

Table of Contents
Smith College Studies in Social Work
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Contributors.....

Editorial

Gerald Schames, MSS.....

Articles

The Contribution of Relational Theory to Social Work Practice

Carolyn Saari, Ph.D.....

Abstract:

Current relational theory is very consonant with traditional social work perspectives, particularly the importance of relationships and of the environment. Further, it is now possible theoretically to describe the manner in which human interactions and the environment are fundamental to identity using the concept of identity complexity. This article examines these ideas, showing the roots of the current developments in cognitive and constructionist theory as well as in psychoanalytic ideas.

Key words: relationship, environment, identity, complexity, event representations

The 'Mother' Returns to Psychoanalysis: Sándor Ferenczi, Welcome Home

William S. Meyer, MSW, BCD.....

Abstract:

For nearly two decades Sándor Ferenczi was Sigmund Freud's closest friend and collaborator. Whereas it was Freud's intellectual brilliance that set in motion the earth-shaking theory of the human mind, it was Ferenczi's deep empathy and creative passion for healing that inspired analytic practitioners to explore all possibilities for therapeutic cure. When Ferenczi fell out of

favor with Freud, the psychoanalytic establishment largely suppressed his work. The absence of Ferenczi's voice tragically left a critical void and, for decades, analytically informed treatment was deprived of the vital influence of one of its most esteemed founders.

Key Words: Ferenczi, mother, psychoanalysis

Promoting Self Awareness: Infant Observation Training as a Model

Harriet W. Meek, Ph.D.....

Abstract:

Many clients relate in ways that elicit emotional responses in practitioners and may also feel pressure to intervene when appropriate action is not yet clear. Practitioners must develop sufficient self-awareness so their own reactions do not interfere with the work they do with clients. Educators exhort their students to be self-aware, but locating methods that foster the capacity can be difficult. Infant observation is an elegant training model that helps to develop self-awareness. The method described here makes use of regular observation, supportive small groups, and repeated detailed examination of what is seen in training both generalist and specialized practitioners. It has become a prototype for the observational study of several kinds of specific populations. Because it attends to people in their own environments and demonstrates a flexible, reflective, multi-modal manner of information-gathering, infant observation is particularly useful in the education of social work practitioners.

Key words: self-awareness, countertransference, uncertainty, observation, information gathering, multi-modal, reflective, infant, person-in-environment, generalist, specialized, training, small group, organization, social work, psychotherapy, case management

A Case For Developing the Emotional Capacities of Social Workers: A Commentary On
“Observational Training as a Model in the Promotion of Self-Awareness”

Susan Bliss, Ph.D., L.C.S.W.....

Psychotherapy with Alcoholic Patients: A Self Psychological Approach

Linda A. Chernus, MSW, LISW, BCD.....

Abstract:

This paper demonstrates how use of the empathic mode in outpatient psychotherapy helped an alcoholic patient reduce his denial of the severity of his illness. Both the general psychoanalytic literature and, in particular, the self psychology literature concerning treatment of alcoholics is reviewed and evaluated. This paper also examines in depth how the empathic mode functions to promote selfobject transferences, which facilitate internalization processes that may lead to a reduction in the alcoholic patient's need to rigidly maintain his denial of the illness. The complexity of the relationship between alcoholism self-help groups and the professional psychotherapy community is also explored.

Key words: empathy, alcoholism treatment, self psychology

Book Reviews

Living With Dying

Edited by Joan Berzoff and Phyllis Silverman

Reviewed by Cheryl-Anne Cait.....