IDTA Newsletter

Volume 15 Issue 4

December 2020

Welcome to the final issue for 2020. And best wishes for 2021.

What a year! It began with exciting plans for the World TA Conference, on target for 1000 participants, and has ended Covid-19 mutating into an even more contagious version that may keep us apart for some time to come.

So we have followed up on the articles in the previous two issues with another that will be relevant for what we will be doing in 2021 - working online.

We also have the usual news from IDTA Council, and this time a detailed report of the business that was conducted in a very packed 3-day online meeting of EATA Council in July. Some time ago but the minutes were not available until after out last issue was published.

Another issue of IJTARP - the International Journal of TA Research & Practice - has just come out so we have included the Abstracts to tempt you to go online and read the full articles - free access for everyone to this open access journal.

And finally, we have an Obituary again, this time for Jenni Hine. For those of you paying reduced fees to IDTA because of the country you live in (and to ITAA if you are a member), you have Jenni and her husband Mervyn (also deceased some time ago) to thank as they came up with the original idea of charging more in 'rich' countries so we could give discounts in economically-disadvantaged areas of the world. A pretty impressive legacy!

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IDTA Council News

Council Meetings

IDTA Council has met twice since the last Newsletter. Main items of business since then have included the results of the EATA Council Meeting (see page 3), a request to ICTAQ to introduce a TA coaching qualification, a decision about the World Online TA Association, and developments with IJTARP. Each of these items is reported on in more detail below.

IDTA Council has offered to host the next meeting of the EATA Affiliated Presidents Platform (APP - see page 5). To date only 6 out of the 40 or more Presidents have indicated any interest.

ICTAQ/ICDTA Developments

Council were pleased to receive confirmation that ICDTA – the International Centre for Developmental TA, had completed their process of introducing an additional level of Master Practitioner qualification that equates to CTA (and to an MSc), as well as acting on the IDTA request that a separate specialisation of Coaching be run alongside the existing Developmental TA option.

Because ICDTA was joined some time ago by ICTAP - the International Centre for TA Psychotherapy - to create ICTAQ, the new contract was signed between IDTA and ICTAQ to ensure that both Coaching and Developmental TA qualifications are now accepted by IDTA as part of the membership categories. Council were also pleased to know that ICTAQ has a legal entity under UK law as a non-profit organisation, and has taken over the management of the TA Proficiency Awards and the International Journal for TA Research & Practice.

WOTAA

The IDTA members of the Organising Committee for the World TA Conference 2020, which was cancelled by ITAA and EATA, are now putting their energies into establishing a World Online TA Association – WOTAA – which will organise ongoing online conference sessions, with interpretation into as many languages possible. Membership of WOTAA will be open to individuals, groups, organisations, associations, etc. Membership fees are likely to be the equivalent of a cup of coffee in whichever country the member lives, because they will need to cover only necessary expenditure for online services and website. IDTA Council has agreed in principle that they wish to bring IDTA into membership of WOTAA.

IJTARP

IDTA continues to provide some financial support to the *International Journal for TA Research & Practice*, and the next issue is appearing at the same time as this Newsletter (i.e. end December). Details of the content are included at page XXX . This journal is published as open access so is freely available to everyone – go to www.ijtarp.org

An exciting development has been the introduction of the translation of Abstracts into many more languages than the original choice of four that were being financed by EATA until the end of 2017. This project is being coordinated by volunteer Daria Modina, who is a student of both developmental and psychotherapy TA. Daria has also taken over the translation into Russian, which was done by another volunteer, Arman Navasardyan for 2010-2017 (Arman is now too busy with humanitarian work).

Of the original languages where EATA had decided to pay professional translators, volunteers are now working on Spanish and Italian (although volunteers are still needed for German and French).

Volunteers have also been found for many of the languages – so far they are working on Armenian, Chinese, Czech, Japanese, Persian, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Serbian, Slovakian, and Turkish.

As the translations are received, they are published at www.taresearch.org under the IJTARP tab. The volunteers are concentrating first on the last three years and then have agreed that they will work backwards to the launch in 2010.

Delegate Report from EATA Council Meeting July 2020

Julie Hay

This is my report as the Delegate to EATA for Special Interest Groups (of which currently IDTA is the only one).

It has been abbreviated from what I reported to IDTA Council because, although it is being written now for IDTA members, it will be published on the internet and therefore can be read by others. Please note that this is my report and not to be read as the policy of IDTA Council. My report is written based on the fact that in October I received some Minutes of the EATA Meeting in July 2020. They are not marked as a draft even though my understanding is that they can only be a draft until the next meeting has included approval of them by those who were at the meeting. Instead, they have arrived as a document that is called Final and they have three signatures at the end of the document – the President, the General Secretary and the Executive Secretary who is shown as the one who took the Minutes.

They also include many references to documents that are on the EATA intranet, which is only accessible by delegates so the Minutes are of little use to anyone who cannot access this additional information. This is made more complex because they have made no attempt to summarise the content of those documents, and they have not used the usual convention of attaching such documents as appendices.

There is no Action column in the Minutes. There are items listed as 'Result', including those that were submitted to an online voting process, but in most cases there is no indication of what actions will follow or by whom.

Affiliation Policy

Although this item came late in the agenda, I am reporting on it first because it has significant potential implications for IDTA. In a very close vote, which to me indicated that we needed more discussion of this item and

probably some different proposals for voting, it was decided by 12 votes to 11 votes, with 5 more voting for another option (i.e. 16 did not vote for the option) that EATA will stop affiliated associations from outside Europe. This vote followed overwhelming votes to accept another association from outside Europe, albeit that it was in a country with an existing affiliated association.

There was no discussion about what this policy will mean for countries such as Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkey and for IDTA where EATA have accepted our payment for members worldwide.

World TA Conference

The Minutes about the World TA conference 2020 (which is headed up only as Birmingham) makes it clear that ITAA, EATA, FTAA, UKATA and IARTA decided to cancel the council meeting, exams, TEW and AGMs. It does not say that they cancelled the conference, although everyone will have seen the announcement in which they did just that. The Minutes also show that EATA President said that ITAA was in the lead for the decision making, and that the decisions were not taken only by EATA but by 5 associations.

It says that they had no power to intervene because the limited company was run by only one person (i.e. Julie Hay) and does not include information that I offered to stand down and appoint as many of them as wished to become directors of the limited company. There is no mention of the fact that I was required under UK law to put the company into liquidation when they had refused to provide any financial support (even though that would have required only about 30,000 UKP and EATA had 300 000 euros in the bank at the time), or that I had negotiated a postponement to 2023 with enough of the creditors that it was a viable option until the associations announced publicly that the conference was cancelled - and this triggered the legal action I had to take. There is also no mention of the fact that they authorised the Organising Committee to put on an online conference and this was being done when they announced that it was not an official

conference, at which point the keynotes and several other presenters withdrew so that also had to be cancelled.

EATA Council Confidential

I cannot see any decision in the Minutes about confidentiality even though it was discussed, and even though Executive Committee published an item about it being required, in the EATA Newsletter, before the Council meeting.

The Minutes do, however, include the point made by a participant (me!) that Minutes should be written without names of who said what, and confidential information should not be included within the Minutes. Having minuted that, these Minutes include names on 2 items where a negative statement is made about those individuals.

In item 18, they have named me alongside the explanation given by EATA President for refusing to answer my question about why IDTA President was ignored in the decision-making about cancelling the conference. They do not include in the Minutes that he also ignored my question about why he was claiming that the Metropole Director had said that there was no need for the company to go into liquidation, when I had spoken to her and she had confirmed that she had never said any such thing.

The other named person is the delegate for Kazakhstan, who was protesting that she had spoken in confidence to Robin Hobbes in his role as Ethics Advisor and he had then shared what she had told him with the rest of the Executive Committee. This needs to be seen in the context of other discussions about the role of the Ethics Advisor, reported on below.

The delegate for Kazakhstan was also protesting about the actions taken by EATA President. This was because EATA President had met with the President of the Association that was seeking to affiliate, without coordinating this with the existing country delegate. He had also arranged for the Presidents of associations that were seeking to affiliate to come along and make presentations to Council, even though this is not within the usual procedure. It was claimed

that in doing this he had cut across the negotiations whereby the existing association in Kazakhstan had been negotiating to encourage the second Association there to join them, and in spite of the accepted policy that EATA should not be interfering within a country.

EATA Ethics Advisor

I was involved with two others in drafting a proposal for reviewing EATA arrangements for dealing with ethical issues. This arose because it became very clear during the meeting that Robin Hobbes is an adviser to the Executive Committee (i.e. he is not independent). The proposal stated that the task force should meet soon so that their proposals can be voted on before or at the 2021 Council meeting; this is not mentioned in the Minutes (paragraph 29). In December I have been advised that this Taskforce is being set up.

Observing the way the Ethics Advisor was joining in during the meeting as if he were a member of the Executive Committee, including when he was challenged by someone because he was answering questions addressed to the EATA President, raised many doubts for me about how unbiased he would have been during my process of complaining about the behaviour of the Executive Committee relating to IJTARP. He has now been in post for nine years and Council have voted him another 3-year term on the grounds that he has not yet finished the tasks his role was set up to do.

The comment in the minutes about the Ethics Advisor adding the complaints procedure to the EATA website is misleading. I pointed out that the complaints procedure that he sent me to use about IJTARP a couple of years ago was not the same as appears on the EATA website. I also pointed out that I had asked him several times about this and I had also asked the date of the Council meeting at which the new procedure have been approved. He insisted that the procedure was on the website, then checked and accepted that it was not. It is now there but still has no indication of when it was approved by EATA Council.

TA Qualifications

I mention this even though it is about psychotherapy qualifications and therefore not strictly of interest to IDTA, because it is worth noting what the implications might be for the future. Marina Banic, who represents EATA on the European Association for Psychotherapy, announced that the EAP were going to vote in October on proposals that will mean that universities must be allowed to teach TA and that it will not be possible for any particular body to insist that they own the name of any qualification – i.e. that others could use the CTA label. The minutes say only that "EATA has to find a position to these questions." It seems to me that this will put TA psychotherapy in the same position as developmental TA, in that many other organisations provide relevant qualifications and we are in competition with those organisations.

Affiliated President Platform

It was agreed that there will be a 5-year trial of having the Presidents of the Affiliated Associations have their own meetings and act as an advisory board to the EATA President, who will also attend the meetings. However, there is no indication of what action will follow from this. Since the Minutes were received, IDTA has volunteered to host the next meeting in the UK or, presumably, online. Emails have been sent out but so far only a few Presidents have responded with interest in such a meeting.

EATA Processes

Early in the meeting, it was agreed that a group would meet to put forward a proposal for setting up some way in which a review could be conducted of how EATA is being run. The group was formed although the leader of the group ended his term as delegate at that time, and another member withdrew on ethical grounds when he realised that many of the issues that led to the proposal involved me (I am his supervisor). The Minutes record only that EATA President reported back that the dialogue will be continued.

IJTARP

Although the cooperation with me as IJTARP editor ceased mid-2017 and I resigned from the end of that year, for some reason Executive Committee brought a proposal to this meeting about closing the 'project' of IJTARP. I had submitted a written statement but I did not take part in the discussion. It was clarified during the discussion, although it is not included in the Minutes, that they had contacted several lawyers and had been told that the ownership of the journal is unclear. This reinforces my comment that, as they have chosen to criticise me because my recollection of Council approval obtained when I attended a council meeting in 2012 was not written into the Minutes of that meeting, neither was anything else ever minuted.

They have also minuted that IJTARP can apply for funding but have not included the caveat that came with it, which made it clear that such funding might be refused. Bearing in mind that they have constantly sought to involve the TDRC (Theory Development & Research Committee) in any negotiations, any funding would likely involve this and would therefore lose the independence of the Editor and consequently the academic respectability of the journal itself. TDRC have never required those given research grants by them to provide an article for the journal, and have publicised options to publish in other journals without ever mentioning IJTARP. In terms of independence, when the journal was first launched it was difficult to explain to potential authors, who were rejected through the peer review process, that a member of EATA Executive Committee did not have the authority to tell them their work would be published.

Term of Office for EATA President

It was agreed that the EATA Statutes be changed to allow an EATA President to serve two consecutive terms. This will need ratification at the 2021 General Assembly. It significantly changes the way in which EATA

functions. The President is not meant to be the manager of EATA but to be the professional figurehead who leads us through the policies decided by the EATA Council.

There is a separate taskforce looking at how the administration of EATA is handled. The current Executive Secretary deals with an organisation which has over 7500 members, over 40 members of Council, and over €400,000 in the bank. She does a similar role for DGTA, the German TA Association.

Obituary for Jenni Hine

Julie Hay

I was very sad to hear in October that Jenni Hine had died. I had contact with her and husband Mervyn over many years and they made great contributions to the TA community. I still remember fondly our initial meeting, when as a TA beginner I had travelled to Switzerland for a conference and discovered that we were being made welcome in their home before being taken in a group to the conference venue. I also enjoyed joining them many years later for their wedding anniversary party.

Recently I was also in contact by email with Jenni about one of the significant contributions made by her and Mervyn. I was correcting misinformation and making sure that Jenni and Mervyn got the credit for the original idea about giving discounts to people in economically-disadvantaged countries. They had come to me with this idea when I was EATA President and I was really pleased to get it introduced. We joked about how they were making the bullets and I was firing the gun, because previously their idea had not been picked up on. We named it the TAlent as a play on TA and the name for money. When I then became ITAA President, I was delighted to introduce the same idea there, which was why I acted so quickly when I saw that ITAA were publishing inaccurate information and not crediting them with the idea.

I went on to use the same idea when I was one of the founders of the European Mentoring & Coaching Council, and also in the Institute for Developmental TA, as well as into my own TA training business, and various other initiatives. Although it was cancelled, I managed to convince the major TA associations that the TAlent idea should be implemented in its correct original format for the World TA Conference that was due to have been run in the UK in July. I am pleased that, thanks to her daughter Marion's efforts with emails, I was able to make sure that Jenni knew that this idea was still going strong.

Jenni also contributed much to TA theory. Her material on games, and how couples can trace the start of a game back to the honeymoon, is so enlightening for clients, as is her TA explanation of Stern's RIGs (Representations of Interactions that have been Generalised). And I am sure Jenni would want us to credit Mervyn also, who was at CERN when they introduced the Internet. So, we are unlikely to ever forget their several legacies to the TA community and through us, to many others.

References

Hine, Jenni (1997) Mind Structure and Ego States. *Transactional Analysis Journal* 27: 4 278–289

Hine, Jenni (2005) Brain Structures and Ego States. *Transactional Analysis Journal* 35: 1 40–51

IJTARP Volume 11 Issue 2

This has now been published at www.ijtarp.org, with five great articles - from Brazil, Bulgaria, Italy and the USA.

This journal is open access so everyone can read it free. You can also access previous issues there - where we have even more international coverage - from authors in Belgium, China, Germany, Guatemala (via a Polish author), India, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Sweden, Switzerland, Syria and the UK.

If you would prefer a different language, we have volunteers translating the Abstracts into Armenian, Chinese, Czech, Italian, Japanese, Persian, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian, Serbian, Slovakian, Spanish, and Turkish - although it may take them a while to catch up with this issue, why not go to www.taresearch.org to see what has been done already.

Examining the Scientist – Practitioner Divide in Psychology: A Transactional Analysis Typology of Scientists

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Abstract

Using transactional analysis models of ego states (Berne 1961, 1964), the author proposes a typology of scientists, and diagrams 14 types based on integrated ego states, contaminated Adult, and single ego state with dual exclusion. The typology is presented as the latest in what could be called the psychology of science, whose exemplars include Thomas Kuhn (1962/2012) and Abraham Maslow (1969). Psychology of science is differentiated from philosophy and theory of science, and existing research into the personality of scientists is explored. Of major importance is the apparent divide between scientist and practitioner in clinical and counselling psychologies.

Based on Feyerabend's (1970) infamous quip about science that "anything goes", the author shows how using a proposed transactional analysis of scientist types, Feyerabend's comment can be understood three ways: Parent: "Scientists shouldn't be so serious"; Adult: "It seems that anything goes"; and Child: "No rules!" It is only in their integration (PAC) that Feyerabend's meaning can be understood. So, too, for the psychological practitioner, whose practice cannot be divorced from its scientific foundations. The author concludes by using the proposed typology to suggest how the same categories applied to practitioners may explain their responses to research

Evaluation and Measurement of Ego States: The Psychometric Properties of the Italian Translation of the Revised version of the Ego State Questionnaire (ESQ-R-I)

© 2020 Fiorenzo Laghi, Giuseppe Crea, Claudia Filipponi, and Giorgio Cavallero

Abstract

As a response to the need for more objectivity, Loffredo, Harrington, Munoz & Knowles (2004) developed a 40-item version of the Ego State Questionnaire-Revised (ESQ-R), which was the readjustment of the original 60-items version (Loffredo & Omizo, 1997). The present study evaluates an Italian version of the ESQ-R scale, completed by a sample of 483 subjects (204 males, and 279 females) and demonstrates acceptable construct validity and reliability in its five subscales of Critical Parent, Nurturing Parent, Adult, Free Child, and Adapted Child. Exploratory factor analyses suggested five factors as referred to in the original ESQ-R scale; items loaded at .30 or below were excluded and additional study showed an Italian version ESQ-R-I with 33-items to have a good construct validity as an objective measure of the five ego states entities according to transactional analysis theory. Implications for future research are included.

Transactional Analysis And Education – Living with Current Complexity: Contracting, Context and Complexity, and Consciousness, Cognition and Comprehension

© 2020 Cesare Fregola

Abstract

A brief presentation of the OECD (2018) 21st Century Skills framework indicates that there are many possibilities for those involved in training, education, teaching and learning. A three-party contract model is reinterpreted in the light of the current complexities of social, economic, cultural and technological changes, and the way in which these are highlighting attention to borders and ethical aspects, allows us to hypothesise new synergies between various fields of TA application of psychotherapy, counselling, educational and organisational. Although this contribution focuses on research within the educational context, it demonstrates the possible implications for personal learning relationships within the complexity of our time.

Transactional Analysis and Multiple Intelligences – A Proposed Diagnosis and Intervention

© 2020 Regina Berard

Abstract

The diagnosis of ego states in action is the first step taken by a transactional analyst in order to develop an intervention plan. Multiple Intelligences theory can help with this by enabling recognition of the abilities and competencies that the client has already, and how the Adult ego state may then become decontaminated and energised. The present study discusses the relationships between the concepts of ego states and multiple intelligences and how this can help with facilitating diagnosis and clinical intervention.

Using the Metaphor of the Sailship Success within a Functional Analysis of a Fintech Company: An Organisational Case Study in Bulgaria

© 2020 Vladislav Yordanov

Abstract

The author describes the application of the transactional analysis model of Sailship Success (Hay, 2017) within a functional analysis case study in a Fintech company based in Bulgaria but with locations in several other countries. Details are given of the way in which the consultancy project was established, its objectives and the methods that were used. Although the design and results of a questionnaire are also described, the focus is on how the Sailship Success was introduced as a metaphor during interviews with managers, leading to identification of significantly different perspectives about whether the organisation was more like a peaceful ship or one going into battle. Other issues highlighted included there being no clear idea of the intended destination of the ship, a lack of awareness of potential threats such as competitors, and lack of any consciousness of being a part of a fleet of companies.

TA Tribe

*Online Transactional Analysis Training and Supervision
for Coaches, Consultants, Teachers and Trainers*

Tribe Foundation Programme
Online Workshops 2020 -21

Lynda Tongue (TSTA-org) is offering a new series of online workshops from September 2020. This series aligns with the Certificate in Developmental TA, awarded by the International Centre for TA Qualifications (ICTAQ), and leads to *TA Practitioner* status. However, you are also welcome if you simply wish to refresh your TA theory, or perhaps are not seeking TA qualification at this time but are looking for continuing professional development.

This programme offers Developmental Transactional Analysis (DTA) theory and its application in the organisational context. The workshops give an opportunity to revisit, refresh or learn anew in small groups the powerful psychological approach to communication and confidence building that DTA offers.

The workshops are 6 hours duration, and the fees are £85 plus vat. They are live, highly interactive and are supported by workshop materials including powerpoint slides, reference and further reading lists and a workshop paper. The workshops aim to run twice a month and there is a discount offered for block bookings of five workshops.

For more information on the workshops, visit: www.ta-tribe.com/tribe-wshops.

Tribe Advanced Practitioners Group (TAPs)
Online Workshops 2020-21

This group is for those who have 2 – 3 years (or more) TA training experience and who have therefore got a good grasp of the core concepts. Once again, the group is for those who are intending to qualify in TA as well as those who are only interested in continuing professional development.

The Diploma and Advanced Diploma subjects and approaches will be covered over a rolling period of two to three years. The Diploma leads to *TA Advanced Practitioner* status, and the Advanced Practitioner to *TA Master Practitioner* status. The workshops are monthly, of two days duration (Friday and Saturday) and are online. The fee is £190 plus vat. Theory topics will be covered on the Friday, in order to deepen TA learning and application and Saturday is a supervision day. Individual and cascade supervisions will be conducted as required. Participants are also encouraged to bring recordings of their work, and to request live feedback on their teaching and/or coaching.

For more information on TAPs workshops, visit: www.ta-tribe.com/taps-wshops.

For information on the Certificate, Diploma and Advanced Diploma process, please visit our website pages: www.ta-tribe.com/accreditation and www.ta-tribe.com/qualifications.html and https://ictaq.org.

Working Online

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Introduction

The regular international webinars I am due to run during January 2021 have the theme topic of Professional Contexts, so I started to think about how our professional context, in all fields of TA application, has largely become online. Hence the following are some of my thoughts as I have been preparing the workbook that I send out to participants.

I begin with a short comment on how much is now being written about Covid, followed by owning some of my biases that I think are relevant to the current situation, and to the concerns that are raised about working online. I go on to respond to some of the other objections and conclude with some general considerations that I hope will be helpful to TA practitioners and students in all fields of application.

As always, feedback is welcome - this material will eventually end up in a free book published under the auspices of ICTAQ - the International Centre for TA Qualifications - that now 'manages', with the help of some great volunteers, the TA Proficiency Awards (www.taproficiencyawards.org) and the International Journal of TA Research & Practice (www.ijtarp.org, www.taresearch.org).

Before you read on, please note that the following is based on working synchronously and with video, which I still regard it as face-to-face. I therefore refer to online or on-site. My comments do not all apply to telephone working, or when the Internet connection is not good enough to use the camera – although I do notice that when the camera is down, clients often share more, presumably because of the disinhibition effect that I describe below. My comments do not apply either to asynchronous working, such as using a chat facility or email, although much of the research about online working includes these formats.

Covid

I have deliberately not used Covid in the title of this article, although that is what has prompted so much attention during 2020 to online working. Covid has become a 'popular' topic to write about. I am aware that what I am about to write is limited because I have only seen articles written in English, and the non-TA professional associations to which I belong are based in the UK, with the exception of EATA in Switzerland and ITAA in the USA. I am sure there are just as many articles in most other countries.

As a member of several professional associations, I have seen articles very recently about managing risk online, measuring the impact of learning and development, remote coaching, and the impact in Covid in Bangladesh, India, Nigeria, Pakistan, South Africa, Turkey and Ibero-America (Argentina, Colombia, Chile, Spain, Mexico and Puerto Rico). Since Covid emerged in March, the *Journal of Human Behavior in the Social Environment* has run 24 articles. In the previous issues of this *IDTA Newsletter*, we have included articles about Covid and volunteer hotlines (Vinokurova, 2020), the Temple Index of Functional Fluency (Bishop, 2020), and the impact on a TA Trainer (and the rest of us) in terms of several TA concepts (Wilson, 2020).

A welcome relief was when I searched the *Transactional Analysis Journal* website and discovered that there had only been one mention of Covid (and I checked there was none of coronavirus) and that was in an Editorial rather than an article (Monin, 2020). I did, however, find an article by Cornell (2020) in *The Script* in which he argued that, as a "somatic psychotherapist" he was experiencing being "deprived of the wealth of sensate, emotional and non-verbal communications that silently inform, enrich and enliven our sessions", which he went on to describe as "an acknowledgement of elements of our lived realities as we cannot be in close or

physical contact with those with whom we are working". (p.3).

Some of my Biases

Physical Presence Privilege

I have been working online, originally with Skype and then with Zoom, for many years. This has included providing psychotherapy and supervision online as well as running webinars with international audiences. I have also been lucky enough to travel and have taught TA on-site in over 40 countries so far. When coronavirus emerged, I converted planned visits to Mexico, Kazakhstan and China into webinars, and I am anticipating that this conversion to webinars will continue for some time to come. For me, I appreciate the way in which Covid has eliminated (hopefully permanently) the *physical presence privilege* (Barber, in Sinclair, Allen, Barber, Bergman, Britt, Butler et al, 2020). It has always seemed problematic to me that so many people around the world who are interested in TA could never travel to TA conferences, let alone attend workshops outside their own country. Online working makes TA accessible to so many more people.

Online Disinhibition Affect

I am very aware that there are different factors about risk assessment when working online, although I wonder sometimes how different they really are. Suler (2004) writes about the *online disinhibition effect,* which may be benign or toxic. Positive results of this are that people will be more willing to share more online than they might on-site; toxic impact might be that they will be more aggressive. A benign effect might be that they are more willing to share suicidal thoughts. I am not sure why this is seen as a drawback of online working. If the client is able to tell the practitioner more honestly about how they are feeling, the practitioner will be in a better position to help them.

Again, I own this as a potential bias. I believe it is better to know when the client is considering suicide. When I was a beginning TA trainee, in the organisational field, my very first one-to-

one TA coaching client asked to speak to me after attending a management training course I had run, so I was expecting to contract about her role in the organisation. Instead, she announced during our first session that she was considering suicide. My supervisor at the time reassured me that the main thing was that she was talking to someone, the client and I closed her escape hatches, continued talking and she was still alive many years later. When I was a volunteer psychotherapist within a prison, the contract made it clear that I could not keep confidential any information about anyone being harmed in the future. This included arranging suicide watch for any prisoner who indicated they were suicidal. We need the clients to tell us how they are feeling if we are to provide an appropriate response, so if working online makes it easier for them to tell us, this becomes an advantage. This will also apply to the toxic interactions - the client can be as aggressive as they wish online without us needing to push the panic button.

Stroking patterns

I have always been intrigued about the assumption that grief must always follow any positive interactions with others. When Berne (1963) wrote about group imagoes, he took us from being alone into having satisfactory group dynamics, albeit that we might instead be engaging in psychological games. He did not add a stage of grieving at the end of each group session. Our imagoes are based on our family of origin and, in a healthy family, people celebrate when the children grow up and leave home. For me, this process can be understood also through the concept of stroking patterns. As a group forms and go through the imago stages, the strokes become more intensive. The same thing happens with any relationship. Hence clients and participants, and practitioners, are exchanging strokes. As the relationship continues, these become part of the current stroking pattern. Hopefully we have a healthy stroking pattern that is made up of stroke exchanges within various relationships, plus some extra 'casual' strokes from people we interact with occasionally, or even only once. If so, then when one

interaction ends we will look forward to moving on to interact with others who form another component of our stroking pattern.

The TA concept of stroking gives us a simple explanation of why the Covid lockdowns have been so stressful for so many people - it has severely disrupted their stroking patterns. In addition to the obvious problems due to lack of contact with family and friends, a major component of the stroking pattern of many people is situated at work, interacting with colleagues, customers, managers, and so on. This may be even more significant for some than the regular interactions with friends and family. Suddenly, all of these may have stopped. This change has been even more problematic for those who already lacked adequate stroking patterns before Covid, such as a client whose stroking pattern is largely restricted to an hour a week with their therapist, or a TA student who relies on the strokes from a weekend workshop once a month. Let's not forget those who teach, whose stroking patterns may rely too much on the interactions with their students.

I teach managers in organisations that they should consider the nature and intensity of strokes that employees receive. Those with jobs that involve interactions are receiving good quality strokes, albeit that some may be negative. Those tending machinery or otherwise working with little human interaction are not receiving strokes whilst working. Unless their non-work circumstances provide them with enough strokes, they may be relying on coffee breaks or may even seek to generate negative strokes - which we all work out in childhood are better than no strokes. Reviewing the organisational stroking pattern can prompt managers to identify ways of stroking employees who may otherwise be overlooked. The same process explains why the focus since Covid has been on the wellbeing of employees who can no longer attend their workplace - somewhat perversely, those who had good stroking patterns at work will be impacted more by the lack of contact than those who already had little contact at work.

The Covid-inspired prohibition about touching adds to the problem because 'TA people' tend to hug! A major complaint expressed about online connection is that there can be no hugging. This is another example of the physical presence privilege. We know that touch strokes have more impact than visual or auditory strokes. They are the only strokes available to small babies, and research has shown that merely touching someone's hand or arm, without their consciousness of that touch, will mean they give more positive ratings for library facilities as well as the library staff (Fisher, Rytting and Heslin, 1976). Wearing medical gloves or being restricted to elbow 'bumping' does not provide enough of a substitute for hugs, or kissing of cheeks, or even handshakes. However, online connections are still providing strokes, even if they are not touch. We just need more of them because they do not have the same intensity as touch, just as managers need to allow employees longer coffee breaks is they have jobs where no stroking occurs.

Emotions Online

Bill Cornell's comments that I have quoted above prompted me to consider whether it is true that the same 'sensate, emotional and non-verbal' processes are denied to us when working online. As a transactional analyst rather than a somatic psychotherapist, and as a neurolinguistic programming (NLP) trainer, I tend to understand these processes by using the NLP simplification of labelling us by our representational system preferences. In other words, we can think of ourselves as predominantly visual, auditory or kinaesthetic and that explains how we are picking up information from others – or, to apply a TA concept to this, it explains what we are almost certainly discounting (Schiff and Contributors, 1975).

I would definitely not describe myself as a visual. I am not very observant. When asked to describe someone I have just been talking to, I have been known to leave out significant elements such as someone wearing a bright red turban (many years ago in the UK when

this was not common) or an exceptionally large moustache. I generally failed to notice when my brother would grow a beard, and when he shaved it off again. My lack of attention to the visual sense may be because I was very short-sighted when I was young so I never got into the habit of recognising people's faces because I did not see them very well. It may, however, be genetic or pathological in that there was something I did not want to see when I was young. Whichever it is, I apply my visual representational system differently online, in a way that is more useful than when in the same room as the client or participants.

Online, if I am working with only one or a couple of clients, their faces are right in front of me on my screen, so I notice their expressions much more than I would if I were sitting in a room with them and not staring at their face. I can also see my own face on the screen so I am able to monitor what they are seeing. If I am working with a group of participants, the webcams on my screen are of course much smaller but it is easy enough to change the setting so that the speaker's face becomes larger. Because I am often working with an interpreter, I generally find that I have a more direct connection with each participant as they speak because they are no longer looking at the interpreter instead of at me when they do so.

What I lose in the visual sense I gain in the auditory. Taibi Kahler (1979a, 1979b) identified the significance of sentence patterns in his early material about drivers and process communication. Neurolinguistic programming borrows from Milton Erickson (Bandler and Grinder, 1975) to identify how we unconsciously 'hypnotise' each other, and ourselves, through the ways in which we say things. Shout *Don't Panic* and people will panic. Tell them not to think about rabbits and they will think about rabbits. Berne's 1966) eight therapeutic operations of interrogation, specification, confrontation, explanation, illustration, confirmation, interpretation and crystallisation, together with Erskine's (1982) addition of direction, are all things we say. Ware's (1983) doors to

therapy are based on what the client (or anyone) can most readily talk about - their thinking, their feelings, or their behaviour. Schiff and Contributors (1975) alerted us to the significance of redefining. TA is full of concepts that work well for 'auditory' analysts - and clients and participants. Maybe that is why Fanita English (2007) proposed that we should call it Cognitive Transactional Analysis.

When it comes to kinaesthesia, I get physical reactions to clients online just as I do when I am in the same room. However, I do not need my own experience to make the point that online is a 'real' connection. Trolling, which means baiting people with horrible messages on social media , is now known to have a significant impact on the people being trolled. Yuan, Park and Sliter (2020) have recently completed studies that have shown that email incivility really does have an impact; even apparently passive (-aggressive) emails can lead the recipient to suffer insomnia.

de Bitencourt Machado, Laskoski, Severo, Bassols, Sfoggia, Kowacs et al (2016) reviewed 59 studies and concluded that online psychotherapy was as effective as the traditional equivalents. They included formats using only text or chat as well as videoconferencing, and cautioned that most of the studies were of cognitive behavioural approaches rather than psychodynamic. There has even been research about how to minimise the impact through social media of relationships that have ended (Pinter, Jiang, Gach, Sidwell, Dykes and Brubaker, 2019). Although such studies may not be based on TA specifically, the Dodo Bird phenomenon and common factors (Rosenweig, 1936) will apply - i.e. that all approaches are about as effective as each other because practitioners exhibit common characteristics and behaviours – they care about the client, pay attention, listen, and believe in whatever approach they are applying.

General Considerations

The following is a list of factors that I have not already mentioned above, in no particular order, that you might want to take into account when you are working online:

Making meaning - I combine classical, cathexis and constructivist schools of TA to focus on how our professional role, in any application of TA, is to offer what Allen and Allen (1987) called the last permission, which is to help clients, participants and supervisees to know that they can make meaning in their own way, instead of discounting to maintain the frame of reference they created when very young in response to their interpretation of events.

Location 1 - insisting on working in a carefully designed therapy or training room is not essential. As a psychotherapist within a prison, I was required to provide therapy in rooms where my client and I could both be seen easily by officers, and where we were sometimes interrupted, including occasionally to be told that there was an ongoing incident and we must not leave the room until the officer confirmed that it was safe to do so. Such 'interruptions' provided opportunities to address the process in a way that emphasised mutuality of responsibility and invited the client to cathect their here-and-now Adult. Having cats, dogs, children or even partners appear when working online provides similar opportunities, as does the appearance of carers, nurses, doctors, psychiatrists, or colleagues or managers, or the parents of child (or grown-up) clients. It is still better for most clients than not having any sessions at all.

Location 2 – we know that domestic abuse is more prevalent when people are in lockdown with their abusers. We know that traumatised clients in particular may exhibit strong emotions during sessions – as may any client. We need, therefore, to contract with the client about whether they will be in a location where this will not cause additional problems, and what support mechanisms there are for them when the session ends. This is not so different from when we see clients in a therapy room – they still have to be able to get their emotions under control by the end of the session and they still have to make their own way home, however distressed they may have been during the session.

Location 3 – NLP has a concept called anchoring (Hay, 2001/2018) which is rather like the TA concept of rubberbanding (Kupfer & Haimowitz, (1971). We can become 'anchored' on a particular location and even a specific seat, so that when we returned to it we feel again and we felt the last time. Clients and participants become anchored on where they are sitting during sessions. At home, we are likely to have become anchored to where we sit to eat meals, to watch the TV, to being in the bathroom or the bedroom. Now that we are working online, we need to be careful that our clients, and us, do not create conflicting anchors. We may be able to work from the same office that we use for on-site working but if we have no 'office' at home, we need to create one rather than risk confusing work anchors with home and family anchors. Having a distressing session with a traumatised client may continue to 'haunt' us if we experienced it at the dinner table or family seating area. The same thing applies to clients - sitting in the car may be preferable to a room in the home - and if they are a driver, maybe they should sit in the back or passenger seat for their sessions with us.

For work groups, such as with team coaching, being in different locations to each other may actually be an advantage. Work groups are often anchored negatively on their meeting rooms or offices, rubberbanding back into the accumulated feelings from past psychological games. For TA training programs, working online minimises the opportunities for competitive symbioses between students as well as for co-dependent symbiosis with the trainer.

Transference and Countertransference - I often think that countertransference is just a polite way of describing transference when we are doing it as professionals! Either way, someone is transferring themselves or someone else on to another person and interacting with them on that basis (Hay, 2018). Often this will be linked to the group imago. Online working will minimise this process because most of us will not have grown up engaging online with our families,

so our imago will function much less when we are not all sitting in the same room. Likewise, the amount of transference that depends on rubberbanding will be less – we may still respond to tone of voice but we are less likely to respond to body posture because we cannot see it, and less likely to respond to things like hair colour or facial characteristics when we are only seeing them on a screen.

Confidentiality – I am mentioning this now although it has been a concern for many people ever since computers were introduced. The concern is exacerbated now because of the ability to save recordings online of online sessions, along with online notes. We need to check that whichever systems we are using (e.g. Dropbox, Zoom) are as secure as possible. At the same time, we need to be realistic – it was always possible for burglars to access any notes or recordings that we may have kept in a locked filing cabinet, and it is not unknown for relatives of clients, or managers of participants, to attempt to obtain information from the practitioner. Precautions such as using code numbers instead of client names are simple to do, as long as we keep the code list somewhere else. Contracting with clients not to say aloud any names (surnames, family names) that would identify someone can help, and it is always possible to delete any problematic segments of recordings before saving them.

Social media - the growth of online working means that many clients who previously paid little attention to the Internet are now much more familiar with using it. This means that it is even more important that practitioners are careful what they post about themselves. For example, LinkedIn is meant to be for business-to-business contacts, although it is increasingly becoming more like Facebook, where much more personal information is usually published. Unless we are sure that our social media information will only be seen by colleagues, we need to consider the impact on clients in the same way that we maintain physical boundaries if we see clients at our home (e.g. no family photos in the therapy room, and I once knew a TA therapist whose family used a ladder to enter the home from the rear when she was working in the open plan room downstairs.) I have had separate Facebook accounts for family and business for several years, since a family member published something that would have breached TA codes of ethics if I had inadvertently shared it.

Risk of Covid - this is related more to Covid than it is to online working but so much online working is happening now only because of Covid so we need to take it into account. Just as practitioners may well be struggling with knowing that any of their clients, or their clients' families, may succumb to Covid , clients know that practitioners and their families are just as much at risk of dying from Covid as are the clients and their own families. Practitioner familiarity with the processes of grieving, and of anticipatory grief, is essential for practitioners and, depending on the contract, may usefully be shared with clients and participants.

These stresses will be exacerbated by the ambiguity of when, or whether, things will return to what used to be regarded as normal. We develop our script (Berne, 1972) because, as children, we feel the need for some way to structure our world so that we can predict what will happen. We work out how to stimulate positive or negative strokes, or how to manage without them, by adopting a life position (Berne, 1962) and we can use that as our frame of reference and discount whatever does not fit. If we were young during a previous pandemic or during a war, or we have grown up within a culture and/or religion that incorporates karma, fate or similar concepts, we may have developed a frame of reference that incorporates uncertainty. However, that will not be the case for many people.

Some Practical Suggestions

Finally, a few extra items for consideration:

- We may need to explain to clients how technology works - and offering to share the recording with them may be a useful way of getting them to reflect on the sessions

- We need to establish what location they will be using for sessions and get some contact details - for them in case the connection drops, and for someone else in case they become distressed - for some clients you need to know how to contact a psychiatrist or hospital (just as you would do if they were seeing you on-site in your own locale (and country - check out cultural norms, requirements, etc).

- We need to check whether interruptions are likely (e.g. partner, children, parents, siblings) and agree how to behave if an interruption happens (e.g. stop talking, talk to whoever is interrupting, review the interruption when it is over, etc)

- If the client or practitioner has less than robust broadband, we may need to agree how we will signal that we are thinking - i.e. how will the other person know it is a silence and not a freeze.

- We need to establish boundaries about the use of technology; will we allow the client or participants to contact us outside of the scheduled sessions; can they do this by phone (mobile and/or landline), voice calls or texts only, emails, WhatsApp or similar services). If so, are there time limits (do we expect clients to make emergency contact with us only during normal working hours and not in the middle of the night - see my note above about hypnotic language).

Finally - do not offer an online service as a practitioner if you do not believe it works. It would be unethical to provide a service that you do not have full confidence in. It is not enough to decide there is no other option so you may as well do it.

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