

Holes in Roles from the Perspective of Affect Regulation Theory

James Amundsen, PhD.

Plenary lecture

Friday, 27 September 2019, 2:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

I'll be using the work of neurologist Alan Shore, whose work is often summarized as affect regulation theory.

Albert Pesso's summary of holes in roles, "too much going out too soon", refers to a developmental sequence that results in an organized adaptation to the dysregulated self state of another person. The dysregulated state of an other is experienced as one's own. This self state involves an attempt to solve the others' pain through an omnipotent fantasy where the person feels as if he or she is the "only one" who can handle the dysregulated state, or, a state of in-completion, of the other. The pain/need of the other is experienced as the responsibility of the self and one's self is the only one that can fix the other. Both the felt sense that the self is responsible for the other and the felt sense that the self can fix the other is a grandiose fantasy that means the self is taking responsibility for something it in fact can do nothing, or very little, about which creates an ongoing, impossible, perfectionist demand on the self. The ongoing attempt to meet the impossible demand mask (of defends) the self against an intolerable dysregulated state.

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