

SFHPT21

Manage difficulties in the analytic/dynamic therapeutic relationship



Overview

This standard shows how the therapist has to be alert to signs of the relationship breaking down or obstacles to it emerging. It includes early subtle challenges to therapeutic boundary maintenance, which may increase the risk of boundary violations by therapist or client. The standard shows how the therapist's response has to be as creative as possible, both seeking therapeutic benefit from what is occurring, and being alert to the risks arising from it.

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 7). 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 identify a therapeutic rupture or impasse or events that may indicate serious boundary violations or challenges
- P2 identify any imminent risk to the client, you, or the therapy, indicated by the difficulties, and manage this risk before addressing transference, countertransference or other content that is emotionally salient
- P3 engage with the client in understanding what is felt to have disrupted or distorted the therapeutic relationship by:
 - P3.1 demonstrating to the client that their relationship with you is something they can discuss
 - P3.2 responding non-defensively to the client's negative experience of the therapeutic work and of you
 - P3.3 responding non-seductively to the client's positive experience of the therapeutic work, and you
 - P3.4 enabling the client to understand the emotional impact of the work
- P4 enable the client to understand that the therapeutic relationship is like any relationship in operating at different levels such that uncomfortable positive and uncomfortable negative feelings towards you can co-exist
- P5 draw the client's attention to the feelings they may be avoiding
- P6 make use of a rupture or impasse in the therapy as an opportunity for deepening understanding of the client's subjective experience and difficulties and for developing the working alliance
- P7 appraise critically when therapy may have reached an unresolvable impasse such that ending or referral onwards may be the most helpful way forward
- P8 consider the respective contributions of you and the client to the client's perception of you and the therapy and to your perception of self, the client and the therapy
- P9 distinguish between instances when resistance to therapy is a manifestation of the client's difficulties and instances when the client is responding to an accurate perception of differences of opinion between themselves and you
- P10 identify the possible contribution of difference between you and the client to a difficulty or impasse
- P11 identify your possible contribution to a difficulty or impasse, understand its meaning and consider the most helpful way of using your awareness to resolve the issue
- P12 protect the client and their therapy by identifying when you need further personal therapy or supervision
- P13 consider how resistance may communicate unconscious material other than difficulties with the therapeutic process

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- P14 use transference interpretations in a sensitive and timely manner in order to manage the client's projections that may otherwise disrupt the therapeutic relationship
- P15 help the client explore and become more aware of areas of conflict by drawing attention to feelings or states of mind that are experienced by them as unacceptable or uncomfortable
- P16 sustain the relationship in the face of primitive states of mind and strong emotion in both you and the client
- P17 refrain from any romantic, erotic or sexual relationship with the client

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Knowledge and understanding

You need to know and understand:

Managing difficulties

- K1 the various responses that the client may make to exploratory therapy and how these may manifest in the therapeutic relationship
- K2 types of event that represent or signal a threat to the continuation or productivity of the therapy
- K3 types of event that represent or signal serious boundary violations or challenges
- K4 how to respond to enactments in therapy
- K5 how therapists may act out unethically
- K6 alternative psychological therapies as a basis for considering more suitable alternatives for the client
- K7 external resources available to support the client during therapy

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 make and titrate a transference interpretation
- K11 how to identify the emotional impact of transference interpretations

Work in the countertransference

You need to know and understand:

- K12 the forms of countertransference
- K13 how to reflect on and consider countertransference
- K14 how to make appropriate use of countertransference
- K15 when and when not to interpret from countertransference

Working with defences

You need to know and understand:

- K16 psychoanalytic conceptions of the nature, processes and purposes of unconscious defences and how to identify them
- K17 how to gauge the effects and implications of the client's psychological functioning on their personality presentation
- K18 the role of anxiety and defences in rendering some interpretations ineffective or destructive
- K19 how to adopt and maintain an analytic stance

Interpretation

You need to know and understand:

- K20 the aims and work of interpretation
- K21 the collaborative process of interpretation

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Risk

You need to know and understand:

- K22 the potential for, and mechanisms of, exacerbation of problems for the client in therapy
- K23 causes and triggers of self harm and violence to others
- K24 potential negative effects of the exploration of transference and counter-transference phenomena
- K25 how to balance the risks around the exploration of transference and counter-transference phenomena
- K26 how to use supervision in reducing the risks from the exploration of transference and counter-transference phenomena
- K27 how to assess the client's capacity to engage in the analytic process in the context of assessment of risk
- K28 causes and triggers of withdrawal from therapy

The rationale for an analytic/dynamic approach

You need to know and understand:

- K29 the nature of exploratory therapy
- K30 how analytic/dynamic approaches privilege the exploration of the client's internal, unconscious world of experience
- K31 the affective and interpersonal focus of the therapy
- K32 the rationale for closely tracking the therapeutic process
- K33 the rationale and features of the analytic setting and stance
- K34 how to adopt a non directive stance in relation to the client's communications
- K35 the importance of maintaining an open mind during therapy
- K36 the emerging aims of therapy and the way in which they may change
- K37 the rationale for an analytic/dynamic approach

Interpersonal and reflective skills

You need to know and understand:

- K38 different interpersonal styles of relating and communicating
- K39 skills of clarification
- K40 skills of confrontation
- K41 the significance of the therapist's own experience of psychotherapy and self-knowledge

Diversity in therapy

You need to know and understand:

- K42 how the characteristics of the client that help to construct identity may be subject to discrimination in therapy
- K43 how to work with the psychodynamics of difference within the therapeutic relationship
- K44 the process of self-reflection by the therapist on their conscious and

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unconscious assumptions, biases and prejudices

K45 the effect on personality and development of the experience of difference and external discrimination

Analytic/dynamic model of the mind

You need to know and understand:

K46 the nature of mental life

K47 unconscious processes

K48 the different structures of the mind and their contribution to personality development

K49 the nature of the unconscious inner world of object-relations

K50 the ways in which the client's imaginative life can be a vehicle for understanding unconscious experience of self and others

K51 various analytic/dynamic models and techniques

Developmental theory

You need to know and understand:

K52 theories of developmental factors that shape the client's experience of themselves and others

K53 theories of personality organisation

K54 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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