MANAGING LOVE AND HATE IN GROUP SETTINGS

I. LOVE AND HATE: BOTH POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE ASPECTS
A. Positive
   1. Energy source, creativity, strength, high morale, vitality, maturation of relationships
B. Negative
   1. Destructive elements - dysfunctional self, relationships, marriage, family, school, workplace

II. GROUP GOALS
A. Help group and members tolerate and contain feelings
B. Help members identify their feelings toward other members and express them constructively.
C. Help members evolve from narcissistic goals of relating to cooperative relationships.

III. THE GROUP, MEMBERS’, LEADER’S FEARS
A. Fear of being attacked
B. Fear of being out of control (impulsivity, acting out without restraints engulfment merger, loss of self
C. Fear of abandonment
D. Fear of humiliation
E. Fear of being bad or damaging (by anger or by consuming person with love)
F. Fear of being rejected

IV. WHY GROUP LEADERS HATE AND LOVE THEIR PATIENTS
A. Subjective
B. Objective

V. HOW GROUP LEADERS EXPRESS THEIR LOVE AND HATE
A. Reluctance to have and hold feelings for patients
B. Therapeutic
C. Non-Therapeutic

VI. MANIFESTATIONS OF MEMBERS’ AVOIDANCE OF LOVE AND HATE IN GROUPS
A. Possible signs of avoidance of loving feelings
   1. Behavior
      a. Flight - intellectualization
         fault finding
         fact seeking
2. Flight - diversion
   changing the topic
   focus on history or future
   split-off feelings
   repression

c. Flight - fragmentation
   poor attendance
   dropping out
   regression

d. Fight - manage, control, manipulate

e. Status quo entrenchment

2. Attitude
   a. Self involved
   b. Distrustful, skeptical, cynical
   c. Compliance
   d. Dissatisfied
   e. Detachment

A. Hate - possible manifestations
   1. Individual level
      a. Non-verbal cues
      b. Action oriented
      c. Self attacking
      d. Attacking of others
   2. Group level
      a. Aggression inward: withdrawn, withholding
      b. Aggression outward: hostile remarks, neglecting/ignoring new members, subgrouping, scapegoat, killing off new members, manage control of topics and feelings, monopolization, acting out.
V. WORKPLACE/SCHOOL/ORGANIZATIONS
A. Signs
   1. Uncooperative behavior
   2. Subgroups
   3. Scapegoat
   4. Poor moral

B. Causes
   1. Members not given proper attention
   2. Members do not feel appreciated/respected
      a. Members do not feel sufficiently compensated by
         acknowledgement, grades, money, status, responsibility, promotion
   3. Leader is not attending to special emotional needs
      a. problems with authority:
         - counter dependent: don’t want to be told what to do
         - dependent: wishes to be told exactly what to do
         - humiliated by criticism
      b. destructive competitive environment
      c. lack of defined boundaries and limits, expectations not clearly
         defined communicated
LEADING THE GROUP

VI. LEADER’S OBJECTIVES
A. Leader
   1. Assesses the individual and group capacity to tolerate individual and group feelings
   2. Interventions take into account the maturational needs, the ego strength, and the
      level of object relations
B. Individual interventions
   1. Insulate, support, strengthen weak ego
   2. Regulate stimulation in the group
   3. Develop an observing ego
C. Group interventions
   1. Get group to work together
   2. Become interested in each other
   3. Decode, investigate disguised emotional communications

VII. LEADER’S APPROACH
A. Clarify function of avoidance as a protective mechanism for members and group
B. Contract
   1. safe container
C. Emphasize the importance of language:
   - as a new outlet for feelings
   - as a source of validation
   - as a means to form emotional connections between group members
     1. Educate - put feelings into words
     2. Inform: no attacking, no actions
     3. Encourage members to be interested and decode feelings of others
     4. Encourage and support toleration of feelings
D. Tools
1. Joining – attunement with the member
2. Bridging the leader inviting members to relate and articulate to another member’s experience
3. developing an insulation barrier
4. developing an observing ego
5. addressing maturational needs
6. immediacy – progressive emotional communication

E. Interventions: address the unique emotional needs
1. Type 1: “Bottled-up Person” - unaware of feelings, closed, somatic
   a. Approach:
      i. sympathetic
      ii. help members identify and put feelings into words
      iii. invite aggression toward leader

2. Type 2: “Dumper” - discharges non-malevolent anger toward leader and others to ward off depression, self-destructive behavior

3. Type 3: “Destroyer” - sadistic, destructive
   a. Approach
      i. set limits
      ii. counter aggression
FROM NARCISSISM TO MATURE LOVE

I. MATURE LOVE
   A. ego strength- including - tolerance of diverse and intense feelings, 
      recovery from regressions, self-reflection
   B. recognition of the other
   C. symbolic and emotional communication
   D. a form of faith
   E. ability to give and receive love

II. NARCISSISTIC LOVE
   A. insufficient ego strength - including- intolerance of feeling, weak 
      recovery from
      regressions, weak self-reflection
   B. primitive emotional communication
   C. weak self/object differentiation
      1. sacrifice self for the other
      2. sacrifice other for self
      3. experiences of love can be experienced as devouring, possession, 
         helpless out of control, terrifying, omnipotence, tantalizing, frustrating, 
         used, taken over, neglected, vindictive, obliterated, stabilizer- can't live 
         without, soother, care-taker, need driven, idealized/devalued, rescuer
III EARLY FORMS OF RELATING
A. Study mode and focus of members relating to see if it enhances or subvert feelings
   1. Possible forms of relating
      a. Based on mother-child: need for protection and completion
      b. Based on satisfying needs - e.g. to be loved, admired, validated, aroused
      c. Based on power - control/domination, submission, owned possessed
      d. Based on omnipotent form of self- sufficiency
      e. Based on longing

IV. THE THERAPEUTIC USE OF COUNTERTRANSFERENCE
   A. Hostage taking communications by the patient: “I'll hurt you, but don’t hurt me”
      1. sexualizing, fragility, monopolizing, not showing up, threatening to quit or explode
      2. intensity of patient(s) communications can create a collapse of transitional space needed for exploration and therapist’s mind shut’s down, becomes frozen or scrambled

   B. Group Therapist’s Approach
      1. therapist’s acceptance as an attitude toward one’s feelings
      2. study countertransference feelings
         a. identify the emotional communications
         b. differentiate malignant aggression ( sadistic attempts to destroy) from benign forms of aggression ( aim to vent and be contained, but not destroy)
      3. contain feelings- particularly important to those kinds of aggressive communications that are not meant to be destructive
      4. use the countertransference feelings as a way of creating transitional space
         a. replay the induced state to the patient or group by investigating the effect
this emotional interaction is having on the group and on the leader.
5. the use of counter-aggression by group leader to destructive communications
   a. signifies the leader has survived, is alive and in good health and safe
1. survival by the object is the beginning of love (Winnicott)
6. keep the frame. despite inducements to gratify or placate.

Suggested Readings:


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