

How to be at home, rest in your work as a family therapist and be influential

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9th Nordic Family Therapy Conference
Visby
19.08.2011
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The intentions of the presenter in this workshop:

- To create a mental space where people can together explore how to rest and be influential during this workshop... and doing therapy.
- To rest in the way I am working and be influential e.g. to be aware nonjudgementally of the unfolding of my experiences moment by moment in order to act wholesomely during this workshop.

Goals in psychotherapy

- *"If I planned to go to a conference, and if I knew forehand what I would be thinking at the end, then I wouldn't go. If I knew where we would be at the end of the session, I don't think I would do this work. And If I had not changed at all after the session, then my actions probably would not have a very big impact on the people who came to me."*

Michael White

Three (crusial) questions related to well-being of the therapist

1. What is knowledge? Where is knowledge in the therapeutic relationship? How do we produce knowledge?
2. Who or what is the "self" that is doing therapy?
3. How is this "self" positioned while we work with people, searching for the constantly shifting balance between connection and detachment, merging and separation?

Key principles in family therapy

- All people in a system are connected such that a change in one brings about a change in others.
- Individuals can be best understood in their contexts.
- The therapist and the client system jointly create a new system – the therapeutic system – in which all involved mutually impact one another.

(Prosky, 2009)

Two practices of knowledge

Aboutness thinking

- The therapist has a privileged position in terms of knowledge and power
- Distance is maintained
- The therapist determines the meanings
- Control, guiding, cures

Witness thinking

- The therapist and the client are mutually privileged; power is freely shared as much as possible
- Distance reduced, closeness increased
- The meanings are negotiated together
- Unpredictable, creative uncertainty, cares

No-self (annatta)

- According to the Buddhist psychology there is no fixed, separate, permanent, independent "self".
- "Self" is empty from core essence, containing no fixed defining characteristics. It is rather a mental construction, image, a label, a narrative we are identified with during our development.
- "Self" is a impermanent, constantly changing process containing of five aggregates: matter (body), consciousness, perceptions, sensations, and intentions, reactions.
- Compare how social constructionism or post-structuralism define the "self".

The Position of the Therapist's "self"

- Centred and influential (*ego-centred*)
- Centred and non-influential
- Decentred and non-influential
- Decentred and influential (*ecologically centred*)
- **Resting in Beingness and non-doing** (*non-dualistically centred*)

Morgan, A.: The position of the therapist in working with children and their families. In White, M. & Morgan, A. (2006): Narrative Therapy with Children and their families. pp.59. Dulwich Centre Publications

The Dance

- Fight-or-flight OR rest-and-digest
- Dual-and-non-dual
- Digital-and-analogic
- Conventional-and-ultimate
- Doing-and-being

The Doing Mode of Mind

- Goal-oriented, motivated to reduce the gap between how things are and how we would like them to be.
- Attention is directed to past or future.
- Constant classification, evaluating and judging.
- Grasping and identification with mind formulations.

The Being Mode of Mind

- No "pollution" of goals or purpose, open relationship with the present moment.
- Attention is directed to present moment, direct experience.
- Sensations, thoughts and feelings are accepted as they are at the present moment.
- Consciousness is a open Witness, a dis-identified Observer. We can **rest** in our Consciousness.

Dvorak Simon

- *"Therapy is a spiritual path on which we suddenly realize that we are something full-bodied, as it were something with guts, something that makes you suddenly realize that you are breathing...that awareness encompasses time and as it is embraced with it, that something is beautiful or absurd, or magnificent, or ridiculous, and every inch of you is moving through space, and knows, and doesn't know that it knows..."*

(Doing Therapy as a Spiritual Path, 1995)

Literature

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