

TECHNIQUES AND PROCEDURES

The contract is an essential technique. The use of a script checklist and questionnaire to detect injunctions, games, life positions, and early decisions is also an important technique. Questioning is often employed. Other procedures include structural analysis, family modeling, analysis of games and rackets, analysis of rituals and pastimes, and script analysis.

APPLICATIONS

The approach can be applied to parent/child relations, classroom and institutional situations, marriage counseling, family therapy, and individual therapy. It is well suited to group methods. In a group situation clients understand the structure and functioning of their individual personality, and they learn how they transact with others. TA can be used with all ages and for many types of problems: delinquent and criminal behavior, alcoholism, "reparenting" of schizophrenics, and interpersonal problems.

CONTRIBUTIONS

Major contributions of the approach are the contract method, the active role of the client, and the emphasis on the client's doing, not merely "trying." The concepts are concrete, specific, and easily grasped. It is a brief therapy with wide applicability. It decreases the chance of dependence on the therapist. It emphasizes transactions and choice, recognizes key aspects of the past as related to present behavior, and gives a rationale for explaining self-defeating behavior in terms of the payoffs of games. People with any type of related professional training can make use of the principles and procedures. TA practitioners are open to integrating techniques from other orientations. In working with culturally diverse client populations, a value lies in exploring cultural injunctions such as "Don't talk about your problems with people outside your family."

LIMITATIONS

The approach carries with it the chance of analyzing the self at a distance and thus of making the self a mechanical thing. The use of intellectual concepts can become a defense against feeling and experiencing, and people can be placed in artificial categories. TA terminology can also blur the therapist's creativity. It is possible for the approach to become a game in itself; one can master the technical style and thus leave out oneself as a person. The model does not include transference. There is little empirical research to support the theoretical concepts that form the basis of TA.

GLOSSARY OF KEY TERMS

Adult. An ego state that is the processor of information. It is the analytical, rational, and objective part of personality.

Child. An ego state that consists of feelings, impulses, and spontaneous acts. This part of personality can manifest itself in several ways: the "Natural Child," the "Little Professor," and the "Adapted Child."

Contamination. The state that exists when the contents of one ego state are mixed with those of another. (Either the Parent, the Child, or both intrude within the boundaries of the Adult ego state and interfere with the clear thinking and functioning of the Adult.)

Critical Parent. An ego state that is fault-finding and harsh.

Ego state. One of the three distinct patterns of behavior and independent levels of psychological functioning: Parent, Adult, and Child.

Exclusion. The boundary problem that exists when one or more ego states are effectively prevented from functioning.

Game. A series of stereotyped and predictable patterns of behavior that ends with surprise bad feelings for at least one player.

Injunction. Parental message telling children what they have to do and be in order to get recognition. These messages, which are usually couched in some form of *don't*, may be either verbal or nonverbal.

Karpman Drama Triangle. A triadic interaction in which one person acts as persecutor, another as rescuer, and the third as victim. A useful device to help people understand the nature of games.

Life position. A stance that people assume in early childhood regarding their own intrinsic worth and that of others.

Natural Child. A form of the Child ego state that is impulsive, untrained, spontaneous, and expressive.

Nurturing Parent. An ego state that is supportive and caring.

Parent. An ego state that is an introject of parents and parent substitutes. Contains the "shoulds" and "oughts" that individuals collect from significant people in their life.

Racket. A habitual feeling (depression, guilt, anger, sadness) that people chronically cling to after a game.

Redecision. The process of reexperiencing early situations in which we made basic decisions about life, evaluating these decisions, and making new and more appropriate choices about life.

Script. A personal life plan, which individuals create by a series of early decisions regarding themselves, others, and their place in the world.

Script analysis. That part of the therapeutic process by which the life patterns of clients are identified, allowing them to take steps toward changing their programming.

Stroke. A form of recognition. Strokes may be positive or negative, conditional or unconditional.

Structural analysis. A tool by which clients become aware of the content and functioning of their ego states of Parent, Adult, and Child. Helps clients resolve patterns that they feel stuck with.

Transaction. An exchange of strokes between two or more people; the basic unit of human communication. Transactions may be complementary, crossed, or ulterior.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION AND EVALUATION

1. Is awareness of early decisions sufficient to effect changes in personality and behavior? If not, what additional factors are needed to bring about change? Explain.
2. Do you believe that people are passively "scripted," or programmed, by the injunctions they are fed at an early age? Or do you believe that people choose to accept or reject these parental messages, make early *decisions*, and have the power to redecide and thus change their life plan? What are the implications of your view for the practice of counseling?
3. What are some of the advantages and disadvantages of contracts?
4. If you wanted to challenge your clients' early decisions and help them work toward redecisions, how might you do this? Provide an example of an early decision that you made and that you have either struggled with or changed.

6. The relationship between the client and the therapist is characterized by _____

7. Some of the major techniques are _____

8. I think this approach is most applicable to clients who _____

9. One aspect of transactional analysis I like most is _____

10. One aspect of transactional analysis I like least is _____

QUIZ ON TRANSACTIONAL ANALYSIS: A COMPREHENSION CHECK

Score ____%

Note: Refer to Appendix 1 for the scoring key.

True/false items: Decide if the following statements are "more true" or "more false" as they apply to transactional analysis.

- | | |
|-----|---|
| T F | 1. The technique of family modeling is an approach to working with a Constant Parent, a Constant Adult, or a Constant Child. |
| T F | 2. Structural analysis is a tool by which clients become aware of the content and functioning of their Parent, Adult, and Child. |
| T F | 3. TA places emphasis on working through the transference relationship. |
| T F | 4. A useful technique to help people work through their ego states is the use of free association to their dreams. |
| T F | 5. In TA therapy resistance is seen as an inevitable phenomenon and as a manifestation of one's unconscious; TA techniques are designed to uncover unconscious conflicts. |
| T F | 6. The role of the TA therapist includes paying attention to didactic and cognitive issues. |
| T F | 7. TA therapists stress the value of equal relationships in the therapy process. |
| T F | 8. Rackets consist of one's life plan, and they include injunctions and decisions. |
| T F | 9. The use of contracts is a basic part of TA therapy. |
| T F | 10. TA assumes that clients can make new and more appropriate decisions to replace earlier archaic decisions. |

Multiple-choice items: Select the *one best answer* of those alternatives given. Consider each question within the TA framework.

- ____ 11. Which of the following is *not* a key concept in TA?
- | | |
|------------|---------------------|
| a. rackets | d. free association |
| b. strokes | e. games |
| c. scripts | |

- ___ 12. Which ego state is the "processor of data and information" and works with facts and external reality?
- Parent
 - Adult
 - Child
- ___ 13. The Karpman Drama Triangle is a useful device for helping people understand
- ~~early transactions~~
 - ~~games~~
 - early childhood.
 - ~~their ego states~~
 - ~~none of the above~~
- ___ 14. The basic goal of TA is to help clients
- uncover unconscious material.
 - learn to live with existential anxiety.
 - rid themselves of emotional disorders.
 - change their irrational beliefs.
 - make new decisions regarding their present behavior and the direction of their life.
- ___ 15. The ultimate goal of TA is
- achieving autonomy.
 - learning to understand games.
 - working through the transference relationship.
 - developing a better "racket."
 - living by the rule of the Parent ego state.
- ___ 16. TA tends to stress
- an equal relationship in which client and therapist become partners in the therapeutic process.
 - a superior and aloof stand by the therapist.
 - therapy in which the client/therapist relationship is not an important ingredient.
 - a relationship similar to that between friends.
 - none of the above.
- ___ 17. A basic requisite for effective therapy is the client's capacity for and willingness to
- keep a daily journal of thoughts and feelings.
 - accept the judgments of his or her therapist.
 - develop a contract.
 - free-associate during the therapy sessions.
- ___ 18. The process by which a person becomes aware of the content and functioning of his or her ego states of Parent, Adult, and Child is known as
- transactional analysis.
 - functional analysis.
 - dream analysis.
 - structural analysis.
- ___ 19. What transactions can occur between people?
- complementary
 - crossed
 - ulterior
 - all of the above
 - none of the above
- ___ 20. TA tends to stress
- cognitive factors.
 - getting in touch with feelings.

- c. control of aggressive impulses.
 - d. dealing with our existential aloneness.
- ___ 21. Redecisional therapy, as practiced by the Gouldings, is done primarily in the context of
- a. individual therapy.
 - b. couples therapy.
 - c. family therapy.
 - d. group therapy.
- ___ 22. In their rededecision therapy the Gouldings integrate TA concepts with techniques drawn from
- a. psychodrama.
 - b. family therapy.
 - c. fantasy and imagery.
 - d. Gestalt therapy.
 - e. all of the above.
- ___ 23. A contribution of TA to counseling with ethnic-minority clients is
- a. its focus on dreams.
 - b. its structure, which helps clients understand how their culture has influenced them.
 - c. the abundance of research on TA theory as it is applied to working with culturally diverse client populations.
 - d. the fact that TA always begins by exploring the client's cultural background.
- ___ 24. The unpleasant feelings that people experience after a game are called
- a. injunctions.
 - b. parental messages.
 - c. script analysis.
 - d. rackets.
 - e. life positions.
- ___ 25. In looking at the future of TA, this approach seems to be
- a. getting more and more complex.
 - b. going back to its psychoanalytic roots in therapeutic practice.
 - c. moving toward becoming more and more cognitive.
 - d. focusing more on encouraging clients to emotionally reexperience crucial experiences when early decisions were made.
 - e. merging with Adlerian concepts.