



IDTA Newsletter

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Welcome to this issue

Our exciting news this time is that we are planning a new series of IDTA events, with the first one happening in Exeter on 17 February 2015.

Put the date in your diary now because we look forward to seeing as many IDTA members there as possible.

The plan for the day is still being worked on but you can expect that there will be several interesting workshops – and that all of these will also provide those really important 'hours for the log' for those of you undertaking TA qualifications.

We are now planning a series of these events, around the country, and we are exploring possible venues now – so if you really can't travel, let us know where you are and we will see what we can do.

Meanwhile, keep the 17th of February 2015 clear in your diary because we are sure many of you will want to come once the final programme is issued.

See also page 3 for a special offer for IDTA Members. Julie Hay is running some Research Supervision Days, using her experience as Editor of the international TA Journal, to provide coaching and supervision about how to undertake research activity, such as is required for Part C of the CTA exam. Relevant for all fields of TA, Julie is offering a special 20% discount to IDTA Members.

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Report from IDTA Council

IDTA Marketing Committee

During our Council meeting on 8th September, IDTA Council set up a Marketing Committee, currently comprising Bev Petrossian, Vanessa Powell and David Morley. These three had already been working hard on producing a marketing plan, out of which has come the new series of regional events described below.

They are also looking at how IDTA might co-operate with other non-TA organisations that are relevant to the services provided by our members.

Meetings will generally be held online, not least because David is in Australia :-)) so if you would like to join the committee and contribute to increasing the awareness of the IDTA in your professional or personal circles, please make contact.

IDTA Regional Events

As you will have seen on the front page of this newsletter, and above in the item about the Marketing Committee, IDTA Council is planning a series of regional events.

The first is due to run on 17th February 2015 in Exeter and we expect to be able to publish the program by the end of November – the keep the date free.

We are planning to run these 4 times a year, so after February we will be organising events for the week of 25-29th May in the Birmingham or Leicester area, in early August so as to be in school holidays, and in October 2015.

IDTA/UKATA Joint Conferences

For the last three years we have run successful joint national conferences with UKATA. However, we have continued to be disappointed at how few IDTA members chose to attend these and we have

therefore come to the conclusion that something different is needed.

Hence the entry above in this newsletter, that we are planning some specifically IDTA Regional Events.

We have therefore withdrawn amicably from our cooperation with UKATA, and we wish them well for their future conferences. We will continue to provide details of these for our members – the next one is being planned for Edinburgh in 2015 and UKATA are joining with STAA - the Scottish Transactional Analysis Association.

IDTA - Free Group Supervision Online

As you receive this newsletter, Bill Heasman is getting ready to run the second of the free online group supervision sessions that are being offered to IDTA members by IDTA trainer members.

There are still some places available so if you want to attend, you can do so by going to <http://www.instdta.org/supervision-for-idta-members.html> or by sending an email to admin@instdta.org

IDTA Treasurer

We are sorry to announce the resignation of Keith Morton, who has served valiantly as IDTA Treasurer for the past five years – and was also responsible for a massive amount of work involved with organising the first two joint conferences that we ran with UKATA.

Keith has contributed a great deal to the IDTA, and a lot of that has gone unseen (but hopefully not too unstroked by Council).

He has left the IDTA in a more secure position because of his efforts and we all owe him a big debt of gratitude.

Although Keith has resigned from the role of Treasurer, he is of course staying in the IDTA so we look forward to seeing him at future events.

If anyone reading this would like to volunteer to become IDTA Treasurer, please contact us. The administrative work, such as sending out invoices and maintaining the accounting records, is currently done by the IDTA office so the role of Treasurer is about understanding accounting practices, producing the annual reports that are needed, and generally advising and alerting the rest of Council on the financial health of the IDTA.

EATA Matters

We now have several outstanding items where we have addressed queries to EATA and are awaiting their response, or where we have had a response that we do not regard as satisfactory so we continue to ask questions.

One of these is about why EATA PTSC are reluctant to allow a consultation process about the Organisational field competencies, as requested by the Taskforce that they set up when we protested about changes to the Organisational field exam questions.

We now await the outcome of a new EATA Taskforce that we hope will provide a definition of a Special Interest Group.

We await a response from EATA PTSC to our comment that it still seems as if someone could take 28 years to reach TSTA and we await their response. The 28 years applies if someone opts to attain CTA Trainer during the first block of 14 years and then re-contract for TSTA.

We have also asked why the hours requirements for CTA Trainer and TSTA are identical.

IDTA - TA Proficiency Awards

Ulrika Widen, National Coordinator Italy and Deputy TAPA Project Manager, and Julie Hay, TAPA Project Manager, made a presentation at the Children Symposium at the TA World Conference in San Francisco in August.

The presentation was videotaped and once it is available, we will be adding it to the IDTA website, along with a charming video that Ulrika made (and sang the background song accompanied by her daughter) that gives an excellent overview of the exciting activities that are now spreading internationally.

Ulrika and Julie are now working with an Italian mathematics teacher (with contributions from an English mathematics teacher working in Peru) to develop a range of activities that teachers could use for teaching TA to children in various age groups. They welcome any ideas or offers of help!

Council member Rosee Elliott has agreed to become the National Coordinator for the TAPA schemes within the UK. We also now have some other new National Coordinators – Koen Bosschaerts in Belgium, Vanda Vos Jerkovic in Croatia, Marina Hoos in the Netherlands, Aleksandar Jovanovic in Serbia and Kim McClelland in the USA.

Research Supervision Days

For trainee, CTA, PTSTA, TSTA

20% discount for IDTA Members.

Research is becoming an increasingly significant area for people seeking CTA accreditation. Julie Hay, TSTA OE CTA P, Editor of the International Journal of TA

Research, will be running one-day group supervision workshops in Hertford (30 miles north of London) - on **20 Dec 2014, 21 Mar 2015, 20 Jun 2015.**

These days may be counted as part of your training/ supervision hours towards CTA and TSTA.

See <http://www.pifcic.org/research-guidance.html> for details and to book.

Discounting and Mindfulness at Work

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Zvelc, Cernetic and Kosak (2011) noted that “Mindfulness is characterized by stable, non-reactive awareness of what is going on in the here and now.”(p. 241)

There are a range of different definitions and models of mindfulness ranging from “awareness” to multi-faceted models. Whilst “awareness” may appear to be rather simplistic it is clear that to be holistically aware we need to take account of self, others and the reality of the situation. We need to account our own experiences, judgements, transferences and the organisational culture in order to see work as it is - and even then this is provisional as there are so many different perspectives on the world. These perspectives will also depend upon whether we come from an individualistic or communal culture.

When we are Mindful our stress will be reduced and we are more likely to operate at optimal levels. In order to achieve clarity sometimes we need to take a meta perspective which requires an objective, non-judgemental stance. In TA terms this also means being OK/OK.

Mindfulness has been an implicit part of TA from its inception. In later years some TA theorists developed the concept of the Integrating Adult ego state, outlining that this is an ongoing dynamic process and not an end itself. Wells (2012) states that Awareness is beyond ego and therefore instead of placing the Adult ego state in a circle between the Parent and Child ego states he puts Awareness in an open space between the two. This open space is because Awareness is not an ego state and is free and open to possibilities and potential. Our (Mountain and Davidson 2011) OK Modes model is the behavioural

manifestation of the Structural ego state model and is contemporary with Wells’ model.

In order to be Mindful we need to be flexible. All too often when our plans don’t turn out we can become agitated, defeated, despondent and some just try harder to make things as they “should” have been rather than as they are. This is something that Lankford (2012) discusses in her article stating:

“Think of Plan B not just as a way of responding to the unexpected (or “going with the flow”) but as a call to action. It is a chance to do something better to push ourselves to grow outside our comfort zones, to make new discoveries and change old habits.....If we stick with Plan A, then each failure inspires an improved attempt to meet the original goal, and each step is a revision of the original hypothesis about how to achieve success.....When we go with Plan B, we choose not only to revise our methods but also to be open to the possibility of revising our goals”. (p. 66)

Being sufficiently flexible and moving into a Plan B - or even C - means that we have to account rather than discount.

Our life scripts are in essence Plan A. When we are in script we are fitting and bending reality to fit our script which involves discounting. In this way we can forget our true nature which is in our cellular memory. Our cellular memory plus physis is important in therapeutic endeavours. Lankford suggests that we should not believe everything we think! This follows Berne’s (1972) statement that:

“In order so say Hello, you first get rid of all the trash which has accumulated in your head ever since you came home from the maternity ward....” (p. 4)

The same is true of organisations. We cannot continue in the same way in a changing, complex world. We need to be cognisant of current realities whilst at the

same time develop and maintain a sense of OKness and develop trust.

One of the difficulties with change is that people become scared that their current skills won't fit or there will not be a place in the world (let alone the organisation) for them any longer. And here it is worth quoting the Proverb: "Just when the caterpillar thought the world was over, it became a butterfly" (in Lankford, 2012, p. 62)

To account means that we need to:

- be organized - so that we can respond efficiently to unexpected situations
- remain centred and grounded
- be prepared to consult and listen to others' perspectives so that we have awareness of complexity (see The Winners Pyramid (Mountain, 2004, p. 206; 2011, p. 137)
- account those perspectives in decision-making
- take responsibility for our actions
- be ethical (see below)
- ensure life balance
- develop a sense of belonging with at least one group
- develop a sense of community with the wider sub-culture of which we are a part.

When we discount ethical issues we show a need for control of our own type. In other words we do not take account of the wider impact, we want to avoid confrontation and be in control of things our way. It means that not all the available information is being used and in this way we can maintain our own frame of reference. An example of this was the banking crisis where discounting occurred by the leaders in industry. Today's problems were caused by yesterday's short-term solutions that often meant that these decisions were an

ego system rather than an eco-system (Scharmer and Kaufer, 2013).

In order to create a balanced world we need therefore to consider the link between thinking, action and impact at all levels. One of the difficulties is that those who make the decisions are often divorced from feedback and without feedback there is no learning, which often means that organisations change too little too late. (Scharmer & Kaufer, 2013)

We can include ethics and unethical behaviour within the frame of Mindfulness and discounting respectively. Ethical decisions are not always easy to make but need to be considered from a perspective of impact on individuals and the wider society. Events around the world show the dangers of believing that we, and only we, "know the truth". We need to be prepared to dive into the complexity and really listen to other perspectives. It is not a time for being a bystander (Clarkson, 1987).

It is clear that society will not survive the 21st Century with 20th Century politics and ethics. We need to account the exploitation of other people and other nations, being Mindful in all we do as well as how we are. Krausz (2011) points out that:

"Change calls for action, and the question is, how can organizational transactional analysts, as individuals and professions, contribute to upgrading the level of awareness about organizational dysfunctions and the suffering they cause.transactional analysts have opportunities to learn, experience, and practice OKness, a state of expanded awareness that helps them decide what is acceptable and unacceptable and under what circumstances - in other words, to develop ethical principles to guide their decisions and actions in the here and now, free of scripty tendencies. OKness impliesautonomous behaviour". (p.130)

The consideration of Mindfulness needs also to be seen within the organisational culture:

“The Euhemerus or primal leader (Berne, 1963), of the organization will have handed down expectations and ways of doing things. These will affect all levels of the contract, including the psychological contract about “how things are done around here”. Those with a Machiavellian frame of reference are likely to promote a highly competitive mentality that creates intense pressure to be the best, whatever the cost. In such organizations ethical decisions will be secondary to winning” (Mountain, 2011, p. 174)

This reinforces the need to take the whole organisation into account assessing all levels. We can do this by using the 3-D Model (Mountain & Davidson, 2011), being able to tolerate complexity and “thinking outside the box”. This means using all the information available which in turn means listening and accounting.

In summary I will use nine of Scharmer and Kaufer’s ten key principles,

- "Transparency: Information must be transparent, not secret
- Sharing: Ownership of goods must be accessible and intelligently shared
- Intention: Organizing revolves around common intention not structures
- Holding Space: Co-creative communities require high-quality core groups and holding spaces
- Conversation: Shift from toxic, transactional to dialogic, co-creative
- Awareness: Shift the primary mode of operating from ego-system to eco-system awareness
- Commons: Identify, protect, and cultivate the commons as base of the whole eco-system

- Playfulness: Create a culture that values playfulness, entrepreneurship and co-creation
- Diversity and symbiosis: which allows the eco-system to thrive”. (p236):

Whatever our role within or in relation to an organisation the major challenges lie not in the parts, but in the interconnections.

In order to ensure that we are willing and able to make those interconnections we, as Transactional Analysts, or training in TA, need to ensure that we receive supervision as this encourages us to look at our “blind spots”, account and continually grow and develop.

Scharmer and Kaufer’s (2013) use of symbiosis is relevant here as earlier in the book they state:

“All eco-systems are based on the principles of diversity and symbiosis: different species working together in symbiotic and harmonious ways. By contrast, industrial production promotes monocultures and single-variable maximization that reduce resilience and make the system vulnerable to disruption” (p 81).

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