CLINICAL PROCESS AND TECHNIQUE II: THE THERAPEUTIC ATTITUDE

Institute for Clinical Social Work
Jennifer Tolleson, Ph.D., L.C.S.W.
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Course Objectives:

1. To address the psychotherapist’s motivations, assumptions, personal characteristics, and attitudes as these inform both the clinical dialogue and the quality of the therapeutic relationship.
2. To explore, using clinical theory in combination with personal and therapeutic experience, the fundamentals of clinical listening and understanding, as well as what is personally required by the psychotherapist for facilitating an optimal therapeutic process.
3. To deepen the student’s reflectivity and self-awareness within the therapeutic interaction.

Required Texts: Two texts are required for the class:

Course Requirements: All readings are required. Students must come to class prepared to reflect upon and integrate the readings into the classroom discussion.

Two essays are required. The first, due the third class meeting, should briefly sketch out your “therapeutic vision” (as described in class), using the outline provided. This essay should be no longer than two pages in length.

The second essay (10-12 pages) is due the last day of class. In the first part of this paper, students are asked to consider one of the therapeutic attitudes discussed in class (freedom, curiosity, reverie, empathy, courage, etc.) from a strictly personal perspective. In other words, what is the value you attach to the idea in human experience and interaction? What does it mean to you personally? In the second section, students are asked to explore their difficulties maintaining this attitude in the clinical situation. What impediments/anxieties interfere with your ability to be free, curious, imaginative, courageous, empathic, etc., in your work with patients? Please include a case example that demonstrates a clinical impasse that you believe was attributable to a retreat (on your part) from holding this attitude. What do you wish you would have done or said (or not done/said), and why do you think you refrained from doing so at the time?

Written work will be evaluated on quality of writing, complexity and independence of thought, and ability to express ideas authentically and honestly. Plagiarism of any kind will not be tolerated, and ideas belonging to others (including the internet) must be cited using APA guidelines. Overall class grades will be based on the following: Quality of class participation: 25%, Essay I: 25%; Essay II: 50%.

The course is taught in a lecture/discussion format. Therefore, class attendance is required. For students who miss more than one class session (excepting a
personal emergency), the overall course grade will be lowered one level for each missed session. Students who miss more than three class sessions will automatically fail the course (in cases of personal emergency, the student will be asked to withdraw from the course and retake it the following year).

Except in cases of extreme personal emergency (requiring permission from the instructor before the last class day), there will be no ‘Incompletes’ given for the class. Assignments turned in late will not be accepted.

Instructor: Students can contact me at 802-651-7670, or at Jentolleson@comcast.net. I am rarely at the Institute, so please do not leave messages or material for me there. My mailing address is: 1 Iranistan Rd, Burlington, VT 05401.

**COURSE OUTLINE**

**Class 1: What is Psychotherapy?**


Symington, Neville (1996). “Introduction” (pp. xiii-xvii), “The traditions and practices of psychotherapy” (pp. 3-10), “The psychotherapist’s education” (pp. 11-22), and “The analyst’s inner task” (pp. 23-34). In The Making of a Psychotherapist. International Universities Press.

**Class 2: The Therapist in the Clinical Process**


**Class 3: Being an Object: Understanding the Patient’s Experience of the Therapist**


**Class 4: Being a Subject: Freedom, Courage, and Authenticity**


Class 5: How the Therapist Listens: Curiosity, Faith, and Reverie


Class 6: What the Therapist Listens To: Forms of Communication, Receptivity, and Clinical Data


Class 7: Why the Therapist Listens: The Centrality of Phantasy, Meaning, and Psychic Reality in the Empathic Process


Class 8: Beginning the Treatment


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