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EDITORIAL SECTION

Editors' Note

I have been involved with this journal for four issues now. This is our first publication in my role as Managing Editor and I'd like to share my experience of this. Not for a moment do I feel any different than I did as a Co-Editor! The sense I have is that of belonging in a balanced family - where every member is an individual with unique and diverse thinking, with the freedom to be their powerful selves and express their distinctive characteristics. We may have labels for our roles and responsibilities - Father/Daughter or Co-Editor/Managing Editor, yet the presence and contributions of each member, is what truly makes the group potent.

My transition has felt easy and comfortable, thanks to steady handholding and guidance from my editorial team/family. They have supported, explained and shown me the ropes, while constantly encouraging me and allowing space for my curiosity, questions and ideas. I feel calm and confident taking up this responsibility. I thank you Ragini Rao and Deepak Dhananjaya, for your instruction, care and generosity. It is with joy and this spirit of fellowship, that I present the 8th SAJTA issue.

Nisha Rao, Managing Editor, SAJTA

The SAJTA is a psychology journal hosted by the South Asian Association of Transactional Analysis (SAATA). It captures views, theories and concepts shared by practitioners in the mental health field. This is our 8th issue, as we strive to disseminate its valuable information with not just members from the Transactional Analysis fraternity, but also with anyone interested to expand their understanding of mental wellness ideas and practices.

While the January Volume of SAJTA runs with a theme, the July edition is an ‘Open Theme’, allowing for more diversity and reach. We hope you enjoy reading this issue, which comprises works shared by three authors.

Transactional Analysis is a system of understanding human behaviour and communication, with tools to effect positive change. Practitioners of this method work in varied fields of Counselling, Psychotherapy, Organisations and Education. “This process of the good life is not, I am convinced, a life for the faint-fainthearted. It involves the stretching and growing of becoming more and more of one's potentialities. It involves the courage to be. It means launching oneself fully into the stream of life. Yet the deeply exciting thing about human beings is that when the individual is inwardly free, he chooses as the good life this process of becoming.” - *Carl R. Rogers, On Becoming a Person: A Therapist's View of Psychotherapy*. This is the world of Transactional Analysis and its practitioners.

Our first article by John Heath explores and expands exactly this thought. In a philosophical approach, John explores psychological Autonomy as a journey, not a destination. A life long process of refinement and wisdom, which one acquires with concerted effort. He proposes that autonomy achieved through one’s personal experience (untaught motivation), is an innate ‘wisdom’. It is distinguished by Dr. Radhakrishnan’s description of its qualities viz. truth, goodness and beauty. One cannot be truly wise without all these three aspects. With such wisdom, John enlists Maslow’s theory on spiritual motivation, to describe how people transcend self-interest, after achieving self-actualization. In a unique manner, he shows the connections between self-acceptance, development and human/global consciousness with scientific beliefs of

absolute reality and quantum mechanics. John then goes on to narrate his own personal quest and experiences, which brings alive and connects all the philosophies explained.

The second article by Samiksha Jain is one that someone even from a non-Transactional Analysis background may find informative and beneficial. Through her experience of working as a counselor with partners in relationships, she shares some of the Transactional Analysis concepts that she uses to understand client challenges and help them overcome them. A case excerpt makes for interesting reading, as Samiksha describes how she looks for cues in gestures, voice and words and employs those impressions to intervene appropriately. She has shared a chart to help our readers understand these cues for themselves as well. Samiksha portrays the accuracy and efficacy of Transactional Analysis tools in her endeavor to help couples become more compatible and intimate.

Zinnatul is our next author and is from Bangladesh. She takes us along with her on a journey that she embarked with her client, towards healing. She shares how a variety of therapeutic interventions enabled and empowered her client to move towards autonomy. Zinnatul explains the various Transactional Analysis tools and techniques she used to invite her client to OKness, despite her adverse life experiences. She acknowledges and shares how this case reinforced in her, the availability and power of Physis. We hope her writing inspires other professionals from her country to write into the journal.

Nisha Rao, Managing Editor, SAJTA

Ragini Rao, Co-Editor, SAJTA

Rosemary Kurian, Co-Editor, SAJTA

Guidelines from the Editorial Board

From our experience in editing the SAATA journal thus far, we have put together some guidelines for contributors to future editions of the journal:

- Write on topics – experiences, opinions, research - which can be explained primarily using transactional analysis concepts.
- Keep sentences short and precise. Where there are multiple ideas, construct them as two or more sentences.
- Use simple and easy-to-understand words. Remember that your audience may not be transactional analysis literate or even use English as their first language.
- Avoid the use of casual phrases, expressions and slangs, unless quoting verbatim.
- Follow APA style of formatting, references, citations and bibliography (<http://www.apastyle.org/>).
- Review the paper for redundancy, where the same idea is expressed multiple times.
- Double-check transactional analysis terminologies and their definitions, e.g. names of games, components of script, drivers, injunctions etc.
- Quote the original authors of the concepts.
- Provide English translations to any vernacular quotation that are made in the article.
- Total word count should be less than 2000 words.
- The article should not be published anywhere before.
- Figures should be grouped as one image. Label figures and tables.
- Submit the article in word format.

- As part of our learning, we have now decided to only accept single part articles that align to the theme of the issue. Multi-part series will only be considered on a case-by-case basis, depending on the relevance and timeliness of the topic.

We hope this is useful as you all contemplate contributing to the journal.

For queries, feedback and suggestions, write to us at journal@saata.org.

Theme for January 2020 Issue

“Diversity in Transactional Analysis”

Deadline for submissions: **November 15th 2019**

Email : journal@saata.org

Please follow the [guidelines](#) before you submit.

Editorial Board

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Beyond Autonomy – from self development to global conversation

John Heath

Autonomy as a stage of development

The phrase “beyond autonomy” suggests a destination; somewhere to go after autonomy has been reached. It implies that autonomy can be achieved and can also be transcended. Berne defined autonomy as the release or recovery of three capacities: awareness, spontaneity and intimacy (Berne, 1964). He wrote that this is achieved through making a “friendly divorce” from parents and Parental influences (p.161), implying in this metaphor that an individual can live free from script and games by throwing off the influence of culture and family. Though he says that such overthrow is “never final”, autonomy does appear to represent Berne’s idea of the peak of human development.

Autonomy as a psychological concept is imported from political philosophy, where it means self-governing. The term implies that a person can achieve a state of self –determination. The cost of this is the loss of illusion and a head on encounter with the existential realities of aloneness, freedom and absurdity (Berne, 1966). In his later writing Berne mused rather poignantly about this struggle and asked himself whether he was actually “calling his own tune” as an individual, or whether he was in some way still rolling out a melody created by others (Berne, 1972). What Berne gave us in the notion of autonomy, is a direction of psychological growth and he defined it in terms of three superlative capacities. Awareness, spontaneity and intimacy are capacities to which we aspire. We can’t really achieve them, or at least not for more

than a moment or two.

Defined like this, autonomy is not a destination. It sets the direction of travel. It makes sense to conceive this journey as a lifelong process of perpetual refinement. Seamless as the process is, it also is helpful to think about it in two major steps. The first step is to become a grown up in the culture and circumstances that we live in, such as managing resources, keeping self and dependents safe. This might usefully be termed “functional autonomy”. Although it shows up differently in different cultures, all cultures have ideas of what it means to be a grown up. These ideas describe the skills and attributes of maturity required for success in the context of a particular time and place. This paper looks at what might come after that, beyond functional autonomy, in the quest for psychological autonomy.

Development beyond contextual maturity

Development beyond functional autonomy can only be achieved through personal experience. It is acquired but it can't be taught. It proceeds towards a state of wise acceptance of self in the context of absolute reality. The exact nature of absolute reality is beyond the scope of this paper but in essence is a unified field. An example of this unification is the discovery that energy and matter are different forms of the same thing. Unity reveals that all the separations we live with in everyday reality, like the physical and the non-physical, are aspects of the same phenomenon. The traditions of science, faith and philosophy have each sought, from different perspectives, to illuminate something of the nature of absolute reality, and the discipline required to achieve a wise understanding of it. Wisdom is not casually achieved. It is a kind of knowing distinguished by certain qualities. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan called these the qualities of truth, goodness and beauty. Radhakrishnan was both a philosopher and a politician. He was India's

second president, from 1962 to 67. He was also a Hindu scholar studying particularly the Vedanta tradition. In a purely science based context, the notion of truth is tied to the notion of objectivity, and this is so highly prized that scientists often believe that objective truth is the end of the search for knowledge. Wisdom is only reached through direct experience, subjectively interpreted, and this must include more than what is simply true, or factually correct. To be called wise, knowledge must also incorporate the qualities of goodness and beauty.

The wise person, then, has an informed and skilled subjectivity achieved through personal experience. This is most commonly accomplished in the post mature years beyond contextual, or functional, autonomy. The centrality of personal experience in moving beyond functional autonomy means that it is self-development, not doctrine that excites the inbuilt appetite for wisdom. This is of core relevance to us as Transactional Analysts in our roles as therapists, counselors and consultants.

The aspiration to move beyond functional autonomy towards wisdom is natural to the state of being human. Maslow, in his classic work on the hierarchy of human needs, developed a biological theory of motivation. Originally, he topped his pyramid with the level of self - actualization. He was later persuaded to go beyond this by the clear evidence that people do things that transcend self- interest (Skelsey Guest, 2016). He came to believe that spiritual motivations are biologically rooted in all humans as a potential, which may or may not be actualized. In 1967 he added this level at the peak of his pyramid, giving it a sixth tier beyond self-actualisation that he called “Intrinsic Values”. Maslow’s life work was dedicated to studying the biological, inbuilt roots of our drive to grow. He excluded all other factors from his model. Even so, in the end he was convinced that there, in the very cells of us, is a latent drive towards

understanding reality from a value-based perspective. This is the drive towards wisdom and it is evident in a spontaneous, untaught motivation to understand life beyond everyday material circumstance.

The paradox of consciousness

Does a tree falling in a far off forest make a noise as it falls when there is no one around to hear it? In other words does noise exist without a consciousness to perceive it? The question is intended to stimulate thinking about the links between the observer and the observed. Are these really separate phenomena or are they aspects of an underlying unity?

The paradigm changing work of quantum mechanics (that branch of physics that looks at our world at the smallest possible level) has shown that the every-day world we perceive is altered by observing it. Whether science concludes that energy consists of waves, such as electro-magnetic waves, or consists of discrete particles such as electrons, depends on what the scientist is looking for. If the scientists look for waves they will find waves. If they look for particles they will find particles. Thus at the cutting edge of science, reality at its smallest and most fundamental level is conceptualised as a field of possibility waiting to be observed. (Kastrup, et al, 2018). From this perspective the noise of the falling tree has no meaning without an observer to call it a noise. Reality is manifested by observation.

Looked at on a global scale this means that, collectively, we evoke the reality we perceive our world to be. Currently there are 7.6 billion individual human consciousnesses on the planet, each involved. Each separate consciousness has free will. It cannot be determined from outside of itself, though they are in relationship with each other. They affect and influence each other, sometimes hugely sometimes slightly, but always to some extent. We are free to think as we

please and we do not operate this freedom in isolation from each other. These two factors give the collective human consciousness the quality of a complex system, i.e. a self-referent, self-organizing system of separate but linked parts with no central point of control. Outcomes, in complex systems like this, emerge. They don't exist until they are generated and they cannot be predicted.

The summary so far

So here is my thesis. Beyond functional autonomy lies the possibility of wisdom, defined here as self-acceptance in the context of absolute reality. It is characterised by the three qualities of truth, goodness and beauty. It springs naturally from the spirituality inherent in us biologically. It is stimulated inevitably by self-development, such as we pursue in TA. As well as having free will, individuals are also relational. These two qualities operate to make our collective thinking a complex system from which outcomes emerge unpredictably. Every individual action has potentially global consequence. Everything any one of us does matters and there is no way of knowing, in advance, how much. It is imperative that as many of us who can are involved in the global conversation from which will emerge our collective future.

A personal story

This is my story of emergence. It's about how I began the series of moves and decisions that have been key to my becoming the person I am today.

I'm not going to go back to the very beginning, though of course it must be of relevance. I'm going to start at the point it all began to form in my conscious life, and that was at school. I was lucky to be one of those kids that did well at school. Learning things was easy for me and I especially loved science. By the time I was twelve I had borrowed and at least partially read

pretty well every book in the junior science section of my local public library. It wasn't any big surprise, then, that when I had the choice I went on to study science subjects at school. Eventually there was no more English literature or history on my timetable, just the material world of animal, vegetable and mineral and those reassuring facts.

Then came the time to think about what I might want to study at university. I would have been seventeen and it was late 1967. Amazingly, given my former dedication to all things scientific, what I knew without doubt was that I didn't want to study anything that I had studied at school. I was drawn towards the mystery of the non-physical aspects of experience. Did everyone have a life inside his or her head like me? If so, why? What was all that hidden activity for? Was it all a kind of wasteful fantasy, or a pointless, private commentary? This sort of question intrigued me long before I knew that psychology and such subjects existed. Certainly I had no sense of these as questions answerable by science. I had met no one who had ever studied psychology, but I knew I wanted to understand more about why people are how they are. I went to see the careers master at school to discuss this. He was a pleasant fellow. I told him I was thinking of studying psychology and asked if he had any advice about where I might find a good course. He looked baffled and said, after a long pause, "I think you've got to be a bit weird to study that stuff". With that he handed me a pile of university prospectuses. I walked away full of excitement, knowing I had found my path. There was no mention of any career possibilities.

What I'm drawing attention to here is that, with no evidence, I made my mind up that psychology was the way to my future. It was as if the idea formed uniquely in my mind, based on no incoming data. I'm describing it here as a kind of epiphany, which I believe it was. You could easily think of it as banal. After all I was just another kid dreaming his dream. I was at a

working class grammar school that was not noted for signposting its pupils towards the road less travelled. The conventional route was the order of the day and *Labor Omnia Vincit* (Work Conquers All) was the school motto. I chose to go against the trend and study something strange with, as far as I knew then, no known potential for indulging the work ethic or indeed for making any kind of living. Perhaps youthful rebellion was all there was to it, but it is my conviction that I was not simply rebelling. That conviction is a statement of faith; a passionate commitment to things of which we are not theoretically certain. In another age or another context I might say that I had heard my call and I followed it.

The first big surprise came when I got to university. There were dozens of kids like me hoping to learn more about their mind, and that's not what we found. Undergraduate psychology was a huge disappointment, with too many rats running too many mazes. But the path it put me on definitely wasn't a disappointment. Studying psychology positioned me in a stream of social change in which the experience of the self-reflective individual was central. Career opportunities were not hard to find and within a few years, psychology had become one of the most popular subjects that young people aspired to study. I don't think it's because of the rats and the mazes.

One of the questions I've sometimes asked myself in moments of grandiosity is, "did I somehow know that psychology would become a key pre-occupation of the late twentieth century?" Of course I didn't know that, but I did know something important that no one actually told me. Psychology was a social phenomenon, a big new thing. It had already exploded in 1960's California and the fall out from that had somehow, invisibly showered down into my consciousness. A similar thing happened when I got interested in psychotherapy. This was 20 years later and I had a secure job as an Educational Psychologist. But I grew weary of the

constraints of the work and the assumptions that it was based on. In the context I was working, psychological insight and expertise was not being used as a force to support the individual to actualise, but as a means of justifying the operations of the system. I heard my call a second time. I knew I had to get out of this, despite the golden handcuffs of regular salary cheques, paid holidays and a pension for my old age.

The prevailing opinion amongst my professional peers at the time was that Transactional Analysis and humanistic psychotherapy belonged to the fringe and was not the kind of thing serious career psychologists should be getting involved with. But I went ahead and, within a few short years psychotherapy was mainstream. The mechanistic, behavioural models that were the bread and butter of my former psychological practice were largely a thing of the past. In many towns in provincial England you would have thought it a financially risky enterprise in the 1980's to open a private psychotherapy practice. Now therapy practices flourish all over the country and are spreading around the world. How could I have known that what even to me seemed like a fringe interest, and most people around me thought of as a personal indulgence, would grow into the professional and social force it is today? I didn't know, of course. I think I was moved by the same invisible factors that had moved me as an eighteen year old. There was something in the air and I wanted to be part of it.

Non-local consciousness

This "something in the air" phrase, is that just a metaphor for a lucky break? Was it a coincidence that my choices later became commonplace and formed part of a force for social change? Or is there a way of my knowing things that cannot be pinned down into a stimulus – response chain in my brain? I've come to believe that there is, and that I hold back my

development if I deny it. One name for it is non-local consciousness (Radin, 1997). That is consciousness that exists independently of location and, most significantly, independently of brain activity. Non- local consciousness isn't generated by brains, though you do need a brain to tune into it and talk about it, rather like you need a TV set to tune into broadcasted information. But we would all know that the TV does not generate the content we watch on it.

Each person is a part of reality, with a unique awareness or consciousness. The observer and the world observed interact as parts of a single system. Ironically, we have been brought to this awareness most powerfully by science, that very activity which is predicated on denying unity. Science proceeds by observing and measuring reality as external to and separate from the observer. But when scientists began to study very small things such as subatomic phenomena or quanta, they found that they don't behave as if they are separate from the scientist. They change depending on what the scientist is looking for. To put it another way, it seems that when we observe or study the world, consciousness does not reside exclusively in the observer.

So, science discovered that, if we are to understand the true nature of what we see, we cannot exclude the intent of the observer, nor its effect on what is observed. I didn't know that when I was at school or for a long time afterwards. Learning how the material world works was the task of my youth. Then I was guided by facts and a belief in linear, explicable relationships of cause and effect obedient to scientific laws. This grounded me in a space and a time and led me to achieving the capacity to live as an independent adult in the particular realities of my cultural and social context. By the time I reached my early twenties I could earn a living, operate successfully in my surroundings, sustain and promote deepening relationship with key others and take care of myself and my children. My autonomy, mostly about functionality at this stage,

wasn't perfect but it was enough developed for me to manage in my contextual reality. In contrast, development in the later stages of my life has not been about functionality. It has been motivated by a desire to transcend the particularities of my space and my time and to experience a bigger reality, a non-local reality. It's led me to know, without alarm, that the world is not as I see it and it never has been. That can be too much to face, especially when we're young and no one around us talks like that.

I think that my own story is not at all unusual. The transitions I describe in the short story of myself took decades to accomplish and I am still seeking to understand them fully. I think of the story as a narrative about my own search, first for functional autonomy and then beyond, which was both an ongoing seamless process and also fell into distinct phases, each, in my case, characterized by a sense of doing something unusual that others around me were not doing. That was my script, my particular way of making the journey. At the universal level it is a story of seeking gradually to know, accept and ultimately celebrate my unusualness, which is actually nothing more than my uniqueness.

The role of psychotherapy in shaping the future

Jung said modern humans are in search of a soul. In largely secular societies many of those modern humans come to people like psychotherapists to find it. Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, a scientist as well as a priest believed that the mass development of self-reflection by individuals is part of the evolution of what he called the noosphere (Teilhard de Chardin, 1959). From the biosphere, the realm of living things, through the activity of humanity comes the noosphere, the realm of mind in which, he says, the world finds its soul.

Helping the world find its soul is a big call but, as we witness the mindless over

consumption all around us, the flagrant injustices and the pervasive denial of the consequences of that, can we doubt that it is necessary? The world's soul is less likely, in my view, to be found in any resurgence of known faith systems than in a new emergence articulated in the language of today and responsive to the fast changing context of a globally chattering world. As Hegel said, faith should arise from thinking, and from experience, not from history

Many others before me have observed that self-development has a tendency to ignite people's interest in the search for deeper meaning, (Kandathil and Kandathil, 1997, Mellor, 2008,). Rebecca Trautmann observed that, as her clients became more used to talking about themselves, they spontaneously often began talking of their spiritual selves (Trautmann, 2003). She said that often they become aware that there is no distinction between "my life" and "my spiritual life", and that the resolving of script issues was in itself a way to transcendence. Her therapy was not directed toward this end but she observed that, as their work proceeded, her clients tended to experience what she called full contact with themselves and all of creation. This is a real message of hope that therapy not only helps the individuals involved but also contributes to a bigger awakening. Trautmann's paper says that all we need to do is to do the therapy. Physis will look after the rest.

Self development opens us to an interest in wider meanings, which is the territory of spirituality or mysticism, the loving union of self with the absolute, eternal nature of reality. As therapists we need to be alert to this and be willing to hold open the door for people when this becomes relevant in their work with us. We could think of this as a permission, which is an antidote to an injunction. Many people lack permission in their Script system to transcend their everyday context. Pearl Drego wrote movingly about this in her TAJ article "Bonding the Ethnic

Child with the Universal Parent” (Drego 2009). By Ethnic Child, Drego meant the child situated in the context of its biophysical ethnicity, whatever that may be. We are all born sometime and somewhere and so we all have part of us, the Ethnic Child, rooted in a time and a place. In contrast, by Universal Parent she did not mean something contextualized and situated in any place but a Parent system applicable in any place and time, that promotes universal human values. The uniqueness of the Ethnic Child, she says can be destroyed, for instance, by the Parent of Negative Globalisation that teaches that the earth is here to be consumed by us, as we like. Central to such destructive script is the injunction, “Don’t Be Holy”. The antidote to this injunction must be the permission to be holy, to embrace a value system which upholds universal values of love for each other, for our earth and for universal justice. If as therapists we show that we believe that everyone is OK and that all individuals are free to create their own destiny then we are holding that door open to a reality bigger than personal circumstance where truth, goodness and beauty are beckoning. Those who want to will go through that door and thus the noosphere will grow in wisdom.

The question for us all as TA professionals, devoted to the work of facilitating individuals to develop, is “Can we hear a call to help the planet by holding the door open for those who can and will go through it to join in the quest for wisdom beyond functional autonomy?” The conversation we need to be having at a global level is about building, or rebuilding, a future consciousness and a grand narrative that is fit for purpose (Lombardo, 2017).

That future is not just for us, but also for those who will follow us.

Note: This article is based on the author’s keynote speech presented originally at the Manchester TA conference in July 2018.

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John Heath is a Chartered Psychologist, TSTA (P), UKCP registered psychotherapist. He runs a private therapy and supervision practice where he lives in the North West of England. He has a particular interest in body psychotherapy and its integration with TA. He also runs a TA training program in Romania and is a tutor at The Berne Institute in England. He visits India annually, offering training in Group psychotherapy. John has served as the president of the ITAA from 2010-2015 and remains an active participant in the international TA community. He can be reached at johnheath105@gmail.com

Being Compatible, Co-operative and Intimate using TA

Samiksha Jain

Abstract

In my work as a relationship counsellor, I use many concepts of Transactional Analysis to diagnose and facilitate self-awareness and infuse co-operation, compatibility, adaptability, harmony and intimacy between couples. In this article, I focus on identifying Ego States, Behavioural Diagnosis, Transactions and Contracting as key concepts that I actively employ to achieve this. Extracts from a case elucidate how I diagnose and work with my clients.

I use the terms intimate relationship, partnership and couples to indicate people in live-in relationships, dating couples, homosexual couples and married couples. Client identities have been changed for client protection and to maintain confidentiality.

Introduction

Transactional Analysis is a theory of personality and communication and a method of analyzing, which can be easily adapted to suit individuals, couples and families including people in intimate relationships. I share how I have used the below concepts to diagnose, facilitate self-awareness and infuse harmony and intimacy in such relationships.

Ego States

Berne (1961), defines Ego States as a set of related behaviours, thoughts and feelings that make up our personality at a given time. Berne spoke about three ego-states that all of us have. Each of them develops during a particular age and by age 12, all ego states are fully developed and continue to evolve throughout our lives.

The **Parent** is the ego state that contains external events that were imprinted on children in

their early years. The Parent Ego State reflects through peoples' beliefs, opinions, rules, prejudices, assumptions and judgments.

The **Child** ego state contains the psychological needs, feelings, thoughts and behaviours related to those external events that were imprinted on a person in their early years. These childhood experiences can be revisited and reoccur when certain psychological needs get met or unmet in an adult intimate relationship.

The **Adult**, is that part of the personality, which is in the here and now, accumulates facts, asks clarifying questions and takes decisions based on facts and rational thinking rather than opinions and emotions, leading to a healthy sense of self, others and world. In a partnership, this ego state reflects when the partners think rationally, collect data by asking questions, do a reality check in the here and now, check for options, weigh the pros and cons and take a well-informed decision.

In intimate relationships, as I have observed, conflict and friction occur when partners have clashes between their individual Parent, Adult and Child ego states.

Behavioural Diagnosis

Berne's Functional model (Berne 1971) helps me diagnose the conflicted partners' ego states - which ego states they access more often, in which context and which positive aspects could be strengthened. When partners access negative aspects of certain ego states more, their interaction sets off the tone to their relationship dynamics and leads to communication issues and limiting behaviour patterns. Strengthening Adult resources to break out of these patterns and learning how to access the positive aspects of all ego states eventually allows them to have intimacy, harmony, co-operation, care, love and compatibility.

I find it valuable to use the below table to diagnose my clients ego states. Sometimes, I give it to my clients to self-diagnose their ego states to check if they are getting the desired response. If not, then which ego state would they like to access instead? Also, I make a contract with them that they will only use it for self-diagnosis and not diagnose their partner.

Behavioural Characteristics of Parent, Adult, Child based on Functional model:

	CRITICAL PARENT	NURTURING PARENT	ADULT	FREE CHILD	ADAPTED CHILD
WORDS AND PHRASES	Should, ought, must, do, don't, never, always, good, bad, demand, control, punish, insist, you can't, don't tell me	Care, support, help, protect, teach, educate, heed, watch, poor-thing, there-there, let me help you, don't worry	How, where, when, what, fact, probability, compute, test, alternative, problem-solve, I understand	Fun, creative, intuitive, wow, natural, free, magic, fantasy, I wish, I want, oh boy, scared, ouch, ughhh, love, hate	Please, sorry, comply, rebel, manipulative, adapt, obey, I must, I can't, yes sir, no sir, did I do OK? try, if only
GESTURES AND POSTURES	Finger pointing, frowning, rolling eyes upwards in disgust, furrowed brow, scowling	Pat on the cheek, open arms, smiling, holding, consoling, touch, sympathetic or proud eyes, Nodding encouragingly	Straight (not stiff) posture, level eye contact, Confident appearance, alert, open, listening, Thoughtful	Uninhibited, spontaneous, free, loose, joyful or Exhilarated stance, bright-eyed, Exaggerated Movements	Pouting, sad, helpless, dejected, downcast or upcast eyes, head tilted to one side, Slumped
TONE OF VOICE	Authoritative, sneering, harsh, punitive, stern, judgmental, Condescending disgusted, abrupt	Sympathetic, caring, soft, concerned, comforting, encouraging, supportive, Loving	Clear, calm, confident, enquiring, even, relaxed	Noisy, loud, excited, free, belly laughing, chuckling, giggling, Energetic	Appealing, complaining, nagging, whining, protesting, Asking permission, placating, Manipulating

Source: Occupational Therapy- August 1980, B. Freedman, J. Graham, G. Langan

Transactions

Human beings communicate constantly. We are social by nature and communication is important to our survival. Even with our mouths completely shut, we may convey what's going

on in our minds. A simple sigh, an eye movement or even the way we place our hands say a lot. When there is incongruence between the spoken word and non-verbal signals, it causes confusion in the receiver's mind. In such cases, we may rely on the non-verbal cues. I explain the relevance of this in ulterior transactions below.

Communication systems are very complex and heavily influenced by our culture, society, gender, race, religion, upbringing, personalities etc. Thus, it becomes imperative that we understand the various ways in which we communicate or transact.

Berne (1961), came up with the term 'transactions' for communications, for the simple reason that there is a constant exchange of information happening between the people during conversations. He defined transactions as "the basic unit of social discourse" (Berne 1964- Games People Play p. 28) and spoke about 3 types of transactions:

Complimentary Transactions: The first rule of communication says that as long as transactions are complimentary, communication can continue indefinitely. Through my work with partners, I find that this type of transactions is useful to talk things through and reach an understanding or resolution.

Crossed Transactions: When a transaction is crossed, break in communication results and one or both individuals will need to shift their ego states in order for communication to be established. I find that this type of transactions has the potential to cause momentary or permanent breakdowns. There could be a lot of defense, attack, persuasion, withdrawal or emotional distancing happening between partners.

However, when crossed transactions are used with awareness and care, from any ego state, it can become a useful strategy to avoid further conflict.

Ulterior Transactions: involve more than two ego states - at the social level there is one message sent, but there is another hidden message sent at the psychological level. The behavioural outcome is determined at the psychological and not at the social level. In my experience, these transactions are the most damaging to a partner's emotional wellbeing, as it undermines ones self-esteem and worth.

I have observed that, especially during conflict, partners pay a lot of attention to body language, tones, gestures and facial expressions rather than the spoken words. This constitutes the non-verbal communication. The ulterior messages are usually delivered through this channel and it is this that determines the behavioural outcome of that interaction.

Contracts

Berne (1966), introduced the concept of Contracts and defined them as an “explicit bilateral commitment to a well-defined course of action”. When I make a contract with my couple clients, what is agreed between the two of them and me, is a clear statement of change that they are going to make. I ask them to specify what each of them is going to contribute to the achievement of that change and ensure the outcome is specific, measurable, observable, reasonable and time bound. Making bilateral contracts highlights that personal accountability, responsibility and agency are necessary to make their partnership work for them.

I am able to avoid these common pitfalls associated with relationship therapy through timely and clear contracting:

- Aligning with one partner
- Taking responsibility to make their partnership work for them
- Entering their games and relationship dynamics

- Not having a commitment or direction
- Unrealistic expectations from me
- Covert agendas with each other and me (the psychological messages of Ulterior transactions)
- Holding secrets (shared by one partner) that might affect their relationship. My contract says clearly that if any partner shares a secret in an individual session, then I insist that they speak about it in the next couple session.

Case Excerpt:

In the case below, I show how I have used Berne's Structural and Functional Ego States models, Behavioural Diagnosis, Transactions and Contracts during counselling.

We contracted to identify expectations, rule out unrealistic expectations and fantasies about each other. I taught them concepts such as Ego States and Transactions, to let them identify and work through their issues under my facilitation. This way, I avoid getting drawn into their conflicted relating patterns, taking sides and risk the client feeling rejected by me.

Shalini and Madhur were in an arranged marriage for 4 years. They were very different people and seldom saw eye-to-eye on any subject. Shalini was a homemaker and Madhur was in a corporate job. They came to me, when they were talking about divorce but wanted to give the marriage a last chance, because they actually did like each other when they were not fighting.

The overall contract was to improve communication between them, so that they could decide about having a baby that year. Some of the initial session contracts were to further their awareness into their patterns of relating with each other and how they learnt to relate like that, how they sabotaged their relationship, what stops them from communicating lovingly. The

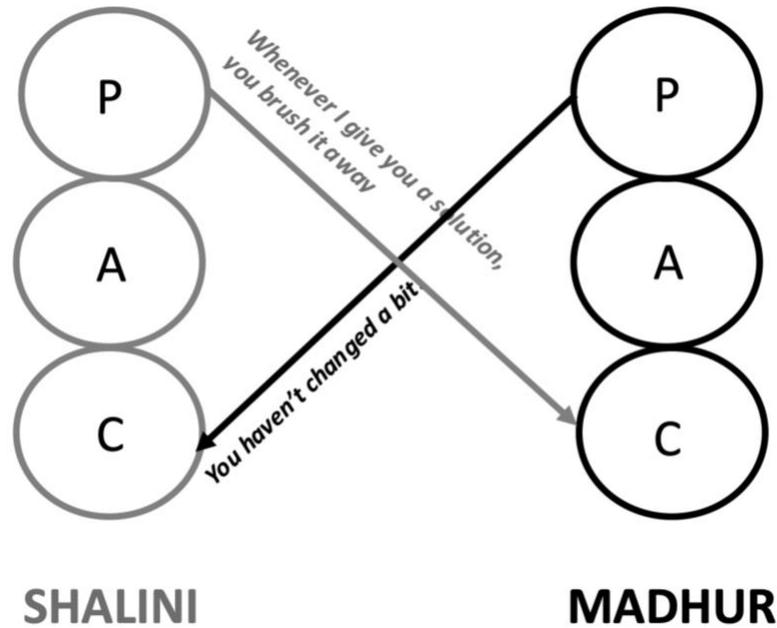
dialogue below is an extract of the first 4 sessions.

Shalini: (sitting straight with a strict expression on her face, talking loudly) We haven't been talking with each other for 2 months now. I don't need to talk to Madhur on a regular basis but now there are certain things that I want to talk to him about. (She accesses Critical Parent with intent to be the right one)

Madhur: (looking away, back slightly bent, in a low tone) My life is also going smoothly. I don't need to talk with Shalini on a daily basis. I take my decisions myself without involving her. She always has an opinion about everything. And whenever I want her to agree with me, she reminds me of all my past failures at work. (He accesses his Adapted Child, withdraws and complains)

Shalini: (louder, waving her hands, excited) That's exactly the problem with you! You cannot take no for an answer! Whenever I give you a solution, you just brush it away...just like your mother. It seems that I don't matter to you people at all. (Using Transactions, she uses her Parent ego state and invites a reaction from his Child ego state)

Madhur: (angrily) I feel the same when you brush away my suggestions as if I have no idea of what I am talking about. You haven't changed a bit. I feel lost in this marriage. (He reacts from his Parent ego state, inviting her Child ego state, as he criticizes her back, thus crossing the Transaction. In the end, he switches back to Child, when he says he feels lost).



Shalini: (angrily, pointing a finger at him) You are impossible! The moment I start talking, you just retract like a mouse! (She starts name calling him, using Critical Parent and Crossed Transactions)

Me: Hmm. Is that how you usually converse with each other? (I check with them and bring awareness of their pattern of relating and communicating)

Shalini: (facing me, talking agitatedly) Yes.. That's how we were talking when we decided to stop talking with each other! (She accesses her Adapted Child as she shakes her leg)

Me: Well, from the way things are going on between the two of you, do you want to live together in the marriage? (Using my Adult ego state, I check if they can have a bilateral and mutually agreeable contract to make their marriage work)

Shalini: (nodding head gently) Yes, I want this marriage. (Here, the possibility of a contract arises if Madhur also wants the marriage to work. She accesses her Adapted Child as

she looks at me hopefully))

Madhur: (shaking head, looking away) I don't think I have any more steam left in me to make this work. I feel so tired and lost already. I have enough stress at work and I don't want additional stress if we start talking again. I find it better without talking with her. (He accesses his adapted Child as he gives up, feeling tired. Now they have moved into a Complimentary transaction. If Madhur doesn't want to be in the marriage then they cannot have a bilateral and mutually agreeable contract to work on their relationship. Then I will offer to see them separately)

Me: I see that the way you both communicate with each other, adds a lot of stress in your relationship. We could look at some contracts, which could alleviate that stress for you if you both are willing to work on it. (Using Nurturing Parent, I suggest an overall contract and check with them for their willingness, clearly stating that they will have to make it happen)

Madhur: (looking at me appealingly) I can't say anything now without knowing what I will have to listen to, in order to make this work. (From Crossed Transactions, he is inviting my Parent to address his Child wanting some control and predictability)

Shalini: (irritated tone, looking at Madhur) You definitely need to be a man and learn to face some issues without running away. (She pursues him relentlessly from Critical Parent. Ulterior Transaction message is 'You should be strong and confront issues')

(In subsequent individual sessions with Madhur, he shared that he felt not good enough about himself, as Shalini kept increasing her expectations from him, which he found hard to match up to).

Me: Hmm.. If this is the way you talk with each other, could this be one of the reasons that

sets off temperatures soaring between the two of you?

Madhur: (looking hopeful, clenching his hands together) Yes, you have put your finger on the right spot. I just don't feel like talking to her when she hurls all these accusations at me. I'm in, if you can stop this from happening. (He accesses his Adapted Child, inviting my Parent to transact with his Child)

Shalini: (nodding her head, looking at me) I am also in, if you can make him stay in the conversation without checking out on me. (The couple is trying to make a psychological contract 'tell my spouse to change', which is not taking responsibility for self. This is an Ulterior Transaction, where the psychological message is "The problem is with him/her")

Me: (gently) Well, therapy is not about making the other person make changes that work for you. (I decline to take on 'change my spouse' contract)

If being in the marriage is what you want, then shall we explore possibilities of communicating differently that might inspire your spouse to behave in a desired way? (With my Adult ego state, I encourage them to take responsibility of their individual needs and behaviour and convey that their individual communication has the potential to make or break the relationship)

Madhur: (looking surprised) Do you think that's possible? (He transacts from his Child, inviting my Parent)

Shalini: (nodding) Yes I could do that! (She accesses her Free Child as she looks excited)

Madhur: Ok, let's look at a different way to communicate with each other. If we can sort out our differences, we can be happy. (An overall contract is made between the couple. He accesses his Adapted Child as he takes a decision based on wife's statement.)

Me: To get there, first, shall we look at how communication breakdown occurs between the two of you? (From Adult ego state, I check with them to set up a session contract that could ultimately lead up to the fulfillment of the overall contract)

Both: (together) Yes.

By making these contracts with Shalini and Madhur, they agreed to be accountable and responsible for their individual contributions and felt hopeful and powerful that they can make it work. Using Transactional Analysis concepts to understand their negative communication cycle, empowered them to identify their own limiting behaviours. Some of the latter session contracts were:

- Identify what constitutes respectful and loving conversations
- Talking without blaming
- Identifying personal contributions to sabotage their relationship
- How they can listen, understand and support each other
- Identifying internal and external resources to stay calm and agreeing to disagree when opinions don't match
- Accepting different perspectives and developing tolerance towards each other

After the 7th session, they were able to talk respectfully, with lesser blame and defense. Here's an excerpt of one of their conversations, which was a turning point in bringing them emotionally closer.

Shalini: (clasping and releasing her hands, looking scared) You know, I kept correcting you, hoping that you see how much I loved you. I didn't know any other way of saying that. Have I lost you forever? (She is transacting from her Free Child as she becomes vulnerable and shares

her inner most fears, inviting his Parent or Child to respond).

Madhur: (stretches out to hold her hand in his hand) When you were not talking with me, I was afraid that you didn't need me anymore. You seemed happy in your own company. I kept my distance, hoping that you will realize that I need you (He accesses his own Free Child. This becomes a Complimentary transaction and gets them the desired intimacy).

In later sessions, we reviewed the contract of the couple having a baby. Considering their financial status, they decided to put off the decision that year and instead focus on strengthening their relationship and finances first. They took an Adult decision based on available resources, data collection, reality assessment and logical reasoning.

Conclusion

Contracts work well as I get a direction and goal to work towards, my role is clearly defined, I address any subconscious unrealistic expectations and clearly state my limitations and my role as a counsellor. Realistic expectations are highlighted, agreed to and set right in the beginning. I feel potent, satisfied and accomplished as a counsellor when I fulfill my contracts. The Ego States models, Behavioural Diagnosis and Transactions make my work more effective. I can reliably assess my clients' intra-psychic and interpersonal communication and facilitate a deeper connection in clients leading to compatibility, co-operation and intimacy.

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Samiksha Jain is a relationship counsellor using TA and Cognitive Behaviour Therapy with a special interest in psycho-sexual therapy. Her clients range from individuals, couples and families. She runs her own private practice called Sahara Counselling Services in Bangalore for the last 8 years. She has completed her SAATA diploma and is currently writing her CTA (C).

You can correspond with her at samikshajain67@gmail.com

Reclaiming Physis – A Case Study

Zinnatul Borak

Abstract

An adverse experience can destroy a life. However, with appropriate intervention, it is possible to empower a client to move towards autonomy and reclaim their inner force – Physis (Berne, 1968). The aim of this article is to share my experience of facilitating and witnessing this beautiful process of healing and change.

This is a case of an adolescent rural girl, who was raped by some country boys and was psychologically impacted quite severely. With the help of systematic interventions, she could find her path towards healing and an autonomous life. This article discusses how the case proceeded using the transactional analysis framework in conjunction with other counseling techniques and models such as Two chair technique, Johari Window, and Conscious Empowerment Therapy.

Tinni

A few years ago, I worked with an organization which referred a teenage client from a shelter home. I worked with her for nine months and conducted nineteen sessions. I will be referring to this client as Tinni (name changed to protect her privacy).

Tinni (14 y) is the 2nd child among five offsprings. She was born and brought up in a joint family. Her father (50 y) was a farmer and mother (35 y) was a housewife. She came to the shelter home as her family claimed that she was raped by some country boys and was no longer safe in the village.

I had established a certain amount of rapport with Tinni before we began our counselling sessions, as I had previously interacted with her during a group workshop that I had conducted for the shelter home. Therefore, we could create a counselling environment based on trust and respect in our first meeting itself. However, Tinni was gloomy in the beginning. I shared relevant details about my credentials and an overview of the Transactional Analysis philosophy. This gave her confidence and permissions to share her story - a detailed description of the rape. She cried a lot during this sharing. I gave her sufficient space to express her emotions. Gradually, she expressed her concerns about the uncertainty of her future with respect to her marriage and finances. After she felt safe and surer, we started with the process of contracting.

Berne (1966) defined a contract as “an explicit bilateral commitment to a well-defined course of actions.” Without clear contracts misunderstandings may arise among the parties. In order to avoid this, Fanita English (1975) suggested a “Three cornered contract”, where a third party is involved. As I was working in an organization, I maintained a three-cornered contract for this case. The parties involved were the organization, the client and me, the counsellor.

With a goal of making a concrete plan, Tinni and I discussed the pros and cons of several options. We mutually agreed on the following objectives:

- Make a plan about future
- Manage anger and work towards inner peace
- Maintain good relationship with others

Towards the end of the first session, Tinni decided to learn some vocational skills, such as tailoring, cooking and, baking, etc. She believed that this could enable her to lead a financially independent life.

She checked in to the second session rather pleased and reported being happy about being able to break her misconception about her marriage. Before beginning the counselling process, she thought that she was bound to marry her rapist. She felt relieved to have embarked on this autonomous life plan.

She wanted to work through another issue during this session: conflict with other inmates in the shelter home. When other inmates chatted in her absence, she thought that they were talking about her. This belief made her feel suspicious about them and their intentions. She would continue with this assumption and would end up feeling angry. To challenge this belief of hers, I asked for evidence to support her belief system, but she quickly realized that she had none.

While working with Tinni, I saw her experiencing anger frequently and often, it did not help in problem solving. “Racket feeling is a familiar emotion, learned and encouraged in childhood, experienced in many different stress situations and maladaptive as an adult means of problem-solving” (English F. 1971). Racket feelings are also experienced as payoffs in games and the reason for playing games (Berne, 1964; Steiner, 1971).

Eric Berne (1964) described more than thirty psychological games in his book *Games People Play*. Tinni was playing ‘Blemish’, ‘Kick me’, ‘Now I got you.....Son of a bitch’, ‘I’m only trying to help you’. These are discussed with a few examples below.

Stephen Karpman (1968) devised a powerful diagram for analysing Games which suggests that whenever people play games, they are stepping into one of the three script roles: Persecutor, Rescuer and Victim.

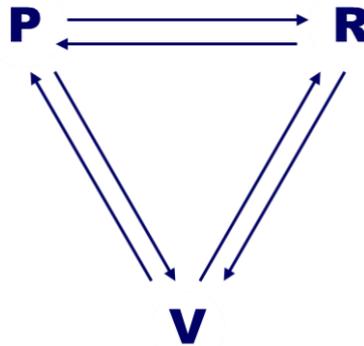


Figure 1: Drama Triangle (Karpman, 1968)

Tinni was shifting from Persecutor to Victim, Victim to Persecutor and sometimes Rescuer to Victim in most of the games she played.

Persecutor to Victim switch

- **Blemish:** Tinni often found faults with other inmates and criticized them about their dress, messy lifestyles, etc. Sometimes the criticised inmate would reject her in one way or another. And at that moment Tinni shifted to victim role.
- **Kick me:** Sometimes Tinni did not follow the rules of the shelter home and she took them lightly. She behaved, as if, it was not important to obey all rules. On one such occasion, an officer (whom Tinni found affectionate) came to visit the inmates and rebuked her for disobeying the rules. Tinni felt rejected.

Victim to persecutor switch

- **Now I got you....Son of a bitch:** When she was hurt by someone else's behaviour, she did not address it immediately, thereby collecting stamps. As a result, inappropriate anger outburst towards others occurred.

Rescuer to Victim switch

- **I'm only trying to help you:** Tinni often tried to give advice to other inmates to help them with their misfortune and got victimized when the other person signaled that the help offered did not work.

During the third to fifth sessions, we continued working through her unresolved emotions, especially bottled up anger, which was hampering her relationship with others. She wanted to develop good relationships with others but crossed transactions with them whenever anyone disagreed with her. When she was confronted about this pattern, she got an insight. Crossed transaction is a type of communication where a break in communication occurs and it is needed to shift the ego states of one or both parties in order for communication to be re-established (Berne, 1961). Tinni learned to choose from different options to relate to others in meaningful ways while stepping out of games and/or not collecting pay offs.

During the initial sessions, while taking Tinni's developmental history, I found that she had received contradictory messages in her childhood. She heard from her mother, statements like "Don't be close with people who belong to different social status. They will be laughing at you behind your back" "People cannot be trusted". On the other hand, from her father, she received statements like "Don't discriminate", "Be close to everyone".

Berne (1961) mentioned, "Double contamination occurs when the person re-plays a Parental slogan, agrees to it with a Child belief and mistakes both of these for reality" Tinni took her mother's messages as universal truth (Parent contamination) and started to believe that "There is something wrong with her and so the other inmates are laughing at her" which made her feel sad (Child contamination). These mistaken perceptions of reality were creating enormous trouble for her in maintaining her relationships.

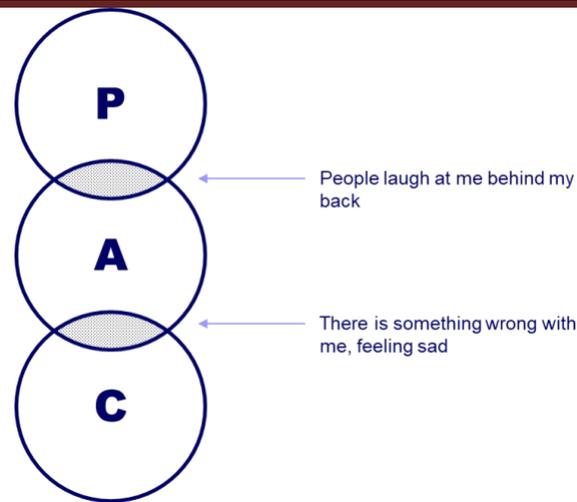


Figure 2: Double contamination (Berne, 1961)

In the sixth session, she walked in joyful as she had received a good amount of money from a foreign delegate as an endowment, that she would continue to receive every year for her development.

During the seventh to twelfth sessions, we continued to work through her anger issues. We used letter writing, two chair technique, self-stroke book and rules of communication to help her work through her emotions while meeting her needs. She resolved her anger issues gradually.

When she came in for her ninth session, I noticed some discomfort in her. She was struggling to open up about something that was bothering her but could not. I introduced the concept of Johari window (Luft & Ingham, 1961) to help her open up. I pointed out to her that expanding the open area leads to better mental health. I encouraged her to express her concerns in order to keep herself mentally healthy.

Figure 3 depicts the possibility of how one can extend their free area by owning and telling their story or asking for feedback from others.

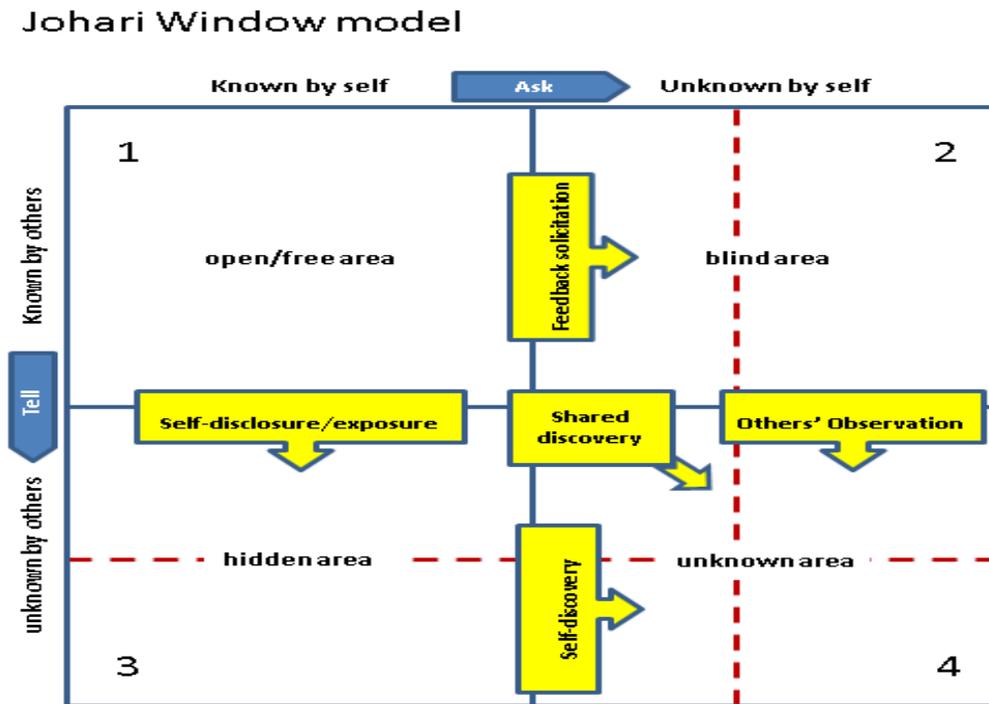


Figure 3: Expanding open area of Johari window

This gave her permission to reveal two of her ‘secrets’ to me in the following sessions. The gist of the first ‘secret’: After the rape, she took shelter in one of her uncle’s house. One day he told her to get ready to go to the court, but instead he took her to his friend’s house and behaved vulgarly. He told her, “You did it once so why not you do it with me now”. Although she could refuse him that time, the event created another deep scar on her mind. She was crying a lot and saying “I cannot tell it to anyone. But whenever this memory comes, I feel so bad that sometimes I get sick”, “Why does all these happen to me? What is my fault?” “Everyone thinks I am a dirty girl, but why? I am a tiny girl and so many things are happening to me?”.

We talked about the event over the session. We explored her thoughts and feelings towards the event and towards the uncle. I invited her to write a letter to him from her Child ego-state, as

a part of Conscious Empowerment Therapy (Yvonne Retief & Bea Conroy, 1997). By doing this she was able to express her anger towards him, which made her calm.

The second ‘secret’ she revealed was a contradicting version of what had happened to her. To respect and protect her confidentiality, I am not disclosing further. She had also requested me not to inform the office about this. However, I faced severe conflict at the time, as I struggled to decide whether I should report it or not. I was also in doubt about which version of the story was true. I was in a dilemma whether to trust her or not.

With this confusion in mind, I took supervision which reminded me about my role as a counsellor and not a detective. Going back to the value base of Transactional Analysis, grounded me again to the principle of OKness. This allowed me to go on, with trust and respect. My supervision also focused on my contract with the organization and I knew I was not bound to share anything with the organization; rather the contract gave me freedom to do what was needed for the client. I assessed the possibility of causing any harm to anyone, using the grid for ethical assessment (ITAA code of ethical conduct) and decided not to disclose.

During our initial sessions, Tinni was very judgemental about the perpetrators of the rape. She criticised her parents and sometimes her teacher and shelter home staff.

Woolams and Brown (1979) stated that “ An egogram is a visual representation of how an individual’s psychic energy is distributed throughout her functional ego states.”

Her Controlling Parent (CP) was the highest, Adapted Child (AC) was second highest; the next was Nurturing Parent (NP); Free Child (FC) was lowest and Adult (A) was second lowest. Her goal was to increase her Adult.

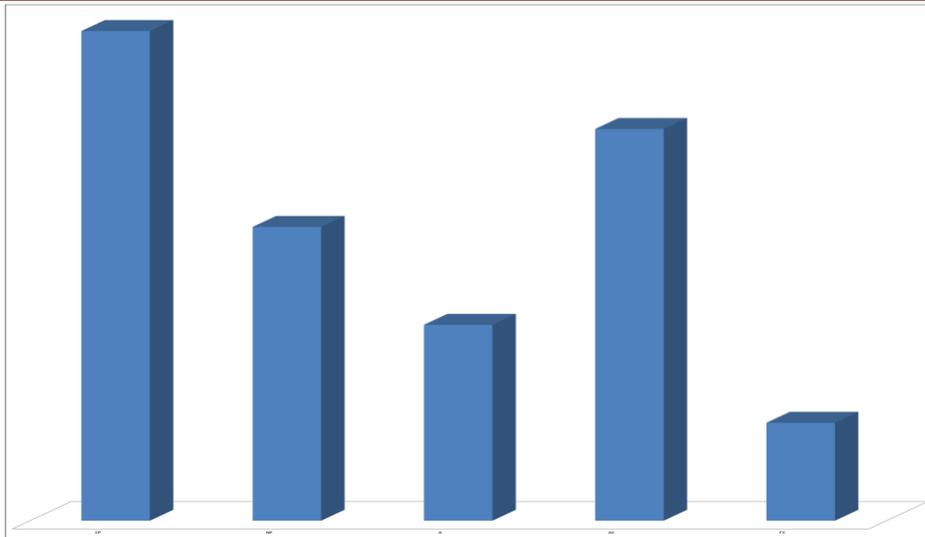


Figure 4. Egogram - First session (Dusay, 1972)

Towards the last few sessions I noticed a change in her attitude towards others, including her perpetrator. She was moving from being judgmental to forgiving, thereby increasing her Nurturing Parent and using maximum amount of her energy to plan for her future. Thus, her final egogram showed Adult as the highest.

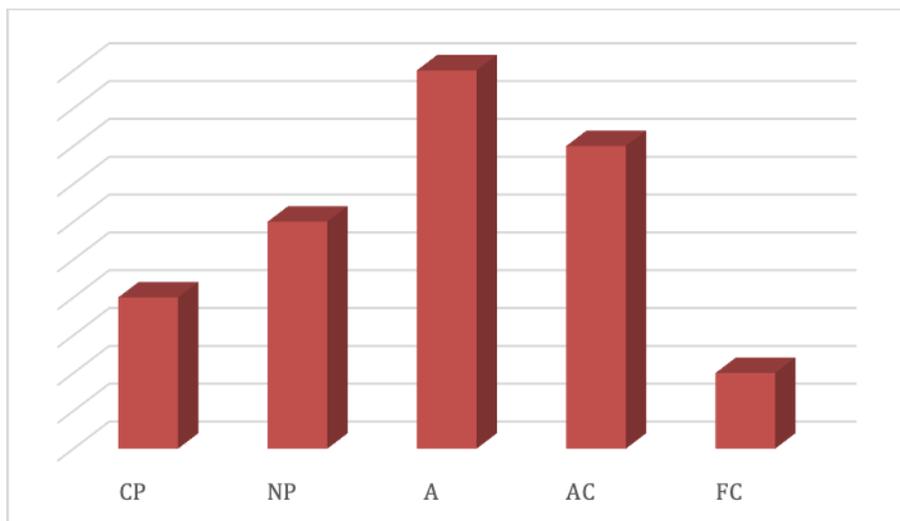


Figure 5. Egogram - Last session (Dusay, 1972)

During our journey together, I noticed a lot of positive changes in Tinni. In the 15th, and last session, she spoke about how this process had enabled her to move on with her life. Following are some of her statements recorded during this session that marked her journey towards healing, change and autonomy.

- *“Before counselling, I thought I have to marry the offender which made me anxious. But now I realize that I don’t need to marry him which gives me peace.”*
- *“I was so suffocated that I could not think and concentrate. Now confidence has increased, and I can study attentively”.*
- *“I am no longer angry with my mother. I realize how much I love her; she did her best for me”*
- *“I am not short tempered now. Yes, sometimes I feel angry, but by thinking positively, I can manage. Anger doesn’t control my behaviour anymore”.*
- *“Now I know how to maintain a relationship. I’ve started to take initiative to re-establish a relationship”.*
- *“Now I am hopeful about the future. After going home, I will continue my studying and will contact local shops and supply bakery items”.*
- *“I respect myself because in spite of all the misfortune, I have the strength to survive”*

I was happy to see her movement towards positivity. Her verbal reports as well as her nonverbal language, gestures, posture, expressions and face color were evidence of what she was saying and that what she was feeling was congruent.

Sixteenth to nineteenth sessions were follow-up sessions. Tinni reported about her peaceful mind and how she was applying her learning in her day to day life. Our contract was terminated by mutual consent after the 19th session.

During our last session, Tinni showed me a drawing which she had made spontaneously. She had painted her lifeline metaphorically using illegible, scribbled lines to show her past sufferings and a peaceful, flying bird and love sign to represent her present state of mind. Her final remark in counselling was: *“I am feeling like I am moving forward from the darkness to a golden light”*

As she said this, I was immediately reminded about the concept of ‘Physis’. Berne (1968) defined Physis as “... the growth force of nature, which makes organisms evolve into higher forms, embryos develop into adults, sick people get better, and healthy people strive to attain their ideals”. The task of a psychotherapist is to allow people to re-experience this life force within themselves in order to facilitate healing and self-realization (Clarkson, 1992). The knowledge and application of Transactional Analysis and other Counseling concepts helped me create a secure space for Tinni, where she was able to access her life force.

A few months after termination, Tinni left the shelter home and started working in a garment factory. She called and informed me that she was enjoying her job.

Conclusion

As I journeyed with Tinni in her path to healing and growth, I witnessed the power of Physis. I saw Tinni emerge from a space of being the victim to an independent person, taking charge of her life. This reinforced in me the belief that all human beings have access to this energy and as a therapist I am committed to enable my clients to access this energy again.

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Zinnatul Borak is a passionate mental health professional and a CTA trainee from Bangladesh. She gives importance to nonjudgmental attitude and loves to implement her learning into practice. At present, she is working as an Assistant Professor in the Department of Educational and Counselling Psychology, University of Dhaka. She can be contacted at zinnatulborak@yahoo.com