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Promoting Career Counselors' Sustainable Career Development through the Group-Based Life Construction Dialogue Intervention: "Constructing My Future Purposeful Life"

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Abstract: Continuous professional development refers to maintaining, enhancing, and broadening individuals' knowledge, skills, and the personal qualities required in their professional lives. The present experimental study attempts to explore the way(s) that the Life Construction intervention: "Constructing my Future Purposeful Life" contributes to career counselors' sustainable career development. Two groups of career counselors participating in a training program delivered by the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens were involved, namely, an experimental group ($N = 33$) that received the intervention and a control group ($N = 27$) that did not receive any intervention. The effectiveness of the intervention was verified through qualitative and quantitative analysis, including the calculation of effect sizes, of the data obtained through the Future Career Autobiography, and the Greek version of the Life Project Reflexivity Scale. The results indicate that the Life Construction Intervention improved career counselors' reflexivity and self-awareness, while, concurrently, the need for practical training in contemporary interventions to support their sustainable career development is highlighted. The main conclusion refers to the fact that the career counselor needs to construct his or her own Self as a sustainable project beforehand, in order to be able to support individuals in their own Self construction and promote their well-being.

Keywords: reflexivity; guidance practitioners; sustainability; professionalization; harmonization

1. Introduction

In the new research area of the Psychology of Sustainability and Sustainable Development [1–3] and in the Psychology of Harmony and Harmonization framework [4], the main objective of the counseling interventions is to improve peoples' quality of life and peoples' chances to enjoy decent and meaningful lives [5]. This perspective reflects a primary prevention perspective [1], which emphasizes the importance of constructing a healthy life, at both a personal and a professional level, through timely interventions. These advanced counseling interventions can promote reflection and reflexivity on what constitutes actual sustainability for people, a concept that includes peoples' core goals, interests, and values [5]. Reflexivity empowers the person—and the community—to clarify priorities, to envision a possible future, and to develop a new configuration that is active rather than passive, offering a useful way to plan the future towards harmonization and sustainable development [4].

In this context, career counseling is called on to respond to the perspectives of sustainability by implementing interventions that will support individuals in managing their life and work plans in such a way that they will contribute to the sustainable development and well-being of individuals and, by extension, of the organizations in which they act [2]. To achieve these aims, it is essential to enhance career counselors' personal control over their professional development in order to respond to the considerable challenges (and opportunities) that global crises bring to the contemporary world of work, to promote the balance between individual expectations and social and/or global needs, and to demonstrate the development of personal strengths in the context of social harmonization and prosperity [3,4]. This is also in line with Maree and Di Fabio [5], who suggest that the close relationship between personal and career counseling requires an integrative approach to the training of all (career) counselors.

Based on the abovementioned analytical framework and previous findings, the authors conducted the present study to inquire into the contribution of the group-based Life Construction dialogue intervention "Constructing my future purposeful life" [6] to career counselors' sustainable career development, in terms of enhancing their reflexivity, self-awareness, and vision for the future chapters of their personal and professional lives. Based on previous research evidence, the authors expected that the intervention would have a positive significant effect on the participants [6,7].

2. Literature Review

2.1. Career Construction, Self-Construction, and Life Construction

In the twenty-first century, the world of work is associated with multiple complexities and pertains to insecurity, instability, flexibility, and continuous change [8]. As a result, individuals are confronted with several challenges and transitions related to their career and personal trajectories that may disorient and prevent them from actualizing their future projects. Therefore, it is rather critical to design and implement preventive interventions that will safeguard individuals against repeated changes in work and life. Guichard [9] (p. 306) noted that the "emerging contexts produce new questions and the need to update interventions and research in career counseling."

In this context, the need of a paradigm shift has emerged, in which we move away from the predominant rational-logical (positivist or quantitative) approach to career counseling [10] toward the narrative/dialogic approach to counseling [11]. This epistemological shift from the modern understanding of career development to postmodern assumptions has led by extension to the gradual move from quantitative to qualitative (or a mixed approach of combining quantitative and qualitative) interventions, tools, and forms of assessment, as the contemporary approaches, based on narratability, biographicity, and reflexivity [12], are inherently qualitative [13]. The evolution of career theories grounded in adaptability, identity and the Self, the interlink of work and life, as well as in meaning and authenticity, reflect this passage.

The Career Construction Theory (CCT) [14] perceives the Self as a project in career construction that includes both a subjective and an objective perspective in a relational form [15]. Therefore, career construction does not actually constitute an individual process, rather a co-construction that confabulates with the individual's social context. Based on the meaning that is attributed to work, both individually and interpersonally, CCT aims to assist people in building successful careers and lives through their personal success formula. This formula encourages individuals to discover their values and purposes in order to construct a meaningful and purposeful project for their career and personal life [11].

In addition, Self-Construction Theory [16], developed around the interrelation between working activities and aspects of personal life, is based on the Subjective Identity Forms (SIFs) that are defined as "sets of ways of being, acting and interacting in relation to a certain view of oneself in a given context" [16] (p. 253). The individual identity is, therefore, composed of an evolving System of Subjective Identity Forms (SSIF) that reflect individual career and life experiences (and expectations)

in different contexts across time (past, present, and future). Therefore, in order for individuals to find meaning in their lives, they are encouraged to unify their present situation from a desired future perspective (what they want to become), as well as from the point of view of another person (or a “generalized other”) based on reflexivity. Recently, the Self-Construction Theory evolved into the Life Construction Theory, as cited in Di Fabio [6]. The theory underlines that individuals are able to unify themselves by connecting their different past and present life experiences and projecting them into the future through narratives, a process that resembles what Guichard refers as “make oneself self” [17].

All the above mentioned career theories lay emphasis on the embeddedness of work in external and internal relational (life) contexts. According to Blustein [8], working entails “effort, activity, and human energy in given tasks that contribute to the overall social and economic welfare of a given culture” [18] (p. 3). Therefore, working is (re)conceptualized on an individual level, which, however, extends and includes the social level (multiple contexts in which the individual exists and acts) by linking work with broader life domains. Hence, the challenges of career management and life management are intertwined [19]. Nevertheless, these challenges may be tackled through narratability, biographicity, and reflexivity, by enabling career counselors to develop advanced counseling interventions that assist clients in defining who and what they want to become in work and across their lives more broadly. In addition, they should focus on facilitating a deep individual reflection on developing a stable identity as an internal compass to deal with the difficulties and transitions of the postmodern world and to successfully adapt to the professional and personal reality that it is unstable and constantly changing [13]. The Psychology of Sustainability and Sustainable Development, as well as the Psychology of Harmony and Harmonization, seem to be promising theoretical frameworks for addressing those purposes.

2.2. Psychology of Sustainability and Sustainable Development: The New Pillar of Psychology of Harmony and Harmonization

Sustainable development is an interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary field associated with several needs and challenges; yet it is a vital quest for humanity in terms of surviving and thriving in the future [20]. The Psychology of Sustainability and Sustainable Development [1–3] and the Psychology of Harmony and Harmonization [4] constitute two contemporary theoretical and empirical frameworks that may provide additional perspectives and inform the advanced counseling interventions to respond to this vital quest, as well as to the increasing challenges deriving from the gradual shift from career projects to life projects [19].

The Psychology of Sustainability and Sustainable Development [1–3] moves beyond the traditional perspectives of the three “E’s” [21] and green guidance [22]. By adopting an inter- and intra-personal approach, the Psychology of Sustainability and Sustainable Development emphasizes the construction and connection of authentic meanings for people (and therefore communities) with their purposes across different spaces and time. The aim is to harmonize the complexities related to individual environments (personal, social, organizational, natural), promote flourishing of their talents, and improve their well-being [3].

The available empirical evidence supports the contribution of the Psychology of Sustainability and Sustainable Development to peoples’ lives across various (social) contexts, environments, and time. In relation to personal environment, life project reflexivity [23] and, regarding social environments, positive relational management [24–27] both have a positive effect on individual well-being. As far as the organizational environment is concerned, a primary prevention approach is suggested to eliminate the development of problems within the organization and promote individual health, flourishing [3], satisfaction [28], emotional intelligence, positive relational management, and well-being in general [24–27], while for the natural environment, Intrapreneurial Self-Capital proves to be a promising core of resources for enhancing natural connectedness [29,30].

The Psychology of Harmony and Harmonization framework [4] considers harmonization both in spatial and temporal perspectives and describes the meaningful construction processes from

the past to the present and into the future based on reflexivity processes at the individual, social, organizational, and natural levels. Rooted in ancient Greek philosophy as well as in Eastern and Western philosophy, the Psychology of Harmony and Harmonization framework attempts to integrate different psychological contributions to Guichard's concept of SIFs [31] and Blustein's relational theory of working [8]. Specifically, a harmonic construction in the dynamic System of the Subjective Identity Forms (SSIF) will promote balance among the different Subjective Identity Forms internally (with oneself), externally (in relation to the individual's interaction with other people), and naturally (with regard to the natural world) across temporal and spatial perspectives [4].

Accordingly, the available empirical evidence supports the contribution of the Psychology of Harmony and Harmonization framework in peoples' lives across various (social) contexts, environments, and time in a primary prevention perspective. At an individual level, the Psychology of Harmony and Harmonization framework may contribute to individual Intrapreneurial Self-Capital [30,32], while, at an (intra-)personal level, to positive relational management [24–27,33]. With regard to the organizational level, the Psychology of Harmony and Harmonization framework encourages the sustainability of work–life projects and meaning for healthy organizations [2] through respect for oneself and others (Workplace Relational Civility) [34] and the management style that permits balancing and harmonization for individuals and organizations (Human Capital Sustainability Leadership) [35]. At the natural level, the framework refers to empathy in terms of connectedness with nature [36,37], as the initial definition of empathy refers to “the extent to which an individual includes nature within his/her cognitive representation of self” [38] (p. 67).

Therefore, both the Psychology of Sustainability and Sustainable Development [1–3], and the Psychology of Harmony and Harmonization [4], from a primary preventive perspective, constitute two evolving frameworks for research and intervention that not only deter the emergence of a problem before it begins, but also promote and foster individual well-being.

2.3. Sustainable Careers and Sustainable Career Development

Fluid organization and liquid societies [39,40], work mobility and flexibility, technological advancements and work digitalization are associated with broader contextual factors, such as the economic and political, that impact peoples' lives and careers and create the need for pursuing sustainable careers [41].

The research on sustainable careers is still growing, as the notion of sustainability in relation to career has recently been formulated and reflects three features. Firstly, providing opportunities for renewal, as people may pause in order to rejuvenate, and secondly, being flexible and adaptable, as their current knowledge and skills soon will be out of date; hence, individuals and organizations need to be continuous (lifelong) and flexible learners. Finally, sustainable careers must include opportunities for integration across individual life spheres and experiences that create the sense of wholeness, completeness, and meaning [42] (p. 138). Furthermore, a sustainable career includes sufficient economic security, matching the individual's career with his or her values, adapting to the evolving changes of individual needs and interests and renewal opportunities, as cited by McDonald and Hite [41]. The aforementioned features are partially reflected in employer perspectives on what personal qualities are effective in enhancing the sustainable career development and employability of young people [43]. The research findings reveal that employers rank goal-orientation as the most important attribute, followed by continuous learning, responsiveness, planfulness, networking, persistence, teamwork, work–life balance, flexibility, risk-taking, optimism, and lastly, financial management.

In this context, the definition of sustainable careers is “the sequence of an individual's different career experiences, reflected through a variety of patterns of continuity over time, crossing several social spaces, and characterized by individual agency, herewith providing meaning to the individual” [44] (p. 7). In order to understand not just the definition, but the challenges pertaining to career sustainability, we need to reflect on the four dimensions acknowledged by the researchers, namely, time, social space, agency, and meaning [44,45], as presented below.

Continuity over time refers to the sequence of the individual's movement through time and across different meaningful career experiences, based on his/her present aspirations, capabilities, needs, and expectations, without, though, compromising future needs. This continuity, which is in line with the notion of sustainability, denotes the dynamic nature of sustainable careers and highlights that the initial step is to better understand what sustainability at work is and then move to the next level of examining ways and identifying factors that promote, maintain, and develop sustainable careers. Furthermore, social spaces reflect the influence of the social environment (e.g., organizations, family) on peoples' trajectories, as well as the impact of peoples' choices related to the social spaces they occupy, on their career sustainability. For instance, challenges deriving from this dimension (social spaces) include the existence of alternative career paths, the multiplication of career options, and therefore, of career decisions, the blurring of boundaries between work and non-work (boundaryless career) [46], as well as the fact that careers are enacted within and across different contexts (work, home, friends, leisure).

The agency dimension lays emphasis to peoples' responsibility and accountability for their careers, as they are considered the primary agents of their own career success. Therefore, individuals are placed in the center, while exterior influences and the constraints of their social spaces are not considered the only determinant factors of their career outcomes. Nevertheless, this is not an easy endeavor, as individuals need to adopt a long-term approach, maintain balance across different life domains (e.g., work and family), and align their personal/career objectives to the organizational objectives. Certainly, this entails a sufficient level of career competencies that renders individuals able to (self-) manage their careers. In addition, it points out the social inequalities that may emerge for socially vulnerable groups (e.g., low-skilled, unemployed, older people) when these career competencies are a priori assumed. Moreover, the dimension of meaning reflects the change in the meaning of careers due to the rising variety of subjective (e.g., work–life balance or personal growth) rather than objective (e.g., financial performance or number of promotions) career success criteria. This variation is dependent upon the career stage or the broader life phase that individuals experience; yet, employability is the core element for attaining whatever is the meaning of career success.

Approaching the notion of sustainable careers based on these four dimensions implies that the plurality of the working population is acknowledged and that careers are not the exclusive domain of those working, but of all people considered to belong in the workforce. Moreover, sustainable careers are linked to peoples' education, occupations, or positions, without, though, excluding anyone [44]. Hence, this inclusive perspective is not only centered on the individual, but also on the balance between individual and organizational needs. This is the reason why individual proactive behavior and personal growth may protect and further enhance career sustainability [47]. This idea can be translated as a call to career counselors to support individuals and build on what Lenart [48] underlines in the framework of sustainable development and decent work, that career counselors support individuals in shaping their self-awareness and in constructing their identities in relation to others.

3. Research Study

3.1. Rationale

The evolvement of the theoretical frameworks in career counseling denotes the discipline's attempt to correspond to contemporary conditions, needs, and challenges deriving from the larger socioeconomic, historic, and cultural contexts. These frameworks either inform and update the existing counseling interventions or lead to the development of new ones aligned with current advancements. Therefore, the counseling practice is refreshed and enriched, while practitioners' roles are being redefined. Additionally, most of the time practitioners have diverse backgrounds while they provide services in various fields, e.g., as educational counselors, social workers, Public Employment Services (PES), freelance counselors. Thus, to ensure the effectiveness of their services, career counselors need, beyond their initial training, to care for their continuous professional development (CPD) in order to update and maintain their skills. One such skill that is promoted in postmodern career counseling

approaches, both for counselors and for their clients, is reflexivity. Namely, career counselors are invited to become life-designing counselors [10] who promote client reflexivity in order to design their future lives (integrating their life domains, including career) in a meaningful way.

Taking into account the aforementioned context, the need for practical training of career counselors and career practitioners emerges. In Pouyaud's view, "Generally, practical activities help students to develop tools for their interventions based on theories, but 'doing' (practice) isn't sufficient. Practice needs to be 'reflective' too. This means that the curricula of CGC [Career Guidance and Counselling] degree programmes need to place a high degree of importance on reflexivity. In order to train students in Career Counselling ... curricula should include training in the use of specific tools centred on these theoretical perspectives ... but also permit counsellors to get professional feedbacks on their practice" [49] (p. 154). In addition, Reid and Bassot, in their contribution to the NICE Competences Framework, highlight that "reflective practice is a growing requirement for many practitioners working in education, health and the social services and is a key aspect of professionalism ... " [50] (p. 179). Therefore, reflexivity needs to be practically acknowledged and included in the respective initial and recurrent training of career counselors and practitioners.

The research on the training and professionalization of career counselors and practitioners has been rising over the last years; however, there is limited research evidence and few concrete references in relation to how reflexivity can be embedded in initial and continuous training in a practical way. Hence, the present research aims to contribute to the wider dialogue that has been developed so far in terms of exploring the impact of an experiential training on career counselors' reflexivity. The specific need derives from the fact that "reflexivity offers a transitional space for the career development of those new to the profession, those who are experienced and, importantly, for their clients" [50] (p. 183).

3.2. Aim and Hypotheses

The aim of the research study is to examine the process and contribution of the Life Construction dialogue intervention "Constructing my future purposeful life" [6] to career counselors' sustainable career development, in terms of enhancing their reflexivity, self-awareness, and vision for the future chapters of their personal and professional lives. The intervention was developed in a group-based setting with the power of audience methodology [51] and responds to Di Fabio's [6] recommendation of extending the research to additional target groups, apart from university students. The following four hypotheses guided the present research:

Hypotheses 1. *The experimental group will see increased changes in the themes relative to professional and personal areas detected through the Future Career Autobiography [52,53].*

Hypotheses 2. *There will be statistically significant differences in the themes relative to professional and personal areas detected through the Future Career Autobiography [52,53] between the counselors who received the group dialogue intervention and those who did not.*

Hypotheses 3. *The experimental group will see increased changes in their reflexivity detected through the Greek version [54] of the Life Project Reflexivity Scale [23].*

Hypotheses 4. *There will be statistically significant differences in the reflexivity detected through the Greek version [54] of the Life Project Reflexivity Scale [23] between the counselors who received the group dialogue intervention and those who did not.*

4. Materials and Methods

4.1. Participants

The study involved 60 career counselors enrolled in the training program "Training Career Counselors in designing and developing contemporary interventions based on narrative and reflective techniques" [55] during the academic year 2019–2020, delivered by the Department of Educational

Studies of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens in Greece. Participants were randomly assigned to the experimental or the control group. The experimental group, which received the group-based Life Construction dialogue intervention “Constructing my future purposeful life” [6], consisted of 33 career counselors, and the control group of 27 career counselors who did not receive any form of intervention.

The experimental group consisted of 12 males (36.4%) and 21 females (63.6%), while the control group consisted of 10 males (37.0%) and 17 females (63.0%). Regarding participant age, the experimental group members were between 25 and 52 years old ($M = 37.45$, $SD = 7.55$), and the control group members were between 25 and 51 years old ($M = 37.07$, $SD = 6.43$).

It should be also noted that the career counselors’ participation was voluntary and, therefore, the intervention was not developed based on a double-blind design, where the experimental and the control group do not know in which group they belong. The participants had to know in order to ensure that they would participate in the intervention, to consent to processing of their answers, and to provide us with permission for publishing the findings, based on the Code of Conduct for responsible research issued by the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens in Greece. All the participants (60 career counselors) were attending the training program provided by the University; two participants joined the training program with their colleagues (two triplets), as they worked in the same organization but in different services (their employers reimbursed them for this CPD course). The initial plan was to have two groups of 30 career counselors. However, as some participants of the two triplets were assigned to different groups (experimental/control), we had to ensure that there would be no “leak” from the experimental group to the control group. The over-numbered participants of the experimental group, who had another colleague in the control group, were asked whether they would be able to move to the other group; yet, they did not accept. This led us to the only solution of asking the three career counselors that were in the control group to move to the experimental group, something that they accepted. As a consequence, we ensured that the no-contact control group took the same pre-test and post-test as the experimental but did not complete any task during the intervention period, and they had no contact with the experimental group.

4.2. The Life Construction Dialogue Intervention “Constructing my future purposeful life”

The Life Construction dialogue intervention “Constructing my future purposeful life” aims to utilize the key meta-competences of adaptability and identity and to strengthen a purposeful identity awareness [6]. The intervention is articulated in three modules that aim to achieve specific reflexive levels, while its fundamental concept stages are rooted in the principal career theories of the twenty-first century, as discussed earlier in the literature review. In brief, the structure of the intervention includes:

- the first module that draws upon the Career Construction Theory and the Life Construction Theory and is composed of two exercises. The first, the “Life Design Genogram,” consists of two genograms, the Career Construction Genogram and the Life Construction Genogram, followed by the Career and the Life motto of the father’s and the mother’s line. Then, the participant is invited to reflect and produce “My career motto” and “My life motto.” The second exercise, “Me and the Future,” aims to improve the meta-competence of adaptability and identity in relation to those two personal mottos;
- the second module, titled “Self-advising my Future Self,” focuses on self-reflection, self-advising, guided meta-reflection, and reflexivity in order for the individual to identify and explain an Authentic Self; and
- the third module, called “Constructing the Purposeful Self,” invites the individual to unify him/herself by connecting his/her different life experiences from the past and the present and extending them to future projects in order to promote authentic intentionality and to continue and enhance reflexivity processes.

4.3. Measures

4.3.1. Future Career Autobiography

The Future Career Autobiography (FCA), developed by Rehfuess [52], constitutes a narrative measure that assesses career intervention effectiveness. The measure collects and highlights an individual's personal and career motives, values, and directions in a narrative form. Specifically, the measure consists of a sheet of paper entitled Future Career Autobiography with these specific instructions: "Please use this page to write a brief paragraph about where you hope to be in life and what you hope to be doing occupationally five years from now." The FCA is completed in ten minutes by all participants, a purposely limited time period, in order to lead to brief, focused, and concise narratives [52,53]. The FCAs are administered before and after the career counseling intervention. The narratives produced in FCAs before and after the intervention are compared, and the presence of change is analyzed on the basis of the eight degrees of change themes identified by Rehfuess [52].

The eight change themes are:

- a. General Fields and Desires to Specification and Exploration Theme, which indicates a movement from general fields and desires toward specific themes;
- b. General Interests to More Specification Theme, where individuals start with a variety of general interests but, over time, their FCAs are refined;
- c. Non-Description to Specification Theme, where individual initial FCAs begin with general themes and then focus on personal and occupational themes;
- d. Disregard to Direction Theme, where individuals disregard the personal and occupational piece in their initial FCAs and seem unable to complete the task; however, in their subsequent FCAs, they address the same task with specificity and direction;
- e. Vagueness to Focus Theme, where the participant FCAs move from an initial sense of uncertainty and vagueness about their life or career to a narrative with a clearer direction and focus;
- f. Hindered to Hopeful Theme, which reflects a sense of fear or indifference toward work that is replaced with specificity in subsequent FCAs;
- g. Fixation to Openness Theme, where individuals have prematurely foreclosed on a life situation or an occupation and are caught off-guard by the incongruence between their personal and occupational goals and their abilities; however, in their subsequent FCAs, they try to respond to this dilemma; and
- h. Stagnation Theme, where there are no changes from initial to subsequent FCAs.

4.3.2. Life Project Reflexivity Scale

The Life Project Reflexivity Scale (LPRS) is used to evaluate individual reflexivity in relation to future projects across career, personal, and life domains. Di Fabio, Maree and Kenny [23] proposed the LPRS as a multidimensional construct composed of three specific dimensions that are generally aligned with the tenets of life and identity construction theory [31,40], namely, authenticity, acquiescence, and clarity/projectuality. Authenticity refers to individual awareness of future career–personal–life projects as a basis of authentic values and the meaning that is aligned with those values. The clarity/projectuality dimension refers to individual clarity about career–personal–life projects and assesses whether they know what they want to become in their next life chapters. The acquiescence dimension reveals a sense of conforming to and passively accepting values imposed on people by their society rather than basing the career–life projects on one's authentic values.

The LPRS consists of 15 items with a response format on a five-point Likert scale from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. The scale has three dimensions: Clarity/Projectuality (example of item: "The projects for my future life are clearly defined"); Authenticity (example of item: "The projects for my future life are full of meaning for me"); Acquiescence (example of item: "The projects for my future life are more anchored by the values of the society in which I live than my most authentic values").

The Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the original Italian version of the three dimensions of the LPRS were: Authenticity (0.86), Acquiescence (0.83), Clarity/Projectuality (0.89), and LPRS total (0.86) [23], while for the Greek version they were: Authenticity (0.80), Acquiescence (0.87), Clarity/Projectuality (0.83), and LPRS total (0.75) [54].

Regarding the adaptation process of the LPRS in the Greek context, a preliminary forward translation and adaptation of the LPRS items were performed individually by three native speakers who were researchers qualified in the field of Career Counseling (at least a Master's degree). Once this phase was completed, the results were compared; items with no differences were highlighted with green, diverged items suggested by one researcher were highlighted with orange, and diverged items by more than one researcher were highlighted with red. Then, the researchers met with two professors (one in the field of Organisational Psychology and one in the field of Career Counseling and Vocational Guidance) in order to review all the items, including the green ones, to ensure that they were accurate. Through discussion and multiple modifications in the way that some items were worded, all five participants agreed on the revised wording to ensure that the best solution was obtained. Upon completion, the group moved to the back-translation procedure, in which an independent researcher reviewed the final version and reported the results to the five researchers of the prior phase. Upon discussion, the items were harmonized to ensure consistency and the final version was proofread. As far as the Confirmatory Factor Analysis was concerned, different indices were used to estimate the fit of empirical data to the theoretical model (the Tucker–Lewis Index (TLI), the Comparative Fit Index (CFI), the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), and the Standardized Root Mean Squared Residual (SRMR)), while the reliability of the Greek Life Project Reflexivity Scale (LPRS) was verified using Cronbach's alpha coefficient [54].

4.4. Procedure

The intervention comprised four days and was based on the audience methodology as described by Di Fabio and Maree [51]. Namely, the audience methodology included parts in which each participant completed written exercises individually, as well as parts in which participants formed a circle, interacting with the career counselor and the rest of the participants without the latter intervening in this process. In this way, they all participated in an individual dialogue counseling session, but they were also able to listen to what their peers shared, and therefore promoted their self-reflection. The intervention was carried out in a face-to-face setting and lasted approximately 10 h, as participants were informed that the intervention would last for 2.5 h each day (with breaks in-between). The intervention was comparable to the number of sessions for effective counseling interventions pointed out by Brown and Ryan Krane [56]. The control group did not participate in any activity and did not receive any kind of intervention.

The authors of the present study administered the FCA and the LPRS in the experimental group, at the beginning and the end of the group-based Life Construction dialogue intervention "Constructing my future purposeful life" [6]. The control group completed the FCA and the LPRS in the same manner and time as the experimental group but did not receive any form of intervention between Time 1 and Time 2.

Participants were initially informed orally about the study. Specifically, they received information about the purpose and the content of the study, as well as about the measures that would be administered. Participation was voluntary, and no compensation was considered beforehand. Additionally, printed forms were handed out in order to obtain written permission both for their participation and for the publication of the findings. Participants were assured that anonymity and confidentiality would be maintained throughout all the research stages. The research adhered to the ethical requirements stipulated in the Code of Conduct for responsible research issued by the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens in Greece.

4.5. Data Analysis

The FCAs were administered before and after the intervention to the experimental group, and at the same time to the control group, without the latter receiving any form of intervention. Their responses were collected and transcribed by two authors of the present study and were not returned to the participants. Each participant's initial and subsequent responses were matched in order to be compared by two reviewers. This process, also reflected in the qualitative analysis, contributed to the validity of the content themes that emerged from the FCAs.

The majority of the FCAs consisted of six to seven sentences, while a few of them presented individual goals in a numbered list. The analysis of the FCAs followed the principles outlined by Rehffuss [52]. The reviewers initially screened and read the narrative content of the FCAs and then circled verbs, underlined phrases, and highlighted themes related to personal, career, and future goals. Upon completion of this analysis, the reviewers performed side-by-side comparisons in order to detect potential similarities and differences in participant narratives. When the reviewers completed the analysis, the results were compared. In addition, Kappa statistic was applied in order to ensure the inter-rater reliability in the FCA analysis. Also, a chi-square test was used in order to examine whether the changes in participant FCAs showed statistically significant differences.

Regarding the quantitative data collected with the LPRS, the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, SPSS, version 24.0 was used. Firstly, the frequencies of gender (males/females) and the descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations) for participant age were calculated based on their group (experimental/control). Furthermore, the total scores for the three subscales (authenticity, acquiescence, and clarity/projectuality) were also calculated for both the experimental and the control group (independent variable) in Time 1 and Time 2 (within-subjects). In order to examine whether there were statistically significant differences between the experimental and control groups, an independent t-test was performed. The independent variable (experimental/control group) was examined in relation to the differences between post- and pre-scores of the three LPRS dimensions (authenticity, acquiescence, clarity/projectuality). In addition, to verify that there were no statistically significant differences in the scores of the LPRS between the experimental and the control group at pre-test, an independent t-test was performed. The effect sizes were also calculated in order to determine the magnitude of the statistically significant differences found [57].

5. Results

5.1. Results from FCA Analysis

The results of the experimental group's FCAs revealed that there were several changes in the career counselors' themes relative to professional and personal areas. Some indicative examples of the results are presented below based on the eight degrees of change themes identified by Rehffuss [52].

General Fields and Desires to Specification and Exploration: the FCAs indicated a movement from general fields and desires toward specific themes. For example, in the narrative prior the dialogue intervention a career counselor reported: "As a career counselor constantly developing my own work," while in the post-narrative: "As a professional that I will take care of my personal and professional development, with a family, being able to manage my time and tasks effectively." Another initial response was: "Working on my own, as a freelancer and stop working in the school that I have been working for the last 18 years," while the subsequent narrative was: "I would like to have set up my own start-up and collaborating with schools, NGOs and other organisations in delivering guidance services, such as vocational guidance to school students and career counseling (individually or in groups) to university students and graduates."

General Interests to More Specification: individuals started with a variety of general interests but over time their FCAs were refined. For instance, in the narrative prior to the dialogue intervention a career counselor reported: "As a career counselor working in schools," while in the post-narrative: "As a career counselor working in schools with students and their parents in Parent Schools that I will

organize.” An additional example of an initial narrative was: “I envision to be involved in the field of education both in teaching and in counseling,” while the subsequent response was: “I would like to work in a primary school by combining the role of teacher and the career counselor through projects focusing on self-knowledge, career skills, experiential assignments for discovering occupations.”

Non-Description to Specification: individuals’ initial FCAs began with general themes and then focused on more personal and occupational themes. In an indicative narrative produced prior the dialogue intervention, a career counselor reported: “Working in my field of studies and gaining a decent income,” while in the post-narrative: “As a career counselor working with vulnerable social groups and specifically with refugees.” Another initial narrative reflecting this theme was: “Having a long-term professional commitment to a workplace,” while the subsequent response was: “Working as a career counselor at the university career services office, supporting graduates in continuing their education and/or assist them in labour-market integration.”

Disregard to Direction: individuals disregarded the personal and occupational piece in their initial FCAs and seemed unable to complete the task, while in their subsequent FCAs, they addressed the same task with specificity and direction. None of the career counselors reported changes in their themes related to this degree of change.

Vagueness to Focus: participants’ FCAs moved from an initial sense of uncertainty and vagueness about their life or career to a narrative with a clearer direction and focus. For instance, in the narrative prior the dialogue intervention a career counselor reported: “Finding a job that will ensure me a decent income,” while in the post-narrative: “As a counselor working with vulnerable groups and specifically with refugees.” An additional example of an initial narrative was: “I am not really sure, as the labour market is not that predictive,” while the subsequent response was: “I would like to work as a guidance practitioner, supporting people and also attend a postgraduate course in Career Counseling and Vocational Guidance.”

Hindered to Hopeful: the theme reflected a sense of fear or indifference toward work, which was replaced with specificity in subsequent FCAs. For example, in the narrative prior the dialogue intervention a career counselor reported: “Definitely not working as a freelancer, as I will not be free and financially autonomous. In general, I don’t have any limitations,” while in the post narrative: “Working as an organisational psychologist in the multinational [name of the company] that will provide me with motives and opportunities for personal and career development.” Another initial narrative reflecting this theme was: “With the crisis in the Greek labour market and the high rate of unemployment, I literally have no idea,” while the subsequent response was: “I hope to be optimistic and manage to commit myself in a civil organization supporting those in real need.”

Fixation to Openness: individuals had prematurely foreclosed on a life situation or an occupation and were caught off-guard by the incongruence between their personal and occupational goals and their abilities; however, in their subsequent FCAs, they tried to respond to this dilemma. In an indicative narrative produced prior the dialogue intervention, a career counselor reported: “I wanted to work with refugees and immigrants, but after volunteering, things changed and now I am trying to sort things out,” while in the post narrative: “I still cannot tell for sure, what I want to do with my career. I am still trying to find my spot in the big picture.” An additional initial response was: “I would like to work as a psychologist in an organization providing support to bullying victims, but the studies that I have completed [social sciences with a Master degree in Career Counseling] do not allow me to do so,” while the subsequent response was: “As I realize that my deep desire is to become a psychologist, I will do my best and try to enter the undergraduate program in Psychology.”

Stagnation: the initial and subsequent FCAs did not reflect any changes. An example was found in the narrative produced prior the dialogue intervention, in which a career counselor reported: “As a career counselor in special education working with students, ensuring my job security,” while in the post narrative: “Working in public special education so I can feel safe in terms of employment.” Another initial response was: “Working in civil society organisations with an emphasis on socially

vulnerable groups,” while the subsequent narrative was: “I would like to work in civil society organisations that have a keen interest in supporting groups of people that are socially vulnerable.”

The quantitative analysis of the codified FCA data revealed that 28 career counselors (84.8%) in the experimental group ($N = 33$) showed changes in their FCAs, while 5 of them showed (15.2%) stagnation. In the control group ($N = 27$), 21 career counselors (77.8%) showed stagnation, whereas 6 of them (22.2%) showed changes in their FCAs. The results of the chi-square, performed in order to examine whether the changes in the participants’ FCAs showed statistically significant differences, indicated that the differences between the experimental and the control group were statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 23.71$, $p < 0.01$). Cohen’s Kappa result for the inter-rater reliability was determined at $\kappa = 0.80$ ($p < 0.01$).

5.2. Results from LPRS Analysis

5.2.1. Pre-Test Analysis

In order to verify that there were no statistically significant differences in the mean scores of the LPRS between the experimental group and the control group at pre-test, an independent t-test was performed. The results presented in Table 1 indicate that the experimental and the control group did not have statistically significant differences. Specifically, with regard to Authenticity ($M_{Exp_pre} = 21.54$, $M_{Cont_pre} = 22.07$, $t(32) = -0.84$, $p > 0.05$), Acquiescence ($M_{Exp_pre} = 18.45$, $M_{Cont_pre} = 18.25$, $t(32) = 2.30$, $p > 0.05$) and Clarity/Projectuality ($M_{Exp_pre} = 19.63$, $M_{Cont_pre} = 19.81$, $t(32) = -0.25$, $p > 0.05$), no statistically significant differences were found.

Table 1. Independent Sample T-Test of the Experimental Group ($N = 33$) and Control Group ($N = 27$) on the Life Project Reflexivity Scale (LPRS) at pre-test level.

	Pre-test					
	Experimental Group		Control Group		<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		
Authenticity	21.54	2.26	22.07	2.58	-0.84	0.40
Acquiescence	18.45	4.16	18.25	2.29	0.23	0.81
Clarity/projectuality	19.63	2.66	19.81	2.81	-2.51	0.80

5.2.2. Repeated Measures

The repeated measures t-test (also known as paired sample t-test) was performed in order to examine whether there were statistically significant differences in the mean scores of the LPRS completed by the experimental group before and after the intervention. The results presented in Table 2 indicate that there were statistically significant differences in the mean scores of the experimental group between Time 1 and Time 2. Specifically, career counselors’ ($N = 33$) authenticity ($M_{pre-test} = 21.54$, $SD = 2.26$) was improved after the intervention ($M_{post-test} = 22.90$, $SD = 1.89$), $t(32) = -5.55$, $p < 0.01$, 95% CI $[-0.04, 1.35]$, $d_{Cohen} = 0.65$. Likewise, career counselors’ ($N = 33$) clarity/projectuality ($M_{pre-test} = 19.63$, $SD = 2.66$) was improved after the intervention ($M_{post-test} = 21.15$, $SD = 3.03$), $t(32) = -3.44$, $p < 0.01$, 95% CI $[-0.16, 1.22]$, $d_{Cohen} = 0.53$. Regarding the dimension of acquiescence that refers to career counselors’ ($N = 33$) sense of conforming to and passively accepting values imposed on people by their society, it was decreased ($M_{pre-test} = 18.45$, $SD = 4.16$), ($M_{post-test} = 18.18$, $SD = 4.04$), $t(32) = -2.32$, $p < 0.05$, 95% CI $[-0.74, 0.61]$, $d_{Cohen} = -0.06$. Therefore, the career counselors who received the dialogue intervention “Constructing my future purposeful life” [6] improved their reflexivity in terms of promoting their authentic values, confining the sense of passively accepting values imposed by others and promoting their clarity/projectuality in relation to their future life–career projects.

Table 2. Paired Sample T-Test of the Experimental Group ($N = 33$) between Time 1 and Time 2 on the Life Project Reflexivity Scale (LPRS).

	Experimental Group				<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>d</i> _{Cohen}
	Pre-test		Post-test				
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			
Authenticity	21.54	2.26	22.90	1.89	−5.55	0.00	0.65
Acquiescence	18.45	4.16	18.18	4.04	2.32	0.02	−0.06
Clarity/projectuality	19.63	2.66	21.15	3.03	−3.44	0.00	0.53

The results of the paired sample *t*-test that was performed for the control group are presented in Table 3. No statistically significant differences were found between participants' mean scores between Time 1 and Time 2.

Table 3. Paired Sample T-Test of the Control Group ($N = 27$) between Time 1 and Time 2 on the Life Project Reflexivity Scale (LPRS).

	Control Group				<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
	Pre-test		Post-test			
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		
Authenticity	22.07	2.58	21.96	2.71	0.29	0.76
Acquiescence	18.25	2.29	19.37	4.46	−1.90	0.06
Clarity/projectuality	19.81	2.81	19.33	3.45	1.22	0.23

5.2.3. Post-Test Analysis

The independent *t*-test was performed in order to examine whether there were statistically significant differences in the LPRS scores between the experimental and the control group at post-test level. The data presented in Table 4 indicate that there was statistically significant difference [$t(58) = 2.17$, $p < 0.05$] between the experimental and the control group in relation to clarity/projectuality. Specifically, the mean score of the experimental group ($M_{\text{experimental}} = 21.15$, $SD = 3.03$) was higher in comparison with the control group ($M_{\text{control}} = 19.33$, $SD = 3.45$) at a statistically significant level, $t(58) = 2.17$, $p < 0.05$, 95% CI [0.14, 3.49], $d_{\text{Cohen}} = 0.55$. In addition, the career counselors of the experimental group had a higher mean score in relation to authenticity and a lower mean score in relation to acquiescence, in comparison with the control group, but not at a statistically significant level.

Table 4. Independent Sample T-Test of the Experimental Group ($N = 33$) and Control Group ($N = 27$) on the Life Project Reflexivity Scale (LPRS) at post-test level.

	Post-test				<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>d</i> _{Cohen}
	Experimental Group		Control Group				
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			
Authenticity	22.90	1.89	21.96	2.71	1.58	0.11	0.40
Acquiescence	18.18	4.04	19.37	4.46	−1.08	0.28	0.29
Clarity/projectuality	21.15	3.03	19.33	3.45	2.17	0.03	0.55

6. Discussion

The present study examined the contribution of the Life Construction dialogue intervention “Constructing my future purposeful life” [6], to career counselors' sustainable career development, in terms of enhancing their reflexivity, self-awareness, and vision of the future chapters of their personal and professional lives. The audience methodology [51] was used and the intervention was delivered in a group-based setting.

The first two hypotheses were confirmed, since the group-based Life Construction dialogue intervention contributed to increased changes in individuals' themes regarding occupational and personal areas, as detected through the Future Career Autobiography [52,53]. Namely, the career counselors who reported more changes in their FCAs were those who received the group-based Life Construction dialogue intervention "Constructing my future purposeful life," in comparison with those who did not receive it. Namely, the majority of the career counselors who did not receive any kind of intervention did not report any changes in their themes. These findings indicate that the intervention activated the reflective processes of the career counselors and promoted their reflexivity for their future life/career projects in terms of becoming more specific, feeling less insecure, and eventually being more hopeful and open towards their future life/career projects. These aspects reflect a positive preventive perspective that underlines the importance of building strengths and permits counselors to consider the value of authentic, clear aims with personal meaning that promote flourishing in harmony and constructing well-being [58]. The findings also suggest that the career counselors' adaptability was improved, as the intervention laid emphasis on individual personal initiative in constructing their careers, empowering their accountability, and retaining their internalized values and beliefs [59]. In addition, career counselors were able to identify their personal resources, something that contributes to gaining self-awareness regarding their options and their ability to manage these options in an effective way [60], as well as to make changes in their Self and the situation to effectively manage their life-career [61]. It should also be noted that career adaptability is aligned with the reflexive self-consciousness, as individuals who manage their life-career transitions more effectively process different future scenarios in which they can verify any prospects and eventually adopt or reject them, proceeding with new attempts [60].

The changes in the FCAs of the participants who received the intervention reflected the career counselors' moves across spatial and temporal contexts, inquiring and reflecting on their Subjective Identity Forms (SIFs), as well as on their Systems of Subjective Identity Forms (SSIFs) [31,40]. In particular, the FCA changes denoted their moves to more specific, authentic, and meaningful future career and personal projects, in relation to their interaction with their Selves, their significant Others, their organizational and natural environments. In the FCAs after the Life Construction dialogue intervention, career counselors referred to their multiple roles more frequently, in comparison with their FCAs before the intervention. Namely, career counselors relocated their focus on the network of interactions that is produced by their multiple Subjective Identity Forms across their social, organizational, and natural contexts and laid more emphasis on the balance that they would like to establish. This finding is in line with the Psychology of Sustainability and Sustainable Development [1–3], as well as the Psychology of Harmony and Harmonization framework [4] that attempt to reconceptualize and discuss the inherent and mutual link of individuals with their world (personal, intrapersonal, organizational, natural) by underlining the processes of harmony and balance that contribute to their well-being. It also reflects that career counselors are inspired by their desire to make a difference both for themselves and for their world in a broader sense [62].

The third hypothesis was also confirmed, since the career counselors who received the Life Construction dialogue intervention improved their authenticity and clarity/projectuality and decreased their sense of acquiescence [54]. Therefore, the career counselors' reflexivity was enhanced, while the three dimensions aligned with the tenets of life and identity construction theory [31,40] were significantly improved. That means that the Life Construction dialogue intervention [6] contributed to the career counselors' awareness of their future career-personal-life projects based on their authentic values and the meaning aligned with those values, instead of conforming to values imposed on them by their society. In addition, the career counselors' clarity about their career-personal-life projects was fostered, as they need to be aware of what they want to become in their next life chapters [23].

With respect to the effect sizes, the authors did not locate any meta-analysis specifically targeted at interventions aiming at promoting the career counselors' identity awareness; however, considering the present intervention as a career intervention for career counselors themselves, some interesting

evidence from the meta-analyses can contribute to further exploration of the present findings. Susan Whiston and Ilene Buck [63] discussed in their research the average effect sizes from two earlier meta-analyses [64,65] focusing on career intervention effectiveness. The first meta-analysis included studies on career interventions before 1982 and found an unweighted effect size of 0.82 [64], while the second meta-analysis that replicated the same process in studies from 1983 until 1995 found an unweighted effect size of 0.45 [65]. Even though the effect sizes appeared different, Oliver and Spokane [64] reported that their mode and median fell within the 0.40 to 0.60 range, which were similar to the effect size of 0.45 found by Whiston, Sexton and Lasoff [65].

Relatively, Whiston and her colleagues concluded that career classes and individual career counseling were the most effective interventions, while group career counseling, group test interpretation, workshops, or structured groups and computer-assisted interventions had moderate effect sizes [66,67]. In addition, Brown and Ryan Krane [68] identified five critical ingredients that positively affect the career intervention outcomes, irrespective of modality and format; these five critical ingredients are written exercises, individualized interpretations, occupational information, modeling, and attention to building support. Specifically, for the written exercises Brown and his colleagues [68] found that when they included: (a) opportunities for occupational comparison and future planning, and (b) opportunities to articulate future goals and activities related to achieving those goals, they yielded larger effect sizes. In addition, they found that the individualized interpretation and feedback should target future planning and setting goals, while the support for career plans increased the perceived effectiveness of the process.

Based on these meta-analyses, the effect sizes of the present study regarding the dimensions of authenticity ($d_{Cohen} = 0.65$) and clarity/projectuality ($d_{Cohen} = 0.53$) presented a moderate effect, which was further validated by Cohen's suggestions [69] having an intermediate effect. Additionally, the Life Construction dialogue intervention had many similar critical ingredients with the career interventions that were studied [68], allowing the partial and careful exploration (not justification or validation) of the present findings. On the contrary, the dimension of acquiescence had an adverse effect ($d_{Cohen} = -0.06$), based on Cohen's suggestions [69], indicating that the Life Construction dialogue intervention "Constructing my future purposeful life" [6] led to the decrease of the acquiescence dimension. At this point it should be noted that as acquiescence refers to a sense of conforming to and passively accepting values imposed on people by their society rather than basing the career-life projects on one's authentic values [6], the present finding is rather encouraging. Hence, these results reflect a primary prevention perspective in the frameworks of Psychology of Sustainability and Sustainable Development [1–3] and the Psychology of Harmony and Harmonization framework [4] in terms of contributing to the career counselors' Self-construction [16].

As far as the fourth hypothesis is concerned, it was partially confirmed, as the only statistically significant difference found between the two groups was the dimension of clarity/projectuality. The effect size of clarity/projectuality ($d_{Cohen} = 0.55$) indicated an intermediate effect based both on the aforementioned meta-analyses [56,66–68] and on Cohen's suggestions [69]. Clarity/projectuality refers to individual lucidity about career–personal–life projects and assesses whether they know what they want to become in their next life chapters. Career counselors who received the dialogue intervention improved their awareness in relation to their future career–personal–life projects, in comparison with the career counselors who did not receive any kind of intervention. The impact of clarity on career counselors can be further described in relation to their SIFs [31], based on data obtained from their FCAs. The majority of the career counselors became more specific and clearer in terms of who (occupational and personal roles) they want to be in the future, where (occupational and personal settings) they want to act in the future, what (occupational and personal activities) they want to undertake, and why (occupational and personal goals in relation to impact). The abovementioned results partially reflect aspects of what Argyropoulou et al. [70] refer to as sustainable career development; namely, a dynamic, continuing, reflective process of: (a) enhancing the harmonization between individual SIFs [31]; (b) encouraging individual personal growth and effective adaptability in liquid contexts;

(c) enhancing their social responsibility and authentic values, and (d) promoting balance between life and career roles in terms of their future personal–career–life projects. With respect to social responsibility, current research further validates the present finding; namely, Di Fabio [71] concludes that, through training, career counselors enhance their sustainable intrapersonal and interpersonal talents by considering their reflexivity and authentic meanings for sustainable career interventions and sustainable well-being, as well as the sustainability of relationships, of groups and communities for well-being, and flourishing by being sensitive to other people and for others who will follow in the future.

In addition, even though the career counselors who received the dialogue intervention reported higher levels of authenticity and lower levels of acquiescence in comparison with those who did not receive the intervention, the differences were not statistically significant. This finding could be interpreted based on the personal underlying values of the career counselors and the nature of those two dimensions. In other words, authenticity refers to individual awareness of future career–personal–life projects as a basis of the authentic values and the meaning that is aligned with those values [6]. The acquiescence dimension reveals a sense of conforming to and passively accepting values imposed on people by their society rather than basing the career–life projects on one’s authentic values [6]. Hence, a possible interpretation of this finding may be based on the diversity of the individuals’ values as well as on their responses to external influences on their value systems. As Schwartz [72] argues, values are general beliefs that transcend specific situations and are ordered by personal importance and pertain to desirable end-states or behaviors. Therefore, values can be differentiated among people, as they constitute highly subjective beliefs that move beyond the present relating to future projects. Reflecting on the non-statistically significant differences between the experimental and control groups on the two dimensions pertaining to the career counselors’ values (authenticity and acquiescence), the authors assume that they are beyond comparison due to their highly subjective nature [72]. This is further validated by the statistically significant difference in the intra-group comparison of the experimental group, prior to and after receiving the intervention, which improved their authenticity and decreased their acquiescence. Inferentially, these findings confirm that interventions focusing on individual life constructions contribute to the harmonization of their value systems, promoting balance between personal–authentic and socially imposed values.

Apart from the evidence base of the contribution of the Life Construction dialogue intervention to the career counselors’ sustainable career development, these results also highlight some practical implications. First of all, delivering experiential training to career counselors [55] is a positive learning experience for the participants, as they can promote both their personal and career development. In other words, as the aim of career counselors is to help people construct their own lives through work and relationships [8,73], they need to plan ahead and have their own lives constructed beforehand. As a result, career counselors’ proactive behavior toward career adaptability and personal growth may protect and further enhance their own career sustainability [47]. Otherwise, career counselors may feel less effective (in a subjective perspective) and prove less efficient (in an objective perspective) in a relational form [15]. This finding is also in line with other research findings that explore the impact of training on adaptability and performance. Indicatively, Jannesari and Sullivan conclude that adaptability resources may accumulate over time, as individuals are involved in education/training and gain experience. As the researchers highlight, a higher level of career adaptability may result in higher performance, because individuals feel more comfortable about investing their whole selves in the workplace [74]. Also, taking into account the liquid nature [39,40] of contemporary societies and the labor market conditions, interventions that promote the harmonization of individuals with their Selves and their environments are imperative.

Taking into account that the construction of the Self as a sustainable project matters not only for individuals, but also for their organizational and social contexts [1,75], the experiential training of career counselors that is based on narratability, biographicity, and reflexivity [12], as well as on adaptability, identity, and purposeful identity awareness [6], may function as a primary prevention

perspective in the frameworks of the Psychology of Sustainability and Sustainable Development [1–3] and the Psychology of Harmony and Harmonization framework [4]. Through their practical training in advanced interventions that require an active engagement and personal reflection, career counselors are empowered, both personally and professionally, to deal with challenges that may arise in their occupational and personal contexts. It has been already shown that recurrent training promotes career counselors' self-efficacy, reduces their stress, and contributes to a more effective delivery of their services [76–78].

As career practitioners should no longer rely on a single theoretical framework in order to address their various operational roles, focus is required on a wider range of conceptual constructs and ideas that are more holistic, have a broader perspective, and emphasize human flexibility, adaptability, and lifelong learning [11,79]. Therefore, the need for continuous professional development in contemporary interventions is necessary in order for career counselors to be active and effective, as global changes and challenges diversify clients' needs and concerns [55]. Cedefop [80] underlines the guidance that practitioners' continuous professional development may contribute both to refreshing and maintaining the currency of knowledge and skills, and to supporting career advancement. Through continuous learning, career counselors' professionalization is promoted and the challenge of having obsolete knowledge and skills, as Newman [42] suggested regarding sustainable careers, is tackled.

In order to further validate the results of the present study, future research should consider follow-up tests with participants who receive the group-based Life Construction dialogue intervention "Constructing my future purposeful life". In addition, a more extended sample size may provide a better insight into the internal processes related to the personal value systems and inquire in a more effective way whether the value systems of the participants change in the long term. On a broader level, future research should benefit from the challenges bound with human nature at an individual, social, organizational and natural level, by leveraging interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approaches. Indicatively, future research could focus on providing additional evidence of career counselors' training in relation to narratability, biographicity, reflexivity, adaptability, identity, and purposeful identity awareness. Furthermore, in the frameworks of the Psychology of Sustainability and Sustainable Development and the Psychology of Harmony and Harmonization, researchers could also examine the dynamic process of sustainable career development and the challenges pertaining to career sustainability in peoples' life domains from different environments and/or countries. This would result in a sound understanding of the potential differences in how the social, organizational, and natural contexts influence (and are influenced by) individual personal context.

7. Conclusions

The present research endorses the fundamental narrative career theories of the twenty-first century and highlights the relational link between individuals and their contexts. The need for advanced counseling interventions that promote the dynamic processes of reflexivity and subjective interpretations in multiple "realities" is evident. However, further light should be shed on the challenges deriving from the nonlinear and unpredictable progression of contemporary societies. Even though the research on sustainable careers is still developing, research interest has been engaged by the diverse challenges and holistic meaning-potentialities that sustainability may provide in understanding aspects of the contemporary world of work. Hence, Sustainable Development remains, yet, a vital quest. As the semio-technique of vocational guidance is redefined [48], the Psychology of Sustainability and Sustainable Development, as well as the Psychology of Harmony and Harmonization framework, may provide additional perspectives and broaden their scope by integrating personal and career counseling in order to promote sustainable development and positive change. However, this should also be reflected in career counselor training. Emphasis should be laid on the counselors' active participation, observational learning, and its interconnectedness with their life-career roles.

The present research contributes to this need by suggesting that career counselors' sustainable development is promoted through experiential training that considers not only their needs, but also

contemporary interventions and up-to-date theoretical frameworks that address current challenges and opportunities. Through practical training, career counselors have the opportunity to apply what they learn to themselves and promote their own reflexivity, harmonization, and sustainable development. Additionally, they are able to update their techniques and interventions and therefore apply what they learn to their clients. Hence, the present research acknowledges the need (and the prerequisite) that career counselors need to construct their own Selves as a sustainable project beforehand, in order to be able to support individuals in their own Self constructions and promote their well-being. In other words, career counselors will not know who they are until they know where they have been, and they will not know where they are going until they know where they are now.

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