

Training of psychoanalytic psychotherapy in contemporary South Africa: Theoretical dilemmas, clinical debates and diverse contexts

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Abstract

This paper offers an outline of the theoretical dilemmas, clinical debates and challenges of diverse contexts in the training of psychoanalytically orientated psychotherapists in contemporary South Africa as well as globally. Radical changes to the delivery and funding of health care generally, and mental health care in particular, have had significant impact on access to, and the practice of, psychoanalytic psychotherapy globally. The crisis facing psychoanalysis in a world plagued by the tyranny of managed health care and demand for instant results has international relevance. Most South Africans have limited access to long term psychoanalytic therapy or psychoanalysis. This needs to be acknowledged as a crucial factor in determining the relevance of training models in psychoanalytically orientated psychotherapy. Given that the majority practice of psychoanalytically informed psychotherapy both in state settings and private practice constitutes the use of psychoanalytic concepts, applications and ideas rather than long term classical psychoanalysis, it is crucial that this should determine the nature of training current psychodynamic therapists should receive. The focus will specifically be on the clinical practice and training of psychoanalytically orientated psychotherapy as it is practiced by a range of practitioners including social workers, psychologists, general practitioners, psychiatrists, sub-specialist child psychiatrists and others.