

In search of the missing pieces of mind

Jenny Perkel

Private Practice, Cape Town

Abstract

In some mental health circles, psychoanalytic psychotherapy is not always regarded as the intervention of choice for children diagnosed with ADHD. This case reveals the ways in which psychoanalytic theory and practice can play a significant role in both understanding and addressing the underlying factors contributing to the symptoms that form the basis of ADHD. A central theme in this latency age child's therapy was a repetitive game in which she would hide little toys in the consulting room and then request that the therapist search for them. Psychoanalytic literature offers numerous valuable theories and insights that could be used in the formulation of this child. Using case material that is based on the repetitive game in the consulting room, this paper explores possible psychoanalytic formulations that could shed light on the meaning behind the child's distress, her history of trauma and her symptoms. There is a particular focus on Bion's ideas about the mind in relation to thinking, learning and knowing.