

Parallels of PBSP with Key Concepts in Developmental Psychology

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Plenary lecture

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Three fundamental formulations in developmental psychology articulate well established psychodynamic crossroads. These are 'Attachment Theory', 'Mentalization' and the 'Oedipal Triangle'. This paper will explore how PBSP techniques and devices can partner with these high profile concepts, providing a practical and singular contribution to healing.

Detailed description of the contribution:

John Bowlby believed that an individual's 'attachment style' is in place by 11 months. Neuroscientists maintain that this 'wiring' is laid down in the arena of implicit memory within the depths of the limbic system. Issues of babyhood are pre-verbal and so are well addressed by PBSP interventions concerning place, nurture and support. In a PBSP structure the 'rewiring' of alternative and ideal memories about being welcome, safe, and a focus of delight is palpable. Attachment Theory's 'earned secure' category provides a definition of what good PBSP structures based in babyhood achieve.

Fonagy's notion of 'mentalization' (the ability to imagine what is in the mind of another) is facilitated by PBSP's classical 'limits' intervention where the omnipotent 'toddler' is faced with the reality of others who are subjects (with minds of their own) rather than objects (a resource or an obstacle in reference to the child's 'me'). Again, the right brain focus and robust body work in PBSP stimulates changes in the body-brain in places where talking techniques cannot reach.

Arguably, Freud's Oedipal triangle was the start and the basis of psychoanalysis. Although less central these days, it is still relevant in the psychological development of many individuals. The Oedipal conflict – unlike the previous two issues – occurs once the left brain is in place and possibly in control. Nevertheless, change is augmented by the physical interactions and symbolic encounters central to PBSP's unique limiting interventions geared to resolve the desire to (1) displace the primacy of the same sex parent and (2) become inappropriately linked to the parent of the opposite sex.

All of us in Prague at the Conference know that PBSP is a remarkably creative and effective system. We also know it warrants a wider profile. One purpose behind the paper is the demonstration of PBSP's theoretical coherence with other highly regarded perspectives along with its confluent body-based focus. It is hoped that this may serve to broaden appreciation for our work among therapists schooled in other traditions.

Sandy Cotter, M.A., M.S. (UK)

Sandy Cotter is one of the three PBSP trainers and supervisors in the UK accredited by Al Pesso and Lowijs Perquin. She brings a career in body-based approaches to mental wellbeing and organisational interaction, having studied under Alexander Lowen and Stanley Keleman, founders of bio-energetic psychotherapeutic practice. Sandy has extended bio-energetic principles of character structure and relational effectiveness into her own system of professional development, the Centaur model. Beyond her work with psychotherapeutic clients and PBSP trainees, Sandy has consulted and led workshops for many years with major corporate clients in different sectors. She was a Founding Director of the Praxis Centre at Cranfield University's School of Management.

