

Indiana University
School of Social Work

Fall, 1984

S635

Barbara Rosof, M.S.

PRINCIPLES OF PSYCHOTHERAPY WITH CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS

I. Course Description

For the beginning child therapist, the task of understanding his/her youthful patients presents some unfamiliar challenges. It is difficult to discern meaning in much of their activity, and equally difficult for the therapist to assess the effect of his interventions. The aim of this course is to examine these difficulties, which is to examine the ways in which children are different from adults, and to help students develop a way of thinking about and approaching children which will enable them to think diagnostically and respond therapeutically.

We will examine in some detail the transactions between therapist and child, from the first diagnostic encounter into the beginning stages of treatment. Emphasis will be placed on the informational value of the therapist's affective experience, on the use of empathy as a therapeutic instrument, and on the central task of fostering the therapeutic alliance with child and with parent.

II. Course Objectives

1. To examine the differences in communication style between children and adults, and among children of various age groups (pre-schoolers, latency, younger and older adolescents), and to develop an understanding of the basis of these differences.
2. To enhance students' capacity for empathy, and to assist them in learning to see and hear children's communications.
3. To develop an appreciation of child development as the theoretical basis for understanding and responding therapeutically to children.
4. To present the tasks involved in performing a diagnostic assessment, in building an alliance with a child and with parents, and beginning the treatment.
5. To help students become familiar with the relevant literature as a resource for refining their skills.

III. Outline of the Course

- A. An orientation to the complexities and pleasures of work with children, with attention to the physical set up, the importance of a developmental perspective, the uses of the therapist's affective experience, the child therapy literature, and so forth.
- B. First meetings: A walk through the diagnostic process. Using material from diagnostic interviews, we will examine the experiences of all parties: the child, his parents, and the diagnostician. The aim will be to highlight the nature of the tasks, and the efforts of all parties to make themselves understood. Variations in procedure which arise from the setting, the nature of referral, the child's age and type of psychopathology will be considered.

Readings: Mishne, pp. 177-255
 Freud, A., Normality and Pathology in Childhood,
 Ch. 3
 McDonald, Marjorie, "The Psychiatric Evaluation
 of Children"

5 sessions

- C. The work of treatment. A consideration of the issues in the ongoing work with children and adolescents, as these are brought into focus in the study of clinical material. Among these will be: setting the contract with child and with parents, fostering the alliance, managing resistances, dealing with interruptions, and termination.

Readings: Mishne, pp. 259-333
 Freud, S., "On Beginning the Treatment"

7 sessions

IV. Assignments

The readings referred to in the course outline and those cited in the bibliography expand on and illuminate the issues discussed in class. At a minimum students are expected to read the assigned material. Additional readings from the bibliography will supplement and enrich the class discussion. Students are expected to draw on and refer to their readings in class discussion and written work.

There will be two written assignments, the first due about a third of the way through the course, and the second at about two thirds. Dates and specifics will be announced well in advance.

V. Evaluation and Grading

The instructor's evaluation of each student will be based on contributions to class discussion and the written work.

The instructor will from time to time invite class discussion of the content, conduct, and progress of the course. In addition, there will be the usual student evaluation of course and teacher at the end of the term.

IV. Bibliography

1. Anthony, E. James. "Communicating Therapeutically with the Child," Journal of American Academy Child Psychiatry, Vol. 3, #1, 1964, pp. 102-125. A good basic orientation to some of the cognitive and emotional differences between children's world view and adults' and some techniques for making oneself understood.
2. Bennet, Michael & Bennett, Mona. "The Uses of Hopelessness" American Journal of Psychiatry Vol. 141, April 1984, pp 559-562. An interesting article, not specifically related to children. The authors suggest that there are times when therapist and patient both must face the limits of their efforts, and the patient's accomplishment should be measured in terms of patience and endurance rather than cure.
3. Chethik, Morton. "Amy: The Intensive Treatment of an Elective Mute," in McDermott and Harrison, Eds., The Psychiatric Treatment of the Child. New York: Jason Aronson, 1977, pp. 117-136.
4. Cooper, S. and Wanerman, L. Children in Treatment, A Primer for Beginning Psychotherapists. Just what the subtitle says it is: a good text for the beginning child therapist. It addresses many basic questions.
5. Fraiberg, Selma, Ed. Clinical Studies in Infant Mental Health. New York: Basic Books, 1980. A well-written account of sophisticated clinical work in the evolving field of infant mental health. Ms. Fraiberg is seasoned clinician, and an eloquent advocate for children's needs.
6. Freud, Anna. "Some Remarks on Infant Observation," Psychoanalytic Study of the Child, Vol. 8, 1953, pp. 9-19. A nuts-and-bolts, practical guide to making sense out of what you see when you observe a baby.

7. Freud, Anna. Normality and Pathology in Childhood: Assessments of Development. New York: International Universities Press, 1965, especially pp. 62-91, "The Concept of Developmental Lines." Anna Freud is the foremost scholar and theoretician of child psychopathology and child development, and she is also a clear and readable writer. Her conceptualization of developmental lines is extremely useful in diagnostic work with children.
8. Freud, Sigmund. "Further Recommendations in the Technique of Psychoanalysis: On Beginning the Treatment," in Freud, Therapy and Technique, Ed. Phillip Riaff. New York: Collier Books, 1963, pp. 135-146. Also in the Standard Edition and in Collected Works.
9. Group for the Advancement of Psychiatry, From Diagnosis to Treatment in Child Psychiatry, New York, Jason Aronson, 1978. Offers a good overview of the tasks of diagnosis and treatment planning, especially for work in clinics and agencies.
10. Ann Hartman, "Clinical Practice in the 80's: New Paradigms" Smith College School for Social Work Journal, Fall 1983, Vol 10, No. 2 pp. 29-32. A brief review of alternative ways of viewing patients (intrapsychic and systemic), and of the necessity for integrating these views.
11. Katan, Annie. "Some Thoughts About the Role of Verbalization in Early Childhood," In Psychoanalytic Study of the Child. New York: International Universities Press, Vol. 16, 1961, pp. 184-188. A classic article which conceptualizes the impact of the capacity to talk and to think verbally on the child's psychological development.
12. Keith, Charles R. "The Therapeutic Alliance in Child Psychotherapy," Vol. 9, #1, 1968, pp. 31-43. Offers good basic model for building the alliance.
13. Lieberman, Florence. Social Work With Children. New York: Human Science Press, 1979. A textbook which attempts to digest a large volume of child treatment material, season with social work values, and serve it up in bite-sized portions. Useful for an overview, unsatisfying because of its brevity. Good bibliographies.
14. McDonald, Marjorie. "The Psychiatric Evaluation of Children," Journal of the American Academy of Child Psychiatry, Vol. 4, October, 1965, pp. 569-612. A detailed review of the tasks of a diagnostic evaluation, with considerable practical advice.

15. McDermott, John F. "Indications for Family Therapy: Question of Non-Question?" Journal of American Academy of Child Psychiatry, Vol. 20, #2, Spring, 1981, pp. 409-419.
16. Meeks, John. "Children Who Cheat at Games," Journal of the American Academy of Child Psychiatry, Vol. 4, October, 1965, pp. 569-612. A detailed review of the tasks of a diagnostic evaluation, with considerable practical advice.
17. Meeks, John. The Fragile Alliance. A very practical orientation to the tasks of diagnosis and treatment of adolescents on an out-patient basis.
18. Mishne, Judith. Clinical Work with Children. New York: The Free Press, 1983. A comprehensive overview of the principles of psychotherapy with children, from a developmental and ego-psychological perspective. It is rich with case illustrations which represent the varied ethnic and racial backgrounds seen in agency settings.
19. Olden, Christine. "On Adult Empathy with Children," Psychoanalytic Study of the Child. New York: International Universities Press, Vol. 8, 1953, pp. 111-126. Somewhat dated, but a useful examination of empathy and inferences with empathy in adults.
20. Palombo, Joseph. "Perceptual Deficits and Self-Esteem in Adolescence," in Clinical Social Work, Vol. 7, #1, 1979, pp. 34-61. A discussion of the impact of perceptual deficits on self-esteem, and a report of the author's very capable work with an adolescent boy. It offers a good feel for the nature of the work with adolescents.
21. Proskauer, Stephen. "Focused Time Limited Psychotherapy with Children," in McDermott and Harrison, Eds., The Psychiatric Treatment of the Child. New York: Jason Aronson, 1977, pp. 74-98.
22. Sarnoff, Charles. Latency. New York: Jason Aronson, 1976. A scholarly study of this rather neglected age group. He illuminates the developmental tasks and the pathological consequences of their disruption. Heavy going, but rewarding.

23. Tanquay, Peter E. "Toward a New Classification of Serious Psychopathology in Children", in Journal of the American Academy of Child Psychiatry, Vol 23, #4, July, 1984. Innovative thinking about the etiology of childhood disorders. Scholarly, perhaps hard to follow, but it offers a good look at current concerns in the field.
24. Thomas and Chess. Temperament and Development. New York: Brunner Mazel, 1977. An eloquent exposition of the influence of children's heredity and temperament in their psychological development.