

UNDERSTANDING LIFE POSITIONS AND EGO STATES

Mapping Your Inner World for Healthier Relationships

I'M OK,
YOU'RE
NOT OK

I'M OK,
YOU'RE
NOT OK

Parent



Adult
Child



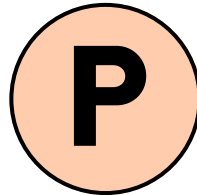
I'M OK,
YOU'RE
NOT OK

I'M NOK,
YOU'RE
NOT OK

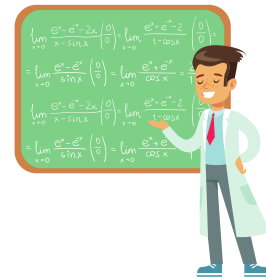
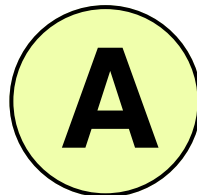
Transactional Analysis

An Introduction to Transactional Analysis

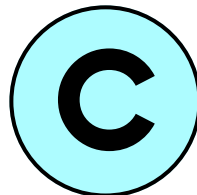
Concepts



Theory



Practice



This is a short paper, set out in 5 sections/chapters that deal with some of the main concepts of this important Humanistic Theory of Therapy

Part 1

TRANSACTIONAL ANALYSIS (T A) AN INTRODUCTION

' Every human being is born a Prince or a Princess ; early experiences convince some that they are frogs ,and the rest of the pathological development follows this'

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BACKGROUND AND BASIC ASSUMPTIONS

TA is a form of therapy devised by Eric Berne and modified by others. It is based on some basic assumptions. These are founded on the quotation (from Berne) and on the basic statement that 'people are OK.' It expands this as in the following way:

1. People are OK (I'm OK - You Are OK.)

Everybody has a capacity to think (most people unless they have some damage to their brain)
People decide their own destiny and can change



2. Secondly, that people have an in-built drive towards both mental and physical health

People live in two different, but related, worlds. These worlds are :

- **An Inner World**

This is a world of dreams, emotions, fears, hopes and memories. This world contains feelings and images of both ourselves and others. It is our private world.

- **An Outer World**

In this outer world we act out our beliefs and feelings. This is the world where we act out our 'games', 'roles' and transactions

How and what we do in our inter-personal relationships depends upon the relationship we have between these two worlds.. Are they congruent or in conflict. These states of congruency or conflict vary with time and circumstances. Berne was originally a psychoanalyst and TA has its roots in this approach or model of counselling. However,

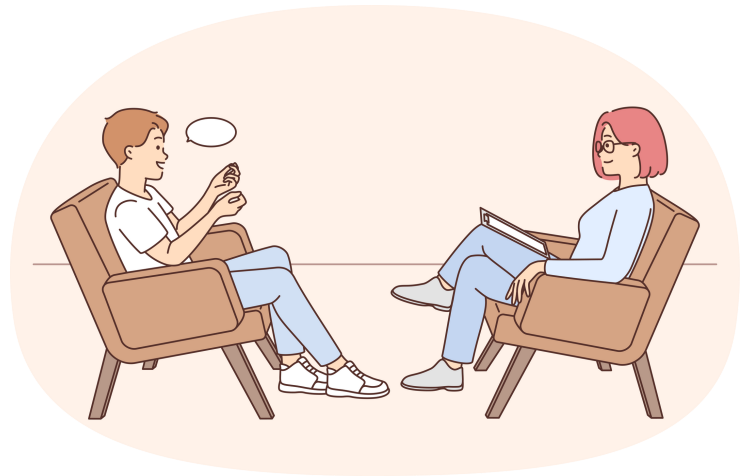


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it has (like Gestalt) developed over many years in the Humanistic Approach to counselling and it uses many of the concepts of Person Centered Counselling. It is a highly experiential model and requires a mainly practical and not a theoretical approach. However, it has a strong theoretical foundation. This series of notes will deal with the theoretical aspects but will be backed up by a complementary series of practical exercises which will influence our approach to all our work in TA. How and what we do in our inter-personal relationships depends upon the relationship we have between these two worlds.. Are they congruent or in conflict. These states of congruency or conflict vary with time and circumstances.

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PERSONALITY AND EGO STATES:

Our basic personality is based on many things. Much of it is unknown unconscious and, as many psychoanalysts believe, primitive. It is affected by many influences family, culture, religion social life etc. However, self awareness, and encouragement of its growth, enables us to understand our two worlds and to make sense of their congruence and conflict.

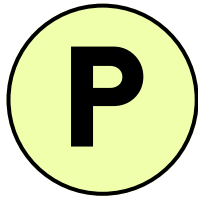
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This conflict often takes the form of an 'inner dialogue'. The task of TA counselling, and all growth in self awareness, is to allow individuals to get in touch with this inner dialogue, make sense of it and grow towards their full and true potential.

EGO STATES

Berne called the parts of us that contribute to the inner dialogue - Ego States. This links with the Psychoanalytical and Freudian concept of the 'ego'. But Berne insisted that these states were real - they allow us to contact reality. Initially we will examine three (3) basic states. Other sub-states exist and these will be examined in later notes.

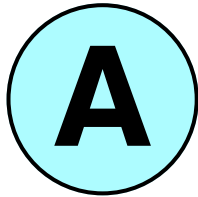
These 3 states begin, and continue, to develop throughout our life. All states are equally important in developing our true potential.



PARENT

This is our collection of attitudes, behaviours, feelings and thoughts, which we have taken in (copied from the past), usually unconsciously, from significant parental figures and role models.

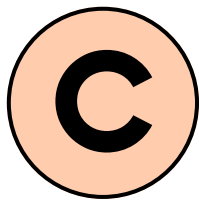
'BORROWED EGO -STATE'



ADULT

This is our collection of attitudes, behaviours, feelings and thoughts, which are direct response in the here and now

'PRESENT EGO-STATE'



CHILD

This is our collection of attitudes, behaviours, feelings and thoughts, which are replayed from our childhood - our own past

'ARCHAIC EGO - STATE'

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THREE (3) BASIC EGO STATES First – Order Structure

We will now explore the above through participating in a complementary exercise. This will be followed by a series of presentations (with notes) and other exercises.

NOTE:- The following activity (along with most of the others) is adapted from the work of Ian Stewart and acknowledged expert of this approach in the UK

TA: - ACTIVITY 1

BASIC EGO-STATE MODEL & SHIFTS

1. Think of examples in the past week where you were acting mainly from each of the Ego States. It might help to role play these to others.
2. Take each of the Ego – States in turn and :
 - Record what you were feeling
 - Record what you were thinking
 - Note how you were behaving



IT MAY HELP IF GROUP MEMBERS DO ONE EACH OF THESE (P A C) NOTES

• Child Ego State

Ask yourself ' What was I saying to myself in my head about myself and others' ?

• Parent Ego State

Ask yourself ' What do I hear my mother/father saying inside my head ' ?

• Adult Ego State

Were your responses etc appropriate for the here and now ?

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3. Discuss your experiences of the exercise. Take each of the Ego – States in turn and :
4. Make some initial notes on both your understanding of the TA Basic Model and your experiences during the exercise.

Part 2 TRANSACTIONAL ANALYSIS (TA)

FUNCTIONAL ANALYSIS OF EGO STATES

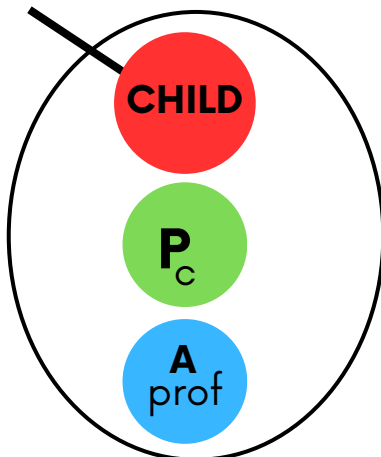
INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter we looked at the background to TA and the three basic ego states, This note will look at the sub- states of the Parent and Child and begin to look at how these are affected by early experiences and 'transferred' into adult life. We will look first at the Child – Parent Relationship

CHILD - PARENT RELATIONSHIP

If we look at the initial relationship between Child and Parent we can begin to see its concepts and importance. TA surmises that inside the Child State , three (3) mini - states occur.

**Transferred to
our Parent State
in later life**



Parent (P_c)

The Parent in our child is our programmed response to how we were treated. It affects our Parent ego state in later life

Adult (A_{prof})

Often referred to as 'the little professor ' It is our adult ego state in its embryo form and helps us get the best out of situations

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Child (Co)

Our original unique infant child, with early memories, feelings etc.

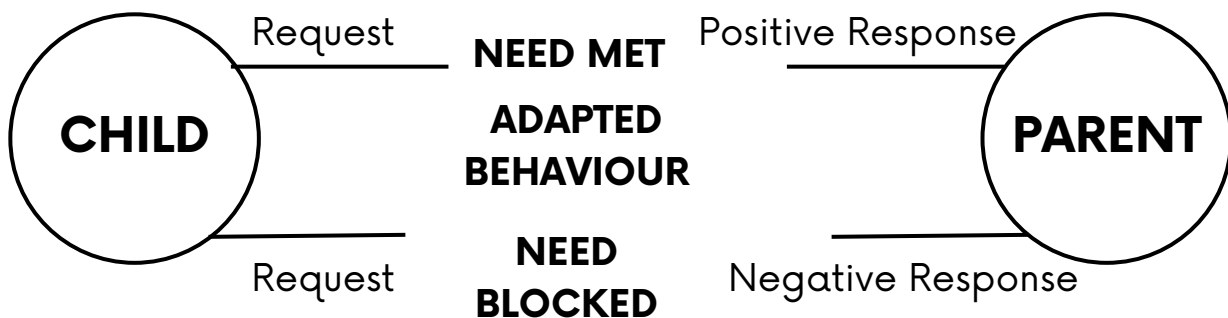
Parent

For a young child parents are extremely important. They have power, knowledge, control, love etc. Children look to them for all their basic needs. How the Parent responds to this (and this will be affected by its 3 Ego States) determines the 'messages' taken on by the child. Good parenting is guided by a love for , and the wellbeing of, the child. Bad parenting stems mainly from the unresolved pains and emotional needs of the parent's (Child) and / or the parents (Adult) ignorance .



An example of this is shown below

Child's Adapted Behavior



NOTE : The child has the three (embryonic) states shown on the previous page) Children learn to adapt. They have needs and these are either met or blocked./ It's the lessons they learn and how they adapt their behavior that is taken into later life.

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EXAMPLES

Baby Peter wants attention so he cries loudly and his mother comes and picks him up.

Baby Patricia cries and is shouted at or ignored , so she learns to keep quiet and not cause trouble.

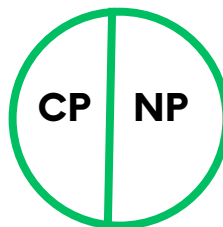
Both learn to adapt their behaviour and 'record ' deep within them the message - 'that's the way to do it !

To understand the importance of good parenting and our ability to change , it is important to look at the additional sub- ego states of both the Parent and Child

SUB- STATES : 2nd Order Functional Ego States

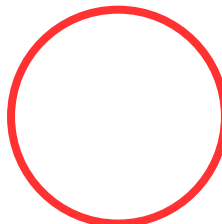
Both the Parent and Child states have two sub-states. These are shown in the Figure below

Controlling Parent
(Controlling, Directing
Persecuting)



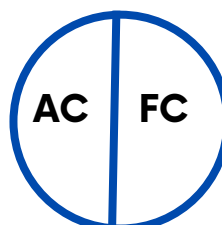
Nurturing Parent
(Caring, Supporting,
Rescuing)

(Thinking, listening,
remembering, planning
etc.)



Adult

Adapted Child
(Conforming/
Rebelling)



Free Child
(Creative,
spontaneous etc)

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POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE ASPECTS OF SUB-STATES

There are both positive and negative aspects of each of the sub-states of both Parent and Child . It is not simply NP Good CP Bad or AC Bad and FC Good. The Complementary Exercise now follows and is designed to assist in the growth of experiential understanding of the above concepts.

TA: - ACTIVITY 2

EGO-STATE MODEL & ADAPTED BEHAVIOUR

This exercise is designed to begin the process of 'changing' the content of our Parent State and thus affect our 'Adapted Behavior '

- 1 With reference the theory (presentation), identify at one or two 'adapted messages' you received from your Parent .
- 2 Working in TRIADS carry out the following exercise

NOTE: Observer ensures client de-roles (IMPORTANT)

- Take turns to be Counsellor and Client.
- Counsellor asks client 'to be' Parent and explore the adapted behavior from the parent's viewpoint' .
- Counsellor (may) finds the adapted message from the Parent. (i.e. Parent in Client's head that gives the ' adapted message') .
- OBSERVER ensures client de-roles and becomes self.
- Counsellor explores with Client the 'adapted message' to find 'new' understanding.

- 3 In TRIADS explore & discuss the exercise.

- 4 (Time permitting) Group Discussion

- 5 Journal on your understanding of these aspects of TA and on the experience



Transactional Analysis

TRANSACTIONAL ANALYSIS (TA) Part 3 EGOGRAMS

INTRODUCTION

In previous chapters we have looked at the background to TA, its basic states, adaptive states and the importance of the Child- Parent relationship. In this note we will examine further the importance of the Parent State and look at the concept of Ego grams and their application

PARENTING

Most approaches to counselling agree on the importance of good parenting. TA agrees with this importance and Berne developed the concepts of the Ego States and those of the parent. Parenting is concerned with the well-being of the child. But what about the parents upbringing ? Their past may have ' contaminated' (see later note) their Ego States. Consequently Bad Parenting can be rooted in the past.

Parents may be ignorant of certain facts etc. (Adult) or , in many cases, have unmet emotional needs (Child) . This will affect them and they too will have Ego States with ' good' and 'bad' messages These messages will stem from their past and influence their role as a Parent. A fundamental attitude of TA is that Messages can be changed . New information (Adult) or emotional changes (Child) can be experienced and the way individuals have adapted can thus be changed. TA would propose that any changes to the Parent state are essential in any therapy. To assist us in looking at this it is important to monitor or be aware of our Ego States. One method is to construct an Ego gram.



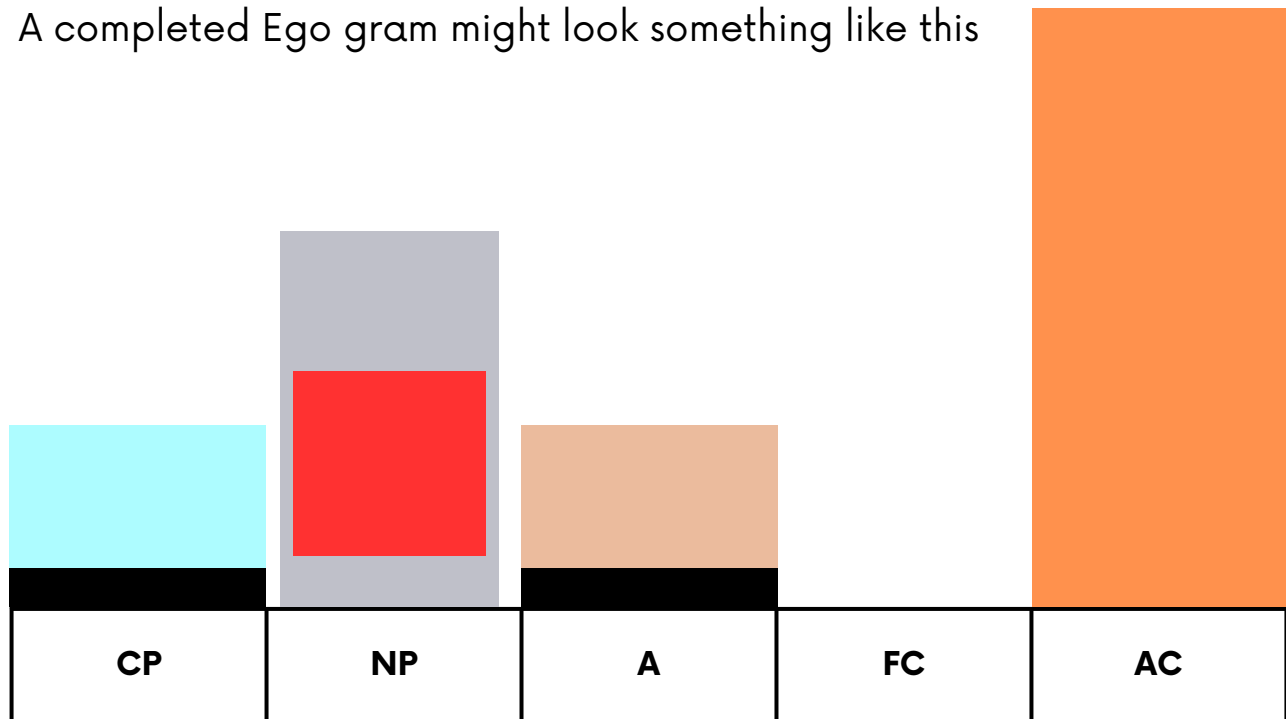
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EGOGRAMS

This is a concept / method devised by Dusay (1977) and is designed to allow you to intuitively assess your own and others Ego-States. It is in the form of a Bar Chart.

CP	NP	A	FC	AC
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A completed Ego gram might look something like this



In the example shown :

A lot of time is spent in Adult - heavily Nurturing
An heavy element of Adaptive Child
No Free Child (where is the fun ?)
A small amount of Adult

The important points to note are :

- In which state do you spend most time ?
- In which state do you spend least time
- What is the ratio of Critical : Nurturing Parent ?
- What is the ratio of Free : Adaptive Child ?

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IT IS IMPORTANT TO WORK QUICKLY AND WITH INTUITION

Particular Reference : Dusay J ' Egograms' New York Harper and Row
1977

TA: - ACTIVITY 3

IDENTIFYING OUR EGO-STATES & PLOTTING OUR EGOGRAMS

This exercise is designed to assist us in identifying our Ego States and preparing to plot our Ego grams

- 1** Write down at least TEN words or phrases that describe you. See Table below - (This is your Internal view of you)

[illegible]

Transactional Analysis

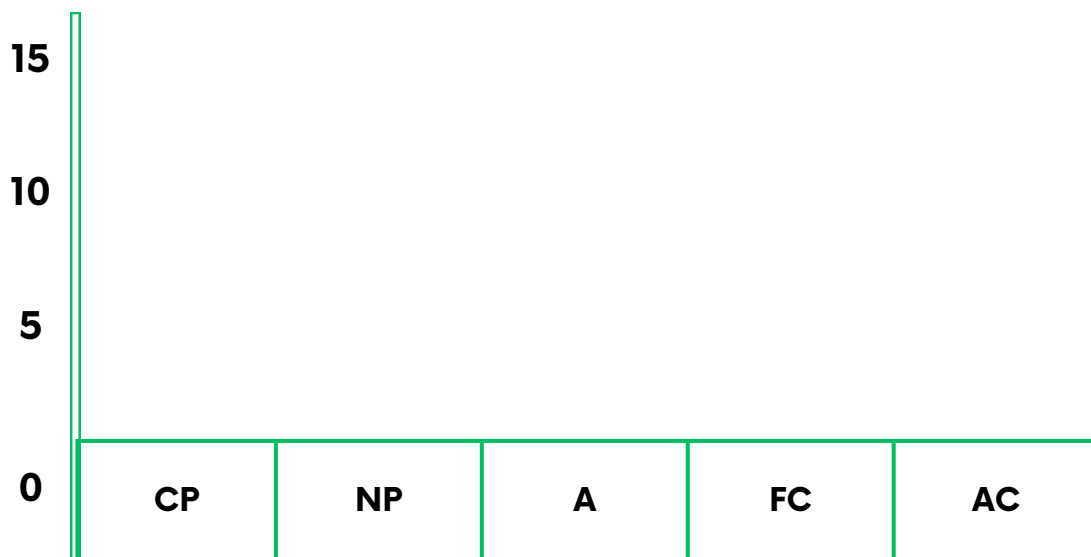
- 2 Working in Pairs , ask your partner to describe to find at least Six words or phrases to describe you. (External view of self)

WORD or PHRASE	LIKELY EGO-STATE

- 3 Reflect on the two views and discuss with your partner
- 4 Read the notes on Egograms
- 5 Reflect on your inter-personal relationships. Get in touch with what you do AND NOT what you feel with other people

NOTE : The Individual levels are NOT important - its the comparisons between the different Ego - States

- 6 Plot your Egogram below



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- 7 Discuss your Ego gram with your partner
- 8 Group discussion on whole exercise
- 9 Reflect on these aspects of TA , the self-awareness arrived at and its application to your Practice.

PART 4: TRANSACTIONAL ANALYSIS (TA) TRANSACTIONS

INTRODUCTION

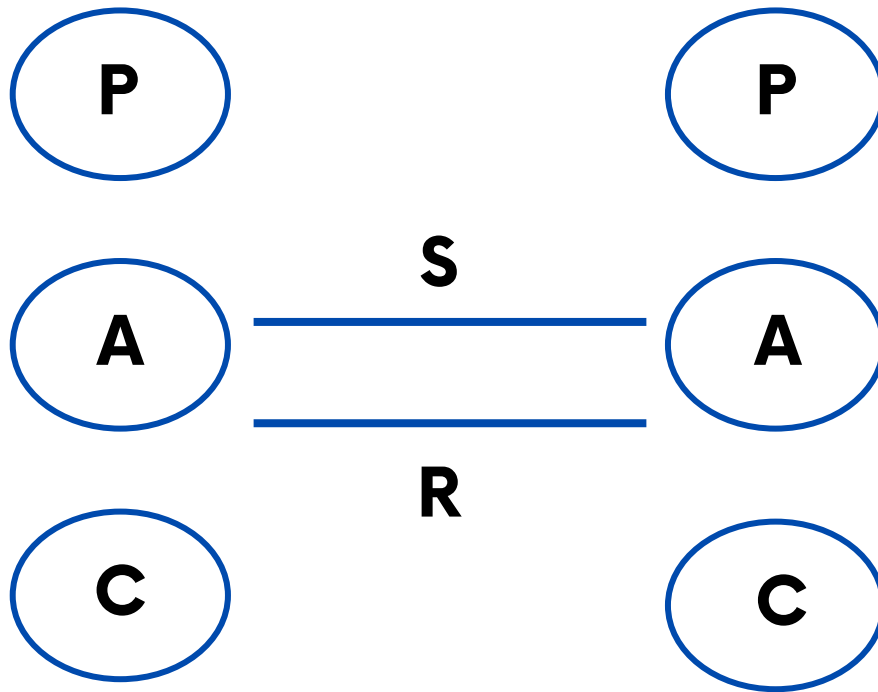
In previous chapters we have looked at the background to TA, its basic states, adaptive states , the importance of the Child- Parent relationship . In this note we will examine the concept of transactions and classify them as either :-Complementary , Crossed or Ulterior Transactions .

WHAT IS A TRANSACTION ?

A transaction is a form of communication and consists of a 'stimulus' (S) an opening remark followed by a 'response' (R) which is the reply. A simple example is when two people meet . 'Hello ' is often followed by a reply ' Its a nice day ' So any communication between people is merely a chain of transactions. There is a difference in quality between some basic types. We will now look at these.



Transactional Analysis



COMPLEMENTARY TRANSACTION

A complementary transaction occurs when the transaction lines are parallel. This occurs when the Ego - State addressed is the one that answers and normally indicates that the relationship is going well.

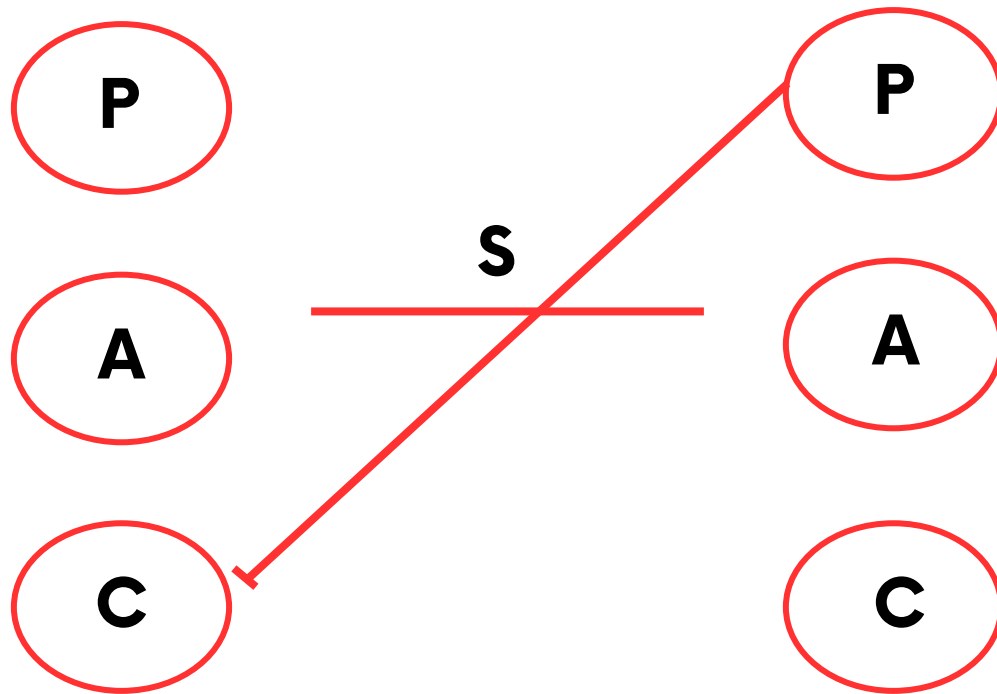
Other possible complementary transactions are :

Parent - Parent **Child -**
Child Parent to Child
Child to Parent

You can discuss Complementary Transactions and give examples in the accompanying exercises

Transactional Analysis

CROSSED TRANSACTION



A crossed transaction occurs when the response comes not from the Ego State addressed but from another. The transaction is often 'uncomfortable'. The example shown is as follows :

Adult – Adult :

Shall we finish and go for a coffee ?

Parent to Child

Why can't you go by yourself

Crossed transactions indicate a problem in the relationship and need to be dealt with

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Although Crossed Transaction (if habitual) can be negative , they can also be positive. They can 'force' another person to change their communication style if the crossed transaction is uncomfortable enough.

You can discuss Crossed Transactions and give further examples in the accompanying exercises or reflect on these and record them in your Journal

OPTIONS

If we find in any relationship / transactions that are unsatisfactory either because we have fixed complementary or crossed transactions, then we have the option to choose to make changes. This notion of options was first proposed by Stephen Karpman - an associate of Berne's. Karpman suggested that ' we had options to move energy from one ego-state to another in relationships ' (Whitton 1993 p 33). It may be useful/ necessary to deliberately change ego-states (Crossing States) to be assertive. Whitton also gives an outline of the permissions we can give ourselves in order to have//take options. He outlines the following four important permissions :



To demand straight transactions

To protect yourself - you can talk back

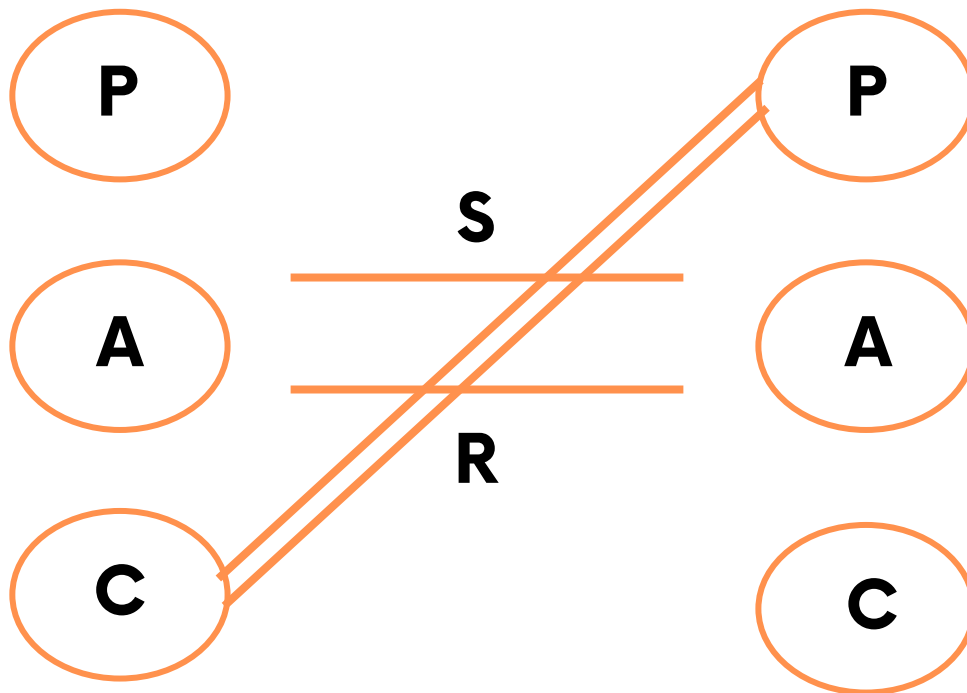
To express yourself - you can express feelings

To learn to use your ego states.

These are four important options and could form the basis for useful and helpful therapy with clients

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ULTERIOR TRANSACTION



An Ulterior Transaction is one where we don't say what we mean The example shown is as follows ;

S ' How did I do on our practice session ' ?

R It went reasonably well '

US ' I didn't do too well - did I ' ?

UR ' You were awful '

There is the obvious Social Transaction but also a hidden and ulterior emotional transaction.. We normally can end up getting something we don't want. Ulterior Transactions are the basis of all Games - more of this later

We will discuss further examples of Ulterior Transactions in an exercise

Transactional Analysis

TA: - ACTIVITY 4

TRANSACTIONS AND OPTIONS

This exercise is designed to assist us in identifying some of our Transactions To rehearse these in small groups and receive and give feedback. To discuss the whole concept of Options and our rights.

WORKING IN SMALL GROUPS

1 COMPLEMENTARY TRANSACTIONS

Identify and practice/ rehearse some Complementary Transactions. Try to identify at least three of the common complementary transactions you use :

In a personal relationship

In a working/professional relationship

In a social setting.

2 CROSSED TRANSACTION

Repeat 1 (above) for Crossed Transactions. Give and receive feedback on how these feel or may be perceived by self and others.

3 OPTIONS

Discuss the whole concept of Options and ' your rights '. How do you feel about them. ?

4 ULTERIOR TRANSACTIONS

Repeat 2 (above) for Ulterior Transactions.. What might prevent us from being open and genuine. ? How might we reduce the number of Ulterior Transactions we use ?

Transactional Analysis

Part 5:- TRANSACTIONAL ANALYSIS Strokes – Rackets – Games & Lifescript

INTRODUCTION

This chapter will look at some further concepts of TA . These underpin our basic approach to relationships and how we act out our feelings. It is accompanied by a complementary exercise

STROKES

This is a key concept in TA . Strokes are ways or methods we adopt in relationships, where we give and receive recognition/ affirmation of the value of the person. Strokes can be positive or negative and conditional or unconditional They are , as their name suggests , transactions which are usually accompanied by physical or verbal messages of well-being. When we were young strokes were normally overtly physical but , in many cultures and especially western Anglo- Saxon culture, this declines as we grow older.



Conditional

These are directed at what we do not who we are . e. g. You are a great / poor teacher ' or ' I love the way you play the guitar '

Unconditional

These are strokes for just being you. e.g. I like your warmth ' or ' You are so loyal !

Its important for us to both give and receive strokes and equally important to recognize the difference between Unconditional and Conditional strokes. We can receive strokes from a variety of people and situations relationships, family, friends, acquaintances, work colleagues etc.

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For each of us each of these will have an importance e.g. A positive stroke from a partner could outweigh several negative strokes from a relation etc.

NOTE It is important to ensure that we attract sufficient positive strokes. We can do this in a variety of ways. We can generate 'self-strokes' and we can look for opportunities to both give and receive them.

RACKETS

we fail to gain sufficient strokes we can often get involved in 'racket' feelings. These are the result of our adaptations to past situations Essentially, there are true feelings and racket feelings.

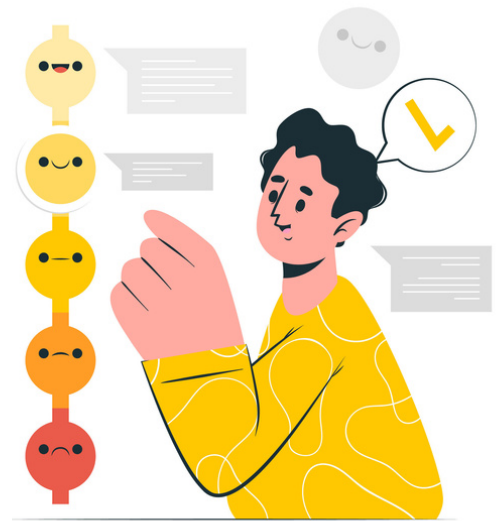
True Feelings

These are our reactions to the here and now. They are our authentic , spontaneous and natural reaction to what is happening.

Racket Feelings

These may be initiated by something happening now but are usually a response to the past. They can have one more of the following characteristics : Manipulative , Inappropriate for the actual situation, Physical symptoms e.g. confrontation leads to headaches etc. , Situational / Repetitive e.g. I dislike endings so I avoid them or emotionally withdraw.

Rackets can go on for some time , especially if this is one way I can get strokes. They can be a form of resistance to facing a problem and are equated to the Psychodynamic concept of defences. Because we can get a 'pay – off ' for a racket – we can begin to look for opportunities/ situations to set them up – we get attention. A result is that rackets are set up from one of the OK/ Not OK positions that are learned in childhood.



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NOTE We all have a series of racket feelings and these are learned from childhood. Each one of us reacts in a different way to a set situation. Rackets do not solve problems – they tend to avoid them Rackets are all part of a series of games and our separate unique life scripts.

GAMES

Games are a series of transactions which we normally apply if a racket fails. We do this unconsciously and play a role . What can happen is that a series of transactions occur these are unique to an individuals 'programming, i.e. our past. Inevitably, ulterior transactions are part of the game.

The whole concept of a game is covered in Games People Play by Eric Berne the originator of TA. But it involves a con (bait) a gimmick a switch a cross up and a pay-off. The sequence, devised by Berne is outlined below



An ulterior Transaction sets up a con or bait which has a gimmick.

This gimmick 'hooks' into some need of the other that causes them to 'bite'.

A response is elicited.

This can lead to a series of transactions which keep the game going.

Eventually a 'switch' occurs – when the 'real' message is decoded.

The game is now in our awareness

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The 'players' in the game of transactions both experience a cross-up

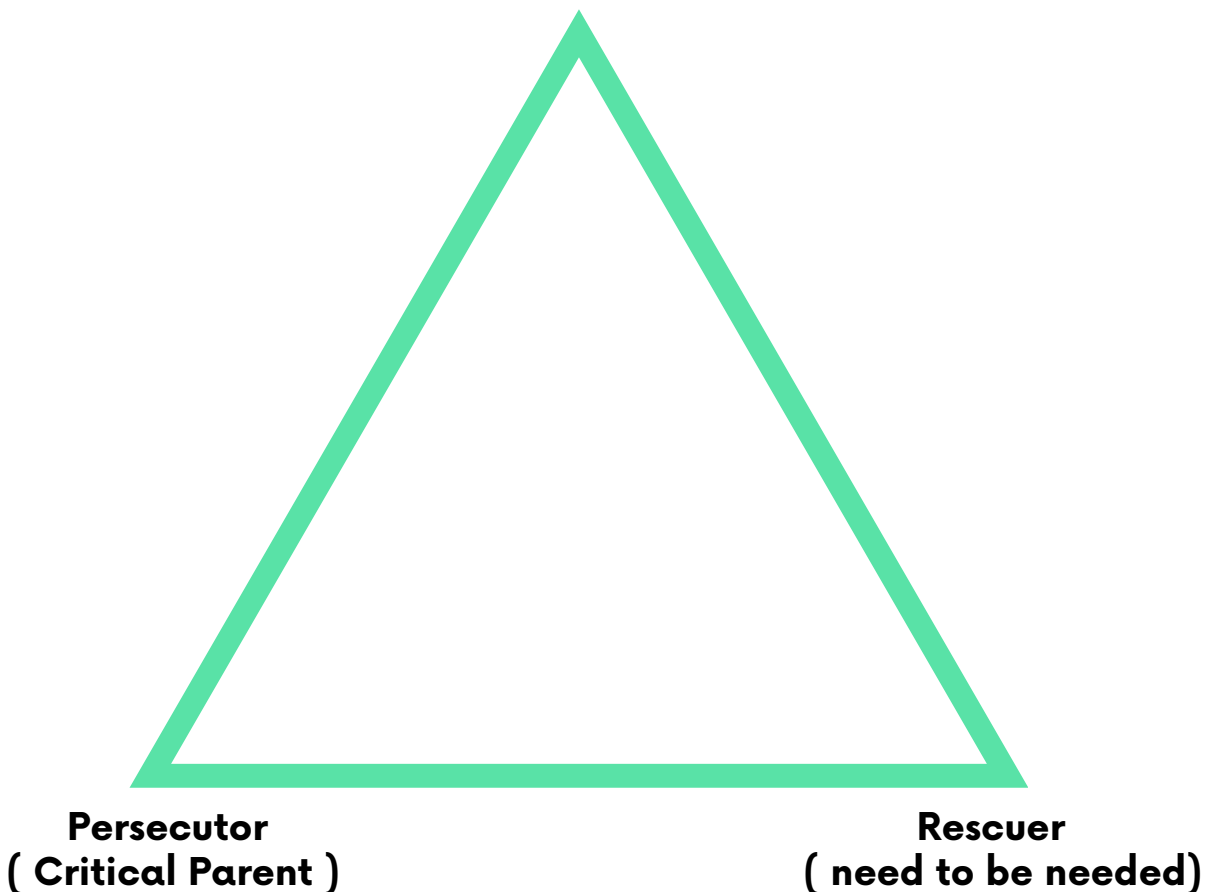
This is normally a moment of 'dawning' confusion

The pay-off is a familiar (racket) feeling for them both.

There are a variety of well-recognized games , some of these are on a separate handout. (see Games People Play) . One of the commonest particularly in triangular relationships, is the Drama Triangle. It can also be part of any relationship .

The Drama Triangle

Victim (negative Adapted Child)



Roles can suddenly ' switch' when we are involved in this game. There are many variants of the scene below :

Transactional Analysis

● A victim sends out a transaction asking to be rescued.

● A rescuer responds with a helpful suggestion

● This can continue – but no suggestions help

● The 'victim' can then switch to a persecutor

● The rescuer becomes the new victim.

Discounting

This is our capacity to selectively ignore information that does not accord with our ways of seeing things or living out our lifescrypt. This is always an unconscious decision. Whereby we 'discount' things.

NOTE Games always involve exchanges of discounts and normally are a replay of strategies derived in childhood. They are played from a negative ego-state using either AC, or NP or CP.

LIFESCRIPT

Every person has a lifescrypt – this is normally started in your childhood and, like every story has a beginning, a middle and an end. As we grow up we add things to our script. The majority of this is done in our early years and may be further added to in our teens. After that we 'bury' it in our unconscious, where it lies. However, it affects how we react in our relationships with others. Often our 'little' lifescrypts have themes or names.. A few now follow

Always being very helpful

Don't trust men/women

Running out of time

Always the jester/fool

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Script Directives

We build up our script and its individual (smaller) themes when we receive a series of script directives. These are normally delivered in childhood as we transact with significant parent figures. They can be straightforward or ulterior transactions. They normally involve mixed or contradictory messages.

FOR EXAMPLE

FATHER (P) Marriage is good	DAUGHTER Her (P)	MOTHER (P) Marriage is good
All men are 'beasts' Don't trust them (CP from his Child)		Her (CP) in her Child

A SCRIPT MATRIX - SHOWING A MIXED MESSAGE

TA5 : - PRACTICAL EXERCISE STROKES- RACKETS - GAMES & LIFESCRIPT

INTRODUCTION

These exercises are designed to assist you in developing an understanding of some advanced TA concepts. They will be carried out in small groups / Triads. They will take place over 2 sessions . If necessary (10 min Max) refer to the handout Notes on Counselling No: 5



Transactional Analysis

Strokes (25 min)

- Discuss your feelings and understanding re conditional & unconditional strokes.
- Take turns to give each other positive strokes :- Do this for 2 minutes each. Remember be honest - be kind - be supportive.
- Discuss how you felt - both giving and receiving strokes.
- Repeat 1 & 2 above for negative strokes (1 min maximum each)
NOTE accept responsibility for yourself - if its proving difficult - say so and ask your partners to STOP !
- Compare both experiences.

Rackets (50 min - 10 min each for task 2)

- Discuss the concept of 'true ' and 'racket' feelings.
- Share (client - counsellor - observer) an example(s) of your racket feelings and where you think they may come from. e.g. Which portion of the OK Corral.
- What do your rackets defend you from ? (give one example each)

Games (30 min)

The Drama Triangle is a useful concept in TA and one commonly found - especially in couples counselling. In the following exercise - take time to 'role-play' different scenes in order to experience each role . The suggestion is to have three separate scenes.



- In Triads decide who will initially play each role. For the first scene (role-play)
- The Victim will commence the scene and you will continue the role-play until you are all aware that a 'switch' has occurred.
- Discuss the experience.

Transactional Analysis

- Repeat 1 - 3 (twice more) each starting off in the Victim Role
- Discuss the overall exercise and (where possible) examples of the Drama Triangle in your life.

Lifescrypt (75 min - 20 min each for task 2)

- Share some of your basic life scripts
- Using your skills and working as client counsellor observer explore a possible 'script matrix' for one of your scripts.
- Repeat 2 above for all in your triad



Discussion

Briefly discuss your responses / feelings about these exercises and share what you have learned

References

Berne, E (1964) Games People Play
Harris, T (1968) I.M OK You're OK
Nelson-Jones, R The Theory &
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