

Editorial for the Special issue

Transactional Analysis Psychotherapy: An Integrative Humanistic approach in the 21st century

Transactional Analysis (TA) psychotherapy, developed in the 1950's by a psychiatrist, Eric Berne (E. Berne, 1958; Eric Berne, 1961), was one of the first integrative models for psychotherapy which combined a humanistic philosophy about the human nature and our innate drive towards growth and health with that of a psychoanalytic understanding of the internalised conflicts, conceptualised through his model of ego states (E. Berne, 1957). Furthermore, Berne developed an original theory and behavioural methodology for conducting treatment by defining observable outcomes for the treatment. Using humanistic sensibilities this way of working was transformed within the TA treatment into developing collaborative agreements about the direction and outcomes of psychotherapy.

From its inception, Transactional Analysis psychotherapy used deceptively simple terms to describe internal and intersubjective processes, such as Child, Adult and Parent ego states, life script and games. The simplicity of the language was intentional. Berne sought to develop psychotherapy where power and knowledge were shared between therapists and clients, working together on developing explicit aims for psychotherapy or therapeutic 'contracts'. The simplicity of the language had advantages in that it made some of these terms widely used in common parlance to the point where their origin is no longer recognised, and disadvantages, as it seemed to oversimplify the theory behind it and made the language jargonistic.

However, over the last 60 years or so, TA psychotherapy continued to develop in both theory and application. It is practised internationally and facilitated by professional umbrella organisations, such as EATA (European Association for Transactional Analysis <https://eatanews.org/>) and ITAA (International Association for Transactional Analysis <https://www.itaaworld.org/>). Amongst the different schools of TA psychotherapy, the emphasis is placed on different aspects of the original theory. For example 'Classical TA' is more focused on cognitive-behavioural outcomes and treatment, 'Relational TA' draws more on the psychoanalytic roots and is close to relational psychoanalysis and 'Integrative TA' emphasises the humanistic and integrative nature of the early theory. These are not the only 'schools' of TA, as the international nature of the current TA treatment continues to foster a lively debate about both the theoretical concepts and ways of working as a therapist.

The theory of Transactional Analysis psychotherapy remains current. The concept of therapeutic agreements or 'contracts' is well supported by research on outcomes on psychotherapy and the importance of feedback and therapist responsiveness (Lambert, Whipple, & Kleinstäuber, 2018; Norcross & Lambert, 2018), as well as the current thinking on directionality (Cooper, 2019) and pluralism (Cooper & McLeod, 2011). The concept of working with ego states and the transference enactments such as 'psychological game' and 'life script' is closely related to modern psychoanalytic approaches such as relational psychoanalysis (Aron, 2001; Mitchell, 1988; Orange, Atwood, & Stolorow, 1997; Stolorow, Brandchaft, & Atwood, 1987). Adding to the diversity of application, TA psychotherapy was

practised as individual psychotherapy, as well as a group treatment (Berne, 1966), from its early development, and used in different settings and with different client groups.

Our aim in this issue was to present readers with a range of papers showing some of the diversity in modern thinking and working in Transactional Analysis psychotherapy, and some of its current research.

We start the issue with a paper on the mechanisms of change in Transactional Analysis psychotherapy ('Why transactional analysis works: reasons for a possible explanation of change in psychotherapy) from the perspective of socio-cognitive TA, developed by Pio Schiligo in Italy. We follow by revisiting the familiar concept of 'psychological games' from the perspectives of relational TA, (Psychological Games in the consulting room), elaborating the theory and its application in therapeutic practice. The following two papers ('Relational Group Process' and Relational Group Process A Discussion of Richard Erskine's Model of Group Psychotherapy from the Perspective of Eric Berne's Theories of Group Treatment) are in a dialogue with one another and show the current thinking as well as the historical perspective and the approaches to group work. The next two papers continue the theme of application continues focused on bodywork ('A psychoactive approach to trauma') and working with perinatal depression ('TA therapy for working with perinatal illness'). Our final paper gives a meta-analytic review of case study research in TA psychotherapy.

In this selection, we recognise that the papers do not represent the full range of TA psychotherapy, its application or diversity. A wider range of papers could be found in Transactional Analysis Journal or TAJ (<https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rtaj20>).

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International Journal of Psychotherapy

Nov. 2019, Vol. 23, No. 3, p. 3; ISSN 1356-9082 (Print); ISSN 1469-8498 (Online) © Author and European Association of Psychotherapy (IJP): Reprints and

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Published Online: 31-Oct 2019; Print publication: 31-Oct 2019; DOI: 10.36075/IJP.2019.23.3.1/Young