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THE INFLUENCE OF INTERNAL COMMUNICATION ON MENTAL HEALTH: A HUMANISTIC APPROACH¹

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1. This article aims to develop more fluid and flexible communication, understanding the direct impact on mental health. Rafaela Madalena Gonçalves - Clinical and educational psychologist. Specialist in Nonviolent Communication.

Abstract: Internal communication is a determining factor for mental health, influencing self-perception, decision-making and the quality of interpersonal relationships. This study aims to analyze the relationship between internal dialogue and psychological well-being, based on the assumptions of Humanistic Psychology, especially the contributions of Carl Rogers and Marshall Rosenberg. Using a literature review, we discuss how internal communication can serve as a bridge to self-knowledge and emotional self-regulation or, on the contrary, as a wall that prevents personal growth. We conclude that a more empathetic and conscious internal dialog can foster self-compassion and reduce destructive thought patterns.

Keywords: Internal communication, internal dialog, Carl Rogers, Marshall Rosenberg, empathy, self-knowledge.

INTRODUCTION

Communication is one of the pillars of human relationships, but before we interact with each other, there is a constant dialog within us. This internal dialog can be constructive, boosting self-esteem and decision-making, or destructive, reinforcing limiting beliefs and negative emotions. The way we communicate internally has a direct impact on our mental health and our ability to face challenges.

Carl Rogers (1961), one of the main theorists of humanistic psychology, points out that unconditional acceptance of our feelings is essential for personal development. Marshall Rosenberg (2003), creator of Nonviolent Communication (NVC), argues that language can be a tool for connection or a means of self-sabotage.

This study seeks to understand how internal communication influences emotional well-being, analyzing strategies that enable a healthier and more constructive internal dialogue.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

INTERNAL COMMUNICATION AND ITS IMPACT ON MENTAL HEALTH

Internal communication refers to the way individuals structure their thoughts and feelings, directly influencing their behavior and emotions (BECK, 1997). Studies indicate that negative and self-critical thought patterns are associated with disorders such as depression and anxiety (NOLEN-HOEKSEMA, 2000).

According to Rogers (1961), genuine acceptance of emotions, without judgment, is an essential step towards personal growth. The humanistic approach emphasizes that the way a person sees themselves determines their relationship with the world. If the internal dialog is rigid and self-critical, there is a greater propensity for self-sabotage and emotional suffering.

NONVIOLENT COMMUNICATION AND INTERNAL DIALOGUE

Marshall Rosenberg (2003) proposed Nonviolent Communication (NVC) as a language model based on empathy and authenticity. Although NVC is widely applied in interpersonal interactions, its application to internal communication is equally relevant.

CNV suggests four fundamental elements: observation, feelings, needs and requests. By applying this to internal dialog, we can reframe destructive self-criticism into more compassionate reflections, promoting a more careful look at our own emotional needs.

REFLECTIONS ON LANGUAGE AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF REALITY

Language shapes our perception of reality. Ruth Bebermeyer, in the poem Words are windows (or are they walls), illustrates how the way we express ourselves can open up space for understanding or create barriers of isolation.

"I felt hurt and misunderstood by the harsh words I heard

Until I realized that they were just words, reflecting what was happening inside me."

This reflection shows that negative internal dialogue may just be a reflection of internalized beliefs, which can be reframed through more conscious and welcoming communication.

METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted through a literature review, analyzing the contributions of Humanistic Psychology and Nonviolent Communication to the development of a healthier internal dialogue. Scientific articles, books and reference studies in the field of psychology and communication were consulted.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The studies analyzed indicate that internal communication plays a central role in emotional regulation and building self-esteem. Individuals who practice a more empathetic internal dialog have greater emotional resilience and are less prone to self-sabotage (NEFF, 2011).

Carl Rogers' approach reinforces that unconditional self-acceptance allows people to develop a sense of authenticity and personal growth. Similarly, Rosenberg's CNV provides tools for transforming rigid self-criticism into a process of self-understanding and care.

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Internal dialog can be reformulated through practices such as:

1. Identification of thought patterns - It is observed that the internal language is critical or compassionate.
2. Change of perspective - Replace phrases like "I never do anything right" with "I'm learning and evolving".
3. Practice self-compassion - Treat yourself with the same empathy offered to a friend.

The literature indicates that strengthening positive internal communication improves emotional regulation, reduces symptoms of anxiety and increases feelings of well-being (GILBERT, 2014).

CONCLUSION

Internal communication can be a powerful tool for personal growth or an obstacle to emotional well-being. The approaches of Carl Rogers and Marshall Rosenberg show that the way we communicate internally influences not only our mental health, but also the way we relate to the world.

By transforming a rigid and self-critical internal dialog into more compassionate and conscious communication, we create bridges to self-knowledge and emotional resilience. In this way, communication ceases to be a wall that imprisons us and becomes a bridge to a more authentic and balanced life.