

Attachment Narrative Therapy: A DMM approach to integrating systemic and narrative therapeutic approaches

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IASA's 10-Year Celebration, Florence, Italy, 2018

ANT: Systemic FT and DMM

ANT – combines systemic FT, with a focus on narrative FT approaches with DMM:

- Emphasis on change as well as continuity in trans-generational patterns
- Narratives and communication as shaping family life
- Narratives as shaped by and shaping attachment processes
- Corrective and replicative scripts - integrative DRs as representing potential for choice and change
- Triangulation - Emphasis on triadic processes - child exists in the context of attachment to each parent and their relationship
- Narratives and representational systems.. Not just what is said but how it is said

COMMUNICATION AS MULTI – LAYERED : DMM: THE LAYERS OF ATTACHMENT

**Family dynamics shaped
by communicational
processes**

**Multi layered – focus
contradictions between
semantic and procedural
systems**

**Trauma and loss –
contradictions in rep.
systems**



ATTACHMENT NARRATIVE THERAPY

Co - Creating a secure base



**Exploring Narratives
and Attachments**



Considering Alternatives

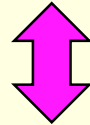


**Future and Maintaining
the therapeutic base**

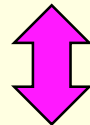


Process of Exploration in ANT: Formulation, intervention and permission

FAMILY PATTERNS /CIRCULARITIES



ATTACHMENT DYNAMICS SHAPING
CURRENT FAMILY PATTERNS



TRANS-GENERATIONAL ATTACHMENT
DYNAMICS SHAPING CURRENT FAMILY
PATTERNS AND ATTACHMENT S

DMM: Formulating Choice of Systemic Techniques

AVOIDANT/DISMISSING

Encouraging revision of use of affect

Action techniques - Role play
Enactment , sculpting
Reflecting on emotions in the session – between family members and family and therapist
Empathic Questions
Visual exploration and expression
Exploring expression and management of conflict

AMBIVALENT/PRE-OCCUPIED

Encouraging revision of use of cognition

Genograms and Life Lines
Tracking Circularities
Mapping Relationships – sculpting with objects
Exploring beliefs and punctuation
Scaling questions
Circular questions
Letter writing

REFLECTING TEAMS and REFLECTING PROCESSES

ANT - FORMATS FOR EXPLORATION:

Utilises sections of the DMM/AAI in therapy

- To promote revision of DRs
- Promote integration and Reflection
- Promote changes in the family processes in the room

FORMATS: Comforting, corrective scripts, triadic processes, semantic – episodic representations

Comforting

When you were ill or upset as a child – what happened?

Try to remember a *specific instance* of when you were ill or upset

- How did you get to feel better? Who helped you to feel better? How did they do this?
- What have you learnt from this in terms of how you comfort your own children? What do you want to do the same/differently?
- What do you think your own children have learnt about comforting from you?
- If it did not happen how do you imagine it might have? What difference would it have made to you if you had been comforted?
- How do you see that comforting was done in other families you have known?

Can be held as a family or couple interview or as a one-to-one conversation.

Exploring memories of Comfort

So if you were upset or distressed or frightened when you were young, who would you go to?

Nobody. I wouldn't go to anybody. The only time I ever did was once when Mum was at work and I had to sleep in my brother's room. I can't remember why, and there was a picture of me and her when we were little, cuddling, and I was only young and I was looking at this picture and I was crying so much because I thought because they're older than most parents that she was going to die really soon and I went down to Dad and he was like "Don't be stupid and go back to bed", and I had to go back to bed. And after that I didn't bother going to him. I would just bottle it all up and just not bother'

Claire

Explorations:

What do you think your dad's intentions were?

Can you think of a time when your dad responded differently?

What made you upset about looking at their photo?

Do mum and dad respond similarly or differently when you are upset?

Change and Re-Organisation:

CORRECTIVE and REPLICATIVE SCRIPTS

A cluster of narratives, intentions, feelings and actions which have developed from our childhood experiences, what we have LEARNED and want to apply to our own lives now. This is NOT always *conscious*.

Corrective Scripts : an intention to do things differently, better than my parents did for me as a child, or to have a different kind of marriage than my parents did

Replicative Scripts: to repeat the things that were good about my childhood, for example that my parents were warm and caring, that I had discipline and was hit sometimes but I learned respect from it.....

FORMAT FOR EXPLORATION: Corrective and Replicative Scripts

Allows us to work in a positive frame with the family in that we assist the family to construe their *intentions* positively, i.e. they have tried to repeat what was good or correct what they felt was bad about their own experiences. This can then lead to a discussion of whether these attempts have been successful or not and possibly how they might be altered, strengthened, elaborated etc.

- What have you tried to do similarly or differently as a parent to how your parents acted with you?
- How has this worked, why.. What influences it?
- How is your relationship with your partner/ spouse similar or different to how your parents were as a couple?
- What do you value vs feel critical about in either of your parent's relationships?
- Does what you have tried to repeat/change work? Is there anything that you want to alter, strengthen, abandon about what you have been trying to repeat or change?
- What do you think your children might do differently when they are parents to how you were with them as parents?
- If you have not tried to do anything differently to your parents, can you imagine how it might be if you did?
- Why do you think your parents acted as they did?

BLAME and RESPONSIBILITY

*Generally most parents have positive intentions towards their childrenand frequently carry ideas of doing things better than had been their own experience of parenting in their own childhoods- **'corrective scripts'**.*

BUT

Many parents approach family therapy with an anxiety that they will be held responsible and may be **blamed** which can lead them to becoming defensive and resistant to therapy.

CORRECTIVE SCRIPTS and ATTACHMENT STYLES

Dismissing Strategies

- Narratives involve idealisation, exoneration, parental perspective. Reluctant to criticise parents .. So corrective scripts minimal

Pre-occupied Strategies

- Blame, derogation, self perspective. Corrective script can be extreme – pendulum swing

Secure

- Balance of criticism, parental and own perspective. Replicative and corrective balanced

Jacqueline: Corrective Scripts

Int: What thoughts have you had about, as a parent,... About how I want to do things differently?

Jacqueline: I'm in complete conflict, as you're growing up you say, 'I am never going to do that as a parent', but , that I find myself doing (*feeling cross with Charlotte for her temper*) – so that's my heart. But my head is saying Charlotte is not capable of that, so I can't expect her to do that.. so I'm in complete conflict

Int: So do you see that in contrast to how your parents were with you?

Jacqueline: Yeah, I have those thoughts , it doesn't matter if she is throwing a tantrum, in the middle of the street she needs to do that, but inside me I think Ohhh , if mum and dad knew (her parents)... . It's that sort of conflict

Int: So you try to be not so bothered by the image..

Jacqueline: Try not to but still am

*** *Reflective Awareness of her own dilemmas and inconsistency between what she feels and thinks***

DOUBLE SENSE OF FAILURE: IT IS NOT FAIR – Corrective Script is not Working !!!

Parents try very hard to overcome the traumas and losses from their own childhood

Conscious Intention - ‘ I will be a better parent than my parents had been to me’

Find that their child has problems.... ‘Cannot be my fault .. I have tried so hard to be a good parent!’

Unconscious –procedural memory - fear, pain, humiliation triggered by their child.... So they freeze.... Feel helpless

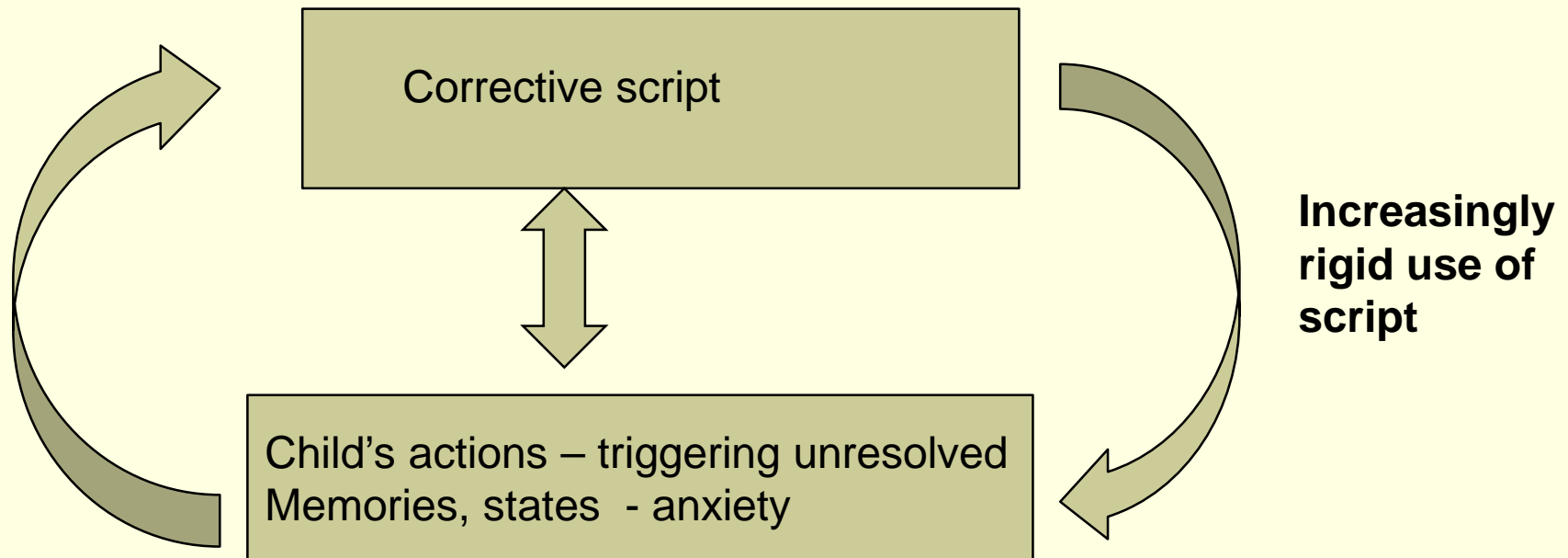
TRAUMA - Trans Generational Patterns

‘When my son starts screaming it triggers those feelings of stress that I had when my mother used to scream (at me) ... that kind of brings it all back , its sort of like triggering, which is why I think that I find it particularly stressful [...] there you know there’s a link between the past and the present’

(Mandy – mother of boy with diagnosis of autism)



CORRECTIVE SCRIPTS and TRAUMA



Suggested Reading:

Dallos, R. (2005) Attachment Narrative Therapy. Maidenhead: OU Press

Dallos, R. and Vetere, A. (2009) Systemic therapy and Attachment Narratives; Applications in a range of clinical settings. London: Routledge

Dallos, R. and Vetere, A. (2010) Emotions, Attachments and Systems. Context, 107, 8-10

Hooper, P..... Marvin, R. (2014) The Circle of Security, New York: Guildford Press

Vetere, A. and Dallos, R. (2008) Systemic therapy and attachment narratives. Journal of Family Therapy, 30, 374-385



Bertinoro, 2008



Cambridge, 2010

To download program materials, click here
<https://www.iasa-dmm.org/iasa-conference/>



Frankfurt, 2012



Miami, 2015