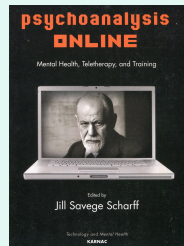


Tele – Therapy From old media to new media

- Some general remarks
- Old media first
- New media
- Practical recommendations



1

Communicative Rules

- All communications are bi-directional.
- They are more or less symmetrical.
- Therapeutic discourse is more or less asymmetrical.
- The media of the exchange is secondary,
- but the rules of communicative coherence must be respected.

2

Communicative Rules

- Communications need an agreed-upon FRAME
- FRAME defines the rules of exchange
- # place
- # time
- # length

3

FRAME - Place

- Letters may be written from one unspecified place to another
- E-mails, SMS, telephone, Skype as well

4

FRAME - time

- Letters may be written at any time !
- There is no agreed-upon rule when to read a letter!
- And whether one should respond or not!
- E-mails, SMS, telephone, Skype at least specify the exact time of sending not the place !

5

FRAME - length

- Letters may be very short or very long !
- E-mails as therapeutic tools also may vary.
- SMS as therapeutic tools are usually very short.
- Telephone and Skype calls as therapeutic tools have a pre-agreed length.

6

- Exchange of Letters - a precursor of new media ?

Going back to pre-historic times would be going too far – but messages have been sent since long. With the advent of a writing culture something like a communicative culture had been established.

Distances – geographical or social – were bridged by diverse media.

Whether therapeutic discourses were established is hard to say; at least the genre of consolation letters was quite common:

Consolation and Love Letters

Letters of consolation have been routine through the centuries –

Love letters also have been a category on its own since long.

A prime example is Goethe's letter exchange with Mrs. von Stein which according to the psychoanalyst Eissler can be regarded as a covered therapeutic exchange.

Eissler, K. R. (1963). *Goethe. A psychoanalytic study, 1755-1786*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press.

Koopmann writes:

„Most likely the love to Charlotte von Stein was the most unique love relationship of Goethe.

He wrote nearly 1800 letters to her.....

Never before and never again love letters have been more beautiful“.

Koopmann, H. (2002). *Goethe und Frau von Stein. Geschichte einer Liebe*. München: Beck.



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Written Talks

Written talks basically are situated in a space of imagination.

The loneliness of the writing person allows to transgress the borders of shame.

Quotation Goethe:

„Often enough a friend to whom one writes is the trigger and not the subject of the letter“

Hamburger Edition Vol. 4, p.486

Turn to the 20th Century

Letters were of interest for their capacity to report about intrapsychic conflicts and problems of inter human relationship.

Writing meant then and today to suffer from a lack.

Ebrecht, A. (1990). Brieftheoretische Perspektiven von 1850 bis in 20. Jahrhundert. In A. Ebrecht, R. Nörtemann, & H. Schwarz (Eds.), *Brieftheorie des 18. Jahrhunderts*. Stuttgart: J B Metzlersche Verlagsbuchhandlung.



11

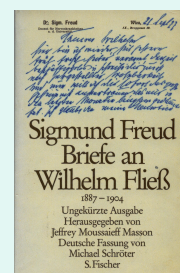
Transference Love?

The exchange of letters between Freud & Fliess sometimes is interpreted as a covered love relationship.

J.M. Masson, editor, wrote:

„It is not fertile to identify transference phenoma, to see in the relation to Fliess a precursor of Freuds self-analysis.

Masson, J. M. (Ed.) (1985a). *The complete letters of Sigmund Freud to Wilhelm Fliess 1887-1904*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

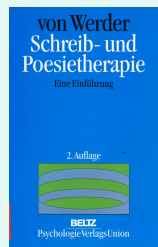


Writing As Therapy or Therapy by Writing

The goal of therapeutic writing is to further self-understanding.

Diaries have a long and rich history
see writing analysis (f.e Anais Nin)

Horney, K. (1942). *Self analysis*. New York: Norton.



13

New Media

- Telephon therapy and supervision
- E-mail
- Skype
- SMS

14

Telephon

Scharff, J. S. (2012).

Clinical issues in analysis over the telephone
and the internet.

International Journal of Psychoanalysis, 93,
81-95.

15

Telephone

The telephone was used as needed for dealing with
crises and reaching a reluctant or bed-ridden patient.

It was used as a substitute for in-person analysis for
patients who were phobic of in-person sessions.

It was used with patients who had to move so that
they could maintain an established analytic
relationship and prevent premature termination.

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Telephone

Main problem: the connection is not working and the silence is misinterpreted.

Voice quality has been an issue; yet recently the use of headsets has improved the situation.

The telephone distorts the inflection of the voice, and critics fear that this will interfere with the reception of the communication

(Argentieri and Mehler, 2003).

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Telephon

My own experience teaches me that prolonged silences are very difficult to tolerate and handle due to lack of non-verbal back-channeling through non-verbal information.

Without prior contact vis-a-vis I would not initiate a telephon treatment!

Many analyst agree that intermediate telephone calls - in-between regular sessions do not constitute a major problem.

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Example 1a

- A telephone line cut-off happened early in his treatment. After some minutes of telling his analyst hesitantly what was on his mind, Mr. M fell silent.
- Hearing nothing from him, she began to interpret the persistent use of silence as a resistance, as a denial of the need of the telephone and for words as the vehicle for the treatment, and as a way of testing her capacity to endure non-connection.

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Example 1b

- Unknown to her, the analysand was speaking but the analyst could not hear him because her headset failed. He was puzzled by her ever more frantic attempts to interpret his non-response as his way of exerting silent control, making the telephone analysis impossible.
- After they discovered the problem and reconnected, she learned that he had in fact been speaking, and had been experiencing irritation in her voice as if she were not satisfied with what he was saying and not responding to him.

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Non-Verbal Environment

- Leffert (2003) pointed out that: “[T]he telephone, like the couch, alters the dimensions of the non-verbal environment: it de-emphasizes or eliminates some of them while emphasizing others” (p. 124).
- Communication occurs through sound, not sight, an echo of the earliest days of life when communication between mother and baby was perhaps through the whish of blood in the umbilical cord.

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Positive Analogy

- The telephone is like the couch in limiting visual cues and freeing the analyst's attention from the demands of gaze interaction (Richards, 2003).
- The analyst listens with the third ear to the underlying theme, like the analyst sitting out of sight behind the analysand, listening better with eyes shut (Hanly, 2005).

22

E-mail

E-mail exchanges are easy to handle, allow for continous contact about session-by-session interaction.

They are limited by the patient's capacity to express herself in the writing mode.

Pennebaker, J. (1997). Writing about emotional experiences as a therapeutic process. *Psychological Science*, 8, 162-166.

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Use of E-Mails in Psychotherapy

- Student counselling-service (Brice, 2000)
- Treatment of Bulimia Nervosa via e-mail diary (Robinson & Serfaty, 2001)
- Adjunct to outpatient psychotherapy in anorectic women (Yager, 2001)
- Support in family therapy (King, 1998)
- Homework assignments via e-mail (Murdoch & Connor-Green, 2000)
- „Dream journaling“ (Childress, 1999)
- Therapeutic writing via e-mail (Murphy & Mitchell, 1998)

24

Example 2a

- I have treated a young patient by using her capacity to express herself in writing.
- In stark contrast to her incapacity to speak while in session during a very long time.
- Since the death of her mother two years ago she was chronic suicidal.

25

Example 2b

- I must admit that her writing skills impressed me.
- The technical issue was how to respond to her long e-mails and in what time distance.
- I decided to wait some time – not to answer immediately but sometime during the day or next day.
- And I kept my responses short!!

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Example 2c

- Over a time span of three years we exchanged about 200.000.– words
- My part counted about 30.000.– words.
- The intermittent SMS-exchange has been published
- Кехеле Г & Бухгольц МБ. (2013) НЕВІДКЛАДНА СМС-ІНТЕРВЕНЦІЯ ПРИ ХРОНІЧНІЙ СУЇЦИДАЛЬНОСТІ: ЯК КОНВЕРСАЦІЙНИЙ АНАЛІЗ ЗБАГАЧУЄ КЛІНІЧНІ СПОСТЕРЕЖЕННЯ 8: 170-184

27

Cyber-Passion

Gabbard provides two examples: one positive + one negative:

The first exemplifies how a benign somewhat erotic transference could be used in a fruitful way; the other ended in a stormy flooding of an illusory love psychosis.

Gabbard, G. O. (2001). Cyberpassion: E-Rotic transference on the internet. *Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, 70, 719-737.

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Skype-Analysis

Sound plus Image?

Does it have advantages beyond telephone?

CHINA AMERICAN PSYCHOANALYTIC ALLIANCE



CAPA is a non-profit organization of 300+ American, Canadian, European and Australian psychoanalysts and psychotherapists & more than 150 Chinese members.

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CAPA-Students

- Young Chinese students are very eager to be in training with this organisation which provides a full circle of lessons, supervisions and analytic experience.
- The camera is placed behind the student so that the analyst gets the same impression as in real analysis.
- Is it really real?
- Many sophisticated discussions around this issue!!

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Couch versus Face-to-Face

Giving the unavoidable limitations in terms of visual and acoustic qualities of the Skype experience -

One may wonder whether it would make more sense to counteract these by face-to-face exchange?

The lack of corporality is evident.

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Analytic Enviroment

- The analytic session encompasses more than voice and image.
- The waiting room, the therapist's environment, the pictures at the wall, the carpet on the floor, the unavoidable sounds of the neighborhood etc
- The coming and going, saying hello, handshake
- looking in each others eye

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Limitations

- One has to assume that a Skype-patient behaves pretty <normal>
- Not throwing around the camera
- Not lying naked in bed while skypeing with his therapist
- Securing confidentiality by taking adequate measures

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Outcome Studies

- The proponents say: it's like normal analysis
- The opponents say: it can't be like normal analysis
- Comparative outcome studies are lacking

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The screenshot shows the website www.horstkaechele.de. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links: Conferences, Index, RTP London. Below this, a banner reads "For all students of the new media in therapeutic encounters". The main content area is divided into two columns. The left column contains a list of items, each with a red circular icon and a number: 01. new stuff: lectures and papers in press, 02. Training Seminars worldwide, 03. Psychoanalytic Researchers, 04. Textbook Psychoanalytic Theory and Practice, 05. Psychosomatic Medicine, 06. Psychoanalysis, 07. Clinical Work, 08. Psychotherapy Research, 09. Books. The right column features a red header "PDFs" and a section titled "Psychoanalysis online 2" by Savage Scherff, J. (Ed.) (2015). Below this, there is a link to download "Psychoanalysis_online_2.pdf". At the bottom of the right column, there is a section titled "Tele-Therapy: From Old to New Media" with a subtitle "A history in the Kien Institute of Psychoanalysis".

www.horstkaechele.de

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