

systeme

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Abstracts

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Resisting burnout with justice-doing

Vikki Reynolds

In this writing I critique the individualism and neutrality of burnout, and offer an approach for resisting burnout with collective sustainability that is shouldered-up by justice-doing. This requires an understanding of collective ethics, and the spiritual pain that we hold as community workers and therapists when we are forced to work against our ethics. I describe the role of justice-doing and solidarity in relation to our sustainability, and practices which can foster our sustainability collectively, including embracing Earth Democracy, co-creating collective ethics, contesting cynicism, attending to immeasurable outcomes, and giving-it-back practices. I connect staying fully alive in our work with therapeutic and possibly revolutionary love, and reflect on the powerful transformations our work offers to us. I address the possibilities of connecting with the social divine and transforming the contexts of social injustice in which clients live and we work.

Keywords: burnout, sustainability, justice-doing, spiritual pain, collective ethics, solidarity

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Long-term effects of inpatient Family Systems Psychiatry in the experience of patients, team-members and collaborating community-based mental health professionals

Markus W. Haun, Henrike Kordy, Matthias Ochs, Julika Zwack, Jochen Schweitzer

For the first time in Germany, the multicenter pilot research project SYMPA (systems therapy methods in acute psychiatry) attempted to establish and evaluate a structured inpatient treatment based on systemic interventions in non-university psychiatric hospitals. The main

goal was the involvement of patients and their important others based on a therapy plan found by interdisciplinary consensus. These joint case conceptualisations conceived patient symptoms as meaningful and functional within the framework of the patient's position within the family, her professional status and her biography. Deliberately, a mere pathological view on the crisis was abandoned whereas the strengthening of patients' and the systems' sense of responsibility was supported whenever possible. For this, between 2003 and 2005, entire teams underwent a multidisciplinary, cross-hierarchical training programme to the extent of the 1-year basic course of the training as Systemic Therapist and Counsellor (DGSF/SG). The following study reports on sustained effects in the experience of the therapy process of patients, team-members and collaborating community-based mental health professionals.

Keywords: Family Systems Psychiatry, important others, mental health professionals

Therapeutic Crisis and Dynamic of Psychotherapy: A Time Series Approach

Uwe Altmann, Thomas Simmich, Lutz-Michael Alisch

Therapeutic crises are crucial therapy events and related to the success of the therapy. We examine the mediating role of emotion regulation in dealing with therapeutic crises. Mood states of 57 patients were measured daily with a standardized questionnaire (16 to 83 times per patient). Time series were analyzed with a hierarchical linear process model. The results suggest that patients without therapeutic crisis regulate their emotions mainly with fatigue/inertia. In contrast, patients with crisis regulate their emotions mainly by depression/dejection, which was related to emotions of the previous day. We conclude that the potential of therapeutic crises to initiate therapeutic change is related to an emotional activation of the patient.

Keywords: therapeutic crises, emotion regulation, process research, time series analysis

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Self-mindfulness in one's profession – a practical approximation from a systemic view

Julika Zwack

Mindfulness is on everyone's lips. It promises recovery of inner freedom – particularly in view of growing external restrictions. The article explores the promises of mindfulness for therapists, coaches and consultants as well as their clients. It offers attitudes, practice and questions that help us to interact mindfully with ourselves, colleagues and clients. The article closes by analysing similarities and differences between systemic concepts and the theory and practice of mindfulness.

Keywords: mindfulness, systemic therapy and consulting, self-care

A Short Story of the Meaning of Stories in Organizations

Mirko Zwack, Arist von Schlippe

Using a case-study approach, the article introduces into the function of stories in the value transmission process within organizations. It points out how core characteristics of stories facilitate the value transmission and offers some ideas how this knowledge could be of use for leaders and managers in their particular organization.

Keywords: stories, organizational culture, values, value transmission

A hypnosystemic perspective on experiences from the bke online counselling for parents and teenagers

Jürgen Wolf

The author describes experiences with a German platform set up by the bke (the German association for child guidance) that provides online counselling for teenagers and parents. The various options for virtual counselling are presented and discussed from a hypnosystemic point of view. Similarities and differences between online counselling and conventional counselling methods are described and the independence of this method is portrayed. The aim of the article is to contribute to the perception and acknowledgement of online counselling as an independent form of counselling. Hopefully, high compatibility with systems theory and the implementation of systemic methods will lead to incorporation into systemic curricula.

Keywords: online counselling, virtual counselling, hypnosystemic counselling, youth counselling, parent counselling

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Normativity in Therapy and Counselling – Dealing with gender roles and sexuality

Heike Schader

In this article the author deals with the possible consequences of normativity in therapy and counselling, taking sexuality and gender as an example. The article focuses on behaviour experienced as “automatic” and normal by professionals in therapeutic and counselling processes when dealing with gender categories and ideal images. First of all, sex and gender is examined in detail as a category with normative implications. Within a historical context and the assumption of reality being constructed, different aspects and their consequences are considered.

For the author, the perspective and therapeutic / counselling behaviour regarding sex and gender is first and foremost a question of attitude and not methodology. Professionals per se have an attitude towards societal norms and (without self-reflection) convey these norms as rules of conduct to their clients. In order to increase the multitude of possibilities and solutions in counselling and therapy, sensitivity and critical questioning of one’s behaviour is required.

Keywords: normativity, gender, sex, therapeutic attitude, sensitivity

Systemic mediation – promising method for conflict dynamics in family business

Nicola Neuvians

This article provides an overview of the specific advantages and disadvantages of systemic mediation in the field of family business. Theoretical foundations of conflict and conflict dynamics and the research design are introduced followed by an extract of research results describing oscillation, imbalance of power, and family taboo as major challenges for members of a family business. Some ideas of explanation will be proposed. The primary thrust of this article is on how the specifics of systemic mediation set the stage for a successful dispute resolution. In systemic mediation changing self-referential processes are intended and are seen as necessary factors in achieving a better understanding of family business conflict dynamics.

Keywords: systemic mediation, system theory of conflict, conflict and its relevant environment, imbalance of power, oscillation, contradictory logics of systems, identity formation

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”You shouldn’t talk to me as if you knew me“ – Encounters with clients ranging between curiosity, speculation, and knowledge

Ulrike Borst

How can the therapeutic relationship best be organized in a space determined by such extremes as closeness and distance, knowing and not knowing, expertise and empathy? This issue is discussed against the background of a number of earlier attempts to characterize a fruitful therapeutic relationship:

- the description of a systemic stance combining respect and curiosity with skill in hypothesizing
- empathy as an expression of generally desirable co-humanity
- the concept of “case understanding in the encounter,” which combines pattern recognition with empathy.

Case vignettes from everyday psychiatric experience are drawn upon to shore up the argument that the encounter between therapist and client should serve joint exploration of new potentialities, ending ideally in a situation where both sides feel that they have learnt from the therapeutic process. In this connection, learning is understood both as understanding and experience.

Keywords: recognition, knowing, not knowing, encounter, learning as experience

Social-constructionist thoughts on inclusive child and adolescent health care systems

Eugene K. Epstein

This article shows how social constructionist theory can be applied to the field of child and adolescent psychiatry in order to create a more inclusive and humane treatment system.

Keywords: social constructionism, child and adolescent psychiatry

Empathy and the recognition of patterns

Hans Christ

Empathy is regarded as a central attribute of therapists even in divergent schools. It is also a central trait of patients, because major psychic dysfunctions go hand in hand with restricted empathy. Psychoanalysts have emphasized early processes of mirroring as essential for the

development of empathy and a “theory of mind“ which has been supported by modern child watching and attachment research.

The discovery of mirror neurons in the mid nineties caused a “hype” of neurological research about empathy. Mirror neurons seemed to provide the ability to empathize with others and thus explain actions and decisions by intuition. More and more publications attributed more and more fantastic abilities to these cells; meanwhile this is met by major criticism even from several neuroscientists.

This article will present essential contributions from the fields of philosophy, psychology and neurobiology in order to illustrate dimensions of empathy between the poles of prereflexive and reflexive processes of mind. Special emphasis is placed on the significance of the rational parts of empathic processes for the discovery of structural similarities and thus for the recognition of patterns. These processes can be learned and applied strategically. They are quite significant for the extension of perception and the change of perspective in our work. This will finally be illustrated by the analysis of a supervised case.

Keywords: mirror neurons, mirroring process, prereflexive empathy, reflexive empathy in supervision and therapy