particular, and the community in general. Members found that unlike clearly defined and objective academic requirements, it is much more difficult and ambiguous to determine the indicators of personal growth, as demonstrated by the following:

I notice in myself many conflicting thoughts about that specific topic... difficult...I'm very torn in a lot of directions. The topic of us being in a school where we teach and training and evaluations...and that's needed and that's great. And then that other level of evaluation...is very vague. You know...what is awareness? What is personal growth? We try to define it, I think we have tried some transparency and clarity, but I think there is a whole level of uncertainty around these things. There's so much room for misuse...It's so delicate and difficult. I do think we try to do a good job with it, but in itself it's a very problematic thing...We're still growing as a community [about] how to do that, how to do that in a better way in general. A lot of...not set in stone. We're still very much developing in that area. Edgar

Members described a feeling of vulnerability and fear of being judged in their entirety as a human being, rather than according to learning and the specific skills associated with a particular professional role (such as therapist or facilitator).

That feeling that's generated amongst us in the Process Work community and here [in our inquiry group] is a constant self-scrutiny because of some bigger thing that's evaluating...It brings up a lot of pain for me about being evaluated according to a spiritual system. Karen

We identified that participants feel differently about this evaluative dynamic, partly related to their role status within the training program; for example, whether or not they are a formal student, and which program they are enrolled in. Participants who were informal or MACF students acknowledged that they did not have to deal with this particular complication about evaluation of personal development:

The requirements for the diploma students are different in terms of the way we define what we would look for in terms of personal growth...there's a huge difference. In the masters in conflict facilitation, there's a more formalized structured academic type structure which doesn't include [this type of evaluation], or less of it. And I think the diploma has much more of that. Edgar

A diplomate within the inquiry group spoke about this issue of evaluating personal development in relation to the final exams for the diploma program:

I get so upset when students come up and say at the end of Phase II exams that they feel like the main thing is working on their relationship with a teacher, and it's on them to work on it. We implicitly make them work on relationship conflict but without clear standards about what is needed. Edgar

While group members recognized that personal development is central to the Process Work community and training programs, they found that its evaluation complicates the experience of MRRs.

Sub-Theme 2: Bias Against Evaluation. The inquiry group discovered that most members have strong negative associations with evaluation due to personal history, meaning they have felt hurt or wounded by how they have been evaluated in the past. Thus, we found a bias against and marginalization of the role of the evaluator, and consequent hesitation to identify with or step into that role. They did not want to be associated with the hurtful role of the evaluator, as echoed by several group members:

I could cry when you say that [you feel evaluated]...I feel it, I've felt it, and it's so completely against what I'm wanting to live, that to feel like I'm part of that upsets me so deeply...I hate being in a role where I'm then part of the evaluation thing. I hate the fact that I've chosen being in a place where yet again something spiritually superior is evaluating another human being in the name of some kind of personal growth stuff. It completely pushes all of my buttons. Karen

I'm not in an evaluative role, I take myself back away from it...there's a part of me that doesn't want...that holds back. I'm not an examiner, I don't go often to the teachers' meeting, and if I go to the teachers' meeting, I often don't talk because there's a hesitancy in stepping into that role. Edgar

On the other hand, Bashful expressed a much more matter-of-fact attitude about evaluation. While she said that she definitely felt the presence of evaluation in the Process Work training program, community and our inquiry group, she accepted it as a given and viewed evaluation as something to live with, explaining

I don't feel there's anywhere in life where you can get away without being evaluated. I'm thinking the system is set up like that, because you have all the dips evaluating for each gate, and what is there to be upset about because that is the system. Bashful

While group members expressed some diverse opinions and experiences in response to evaluation, there was a general acknowledgement of its significance and dislike of stepping into the role of evaluator or being on its receiving end.

Sub-Theme 3: The Unoccupied Role of the Evaluator. Inquiry group members discovered that the bias against evaluation due to painful experiences and personal history creates an obstacle to stepping into the position of evaluating others. Members described evaluation as direct and honest feedback, to be critical or not supportive, and to offer opinions and judgments openly. Drawing upon their understanding of role and field theory, group members found that this resistance to evaluating and avoidance of more direct interaction manifests as a third-party evaluator; meaning that the evaluator becomes a floating or ghost role, not occupied by an actual person, instead searching for someone to inhabit and give it life. As summarized by Karen,

If we can't evaluate ourselves, if we can't step into the one who gives honest feedback, evaluation, whatever – then it's difficult. It constellates problems in MRRs because there's nobody there to say this is good or bad. So then a third party, as in the state or laws or regulations, is actually needed in order to arbitrate whether this is good or bad. Karen

Members discovered that because the role of the evaluator is unwelcomed and unoccupied, it can manifest as a critical role within the inquiry group, MRRs in general, or the imposing presence of the state (ie, ethical investigations) in relation to the Process Work community as a whole.

Theme 4: Everyone is Down River – Rank & Power in MRRs

Our group found that barriers to stepping into the role of the evaluator related to issues of rank and power in general. Group members expressed an over-riding difficulty in identifying with their own rank and power in relationship. Members discussed several reasons for this difficulty, including a preference for equality within relationships; incongruous experiences of rank; the ghost of the founding group of

Process Work; and “immigrant dreaming.” Members also pointed out that the difficulty in identifying with one's power was experienced in both low and high rank positions.

Sub-Theme 1: We're All Equal Here. Members indicated a preference for equality in relationship and the good feelings of respect and friendship that can go along with an egalitarian way of viewing and treating each other. As one member expressed,

I always have difficulty identifying with rank. I guess everybody does, but I always see myself...I tend to see myself as much more equal with people and not want to know about the rank stuff... Karen

This in part related to members' inclinations toward valuing and appreciating the gifts, skills, and expertise another person brings to a relationship. Susumu framed this preference for equality as a type of power in relationship (“power-with”), and simultaneously saw it as a tendency of “running away from power and rank,” as described below:

From the moment we began our group process, I heard or experienced the three diplomates beginning the conversation by running away from power or rank...I do believe that the Process Work community...values power-with rather than power-over, as in hierarchy...I'm aware for me anyway, that in my experience of power in groups, or rank in groups, the power piece is very different in this group than in any other group I've experienced...I feel like people who are of higher rank in our group seem to want to run away from that power-over type of power, and want to be in a power-with configuration. Susumu

Members explored this difficulty in stepping into one's power further and found a strong tendency towards feeling where we do *not* have rank. For example, when Bashful spoke about her style of learning being natural for her and somewhat unconscious, Karen responded,

Isn't that the way with rank?...We're always not aware of what we do that's powerful...Isn't it easier to see the strength in the other?...It's easier to feel the place where we have less rank. Karen

Sub-Theme 2: Outer Role vs. Inner Experience. The group's discussions indicated that this tendency to identify with low rank in relationship also related to the lack of congruence between contextual roles and inner experiences. Perry described this conflict between her contextual role as a teacher and her inner experience due to rank in relationship:

I held more rank in my role as yoga teacher, in terms of my knowledge and experience. [My supervisor] trusted me to lead her into edgy places both physically and consequently emotionally, and I felt responsible for her well-being like I would with any student. All the while, her rank was very much in the background for me, both consciously and unconsciously – no matter that she was my yoga student, she was still all the while a big figure for me, as a teacher in the community, someone I respect and look up to, as well as my supervisor. So I often felt slightly uneasy and insecure – something so close to a regular feeling pattern for me, it was hard to differentiate or notice or really examine as part of our relationship dynamic. Perry

As illustrated above, inquiry members found that although one may occupy a certain high rank role on a consensus reality level, that person may actually identify more with his or her internal experience of vulnerability, confusion, insecurity and other low rank emotional and psychological experiences – due to personal history and/or dynamics and roles within the current relationship. Group members' interactions with each other also reflected this pattern. Members found that in any given relationship, there are multiple rank statuses co-existing; meaning that there is rank related to each person's contextual role, as well as background rank based on other roles and experiences present underneath the surface and influencing the relationship exchange. Many members

found it difficult to identify with their rank relative to others in the group, as indicated by the following conversation:

Edgar: We are colleagues...as diplomates.

River: I'm rather green, the new one...

Edgar: You are the youngest one, most recent one.

Karen: (To Edgar) And I'm younger than you.

Edgar: You are?

Karen: In diplomate years...

Edgar: You are?!

Karen: Yeah, way younger...[laughter from group]...I'm only middle-aged.

Perry: (To Edgar) Wake up to your rank! [more group laughter]

Edgar: I didn't even see that...I don't even see that anymore...that's something I wouldn't have thought...realized how much I would see us in the same [place] somewhat...That's interesting because I still feel...I see myself as a junior diplomate.

Sub-Theme 3: Founders as Ghosts. This group interaction illustrates another key insight into why members found it difficult to identify with their rank. Group members realized that they often referred to the founding group of Process Work as the ultimate evaluators and standard to live up to. In this way, members recognized that the founders exist as ghosts which constellate a constant background comparison, as expressed by one diplomate in the inquiry group:

Well, I compare myself with [names members of founding group]...that generation. For me that's the generation of established diplomates. In comparison to that, I think I'm not...I'm still a junior. So that's maybe why I see myself on the same level as [another diplomate in our group] in comparison to them. That's my measurement thing, a kind of generational thing. Edgar

Members discussed how we shy away from the rank we do have because it is always less than the experience and expertise of the founders. Members found that this ghost of the founding members creates a kind of hypnosis around rank which places high value

on the local Process Work structure, and exacerbates the difficulty in identifying with one's own rank and power and their many forms both within and outside of the Process Work community.

Sub-Theme 4: Immigrant Dreaming. Members recognized that the difficulty in identifying with one's rank also related to “immigrant dreaming” within the Process Work community, at both consensus reality and dreaming levels. Members discussed how many members of the Process Work community are immigrants who either leave their country, and/or leave their familiar personal and professional identities, in order to relocate and study Process Work. Members spoke of the pain and economic hardship that often go along with immigrant status, and acknowledged how experiences differ in part depending on which country someone has immigrated from. At both practical and psychological levels, in various ways members expressed an experience of being disenfranchised, uprooted, and cut off from their roots upon studying Process Work. In terms of culture, family, profession, and thinking style, members explored how this “relocation” was both a hardship and a privilege, in that it scrambled one's identity and demanded that we reinvent ourselves – and yet also exacerbated the experience of lacking rank.

Sub-Theme 5: Hard When You're High, Hard When You're Low. Group members indicated the above reasons for this tendency to avoid power and identify more with low rank experiences. The inquiry group's discussions also pointed out that difficulties with power exist in both positions of contextual high and low rank. As indicated by the discussions amongst group members, there exists a strong tendency in

positions of low rank within MRRs to “go away” in relationship, either literally or figuratively. Members discussed how they tend to withdraw when conflict and hurt feelings come up in relationship with someone of higher rank:

That's what I do personally in my own relationship with someone with higher rank. I retreat and close up...distance myself and become resentful because I can't express the hurt...I wall off and it may take a long time to get back. This affects my relationship...there is still a mood because I am not able to share my feelings and process them in relationship. I keep them inside. Edgar

Members also noticed that when we are experiencing a lack of power within low rank positions, we tend to not share personally or participate (in a group or relationship) as freely as others. Members discussed a lack of freedom related to fears of evaluation, drawing interconnections between the themes of silence, evaluation, and rank and power.

Group members recognized, however, that those within positions of high rank also suffer and feel constricted in relationship, as described by one member:

I feel so kind of weighed down the way that rank structures get you...put you in a particular...you put yourself and other people put you there, and how you can't be yourself quite the same way that you can when you're just with friends. Karen

Members discussed that high rank implies looking after the one in low rank, and expressed a lack of freedom in the high rank position due to the pressures and responsibilities of the role, unable to bring in their own experience, hurts and frustrations, and be one-sided in MRRs.

This section has explored how “Everyone is Down River” in terms of power and rank in MRRs in the experience of study participants. It highlights the over-riding

tendency of participants to shy away from their rank and identify with low rank experiences, due to preferences for equality within relationships; incongruous experiences of rank; the ghost of the founding group of Process Work; and immigrant dreaming. This section also addressed the difficulties of power and rank experiences in MRRs from both low and high rank perspectives. The two sections that follow explore specific examples of types of MRRs – transitional and therapeutic relationships – and the particular challenges they present.

Theme 5: Time Changes Everything...Or Does It? – MRRs as Transitional

Relationships

In various ways, group members repeatedly discussed the significance and challenges brought about by relationships that change roles over time, also referred to as transitional relationships. Group members found that as their status and identity changes within the Process Work community, the expectations in relationships also change. However, their experience in relationship may still be strongly linked to other previous and/or ongoing roles. This section describes different types of transitional relationships that contribute to the challenges of negotiating MRRs. It reviews group members' experiences of these transitions, including one-time shifts in role status, as well as non-linear changes. This section also focuses on the significant transition into diplomate status and the particular MRR challenges group members faced in regards to boundaries and power.

Sub-Theme 1: Linear & Non-Linear Transitions. Several types of transitional relationships were addressed by inquiry group members: the transition from

student/client/supervisee to diplomates/colleagues; from fellow students to student/diplomate, due to one person graduating; from Phase I to Phase II student among diplomates and fellow students; and transitional roles throughout longer-term relationships. Most group members identified more strongly with their initial role relationship even after the relationship shifted and changed.

For example, River stated that in her transitional relationship with Karen from student/teacher to colleagues, River still identified with their previous evaluative relationship more than a collegial one. Karen, on the other hand, emphasized that she has always felt River's higher relative professional status which made her view the relationship more like colleagues and equals. In another example, having previously been students together with River (who is now a diplomate), Perry stated that she felt more of a friendship and collegial spirit in their relationship, rather than a rank-laden one. These examples illustrate how most members tended to identify with their initial roles rather than current or future role dynamics. However, Bashful gave more weight to future role changes, such that along with her transition from Phase I to II status Bashful became increasingly alert to evaluation. This attention to imminent role changes made Bashful view her peer Perry as a potential evaluator, due to Perry's eventual status as a diplomate.

Non-linear transitions in roles were also discussed, meaning relationships in which roles shifted over time, from one role relationship to another then back again, evolving into something new, or over-lapping depending on context. Sometimes these changes in roles happened intentionally, creating boundaries and closing doors on

certain roles, then opening them again at a later time. For example, Perry began her MRR as a supervisee and also yoga teacher, then ended her teacher role to focus exclusively on the supervision experience, then returned to both at a later date. Karen also experienced fluid changes in her MRR, beginning as community members with brief interactions, then working together with her MRR partner on professional projects, then exchanging therapy for professional services, and finally developing a stronger friendship once their therapeutic relationship had ended.

Sub-Theme 2: From Student to Colleague. Sometimes the changes in roles that the group discussed were less directly about the particular relationship, and more reflective of greater shifts in status with vicarious relationship effects. For example, group members placed significant attention on the challenge of transitioning from student/client/supervisee to fellow diplomate – particularly when an evaluative rank relationship is on-going. Edgar addressed in detail the difficulties and learnings he has faced in his relationships with therapists and supervisors who are now also peers and colleagues. He described feeling encouraged and compelled to participate and help in group projects, yet self-conscious and less valued for his contributions because of his low rank and newcomer status. In particular, Edgar emphasized the complication of maintaining privacy and boundaries when in collegial relationships with someone who is also his supervisor or teacher. When Edgar gave the example of receiving phone calls during the weekend requesting his help, group members spontaneously responded with this exchange and consequent discovery:

Perry: Caller ID...[big laughter in group]

Edgar: Or answering machine...

Susumu: Or the boxes...if you would like to speak to client-Edgar, press one..

Perry: If you would like to speak with colleague-Edgar, press two...

Karen: Actually, the caller should ID themselves when they call. 'Hello, this is your therapist/supervisor, I want you to do something as my peer/client.' Caller ID would be the answer to all the multiple role problems. Everyone has to identify themselves all the time.

Perry: Who are you who is calling?...

The group recognized that transitional MRRs encounter difficulties partly due to the lack of clarity in “who is calling” and “who is answering” – meaning in which role is the caller and receiver when contact is made.

Sub-Theme 3: Power and Boundaries. Group members identified the unique aspect of power present in transitional relationships that makes boundaries difficult and identities blurred for the transitioning supervisee/client.

Do you have two different parts of you as a client?...Like I know I have a client side that's just so grateful to my therapist for the things that are so valuable to me that I'd do anything. And there's another side of me as a client that, like, feels not able to say no, or feels not powerful enough relative to the particular power that a therapist has because I'm so over-awed by the greater consciousness or greater skill or whatever...who can't say no. So for me, it's like a two-fold dynamic – one doesn't want to [say no] and one can't. Karen

One doesn't want to [say no] because it wants to do everything, because it's so important and you're so grateful and you have so much invested in that relationship. And also it's really so relevant and meaningful for you that you really want to do it, but then you can't...feel that you're not really free. Because then you marginalize that other part that would say 'sorry, no, listen I'm just in the middle of something'. Which, if you are just a peer, you would feel free-er to do that. Basically, it's rank... Edgar

In regards to boundaries, group members also discussed the complication when outside peer material was brought into the ongoing supervisory or therapeutic relationship. For example, when Edgar was challenged as a client to pick up on his own unconscious

power in relation to a peer project, he felt pulled because this challenge became one of his biggest learnings. However, Edgar also did not feel like he had the freedom or power to maintain his own agenda as a client. This left him feeling at times constrained, cheated and *en garde* in transitional peer/supervisory relationships.

In a similar vein, group members discussed the power dynamics that maintain a kind of inequality in transitional MRRs, such that relationship conflicts as peers in one context can be framed as the supervisee's individual growth process in the context of supervision, making the conflict and learning appear one-sided:

It's a fear that [if I address peer conflict] it will reconstellate...and come back to me as a learning and it's not heard on the other side. [My own unconsciousness] is definitely part of it, but it will come back as an attack...No, as a challenge, not as an attack, as a growing challenge for my own thing...But then you will never, in a way, there will never really be a satisfaction because the rank will always be there in a way that you feel psychologically lower, and never able to balance it and feel you can resolve it on an equal level because there will always be...because the person will always be the supervisor and teacher and you keep him or her in that role as the teacher...Is it my growing edge of leaving that student/therapeutic relationship and growing into a peer relationship? I often think it's just a transitional process. But when do I...Do I choose to leave that relationship when it's right for me? Or can I keep that relationship because I need a teacher also, because I want it, I still need a supervisor? Edgar

These questions illustrate the tensions and seemingly conflicting needs amplified by transitional MRRs.

This section has described how our group explored many variations in roles and experiences of transitional MRRs. The group placed significant attention to the transition from student/client to fellow diplomate, which brought out the challenge of negotiating this change of status toward a peer relationship, especially when continuing

in an evaluative/supervisory relationship. The group addressed how this particular transition brings up issues of privacy and boundaries, as well as the complication of power dynamics, awareness of rank, and how that power is used when bridging a peer/supervisory relationship.

Theme 6: Treading on Sacred Ground – MRRs in Therapeutic Relationships

Our group found that the therapeutic relationship in particular raises special concerns and brings additional layers of complexity to MRRs. Group members discussed the specialness or sacredness of the therapeutic relationship, and found it to be trickier ground to negotiate in terms of multiple roles – something which requires more tenderness, awareness and caution. Group members addressed several issues specific to multiple roles that overlap with a therapeutic relationship, including protecting the role of the therapist, different types of client needs, sequence of roles, the power of the therapist to frame issues therapeutically, and boundaries.

Sub-Theme 1: Role of the Therapist. Group members discussed transference within the therapeutic relationship, and acknowledged that multiple roles are feared to interfere with the therapeutic alliance and the power of the therapist's role. Members related this fear to “the white coat phenomenon”: the medical model's conceptualization of therapist as helper/healer/positive parental figure, and the belief that the therapist needs the rank that comes with being impersonal and boundaried in order to maintain authority, create safety, and do the job of therapy. Some group members felt eager to preserve the therapeutic relationship, marginalizing relationship experiences that could threaten that connection:

I don't feel free...I'm protective of the therapeutic relationship. You need to protect the role of the therapist to stay in the therapy relationship...need a positive parental role for myself in therapy...need to keep the other in that role. So I can't afford to express hurt or be open...risk losing having it or affect my perception of the other in that role [of therapist as positive parental figure]. Edgar

I take the therapeutic relationship as a sacred place, so other aspects don't come in...It's the "white coat phenomenon"...You are free-er to be naked when the therapist is impersonal. River

River spoke about having an office in her basement, and how it is hard for some of her clients to see her as a real person (for example, when they need to walk through her house to reach the bathroom). She noted that her clients have not consented to that personal information; it just happens due to the physical set-up.

Other group members, however, felt that the therapeutic relationship cannot ultimately be protected or impersonal, stating that “no matter what you do for a living, you also do have a personal life” – the “person” cannot be left out of therapy. Speaking about an accident which brought Sharmaine and her therapist together outside of the therapeutic context, Sharmaine expressed the difficulty of

really accepting that [her therapist] was human with limitations and fears, and not some omnipotent being that was never hurt...I know that the whole situation theoretically should have backfired big time. According to my academic knowledge, the whole therapeutic relationship should have been destroyed. But it didn't. What happened was exactly the opposite. Sharmaine

Members recognized that how these boundaries are negotiated depends upon the actual relationship and two people involved.

Sub-Theme 2: Client Needs. Group members spoke about different types of clients, that these distinctions and the various needs of clients often determine whether

or not members were open to MRRs. Some members expressed hesitation about entering into MRRs depending on the different types of clients and consequent therapeutic responsibility:

There are the kind of therapy relationship where you're more the facilitator of someone's awareness process, and they have a lot of self-awareness, they're good at working with themselves, they may need to work with you to get that extra awareness or some outside skill. That's really different from working with somebody who's very much in the client role, who maybe has some kind of say psychological disorder or like a strong emotional dependence on you. Karen

Members discussed how the strength and/or fluidity of role differentiation depends on awareness, emotional dependence, and type of client. Members noted that Process Work students can sometimes be more self-facilitative as clients, in that they are simultaneously in a student role and often interested in learning to use the same skills they are experiencing through therapy.

Sub-Theme 3: Sequence of Roles. Group members discovered that the sequence of multiple roles seems significant especially in a therapeutic relationship, meaning which roles are present before and/or after therapy. When working with someone as a therapist, Karen specified how she withheld multiple roles when the therapy became more “therapeutic,” meaning when the client's “emotional neediness” strengthened the need for the therapist role. She expressed that friendship was possible after the therapy ended, but that the therapy itself probably increased the potential for intimacy in the friendship:

Earlier on I was not as open to friendship as I am now – something changed in our relationship once we stopped working together in therapy. The therapeutic alliance is a powerful one and it subtly affects the whole relationship I think – I didn't feel quite free, I felt I needed to

think about how I was and whether I was giving enough, whether she was comfortable in the relationship. Now that we have not worked together for about a year, I feel the relationship is really free and open. But maybe it wouldn't have got to this point if we hadn't worked together in therapy. I don't know if she would have shared as much about herself...is less ready to do that in friendship than I am for example, less self-disclosing and intimate for longer than I am. I also feel that at one point, I did not want to be close friends because of that. I feel that as she has become more open and intimate with me, I have wanted to be closer to her. I think we have both grown in our capacity for friendship and intimacy actually, and that the friendship has become stronger as a result. Karen

Sub-Theme 4: Power and Boundaries. As in transitional relationships, group members noted that MRRs pose significant challenges in therapeutic relationships because of the unique power dynamics within the client and therapist roles. In particular, members addressed the therapist's power in framing issues therapeutically, meaning that the therapist has the right to comment on relationship dynamics outside the therapeutic roles, but the client does not have this same power because the therapist can always turn a relationship conflict back into a therapeutic issue. Members discussed an internal sense of conflict in the client role when “outside issues” are brought into therapy, recognizing that those moments have been both incredible opportunities for learning but also painful and full of suffering. Members questioned “where do you draw the line?”

If everything is always seen in terms of its potential for growth, like so it's suffering...and suffering is potentially growthful. Then that means it gives license to anything because suffering is always growthful, therefore it's somehow OK. Then where does the line get drawn? ...because some suffering may be growthful but it's also not OK by some standard. And I'm not sure what the standard is, maybe it's an individual setting of limits that says, well this is actually not good for me, end of story. I don't know, that's a big question in my mind. Karen

Members addressed the complication of relationship conflict in a therapeutic setting, why MRRs are particularly difficult and usually don't work in the therapeutic context:

Is it sort of like [the relationship conflict] can be used as evidence against you? Like in a court of law, if you bring it up, it's yet more fodder for therapy. It's like, you're hurt, you're bringing it up, but you're still bringing it up in a relationship where the other person's job is to work with you. Although I would say that it's the therapist's job to also pick up [the relationship conflict]... Karen

This question of “where do you draw the line” challenged group members to consider the responsibility of creating limits and boundaries.

Members also discovered that whether relationship hurts/conflicts are framed as an individual developmental process or as a collective edge is a crucial distinction. As Edgar spoke about his experience as a client,

One way we can see it is an edge, from an individual psychology point of view. I see it as bigger than an edge. I know I can work on it, and still find there is something else – I can't bring it in. In our own model, this can become abusive, if only seen as an individual edge. If it is seen as a collective edge – more than an individual developmental process – if we are about individual development and more like an egalitarian adult education (not just a patient/therapist model), we are open to multiple role relationship as an opportunity for awareness development and growth on all sides... Edgar

Members wrestled with this distinction and the therapist's power in shaping how conflict is viewed and worked with.

The question of “where do you draw the line” in therapeutic relationships also came up in terms of defining the boundaries, role and responsibilities of the therapist. Members discussed how, especially in a small community, people have interactions with each other outside of the therapeutic setting. So even if someone has not

intentionally created a MRR, such as a business relationship for example, a therapist and client can still be in a MRR “by default” via community meetings, classes, on email strings, and in passing.

Where does the contract start and end? Is it that hour that you're together? And when you leave the room, are you still in that? Perry

The difficulty to be a therapist in a community is that you will be seen not only in the therapy room, but in public. They might have a reaction to what I do outside of the therapy room. Some clients are able or are willing to bring their reaction into the session, but some are not able, or will not. Some even bring their reaction in the therapy room into the group. When it happens, which role am I asked for? Am I her therapist who helps her to facilitate her edges? Am I the authoritative role who she is fighting against? Am I an equal member of the community? Am I a victim of her mean attack? All these parallel worlds happen at once. Probably what I need is detachment and fluidity among those worlds... But I haven't really figured out how to free myself from the therapist role. River

Members noted that the sense of duty and obligations that go along with being a therapist can create a feeling of constraint, creating a “role cage.” Members also discussed the sense of constraint and entanglement of MRRs from the client perspective:

The person was my therapist. On top of that we had a private interaction, so through that I get to know their private life as well. And I think that the entanglement came from knowing the details of their life... so then I get frozen because I know that information. Sorry I can't be more specific. That's why the relationship is difficult. And probably it is still difficult because I can't talk so freely about it, protecting the other person...I have come to terms with the person, but probably inside of me I haven't really finished it, so I can't really describe what happened and which role. So that's the reason, it's not only protection of the other person, I'm too entangled. River

Overall, the additional complexity and problems the therapeutic relationship brings to MRRs for both therapist and client roles was evident throughout group discussions and

reflections. Members found that just attempting to speak about these challenges was important and expressed appreciation for addressing complications even though they did not yet feel resolved.

This chapter has examined the difficult territory posed by multiple role relationships. The chapter has discussed in detail the complexities and challenges found in MRRs through the inquiry process, including the over-arching theme of multiple shifting identities. Other themes contributing to the difficulties found in MRRs addressed silence, evaluation, rank and power, transitional relationships, and the therapeutic relationship. In this next chapter, I will look at the “Stuff of Success” within multiple role relationships, discussing the various themes that arose from inquiry group members related to the benefits and successful negotiation of MRRs.

CHAPTER 5

THEMATIC FINDINGS: THE STUFF OF SUCCESS

Along with the many challenges and difficulties found in MRRs, members of our inquiry group also explored what allows MRRs to be successful – in other words, what makes them work. From the collaborative learnings stimulated by our discussions and interactions with each other, key themes emerged as guiding features for successful MRRs. This chapter describes “the stuff of success,” elements that contribute to the overall sense of satisfaction and positive experiences within MRRs, including: recognizing MRR paradigms; pragmatic needs and contributions; maturity; learning styles; rank and power; and Dreaming and deeper connections. The chapter concludes with new learnings that emerged from the inquiry process, which pointed to growing areas to assist in the negotiation of MRRs, including: bias of support within therapeutic contexts; importance of evaluation and reconceptualizing its expression; and role fluidity.

Theme 1: Where Are You Coming From? – Identifying & Challenging MRR

Paradigms

Throughout the inquiry process, members explored various paradigms, cultural and personal perspectives on MRRs. In their experience, MRRs were either viewed as a

normal part of everyday life, something requiring caution and strict boundaries, or something needing fluid structure according to changing needs. Members found that identifying “where you're coming from” assists in the negotiation of MRRs by bringing attention to cultural and personal beliefs and feelings. These paradigms can then be addressed and assessed to determine whether individual and relationship needs go along with these values. Members also found that MRRs seem to work best when the form of relationship aligns with both partners' views and needs.

Group members discussed various perspectives on MRRs. One inquiry group member addressed how different cultures approach MRRs by reflecting on “how the road is made:”

*Putting the cart before the horse...Multiple roles came first, then the concept of role came later. Communities have always been in MRRs. When I was flying in...I looked down, shook my head, and said, look at the roads...they're all made out in grids...only in America. In any older culture, the house comes first and the road is made for the house...there's a labyrinth of roads. Only in America would someone come with a tape measure and say, make a road here, make a road here, now whoever wants to live, come and live on these blocks. So I think that's what they're doing, they're making grids and squashing everything into those. Because overall MRRs have always existed. Whoever we are, whatever we do, in whichever culture, we all live in multiple...now we're trying to take a thousand things and squash all ourselves into [one].
Bashful*

Members noted that MRRs are sometimes feared and viewed as bad or potentially harmful, yet considered a normal part of everyday life in other spheres and communities:

We think of multiple roles as not good. I don't. I don't come from a culture where we think of multiple roles as not good. I come from a culture where multiple roles are a way of life. We've never bothered to analyze it. So I don't identify with that thing in the mainstream... Bashful

Another member addressed the dominant view of MRRs within the “culture” of mainstream psychology, which prescribes caution and strict attention to boundaries.

Sharmaine discussed her role and obligations as a teacher of psychology, in contrast to her personal beliefs and experiences:

Although when I teach, I always emphasize strongly that multiple roles seriously damage the therapy, I never really believed that...as an axiom...There's always the feeling that most of the mainstream psychologists and therapists are afraid of relating with their clients in any other way...afraid of losing their power...that it will be damaging and blow up. Sharmaine

Sharmaine explained how she would lose her job if she did not teach the ethical codes against MRRs, so she feels it is important to initially “start with an absolute no” and then later allow more room to “play with boundaries.” When speaking about her personal MRR experience, however, Sharmaine expressed surprise at its success and noted how her actual experience of MRR boundary-crossing contradicted her professional precepts:

I know that the whole situation theoretically should have backfired big time. According to my academic knowledge, the whole therapeutic relationship should have been destroyed. But it didn't. What happened was exactly the opposite. There was a new kind of respect and an actual real life example on how to deal with strenuous situations. Sharmaine

Group members noted that recognizing and questioning MRR paradigms gives room to appreciate both a more open attitude as well as the presence of structure. Members expressed appreciation for the equality and real life reflections sometimes offered by MRRs, but also valued the structure and clarity that boundaries and singular role relationships attempt to secure. Susumu discussed the influence of his own cultural

background and how that made him value fewer multiple roles:

What are our assumptions about multiple roles? Do we value the place of having multiple roles over fewer multiple roles?...In my [cultural] experience...when the role is singular and identified, then language and relationship is very helpful in clarifying. Then when we move into multiple roles, then I get lost. And I have to say that part of me values multiple roles because of a sense of equality and equanimity with another human being, but another part of me feels more clear with those roles and definitions. Susumu

Group members' discussions also showed that matching personal and cultural perspectives with the changing nature of relationship created a kind of fluid structure that assisted in negotiating MRRs:

I've been thinking about experiences like in a client or supervisee role where I have initiated ending some aspects of the relationship and making it more singular for my own sense of clarity and safety and structure...It seems like there's a time or a need for that simplicity and clarity...The multiplicity of what's present is a lot to hold. There's multiple levels of relationship going on all the time. It's like we're agreeing for the sake of something to reduce what is. Like agreeing to marginalize some of the things that are occurring, to hold down one aspect of the relationship...in order to create a sense of safety or structure. Perry

In this way, the group acknowledged the importance of following both the timing of when to create simplicity and more clarity with roles and when to open up to the multiple possibilities present in relationship.

The inquiry group found that MRRs seem to be most successful when MRR partners “make the road together,” or share similar beliefs or ways of approaching the MRR experience, as described by River:

I think MRR is challenging. So you can call it negative or positive – it depends on assemblage point. If you share the same assemblage point with the other person who I have difficulty with in MRR, it is easier. But if the other person has assemblage point that the relationship which

goes smooth is positive and the relationship which doesn't go smooth is negative, then I have different assemblage points and things get difficult...I think in order to deal with MRR requires willingness from both sides. River

Members' discussions showed that identifying how those around us and we ourselves are thinking about and approaching MRRs is important. Bringing more awareness and understanding to the existence of these various paradigms can contribute to successful experiences within MRRs by helping us identify our own views, feelings and needs, and shaping our MRRs to match.

Theme 2: Shake On That – Attending to Practical Needs & Contributions

Group members found that attending to the pragmatic needs and contributions of both partners adds to the success of MRR experiences. Members' discussions addressed several questions: What do you want from a given MRR? What is being asked of you? Are you able to give that? Do you want to? Do both MRR partners value what is being exchanged? Does the exchange feel satisfying? Members pointed toward elements that assist in attending to this level of relationship, as well as how practical needs and contributions related to other aspects of satisfaction within MRRs. The inquiry group also emphasized the importance of valuing each other's contributions on a professional level.

Members recognized that the pragmatic level of relationship requires self-awareness in order to become clear and honest about one's own needs. The inquiry group found that it was important to communicate about these needs and be honest about whether or not there was a willingness to reciprocate. Karen described her

learnings based on a not-so successful MRR experience:

I try to attend to my own needs so I don't use people unwittingly for some unresolved need of mine. Yet I also think that in any instances where someone might be unhappy with me in a MRR, it is because I have somehow needed them in a particular way, but not been willing to reciprocate in meeting whatever needs they had towards me in the relationship. I am thinking about occasions where I had a need for someone to care for my dog, and the individuals who were willing to help out there were also interested in more personal relationship with me than I wanted at the time. I think in retrospect if I had been really scrupulous, I would have paid attention to that and not followed my own need there, out of expediency or convenience. Karen

Group members pointed out that attending to pragmatic needs in MRRs related to other levels of satisfaction as well. Bashful explained that her successful experience within her MRR stemmed from attention to her practical needs: due to her socio-economic status, her MRR partner's support assisted her to live in the country, work and earn money. This practical support also made Bashful feel understood and supported in general. The relationship connection with her MRR partner that came in part *because* of Bashful's economic need also contributed to her overall sense of well-being and her feeling of being “responded to as a person,” not just someone “in need.” Commenting on how her low socio-economic status related to her positive experience within her MRR, Bashful explained:

I don't try to hide it, but I don't want to where it on my sleeve...I work really hard to separate my checkbook and myself. I try really hard to show that that's OK – I may not have money but that's OK...At the same time I don't want to be patronized. I'm thin skinned about it. I don't want charity and I don't want someone who'll be kind to me...We worked on this very well together. Most of the time we talked like two individuals...[There was a] brevity of communication, but a strong understanding between us, quite surprising considering we're not intimate...but we have a rich meaningful relationship. Bashful

Group members also expressed that both MRR partners need to feel like they are making a contribution, and truly value what the other is contributing, to the relationship. Inquiry group discussions emphasized this level of mutual satisfaction as a significant element of successful MRR experiences. Members found that it was important to be clear about finances, especially when trades were involved, so that both MRR partners felt an equal value in the exchange. While members recognized many levels of contribution in MRRs, they emphasized that mutual satisfaction often related to professional contributions in particular. The group placed significant attention on professional status and professional respect, as illustrated by Karen's description of her MRR:

I think the success of our relationship has been due to...a capacity to value, respect and be guided by each other's skills and abilities – a mutual respect for each other professionally...She had established rank relative to me in her proficiency in her professional capacity. I was dependent on her and needed to follow her lead, ask her advice, get help from her...Her work was as a professional, something that required talent and experience. I admired her for, and depended on, her expertise. I think this was different to, for example, her doing some kind of low paid job, which might have tipped the power balance in another direction. Karen

In these ways group members recognized the importance of attending to the practical level of needs and contributions within MRRs. This section has addressed how identifying one's own needs, expressing them clearly, and valuing each other's contributions on a professional level assist in the mutual satisfaction and success of MRRs.

Theme 3: Develop Yourself – Maturity in MRRs

Group members identified maturity as a contributing factor to the ease and success of MRRs. The inquiry group's discussions pointed toward various qualities of maturity. In particular, members described maturity as related to both emotional and professional development, as well as a developed sense of rank.

The group expanded on the area of emotional maturity, describing it as an experience of knowing yourself, being able to recognize your feelings, needs, and reactions. Members discussed emotional maturity as the ability to communicate about these needs, reactions, and how the relationship itself is going. Members also noted the importance of caring for oneself and/or seeking out other sources of support, rather than looking entirely to one's MRR partner. Members discussed how high levels of emotional needs often required greater attention to boundaries in MRRs, as well as clarity and honesty about how needs differed, and whether or not each MRR partner was able or willing to reciprocate. Karen addressed the main elements that influenced the success of her MRR, emphasizing

emotional maturity on both our parts – we are both adults with a sense of who we are in the world...I also admired her personal maturity and ability to work with me as a person, not as someone with a particular role in the PW community. Karen

As illustrated by the above comment, group members also linked maturity with a developed sense of one's professional identity and/or sense of oneself separate from his or her status within the Process Work community. Members discussed how professional development contributed to mutual respect within MRRs and gave a sense of detachment from multiple roles tied to therapy and evaluation. Edgar, a diplomate

group member, who participated in a project with Susumu who was an informal student, explained that

I saw [Susumu] as having professional rank...so he was invaluable as a link to the [non-Process Work] community...I needed his rank, gave a feeling of ease...I'm wondering if his status as an informal student made it easier because he could stand out more in his own professional background and experience without having a role as a student. Edgar

Perry, who was a formal student, also brought professional status to her MRR. Perry acknowledged that her identity as formal Process Work student brought complications to the MRR experience, but that her professional contribution as a yoga teacher was also valued which created a sense of mutual respect and trust with her MRR partner.

While members pointed towards emotional and professional maturity as key elements in successful MRRs, at the same time they also described maturity as something that extends into rank awareness in general. Members discussed how successful MRRs often reflected a recognition and valuing many levels of rank – the ability to see each other in their Process Work role, for example, as well as the other aspects of their identities and contributions. Karen connected maturity to a developed sense of rank, explaining that “neither of us are overawed by one type of rank, we recognize each other's strengths and admire them.”

In these ways, the inquiry group acknowledged that emotional and professional development, as well as rank awareness in general, fostered a sense of maturity that assisted in successful MRR experiences. Members found that knowing oneself, being able to communicate about one's feelings, needs and reactions in relationship, and caring for oneself brought an emotional level of maturity that helped MRRs. This

section also discussed how professional maturity (by having a professional identity or contribution separate from one's Process Work status), as well as rank maturity (by recognizing and valuing the multiple levels of rank present), all added to the ease and satisfying negotiation of MRRs. The next theme addresses the connections between learning and relationship as illustrated by members' MRR experiences and the dynamics within the inquiry group itself.

Theme 4: The Stroke & the Stick – Honoring Different Learning Styles

The group discovered that identifying and valuing different learning styles also contributed to the success of MRRs. Members both directly and indirectly discussed the connection between learning and relationship: the ways in which relationship contributed to and created challenges in learning; preferences for different approaches to relationship; and how these different approaches impacted learning. Group members found that relationship and relating itself can be a learning style, as opposed to more linear and academic approaches to learning. Different styles of relating were also named as more or less effective ways of learning, depending on individual needs.

In particular, members identified two different learning styles within relationship: “the stroke and the stick.” Perry spoke of her struggle in an MRR with her supervisor and the importance of working through her feelings of being evaluated to arrive at a feeling of support in the relationship:

It was painful and getting in the way of my learning to feel like she wasn't on my side, and so I had to fight with her and this [inner] figure and do my innerwork and also in relationship with her...We were changed through it – meaning she's on my side now, she's my supervisor there on behalf of my learning, she's there for me. She's no longer there

scrutinizing me – she's got my back, she's in my corner through these very challenging supervising experiences, which was for me very important to shift my...like it was personally healing for me, my personal development, but also shifted my assemblage point around my journey through this program. Perry

The inquiry group's discussion about different styles in relationship and learning went further, revealing the need not only for “the stroke” of support but for “the stick” as well, as illustrated by the following interaction:

Bashful: I'm thinking I have the exact opposite style. I go to my study committee, and I would say “here's a stick, now use it.” Because I'm not going to learn if you keep being supportive and kind to me...

Perry: ...I love [my supervisor's] roughness and toughness, but I need to know that that's coming from love. It doesn't necessarily come out sweetly or “I'm all for you” but I can take it because of what's happening in my inner psychology.

Bashful: I'm saying we're different, our inner psychologies are different. I don't need love. I've been in situations where I've been loved. In my previous relationship I would say I need less love, I need more reason. I don't need so much love – keep out that love and let's get something we can work with!...[Respect] is way more important...I just gave them the stick and they used it – what are you going to do? It's OK. For me, it's OK, that's what I'm learning. And when I go back to that person, I'm not going to say “Oh, you're so mean to me.” I'm going to say “OK, let's have some more!” That's what I want.

The group unfolded these learning needs further, identifying two crucial and seemingly different emphases within relationship – love and respect. Members related these preferences to past relationship experiences and their potential healing. When the group asked each other whether or not they needed to feel loved by their teachers, Karen acknowledged:

My teacher absolutely has to love me...My entire history was falling in love with spiritual teachers. And finally, the best relationship in my life, where I'm learning something that's deeply important to my psychological and spiritual growth, is a love relationship. And I have to say...a love relationship. It's that something in me desperately needed to

be loved by a teacher. It's healing old scars of spiritual teachers who weren't loving, and it's healing childhood wounds of a completely unloving, theoretically loving, but in practical experience not loving. So I'm thinking some of us, as a personal expediency, teaching has to be combined with love, and for others it doesn't. Karen

Members experienced and described the qualities of love and respect in relationship differently, yet made it clear that MRRs were more successful and satisfying when they matched personal learning styles and preferences.

Sub-Theme 1: Getting Juicy – Learning through Relationship Itself. The inquiry group also became aware of how relationship surfaced amongst members themselves throughout the study. During email exchanges whilst reviewing the data, members became more directly confrontational with each other, bringing attention to different styles of relating and different needs in the research process. Members also began to value the relationships and interactions between each other as a key to the cooperative inquiry process and research findings. Members discussed different styles of approaching our research study together, differentiating thinking about MRRs from learning through relationship itself. Some expressed a tendency toward a more linear methodological approach, yet also appreciated, for example, Bashful's “insistence on making things real,” as illustrated by the following comments:

As a group who is studying MRR, we are ourselves in the relationship channel. It occurred to me that we are not paying enough attention to that...I'm a relationship type. I can't get too academic. I need juice...Maybe it's also a relationship style that says, “Hey, we're all grown ups around here. Do I always have to watch every word I say? Can we have a little juice here? Most good juice I know is both sweet and sour, that's what makes it so good.” Bashful

Probably we need more juice, personal contact and interaction to each other. I feel thirsty!!! River

I was thinking the same about how these more personal exchanges do extend and enrich the MRR study, not just our own relationships. Susumu

Group members found that attention to multiple roles with each other brought the group to a deeper understanding of themselves and others, as well as closer relationships. Throughout the study, group members began to discuss more of the circumstances of their ongoing daily lives, becoming more personal with each other and bringing more awareness to the factors that influenced if, when, and how members participated in the inquiry process. MRRs amongst group members brought up many feelings, complexities, traumatic experiences, personal issues and challenges. Working through these areas on our own and with each other, members expressed a sense of deepened relationship amongst each other. By the end of the research process, they discussed feeling “cozy and happy to see each other,” as well as developing new friendships, professional contacts, and alliances. As Susumu described, “Emotional moments and clashes led us to creative movement forward in relationship.”

Theme 5: Feel It, Use It – Rank & Power within MRRs

The group clearly acknowledged that power and rank differences were central to MRRs and the challenges faced there, and thus found that how we recognize and use our power and rank within MRRs is key to their success and the satisfaction of both MRR partners. Many examples of this arose throughout group meetings, both in discussing our experiences of power within MRRs and how group members used our power with each other in the research process itself. Group discussions highlighted

three examples of positive use of rank within MRRs: the power to open up dialogue; the power to relate in conflict; and the power to see and value multiple kinds of rank.

Sub-Theme 1: Power to Open Up Dialogue. Group discussions reiterated that it can be extremely helpful when someone identifies with and uses his or her power on behalf of both MRR partners. For example, Karen explained how she was more comfortable with communication in relationship than her MRR partner, so used this ease and rank by initiating talks and check-ins:

I think I took the lead in [talking with each other about how the relationship was going, whether it was working, etc.], and used my ease in this area well, to good effect for both of us. Karen

This process of identifying with one's own rank and using that power to benefit another also occurred within our inquiry group. Edgar, a diplomate member, upon hearing about another student member's MRR experience, initially expressed discomfort and was not sure he wanted her to continue because he felt protective of the person who was being discussed. However, after processing this in the group and working on himself, Edgar decided that he did not want to squash what the other member needed to say. He explained,

It's important that people in our group feel free to bring out problematic issues...so I will step out of the protective role and want to empower both of you to deal with whatever difficulties arise in your MRR. Edgar

In this way, Edgar recognized the power he held in the group as a diplomate and was able to use his rank to further the discussion rather than shutting it down.

Sub-Theme 2: Power to Relate through Conflict. Power surfaced again within the study when our inquiry group became more confrontational and directly engaged in

relationship through several email interactions, in which we challenged each other and explored how evaluation and different communication styles were operating amongst us. Bashful, who had lower rank in regards to Process Work training status as a newly Phase II student, initiated much of this discussion. She challenged both senior students and diplomates about their “sweet” and seemingly supportive styles of relating and lack of awareness about the impact of this bias in relationship, making her feel neglected and ignored due to her contrasting “bad girl, big mouth” style. Group members received the feedback and explored further with each other. Several group members, including a senior student and diplomate, responded personally about their feelings in relationship with this junior group member, as well as the impact of different communication styles, criticism and support in their lives. The interactions took the group to a deeper, more direct level of relationship interaction with each other, framed by Susumu as an example of positive use of rank:

*I felt that was so artfully done...There was a wonderful naming of perception, affirmation of the other, checking in, calling out for more clarification and depth, then, in case the tone was missed, affirming the spirit of the inquiry with, if I remember, "with love AND respect."
Susumu*

Sub-Theme 3: Power to See & Value Multiple Ranks. While group members discussed the importance of recognizing distinctions in rank and consequential power dynamics, they also noted how successful MRR interactions often went beyond the sum of ranks between people, and reflected a sense of dignity and respect despite rank differences. As Karen expressed,

It's hard to put your finger on it, but it's more than the sum between different ranks...treatment of each other within and regardless of all

those ranks...not intellectual, power-based, but a human quality. Karen

Related to this human quality of interaction within successful MRRs, members discussed the importance of recognizing and valuing multiple expressions of rank, how they are present and contribute to the relationship. Karen highlighted how it is particularly important to acknowledge other forms of rank outside of the Process Work subculture, especially when one member of the MRR has higher Process Work structural rank:

When the person that has more identified social/structural rank is very willing and able to acknowledge the other types of rank that the person with lower social/structural rank has, and repeatedly notices it, supports it, genuinely loves it, I think that's a big equalizing factor...[In reference to one of her MRRs] I was always recognized for the things I had and did and was outside of Process Work. I may not have been a diploma person, I may not have been a senior teacher, I may not have had that rank - but I was seen for my spiritual rank, I was seen for my abilities outside of Process Work, I was seen for my personality traits, what I brought to the relationship besides money and the things that go with having a professional status in this country, things like that. Those kind of things can make a big difference as to whether unequal ranks work or not...Really seeing people for who they are in their multiple strengths. Karen

This recognition of the multiple strengths and value each person brings to relationship became a central theme in group discussions. An unofficial student, Susumu, who identified himself as having the lowest rank in the group from a Process Work structural standpoint, spoke about how he felt his voice was honored within the inquiry group, and how powerful it was for a community to explicitly say that each voice was honored regardless of rank. Karen expressed how she viewed his role as a “bridge” (between the Process Work community and other spheres) as particularly valuable, in that

I don't really like the singular identity that being really involved in one thing puts on you, and that I also put on myself...I value bridges, I love the mixing of different things, and I get unbelievably frustrated with my own tendency to get pulled toward things and be in the middle of things and think in a narrow way, when I so much more prefer connections and bridges and links. So I just bring that in because I think it's a different kind of rank...the rank of being a bridge...I think being a bridge is a tremendously valuable thing for the world because it's not one, it's more than one. And my personal feeling is that one way and one thing, one way of thinking is what's doing the world a lot of bad, so that's why I value the bridges. Karen

This section has addressed the ways in which the inquiry group found rank and power to be useful in the negotiation of MRRs. Member discussions pointed out the importance of recognizing one's own rank and using our power to benefit both MRR partners, particularly by opening up dialogue and relating through conflictual experiences. Members also found that the experience of power in MRRs depends on more than rank status alone and is benefitted by affirming many forms of rank in one's MRR partner, especially recognizing those unrelated to one's Process Work identity. The final theme extends beyond the relationship dynamics within MRRs and speaks to members' experiences of the strange attraction found within the Dreaming and deeper connections of MRRs.

Theme 6: Strange Attraction – Dreaming & Deeper Connections in MRRs

While the group acknowledged that rank, power, and their use in relationship were central to successful experiences of MRRs, members also discussed the presence of another quality. They found that although rank and roles are significant in MRRs, they are also *not* – in that there existed something perhaps even more significant underneath the roles that we assigned to ourselves and each other, “something that

holds participants in an MRR, something below the choppy surface waters of rank and power” (Susumu). This “other quality” appeared many times and in many ways throughout the inquiry process, referred to by participants as “a dream connection,” “a spiritual essence or core,” “a third thing,” and “something deeper that holds the whole.”

Members discussed how the presence of this deeper undercurrent surfaced in their MRRs. Perry described how her MRR actually “began in the dreamworld.” She explained that before she had much contact with her MRR partner, she had a nighttime dream from which she awoke “with an inner sense of knowing, a feeling that she had seen her [MRR partner's] dreambody.” Perry felt that this MRR has been helping her to integrate the elements of that dream with her personal process of development. She described that her MRR became a “bridge between worlds” offering her a new language and learning tool for translating information between the body and intellectual fields:

Having [this person] as a partner and ally who shared the love of yoga and brought the expertise of Process Work has helped to bridge that gap and heal that split. Perry

Other members shared in the experience of deep connections that MRRs can offer. In describing one of her successful MRR experiences, Karen emphasized the spiritual connection they shared:

We had a common spiritual understanding, which at times was startling. We both found that we could talk about really deep spiritual concerns and experiences, and feel understood by the other...Something spiritual between us, that held the relationship with understanding and love. I love and admire her, and respect her. I have fun with her. I share a deep sense of mutual understanding and values with her. We both recognize this dimension in our relationship and are a little awed by it. Karen

Members often spoke of a spiritual or unnamable presence that influenced their MRR experiences, and shared the recognition that a third thing connects, holds and guides the relationship. Susumu spoke of an infinite presence:

Roles and relationship come and go...nothing is ultimate...like changing boxes, they come on and off...There is something infinite [whereas] roles are finite...a deeper thing makes it work, something bigger than individuals. Susumu

Bashful described this “third thing” as a skipper of a ship that

steers the deeper thing, the myth of relationship...It may be unconscious, just there...may or may not be able to talk about it. Bashful

This “third thing” was also described as a feeling quality:

a mutual passion regardless of roles [that] gives the relationship zing and carries it to another level beyond the troubling aspects. Susumu

Group members found that dream connections, spiritual understandings, and the sense of a deeper presence create a strange attraction and hold MRRs, and that recognizing this background presence helps to guide MRR experiences.

New Learnings & Growing Spots

This final section serves as a bridge from thematic analysis to discussion of the study's findings. True to the nature of cooperative inquiry, group members act as both participants and researchers. Thus in the final meetings of our study, we discussed the research experience as a whole, reflecting upon our learnings which pointed toward directions for growth in the understanding and negotiation of multiple role relationships. Members discovered a “trance of support” within therapeutic contexts. This discovery challenged the group to reconceptualize evaluation and its value within

MRRs. And finally, group members recognized that MRRs are assisted by role fluidity, the freedom to step in and out of roles. These insights serve as both final points in the data analysis as well as the beginnings of a discussion of our findings through the voices of inquiry group members themselves.

Bias of Therapeutic Field – The Trance of Support

Our group discussions and personal reflections revealed that members experience a strong bias towards support and healing, both within the therapeutic field in general and the Process Work community in particular; meaning that group members often associated therapy and the role of the therapist with something that is supportive, makes a person feel good, caring, nurturing and open, with a general feeling of saying yes to things. This supportive orientation was framed in contrast to an evaluative quality, which members associated with something harsher and defined as being direct, critical, giving honest feedback, saying no, and distinguishing between good and bad. In other words, as this exchange between group members shows,

Edgar: My main identity is still often the one of the therapist.

Bashful: You're saying that being an evaluator is not being a therapist.

Edgar: Being an evaluator or a teacher is not being a therapist – it's someone who says these are the standards and these are the criteria that need to be fulfilled...It's a less caring role.

In this way, the group realized that there is a split between what is considered therapeutic and what is considered evaluative. Members recognized that this split shapes what is acceptable in each role, marginalizing the other qualities which do not go along with that identity.

Reconceptualizing Evaluation – Become It...We Need It

The group found that these marginalized qualities of evaluation often present a problem within MRRs and community life as a whole. Members discussed how “the trance of support” creates a main identity that is therapeutic (according to the qualities noted above) and shoves evaluative characteristics to the background so that they emerge indirectly. The group went further in their exploration, recognizing that the resistance to being evaluative constellates a third party evaluator, which can manifest as strong challenges or attacks in relationship, a critical ghost role in the group, or as the state/government bodies in relation to the Process Work community, for example.

This realization helped the inquiry group answer one of its main questions: How do you successfully negotiate MRRs? Members found that “Number one: You cross your edge to being a conscious evaluator” (Karen). Group members found that this means being up-front about one's evaluations, giving direct feedback, setting clear boundaries, and being honest about one's limitations, rather than falling into a trance of being one-sidedly supportive and open in relationship. Members discussed how stepping into this role diminishes the need for an outer evaluative presence. Members also discovered that having someone be direct in evaluation can actually be relieving for the one on the receiving end as well because the evaluation becomes “up here, out clear, available to be dealt with” (Karen). Perry discussed her sense of relief when given honest feedback and clear boundaries in regard to the research process itself because it externalized her over-active and ambiguous inner evaluator.

Realizing the power and importance of evaluation helped group members give

more space to its presence and the possibilities for its expression in MRRs. Members noted that just because the evaluator has not fallen under the trance of support does not mean that evaluation necessarily needs to always be negative or critical. Group members discussed how feedback of all sorts can be evaluative. In an email correspondence helping to unfold the evaluative presence, Perry wrote:

I find that I'm excitedly becoming an advocate for the evaluator ...exploring the essence of this presence, the analytical/critical mind that can discern. As I feel into that, I see an animal scanning the environment, alert to everything, hunting the food...the potential substance...Made me look up the word 'evaluate': (1) to determine or fix the value of; (2) to determine the significance, worth, or condition of, usually by careful appraisal and study. I think about PW and channel awareness, for example – how we are using our training to constantly evaluate – inside and out – to determine the most worthy direction in any given moment, based on structure and feedback, for the benefit of the client. How this kind of evaluation – someone using their rank/power with good meta-skills on our behalf – is what many of us are seeking to receive and also become. Perry

By identifying the trance of support within therapeutic contexts and the consequent marginalization of other needed qualities, group members began to reconceptualize evaluation. Group members discovered the significance of evaluation, that it can be expressed in many ways, and that evaluation is needed to help negotiate MRRs.

Take It On and Off – Role Fluidity

Group members went further in their exploration of clarity, boundaries and responsibility within MRRs. They found that part of the success of being “multiple” in relationship is role fluidity: the freedom to be one thing and then another, relate in many different styles or not at all; meaning that stepping into a role consciously is just as important as the ability to let it go. River discussed her feeling of being constrained

by a “role cage”:

Meetings and conversations showed me how much I am frustrated by the idea of MRR...Sometimes it is more than I can do...I want to be aware, but with awareness I can also be free from the role....I have rank so I can't bring myself in – that's my “not-free.” But I can bring my experience in more, with awareness, and be free from role constraints...I create the role cage myself. River

In this way, members found that valuing a role and making it explicit is important, yet when one is no longer in that contextual role, or has other experiences within that role, it is just as important to take it off. Members noted that rather than a cage, roles can be like wearing different coats – we can take them on and off. Members found that MRRs are assisted by allowing both the freedom to truly step into a role and also letting it go.

This chapter has described the “Stuff of Success” within MRRs. It has discussed the areas and issues members found to assist in the successful negotiation of MRRs, including: recognizing and challenging MRR paradigms; tending to the practical level of needs and contributions within MRRs; developing different qualities of maturity; honoring diverse learning styles; identifying rank and using power well; and finally, experiencing the Dreaming and deeper connections that hold and guide MRRs. The chapter also reviewed the inquiry group's discussion of new learnings and growing points, including the therapeutic trance of support, reconceptualizing evaluation, and role fluidity. The next chapter explores how the challenges and successes of MRRs help answer the inquiry study's initial research questions, discusses these findings in relation to the wider field of psychotherapy, and examines the skills and metaskills these learnings imply.

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION

In this chapter, I review the study's goals, discuss how the main findings from our cooperative inquiry answer our initial guiding questions, and extend our cooperative inquiry approach and outcomes to the literature on multiple role relationships as a whole. I explore the relation between these findings and the issues that have already been addressed in the field, as well as the gaps our study helps to fill.

Review of Study's Goals & Research Questions

This study grew out of a Process Work orientation, initiated and conducted by members of the Process Work community, and thus reflects many of its values, perceptions and methods of working with relationship and conflict. The cooperative inquiry approach shares a philosophical alliance with one of the central guiding principles of Process Work—Deep Democracy—in that cooperative inquiry research methods reflect democratic principles and seek to democratize research itself by creating a forum in which participants decide what and how they want to explore things that are important to them, and in doing so learn more about what matters to them and how they want to change things for the better (Bray, Lee, Smith & Yorks, 2000; Reason & Heron, 1999). Similarly, the concept of deep democracy respects the importance of

all voices in the creation of reality and the structures that support life to happen (Mindell, 1995; Deep Democracy website). Process Work recognizes that some parts of ourselves as well as group culture are feared and rejected, thus marginalized and not welcomed in, which creates disturbance, conflict, and sometimes out and out war. Process Work believes that by listening to all parts—those common in our awareness as well as those neglected or oppressed—and facilitating their interaction, we invite deeper understanding which leads to steps forward that are more sustainable and reflective of the whole.

The methodological orientation of cooperative inquiry, supported by the principles and methods of Process Work, has been particularly well-suited for this study of multiple role relationships, in that the research process itself became a living laboratory reflecting the many roles, relationships, and issues that arise within MRRs in the Process Work community. The intent of this project has been to create a forum to find out more about multiple role relationships in their actual lived experience, give space for diverse voices to be expressed, and legitimize the existence of MRRs enough to actually find out about the challenges they carry as well as what contributes to satisfying experiences, rather than just shutting them down. Our study helps to make transparent the roles we embody, the meaning we place on those roles, our experiences within those roles, and the complexities that rise up when these roles begin to interact with each other. It values the existence of multiple role relationships and the experiences of those within them, without minimizing the challenges they bring. By exploring how MRRs are both problematic and beneficial, the study points towards

skills and metaskills that may assist in their negotiation.

In the sections that follow, I discuss how our findings answer the main questions guiding our cooperative inquiry study:

1. How are non-sexual multiple role relationships understood and experienced in the Process Work community of Portland?
2. How are they problematic and/or beneficial?
3. What skills and metaskills allow Process Work trainers and trainees to negotiate such relationships effectively?

This final look at our study locates and discusses the cooperative inquiry findings in relation to current views on MRRs.

MRR Understandings & Experiences

Our cooperative inquiry study revealed that participants have diverse understandings and experiences of multiple role relationships within the Process Work community. Members expressed several broad orientations toward MRRs, ranging from fearful, cautious and protective, to accepting them as the norm, to viewing them as rich and rewarding. All views were spoken for by all of the various Process Work roles within our group at some point throughout the study, including both diplomates and students (both registered and informal), so the views do not seem to coincide with any particular role within the Process Work community. Members often identified with more than one feeling and orientation within themselves.

Our study names similar roles, relationships and orientations toward multiple role relationships as those represented within dominant and alternative views. The dominant view, however, places most attention on the therapeutic relationship and its exploitative potential when additional roles are introduced (Pope & Bajt, 1988; Borys & Pope, 1989; Pope, 1990). Thus mainstream discussion and guidelines are centralized around this main relationship, in this way minimizing awareness of the indeed *multiple* ways in which MRRs can manifest. On the other hand, alternative perspectives reflect a much more community-oriented understanding of MRRs, citing different types and ways in which multiple roles are experienced (Lazarus & Zur, 2002; Remley & Herlihy, 2001). The alternative conceptualization of multiple role relationships supports the findings of this study, which speak to MRRs involving training roles, community membership, professional contexts, and friendships. While the findings of this study also emphasize the importance and challenges linked to the therapeutic relationship in particular, the above distinction between perspectives underlies and structures the paradigms which guide various understandings and approaches to MRRs.

One of the findings of this study reflects the view of MRRs as a normal, everyday part of life, particularly within some non-western cultures. This view points out that people are many things and carry many different roles and identities, so it is natural that relationships reflect this complexity and multiplicity. This orientation advocates for accepting MRRs as a reality and dealing with the problems and benefits that arise. Alternative literature echoes this perspective when discussing small communities and subcultures, recognizing that MRRs are prevalent within rural towns,

specialized training contexts, and groups that gather together because of shared worldviews and values, such as political affiliations, ethnic identities, and sexual orientation (Lazarus & Zur, 2002; Wakefield, 1998). Multicultural counseling emphasizes that conventional understandings of therapy are based on western values of health and relationship, and often do not suit ethnic minority clients (Sue & Sue, 2003). The cultural diversity within this study, and within the Process Work community in general, points toward a need for inclusive and diverse understandings of relationship, its overlaps and boundaries.

Members also voiced hesitation and caution regarding MRRs, due to personal experiences and cultural orientations (ie, transitioning from student to diplomate, teaching within university psychology programs). This view spoke of MRRs as difficult, painful, and potentially harmful (ie, in regards to therapeutic relationships). Members expressed feeling wary, confused, hurt, protective, conflicted and unresolved because of challenging MRR experiences. Although no one advocated for strict boundaries or regulations against MRRs, members addressed the need for increased awareness around rank, power and boundary issues. It is interesting to note that while Process Work's orientation toward MRRs is generally more accepting and valuing of their presence, members of our study also expressed more conservative perspectives, such as fear, caution and self-protection as is found within dominant literature. The main distinction being that rather than simply forbidding MRRs, participants were more interested in understanding and working with these experiences as they arise and reflect complications in relationships in general.

Based on our findings, members also viewed MRRs as potentially enriching opportunities that bring depth and learning in a variety of respects. Members discussed how MRRs enhance personal growth and development, assist in the learning of Process Work, open up professional opportunities, bridge various fields and communities, and create relationship connections. This view recognized that MRRs require more awareness and responsibility, as well as the ability to be fluid in one's identity orientation, but are worthwhile because of the added depth, opportunities, and multiple connections they bring. Alternative views also recognized the potential value of MRRs, specifically citing the clinical efficacy of familiarity and methodological relevance (Lazarus & Zur, 2002; Zur, 2000).

Problematic & Beneficial Aspects of MRRs

Problematic Aspects

The thematic findings of “Difficult Territory” discussed in Chapter Four point towards the problematic aspects of multiple role relationships as experienced by cooperative inquiry participants. Based on the study's findings, problems in MRRs relate to silence, multiple shifting identities, the evaluative presence, rank and power, specifically addressing the significance of transitional and therapeutic relationships. The ways in which group members experienced MRRs as problematic are summarized and expanded upon below in relation to the literature discourse on MRRs.

Silence. As I begin to address the outcomes of this study and their relationship to the field of psychotherapy as a whole, I must speak to the difficulty of discussing the

topic of multiple role relationships at all. A main challenge within the Process Work community regarding MRRs is the silence surrounding them. They are there, all around, blatant in fact – yet we do not necessarily hear about them. In this way, although MRRs are present, we do not see them – they become invisible. Why is it so difficult to recognize the presence and significance of MRRs? Why are they so difficult to talk about? MRRs are so much the norm within Process Work’s subculture that, until recently, they often go unnoticed, unnamed, and unaddressed as such. As discussed in the introduction and literature review chapters, MRRs are deeply embedded within the lineage of Process Work, rooted in an apprenticeship orientation modeled by the training communities of Freud, Jung, shamanism and other spiritual traditions. Is it important to question or even notice these forms of relationship in particular, especially when relationship conflict, rank and role awareness are so much a part of Process Work training in general? Relationships within the Process Work community are multiple in their very nature (to varying degrees) by virtue of being part of a small community that shares an academic training component. This presents complications that bring additional complexity to Process Work relationships. The outcomes of this study suggest that yes, it is important and helpful for MRRs to be recognized such that the complexities they contain can be brought to awareness and support their successful negotiation.

When someone enters the Process Work community, s/he may or may not have an understanding of multiple role relationships and their current framing within psychotherapy. People enter into Process Work from numerous professional and

cultural orientations – not necessarily trained in mainstream psychology or counseling, and not necessarily from the US or western countries. They could be from business worlds, healthcare, education, artist or performance communities – often from cultures reflecting different values and approaches to relationship, roles and boundaries than those enforced by the dominant US culture. However, all share an interest in understanding and working with various manifestations of conflict and their creative potentials. The mindset peculiar to psychologically-oriented fields highlights this dynamic configuration within relationship life, names it “multiple role relationship,” identifies potential conflict in roles, links those conflicts with methodological, ethical and legal issues, and proscribes relationships accordingly. However, this conceptualization of MRRs may not occupy the cognitive schema of people entering into Process Work, nor be particularly relevant to their personal, professional or cultural orientations or goals of application.

At the same time, multiple roles and their relationship overlaps are a significant part of Process Work training and community life, given Process Work’s small size and theoretical orientation. While MRRs are implicitly valued within Process Work, they are not often explicitly discussed. As indicated in this study, the silence which surrounds them creates and perpetuates problems. Whereas mainstream psychotherapeutic cultures advocate a kind of hypervigilance regarding MRRs, Process Work normalizes them to such an extent that indeed can create a blindness to their existence (Pope & Vetter, 1991; Pope, 1990; Borys & Pope, 1989; Pope & Bajt, 1988; Pope, Keith-Spiegel & Tabachnick, 1986; Simon, 1994). As noted by alternative

viewpoints, mainstream hypervigilance causes its own problems, such as disregard for the potential benefits and diverse cultural perspectives of MRRs, allowing fears of litigation to guide clinical decisions and rigid boundaries that stop short of effectively exploring and resolving the complexities of relationship and conflict (Zur, 2006; Cleret, 2005; Capuzzi & Gross, 2004; Sue & Sue, 2003; Gladding, 2002; Lazarus & Zur, 2002; Remley & Herlihy, 2001). On the other hand, however, this strong attention within the dominant culture also provokes an alertness to the existence of MRRs, their considerations, and the ability to engage in a conscious decision-making process about whether or not to enter into them. Because MRRs are so embedded into training and community life within Process Work, they are not necessarily recognized, thus become difficult to make an informed decision about whether or not and how to enter into them, much less address and work on when challenges arise.

Whether vigilant about their presence as in the case of mainstream psychotherapy or integrated into community and training life as with Process Work, both share the problem of a deeper silence around the actual experiences within MRRs. They are difficult, if not impossible, to speak of. Cleret (2005) addresses this silence in “‘But It’s Different in this Case’: Is there a Case For Multi-Role Relationships?” She speaks to the prohibitory atmosphere surrounding MRRs, driving underground those who want to explore the boundary, which is potentially more detrimental than open discussion. Going further, Cleret (2005) discusses her own anxiety in disclosing personal MRR experiences:

How will my colleagues react to my revelations and ideas? Will I lose all credibility and standing in the therapeutic circles in which I move? Will there be bad repercussions for my practice? Perhaps this is why we find so little written in the professional literature about this topic. The stakes are high (p. 49).

Indeed, even within the current study, this silencing power not only inhibited the initial discussion of MRR experiences but also continued, such that members wished to maintain anonymity and were unwilling to publicly discuss their participation in the study during a post-research symposium. This strong and enduring request for anonymity points toward the severity of feelings and reactions about MRRs in the field as a whole, as well as the need for intentionally creating a space to explore MRRs as a community and training issue. Our study's findings point towards three main factors contributing to this silence: a general taboo against MRRs; the lack of anonymity within small communities; and a wish to protect the privacy of both people involved.

Another factor contributing to the silence around MRRs which was alluded to within the study, though not given detailed focus, stems from the implicit message within the Process Work community that MRRs are a kind of "initiation" – that is how one becomes a "real" Process Worker, demonstrate appeal and connection to the work, as well as the ability to "hack it." *If you cannot get your head around the complications of MRRs, you are just not quite up to the path.* This message – unexpressed, but somehow felt and seen – chokes one's ability to criticize, complain about, or even explore MRRs as an important issue for training and community life, beyond one's

personal experience.

Discussing these difficult aspects of MRRs within Process Work is practically impossible, and so hard to write about. I am pushing up against the inhibiting power of silence in all the ways mentioned above, as well as challenging my sense of loyalty to the Process Work community as a whole. Something in me does not want to do it – I only want to focus on the love I feel for the community, my colleagues and teachers. The admiration for their work and the method, as well as the incredible learning I have experienced in my years of training, which is indelibly intertwined with MRRs. It is one thing, and hard enough, to expose these experiences, questions and criticisms within one's own community – it is another thing altogether to open them up to the public at large. I feel protective of Process Work, its reputation, and ability to communicate with other communities and fields. Over the past 25 years, Process Work has been establishing itself as an inter-disciplinary approach to working with conflict, in all its many forms. I do not want to say anything that will threaten our already fringe presence within dominant institutions.

And yet, one of the primary intentions guiding this study seeks to step into a self-critical practice of examining and reflecting upon our understandings and experiences of and approaches to MRRs. Rather than wait and be susceptible to criticism by outer authorities, instead this study intended to pick up the projection of power and evaluation by taking a good look at ourselves. An additional hope for this study has been to serve as a bridge – to begin to open up the conversation about MRRs, the many ways they are perceived and experienced, and link that conversation to the

psychotherapeutic community as a whole. To find out how we are similar, how we are different, and what we have to offer each other. If I do not tell Process Work's stories, I collude with the silence, and suffocate the ability to have a robust conversation about the real-life complexities of MRRs. If I bring out the depths of complexity, I risk the consequences of confronting my own community, as well as exposing myself and them to potential condemnation from the psychotherapeutic field at large. How do I both honor this community and the work we do, and also bring out that which we tend to hide or do not know about ourselves? How to value what MRRs bring and their potential benefits, and also expose and admit to the problems they contain and how truly complicated they can be?

These tensions, questions, and difficulties in speaking about multiple role relationships in general, mirror the challenges brought by MRRs in general and at multiple levels: internally, interpersonally, and systemically. As I write, I negotiate multiple identities within myself – a person who has had both difficult and beneficial MRR experiences, a researcher wanting to convey the findings of this study, a student within the diploma program, a member of the Process Work community, and member of the psychotherapeutic community as a whole. At the interpersonal level of MRRs, we bump up against different aspects of our identity and roles activated by the relationship. The field also carries different roles, whether the small community of Process Work or the larger context of psychotherapy, which represent different and often competing powers of influence. Which identity gets to speak? Which voices dominate? And can those quiet realities break through the silence and paralyzing

powers that inhibit voicing these other experiences?

Multiple Shifting Identities. These conflicts – pulls between various identities and experiences – are also echoed within the outcomes of this study. Our cooperative inquiry findings indicate that “multiple shifting identities” bring complexity to MRRs and contribute to the problems members experienced in them. The concept of multiple shifting identities speaks to the outer roles we are known by in any given context, the inner roles that fill out our identities, and the fluctuation of these roles from moment to moment, time and place. The ways in which we experience ourselves in these roles, and how those experiences interact with others' experiences, give shape and energy to our MRRs. Jones (2000) discusses the complicated nature of identity in “Margins of Uncertainty,” describing it as complex, multi-dimensional, multiple, shifting, and often self-contradictory. Members' experiences of MRRs reflect this complexity—we are many things, have many experiences, and our identities and feelings about ourselves do not necessarily match up with the contextual roles we occupy. The boundaries of identity and experience do not necessarily coincide with the boundaries of context. Members carried feelings and associations based on overlapping roles and relationships. Multiple shifting identities contributed to members' complicated experiences within MRRs and created confusion, inner turmoil, as well as outer conflict.

The concept of multiple shifting identities appears in the literature discourse in various ways. On the most obvious level, both dominant and alternative perspectives acknowledge that roles change according to social context. In a commonly cited article

entitled “Avoiding Exploitive Dual Relationships: A Decision-Making Model,” Gottlieb states, “Social roles contain inherent expectations about how a person in a particular role is to behave as well as the rights and obligations which pertain to that role. Role conflicts arise when the expectations attached to one role call for behavior which is incompatible with that of another role” (1993, p. 41). Our social identities, the responsibilities and expectations that go along with those roles, change and sometimes conflict.

In terms of individual and relationship levels, the literature indirectly addresses the experience of multiple shifting identities when examining ethical practices in therapy and teaching, as well as the psychoanalytic concepts of transference and counter-transference. Research into the ethics of therapeutic and teaching practices has correlated the beliefs and practices of therapists and teachers in order to find out more about ethical decision-making, congruence and discrepancies (Tabachnick, Keith-Spiegel & Pope, 1991; Pope, Tabachnick & Keith-Spiegel, 1987). Decision-making models delineate the different (and often competing) factors that influence MRRs, such as gender, culture, religious/spiritual affiliation, therapeutic orientation, character traits and abuse history. In this way such models encourage practitioners to weigh multiple aspects of identity (of both client and therapist), as well as factors influencing the therapeutic relationship and setting (Sonne, 2005; Gottlieb, 1993). In addition, the psychoanalytic concepts of transference and counter-transference parallel the idea of multiple shifting identities, in that both the client and therapist bring aspects of their personal history into the therapeutic relationship and must work with those additional

levels for the benefit of the client (Novie, 2004). However, these concepts are not extended beyond the therapeutic relationship to assist in the understanding of MRRs in general. Whereas Process Work applies the unifying theories of “dreaming up” and level awareness to understand the many dimensions that emerge in relationships both in and outside of the therapy room, the transferential dynamic is limited to therapeutic encounters (Mindell, 2002; Goodbread, 1998). In addition, many modalities do not necessarily share the psychoanalytic concepts of transference and counter-transference. Thus the awareness of multiple shifting identities as they appear within non-therapeutic relationships is generally absent from the literature discourse.

The main distinguishing element within the current study regarding multiple shifting identities relates to the recognition that how we experience ourselves, as well as how we see others, does not necessarily match up with the role we or others are “supposed” to be in. This discrepancy between experience and context, and its problematic influence on MRRs, is minimally spoken to within current literature. In part, this gap relates to the over-riding absence of experiential discourse in general on MRRs. As addressed in the previous section, experiences are silenced, stifled by stigma, social and legal consequences. For the most part, articles on MRRs focus either on quantitative research, theoretical condemnation or advocacy, and pre-emptive measures. Rarely does one find disclosures that actually describe personal experiences within MRRs, their complexities and how they were understood and dealt with – reflections upon the relationship experience itself – with the notable exceptions of Lazarus and Zur (2002) and Cleret (2005), to name a few examples. Cleret speaks to

the tension of multiple shifting identities by asking important questions, such as: What does it mean to shift from a therapeutic to a peer relationship or friendship? How would that shift impact the balance of power, intimacy and vulnerability? Even with these considerations, however, the reality of co-existing experiences within ourselves and others, and the challenges brought about in relationship because of this incongruence, does not seem recognized by dominant and alternative views alike. The predominant orientation toward boundaried identities and objective commentary on MRRs within the literature leaves a sense of guidance without substance, and a strong background echo of fear and “doing it right” without much acknowledgment for the complexity of identity itself, nor support or room for making one’s way through the actual interactions of MRRs.

Evaluation. The background atmospheric pressure of “doing it right” appeared as a significant problematic aspect of MRRs within the current study. In relation to the silence surrounding MRRs, members recognized that a hushed feeling comes in response to something that is listening, and identified that “something” as an evaluative presence. Members discussed the experience of being evaluated without boundaries, so to speak; meaning a feeling that evaluation permeates the Process Work community, relationships, and areas of development. This experience arose in participants' initial MRR stories and also within the inquiry group itself.

Specifically, members related the problems they experienced in MRRs to the evaluation of personal development that is part of the Process Work training program and learning community. That which attracts many of us to this work also becomes an

exacerbating source of pain and sense of oppression due to the ambiguous nature of personal growth. Process Work culture values and emphasizes growth and diversity, having more access to and relationship with different parts of ourselves and experiences around us. On the one hand, the Process Work training programs have created standards to assess the skills and metaskills reflective of this development. At the same time, personal development is just that—*personal*—meaning unique to an individual's own nature, myth, history, culture, and edges. Participants described personal growth as “more intimate, subjective, and experiential” than other formalized and structured academic requirements. How one's development evolves and unfolds will manifest as diverse expressions with their own timing and outcomes. Evaluating that something is indeed happening, needs to happen, or is not happening in someone's developmental process, may necessarily look different from someone else's “happenings.”

Due to the ambiguous nature and requirements about personal development, members expressed feeling vulnerable and afraid that they are judged in their entirety as a human being rather than according to specific objective skills and their actual learning process. Members discussed feeling *en garde*, inhibited, and un-free, that they had to watch themselves at all times, such that every relationship interaction could be viewed as a potentially evaluative one. Participants who were informal or MACF students acknowledged that they did not have to deal with this particular complication about evaluation of personal development, due to different requirements and evaluative structures, or the absence of outer evaluation.

Group members explored this distinction between experiences, and how the

Process Work training programs and regulations have been changing. Members described how two strands or approaches seem to be evolving: one more focused on “mastery” that involves a spirit of warriorship, *deathwalk*, and often relationship entanglement (Diploma program); while the other (MACF) is more pragmatic in its intention and provides clearly defined academic criteria. Members termed the masters strand the “new Process Work” whereas the Diploma was referred to as more “authentic.” Members expressed both appreciation and distress about the intertwined focus on personal development, relationship, conflict, and evaluation that seems inherent in the Diploma program. Members found that we crave and invest in the development of ourselves, and that feedback is part of that process—and yet we also suffer from it. Members discussed how this intertwining of personal development and evaluation is a vision, a dream within Process Work training, but that some people do not share that dream or think the vision needs to be more clearly articulated.

Current literature emphasizes a much stronger and more rigid delineation between evaluative and other roles (Tabachnick, Keith-Spiegel, & Pope, 1991). However, as a whole, the findings of this study reflect similar issues addressed by current literature on education and training concerns within MRRs. Within the literature discourse, evaluation is discussed in relation to teaching and supervisory roles. For the most part there exists a clear recommendation for separating the roles of trainer and therapist. Some guidelines suggest dividing the multiple areas of teaching even further, such that different individuals fulfill the various roles of teacher, clinical supervisor and administrative supervisor, for example (Remley & Herlihy, 2001). This proscription is

based on the understanding that the roles of therapist and teacher/supervisor comprise different functions and carry conflicting responsibilities that potentiate problems in dual relationships and may compromise the teacher/supervisor's ability to objectively evaluate the student/supervisee. In particular, the literature places importance on the power differential within evaluative relationships, and recognizes that the power of educators extends far beyond grades to, for example, providing introductions that create networking opportunities, sponsorship to professional organizations, opportunities for research experiences and publications, and recommendations for scholarships, assistantships, internships, and jobs (Remley & Herlihy, 2001). Process Work shares this delineation between therapeutic and evaluative roles, for example, in that therapists are not allowed to serve on clients' study committees nor make an evaluative recommendation regarding their progress through the training program. However, due to the small size of the Process Work community and limited amount of Process Work diplomates, multiple evaluation methods, and an underlying philosophy which values multi-contextual learning and pursuing experiences aligned with the learner's needs and interests, students often study with teachers who are (or were at one time) their therapist, supervisor, and/or fellow community member.

Similarly, within current literature, there exists a growing recognition of the inherent complexity of training and evaluating future psychotherapists and practitioners in related fields. The literature acknowledges the fluidity of these relationships – training and supervision necessarily involve “therapeutic moments” in which students engage in self-exploration as they integrate theory with practice, and confront their own

biases and values which may interfere with their ability to work with clients (Remley & Herlihy, 2001). Indeed, some recognize that a rigid stance against MRRs, termed “dual relationship phobia,” could actually be “sidestepping [faculty] obligation to confront the struggles of making responsible decisions that will foster maximum student development” (p. 253). Within the past two decades, there has also been a gradual shift towards including self-growth experiences and therapy requirements within training programs in order to enhance students’ potential effectiveness as therapists by increasing their self-awareness and understanding of interpersonal dynamics. Programs are required to include informed consent and exclude self-disclosures from the evaluative process. However, this personal level of information is inevitably taken into account, in that educators are also considered “gatekeepers” of the profession and have an ethical responsibility to evaluate students’ readiness and ability to work with clients. For the most part within current literature, evaluation of personal development is limited to the scope of professional effectiveness, its success dependent on “adequate informed consent, on a boundary between materials subject to grading the type or quality of self-disclosure in the experience, and on an agreement that the faculty member acts in all possible ways to respect the dignity of the student” (p. 248). (See Appendix D for “Self-Evaluative Questions for Faculty in Multiple Role Relationships,” Biaggio, Paget & Chenoweth, 1997.)

Although unaddressed within the literature on MRRs, the cooperative inquiry study also indicated a general bias against evaluation, meaning that members tended to have negative associations with being evaluated, due to painful learning experiences

and other aspects of personal history. This negative association prevented members from wanting to step into the role of the evaluator and be directly evaluative for fear of reenacting or perpetrating these painful experiences. Instead, as part of a “therapeutic community,” members noticed that they identify more as therapists than evaluators, and recognized a strong bias toward supportive qualities. This “trance of support” creates problems in MRRs, in that evaluation is constantly held back from interactions, or any style of communication or information that triggers an evaluative association. We marginalize the value of evaluation and other styles of communication that include direct feedback, honest criticism, and the ability to say no, leaving its presence to manifest indirectly or create an over-riding “un-boundaried” atmosphere of evaluation within MRRs. Members noted that this marginalization can have significant consequences in regards to personal psychology, relationships, and community life. Members discussed how keeping out the evaluative presence may indeed force it to enter in another form, such as the state, laws, regulations and punitive consequences.

Rank & Power. The complexity of power and its problematic presence within MRRs received significant attention both within the cooperative inquiry study as well as current literature on MRRs. Members recognized an over-riding difficulty in identifying with their rank and power, no matter what role they were occupying in any given context. Members related this difficulty to a preference for equality, wanting to feel a general sense of connection and appreciation of each other's gifts and contributions, rather than recognize the hierarchy that exists, identify with and take responsibility for the power associated with different positions of rank. Members saw

how we tend to not be aware of the things we do that are powerful, instead seeing strength in others. In this way, it is easier to identify with experiences of low rank, and project our power outwards. Difficulties in identifying with one's rank, feeling and using one's power, contribute to this cycle.

The relativity of power and difficulty in identifying with the elements and sources of one's own power are unaddressed by the dominant literature. Dominant views approach the discussion of power from a hierarchical perspective. Discourse primarily focuses on the power differential within the therapeutic relationship as the main source of exploitation and harm, arguing that the client and therapist roles should be protected and maintained, otherwise the therapist's objective judgment and clinical effectiveness will be compromised. Thus, guidelines advocate for thorough assessment of various factors within the primary and potential relationship, in order to assist in the decision-making process of whether or not to enter into MRRs (Gottlieb, 1993; Sonne, 2005). These factors are assessed according to professional codes of ethics, methodological orientation, the socio-legal context, and an understanding of one's personal and professional identity. Various systems have been created in order to guide practitioners in the decision-making process, which include considerations about the therapist, client, therapeutic and other relationships, such as: both person's gender, culture, and spiritual orientations; the client's strength, vulnerabilities, and history; the nature, duration, setting of the therapeutic relationship; and potentials for conflict, benefit, and harm – particularly from the client's perspective.

Challenged by alternative views and the growing recognition that MRRs are not

inherently dangerous and fraught with exploitation and harm, dominant literature now incorporates more extensive considerations, flexibility, and even acknowledgement of the potential benefits of MRRs. However, the dominant paradigm still communicates a pervasive fear of conflict and mistrust of power in general. Alternative viewpoints explore the complications and relative nature of power from a more in-depth perspective. Such views have brought more specificity to the discussion by distinguishing boundary crossings from boundary violations; different types, contexts, and levels of MRRs; as well as the diversity of therapeutic modalities and cultural orientations toward MRRs and power in general (Lazarus & Zur, 2002). This shifted paradigm shows how the prohibition of MRRs actually increases isolation and the perceived therapeutic power differential, thus increasing the chances of exploitation. As Zur (2006) explains, “Exploitative therapists will take advantage with or without restrictions on dual relationships...Avoiding all dual relationships keeps therapists in unrealistic and inappropriate power positions, increasing the likelihood of exploitation” (p. 4). In this way, alternative views introduce the awareness that appropriate and healthy MRRs can indeed prevent exploitation and harm, rather than lead to it, by opening the relationship to other contexts and creating natural checks and balances to power inequities. As Cleret (2005) points out, however, the egalitarian ethos found within many alternative approaches can also lead to significant consequences when practitioners slip into MRRs “without sufficient critical thought, careful preparation, and monitoring during the transition...as well as over the course of the relationship over time” (p. 49).

The difficulty in identifying with one's rank and power is echoed within general literature on power, yet predominantly absent from the discussions on MRRs (Mindell, 1995; Dworkin & Mones, 2004; Cleret, 2005). The cooperative inquiry findings address some of the reasons behind this widespread difficulty. Related to the issue of “multiple shifting identities,” members found that their inner experiences do not necessarily go along with the outer roles they occupy. Although the context may grant a certain powerful status, their feelings about themselves do not necessarily match that rank. This is particularly significant in roles of contextual high rank, in that those in positions of power do not necessarily feel powerful. In addition, members recognized that the background presence of the founding group of Process Work created a strong marker of comparison that made participants devalue or not recognize their own rank, a kind of “domino effect” such that power is deferred and one's self-concept is constantly “less than.” Members saw how we place ultimate significance on our Process Work roles with each other, creating a kind of rank hypnosis which neglects other forms of rank and roles both within and outside of the local community. Process Work contextual roles hold the most power and create the main framing for relationships, regardless of other contexts/rank/roles involved. Members also linked actual and psychological experiences of immigration with the difficulties in identifying with one's rank and power, including being uprooted from the rights, privileges and securities of culture, family, profession, and paradigms.

Finally, members noted that difficulties in identifying with one's power were present in both high and low rank positions, in that members felt inhibited and a lack of

freedom in expressing themselves in both roles. From the perspective of low rank experiences, members discussed how MRRs can activate psychological complexes and insecurities. Members described a tendency to shut down and leave relationship interactions, either literally or emotionally, because they felt unable to support themselves and express their experiences. Members also related this inhibition in low rank experiences to the fear of evaluation. From the perspective of high rank positions, members discussed the challenge of being in roles of authority, such as feeling trapped in a role of high rank and its responsibilities regardless of context, unseen for their whole selves, pressured to look after those in low rank, and unable to express the multiplicity of their own experiences. The constriction expressed by both high and low rank perspectives indicates a need to more thoroughly delineate the rank, function, responsibilities and limits of any given role (Diamond, 2004).

These difficulties in identifying with rank and power point toward several questions: What would it look like if we were able to identify with our own rank and power? How would it be experienced internally and in relationship, in various contextual roles of greater or lesser rank? What would help us in making these shifts toward recognizing our own rank and experiencing our places of power? And how would identifying with rank and power impact the experience of MRRs? These questions will be addressed in relation to the third research question which discusses the skills and metaskills helpful in negotiating MRRs.

Transitional & Therapeutic Relationships. The final areas in which members experienced MRRs as problematic focused on two significant types of MRRs:

transitional and therapeutic relationships. Members explored how relationships which change roles over time, or transitional relationships, can involve either linear or non-linear transitions. Regardless if role shifts occurred once or changed many times or in many ways, the initial role relationship often persists over time in the background and establishes the main rank dynamic. Members gave particular attention to the transition from student to diplomate, and found that shifting into collegial relationships while past or ongoing supervisory/therapeutic roles are also present create problematic power and boundary issues. Members spoke about a tendency to accommodate to the needs and requests of their past/current supervisors and therapists, and have difficulty creating boundaries and saying no—for example, in order to please and be liked; because they care and want to help, but feel pulled by conflicting needs; fears of potential relationship conflict. Members felt encouraged and compelled to participate and help in group projects, yet self-conscious and less valued for contributions as a newcomer. Members also discussed the power of supervisors and therapists to bring outside peer interactions into sessions and frame them as individual development issues, making the transitioning student feel perpetually psychologically lower and unequal.

For the most part, current literature does not address the issue of transitional MRRs. Indirectly, dominant views touch on this area when considering whether the client/therapist relationship is fixed or temporary – meaning whether one believes “once a client, always a client” or views the roles according to a time-limited, service-based contract (Remley & Herlihy, 2001). More conservative views eliminate the possibility of transitioning to different identities by maintaining rigid structural and

perceptual boundaries. However, transitional MRRs are more widely recognized within traditional academic contexts, given that students are in constant transition as they move through the program, “first as beginning students, next as advanced students and interns, then as graduates, and finally as colleagues and professional peers of their trainers” (p. 252). Alternative viewpoints have more awareness with regards to the likelihood and complications of transitional roles, especially within small communities and alternative training institutions, and also note that dual relationships can occur sequentially or concurrently (Zur, 2006; Wakefield, 1996). In particular, Cleret (2005) emphasizes the importance of addressing the intricacies of a transitioning relationship, including the feeling dynamics as intimacy and power balances shift.

Participants also discussed how MRRs involving a therapeutic relationship raise significant complexities, including questions about the role of the therapist itself and whether the therapeutic relationship requires special protection. Some of this study’s findings concur with the predominant sentiment found in literature that this dynamic needs to be protected for clinical effectiveness. Members discussed the “sacred” nature of the therapeutic relationship and expressed a preference for maintaining a separation from other roles—that this boundary heightened the therapeutic alliance, creating a sense of safety and freedom, thus enhancing its potential therapeutic power. Members expressed other experiences as well, however, which echo the value alternative views place on MRR experiences that overlap with therapy. The level of a client's emotional and psychological needs, as well as the sequence of roles, influenced whether or not members thought additional roles would be problematic in a therapeutic relationship. In

this way, members acknowledged that whether or not and how therapeutic relationships involve MRRs should depend on the unique situation, client and therapist – a bottom line found within dominant and alternative views alike (Zur, 2006; Sonne, 2005; Gottlieb, 1993).

Similar to issues of power and boundaries within transitional relationships, members found that bringing outside issues from MRRs into a therapeutic context can be problematic due to the therapist's power to frame and work with those issues as an individual development process rather than a relationship conflict, creating a one-sided experience rather than an opportunity for collective responsibility and learning. Finally, members discussed the difficulty of being in a therapeutic relationship and interacting in other contexts, because therapists get caught in their role and do not know how to manage multiple experiences, and clients feel inhibited and overwhelmed by too much information about their therapists.

Beneficial Aspects of MRRs

As indicated by the discussion above, current literature gives most attention to problems associated with multiple role relationships, as well as assessing for potential harm and exploitation. Most of the decision-making models encourage a “cost/benefit analysis” in order to determine whether or not to enter into MRRs, emphasizing the importance of asking “who benefits” such that the client’s needs are ultimately served and not undermined by an additional relationship (Gottlieb, 1993; Younggren, 2002; Pope & Wedding, 2007). However, although dominant views encourage weighing potential costs and benefits, the beneficial aspects of MRRs are not directly discussed.

Benefits are referred to, but readers are left with a hole as to what these benefits might actually involve. On the other hand, alternative perspectives on MRRs not only address and/or rebut problematic aspects of MRRs, but also speak to their potential benefits.

Although the problems related to MRRs received significant attention in both this study as well as current literature, the findings from our cooperative inquiry study also speak to the ways in which members experienced MRRs as beneficial. This section discusses the key benefits indicated by our study, including personal development, integrated learning, professional opportunities, expanded roles and relationships, and sources of support. I then relate these benefits to alternative perspectives on MRRs. These beneficial areas (along with the discussion of skills and metaskills that follows) summarize and extend the thematic findings from Chapter Five, “The Stuff of Success.”

Personal Development. The cooperative inquiry findings revealed that members experienced MRRs as a vehicle for personal development, meaning that their MRR experiences helped them to grow and change, heal areas of long-term suffering, and connect more deeply to a sense of personal power. Members discussed how MRRs helped them to grow by bridging worlds and ideas. For example, Perry expressed an inability to reconcile different areas in her life. By working with her MRR partner in various contexts and roles, she felt more understood and was able to bring together areas of her life previously split off from each other. Sharmaine discussed how her MRR experience gave her a feeling of increased possibility in life. Before seeing her therapist outside of a therapeutic context, Sharmaine had viewed her therapist as a kind of all-powerful god. After an experience that exposed her therapist as a human being

with limitations and fears, Sharmaine felt more capable of facing distress in her own life. In addition, River expressed how MRRs challenged her to develop detachment and fluidity when occupying a role of authority. Members discussed how early wounds and long-term patterns were understood for the first time, met with care and respect, and had the opportunity to truly transform and heal because of the intimate and overlapping roles and relationships they shared with others. Members recognized that increased self-awareness is one of the main benefits of MRRs.

Integrated Learning. Members found that MRRs not only serve as a tool for personal development, but for learning in general. Members addressed how MRRs can reflect multiple ways of learning, including intellectual and experiential styles, styles emphasizing support or respect, as well as learning through relationship itself. Sharing multiple roles with each other—as friends, teachers, students, colleagues, and professional partners—enables deep and holistic learning. MRRs enliven the learning environment. Learning becomes personal and emotional, not just cerebral. Without this depth and overlap in experience, members discussed how learning stays at the intellectual level, but lacks integration in that we are not changed personally.

Members also discussed how MRRs assist in learning Process Work in particular, in that MRR partners shared this awareness paradigm in the background. MRR can become a dojo for practicing Process Work in various contexts and roles, integrating Process Work theory into “real life.” Members also expressed how the other ways in which we come to know each other through relationships outside of our Process Work roles can be brought in to our learning of Process Work—utilizing non-

Process Work strengths and abilities as metaphors for understanding and building upon our Process Work skills and metaskills. In the group's reflections about their participation in the cooperative inquiry study, members discussed how the research experience itself served as a vehicle for learning—teaching us about ourselves, each other and MRRs in general by sharing and listening to each other's stories and views, as well as actually being in MRRs together.

Professional Opportunities. Cooperative findings also show how MRRs create beneficial professional opportunities. Most members of our inquiry group discussed professional capacities as a main feature of their MRRs, including the exchange of valued goods and services, as well as professional collaboration. Members found that MRRs are often born out of the desire to bridge Process Work with other contexts. For example, Susumu's role in the hospital setting enabled two Process Workers to join him in teaching Process Work methods at a conference for chaplains. Bashful developed her food trade as a way of earning money and financing her education; Perry taught yoga in exchange for supervision sessions; and Karen exchanged professional services with a community member and client whom she greatly admired. At the end of our cooperative inquiry study together, members also discussed how new professional opportunities, ideas for projects and collaborations had arisen amongst each other.

Expanded Roles & Relationships. Inquiry members expressed how MRRs add a richness and depth to relationship life. Members found that by expanding relationships beyond the initial roles we may find ourselves in, we get to know the other and be known as a whole person, rather than being limited to one role, context or

capacity. This expanded sense of oneself and another can nurture and grant respect to both individuals beyond their Process Work roles with each other. It also creates a more complex and realistic understanding of identity, rank and power.

Members shared how MRRs offered an increased sense of intimacy and realness in relationship, creating friendships and an experience of community. In contrast to problematic experiences of MRRs, members discussed how therapeutic and supervisory relationships in particular were actually benefited by MRRs. For example, Sharmaine felt her therapeutic relationship was strengthened after seeing her therapist deal with a real-life strenuous situation outside of the the therapeutic context because it humanized her therapist and gave Sharmaine a role model, as well as a feeling of increased possibility. Perry found that her dual roles as teacher and supervisee served as a bridge between intellectual and body-based fields, and created a shared language that assisted in her learning of Process Work. Being in an ongoing MRR brought both intimacy and conflicts with her supervisor that in turn increased Perry's trust and ease, strengthening her supervisory relationship and learning process as a whole. Karen expressed how she felt the therapeutic relationship increased the possibility for a deeper and more intimate post-therapy friendship. She discussed how her MRR partner was less self-disclosing and unable to share much of herself before therapy, but that their capacity for friendship and intimacy grew after the therapeutic relationship ended.

Sources of Support. Finally, the cooperative inquiry findings point toward the ways in which MRRs provide beneficial sources of support—practically, emotionally, psychologically and spiritually. As indicated above in professional opportunities,

members discussed the practical support afforded by MRRs, in that they provided financial assistance in general and specifically helped to finance some members' Process Work studies through trades and service exchanges. Members expressed feelings of gratitude for these opportunities, unsure of how else they would have been able to afford the program. Members also discussed how this practical support connected to a feeling of support in general, in that they felt seen and appreciated for their capacities, talents, and strengths—not just as someone “in need,” but as someone who had something valuable to offer. This gave members a greater sense of wellness, and supported their emotional and psychological well-being.

Being seen and appreciated for various qualities and abilities through MRRs, members discussed a greater sense of themselves. Members framed this as a positive use of high Process Work rank—being recognized and valued for multiple strengths and expressions of power translated to an experience of emotional and psychological support. In terms of Process Work studies in particular, which can confront us with difficult, painful, and vulnerable learning experiences, members shared how being seen for our strengths prevented us from collapsing totally into our low rank experiences.

Lastly, members discussed the spiritual support offered by MRRs. Members spoke of spiritual and dreamtime connections in MRRs, mutual understandings and values. The group also shared an awareness that MRRs often carry a kind of spiritual presence in the background—a force that attracts us to each other, carries and guides the relationship. On many levels—practical, emotional, psychological and spiritual—MRRs provided members with the benefits of multiple sources of support.

For the most part, alternative perspectives discuss the benefits of multiple role relationships in terms of therapeutic effectiveness in general. Literature focuses on how additional relationships impact the therapeutic relationship, emphasizing the potential benefits for the client. However, benefits that might be experienced by the therapist are generally neglected or down-played, probably in an effort to counteract likely accusations of exploitation (Lazarus & Zur, 2002). Due to this slant, although alternative literature addresses dual roles that include other business relationships, professional opportunities are not discussed as a benefit per se, but more as an unavoidable factor of small community life. Benefits of MRRs are framed within the therapeutic roles, and non-client/non-therapist experiences are generally left unaddressed.

Although discussed in different terms, the benefits addressed by alternative literature strongly correlate with those areas identified by the cooperative inquiry findings. Alternative literature recognizes that MRRs support personal development and integrated learning by bringing greater flexibility to role definitions, intervention methods, and location of visits. These perspectives also speak to the benefits of expanded roles and relationships, as well as the sources of support provided by MRRs (Lazarus & Zur, 2002). For example, bartering increases the affordability of therapy for clients. MRRs stemming from shared cultural backgrounds, spiritual orientations, marginalized experiences or community affiliations can bring an increased sense of understanding and rapport. Therapists acting in the dual role of matchmaker can also be

clinically helpful, in that “facilitating the union of two souls, each in search of a life partner, can be...crucial” (Lazarus, 2002, p. 392).

The main benefits addressed within the literature include an increase in the therapist’s knowledge of the client, the client’s trust in the therapist, as well as the enhancement of the therapeutic alliance (Zur, 2000). In addition, alternative views discuss how the increased familiarity and rapport brought by MRRs can shorten therapy and increase its effectiveness. Because non-psychoanalytic methodologies (such as humanistic, feminist, and multi-cultural approaches) challenge dominant views on appropriate boundaries within psychotherapy, the literature also relates alternative interventions and their positive outcomes to additional benefits of MRRs. Examples of “boundary-crossing” interventions include out-of-office visits, disclosure and interdependent styles of relating, and the use of touch within psychotherapy (Zur & Nordmarken, 2007; Zur, 2001). As Zur (2000) aptly summarizes,

In a healthy society, unlike our modern culture, people celebrate their reliance on each other. The more multiple the relationships, the richer and more profound the individual and cultural experience. The witch doctor, the wise elder, and the practical neighbor all contribute advice, guidance and physical and spiritual support. In ministering to the needs of the members of the community, therefore, the healers, rabbis, priests, or therapists don’t shun dual relationships, but rather rely on them for the insight and intimate knowledge that such relationships provide (p. 4).

Effective Negotiation of MRRs

The final question guiding our cooperative inquiry study directs us toward the skills and metaskills that assist in the effective negotiation of MRRs. Skills refer to those abilities that help us work with ourselves and others, including techniques, interventions and awareness practices that assist in facilitating the experience of MRRs. Metaskills refer to a concept developed by Amy Mindell (2003) to describe the feeling attitudes and spirit we bring to relationship based on deep beliefs about ourselves and life in general. These metaskills inform and give life to whatever skills we might draw upon. Our inquiry findings, both implicitly derived from “Difficulty Territory” and directly named in “The Stuff of Success,” help to answer this final question.

Skills

Where Are You Coming From? – Identify & Challenge MRR Paradigms.

Whether one views MRRs as a normal part of everyday life, something requiring caution and strict boundaries, or something needing fluid structure according to changing needs, members found that identifying “where you are coming from” assists in the successful negotiation of MRRs. According to this study’s findings, recognizing what role you see yourself in, as well as one’s attitudes toward MRRs in general, brings awareness to personal and cultural beliefs and comfort zones regarding roles, boundaries, and power negotiation. With this awareness, MRR partners can more easily self-reflect, understand each other, and establish an approach that works best for both. This skill provides a meta-perspective that assists in clarifying the orientation of both MRR partners, challenging biases, and shaping MRRs accordingly.

Alternative literature, and to a growing extent dominant views as well, recognize the significance of different perspectives toward multiple role relationships. Decision-making guides encourage therapists to consider various factors that influence MRRs (Gottlieb, 1993; Younggren, 2002; Sonne, 2005). These include detailed exploration of the elements of both therapist and client experiences, as well as the therapeutic relationship, such as gender, culture, religion/spirituality, professional and theoretical orientation, personal characteristics and history of boundary violations. Ethical models also recommend that risks and benefits are considered, and that therapists obtain consultation or supervision, as well as engage in ongoing discussion with the client to mutually monitor the MRR and any problems that arise. In these ways, the literature reflects a similar understanding to our study that identifying “where are you coming from” can support the successful negotiation of MRRs.

Shake On That – Attend to Practical Needs & Contributions. Members also found that identifying one's needs, expressing them clearly and honestly in relationship, and valuing each other's contributions on a professional level assist in the mutual satisfaction and success of MRRs. This skill helps us tune in to the practical level of what we need and what we have to offer, such as time, money, and abilities. Attention to the importance of this level arose from the many professional overlaps members experienced in their MRRs, such as offering and receiving various services and working with each other on projects. The findings emphasized the importance of acknowledging strengths as well as limitations, and suggests making that explicit in MRRs. Members indicated that MRRs are liable to be more successful and satisfying if

practical needs and contributions are recognized, discussed and agreed upon throughout the relationship experience.

As discussed in the previous section on benefits, MRRs involving business and financial relationships have received little attention within the literature. Practical needs and each person's contributions are somewhat addressed within discussions about bartering and sliding scales. Similar to this study's findings, literature recommends an honest assessment of the relative value of what each has to offer and clear agreement about the exchange. However, the literature as a whole is generally leery of bartering and entering into other professional arrangements with clients, thus neglects the skill of attending to this practical level of MRRs (Remley & Herlihy, 2001; Lazarus & Zur, 2002).

The Maturity Factor - Develop Yourself. The inquiry group's discussions showed how emotional and professional development, as well as rank awareness in general, fostered a sense of maturity that assisted in successful MRR experiences. This skill involves recognizing our feelings, needs and reactions, and communicating those in relationship—including the ability to say yes and no. Members emphasized that emotional development includes caring for oneself and getting the support you need, often outside of the MRR. The professional element of this skill involves developing one's professional identity separate from one's Process Work status. This skill provides a feeling of detachment and relieves the MRR from being solely defined by Process Work therapeutic or evaluative roles.

Both dominant and alternative literature recognize “the maturity factor,” in that

“each new client, whatever his or her similarities to previous clients, is a unique individual. Each situation also is unique and is likely to change significantly over time” (Pope & Vasquez, 1998). The discourse recommends assessing for different levels of maturity and ability to handle MRRs by examining a client’s psychosocial strengths and weaknesses, as well as history of prior boundary violations (Sonne, 2005). Decision-making models also focus on therapist characteristics, such as tolerance of ambiguity, narcissism, need for control, and risk-taking orientation. Within the alternative literature in particular, Cleret (2005) addresses the importance of maturity when she asks, “Are they grown up enough?” and “Are you grown up enough?” (p. 52). She discusses further considerations of maturity, including emotional and everyday functioning, approach to conflict, responsibility, integrity, self-reflection, and communication abilities. Zur (2006) also emphasizes the importance of being aware of and attending to one’s own needs through personal therapy, conversations with friends, supervision or self-analysis. Although the literature does not recognize professional identity as a helpful quality of maturity, current perspectives strongly support the findings within our study that the self-awareness and relationship skills associated with maturity assist in the successful negotiation of MRRs.

The Stroke & the Stick – Honor Different Learning Styles. Group members explored various needs within relationship and identified “love and respect” as two main learning styles. Other styles may include linguistic, logical, spatial, kinesthetic, musical, naturalistic, spiritual, self-awareness, or learning through relationship itself (Gardner, 1993). The study’s findings indicate that members learn in various ways, and

that MRR experiences are enhanced when these styles are identified, honored and incorporated into our relationship interactions. Aligning MRRs with these various learning and relationship needs can bring creativity, ease and a sense of satisfaction.

The dominant literature completely disregards different learning styles in relation to the negotiation of MRRs. Alternative perspectives also do not directly address the significance of learning styles. Discussions within alternative literature attend to the value of diverse methodological approaches, client backgrounds, orientations and clinical situations, and how flexible interventions can lead to greater therapeutic effectiveness (Lazarus & Zur, 2002). However, the cooperative study findings bring greater specificity to this area and point toward a new skill of “learning style attunement” as specifically relevant to the successful negotiation of MRRs.

Rank & Power within MRRs – Feel It, Use It. Members' discussions showed how rank and power not only created challenges within MRRs, but also contributed to successful experiences, depending on how our rank and power is recognized and used. This skill involves: (1) knowing and fulfilling the responsibilities of one's contextual role, as well as its limits; (2) recognizing one's own rank (contextual and other forms) and using it on behalf of both MRR partners; and (3) recognizing and appreciating multiple qualities and expressions of rank in your MRR partner, especially those outside Process Work roles. Members found that using one's rank to open up dialogue rather than close it down, as well as staying related through conflictual interactions, were particularly helpful in the negotiation of satisfying MRR experiences. This skill brings awareness to multiple levels of rank, respects the whole person, and exercises

our ability to use our powers creatively to support both ourselves and our MRR partners.

Although current literature recognizes that power can contribute to exploitative MRRs, the beneficial use of power represents a significant gap within both dominant and alternative discussions. Discussions are limited to identifying the power differential and rating its scope of influence (Gottlieb, 1993; Remley & Herlihy, 2001). Guidelines generally focus on the therapeutic relationship, thus confine the discussion of power and its lack in terms of the therapist and client roles. As discussed in the problems section, literature does not recognize the complication of multiple shifting identities nor other levels of power beyond contextual roles, such as psychological or spiritual rank (Mindell, 1995). Dominant views are particularly strong in recognizing contextual role responsibilities, yet weak when considering other dimensions of power, thus disregard its limits. This over-valuing of contextual rank creates polar extremes of either rigid roles or likely exploitation, ultimately revealing a deep fear and mistrust of power in general. Alternative perspectives present a more complex understanding of power dynamics and egalitarian models of relationship, recognizing that power is not inherently exploitative but rather depends on its use (Zur, 2000). Both perspectives are guided by the background ethos of “do no harm,” however this torch loses its fire without skills to assist in the actual interactions of MRRs, the recognition and negotiation of power in relationship. This study helps fill this gap by pointing toward skills for working with the multiple layers of power that exist in MRRs.

Reconceptualize Evaluation – Become It...We Need It. Rather than fall under the “trance of support,” members realized that becoming a conscious evaluator assists in the successful negotiation of MRRs. This skill involves being up-front about one's evaluations, giving direct feedback, setting clear boundaries, and being honest about one's limitations, rather than falling into a trance of support and openness in relationship. It is a practice of inner and outer discernment that can be expressed in many forms, backed by many feelings. Evaluation can bring clarity and relief to MRRs by bringing it out to be dealt with directly, and diminishes the need for an outside evaluative presence.

Current literature clearly advocates for thorough evaluation of MRRs, as exemplified by the ethical decision-making models discussed above, and in this way demonstrates strong evaluative abilities (Gottlieb, 1993; Younggren, 2002; Sonne, 2005). However, these evaluative guidelines focus on preemptive measures, meaning evaluation-before-the-fact. Dominant views particularly emphasize the question of “whether or not” to enter into MRRs, yet neglect the question of “how” – meaning once practitioners decide whether or not to open the door, how shall they enter the room? Cleret (2005) encourages practitioners to acknowledge and communicate “hard truths.” Beyond ongoing self-evaluative measures through supervision and consultation, the literature only weakly addresses what this might look like in an ongoing MRR. The challenges of evaluating amidst relationships represent a significant gap throughout current literature. Put another way, how do we evaluate ourselves, our MRR partner, and the relationship itself, and bring this awareness into our interactions with each

other? Our findings help to fill this gap and indicate that evaluation needs to be expressed through honest direct communication in MRRs.

Role Fluidity in MRRs – Take It On and Off. Finally, members found that role fluidity supports the effective negotiation of MRRs. This skill involves putting on the “coat” of a role consciously, based on the context and other roles involved, the responsibilities and limits of that role, and one’s ability and willingness to fill it. Role fluidity also allows for a freedom, however, such that one is not trapped within a static identity or style of relating—so the coat does not become a straight jacket. Thus, when the context changes, it is just as important to take it off and step out of the role. Role fluidity assists MRRs by opening up the freedom to be one thing and then another, relate in many different styles or not at all. This skill assists in a more subtle level of boundary awareness by not allowing a role to take us over completely, giving more freedom and possibility to MRR experiences. We can say yes and no to role identities within relationships, rather than having to say no the relationship in its entirety.

This concept of role fluidity represents a clear gap within current literature. Both dominant and alternative perspectives recognize the variability of roles, however, the ability to actually fulfill and let go of these various identities within MRRs is not recognized as a concept, thus neglected as a helpful skill in their negotiation. Our findings thus contribute the practice of role fluidity as another potentially useful skill in the successful negotiation of MRRs.

Metaskills

Amy Mindell discovered and formulated the concept of metaskills in her book, “Metaskills: The Spiritual Art of Therapy” (2003). Although echoed in spiritual traditions and applicable to many areas of life and work, the significance of these feeling attitudes and their power in practice has been given most attention within Process Work literature and practice. The idea that metaskills influence our relationship experiences has never been applied to MRRs directly; nor does current literature speak to the significance of feelings or spiritual attitudes within MRR experiences. The cooperative inquiry findings bring this new territory to light and point toward several attitudes that can be helpful in negotiating MRRs effectively. The metaskills discussed below attend to the feelings behind the skills we use, the experiences we connect with, and where we come from as we work with the dynamics of multiple role relationships.

Box Mind, Multi-Level Mind...Clear lines, many dimensions. This metaskill speaks to a feeling for identity as both contextual and multi-dimensional. It is an attitude that holds a respect for the concreteness of things—Who are we according to this time and place? What are our roles here and now? How do we fulfill the things associated with those roles? Recognizing the importance of the box we share. And, at the same time, an awareness that you and I are not only that box. We have other experiences at multiple levels, which add color and dimension to this box, and may shake up or give solidness to our moment to moment relationship. Box mind, multi-level mind...both.

Relationship Seasons...Everything has its season and time. This metaskill gives

a feeling for relationship as a changing growing entity, a reflection of nature, taking on different forms at different times. It speaks to the importance of following the needs of the relationship, respecting its changing nature and form, which at times might ask for clear structure, simplicity, and stepping back. At other times, the relationship may want the doors thrown wide open, welcoming in the sun and wind and many things that we are to each other. A butterfly is born out of many phases of life...egg, caterpillar, chrysalis...all requiring different food and housing. Things change, as do our identities and needs. This metaskill follows the seasons of MRRs.

Clear As Day...Undeniable...there it is...the thing that will not go away. This metaskill attunes to and appreciates *what is*. It is not about pushing or forcing or trying to make something work, but instead recognizes the simple truth of what is present and attends to that (at least until it changes!). In this way, “clear as day” brings an honesty and matter-of-fact attitude to MRRs that assists with inner clarity and straight-forward communication.

Whole Seeing...The powers that cannot be seen. All of who we are... vulnerabilities, life experiences, strengths and sensitivities. This metaskill draws upon the wisdom of “Box Mind, Multi-Level Mind” but particularly reaches into relationship with a feeling for one's wholeness and capacity beyond the context of Process Work roles and rank. It communicates a respect and appreciation for the whole person—outside of our Process Work identities and beyond the momentary high or low rank roles we occupy—and sees the many qualities and strengths we embody and bring to MRRs.

*Stroke Way, Stick Way...Come here sweetheart...big arms embracing. Wake up and notice!...*with a whack of attention. These metaskills reflect the diverse ways we can approach learning and relationship. One filled with love and support, the other communicating discipline and respect. The words are unable to match the power and effectiveness of the feelings these metaskills bring. Each is rooted in different spiritual traditions with a healing potential in the background. “Stroke way, stick way” reflects styles of relating that can activate our ability to connect and learn in MRRs.

Getting Juicy...Let's get in there and get messy! This metaskill brings a feeling of vigor and vitality to relationship, conflict and emotional expression. It values the sour as much as the sweet, and views conflict as a potential road toward intimacy, a way of getting to know one another better, and being real. “Juicy Way” grabs hold of the challenges that MRRs can bring and squeezes out their gifts.

Strange Attraction...How did we end up here? And what is this mysterious force drawing us together? This metaskill views MRRs as a manifestation of a deeper reality than what is obvious in everyday life. It recognizes and is curious about the “third thing”—beyond yet connected to you and me—that brings our paths together. This metaskill senses the essence that holds and steers the relationship. “Strange Attraction” brings a wonder and awe to MRRs, and allows that to guide its direction.

Discussion Summary

Our cooperative inquiry findings stem from and reflect the inclusion of many different roles and voices within MRRs—both therapists and clients, teachers and students, supervisors and supervisees, among other roles in the Process Work community. Current literature on MRRs is written by and from the perspective of practitioners. The inclusion of non-practitioner roles, the voices of the others involved in MRRs expressed from their own perspectives, is completely absent. In this study, we found that each voice contributed to valuable information, helping to fill out the whole multi-layered experience of MRRs. In addition, each role required in-depth examination, for within one role existed many different voices of experience (ie, multiple shifting identities). Thus, it soon became evident that a simple categorizing of “high” and “low” rank roles was not reflective of the multi-dimensional realities of group members' actual lived experiences of MRRs. Multiple role relationships contain shifting high and low rank positions, depending on context, and also many different experiences of one's identity within those positions. Our recognition of and response to these multiple shifting experiences contributes to the successful negotiation of multiple role relationships.

It is interesting to note that similar issues addressed in dominant and alternative viewpoints arose throughout the inquiry process, such as power inequities, legal and ethical guidelines, therapeutic effectiveness, cultural considerations, and dynamics within small communities. However, the cooperative inquiry approach brought an expanded understanding of individuals' actual experiences of these issues by exploring

personal stories, as well as creating a space for interactive dialogue between the different roles indicated by these various issues. For example, whereas discussions of power within most literature on MRRs remain a one-way hierarchical concept, our study uncovered the belief systems, complexities, and relational dynamics within members' experiences of power issues in MRRs. Thus, the study's outcomes reflect this more in-depth exploration—not an argument simply for or against MRRs, or even just a listing of problems and benefits, but instead a thorough illustration of how these problems and benefits are experienced, their layers of meaning and associated feelings. From there, these in-depth understandings, reflective of the multiple and co-existing roles and relationships of the inquiry group members, generated the learnings evident in our findings and guided the recommendations these findings imply.

I began this chapter asking: *How do I both honor this community and the work we do, and also bring out that which we tend to hide or do not know about ourselves? How to value what MRRs bring and their potential benefits, and also expose and admit to the problems they contain and how truly complicated they can be?* In actuality, this task faces not only those within Process Work, but the field of psychotherapy as a whole. This is the border that all of us must walk. The tension can silence us, or provoke our own humble transparency – revealing the complicated internal and relationship struggles we face, and learning from them together.

The debate amongst views has drawn out more specificity regarding the considerations and variability in multiple role relationships. The exchange has challenged dominant views to evaluate MRRs based on a greater understanding of

contributing factors from both the therapist's and client's frames of reference, as well as the therapeutic relationship (Sonne, 2005; Younggren, 2002; Gottlieb, 1993), rather than generalizing that MRRs are synonymous with exploitation and harm. Dominant views now tend to recognize that some MRRs actually enhance the therapist's knowledge of the client, the client's trust in the therapist, the therapeutic alliance, and even benefit from the use of nonsexual touch when concordant with clinical needs, context, competence, and consent (Pope & Wedding, 2007; Sonne, 2005). This movement along the continuum towards greater acceptance has been provoked by courageous individuals "coming out" with alternative views which challenge a pathological conceptualization of MRRs (Zur, 2000, 2001, 2002a, 2002b, 2006; Cleret, 2005; Holzman, 2004; Lazarus & Zur, 2002; Llewellyn, 2002; Williams, 1997; Skidmore, 1995).

The unique contribution this study offers is the willingness to name, explore and expose our own stories, struggles and learning areas. In this way, our cooperative inquiry study is a practice in transparency itself – it models and opens the door for others to do the same.

In the chapter that follows, I conclude with a review of our cooperative inquiry study and research outcomes. I discuss the limitations of our research and this thesis project. I then discuss the contributions of this research and make recommendations for the Process Work community, the development of training curriculum, and the broader psychotherapeutic field based on these findings. Finally, I explore future directions this study leads us toward and possibilities for further research.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this chapter provides an overview of our study on multiple role relationships, including the cooperative inquiry intention, the study's purpose within Process Work and the wider psychotherapeutic community, and the significance of the research findings and outcomes. I also address the limitations of this study and thesis project. I then discuss contributions and recommendations for the Process Work community and training curriculum, as well as the broader field of psychotherapy. I conclude with an exploration of new directions and suggestions for further research.

Review of Study

In many ways, multiple role relationships have generally gone unrecognized within the Process Work community. By virtue of our size and orientation toward relationship, Process Work understands and values multiple roles as a practical necessity and essential part of human interaction and community life (Diamond & Jones, 2004). Until recently, MRRs within the Process Work community have not necessarily been named as such (which would imply something special or unusual happening), instead more normalized than not, and certainly not forbidden unless deemed harmful. Issues related to MRRs—such as rank, power, identity, and

relationship conflict—receive significant attention within Process Work theory and practice. However, they have not been framed or conceptualized within a discussion of multiple role relationships in particular. Just as a family matter-of-factly accepts that a brother might also be a playmate, a mother becomes a momentary teacher, or a cousin employs you for work – tending to the conflicts and joys that arise in the overlaps – Process Work has not had much reason to identify, explore or evaluate MRRs as such.

As the Process Work training programs and community grow and we begin to interface with and seek accreditation from the broader psychotherapeutic community, it becomes increasingly important to engage in a process of critical self-reflection in order to more thoroughly understand our orientation and approach toward multiple role relationships, as well as our experiences within those relationships, and be able to communicate that with a wider community. For within this unexamined territory lie jewels of experience and substantive treasures for working with the complexities of MRRs, which can benefit those within the Process Work community and training programs, as well as the psychotherapeutic field as a whole. Diamond and Jone's article on “Paradigms of Influence in the Process Work Approach to Multiple Role Relationships” (2004) and Diamond's “Where Rank, Roles and Relationship Meet: A Framework for Working with Multiple Role Relationships in Process Work Learning Communities” (2004), both informed by the ongoing developments of Process Work practitioners (Goodbread, 1997; Mindell, 1995), provide an essential ground-breaking discussion of theoretical foundations and training applications for MRRs. This cooperative inquiry study has joined the endeavor by providing an initial practical

understanding of how multiple role relationships are experienced within the Process Work community of Portland, Oregon.

My participation in this research project stemmed from my own interest and personal draw toward multiple role relationships, as well as the ripeness for the topic within Process Work. My own passion and struggles in learning through many forms of relationship met the *zeitgeist* of our community. In collaboration with six other members of the Process Work community, we gathered for a series of meetings over approximately one year with the intention of exploring this territory and learning from the various experiences, perspectives and concerns that arise within MRRs. Following the methodology of cooperative inquiry research, the direction and focus of our study was determined by the group through our interactions with each other, as well as the reflections and further actions they provoked and inspired. In this way, the research outcomes and the process itself truly were mysteries to be discovered along the way. We wanted to study this soup called “Multiple Role Relationships,” yet what we ended up serving and how it tastes depended on the spices each of us brought and the alchemical creations that emerged as we cooked together.

Our cooperative inquiry study was guided by the following over-arching questions: How are non-sexual multiple role relationships understood and experienced in the Process Work community of Portland? How are they problematic and/or beneficial? Also, what skills and metaskills allow Process Work trainers and trainees to negotiate such relationships effectively? Through continuous cycles of action and reflection, both within the group and independently, these questions have led to several

discoveries. We found that participants experienced multiple role relationships in various ways, including different combinations of roles as teachers and students (both formal and informal), supervisors and supervisees, therapists and clients, friends and non-Process Work professionals, in addition to the other roles described in previous chapters. These MRRs occurred simultaneously as well as over time. The experiences of group members reflect a continuum from viewing MRRs with hesitation and caution, as a normal everyday part of life, and also as rich and rewarding. Our cooperative inquiry findings address problematic aspects of MRRs, including silence, multiple shifting identities, evaluation, rank and power, and transitional and therapeutic relationships. Findings also speak to ways in which members experienced MRRs as beneficial, including personal development, integrated learning, professional opportunities, expanded roles and relationships, and sources of support. The study points toward several skills helpful in the effective negotiation of MRRs, such as recognizing MRR paradigms, practical needs and contributions, personal and professional development, rank and power, transitional and therapeutic relationships, evaluation, and role fluidity. Metaskills suggest approaching MRRs with various feeling attitudes, named as: *Box Mind*, *Multi-Level Mind*; *Relationship Seasons*; *Clear as Day*; *Stroke Way*, *Stick Way*; *Getting Juicy*; and *Strange Attraction*.

Limitations

For the purposes of this project, we decided to limit our study to the members of our cooperative inquiry group. We chose not to interview or involve other members of the community, due to limited time and resources. Also, to follow the methodological

intent of focusing on in-depth learning through group collaboration, we gave priority to studying the experiences of group members and the relationships amongst us.

These limitations served our purposes in exploring the actual MRR experiences of various community members representing various roles within Process Work. In doing so, our findings illustrate the complexity, multi-dimensions and over-lapping experiences of inquiry members. Field theory supports the idea that the microcosm reflects the macrocosm, such that our group may indeed reflect the many roles, issues and voices of experience found within the larger Process Work and psychotherapy communities in general (Diamond, 2004; Goodbread, 1997; Mindell, 1995). However, due to the non-random sampling procedures of our research group, our findings lack generalizability, meaning that we cannot assume that the research outcomes represent the experiences of a larger population. In addition to the small non-random sample, because we approached our study from the qualitative, experiential, and interactive method of cooperative inquiry, unbound by a set of structured questions or procedures, our research cannot be replicated. Although guided by background questions, our inquiry groups were only semi-structured and mostly “improv” in response to the interests and dynamics of each member and the moment itself. This approach respected the authority of the group as co-researchers and co-participants to direct the study, thus offering unique outcomes not necessarily indicative of those another group might find.

Qualitative research regards the subjectivity of researchers and participants as integral to the process of co-creating outcomes, rather than attempting to determine objective facts (Jones, 2000). From one perspective, this subjectivity biases the research

process; on the other hand, if recognized as central filters of experience, this subjectivity actually serves the research purpose. In future research, these filters could be isolated as lenses to focus further exploration; such as looking at MRRs through the lens of diplomats within the Process Work community, specific cultural backgrounds, or gender, for example.

On a group level, in varying degrees, members all shared a Process Work orientation. This limitation was in some ways required by our particular research aim and questions, and potentially enhanced our research process by providing a method to assist the tracking of inner, relationship, and group dynamics. However, this shared orientation potentially biased the inquiry process by blinding us with in-group thinking and conclusions. I discussed my own subjective orientation and biases toward MRRs in the introduction. As the main interpreter of our group's experience, I attempted to address this potential limitation with various checks on validity, including drawing upon the group's analysis to guide my own, and asking the group for feedback and evaluation. I also performed my own "inner validity practice" of stepping into each person's experience within our group in an effort to truly understand where each member was coming from and give voice to the main thrusts of their perspectives. However, the information presented here is subject to misinterpretation on my part and/or my own unrecognized personal leanings.

On a procedural note, the collection of data involved note-taking and some transcriptions. Notes potentially leave out important content, and transcriptions were sometimes incomplete due to poor sound quality. In the future, I would recommend

using high quality recording devices and transcribing material after the fact, for more accurate date and so that participant/researcher attention is not split.

Contributions & Recommendations

This study furthers the field of research into non-sexual multiple role relationships within a psychotherapeutic context by creating a forum to chart the often challenging, complex and rarely explored territory of MRRs. In the section that follows, I address the implications of this research for the Process Work community, Process Work training curriculum, and the broader field of psychotherapy. I make recommendations in these various areas based on our cooperative inquiry findings and my own conclusions as a researcher and participant.

Process Work Community. The practical value of this study, as part of the action research genre, is that it has the potential for change. MRRs within the Process Work community come in many forms, some unavoidable and others chosen. The purpose of this project aimed to explore the actual experiences of MRRs to increase understanding, as well as learn skills and metaskills to assist in their effective negotiation. Rather than attempt to do away with them or simply create rules to contain them, our findings suggest key areas to bring to awareness, as well as tools and attitudes for working with MRRs. Hence, the outcomes offer the possibility of directly benefitting members of the Process Work community.

Based on the research findings, effective negotiation of MRRs includes the explicit option of *not* entering into them. For low and high rank positions alike, there needs to be a place for boundaries, limitations, and out-and-out “no’s” to MRRs. First

and foremost, it is important to follow oneself and pay attention to hesitations. This includes recognizing and admitting one's limitations, picking up evaluative abilities before as well as amidst MRRs, and stepping back if you do not feel up to the relational complexities of MRRs. As this study illustrates, MRRs are complicated and often involve personal and relational hardship. If the additional complications do not feel right, don't go there. Plain and simple. MRRs can be confusing and require a lot of support. Relationships are complicated enough, and multiple roles add another dimension to those complications. We are all just growing in our ability to work with the challenges of roles and power in relationship. If you find yourself hesitating, do not force it.

At the same time, MRRs are inevitable, often unavoidable and others well worth the complications, challenges, and benefits they bring. In these cases, the skills and metaskills discovered through our research findings (as discussed in Chapter 6) can assist with awareness and the ongoing facilitation of MRRs. Perhaps just reading about a generally silenced topic will provide a sense of relief, echoed feelings and concerns, as well as more options for one's actual participation in MRRs. In addition, as community members, I suggest drawing upon the skills and metaskills articulated in this study, both independently and with MRR partners, as handles to help steer the sometimes rocky ship of MRRs. In particular, I recommend that the Process Work community create a space for naming and exploring our own MRRs. For example, a faculty/student retreat could include a group process on MRRs within our community, as well as dyad and inner-work exercises (See Appendix G for MRR Exercise).

Finally, the study points toward growing places within the Process Work community concerning rank, power and evaluation—emerging directions that create fear and discomfort, yet may enhance our holistic development and directly assist our MRR experiences. These include recognizing how Process Work rank structures tend to dominate our identities. The more we explicitly identify the rank structures that do exist, the easier it will be to recognize and value additional forms of power within ourselves and our MRR partners. Naming contextual roles and their associated rank and responsibilities also defines limitations, which will bring greater clarity to the expectations associated with MRRs and enable role fluidity. In addition, the study encourages a reconceptualization of evaluation – meaning the importance of “de-therapizing” interpersonal styles, so that a climate of support does not suffocate our experiences. Instead, MRRs benefit from the ability to bring out honest, direct and clear feedback.

Training Curriculum. As training programs within Process Work begin to seek accreditation, it becomes increasingly important to be able to communicate Process Work theory and practice with the wider mainstream communities. This requires Process Work students and practitioners to become “bi-lingual,” meaning that we understand and can articulate the rationale and approaches of both worlds. With this in mind, I recommend including multiple role relationships and the related issues they encompass within Process Work training curriculum, which involves learning from the broader psychotherapeutic articulation of MRRs and their considerations. This could take the form of a course on legal and ethical issues in psychotherapy, addressing

MRRs from dominant, alternative and Process Work orientations. I suggest using Diamond's (2004) framework for working with MRRs as a training model, as well as incorporating the skills, metaskills and research findings from this study as additional resources. To provide practical application of theory and the development of skills and metaskills, the course could include case studies as well as dyad exercises to bring awareness to our own MRRs and practice facilitating their dynamics. MRRs could be framed as an essential element of relationship curriculum in general, with sub-topics of application including: internal role conflicts; MRRs in transitional relationships; MRRs and therapeutic relationships; MRRs within couples; and working with one's own MRRs.

In addition to this study's practical contribution to training curriculum, the approach of this thesis provides a model for future projects. Similar to research traditions in mainstream graduate programs, this project establishes a path for future Process Work students to participate, collaborate, and assist with the research endeavors of Process Work teachers/diplomates in fulfillment of thesis requirements. In doing so, we have the potential to work together to build upon our research interests and work toward systemic change.

Broader Psychotherapeutic Field. This research serves as a bridge between Process Work and other psychotherapeutic communities. The study has the potential to enhance the academic and professional credibility of Process Work and legitimize theoretical developments by using an accepted research method to communicate with practitioners in the wider research community, including the potential outcomes of a

journal article and public presentation.

In many ways, dominant and alternative literature currently surpasses Process Work's conceptualization of MRRs, in that they have given in-depth attention to outlining the contributing factors, theoretical premises, ethical considerations and methodologies influencing the decision-making process surrounding MRRs. However, methods for addressing the actual experiences of MRRs are sparse, reflecting a general fear of conflict and how to negotiate its complexities within relationship. As Ingrid Mattson, the first woman and first convert to lead the Islamic Society of North America, describes, "We're so focused on trying to keep the peace, we miss out on the benefits of those differences among us" (Mattson, 2007). Whereas much of the current literature surrounding MRRs remains a polarized debate arguing for or against their existence, our study risks venturing into the conflictual experiences that do exist and exposing their nature. This requires a substantial risk and even vulnerability on the part of research participants—however, one which can be minimized by a commitment from the surrounding community to stand behind these efforts. My primary recommendation for the larger psychotherapy community—rather than continue to stand at the edge with condemnation, rules or advocacy—is to jump in, explore, and expose the realities of MRR experiences from all perspectives involved. Rather than trying to "keep the peace" by squelching the potential conflicts of MRRs, let us benefit from grappling with them together.

If MRRs are essentially conceived as a problem of exploitation and abuse, a truly sustainable solution is not to try to eliminate its potential – for that is dangerously

simplistic, like trying to squish an elephant behind the couch, make alcohol illegal with the belief that will stop people from drinking, “just say no” as a method for decreasing teenage sex, or attempting to eradicate all pests from the face of the earth because they are “bugging” us. In doing so, we deny or reduce the complex realities of our existence. We may not only get rid of the things that disturb us, but unwittingly kill the very things that give us life, thereby destroying ourselves as well. Instead, MRRs become opportunities to learn about the very places where we do not know ourselves well (ie, unconsciousness about our own rank and power), challenging us to use those uncomfortable places as fertilizer for our development—the very issues we, our MRR partners, and our communities may be struggling with. We as practitioners need to risk traversing the edges of our comfort zones. Rather than grasping onto rigid boundaries and standards that on their own confine reality, limit our healing potential, and choke the possibilities of transformation, we need to follow our calling into the complexity of relationship. With awareness, guidance from others, and our own capacity for learning and growth, let MRRs be our teachers.

Suggestions for Further Research

Process Work has only recently begun researching and developing theory to address the experiences and negotiation of multiple role relationships (see Diamond & Jones, 2004; Diamond, 2004). As a qualitative reflexive exploration, this cooperative inquiry study contributes in-depth descriptions and practical examples of MRRs, which have the potential to generate theory for further investigation. These research findings can be examined from various perspectives and used to further explore how role and

rank theories are understood and experienced within MRRs.

With these considerations in mind, it is interesting to explore new directions where this research could go further. Indeed this study was conceived as an initial exploration which could be deepened and extended in future studies in a variety of ways. A logical direction could focus on practical application, for example, case studies which draw upon the skills suggested by the research findings; or small and large group community processes, examining the issues of MRRs and experimenting with the skills recommended by this study. An article focusing on metaskills which illustrates their use in a range of MRR situations could provide another useful direction for further research. In-depth personal exploration of MRRs using reflexive methods of self-inquiry could also add to the body of research on this topic. Similarly, the method used in this study could be extended to include interviews with others outside the inquiry group. In particular, it would be valuable to deepen the inter-personal understanding between MRR partners by interviewing both individuals, separately and together, to explore the similarities and differences in their experiences and perceptions.

This research could also be enhanced by an in-depth study of the origins of MRRs, the tradition of apprenticeship, and its various manifestations within fields related to psychotherapy, such as shamanism, yoga, and other spiritual and/or healing traditions. It would be interesting to explore the history of MRRs within the Process Work community, learning about their influence on personal and professional development. This direction could be extended as an inter-disciplinary study to examine how diverse perspectives (regarding field of study, culture, race, gender, age) influence

our experiences of MRRs; or how different paradigms of power within organizations (ie, power-over vs. power-with) relate to the ability to negotiate MRRs. Quantitative analysis using a questionnaire to measure different role and rank factors, a categorization of experience, and prioritization of issues involved could also further our understanding of MRR experiences within the Process Work community.

This cooperative inquiry study provides an example of surrendering to the reality of multiple role relationships and embracing their existence enough to better understand their experiences, the complexities they contain, and the guidance they have to offer. Implicit in the rules proscribing MRRs, and in some ways even the arguments legitimizing their inclusion, is a fear and mistrust of power in general. Practitioners are not trusted in their judgment, clients are viewed as vulnerable and susceptible to harm. Power is an issue that crosses fields and disciplines of study. Our conceptions and use of power continue to evolve, as do our understandings of identity. As Diamond (2004) advises, “The more people understand and value their different types of power, the more intelligent their use of power will be” (p. 35). MRRs within psychotherapeutic communities serve as a vehicle for the study and practice of negotiating power as a complex interpersonal phenomenon. Process Work's orientation toward relationship encompasses the complexities of role and rank issues found within MRRs, and thus offers a comprehensive theoretical and practical framework which can contribute to the efficacy of negotiating MRRs within the larger psychotherapeutic field.

In my opinion, such an endeavor requires a powerful, loving, democratic and truly curious presence – a metaskill or attitude which can hold the space for exploration, recognize and be interested in the complexity, and not collapse too quickly into one side or jump to conclusions and solutions that minimize that complexity. The examination of multiple role relationships reflects personal psychology, relationship dynamics, and issues contained within the field. The effective negotiation of multiple role relationships arise not from “The Answer” or one solution that attempts to apply itself to every encounter. The learning comes through struggle and examination – *the process itself* – if we can embrace it.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Personal MRR Experience*Perry*

(with permission from MRR partner)

I feel like my MRR with DJ truly began in the dreamworld. Before I moved to Portland about four years ago--and before I had much contact with DJ--I had a nighttime dream with her. In the dream, I asked how things were going with her partner (a man). She said she felt like she was more and more becoming him. She was wearing a plaid lumber-jack type shirt, and looked very big and broad--so in that sense, extremely masculine, sturdy and strong. Yet at the same time, her face was all made-up and her hair was done as well--she looked totally beautiful, striking. She was standing at a podium and studying, very intent, focused, and totally un-self-conscious--no hiding, shame or cowering--upright within herself and focused on the project she was working on. I awoke from the dream with an inner sense of knowing, a feeling that I had seen her dreambody.

The feeling was so strong that, although I did not have much of a relationship with DJ, I was moved to email her about the dream. I realize now that I did this without much self-consciousness (perhaps the spirit of the dream itself moved me). She emailed me right back, surprised and moved by the connection of the dream to what she was actually experiencing. I get the feeling as I write that, after all this time, I am now integrating this dream at an even deeper level with where I am in my personal process

of development, and through the process of writing about our multiple role relationship.

After I moved to Portland, I started teaching yoga here. DJ approached me because of her interest in yoga and asked if I would give her a private session. I began to teach her yoga regularly, which involved going to her house usually once/week or every other week. Soon after we set up a trade for therapy and supervision sessions-- one and a half hours of yoga (my usual time for a private yoga session) for a one-hour session. Once in a while, she would come to a public class and pay the regular fee. I was seeing DJ along with another process worker for personal therapy. Within a couple months, I asked DJ to be on my study committee because of the connection I felt. At some point, therapists were no longer allowed to be on study committees, so I made the decision to shift to someone else as my primary therapist, and see DJ as my primary supervisor. We continued on with a yoga/supervision trade for about three and a-half years, fairly regularly except when she or I was out of town. Once in a while, either she or I would pay our discounted rate to each other if we wanted an additional yoga or supervision session and a trade was not possible for some reason. This happened for both of us just a few times.

So in the course of our relationship, DJ has been my Process Work teacher, yoga student, therapist, supervisor, and study committee member. Currently, she is my primary supervisor and study committee member, and sometimes formal teacher when I attend a class taught by her. I say "formal teacher" because I also experience her as a teacher through our supervisory relationship.

Last Fall, I initiated ending the trade for several reasons, which coalesced as a

feeling that the dreaming had shifted to another way of being in relationship. First of all, I was no longer teaching yoga with anyone else, so my role as a yoga teacher was becoming a smaller and smaller part of my identity. As my graduate studies and work demanded more time and energy, I felt myself going in other directions. It was also increasingly inconvenient to travel across town, which involved an additional hour and a-half by bus. I no longer felt congruent inside myself to pursue that role with DJ. Also, as I faced more challenges in my supervision, I wanted to be held solely in my role as student and supervisee. Somehow the added dimension of our yoga relationship felt like too many levels--I needed the relationship exchange to be clearer and more focused in order to contain and work with my personal edges, as well as relationship struggles that were coming up for me in my supervision relationship with DJ.

For me, this multiple role relationship became a bridge between worlds, helping me to wake up to, work through and reconcile my changing connection with yoga and my growing relationship with Process Work. Having DJ as teacher/student/colleague and mediator in that exchange has been invaluable for me. She too shares a connection with yoga, and I felt she developed a deeper understanding of yoga and me as well through our time together. Through our yoga time together, it was like she learned a new language, along with ways of thinking/perceiving/experiencing. We drew upon this "language" during our PW time together (and vice versa), as a method for translating information. This was an incredible learning tool for me that translated all the way through into my body.

I realize that mind and body--perhaps a universally experienced split--has been a

mythic conflict for me, that has taken me back and forth throughout my life from body-centered worlds (like dance, musical theatre, bodywork and yoga) to more intellectual fields (psychology and other academic studies). Throughout my life, there has been a background attempt to reconcile these sometimes disparate worlds--feel and understand their relationship and underlying unity. Having DJ as a partner and ally--who shared the love of yoga and brought the expertise of PW--has helped to bridge that gap and heal that split.

Though I did not recognize it so much at the time, I also think that my unconscious insecurities needed the compensation of being seen in a realm where I felt (for the most part) confident, passionate, and skilled. Little did the little-me know that the Big-Me of Process Work was going to be traversing me through the scariest, deepest places within myself--I think yoga, being known and seen there, and my relationship with DJ helped provide me with an anchor through extremely challenging times of learning, health crises, depression and facing more of myself. She expressed a lot of appreciation and support for me as a yoga teacher.

I also felt an inner kind of specialness and importance to be invited into her life in this way--which gave me an added boost, feeling that she really values me, trusts me/us to handle this dual relationship. We experienced very intimate times together--both in yoga and therapy/supervision. This is usually more one-sided, in that Process Workers often witness students in vulnerable places. Yet in our relationship, DJ also had vulnerable experiences through yoga. I felt honored to be part of these experiences with her and to know more of her, responsible to hold them with respect and privacy,

and also aware that we shared a wide space in our relationship.

I held more rank in my role as yoga teacher, in terms of my knowledge and experience, DJ trusted me to lead her into edgy places (both physically and consequently emotionally), and I felt responsible for her well-being like I would with any student. All the while, her rank was very much in the background for me, both consciously and unconsciously--no matter that she was my yoga student, she was still all the while a big figure for me, as a teacher in the community, someone I respect and look up to, as well as my supervisor. So I often felt slightly uneasy and insecure--something so close to a regular feeling/pattern for me, it was hard to differentiate or notice or really examine as part of our relationship dynamic.

Now I can look back--and actually see how it still surfaces--as a projection of expectation, standards and potential criticism. My tendency has been to look inward and work on things more intrapsychically than in relationship. When we did discuss feelings about our multiple relationship, it was mostly during my session time with DJ, as opposed to yoga time. I was hyper-alert to not bring myself in too much to our yoga time, really keep a clear boundary--which I can now see how that impeded my freedom and ease in my role as a teacher as well. As I write, I now feel like retracting a bit, defending us and my own awareness--saying, it wasn't so bad, just subtly inhibiting--we did a good job of bringing things up and processing them as we went along. This is also true. I guess I'm just realizing there was more that was beyond my scope and capacity at the time--and also blended so much with my personal work and learning in general--that it did not seem appropriate to bring too much into our relationship. I wanted the

privilege and pleasures of this exchange, and would deal with the ways it amplified my edges more so on my own.

I became more aware of this tension in me through our supervision time together--my insecurities, feeling unfree in myself, scared and criticized. While it was terrifying and really challenging to bring them out in our supervision sessions together, I felt more free and safer to do so in that context. I see now that the issues were parallel and showed up in our yoga time as well. I see them as part of my personal development, yet I wanted and needed the relationship interaction to help me address and work through them. The struggle helped our relationship to grow and feel closer. I now feel her as my partner and ally in learning, believing in me, watching my back, encouraging me all the way--that we're in this together. It has been really hard to get to this place--remembering/feeling our connection amidst my complexes of feeling scared and under attack. The multiplicity of experiences we've gone through together I think has truly nourished the ground and provided the dojo to break through these complexes and transform them into a supple and strong place of love within myself and alliance between us.

APPENDIX B

SEEDLINGS OF INSPIRATION...WHAT'S UNDER THAT ROCK?!*How the MRR Study Began*

(Synopsis of Interview with Lee Spark Jones—January 23, 2006)

KATJE: How did this whole project begin?

LEE: The thing that stands out to me... one day I was taking a walk with Julie at lunchtime. It was about 5 years ago, and I was complaining about not doing anything meaningful. She asked me what would I like to be doing, and I found myself saying something about multiple roles, that I would like to study this more. I don't remember much, just the sun shining, and this feeling like I wanted something to get my teeth into.

Other stuff went on in between. The next thing that really happened was the state pressure around problems in the program. We decided we wanted to study them, not just be criticized. No one has actually studied them. There is this assumption within the process work community that MRRs are great, but clearly something was wrong here.

We defined various phases of study—that was about 5 years ago. The first thing we did was presented something at a staff retreat. Then we did a study on other modalities of different practitioners. Then Julie wrote an article on roles and relationships which she put on her website. And now we're doing this.

Originally I had put out an email and received lots of interest. I couldn't handle the thought of all those different people, from all those different countries, all those group processes about how we should do things. So I put it off. And then I decided I

have to take charge, choose who I want to do it with, make it manageable for me.

KATJE: You set a boundary [referring to what we're learning in the MRR research]

LEE: Yes, that's a brilliant insight! I set a boundary...And it all got rolling. I asked [a colleague] about it, and he expressed interest. I contacted others in the group, and all were into it. Except maybe one, can't remember...due to time constraints I think. And it all started to roll. It was easy from there on...at least at that stage. Then we've hit our other bumps from there.

It's personally meaningful to me...all in one...my whole experience has been in multiple role relationships. It's tremendously important to me. I've loved the fact that I could explore and study at the same time, that my teachers were also my friends and colleagues...and partner! I wanted a learning environment where it was personal and emotional, not just cerebral. Because otherwise, the intellect grabs it but it doesn't necessarily change me personally.

KATJE: Like cooperative inquiry...real learning comes through relationship...

LEE: Yes..I like questioning sacred cows. I felt like there was a certain smugness and self-satisfaction around MRRs. I like turning over the stone and seeing what's underneath, not because it's good or bad, but because it's there, and there's a need to know what's underneath.

Also, it's a big topic. In the mainstream, it's the other way around. We [PW community] are different from what's conventionally accepted, so we can potentially present information about how it can work. From my own experience, it does work.

APPENDIX C

CODES OF ETHICS

Relevant Excerpts from ACA, APA & Process Work

ACA Code of Ethics (2005)

THE COUNSELING RELATIONSHIP

Standard of Practice Three (SP-3): Dual Relationships. Counselors must make every effort to avoid dual relationships with clients that could impair their professional judgment or increase the risk of harm to clients. When a dual relationship cannot be avoided, counselors must take appropriate steps to ensure that judgment is not impaired and that no exploitation occurs.

TEACHING, TRAINING & SUPERVISION

Standard of Practice Forty-Two (SP-42): Self-Growth Experiences. Counselors who conduct experiences for students or supervisees that include self-growth or self-disclosure must inform participants of counselors' ethical obligations to the profession and must not grade participants based on their nonacademic performance.

APA Code of Ethics (2003)

HUMAN RELATIONS

3.05 Multiple Relationships

(a) A multiple relationship occurs when a psychologist is in a professional role with a person and (1) at the same time is in another role with the same person, (2) at the same time is in a relationship with a person closely associated with or related to the person with whom the psychologist has the professional relationship, or (3) promises to enter into another relationship in the future with the person or a person closely associated with or related to the person.

A psychologist refrains from entering into a multiple relationship if the multiple relationship could reasonably be expected to impair the psychologist's objectivity, competence, or effectiveness in performing his or her functions as a psychologist, or otherwise risks exploitation or harm to the person with whom the professional relationship exists.

Multiple relationships that would not reasonably be expected to cause impairment or risk exploitation or harm are not unethical.

(b) If a psychologist finds that, due to unforeseen factors, a potentially harmful multiple relationship has arisen, the psychologist takes reasonable steps to resolve it with due regard for the best interests of the affected person and maximal compliance with the Ethics Code.

(c) When psychologists are required by law, institutional policy, or extraordinary circumstances to serve in more than one role in judicial or administrative proceedings, at the outset they clarify role expectations and the extent of confidentiality and thereafter as changes occur.

RELATED TOPICS

3.04 Avoiding Harm

Psychologists take reasonable steps to avoid harming their clients/patients, students, supervisees, research participants, organizational clients, and others with whom they work, and to minimize harm where it is foreseeable and unavoidable.

3.07 Third-Party Requests for Services

When psychologists agree to provide services to a person or entity at the request of a third party, psychologists attempt to clarify at the outset of the service the nature of the relationship with all individuals or organizations involved. This clarification includes the role of the psychologist (e.g., therapist, consultant, diagnostician, or expert witness), an identification of who is the client, the probable uses of the services provided or the information obtained, and the fact that there may be limits to confidentiality.

PROCESS WORK Code of Ethics (2002)

Principle F: Relationships

Process Workers understand that relationships between and among people are an important vehicle for change. Process Workers engage people as partners in the helping process. Process Workers seek to strengthen relationships among people in a purposeful effort to promote, restore, maintain, and enhance the well-being of individuals, families, social groups, organizations, and communities.

RESPONSIBILITY TO CLIENTS

1.04 Rank and Power

Process Workers make a reasonable effort to both be aware of the dynamics of rank and power in their professional relationships, and to insure that the client's best interests are thereby served.

1.08 Multiple Relationships

It is well recognized that multiple relationships are an inherent and unavoidable aspect of life in small communities and subcultures, for example rural communities, university counseling centers, or ethnic and non-ethnic subcultures such as the disabled and the gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender communities, training institutes, specialized educational centers, and learning communities. Process Workers avoid multiple relationships that are harmful, and/or exploitative and/or involve a conflict of interest.

A Process Worker refrains from entering into a multiple relationship if the multiple relationship could reasonably be expected to impair the Process Worker's objectivity, competence, or effectiveness in performing his or her functions as a Process Worker, or otherwise risks exploitation or harm to the person with whom the professional relationship exists.

Multiple relationships that would not reasonably be expected to cause impairment or risk exploitation or harm are not unethical.

In those cases or situations where there may be some question, lack of clarity, or confusion, it is the Process Worker's responsibility to seek assistance through supervision and/or therapy and/or consultation with a third party.

When a conflict of interest arises or judgment is impaired, the Process Worker must withdraw from the dual relationship taking care to minimize harm to the client.

RESPONSIBILITIES TO STUDENTS

2.1 Multiple Relationships in the Process Work Learning Community

The Process Work learning community is a "small community" in the sense already noted in 1.08. As is typical of such communities, multiple role relationships are inherent and unavoidable, and all reasonable measures must be taken to avoid harm and/or exploitation and/or conflict of interest in such relationships. Process Workers must make reasonable effort to be sensitive to power differences in light of the vulnerability of students and/or their potential difficulties in unequal power relationships. Process Workers who evaluate trainees must take all reasonable precautions to avoid conflicts of interest in evaluation, as well as avoiding situations that impair judgment.

Because the potential for harm and/or exploitation and/or conflict of interest is greatest when power differentials remain covert, the Process Work learning community makes available a variety of procedures and opportunities for sorting out issues of power, equity and fairness. They include: periodic meetings open to all students and faculty in which power issues can be addressed; a Dean of Students who functions as an ombudsperson to help sort out student-faculty power issues; an Ethics Committee to act as a mediation body in case of student claims of unequal, unfair and/or exploitative treatment.

Note on RESOLVING ETHICAL ISSUES

PW has a more detailed, tiered system to address problems as they arise, including confronting ethical issues and resolving through informal means and/or professional consultation, whereas other codes of ethics refer only to the importance of compliance with the ethical committee, leaving the details of what that process might entail vague.

APPENDIX D

SELF-EVALUATIVE QUESTIONS
for Faculty in Multiple Role Relationships

From *A Model for Ethical Management of Faculty-Student Relationships*
Biaggio, Paget, and Chenoweth (1997)

1. What is the student learning? Is the student becoming competent on a "special" relationship?
2. What are the other students learning? Are they learning about equitable treatment or special privilege?
3. Does the student involved have a choice? Does the power differential allow the student freedom to refuse a professor's request?
4. Do all students have the same opportunity for access to a professor's attention? Are opportunities for consulting offered equitably?
5. Has the professor lost, or is he or she perceived to have lost, the capacity for objective evaluation?
6. Are future evaluation decisions apt to be influenced?
7. Are there consequences of the dual relationship for other faculty members? Are they having to resolve issues resulting from soured dual relationship?

APPENDIX E

CR and NCR Role Components & their Awareness Requirements

From *Where Roles, Rank and Relationship Meet: A Framework for Working with Multiple Role Relationships in Process Work Learning Communities*, Julie Diamond (2004)

CR Role Components & Responsibilities	NCR Role Components & Responsibilities
<p>Rank and authority</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Know the role's authority and its limits ○ Value the social rank of the role, and use it for others' sake. ○ Legitimize rank by creating consensus and feedback procedures ○ Understand your own social rank history, both its mainstream and marginal aspects. ○ Keep social rank in perspective <p>Function and duty</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Know and fulfill the role's primary function ○ Know the limits of your capacity to fill that role and its expectations ○ Let context determine the function of your role ○ Frame any conflict between or within functions ○ If in doubt, the other person determines the role's primary function. 	<p>Rank and authority</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ NCR rank isn't personal; don't identify with it ○ Discover and use the NCR rank of the role to legitimize social rank <p>Non-locality of role</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Remember that a role is non-local; anyone can play it ○ A role has information and energy, not identical to the person in the role ○ What you think is personal material or reaction may be information about the client's process. <p>Essence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Discover and express the essence of role ○ Share the essence with the other ○ Discover and fulfill the role's highest purpose, both through <i>what</i> you do, and in <i>how</i> you do it. <p>Personal Experiences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Practice self-reflection; be able to disentangle your feelings ○ Notice what you sense in a given role ○ Notice edges or resistances to your feelings ○ Know about possible hurt from personal rank history ○ Be comfortable with vulnerability and uncertainty ○ Be aware of high dreams and hopes

APPENDIX F

Working with Your Own Relationship Conflict

Excerpt from *Process Work General Standards for Phase 2 Exams*

1. Stay in the conflict and keep a metaposition
2. Do not act as the therapist but hold the awareness
3. Track your own signals and unfold them
4. Track other's signals and support the other person to unfold them
5. Find the other in yourself
6. Fluidity with side taking
7. Level awareness and ability to work on different levels
8. Ability to bring up a conflict
9. Awareness of rank and ability to work with it
10. Demonstrate curiosity about someone's process while in conflict with them
11. Innerwork while in conflict

APPENDIX G

Multiple Role Relationship Exercise

This is an exercise in deeply democratic power – the ability to identify multiply co-occurring processes – the context, roles and rank of the moment and its relationship to the MRR intersections you share

1. It's important to be basic, meaning orient yourself to your MRR by asking: what's my role in this moment, what is the other person's role, what's the context – what is my main intention and responsibility – what are the obvious power dimensions involved?
2. Then, what else is coming up – where else do we cross over? Is our MRR intentional or unintentional? How do I feel about our other relationships, and what happens in the crossing over? Do I want that? Is it good for me? What else do I notice?
3. Then step back – really see – who else am I? and who is this other person? Out of the trance of the Process Work world and identities – recognize the other roles, identities and powers – both within yourself and the other person
4. Are you able to talk about these things with your MRR partner? Do you want to? Do you need support in some aspect of the relationship or what's coming up for you? Where can you get that?
5. Finally, embrace the ultimate spirit of satisfaction – LEARNING – the love and challenge of discovering more about yourself and another and relationship in general – What are you learning? How does this guide the direction of your MRR?