

## SFHPT17

# Explore with the client their experience and understanding of unconscious communication in analytic/dynamic therapy



### Overview

This standard is about creating space for unconscious communication to emerge and be understood in therapy. It involves a high level of reflectivity for the therapist. It makes demands on both therapist and the client who has come for therapy to tolerate silence and seeming lack of structure in the session and make effective use of them. It explores the client's preparedness to tolerate or seek interpretations, drawing on the full range of expressions of the client's internal world.

This standard describes therapeutic practice that has been shown to benefit individual adult clients engaged in therapy for healthcare reasons (see reference in the additional information section on page 6). To apply this standard, practitioners also need to take account of the multiple problems and complex co-morbidities that individual clients may bring to therapy.

Users of this standard will need to ensure that they are receiving supervision and that their practice reflects up to date information and policies. This standard should be understood in the context of the Digest of National Occupational Standards for Psychological Therapies.

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#### Performance criteria

- You must be able to:*
- P1 allow your own subjective associations and ideas to form in response to the client's communications
  - P2 recognise and help the client to reflect on unverballed feelings
  - P3 help the client elaborate on their idiosyncratic use of language, imagery and dreams
  - P4 allow silence that permits the emergence of the client's uninterrupted flow of associations and communications
  - P5 limit silences if the client's anxiety risks undermining engagement with the therapy
  - P6 change your level of activity in response to unproductive levels of anxiety
  - P7 explicate as needed the client's use of silence in the session
  - P8 communicate to the client that you understand the anxiety silence can generate
  - P9 attend and respond sensitively to the conscious and unconscious meaning of the client's current preoccupations and distress
  - P10 evaluate when it is most productive to focus primarily on the client's external or internal reality
  - P11 consider whether and how to make an interpretation that enables the client to explore previously unconscious or unrecognised feelings or fantasies
  - P12 evaluate and explore the meaning of the symbolic content of the client's communication
  - P13 help the client to make connections between their current, real-life preoccupations and their unconscious internal world of subjective experience
  - P14 monitor and evaluate the client's response to interpretations

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### Knowledge and understanding

*You need to know and understand:*

#### Unconscious communication

- K1 meaning in latent communication
- K2 conditions under which unconscious communication is likely to emerge
- K3 how to recognise unconscious communications
- K4 how people use their bodies to communicate

#### Working with symbolic material and dreams

*You need to know and understand:*

- K5 theories relating to symbolic communication
- K6 how to explore and consider symbolic communication
- K7 how to examine, explore and interpret symbolic communication and dreams

#### Work in the transference

*You need to know and understand:*

- K8 the forms of transference
- K9 how to develop and work in the transference
- K10 how to formulate dominant transference themes from the client's assessment
- K11 how to make a transference interpretation
- K12 the emotional impact of transference interpretations
- K13 the rationale and features of the analytic setting and stance

#### Work in the countertransference

*You need to know and understand:*

- K14 the forms of countertransference
- K15 how to reflect on and consider countertransference
- K16 how to make appropriate use of countertransference
- K17 when and when not to interpret from countertransference

#### Working with defences

*You need to know and understand:*

- K18 psychoanalytic conceptions of the nature, processes and purposes of unconscious defences and how to identify them
- K19 how to gauge the effects and implications of the client's psychological functioning on their personality presentation
- K20 the role of anxiety and defences in rendering some interpretations ineffective or destructive
- K21 how to adopt and maintain an analytic stance

#### Interpretation

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*You need to know and understand:*

- K22 the aims and work of interpretation
- K23 the collaborative process of interpretation

#### **Diversity in therapy**

*You need to know and understand:*

- K24 how the characteristics of a client that help to construct identity may be subject to discrimination in therapy
- K25 how to work with the psychodynamics of difference within the therapeutic relationship
- K26 the process of self-reflection by the therapist on their conscious and unconscious assumptions, biases and prejudices
- K27 the effect on personality and development of the experience of difference and external discrimination

#### **Interpersonal and reflective skills**

*You need to know and understand:*

- K28 different interpersonal styles of relating
- K29 skills of clarification
- K30 skills of confrontation
- K31 skills of exploration
- K32 the significance of the therapist's own experience of psychotherapy and self-knowledge

#### **Analytic/dynamic model of the mind**

*You need to know and understand:*

- K33 dynamic theories of the nature of mental life
- K34 the different structures of the mind and their contribution to personality development
- K35 the nature of the unconscious inner world of object-relations
- K36 the ways in which the client's imaginative life can be a vehicle for understanding their unconscious experience of themselves and others
- K37 various analytic/dynamic theories, models and techniques

#### **Developmental theory**

*You need to know and understand:*

- K38 theories of developmental factors that shape the client's experience of themselves and others
- K39 theories of personality organisation
- K40 theories of developmental psychopathology

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### Additional Information

#### External links

This standard is derived from research reported in Lemma A, Roth A D and Pilling S (2009) *The competences required to deliver effective Psychoanalytic/ Psychodynamic Therapy*. Centre for Outcomes Research & Effectiveness (CORE) University College London.

This standard has indicative links with the following dimension within the NHS Knowledge and Skills Framework (October 2004):

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**Suite** Psychological Therapies

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