

Ioan-Alexandru GRADINARU
“Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University of Iasi (Romania)

The Principles of Supportive Communication: A Critical Perspective

Abstract: My paper focuses on the concept of supportive communication. While several authors have proposed a list of principles of supportive communication, a review of the most relevant literature on the matter reveals a bewildering complexity. What was initially thought as a straightforward interaction, easily understandable within the theoretical frame of social support, proved to be a much more intricate process, involving verbal, paraverbal and nonverbal content, facework, cognitive heuristics and contextual factors. The problem-focused paradigm has been complemented with the emotion-focused one, and Brant Burleson offered a very useful tool by distinguishing among Low Person-Centeredness, Moderately Person-Centeredness and Highly Person-Centeredness. Along other refined tools, the latter distinction will allow us to have a better grasp of this process and to find better ways to increase the positive outcomes.

Keywords: supportive communication, person-centeredness, message content, perceived support availability, optimal outcomes