

Work with a suicidal adolescent at a Walk-in Centre in London

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Abstract

Suicidal attempts in adolescence, whatever the physical outcome, are always serious psychologically. They are an attack on the body during a psychotic episode of transitory or long duration. Suicide is looked at within the context of the adolescent developmental process. Some common features are described and ways of understanding and of dealing with them are offered. The psychoanalytic meaning of the suicide attempt of a 19 year-old girl is traced in the first five preliminary interviews, during which she was helped to be in touch with her self-destructiveness and her wish to live, to accept the hope that psychotherapy held for her.

Aspects of the psychoanalytic assessment of a preschool child

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Abstract

Neurotic symptomatology in a young child also gives evidence of the child's developmental achievements, e.g. the state of internalisations, of defences, of ego and superego development, of object relationships. The first few sessions are discussed in the assessment and brief treatment of a two and a half year old child presenting acute phobic symptoms, seen initially together with her mother. The child's ways of bringing and exploring her aggressive conflict are outlined and in particular her use of play. The structure of the phobia is noted in terms of what it implies about the developing structuralisation of the child's personality. Individual work with the child is combined with intervention in joint sessions including the mother.

Psychodynamic assessment of a latency boy

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Abstract

I briefly describe the accepted normal behaviour of latency children and my assumptions, based on the norm, about the performance of a 9-year old boy, coming from a middle class, professional, nuclear family. I outline Ronnie's problems concerning his family and school, based on my interviews with his father and mother, and reports from his school and an educational psychologist, academic failure, friendlessness, battling relationship with his mother and brother, sleep disturbance. I then give details of the psycho-dynamic assessment interviews with Ronnie, including the technique used, during which Ronnie's feelings about his unhappiness and failure were clarified. We noted his despair and his hopelessness by the fact that he was neither loved nor lovable, as we explored his terrifying nightmares. We uncovered the depth of his hatred for his younger extrovert brother and the anxiety and guilt related to this. These in turn could be seen as interfering with his capacity to learn and to sublimate. I presented him with the hope and possibility of help through regular psychotherapy, the aim of which would be to resolve his unhappy state and thus free him in order to progress to his age and intelligence appropriate stage of development.

The expererience from the development of an infant observation seminar in Athens

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Abstract

Since 1948, when the observation of babies was first introduced in the training of child psychotherapists in Tavistock by E. Bick, it spread to various countries as an integral part in the training of psychotherapists and analysts. With the encouragement and help of the Child Psychotherapy training Committee of BAP, an infant observation seminar has begun in 1988 in Athens. Many difficulties had to be faced by the trainers and the trainees, concerning the anxiety for involvement, fears of intrusion into the families and questions about professional roles. The process of this group is discussed, in relation with the difficulties and gains from the training on the following issues? learning from experience about human growth and development, distinguishing normality from pathology concepts of time and timing, ability to observe, self control, recognising the child in the adult, giving and taking, keeping the professional boundaries.

Observations based on the experience of an introductory clinical seminar to children's psychotherapy

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Abstract

An introductory seminar to child psychotherapy was concluded in the setting of a General Paediatric Hospital for two years. In order to allow the unfolding of the many parallel processes between insight in psychotherapy and learning at the seminar, the latter needs to remain an independent intermediate space of common shared experience. A firm setting of acceptance is necessary for true sharing of experience to take place. The sufficient condition for learning to take place was an unexpected comment by one of the members of the seminar at a moment of tension. This resulted in gathering the economy and dynamic aspects of the patient's conflict which gave a new meaning this organising and completing the experience of the group of therapist. The therapists were this taking part in an unconscious meeting with several aspects of the therapists inner world.