Working Through Ruptures and Impasses

How to identify and resolve blocks to progress in therapy

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In spite of solid evidence that psychotherapy is effective, approximately 30% of people receiving psychotherapy do not benefit, around 25% drop out of treatment and up to 8% experience a worsening of their problems. In addition, the evidence suggests that therapists tend to overestimate their own success rates with patients. What can we do to help more of our clients benefit from our work?

A good therapeutic alliance has been shown to predict effective therapy. This 2-day workshop provides a systematic framework for understanding factors contributing to problems in the alliance and how to resolve them. Video-taped material will be employed to illustrate different types of alliance ruptures, as well as essential principles relevant to addressing and repairing ruptures when they occur. A third follow-on day will offer an opportunity for those involved in training and supervision to address the issues involved in introducing these models of rupture repair into routine therapeutic practice.

You will learn about:

- Different types of ruptures in the alliance
- Evidence based intervention strategies to address and resolve blocks to progress
- The use of therapist self-disclosure and meta-communication (‘mindfulness in action’)
- Harnessing and working constructively with the intense, conflictual and often threatening feelings that emerge for patients and therapists during difficult therapeutic moments.
- The role that therapists’ capacity to regulate their own affective experience can play in helping the m to work constructively with difficult alliance ruptures, and in helping their patients develop their own capacity for affective self-regulation.

Dr. Safran has spent over 30 years playing a leading role in developing a “second generation” of alliance research that investigates factors promoting the development of a strong alliance, as well as principles relevant to repairing strains or ruptures in the alliance when they occur. He is the author of Negotiating the Therapeutic Alliance: A Relational Treatment Guide (2000), Psychoanalysis and Psychoanalytic Therapies (2012); Interpersonal Process in Cognitive Therapy (1996); Emotion, Psychotherapy and Change (1987), and numerous journal articles and book chapters on relational processes in psychotherapy.

Venue: University of Oxford Department of Continuing Education, Rewley House, 1 Wellington Sq., OX1 2JA

2-day workshop on clinical skills: May 11th and 12th £250
1-day workshop on training and supervisory skills: May 13th £125
Cost for all three days £360

More details at: www.oxfordpsychologicaltraining.co.uk
To book or for further information email david@oxfordpsychologicaltraining.co.uk
May 11th and 12th, 2015

Working Through Ruptures and Impasses: How to Identify and Resolve Blocks to Progress in Therapy

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A half-century of psychotherapy research has demonstrated that a variety of different types of psychotherapy can be helpful for a range of emotional problems, that therapy is as effective or more effective than medication for many problems, that the benefits of psychotherapy are, as a rule, more enduring than the benefits of medication, and that therapy does not have the side effects commonly associated with medications. Nevertheless, 25-30% of patients drop out of treatment, approximately 35% of people receiving psychotherapy do not receive substantial benefit, and up to 8% experience a worsening of their problems. In addition, the evidence suggests that therapists tend to overestimate their own success rates with patients.

One of the more robust predictors of treatment success is the quality of the therapeutic alliance. Over the last 30 years Dr. Safran and his colleagues have played a leading role in developing a “second generation” of alliance research that investigates factors promoting the development of a strong alliance, as well as principles relevant to repairing strains or ruptures in the alliance when they occur.

This workshop provides a systematic framework for understanding factors contributing to problems in the alliance, as well as basic principles relevant to addressing and repairing ruptures when they occur. Different types of ruptures in the alliance are described and relevant intervention strategies are outlined.

Detailed guidelines are provided to facilitate the use of therapist self-disclosure and metacommunication as tools for collaboratively exploring and working through problems in the alliance when they emerge. Therapeutic metacommunication is conceptualized as a type of mindfulness in action, through which therapists cultivate an ongoing awareness of subtle shifts in the quality of the therapeutic relationship, as well as moment by moment fluctuations in patients’ receptiveness to their interventions.

The role that therapist mindfulness training plays in developing the skills relevant to working through alliance ruptures will be explored and participants will practice integrating mindfulness skills with the process of collaboratively exploring what is taking place in the therapeutic relationship.

Particular attention is devoted to ways that therapists can harness and work constructively with the intense, conflictual and often threatening feelings that emerge for patients and within themselves, during difficult therapeutic moments. Special emphasis will be placed on the cultivation of the type of "inner skills" that therapists require in order to work through difficult alliance ruptures and therapeutic impasses. We will also explore the role that therapists’ capacity to regulate their own affective experience can play in helping them to work constructively with difficult alliance ruptures, and in helping their patients develop their own capacity for affective self-regulation.

Video-taped material will be employed to illustrate different types of alliance ruptures, and principles and intervention strategies relevant to addressing and resolving ruptures. In addition, role plays will be used to provide workshop participants with hands-on experience experimenting with various interventions for addressing and repairing ruptures.
Monday May 11

Morning

Introduction

- Therapeutic impasses and alliance ruptures: definition and examples
- Therapeutic alliance: A reconceptualization from a relational perspective
  - Empirical taxonomies of rupture types
  - A taxonomy of therapeutic alliance rupture interventions
  - Detecting subtle rupture markers
  - A dyadic systems perspective on alliance ruptures
    - Therapeutic enactments
    - Interventions as relational events
    - Beginner’s mind
    - Mindfulness and the inner discipline of the therapist
  - Video illustrations and Exercises

Afternoon

Therapeutic metacommunication as mindfulness in action

- Role of emotion theory and research
- General principles of metacommunication
- Specific principles of metacommunication
  - Reflection-in-action
- Video Illustrations and role-playing exercises
Tuesday May 12

Morning

-Stage process models of alliance rupture resolution
-Resolution process in confrontation ruptures
-Resolution process in withdrawal ruptures
-Video illustrations and role-playing exercises

Afternoon

Therapist affect regulation and the negotiation of therapeutic impasses

-Theoretical background
-Developmental research
-Patient-therapist affect coordination and the alliance
-Working through both patient and therapist hopelessness and despair
-Exercises and discussion

Workshop Learning Objectives

1. Participants will learn how to identify different types of therapeutic alliance ruptures
2. Participants will learn how to explore different types of alliance rupture
3. Participants will learn general principles relevant to repairing alliance ruptures
4. Participants will learn and practice principles of therapeutic metacommunication
5. Participants will learn how to make use of their own feelings as a source of information
6. Participants will learn how to make use of personal mindfulness training and exercises for the purpose of tracking subtle shifts in the therapeutic relationship