Contemporary Psychodynamic Psychotherapy

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Evolving Clinical Practice

Edited by

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Introduction

Psychodynamic psychotherapy is one of the most widely practiced forms of psychotherapy today, applied in a variety of settings and contexts, across a wide range of patient or client problems, and by members of several mental health disciplines. A great many psychotherapists expressly identify themselves as "psychodynamically oriented," and countless others incorporate psychodynamic principles and strategies in their work, often blending or integrating psychodynamic understanding and technique with other therapy models. Similarly, many consumers of psychotherapy benefit from psychodynamic approaches without having explicitly sought them out in their quest to obtain help. Seeking relief from suffering, they may happen upon a psychodynamic process through consulting with a therapist at a local outpatient clinic or in an integrative therapy group that blends psychoeducation with examination of interpersonal processes. Many individuals seeking psychotherapy, however, are intent upon engaging in a therapeutic process that allows for a thorough exploration of one's mind, interpersonal relationships, and broader sociocultural influences in the process of understanding and addressing complex life problems. These consumers have little difficulty regarding an extended, even meandering, exploratory therapy as a legitimate and effective means to alleviate suffering and expand personal capacities. Psychodynamic psychotherapy offers this possibility for those who seek it. Indeed, many psychotherapists themselves choose to obtain psychodynamic therapy for their own personal therapy, whether to address personal challenges or simply for better self-understanding, regardless of the therapeutic approach they offer their clients. Other prospective therapy consumers, however, seek a more direct route to problem resolution. These individuals may want a time-limited, structured approach that can zero in on conflicted motivations, constricted affects, or unsatisfactory attachment patterns underlying their troublesome symptoms. Here again, psychodynamic therapy can deliver, with well-defined, structured models available for a range of mental health problems. These various permutations, among others, add up to a lot of psychodynamic psychotherapy being sought by clients, practiced by clinicians, and—we would argue—delivered to good effect.

Despite this widespread proliferation, misconceptions abound regarding psychodynamic psychotherapy as a contemporary treatment. One common misconception is the notion that a psychodynamic approach is old-fashioned, a dusty relic of a bygone era. According to this perception, the theory underlying psychodynamic therapy was long ago supplanted by more modern, scientific understandings of the mind and mental disorder, rendering psychodynamic therapy an antiquated and irrelevant endeavor. Related to this misconception is the claim that psychodynamic psychotherapy has been eclipsed by "evidence-based" treatments that have been

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validated by rigorous empirical research, implying that psychodynamic therapy has not been or, worse, that it has been found to be an inferior approach compared to other mental health treatments. Another misconception may even be unwittingly perpetuated by some practitioners within the psychodynamic community: that there is one particular way—steeped in tradition—of doing psychodynamic psychotherapy. This myth is most likely to be transmitted implicitly, through the training and supervision of new clinicians, and may be compounded by new therapists' anxieties about practicing "the right way." From our perspective, these various misconceptions could hardly be further from the truth. Psychodynamic psychotherapy today is a diverse and vibrant field. The scientific basis for psychodynamic approaches has become more robust and expansive, with an ongoing accrual of research evidence regarding treatment outcomes and processes—shedding light on how therapy works —across different conditions and populations. Meanwhile, theoretical and practice innovations continue, contributing further conceptual refinements and novel applications. Rather than ossifying, psychodynamic psychotherapy is enjoying a quiet renaissance.

When we were considering the development of this volume, our objective was to share some of the evolution and vitality evident in the field of contemporary psychodynamic psychotherapy. We felt that it was about time for a book to bring together a number of recent developments, including research contributions, conceptual developments, research-to-practice translation, and innovations in clinical delivery. This book is thus intended to celebrate the leading edge of psychodynamic psychotherapy today. In one sense, we view the book as a compendium of current knowledge regarding psychodynamic psychotherapy: a snapshot of where the field is today and some of the directions in which it is moving. At the same time, we also hope that this compilation overall conveys a sense of the organic, everdeveloping nature of contemporary psychodynamic science and practice.

For the reader who is new to psychodynamic psychotherapy, we hope that the chapters within will reveal how versatile this approach can be. While the chapters are not exhaustive in scope, we have tried to include a variety of problem areas for psychodynamic applications, with different points of technical emphasis conveyed across the chapters. Similarly, for readers who identify with other theoretical traditions but seek to incorporate psychodynamic interventions in their clinical toolkit, the different approaches described in the book offer opportunities for comparison, integration, and further exploration. Our hope for the seasoned psychodynamically oriented reader is a volume that provides an update on research-based models, contemporary practice considerations, and innovative treatment formats.

To meet the objectives we had in mind for this book, we sought contributions from people who are actively moving psychodynamic therapy forward and who are communicating their work through academically oriented writings. This work doesn't always get into the hands of practitioners in a timely manner and often not in one volume. Here, we wanted such contributions to be addressed to clinicians—therapists in real-world practice—in a way that distills key insights, allows for ready translation to clinical work, and stimulates interest in further learning. We asked leading psychodynamic therapy researchers to present key implications of

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their work, focusing on various mental health problems that often bring people to psychotherapy. To complement this problem-based focus, we invited scholars to discuss psychodynamically informed perspectives regarding clinical work with particular client populations as well as special clinical considerations that reflect the diversity and complexity of contemporary practice. Recognizing that leading edge practices are often not well established in the literature, we also invited contributions from authors whose academic work is nascent, though highly innovative in applying and integrating psychodynamic principles and interventions in novel ways. Thus to further reflect the vitality of contemporary psychodynamic psychotherapy, we sought to bring under one roof the work of scholars and clinicians across a variety of areas and stages of development.

Some readers may observe that psychoanalysis is conspicuously underrepresented throughout this book. The relationship between psychodynamic psychotherapy and psychoanalysis is a complicated one, discussion of which would take us too far afield from the objectives of this book. Suffice it to say that psychodynamic psychotherapy and psychoanalysis are not one and the same. Psychoanalysis has left an indelible impression on psychodynamic psychotherapy, and there remains an ongoing exchange between these disciplines that, in our view, strengthens both. Yet psychodynamic psychotherapy has evolved in its own right, and our intention is to showcase the current state of this evolution. While echoes of psychoanalysis may be heard throughout these chapters, psychodynamic psychotherapy is playing the lead role here.

The chapters have been loosely organized into five sections. We begin with a section on prominent theoretical developments in contemporary psychodynamic psychotherapy, followed by a section devoted to an overview of the empirical support for psychodynamic constructs, treatments, and therapeutic processes. The third section comprises chapters that describe psychodynamic therapy approaches for various mental health problems. These chapters draw upon the authors' and others' empirical research and clinical expertise, often including illustrative case material, to convey a sense of how these disorders can be addressed using psychodynamic therapy. Since the differences and concerns among clients transcend their presenting problem or diagnosis, the fourth section is focused on special populations and critical considerations. These chapters draw attention to some of the nuances that emerge through clients' diverse needs and experiences and highlight psychodynamic perspectives that can assist the clinician in working effectively with these complexities. The final part of the book contains chapters that outline several novel means of delivering psychodynamic intervention. These contributions provide compelling examples of the ways in which psychodynamic therapy is extending its reach, often through integration with other modes of service.

Section 1: conceptual advances

Our first chapter gives an overview of prominent theoretical developments, aimed at introducing key features of psychodynamic theory to the novice reader and

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providing a sense of conceptual evolution to readers grounded in psychodynamic practice. In the second chapter, Mark Hilsenroth and Seth Pitman focus on the specific issue of understanding and working with patients' cyclical relational patterns, a hallmark of psychodynamic therapy. This contribution takes the reader through the traditional meta-psychological construct of transference and moves toward a more descriptive and experience-near conceptualization of the processing of insession, here-and-now relational dynamics. Next, Martin Debbané provides an overview of contemporary attachment and mentalization theories. This chapter introduces a mentalization-based conceptualization of psychopathology along with a discussion of the nature of therapeutic change from the perspective of mentalization theory.

Section 2: psychodynamic psychotherapy as evidence-based treatment

The second section is intended to give the reader a sense of the scientific work being done to support the efficacy of psychodynamic psychotherapy and to further our understanding of how it works and for whom. Owing to the volume of work in these areas, these chapters are necessarily concise, providing summaries and overviews of the current evidence base rather than a detailed examination of each individual study. This section begins with a chapter by Falk Leichsenring and Christiane Steinert that reviews the efficacy of psychodynamic therapy, revealing substantial evidence for the efficacy of psychodynamic therapy in depressive, anxiety, somatoform, eating, substance-related, and personality disorders. This is followed by a review by Kevin McCarthy, Sigal Zilcha-Mano, and Jacques Barber of some of the sophisticated and novel studies regarding interventions in psychodynamic psychotherapy, the therapeutic relationship, and their relation to other phenomena in psychodynamic psychotherapy and its outcomes. The section closes with a chapter by Kenneth Levy, John Keefe, and Johannes Ehrenthal that provides an overview of empirical evidence that supports basic psychodynamic tenets, with consideration of the implications of these concepts for the process of psychotherapy treatment.

Section 3: contemporary psychodynamic treatment for specific conditions

Major advances in the application of psychodynamic therapy regarding specific clinical disorders are presented in this section. These chapters provide informative overviews of empirically supported psychodynamic models, many with illustrative case examples, for several mental health challenges. The section begins with a chapter in which Mary Beth Connolly Gibbons, Katherine Crits-Christoph, and Paul

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Crits-Christoph outline an adaptation of short-term supportive-expressive psychotherapy for the treatment of depression, specifically designed for implementation in community mental health settings. The treatment of anxiety is taken up by Fredric Busch and Barbara Milrod, with a description of Panic-Focused Psychodynamic Psychotherapy. This chapter outlines an extension of the panic-focused psychodynamic psychotherapy model to address a range of DSM-V anxiety disorders, cluster C personality disorders, and posttraumatic stress disorder. In their chapter on mentalization-based treatment, Anthony Bateman and Peter Fonagy expand on a conceptualization of personality disorder that emphasizes the vulnerability to losing the capacity to mentalize. The chapter outlines the use of mentalization-based therapy for patients suffering from borderline and antisocial personality disorders, conditions that are commonly regarded as challenging to treat. Another prominent evidence-based treatment for personality disorder is featured in the chapter by Eve Caligor, John Clarkin, and Frank Yeomans. These authors articulate the use of transference-focused psychotherapy for patients with both borderline and narcissistic personality disorder, the latter of which is often neglected in structured approaches to treating personality disorders. Focusing on the immense challenges of working with patients who suffer from cooccurring substance use and personality disorder, the chapter by Robert Gregory presents a comprehensive treatment model called dynamic deconstructive psychotherapy for use with this patient population.

Although there is a rich history of its use with patients who suffer from psychoses, psychodynamic treatment has often been overlooked as an appropriate therapy for such patients. Bent Rosenbaum provides a chapter that challenges this omission by describing the contemporary use and empirical grounding of psychodynamically informed supportive therapy for patients with psychosis. Next, Patrick Luyten, Celine De Meulemeester, and Peter Fonagy describe dynamic interpersonal therapy, a contemporary psychodynamic approach to the understanding and treatment of patients with somatic symptom disorder or functional somatic disorder. Their work is founded on three related biobehavioral systems that are central in current psychodynamic approaches to helping patients with these conditions. The section closes with a contribution from Giorgio Tasca and Louise Balfour describing an approach to psychotherapy for patients with eating disorders that is informed by attachment theory and an interpersonally based psychodynamic model. This chapter invites readers to consider psychodynamic conceptualizations and approaches to treating eating disorders that take into account social and relational contexts and attachment-related states of mind.

Section 4: special populations and critical considerations

This section extends the practical focus of the preceding section to the application of psychodynamic approaches for client populations with specialized needs as well as critical considerations for generalist clinicians to bear in mind, better equipping them to consider the unique experiences and needs of diverse clients. A trio of chapters

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focus on the use of psychodynamic therapies for younger populations (infants, children, and adolescents). Bjorn Salomonsson considers the development of psychodynamic therapy for infants and parents, comparing models on the basis of their conceptual and technical emphases regarding the psychologies of and interactions between infant, parent, and therapist. Geoff Goodman and Nick Midgley provide a review of five different manualized child psychodynamic therapies, presenting the aims and methods of each approach, summarizing their treatment course, and offering empirical evidence in support of their effectiveness. Following along the age trajectory set forth by these two chapters, Dana Atzil-Slonim contributes an overview of adolescent psychodynamic psychodynamic practice with adolescent clients.

Psychotherapy that ignores issues related to clients' sexual orientation and/or gender identity is, in addition to lacking effectiveness, likely to perpetuate marginalization of sexual and gender minorities. Many such issues and their implications for psychodynamic therapy are discussed in a chapter by Vittorio Lingiardi and Nicola Nardelli. This contribution offers the clinician a framework for contemplating critical issues in psychodynamic practice with clients who identify as members of sexual and gender minorities. Immigrants and refugees represent another broad group whose social challenges, including trauma and marginalization, need special consideration in psychotherapy. Pratyusha Tummala-Narra provides an overview of key sociocultural factors that may shape the clinical picture in work with immigrant and/or refugee clients. The chapter invites the reader to consider premigration and postmigration contexts, acculturation and related stress, and trauma as well as the implications of these factors for the client's negotiation of separation and loss and for the dynamics of the therapeutic relationship.

The next set of chapters in this section present potential considerations and approaches in psychodynamic work with people who have encountered profoundly traumatic experiences. Richard Chefetz addresses the issue of dissociative processes, often highly salient in the experience of individuals who have suffered severe trauma. This chapter demonstrates the dissociative concealment of the underlying meanings of experience, behavior, and motivation that ultimately shapes the client's subjective sense of self and organization of mind. Next, Nel Draijer and Pauline Van Zon describe the application of transference-focused psychotherapy to the treatment of former child soldiers suffering from dissociative identity disorder. These authors discuss how this approach can address overwhelming, dissociated negative affects, including their role in controlling and alienating others, in order to help sufferers of severe trauma to find release from internal oppression. The final chapter in this section, contributed by Christiane Steinert, Johannes Kruse, Falk Leichsenring, Helga Mattheß, and Wolfgang Wöller, considers the immense gap between the need for mental health services and the availability of such services in postconflict and refugee crisis settings. The chapter describes a brief, culturally adaptable, manualized intervention that puts special emphasis on the therapeutic relationship, stabilization and emotion regulation, and the strengthening of resources while addressing dissociative states and transference and countertransference reactions in the context of trauma.

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Section 5: innovative modes of delivery

The final section of the book highlights several novel ways of delivering psychody-namically informed intervention beyond the typical configuration of therapist and client meeting in the consulting room. Chapters in this section describe applications that extend the reach of psychodynamic work, offering benefit to clients who otherwise might not access psychodynamically informed intervention as traditionally offered. While the applications profiled in this section are diverse, a common thread of innovation runs through these contributions. While some of these efforts have been well researched, several represent the work of leading clinicians who—fortunately for the contemporary psychodynamic field—have recently begun writing about their work. We hope that the sharing of these accomplishments might inspire clinicians to implement such novel approaches or to consider other ways in which they might develop innovative psychodynamic applications in their own practice.

Robert Johansson begins the section with a chapter that describes psychodynamic intervention in the form of guided self-help through the internet. This mode of delivery holds promise for the potential to reach individuals who may not otherwise have access to sophisticated psychological treatment. For others, online delivery may be ideally suited to their preferences and life demands. The next chapter, by Guy Diamond, Syreeta Mason, and Suzanne Levy, provides an overview of a psychodynamically informed, attachment-based family therapy. Aimed at helping distressed adolescents and young adults, this approach seeks to identify and resolve, through direct family-level therapeutic work, family conflicts that contribute to damaged trust between parents and adolescents.

Psychodynamic principles are also being applied at the broader community level. The chapter by Pamela Nathan describes such an effort, profiling the work of a not-for-profit, psychoanalytic organization known as Creating A Safe Supportive Environment (CASSE) in central Australia. Guided by key principles of psychodynamic practice and modified for broader application to the community, CASSE forms partnerships and collaborations with Aboriginal organizations and other stakeholders to work toward ameliorating the psychological impact of colonialism and cultural dispossession experienced by Aboriginal communities.

Another community-based effort, known as Sport and Thought, is described in the chapter by Daniel Smyth. This chapter outlines an innovative approach to help adolescent boys with behavioral and emotional difficulties through the fusing of psychodynamic principles with football. The Sport and Thought program offers an accessible prevention and early intervention approach for youth who would not engage via traditional therapeutic routes. The next chapter, by Frank Sacco, Jr., James Higginbotham, Charles Granoff, and Frank C. Sacco, also profiles an approach targeting high-risk youth. This contribution describes therapeutic mentoring, a community-based program that extends mentalizing work into community settings with young people who are receiving more traditional psychodynamic therapy. Therapeutic mentoring is delivered as part of a team-based approach whereby the mentor reinforces mentalizing and social adaptation through engagement in

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community-based activities. Young people are also featured in the final chapter in this section, although the insights shared by Norka Malberg in this contribution extend to various populations receiving intensive medical treatment. This chapter describes psychodynamic group intervention in inpatient medical settings, indicating the benefits—both for patients' emotional well-being and for their ongoing medical care—of helping patients work through the psychodynamic concerns that often accompany compromised physical health and the need for intensive medical treatment

A final note

The field of psychodynamic psychotherapy is continually evolving. While traditionally focused on unconscious elements that underlie various psychological maladies, psychodynamic psychotherapy in contemporary practice has a broad scope that merges attention to complex mental states with consideration of biological, interpersonal, social, and cultural factors. Drawing upon a rich heritage of theorizing about the complexities of human development, interaction, and psychopathology, contemporary psychodynamic psychotherapy represents a viable means of addressing emotional suffering and mental disorder. Moreover, the principles and interventions gathered under the psychodynamic umbrella are aimed not only at the amelioration of particular symptoms, but also toward the encouragement of growth in essential human capacities to love, work, play, and laugh—to live with creativity and meaning. To support these aims, psychodynamic theorists, clinicians, and researchers eschew complacency by contemplating new questions and challenges that further advance the perspectives, applications, and empirical bases of psychodynamic psychotherapy. It is our hope that this book, through consolidating some of the foremost advances in the psychodynamic field, will inform and inspire readers to consider how such developments might help to shape their own contemporary psychodynamic practice.

David Kealy and John S. Ogrodniczuk