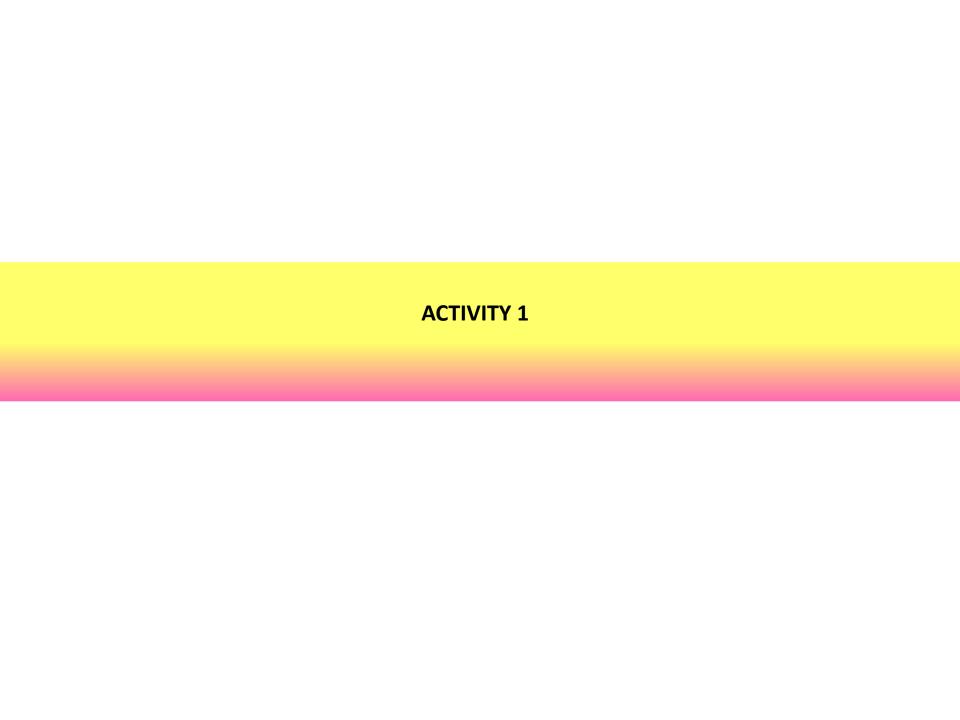
TRANSFERENCE & COUNTERTRANSFERENCE

Seminar for Module 3, Terapia, 2023

MAGDA RACZYNSKA hushstill@gmail.com



Human animals 1/5

- internal world -

Physical factors (nature)

Primary relationships with others (nurture)

INTERNAL WORLD

Individual way of making sense of the experience we have in the world / a pattern of explanation:

- stories we tell ourselves right from the beginning of our life
- to explain it / to give sense of who we are
- not identical to the external world
- coloured by UCS feelings
- influences how we relate

Example: can't find my keys in the bag

the world seen as safe place (friendly hide & seek)

the world seen as deliberately destructive place

'I know you're there ©'

'This is hopeless, I'm going to be late again, I'm hopeless;

Human animals 2/5

- communicating inner states -

COGNITIVE COMMUNICATION

LANGUAGE:

- expresses information about the speaker's thoughts
- conveyed to the listener via speech and other symbols.

Main focus of mainstream psychoanalytic theory until 1980s:

- TRANSFERENCE = RESISTANCE to the analytic work: 'on that field that the victory must be won [via interpretation] (Freud 1912: 35)
- COUNTERTRANSFERENCE = OBSTACLE 'the treatment must be carried out in abstinence' (Freud 1912b: 42)

EMOTIONAL COMMUNICATION

FEELINGS:

- express information about the speaker's affective state
- via non-verbal (and non symbolic) means, e.g. prosody, tone of voice, facial expression, posture, gestures.

split between language and pre-linguistic experience (Stern 1985)

'MINORITY TRADITION' (Geltner 2013):

- Ferenczi: reparative work in transference instead of interpreting
- Balint: provide object relationship instead of describing it
- Kohut: the importance of empathy
- Winnicott: recognizing negative feelings as important for the relationship

Human animals 3/5

body came last –

Growing recognition Most of brain-to-brain psychodynamicallycommunication oriented literature on (Schore 2014) CT, (including a smaller body of work on CT in - but related GAP child psychotherapy) approaches (e.g. Siegel 2010, Ogden - reduce it to mindand Fisher 2015, related impact Fisher 2017) seem to (thoughts, images, memories, associations) ignore the concept of CT*

Filling that gap started from about **1985**:

- SCT in adult therapy (Samuels 1985)
- CT in child work (Schowalter 1985)

Available literature on somatic countertransference (SCT) – still scarce and mostly focused on adults

^{*} Correction needed after attending a webinar by Pat Ogden and Bonnie Goldstein on June 11: there is an interest in CT in sensorimotor therapy and the use of it but not really theorised: 'T & CT are always there, enactments are always there, we use it, we are aware of it' (Ogden 2020)

Human animals 4/5

- inducing emotions -

EMOTIONAL COMMUNICATION



Survival-related needs:

food, sleep, gastrointestinal relief

Primitive forms of affective experience:

agitation, 'nameless dread' (= primitive anxiety about survival; Bion 1959: 308), contentment, playfulness, delight:

- transferred to / induced in the caregivers and reflected via their feelings
- · reflecting the feelings induced by the caregivers

The Alienist, S1E4, 9:59'-12:26'



'ghosts in the nursery' (Freiberg et al. 1975)

Human animals 5/5 - repetitions (think your post-it notes!) -

REPETITION COMPULSION

patterns of repetitions everyday, feeling and expressed via by inducing old unaware of recreate the almost behaviour emotional to repeat feelings in new being induced. affective past irresistible from early life communication objects in the affective tendency experience. present

TRANSFERENCE / COUNTERTRANSFERENCE = those same everyday repetitions / induced feelings that can be observed and metabolized in the context of therapy

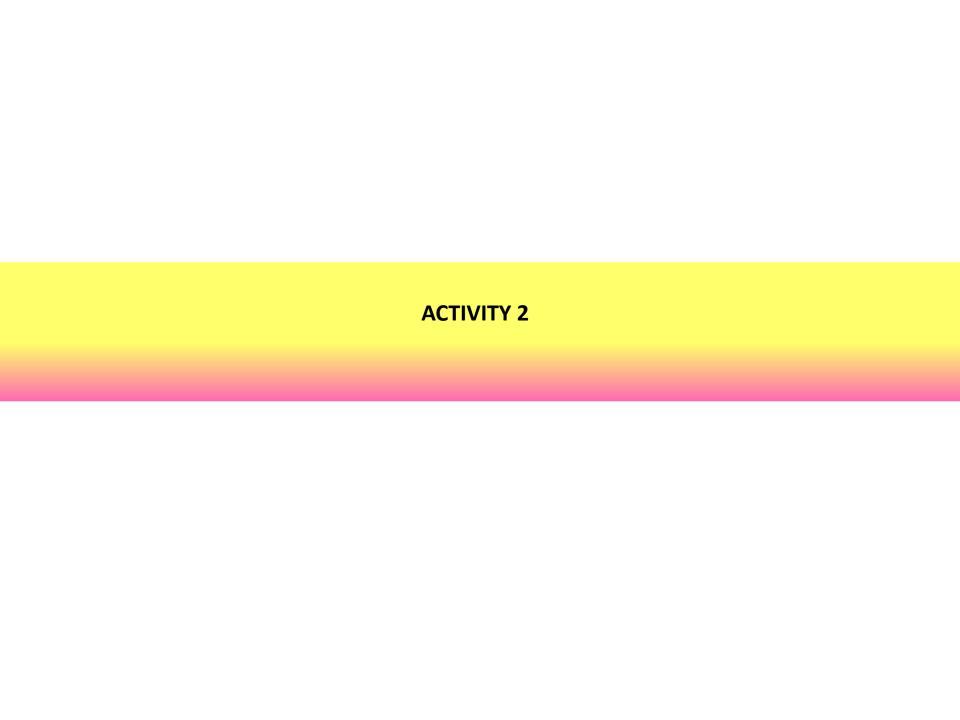
(Geltner 2013: 19-20)

seeking 'transformational object'

(Bollas 1987: 6)

'an opportunity to complete whatever action got thwarted or overridden'.

(Menakem 2017: 9)



Understanding transference/countertransference matters...

- remember your post it notes -

client parts WHO IS SPEAKING? parents **IWMs** family school

TO WHOM IS X SPEAKING?

early experiences parts unresolved

conflicts

IWM

CT

OBJECTIVE COUNTERTRANSFERENCE

'a feeling that is induced in the analyst by the patient's emotional communications and is a repetition of a feeling that originated in the patient's emotional life history'.

(Geltner 2013: 23)



The Alienist, S1E4, 25:539'-26:42'

...because the client needs to feel felt to heal

'EMOTIONAL REVOLUTION' (Schore 2014)

A paradigm shift across all disciplines: feelings determine all areas that constitute who we are.

(Raczynska 2019)

Grounded in the specific, describable body sensations

Constitute a part of a broader system of reactions to / indicators of experience => thus determine a sense of self

Relational: co-created, shared and communicated in interaction

Somatically transmitted, through body-to-body impact, predominantly unconsciously

How to recognize the client is inducing a feeling.

How to make sense of the feeling the client induces in the therapist.

How to recognize the moment of embodied relating.

What is the nature of embodied communication?

Healing happens through the ability to attune to this somatic relay

How to use countertransference to attune to the client.

'What is then needed (for a therapeutic response to be possible) is for the recipient, the mother or the therapist, to be more able to manage being in touch with these feelings than the infant or patient had been. When this response is found, the previously unmanageable feelings become more manageable. They become less terrifying than before, because another person has actually felt them and has been able to tolerate the experience of those feelings. The projector can thereafter take back those feelings, now made more manageable; and along with this can take in something of the recipient's capacity to tolerate being in touch with difficult feelings. The unconscious hope, implied in the use of projective identification as communication, thereby meets a therapeutic response from the mother or therapist.

However, this unconscious hope is not always met.

...

It is therefore not only unmanageable feeling-states that come to be evoked in the therapist by means of impact behaviour; this may include aspects of the patient's unbearable experience'.

(Casement 1985: 82-82)

One of many

THERAPEUTIC RELATIONSHIPS

(Petruska Clarkson 2003: 3-32)

The working alliance	 How are you? Fine, and how have you been? / As you can see from my husky voice, I have a bit of a cold, but I am quite well enough to work with you today.
The transferential / countertransferential relationship	 How are you? / I wonder what prompts your concern for me? It may be that you're anxious again, like you were with your mother, that I will not be able to withstand your envy towards me.
The reparative / developmentally needed relationship	 How are you? [depends on needs] I'm fine thank you and I appreciate your caring / You don't need to worry about me right now. I/m here to take care of you and I am ready to do that.
The person-to-person relationship	 How are you? Great, how about you? / Physically I'm fine, but lately I have been wondering about the helpless feeling I sometimes experience when you talk about the death of your baby. I guess it reminds me of losing my husband, and the fact that we are both grieving for loved ones in the same year. How are you?
	-

ACTIVITY 3

- 1. How to recognize the client is inducing a feeling
- 2. How to make sense of the feeling the client induces in the therapist
- 3. How to use countertransference to attune to the client

How to recognize the client is inducing a feeling 1/2

- what we're looking for -

TRANSFERENCE POSITIONS (Bollas 1987/2018: 163-167)	The use of the analytic object (= therapist and the analytic setting) = how is client using / what the client is passing to the therapist Rarely one type only, usually different types overlap even within one session
'Transfer to the analyst's discrete idiom'	Client's experience and response to the therapist's idiomatic, idiosyncratic way of being/working
'Transfer to the narrative object' (esp. important w/adolescents)	A character in client's narrative carrying client's (or therapist's) parts
'Transfer of parts of the self into the analyst' (esp. prominent with CYP)	Projective identification (Klein): client using therapist to evacuate, experience and contain the unbearable or intolerable parts of herself (good or bad)
'Transfer of life history via the analytic process'	Therapist (and client) cast in various roles to reenact and rework the client's family experience
'Transfer of true self via object relating'	Close to 'real relationship' (Clarkson). Client experimenting with different aspects of her authentic self using the therapist as her object.
'Transfer of the self-analytic element'	'the unconscious inclusion of the analyst in the patient's intrapsychic life' (165) – nothing to do with containing, an auxiliary function
'Transfer of the unthought known' (esp. important with CYP)	What has not been realized yet but simmers to be pushed towards to being thought: primary/unconscious, often related to preverbal/mother-baby dyadic experience; also, what's 'beyond comprehension' (166)

How to recognize the client is inducing a feeling 2/2

- how we're noticing it -

Systematic attempt at building an evidencebased, quantifiable scale (Egan and Carr 2008, Booth, Trimble and Egan 2010) Reluctance to quantify or exhaust – curiosity of and attention to anything that is unusual, unexpected or vexing

Immediate physical reactions, changes in relating or the style of clothes, feeling pregnant, spikes in anxiety, muscular tension, constriction in the chest, shifts in the tone of voice, feeling sick/pregnant/assaulted, noticing touching one's hair, noticing changes in own arousal levels, involuntary acts.....

Trying to group signals into categories:

- From sensation to cognitively organized sensory experiences (Forester 2007)
- Ordinary affects vs deeper, unconscious dynamics (Gubb 2014)
- Somatic & behavioural responses / feelings / phantasies
 all grounded in the body (Samuels 1985)
- Observable / the nature of contact / therapist's awareness of own shifts = SCT proper (Orbach and Carroll 2006)

Any aspect of the client's body and behaviour that impacts the body of the therapist can serve the communicative role (Dosamantes-Beaudry 2007)

SCT PREDISPOSED CLIENT GROUPS

- Borderline, narcissistic, psychotic
- Instinctual problems, i.e. eating disorders, aggression, sex
- Emotionally inhibited
- Trauma, regression, reduced verbal capacity, psychosomatic illness (other authors)

SCT PREDISPOSED THERAPISTS

Introverted intuition as dominant personality trait = focus on inner experience and dissociate (by somatising the sensory output from the environment

(Stone 2006)

How to make sense of the feeling the client induces in the therapist 1/3 - what does it contribute to our understanding -

Winnicott (1963), Stern (1985), Bollas (1987)

CT reveals the nature of the client's internal world

Feeling the quality of the client's developmental history and attachment experience:

- what it was like to be them in their early environment
- how they were held and handled by their carers - mother: 'transformational object' (Bollas 1987/2018: 5) / how others felt about them (
- what they may have suffered or missed
- how it felt for them
- how their mother felt about her own body

Bion (1962)

CT highlights the client's most painful, unprocessed, dissociated and disowned parts

Whatever fails to reach consciousness and stays in the body is sure to be expressed through the body.

The client projects her intolerable affects to the therapist who then needs to contain them until the client is ready to integrate them – which can also manifest as physical symptoms in the therapist's body.

Somatic symptoms = pointers to the gaps in the client's or the therapist's reflective awareness and capacity to think, signaling areas where more work is needed

How to make sense of the feeling the client induces in the therapist 2/3 - how do we figure it out -

Systematically tracking own psycho/somatic experience - awareness

REVERIE

Contextualizing against the client's early childhood story / the backdrop of specific developments in the client's narrative / first session's communications / why this therapist with this client in this moment

Ongoing oscillation between engaging with the physical and the psychic material

Becoming aware of 'transferential babblings'

(after 'somatic babblings', Martini 2016: 8):

Remaining in the state 'not knowing', enduring confusion, not reacting

Wondering, musing, freeassociating, holding the physical/emotional/cognitive response in mind, 'embodied reverie' (Martini 2016), playing with metaphors

CARE TO AVOID TRAPS

- Translating the somatic to the verbal
- Translating the somatic to the psychological
- What belongs to who

How to make sense of the feeling the client induces in the therapist 3/3 - care to avoid traps -

FROM SOMATIC TO VERBAL

More difficult to induce meanings from body signals than from the symbol and image-based material

FROM SOMATIC TO PSYCHOLOGICAL

Don't rush with psychological meanings, the body may have its own transferential needs (Orbach: True/False Body)

CONTEXTUALISE

C's early childhood story
C's narrative
first session's communications
(Ogden 1989)
why this therapist with this
client in this moment

WHAT BELONGS TO WHOM

Neurotic CT
Therapist unaware of own unresolved needs, thus unable to differentiate

from the client'

Reducing client's subjective phenomena to the perceptions of the therapist

Reactive/subjective CT
Therapist's contributions to the clinical relationship

Proactive/objective CT Client's contributions to the clinical relationship, what the T reacts to in the C

'My diminution was not altogether unpleasant. I went back and forth between feeling teetered over as though I was this little thing underneath her, and then sensing my lungs expand to take a metaphorical hearty breath as they were poised to shoot forward to prick and deflate her. She was at once substantial and puffed out, carrying too much water to let her feet sit comfortably in her dainty shoes, and yet almost menacingly large and solid. My body countertransference with Doreen was a visceral rendition of her early experience of bodies around her being too large and yet not sufficiently robust or stable for her to find or develop a body herself from. She did feel them teetering over her. She couldn't get them to be in focus, and the volatility of the body size I experienced in the countertransference was a version of the search for a body for herself that could moor itself by finding a place in the physical storm that surrounded her.'

(Orbach 2012)

How to recognize the moments of embodied relating

elusive nature of contact

NOW MOMENTS

(Stern 1998, Lyons-Ruth 1998)

- momentary, spontaneous and co-created enactments
- occurring between the client and the therapist
- that are felt as uniquely grounded in the present moment
- and when grasped can shift something in the relationship

The client needs to experience feelings in relation to the therapist / feel felt for the sake of the healing process

Essential for the therapist to find her indicators of when that contact might be occurring in order to seize it

- Becoming aware of 'somatic babbling' (Martini 2016: 8)
- Physical symptoms 'harbingers and omens of potential moments of meeting' (ib.: 16)
- Systematically tracking shifts in the therapist's body & mind
- Personal 'wonderful symptom' (Schellinski 2013: n.p.)
- Tracking 'the sense of contact quality' (Orbach and Carrol 2006: 64)
- Noticing moments when the client is disconnecting / regressing
- Checking with the client but not as intervention yet:
 e.g. What just happened? What are you noticing?
 What's going on in your body now?

"I get hot feet, an energy rising from the floor, the knees, an energy rising from the knees, all the way towards like grounding, a tingling, going up, all the feels like grounding, a tingling, and up and up. It feels like 2013: n.p.) thighs and up and up. (Schellinski 2013: n.p.) good "standpoint". (Schellinski 2013: n.p.)

What is the nature of embodied communication? 1/2

SPIRITUAL APPROACHES

mundus imaginalis

affective alchemy

mystical state

shared space

combined

unconscious

wearing your

patient

Qi

kinship libido

cauldron of transformation

PHENOMENOLOGICAL

APPROACHES

lived-body paradigm analytic setting – embodied setting

DEVELOPMENTAL

ANALOGIES

potential space

maternal

preoccupation

reverie

body reverie

basic relatedness

intermediary site

intermediate

buffer

affective

attunement

PHYSIOLOGICAL/ NEUROSCIENTIFIC DESCRIPTIONS

attachment enactments

postural mirroring

affective

communication

implicit relational

knowing

What is the nature of embodied communication? 2/2

THE COST OF AFFECTIVE CONNECTEDNESS when no awareness of it / suppression PROBLEMS

Dilemma between resisting and needing to survive CT (esp. SCT)

Consequences of ignoring embodied communication

- Embarrassing, awkward, uncomfortable
- Vexing, disturbing, unbearable
- 'embodied suffering' (Martini 2016)
- Resistance to owning

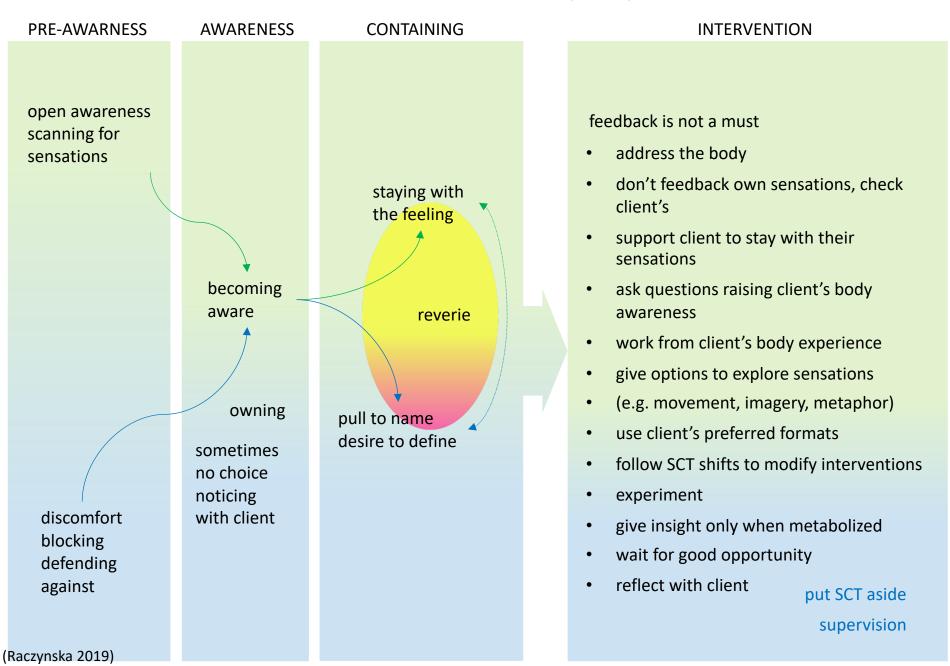
- Blocked energy
- Blocked communication
- Disturbed empathy & connection
- Risk to the therapist's own health

Missed client groups / implicit bias

Less capacity to support the client's process

Imperative of training, supervision & self-care

How to use CT to attune to the (adult) client

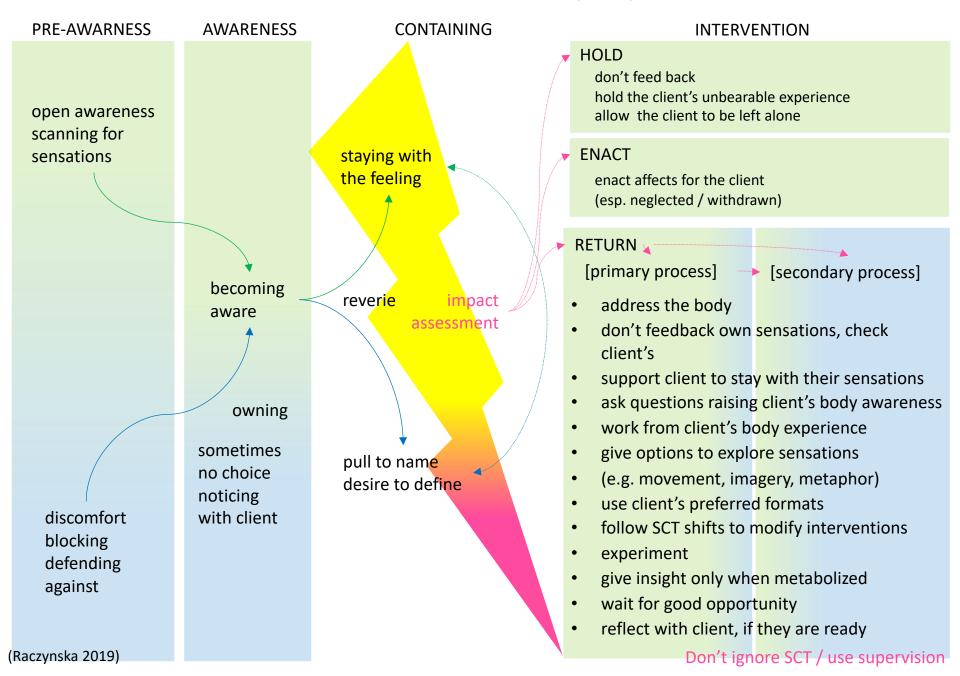


How to use CT to attune to the (child) client



(Gilmore Girls S4E3)

How to use CT to attune to the (child) client



The nature of child psychotherapy

- Exceeds language
- Action is superior to reflection
- Play demands
 physical proximity =>
 relational experience
 more immediate
- Children's capacity to mentalise developmentally limited (Luyten and Fonagy 2015)
- They tend to stick to primary process (Ekstein and Wallerstein 1956)
 - Defense mechanisms as forceful as those of adult psychotic clients (Benveniste 2015)
 - Weaker containment of child aggression and sexuality => the likelihood of the therapist's regression (Schowalter 1985)

The presence of the child's primary objects — parents, grandparents, siblings, teachers (T/CT)

Sensitivity around interpretation and feedback

Stronger CT - the stage of containing is messier and in need of stronger holding

- CT is embodied by nature every time the term CT is used it connotes an integrated psychosomatic experience
- Child therapist has no choice but to rely on psychosomatic signaling to understand the child's experience
- Yet it is more intense, direct and physical than in adult therapy thus more difficult to process and contain.

The impact of CTbased feedback needs to be assessed and its location decided (Alvarez 1996)

Caregiver's transference

'As the memories of childhood terrors emerged in the last session, the original affects must have emerged – not in the treatment hour, but afterward – and the therapist became the representative of fears that could not be named. ... Annie did not remember the terror of being locked out of the house by the woman who cared for her when her mother deserted the family, and to make sure that she would not remember, Annie did not remember the terror of abandonment by her mother, but she reenacted the experience in transference, creating the conditions under which the therapist might have to abandon her' (Freiberg et al. 1975:184).

'...access to childhood pain becomes a powerful deterrent against repetition in parenting, while repression and isolation of powerful affect provide the psychological requirements for identification with the betrayers and the the aggressors' (lb.:195).

The presence of the child's primary objects – parents, grandparents, siblings, teachers (T/CT)

parents not remembering how they felt suffering as children blindly repeating their past inflicting their childhood feelings of pain and anxiety on their child

TRANSFERENCE RESISTANCE / flight from treatment

 when the therapist becomes a representative of the oppressor / a reminder of the unnamed fears and dread that have been split off and now brought back in treatment



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