

**CREATIVE MAPS FOR TRAINING SYSTEMIC  
PSYCHOTHERAPISTS**

by

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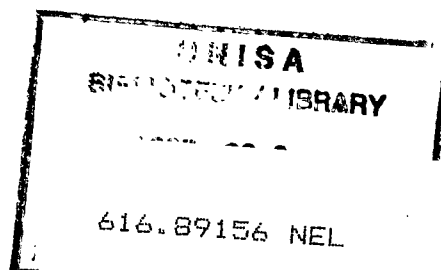
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Toe ek 'n kind was het ek gedog  
die dinge is maar so  
maar nou dat ek 'n man geword het  
weet ek  
dit is dogmadinge  
wat 'n mens doodmaak  
binne

(Jordaan, 1987, p.11)



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**SUMMARY**

In this study psychotherapy training is described from a new epistemological perspective. This perspective, based upon new science and physics and Batesonian evolution, embodies elements of holism, reciprocity, circularity and a both/and view of the universe.

From a new epistemological perspective understandings of psychotherapy training are constructed, not discovered. By precluding the notion of absolute truth, an infinite variety of alternative constructions of training becomes possible.

The conceptual map constructed in this study incorporates a process model for the training of systemic psychotherapists. In terms of this model, training should be a context where various orders of learning are encountered by student and trainer. In particular, the trainees must learn how to differentiate from each other and how to separate from the trainer. Three evolutionary stages of training are identified to describe how an emancipatory learning context may be created.

It is suggested that training may never be concluded.

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

"Where shall I begin, please your Majesty?" he asked.

"Begin at the beginning," the King said, gravely "and go on till you come to the end: then stop."

Carroll, L. (1929, p.157)

#### Training in a Family Therapy Context

Psychotherapy training in a family therapy context is defined by Snyders (1985, p.5) as "a set of systematically planned attempts at introducing greater complexity and flexibility into rigid trainee systems." This can be achieved by trainers and trainees coauthoring a training narrative through which trainees are perturbed to behave and communicate effectively in terms of knowledge of, and skill in, different therapeutic processes (Snyders, 1985).

During the last decade training has become one of family therapy's most active and rapidly expanding subsystems (Liddle, 1982; Liddle, Breunlin & Schwartz, 1988). The growing increase in interest in psychotherapy

training has resulted in a speciality within the family therapy field which is characterized by a tremendous heterogeneity of backgrounds, biases, intentions and objectives (Liddle et al., 1988). Training based on the well known family therapy models include structural (Colapinto, 1983, 1988; Minuchin & Fishman, 1981), strategic (Cade & Seligman, 1982; Haley, 1976; Mazza, 1988) and systemic (Boscolo & Cecchin, 1982; Pirotta & Cecchin, 1988) approaches. Each of these approaches engages in recursive processes of cultivating, emphasizing and validating its specific theoretical viewpoints and complementary training methods.

In this thesis an attempt will be made to map an ecosystemic approach towards the training of psychotherapists. Such an approach can be described in different contexts and in different, but equally valid, ways. This text will be narrated within the context of the psychotherapy training program offered at the University of South Africa (UNISA).

### Context of this Study

The UNISA training program is based upon a contextual approach toward understanding human experience and action. A contextual approach holds that human experience and action

can be properly understood when viewed within the context in which they occur in everyday life (Jordaan & Jordaan, 1989).

The basic goal of the program is to train effective psychotherapists - adequately equipped to meet a transforming South African society's growing demand for a variety of mental health services. Following Snyders (1985, 1986), this goal can be realised through a process of creating various educational, training, and supervisory contexts where different orders of learning (Bateson, 1972) are encountered by student and trainer.

The theoretical orientation adhered to within the MA Clinical and Counselling training program at UNISA went through several stages since its inception in 1974. It started out adhering to a non-directive approach (Porter, 1950; Rogers, 1951; Truax & Carkhuff, 1967) towards psychotherapy. This was followed by an emphasis on interactional patterns and communications theory (Anchin & Kiesler, 1982; Cashdan, 1973; Watzlawick, Beavin & Jackson, 1967), which implied a strategic approach (Haley, 1963, 1973; Watzlawick, Weakland & Fisch, 1974). This eventually led to a greater emphasis on family therapy (Andolfi, 1979; Elkaïm, 1980; Haley, 1976; Hoffman, 1981; Minuchin, 1974; Minuchin & Fischman, 1981) and, ultimately, to a systemic or ecosystemic approach (Auerswald, 1968, 1985; Dell, 1982; Keeney, 1979, 1983;

Le Roux, 1987; Selvini-Palazolli, Boscolo, Cecchin & Prata, 1980; Snyders, 1986) towards therapy and training which emphasises ideas from constructivism (Efran, Lukens & Lukens, 1988; Von Foerster, 1984; Von Glasersfeld, 1984).

Over a three year period (degree plus internship) attempts are made to impart the reigning ideology of the training system, that is, an ecosystemic view of psychotherapy, to trainee therapists along a developmental model. At its core this view is sensitive to contexts: patterns, wholes, relationships, organization and structure.

Process wise, trainees are initially introduced to relatively simple (one-to-one) relational systems, such as the trainee therapist-individual client system interface (therapeutic system) and supervisor-therapeutic system interface (supervisory system). Training then develops to include the management of more complex systems, such as therapeutic and supervisory systems that include therapeutic teams and families and groups as clients. Finally, the training starts to focus on the participation in, and observation of, larger organizational systems such as hospitals, clinics, institutions and the wider community. Each stage is viewed as part of an interactional system within the larger system of the training process as a whole.

The developmental process of training is furthermore incorporated into the specific areas covered in terms of content during different stages of the training programme. This is done much along the lines of the stages of the historical development of the training system (earlier described) itself. Accordingly, the first year of training starts by focussing on a non-directive approach towards psychotherapy, moves on to emphasize interactional patterns and communications theory, implying a strategic approach, and then gradually start to emphasize ideas related to the theory and practice of family therapy. For this purpose the theoretical and practical aspects of four specific areas are covered in terms of content: (1) Directive therapy 1; (2) Research; (3) Directive therapy 2 and (4) Assessment.

During the second year ideas related to the theory and practice of family therapy are developed further. Intermittently trainees' attention and efforts are directed toward the understanding of, and participation in families, groups and larger systems in terms of an ecosystemic approach. Ultimately, a constructivist position for psychotherapy is advocated. Again, for this purpose the theoretical and practical aspects of four specific areas are covered in terms of content: (1) Neuro- and health psychology; (2) Group psychotherapy; (3) Family therapy and (4) Community psychology.

In the third year a basic understanding of ecosystemic epistemology is assumed. During this time trainees are required to complete an internship and to write a dissertation. Training is redefined as consultation. Trainees are free to draw upon the training content in a way that is meaningful and useful to them - thereby aiding their understanding of, and participation in, the wider context. Again, each phase of exposing students to training content forms a part of an interactional system within the larger system of the training system as a whole.

#### **Evolving Nature of the Training Context**

Following Andolfi, Angelo, Menghi, and Nicolò-Corigliano (1983), the training system may be viewed as an evolving relational system. It is in a constant process of change and development, therefore also restructuring its content and including new materials in training. According to Marchetti (1989) this results from the following circular processes inherent in training systems:

1. On-going research and self-development of trainers
2. Continuous feedback and evaluation provided by the trainers
3. Continuous feedback and evaluation provided by trainees

#### 4. Feedback provided from discussions with trainers from other training programmes in South Africa

The complex interdependence between elements of the training ecology (system) viewed together with its inherent circular and evolving nature as described above, creates numerous opportunities for learning to construct frames, sets of frames and an alternative system of sets of frames (Keeney, 1983) - the systems view of psychotherapy. In this learning process the use of language plays a central role.

#### "Languaging" Training Contexts

For Maturana language creates, through acts of distinction, the "things" of which we speak (in Brown, 1972). Moreover, each set of distinctions invariably carries different implications for action. Language is not merely abstraction - it evokes ways of being together. Also, different ways of languaging are not equal. Some language sets could therefore open more "training doors" than others.

In order to produce effective psychotherapists, trainers need to continuously develop innovative and creative ways to language training events and processes. In doing so they would embark on journeys where trainees could be perturbed towards creativity and inventiveness,



using their personal strengths and idiosyncrasies "in a manner congruent to the actual interactions in the therapeutic context" (Andolfi et al., 1983).

In this thesis attempts will be made to draw some maps of an ecosystemic training territory in language. The psychotherapy training program at UNISA provides the context for understanding these attempts. It is hoped that the drawing of these maps would contribute to the alteration of the social linguistic landscape of training in such a way that more creative explorations and travels can take place.

In Chapter 2 a paradigm for training will be proposed. Attempts will be made to map the underlying epistemology inherent in the work of trainers who approach training from an ecological and systemic way.

Chapter 3 will be used to outline a process model for training psychotherapists. This model will provide a map by which evolution of a trainee system could be followed through three developmental stages.

In the following chapters the unfolding of a learning context that the application of the model may create will be explored. This will be done in terms of the training ecology of dependence (Chapter 4), the training ecology of dependence/autonomy ambivalence (Chapter 5) and the

training ecology of conditional dependence (Chapter 6). In Chapter 7 some conclusions and recommendations for future research will be made.

## CHAPTER 2

### TRAINING AS A CO-CONSTRUCTED REALITY

"You're really not going to like it," observed Deep Thought.

"Tell us!"

"Alright," said Deep Thought. "The Answer to the Great Question..."

"Yes...!"

"Of Life, the Universe and Everything..." said Deep Thought.

"Yes...!"

"Is..." said Deep Thought, and paused.

"Yes...!"

"Is..."

"Yes...!!!!...?"

"Forty-two," said Deep Thought, with infinite majesty and calm.

Adams (1979, p.135)

### Introduction

The goal in this chapter is to propose a paradigm for conceptualizing training in the realm of "systemic family

therapy" (Keeney & Ross, 1985, p.3). The paradigm proposed is congruent with the new science epistemology (Auerswald, 1985) and approaches the training of psychotherapists from an ecological and systemic view. In this text a number of interrelated ideas will be networked to describe a training context ecosystemically.

### Epistemology

The term "epistemology" has been used in a number of ways. Bateson (1979, p.246) defined epistemology as

a branch of science combined with a branch of philosophy. As science, epistemology is the study of how particular organisms or aggregates of organisms know, think and decide.

For Auerswald (1985, p.1), epistemology can be defined as "thinking about thinking" or, more concretely, as "a set of immanent rules used in thought by large groups of people to define reality."

The epistemology ascribed to in this thesis, ecosystemic epistemology (Keeney, 1982), is coherent with New Physics and Batesonian evolution as described by Auerswald (1985). Inherent to these three idea sets is a "new" set of rules governing thought - a "new" epistemology.

### Development of a "New Epistemology"

The late nineteenth century was characterized by the belief that scientific reasoning or rules of thought based upon Newtonian physics was, albeit with a few exceptions, able to reveal "the boundaries and nature of physical reality" (Auerswald, 1985, p.2). In the field of natural science Darwin's Theory of Evolution conformed to the same mechanistic epistemology as Newtonian physics.

Both Newtonian physics and Darwinian evolution facilitated acceptance of a reality which depicted daily events as fairly stable and predictable. However, a new set of rules governing thought - a "new" epistemology - evolved to challenge this predominant thought system of the Western world.

Investigations by physicists like Planck and Einstein led to the development of a new science that disobeyed the old set of rules governing thought. This new science introduced the theories of quantum and relativity which, among other things, emphasized uncertainty rather than predictability. With it came the suggestion that finding absolute truths and a final definition of reality would prove to be unattainable.

According to Auerswald (1985), Bateson was able to synthesize the ideas found in new science with the work of Wiener on information cybernetics and with the work of Bertalanffy on evolving general systems theory in an evolutionary paradigm. The epistemological links between Batesonian evolution and new science created the roots for a 'new' epistemology in the realm of family therapy.

Auerswald (1985) presented the main epistemological differences between old Western epistemology and new epistemology as follows:

New Physics and Batesonian Evolution	Newtonian Physics and Darwinian Evolution
1. A monistic universe is assumed (both...and).	1. A dualistic universe is assumed (either...or).
2. The concept of fourdimensional timespace is used by both.	2. Time and space are treated separately by both.
3. Linear clocktime is viewed as a heuristically useful concept which does not, however, establish causative relationships between events.	3. Linear clocktime is viewed as real time in which one event is causative in relation to the next event.

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 4. "Mind" or abstract ideas are included as part of the field of study by both. | 4. The field of study is perceived as mechanistic and separate from the studying mind by both.                       |
| 5. Both focus primarily on patterned events in four-dimensional context.        | 5. Both focus primarily on atomistic examination of entities in space and progression of events in linear clocktime. |
| 6. Certainty is discarded by both; truth is viewed as heuristic.                | 6. Certainty is accepted by both; truth is viewed as absolute.   |

The epistemology underlying the ecosystemic training paradigm proposed in this chapter is coherent with new science and Batesonian evolution. Moreover, in terms of this paradigm all ideas constructed within a training context should be viewed as interrelated and organized through complex circular processes.

Following Keeney (1982) and Keeney and Ross (1985), the drawing of a distinction between two thinking contexts in training might be useful. The first context is an aesthetic

one concerned with achieving a formal theoretical understanding of psychotherapy training. The second context, a pragmatic one, involves developing a practical strategy for organizing one's action in conducting psychotherapy training. The primary purpose of the rest of this chapter is to address and network theoretical maps for formally understanding psychotherapy training from a 'new' epistemological perspective. In the next chapter a model (practical strategy) will be suggested to demonstrate how these maps relate to training action.

## Theoretical Maps

### Introduction

The interwoven interpersonal contexts of family therapy and family therapy training are characterized by the frequent introduction of conceptual frames and constructs. These theoretical maps are aimed at improving the understanding of these contexts. In this section the introduction and development of some of these maps will be discussed. This will serve as a basis for proposing some ideas of how to define and describe the interpersonal context of systemic therapy training in subsequent sections.



### A Systems View

Traditionally, psychology has regarded the individual as the unit of observation and treatment. However, within the framework of family therapy and its underlying epistemological premises, the individual is viewed as being part of a larger whole - a system - for example, a family.

At the most basic level a systems view posits that objects and events, and experiences of them, are all part of larger wholes. It is therefore a holistic approach, focusing on the gestalt rather than the constituent parts.

The concept of system has been defined in a number of ways. According to Bor (1990) a system may be defined simply as "objects in relation to one another," or as "a set of mutually interdependent units" (p.55). Hence, any set of two or more interacting or related elements can be viewed as a system.

System has also been defined by Hall and Fagan (in Watzlawick, Beavin, & Jackson, 1967) as "a set of objects together with relationships between the objects and between their attributes" (p.120). In this definition objects refer to the components, elements or parts of the system, attributes are their properties and relationships bind them together in a system.

Every system can simultaneously be punctuated as a subsystem of a larger system and as a suprasystem including smaller subsystems. These systems could also be designated in terms of their boundaries which might be open or closed. Whereas the boundaries of open systems allow for an exchange of material, energy, and information with the environment, those of closed systems do not.

A number of perspectives evolved as to how the elements of a system relate. One is that the operation of a system can be described as mechanistic in nature. In the family therapy field this view became known as "first order" cybernetics (Hoffman, 1985).

### First Order Cybernetics

"Cybernetics" was one of the first models used to describe the general principles of how human systems operated. The cybernetic model introduced descriptions of system operations based on developments in computer science and communication theory. Not surprisingly, this view of human activity had a distinct technological and mechanistic flavour.

The cybernetic model emphasized control and recursiveness. It suggested that the elements of a system were related through processes of recursive feedback

activity. Recursiveness, through negative and positive feedback, explained how systems maintained and changed, respectively, their organization. Whereas negative feedback operated to counteract the introduction of differences, positive feedback operated to amplify the introduction of differences. These concepts were extended to include the ideas of morphostasis and morphogenesis (Maruyama, 1963).

Morphostasis explained how systems maintain relative stability (equilibrium) through deviation-counteracting multilateral mutual causal processes. Morphogenesis, on the other hand, explained how systems maintain equilibrium by achieving a new equilibrium through deviation-amplifying multilateral mutual causal processes.

Bateson (1972) suggested that "all change can be understood as the effort to maintain some constancy and all constancy as maintained through change" (p.381). For Keeney (1982), cybernetics captured the interrelation of stability and change succinctly. In terms of a cybernetic view "one can never totally separate stability from change - both are complementary sides of a recursive coin" (Keeney & Ross, 1985, p.50).

The cybernetic connection of stability and change is reflected in the realm of family therapy by the introduction of the concept of homeostasis. Jackson (1968)

conceptualized the family as a system which maintained an internal balance or homeostasis. This meant that the family system operated within certain limits which tended to remain fairly constant, and allowed it to operate. Family homeostasis thus referred to "the relative constancy of the internal environment, a constancy, however, which is maintained by a continuous interplay of dynamic forces" (Jackson, 1968, pp.1-2). In terms of communication theory, Jackson (1968) described family interaction as "a closed information system in which variations in output or behaviour are fed back in order to correct the system's response" (p.2).

In conclusion, first order cybernetics, as applied to the realm of family therapy, concerned itself with the observation and description of systems processing information via complex, interrelated circuits. These circuits did not, however, include the observer as part of what was observed. The observer was seen as separate from the system being observed and described. The introduction of the idea to include the observer as part of the observed system became known as "second order" cybernetics in the arena of family therapy (Hoffman, 1985).

### Second Order Cybernetics

First order cybernetics suggested that the observer

could set him or herself apart from that which he or she is observing. Von Foerster (1981), in challenging this view, called for a shift in attention from a cybernetics of observed systems to the cybernetics of observing systems or cybernetics of second order. The latter perspective emphasised an observer's active participation in constructing what is observed. Richards and von Glasersfeld (in Keeney & Ross, 1985, p.12) called this view "constructivism." Essentially, these developments banished the idea of an objectively knowable reality: there is only objectivity in parenthesis (Maturana, 1980, in Efran & Lukens, 1985).

The development of these "second-order views" (Hoffman, 1990, p.4) put the observer in a reflexive or self-referential (Keeney, 1983) position. According to Le Roux (1987, p.36) living systems are "structured to exist in terms of the only way they can exist - thus self-referential." Maturana maintained that these systems were structure determined (Maturana & Varela, 1987).

The theory of structural determinism emphasizes both the self-creating nature of living systems and the central role that language plays in shaping human activity. According to this theory, living systems are organized in such a way that they maintain themselves through constant self-referral processes. It is therefore argued that their

operation is a function of how they are organized and structured. Thus, the structure of the system, and not any external perturbation, determines the system's behaviour. Because the system itself determines its own response to a perturbation, it can be viewed as informationally closed and autonomous.

Two important conclusions follow the view that living systems are informationally closed and autonomous. Firstly, instructive interaction as a concept is viewed as questionable. Living systems cannot be changed in an instructive way. Secondly, what an observer perceives is determined by his or her organisation and structure rather than the qualities of the observed.

Structure determined systems are further seen as existing in a medium (an environment or context). In order to survive they have to find a mutually satisfying fit - a structural coupling - with one another and with other aspects of the surrounding medium. When the fit is insufficient and the structural coupling inadequate, there is disintegration - the system "dies".

Structural coupling of human systems in an interpersonal context (environment, medium) is facilitated and attained through the use of language. In this regard, Maturana and Varela (1987, p.26) pointed out that

every reflection... invariably takes place in language, which is our distinctive way of being human and being humanly active... language is also our starting point, our cognitive instrument, and our sticking point.

Language (words and symbols) allows human systems to interact. Mutually satisfying interactions (structural couplings) generate, what Maturana called, a consensual domain (Le Roux, 1987, p.49). The establishment of a consensual domain creates an illusion of a single reality existing separate from or outside the observer.

With the inclusion of the observer as an integral part of the system observed (second order cybernetics), reality became viewed as relative. Consequently, a "multiverse" of realities may co-exist, each valid in its own right. Also, each participant in interpersonal interaction became viewed as both observer and observed, subject and object.

In conclusion, whereas first order cybernetics introduced the idea that a human system could be described as working to maintain equilibrium, second order cybernetics introduced the idea that this description was not of the system but something attributed to it by an observer (Dell, 1982; Dell & Goolishian, 1981). The "maintaining

equilibrium" description was therefore only one among many possible versions of human system functioning. Instead of describing human systems as working to maintain equilibrium, they may also be described in terms of their evolution.

### Evolutionary Systems

In the field of family therapy the mechanistic structure of the technological world was initially used to describe the operation of human systems. This mechanistic view used the cybernetic machine, always returning to a presumed steady-state (equilibrium), as an analogy for the redundancies in interaction observed in human systems such as families.

Using nature as its referent, another perspective developed which favoured instability over equilibrium. This view asserted that living systems are permanent instabilities and therefore constantly evolving. "Evolving systems might... be seen as going from a state of instability, to a state characterized by relative rigidity to new instabilities" (Hoffman, 1981, p.348).

According to Hoffman (1981) the view that living systems are in a constant process of evolution is largely based upon the work of physicist Ilya Prigogine. Writers



such as Dell and Goolishian (1981) and Elkaïm (1981, 1985) have linked Prigogine's ideas with family theory and therapy.

✓  
Prigogine's concept of "order through fluctuation" (in Prigogine & Stengers, 1984, p.178) is a basic, nonequilibrium ordering principle that governs the forming and unfolding of systems at all levels (Dell & Goolishian, 1981). This principle explains how a system could undergo sudden transformations from one coherent order to another without the effort of an external force. Hoffman (1981) argued that these changes should be viewed as evolutionary and not based on equilibrium.

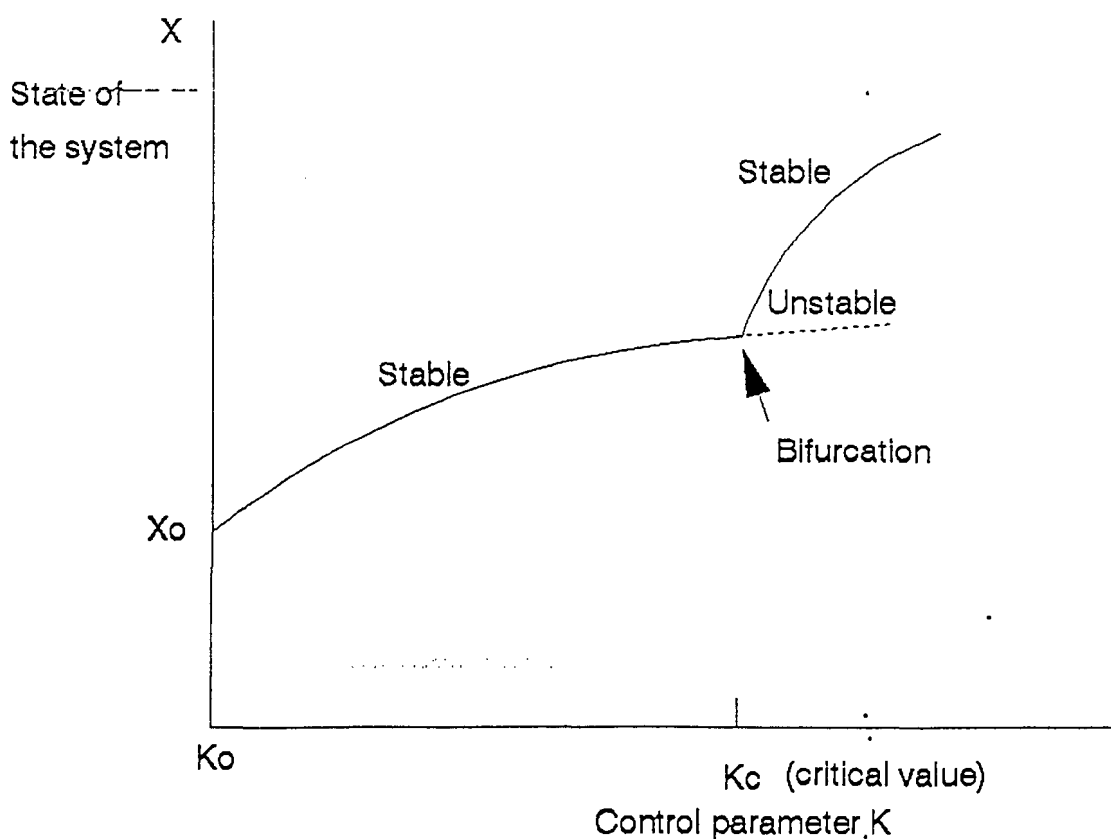
The concept of order through fluctuation challenged the Second Law of Thermodynamics which suggested that all structure inevitably degrades toward an unstructured point. Prigogine's work indicated that many systems evolved toward new, more complex, regimes of dynamic functioning when they became stifled by the the debris of past entropy production (in Prigogine & Stengers, 1984). Thus, instead of breaking down at a final point of equilibrium, these systems defied the Second Law of Thermodynamics by evolving into greater complexity of nonequilibrium.

Prigogine theoretically explained the phenomenon of systems evolving via discontinuous, self-transcendent leaps by introducing the concept of "dissipative structures" (in

Prigogine & Stengers, 1984, p.12). These structures draw energy from outside the system to enhance growth, but attain the conditions necessary for discontinuous change into new structures from the fluctuations within the system.

Dissipative structures occur only when the system is away from equilibrium and when a continuous supply of energy or matter is present (Elkaïm, 1985). When a critical value of the system's parameters is reached a discontinuous shift or, as Prigogine called it, a "bifurcation" (see Figure 2.1) (Elkaïm, 1985, p.152) occurs.

**Figure 2.1** Bifurcation Diagram



(Elkalm et al., 1980, p.52)

At the point of bifurcation - only occurring away from equilibrium - it becomes impossible to predict not only the direction of a system's change, but also "which of the fluctuations will transform the system's state" (Elkaïm, 1981, p.292). This notion of chance was elaborated upon by Laszlo (1986). He pointed out that the further away from equilibrium, the greater the number of possible states into which the system can settle following a critical perturbation. For Laszlo (1986) non-equilibrium systems are inherently unpredictable.

Elkaïm (1985, p.153) emphasized the importance of chance in the realm of family therapy:

When we intervene in human systems that we try to move "far from equilibrium," we cannot predict which direction this change will take. It is the specific properties of that given system and the random amplification of certain "singularities" that bring the family to a subsequent stage.

Also important for describing systems away from equilibrium is the notion of evolutionary feedback. The establishment of a dissipative structure is accompanied by

the appearance of a new function related to this structure. As a result of this new function, a higher interactional level of the system with the environment is established. Prigogine described this behaviour as "evolutionary feedback" (Prigogine, 1977, in Elkaïm, 1985, p.153). He also pointed out that with increased dissipation, the class of fluctuations leading to instability is extended (Elkaïm, 1985). As a result of this increased entropy production, more instabilities may appear.

In conclusion, the above evolutionary perspective maintained that living systems (including human systems such as families) far from equilibrium tend to evolve toward maximal complexity attainable given the energy available from the environment. A system should therefore evolve towards greater variability, flexibility and higher order of process (Laszlo, 1972) - eventually becoming metastable and able to shift easily from one dynamic order to another as it engages in an ongoing process of evolution (Dell & Goolishian, 1981).

### Conclusion

New science epistemology precludes the notions of absolute truth and ultimate reality. By moving away from an absolute to a heuristic truth, and from an ultimate to a relative reality, freedom and diversity of description are

allowed. It becomes possible to construct a multitude of realities around any situation. No one construction of a situation is more true or valid than another. Different ways of looking at the same situation allows for both constructions to be equally applicable.

It follows that a multitude of realities can be constructed around psychotherapy training. The fit of the different theoretical maps outlined, to a description of a training context, should be considered as the construction of the author. The coherence of the maps and the description, however, represent a co-constructed reality of psychotherapy training.

The co-constructed reality of training languaged in this dissertation by no means proposes closure as to the essence of psychotherapy training. It merely allows the observer a temporary understanding of the evolving context of psychotherapy training.

## CHAPTER 3

### TOWARDS A TRAINING MODEL

That's another thing we've learned from your Nation," said Mein Herr, "map-making. But we've carried it much further than you..."

"We actually made a map of the country, on the scale of a mile to the mile!"

"Have you used it much?" I enquired.

"It has never been spread out yet," said Mein Herr: "the farmers objected: they said it would cover the whole country, and shut out the sunlight! So we now use the country itself, as its own map, and I assure you it does nearly as well."

Carroll, L. (1893, p. 169)

### Introduction

In Chapter 2 ecosystemic epistemology was described as an appropriate paradigm from which the training of systemic psychotherapists can be approached. The purpose of this chapter is to introduce a process model of psychotherapy training that adheres to the basic tenets of ecosystemic epistemology.

According to Snyders (1985, 1986), various orders of learning are required in the different contexts in which psychotherapeutic skills are imparted. Three such contexts - education, training and supervision - may be distinguished. Training can be described as a learning context in which trainee therapists learn and develop skills which could be applied to their therapeutic work. This learning context also offers opportunities for trainers to learn about learning and teaching (Snyders, 1985, 1986).

Various models and techniques have been developed and described in the realm of family therapy training (Liddle, Breunlin, & Schwartz, 1988; Whiffen & Byng-Hall, 1982). The process model introduced in this chapter provides a frame within which the unfolding of an emancipatory learning context (Snyders, 1986) for students and their trainers may be viewed.

### Orders of Learning

According to Bateson (1972) the word "learning" refers to some kind of change. To indicate what kind of change would be very difficult. In this regard, Bateson (1972, p.283) wrote as follows:

Change denotes process. But processes are themselves subject to 'change.' The

process may accelerate, it may slow down, or it may undergo other types of change such that we shall say that it is now a 'different' process.

Bateson (1972) proposed a logical classification of the process of learning by introducing the concepts of "zero learning," "Learning I," "Learning II," and "Learning III." These orders of learning are linked to the contexts in which they occur and are appropriate.

Zero learning refers to the most basic assimilation of information about an external event that could take place. This type of learning is not subject to correction. A particular event is given a meaning in such a way that a similar event at a later stage will convey the same meaning: A trainee coming to understand that an abrupt silence in a therapeutic situation has message value, then knows that whenever a client suddenly stops talking he or she is communicating some or other message to the therapist.

All learning, other than zero learning, contains some form of stochastic learning (Bateson, 1972) - that is, learning involving a trial and error process. This means that an organism's behaviour can be revised, marked as wrong, and rectified by trying out other forms of behaviour.



Learning I refers to the "change in specificity of response by correction of error of choice within a set of alternatives" (Bateson, 1972, p.293). According to Keeney (1983) this implied the learning of a specific simple action within a given context. Those items commonly called "learning" in experimental psychology laboratories fall within this category of learning. In the realm of systemic therapy, a relatively simple skill like positive labelling may be taught using some implicit or explicit operant procedure. For example, the trainer may present a hypothetical family problem which the trainee must re-label in a positive way. The trainee has to engage in a process of trial and error until he or she succeeds in finding a positive label for the problematic situation that satisfies the standards set by the trainer.

Learning II goes beyond the mere correction of errors of choice within a set of alternatives (Learning I). It denotes a corrective change concerning the set of alternatives from which a choice is made (Bateson, 1972). For Keeney (1983) this implied learning about a particular context of learning.

Learning an alternative way of punctuating a context involves Learning II and can be regarded as a second-order change (Keeney, 1983). For example, a trainee therapist may learn to describe the therapeutic process in terms of

recursive interactional patterns and communication theory in the presence of one trainer, and in terms of vulgar and profane stories in the presence of another trainer.

Following Bateson (1972), the creation of a context in which the trainee has to deal with this larger context of contexts may promote creativity - provided the student-trainer relationship is preserved.

According to Bateson (1972) Learning III refers to "a corrective change in the system of sets of alternatives from which choice is made" (p.293). Although this order of learning is very difficult to achieve and rarely occurs, Bateson (1972) suggested that it happens from time to time in psychotherapy, religious conversion and in other situations where a profound reorganization of character occurs. Learning III therefore embodies a change in epistemology, that is "a change of the premises underlying an entire system of punctuation habits" which "results in the creation of an alternative system of punctuations" (Keeney, 1983, p.159). For example, a trainee therapists' transition from traditional lineal reasoning in psychotherapy towards an epistemology based on New Science, (Auerswald, 1985) constitutes Learning III.

Following Snyders (1985, 1986), attempts should be made to create contexts where trainers and their students have to learn about the aesthetics and pragmatics concerning frames,

sets of frames, and alternative systems of sets of frames (Keeney, 1983). One such context, a training context, can be created with sufficient complexity to permit the various orders of learning to occur.

In the next section the aims of the training model and some of its underlying assumptions will be explicated.

### Toward a Model for Training Psychotherapists

#### Aims of the Model

##### Aesthetics and Pragmatics

Trainers and their students have to learn the systems view of psychotherapy - the aesthetics and pragmatics concerning frames, sets of frames and alternative sets of frames (Keeney, 1983). According to Snyders (1985) this view necessitates the learning of "how to draw distinctions, how to describe contexts in which behaviour occurs, and how to distinguish patterns of relationship over time" (p.274). A context rich in complexity is essential for this type of learning.

##### Drawing Distinctions

Both Bateson (1972, 1979) and Keeney (1983) regarded

the drawing of distinctions as the most basic epistemological act possible. The differences that make a difference constitute the information (Bateson, 1979) on which relationships are built, sustained and changed. Because information forms the basis on which learning occurs, training should be a context

of complexity within which the various orders of learning may be facilitated in terms of reflection on, and interventions concerning, the interplay between various contexts of behaviour over time (Snyders, 1985, p.274).

### Psychotherapeutic Skills

Trainers should create a context in which training activities facilitate the learning and development of three interrelated sets of skills required by a therapist, namely perceptual, conceptual and executive skills (Tomms & Wright, 1979). Bor (1989) suggested that the development of these skills occur in a co-evolutionary way.

Perceptual skills refer to the therapist's ability to make relevant and accurate observations. Conceptual skills comprise the process of attributing useful meanings to observations, while executive skills pertain to the

successful application of previous learning experiences to a current therapeutic situation. According to Tomm and Wright (1979) these skills are needed to facilitate successful engagement, problem identification, change and termination in therapeutic contexts.

### Use of Self

Snyders (1985) pointed out the importance of trainers and students learning to use themselves, and not their techniques, as the major instruments of change. In a similar vein Andolfi et al. (1983) suggested that trainers use the personal strengths and idiosyncrasies of trainees in pushing them towards creativity in the training context.

One way to engage in such a process is to redefine the therapist as an improvisational artist (Keeney, 1990). In this regard, Keeney (1990, p.2) wrote:

Becoming an artist involves moving away from impersonating others and developing one's own improvisational style. An artist fully utilizes his or her personal resources and limitations to create a unique style that is an aesthetic portrait of self-in-context.

Given the unpredictable nature of human communication, the trainer's participation in the theatrics of a training session becomes an invitation to improvise. Creating training situations in which students cannot rely exclusively upon previously designed lines, patter, or scripts would facilitate their readiness to "respond resourcefully to any possible situation" (Keeney, 1990, p.1). Such a training context would also provide the trainers with the opportunities to broaden their improvisational strategies.

### Emancipation

Following Snyders (1986), the trainer has to facilitate the unfolding of a learning context in such a way that increased flexibility and differentiation of all the participants are encouraged. This context should specifically promote the progressive emancipation of the trainee therapist until he or she can successfully separate from the training system (Snyders, 1986).

### Basic Assumptions

According to the Oxford English Dictionary training can be described as "Systematic instruction in exercise in some art, profession or occupation, with a view to proficiency in it" (p.3375). For Snyders (1985) training

mainly involves four components of action: experimenting with new forms of behaviour, practising specific ways of working, evaluating such experimenting and receiving feedback. Thus, activities such as role-plays, simulation games, relationship, interview and communicational training, and non-verbal exercises all constitute training activities.

Training activities can be perceived as events taking place in a system which tends to evolve toward new, more complex, regimes of dynamic functioning given energy is available from its environment. This evolving training system consists of various contexts within contexts (Snyders, 1985). For example, during training the context of the trainee A - trainee B system affects and is affected by events in the context of trainee A - trainee group system, which influences and is influenced by occurrences in the trainer A - trainee group system and so on.

The aims described in the previous section may be achieved by organizing activities in accordance with this contextual view of training. In this regard, Snyders (1986) pointed out that the trainer may use interactional sequences within and between these and other relevant systems as the basis for making primary distinctions (Keeney, 1983). In this way raw data for training can be captured. The trainer may then proceed to draw distinctions at a higher level of abstraction such that the raw data is organized into

interactional "patterns which connect" (Bateson, 1979, p.11). At yet a higher level of abstraction the trainer may examine the way in which distinctions had been drawn. In this way students will learn from how the trainer "thinks and acts, rather than from the content of what is being said" (Snyders, 1985, p.278).

Two other assumptions underlie the training model presented in this chapter:

1. Group training activities are indicated as an effective training modality, for example "sculpting" one's own family and the group in training (Andolfi & Menghi, 1980; Duhl, 1983).
2. Training and psychotherapy are isomorphic in nature (Andolfi et al., 1983; Liddle, 1988; Liddle & Saba, 1983; Liddle & Schwartz, 1983).

### A Training Model

#### Introduction

In recent years an increasing amount of attention has been focused on explicating models of the training process that are based on a developmental perspective (Worthington, 1987). The basic assumptions and notions of



one such model, Stoltenberg's "Counselor Complexity Model" (1981, p.60), are presented in Table 3.1 below. It will be used to serve as a basic framework to describe the kind of training context that can be created to achieve the aims mentioned in the previous section.

Table 3.1

Expected Counselor Characteristics and Appropriate Environments

Counselor level	Counselor characteristics	Optimal environments
1	Dependent on supervisor. Imitative, neurosis bound, lacking self-awareness and other awareness, categorical thinking with knowledge of theories and skills, but minimal experience	Encourage autonomy within normative structure. Supervisor uses instruction, interpretation, support, awareness training and exemplification; structure is needed.

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| 2 | <p>Dependency-autonomy conflict.</p> <p>Increasing self-awareness, fluctuating motivation, striving for independence, becoming more self-assertive and less imitative.</p>                                | <p>Highly autonomous with low normative structure. Supervisor uses support, ambivalence clarification, exemplification, and less instruction.</p>                   |
| 3 | <p>Conditional dependency.</p> <p>Personal counselor identity is developing with increased insight, more consistent motivation, increased empathy, and more differentiated interpersonal orientation.</p> | <p>Autonomous with structure provided by the counselor. Supervisor treats counselor more as a peer with more sharing, mutual exemplification and confrontation.</p> |
| 4 | <p>Master counselor.</p> <p>Adequate self- and other awareness, insightful of own strengths and weaknesses, willfully</p>   | <p>Counselor can function adequately in most environments.</p> <p>Supervision now becomes collegial if continued.</p>   |

interdependent with  
others, and has  
integrated standards  
of the profession  
with personal  
counselor identity.

(From Stoltenberg, 1981, p.60)

The model that is proposed by Stoltenberg (1981) represents a general, metamodel for the training of psychotherapists. It proposes ways in which trainees and their environment (including trainers) should change over the course of the training program. Although arbitrarily punctuating events in timespace, this model was selected because of its emphasis on the (developmental) process of training.

#### Developmental Stages of Training

Stoltenberg (1981) conceptualized the training process as a sequence of four identifiable developmental stages. Because trainee therapists develop in a fairly predictable manner over the course of their training, environments which encourage development through each stage need to be created in training (Stoltenberg, 1981). Stoltenberg (1981, p.60) also pointed out that

the proper environment for any particular stage is a suboptimal environment for the next higher stage and a superoptimal environment for the previous stage. This paints a picture of the developing individual as a person who needs a changing environment over the course of development to encourage movement toward more complex stages.

The trainee in Stage 1 typically lacks confidence, depends upon the trainer for concrete advice and direction, imitates the trainer, and subscribes to techniques. This is the stage of "unilateral dependence" (Stoltenberg, 1981, p.61). A training context congruent to this level of trainee development is one that encourages autonomy while providing structure and support. Trying out new behaviour and risk taking have to be encouraged. It is at times necessary for the trainer to assume the role of teacher, to clarify connections between training and therapy and to allow observation of live therapy sessions (Stoltenberg, 1981).

Stage 2 trainees can be described as struggling between dependency and autonomy (Stoltenberg, 1981). There is a

constant oscillation between being over confident in newly acquired skills and being overwhelmed by the increasing responsibility of doing therapy. This often results in fluctuating motivation. Experimentation with different therapy styles takes place, along with increased occurrences of disagreement with the trainer's approach. At this stage the training becomes more non-directive - the trainer becomes more of a reference source and less of a teacher/advisor. Instruction and advice are given in a sensitive manner when necessary.

The trainees in Stage 3 can be described as showing conditional dependency with increased empathy (Stoltenberg, 1981). A decrease in technique boundedness and counterdependence become evident. There is a marked increase in the trainee's ability to work with a wider variety of clients and to be tolerant of different styles and theoretical viewpoints. The training relationship becomes more of a peer interaction where both individuals gain insight and support from reciprocal sharing and exemplification. At this developmental level the trainee is secure enough to respond to direct confrontation more objectively without unnecessary resistance. In addition, the trainer is now in a position to acknowledge his own weaknesses with less fear of losing the trainee's respect and attention.

Stage 4, that of developing into a "master counselor" (Stoltenberg, 1981, p.63), is envisaged to fall outside the scope of the proposed model and will therefore not be discussed here.

Interrelated to the different developmental stages of the training process, Stoltenberg (1981) suggested the necessity, on the one hand, of creating different learning contexts for trainees at different developmental levels while, on the other hand, discriminating between different trainees at the same level of development. Trainers must also be able to match the changing needs of trainees with appropriate learning contexts. Finally, the speed with which the trainee progresses through the developmental stages depends, among other things, upon the different learning and teaching contexts provided by the trainer and upon the skills of the trainee (Stoltenberg, 1981).

### The Model

It is proposed in this thesis that the training process is a reality co-constructed in language from the perspective of all participants in the training context. It is also proposed that the process of training could be described in terms of three developmental stages within which various orders of learning occur.

How then does the trainee therapist progress from one developmental stage to another? To answer this question one may conceptualize moving through the different developmental stages in training as a succession of bifurcations which appear as a result of the random amplification of certain fluctuations (see Figure 3.1). This view does not imply a reintroduction of the concept of linear causality into the training process. It simply means considering a diachronic aspect of the training system that is not reducible to causal time.

In this thesis it is hypothesized that training inputs and the interactional dynamics of the training system may perturb the system away from equilibrium. Amplification of these fluctuations may give rise to an unstable state and to a specific bifurcation such as moving from one developmental level to another.

The trainer has to identify and use what is unique at any given moment in a creative and confirming way. He or she should also fully include himself/herself in the interactional dynamics pertaining to each developmental stage of the training process in innovative and creative ways. This must be done so as to help move the training system away from equilibrium and to allow fluctuations to be amplified and, through bifurcation or otherwise, to change the regime whereby the training system functioned.

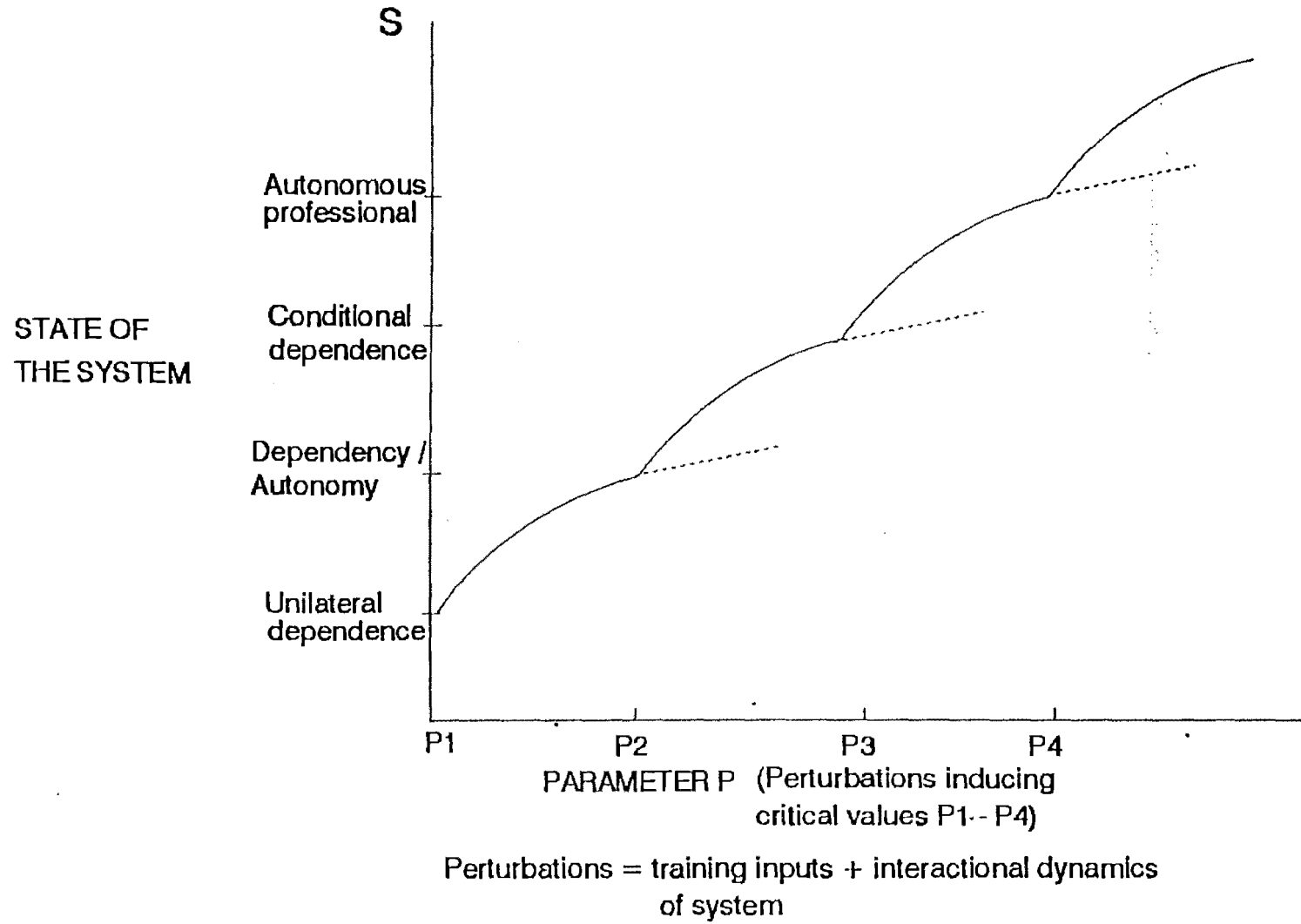


Figure 3.1 Evolution of the Training System



Moreover, fluctuations proper to the training system should be allowed to amplify to such an extent that the system would be able to evolve toward a new, more complex and flexible, mode of functioning that would in itself evolve in turn through a process of evolutionary feedback. In this context the fledgling therapist should be able to emancipate progressively through the developmental stages of training to reach the level of conditional dependence (Stoltenberg, 1981).

### Conclusion

The training of systemic psychotherapists could be described in many, equally valid, ways. The process model of training serves as a creative map by means of which an emancipatory learning context may unfold. It represents one way of constructing and developing a training reality in language.

In the suggested model three developmental stages of training are identified. The trainer's main responsibility is to co-create contexts for various orders of learning to occur. This can be achieved by inventing innovative and creative ways to use the interactional dynamics of the training system and to deliver training inputs.

## CHAPTER 4

### THE TRAINING ECOLOGY OF DEPENDENCE

"How does one become a butterfly?" she asked pensively.

"You must want to fly so much that you are willing to give up being a caterpillar."

"You mean to die?" asked Yellow, remembering the three who fell out of the sky.

"Yes and No," he answered. "What looks like you will die but what's really you will still live. Life is changed, not taken away. Isn't that different from those who die without ever becoming butterflies?"

Paulus (1972, p.75) .

### Introduction

In the proposed model the three stages of training revolve around the creation of contexts within which each trainee could emancipate progressively as a systemic therapist. Each context should provide the trainee with opportunities to experience moments critical to his or her emancipation as a therapist.

It is the task of the trainer to determine what kind of context could be created to facilitate this process of individuation during each stage of psychotherapy training. Once determined, the trainer could find a way to create the desired context for each stage.

The main purpose of this chapter is to describe the creation of an appropriate context for the first stage of training - the stage of unilateral dependence (Stoltenberg, 1981). One way to decide what constitutes an appropriate context for this stage, and how can it be created, is to consider the messages which could be transmitted between trainer and trainees at the outset of the training process.

## Provocation and Counter-provocation

### Introduction

Following Andolfi and Menghi (1981), a message transmitted by the training group can be viewed as a provocation. Furthermore, trying to formulate a training strategy in response to this message can be regarded as a counter-provocation (Andolfi & Menghi, 1981). Thus, through provocation and counter-provocation, the trainer and trainees could influence the unfolding of a learning context.

At the outset of the training program the trainee group is likely to express certain provocative messages addressed to the trainer. The following discussion constitutes one way of punctuating the essence of a newly formed trainee group's provocation.

### Trainee Group Provocation

A student usually enters psychotherapy training with a strong desire to become a psychotherapist in his or her own right. However, this desire coexists with a fear of change that might be demanded by certain facets of the training program. Thus, although the student may be sincere in his or her desire to become a therapist, real change may seem too threatening. In order to protect themselves from potentially disruptive training situations the students may form a cohesive, but undifferentiated, group when entering training. Students expect that the formation of a cohesive training group will provide them with the stability they so desire when entering the unknown world of psychotherapy training.

The move from education (developing knowledge) to systemic therapy training (developing skills) represents a potentially threatening situation for students and is likely to disturb the fragile equilibrium between group cohesion and growth of each individual trainee. For the first time

individual trainees are required to start differentiating as systemic therapists. As such this situation may be viewed as a developmental crisis for new trainees.

Since new trainees are generally inexperienced and unfamiliar with the training context, one could expect them to experience a high degree of difficulty in dealing with this initial imbalance. As family therapists they may find it hard to start alternating between group cohesion and progressive differentiation as individual group members. In struggling to deal with this difficult and unfamiliar situation, trainees could experience high levels of stress, anxiety and tension.

Following Andolfi and Menghi (1981) and Andolfi et al. (1983), the situation described above is analogous to a family system that enters psychotherapy. The family, experiencing a developmental crisis, expects that the therapist will remove their stress and confusion by helping them to reconsolidate a previously attained equilibrium. In essence, the family requests an impossible task: to help them "to change a situation while adhering to the same rules of interaction that have served to maintain that situation in the past" (Andolfi, Menghi, Nicolò, & Saccu, 1980, p.176).

In the context of a group of students entering therapy training, one could expect similar contradictory requests from the trainees. These requests constitute the inexperienced trainees' provocations as the training process commences.

The young systemic therapist's provocations could be summarised as follows: "Help me to differentiate by using myself as the major instrument of therapeutic change (explicit request), while protecting my need for cohesion within a nurturant training group (implicit request)."

Trainees' need for cohesion could manifest in them seeking anonymity, masking tension and fearing individuation (Andolfi & Menghi, 1980). In order to remain an undifferentiated system, they may hide their fears behind the centrality of the trainer. Trainees may constantly look to the trainer for guidance, advice and direction (Watkins, 1990). They may also project their tensions onto the trainer. By doing so, the members of the trainee group assume an exclusively dependent stance in their operations (Watkins, 1990). Inability to modify this situation inevitably interferes with group members' needs for differentiation and could lead to the formation of a rigid training system.

The trainer's main task at this stage is to anticipate the formation of a rigid training system. An appropriate training context should be created for this purpose. This context should be such that each group member is provoked to become actively involved in processes of progressive emancipation in, and eventual separation from, the training system.

The trainer has to find a way in which his or her centrality, and the trainees' dependency, could be utilised in co-creating an appropriate training context. In summary, the trainer has to formulate a training strategy - a counter-provocation - in response to the trainees' initial provocation.

#### Trainer Counter-provocation

The newly formed trainee group is likely to expect that the trainer will teach them how to become therapists without undergoing any major changes. In essence, the trainees request that the trainer change them by not changing them. As a result they may interact with the trainer in ways that tend to draw him or her into their attempts to remain a cohesive and undifferentiated unit. In the process, rigid interactional rules and patterns that prevent the trainer from working for change, may be formed.

If the trainer openly promotes change (individuation), the trainee group may perceive it as a threatening situation. They could then unite to nullify the trainer's efforts. Even though the trainees may want to become systemic therapists, they will probably try to reinforce the existing status quo because they believe it to be the best situation possible. For example, assuming a highly dependent position vis-à-vis the trainer could be perceived by the trainees as the best or only way to deal with an unfamiliar training context. The more the trainer openly tries to change this situation, the more the trainee group may respond by reinforcing the status quo. Following Andolfi et al. (1980), this could eventually result in trainer-group interactions which "tend to crystallize in increasingly static and predictable roles and functions" (p.176).

The trainer could modulate his or her level of unpredictability (Andolfi & Menghi, 1981) to overcome these interactive difficulties. Following Andolfi et al. (1980), the trainer could, instead of openly advocating change, indicate his or her willingness to initiate the training process while denying his or her role as agent of change. This counter-provocation will have maximum effect if the trainer agrees with the trainees that it is impossible to change (differentiate) at this stage. He or she could even introduce the idea of change as something to be feared and



emphasize the need to uphold the status quo. By doing so, the trainer is able to acknowledge and bring into the open the trainees' discomfort, rather than trying to minimize and/or conceal it.

The trainer's counter-provocation - expressed as "Do not change anything" - will probably come as a surprise to the trainee group. Moreover, by redefining the trainees' behaviour as logical and voluntary, and by supporting fear of change, the trainer could amplify the group's habitual interactional style: maintaining cohesiveness so that the members do not have to differentiate.

At this stage the trainer may even warn the trainees against any alteration of the present situation - explaining that this could risk the entire group's hard-won cohesiveness. At this stage the group's difficulties could become more severe. However,

if the [trainer] adheres to his or her strategy consistently, defining even the deterioration of the situation as confirmation that the [trainee's] behavior is logical, voluntary, and useful, he or she will gain entrance into the [trainee] system, and its members will be able to begin exploring

new areas and functions (Andolfi et al., 1980, p.179).

Thus, if the trainer succeeds in creating a context in which the group members' habitual interactions are amplified, the training system could "begin to destabilize", "enter into a state of crisis", and eventually "become less rigid" (Andolfi et al., 1980, p.178).

There are various ways in which the trainer could facilitate this process. A number of these are mentioned below.

#### Providing Extensive Structure

Following Watkins (1990), the trainer may structure the initial training sessions in particular and more generally, the training process as a whole. For example, as a newly selected trainee the author received a letter with the instruction to attend an intensive, week long introductory workshop. A detailed reading list accompanied this letter.

At the beginning of the introductory workshop the trainee group was contracted to be available for training for the duration of the week and for a specific number of hours per week thereafter. During the week trainees were introduced to the various trainers and to procedures to be

used in training, for example the utilization of a one way mirror, video and/or audio recordings, etcetera. Each day trainees were instructed to study selective reading material (from the list) for the following day. The workshop also provided a number of structured inductive experiences for trainees. Actual group events were used to introduce basic perceptual, conceptual and executive skills. Both in content and format the training workshop adhered as far as possible to the conceptual framework of viewing people in context.

Towards the end of the week trainees were informed how the available time in the training programme would be utilized henceforth. A basic outline of the various courses and a timetable were handed out to the trainee group. Finally, trainees were also instructed to familiarize themselves with the remainder of the reading list.

#### Assuming an Omnipotent Stance

The trainer could purposefully "agree" to adopt the central role of omnipotent problem-solver and directive teacher in the training system. The trainer could continue to amplify this image of someone who is all-knowing, expert and infallible in a variety of ways throughout the initial stage of the training process. For example, when the trainer instructs the trainees to role play a specific

therapy situation, he or she could determine the roles and interactional rules. He or she may also reserve the right to make comments and suggestions regarding the role play. In addition, the trainer could model certain aspects of the interactions required by the role play.

### Employing "Delay" Tactics

During the first stage of training the trainer may also employ delaying tactics such as the "You're not ready yet" technique (Mazza, 1988). Inexperienced trainees could be told that they are not "ready" to do therapy with "real" families at this stage. Instead, they may be allowed to observe more experienced trainee therapists working with families. They could also be allowed to listen to the pre- and postsession discussions without interrupting. Furthermore, they could be instructed to read the case notes of the senior trainee therapists, but not to attempt writing their own.

This technique may also be employed whenever a new trainee wants to experiment with something new. Again, the trainee may be told that he or she is not ready yet for such experimentation. The trainer could even instruct the trainee to observe the senior trainees more, to do more role-plays, to study more video-tapes, or to do more extensive reading before trying out new behaviour.

### Operating as a Group

The trainer may stress the importance of being able to work together as a trainee group. The trainee group may then be instructed to work together as a group on a particular project. For example, the trainee group of which the author was a member, was instructed during the early stages of training to plan, carry out, and write up a research project on hypnosis. Each trainee had to participate actively in each of the three aforementioned aspects of the project.

### Working in Pairs and/or Subgroups

The trainer may also assign a partner to each trainee and/or divide the trainees in subgroups. Each pair/subgroup is then instructed to work together on all presentations, assignments, and projects (other than specified group projects) for an indefinite period. In addition, the trainer could emphasize that important benefits such as support, assistance and nurturance, could ensue from working together.

### Emulating the "Masters"

The trainees may be given extensive reading material on one or two of the early "masters" of the family therapy

field, such as Jay Haley (1963, 1973, 1976) and/or Salvador Minuchin (1974, 1981) for this first stage. The reading material may be complemented by audio- and/or video-tapes. The trainees may then be asked to come to terms with the conceptual framework proposed by the master therapist. They should also practice the therapy techniques advocated through appropriate role-plays, simulation games and non-verbal exercises. Furthermore, the trainees could be told not to read about, or study, any other family therapist's work since that might only confuse them.

#### Electing a Spokesperson

The trainer may ask the trainees to elect a spokesperson for the group. Whenever there is a need to discuss an issue with the trainer, this person has to represent the group as a whole. As a result, a trainee is not allowed to visit the trainer in his or her individual capacity.

#### Using Metaphors and Metaphoric Objects

Following Andolfi, Angelo, and DiNicola (1989), the trainer may introduce not only metaphoric images evoked in him by the way the group presents its fears and discomfort, but also suitable metaphoric objects which represent them concretely.

During the early stages of the author's training one of the trainers introduced the metaphor of a ship in stormy weather to signify the fears and anxieties experienced by the group. The trainer developed the metaphor further, elaborating the themes of danger, fear and anxiety inherent in the (metaphoric) situation. Eventually, the trainer sculpted the metaphor in space.

While this is by no means a comprehensive list, it could give some indication of how a context appropriate to this stage of training can be created.

### Conclusion

At the beginning of the first stage of the proposed model the trainer is confronted with as yet uncoupled and undifferentiated trainee therapists. The trainer has to create a context within which the undifferentiated masses can be linked with the aim of initiating processes of differentiation (Snyders, 1986).

During the course of this first stage numerous trainer-trainee group encounters take place. These initial encounters lead to the formation of a new system: the trainee group in interaction with the trainer. This training system creates its own structure "according to new [interactional] rules which evolve through a process of

reciprocal negotiation" (Andolfi & Menghi, 1981, p.183).

A number of interactional rules may evolve in the newly formed training system. One set of rules could see the inexperienced trainee attempting to interact with the trainer from an exclusively dependent stance. As a result a trainer-trainee relationship characterized by marked trainee dependency could develop. Prolonged continuation of such a relationship may prohibit or congeal processes of differentiation from taking place.

In order to overcome this difficulty, it is suggested that the trainer influences the training context in such a way that processes of differentiation are activated. One way in which this could be done is for the trainer to amplify the dependency of the trainees. It is postulated that repeated provocations of this kind may eventually lead to a situation where the members of the training system can no longer operate exclusively as an undifferentiated mass. When this happens a different, more complex and flexible set of interactional rules may develop.



## CHAPTER 5

### THE TRAINING ECOLOGY OF AUTONOMY-DEPENDENCY

#### AMBIVALENCE

The Rabbit sighed. He thought it would be a long time before this magic called Real happened to him. He longed to become Real, to know what it felt like; and yet the idea of growing shabby and losing his eyes and whiskers was rather sad. He wished that he could become it without these uncomfortable things happening to him.

Williams (1922, p.8)

#### Introduction

During the first stage of the proposed model the members of the training system are linked within an ecology of dependence. Towards the end of this stage tentative processes of differentiation may appear as a result of the continued amplification of the dependency.

The beginning of the second stage of the training model can be punctuated as the time when it appears that trainees are starting to experience conflict between processes favouring autonomy and dependency respectively (Stoltenberg, 1981). During this second stage the trainer and the trainees will again provoke and counter-provoke one another.

## Provocation and Counter-provocation

### Trainee Provocation

As the first stage of the learning process unfolds, the trainee acquires basic therapeutic skills within an ecology of dependency. Growing confidence in these newly learned skills and increasing uneasiness with total dependency are likely to lead to the trainee developing the need to define his or her own individual therapist identity.

When the trainee reaches this developmental stage he or she is no longer satisfied to be exclusively dependent upon the trainer's instructions and advice. Instead, the trainee typically becomes more self-assertive and begins to strive for more independence. For example, he or she may start to question the trainer's judgement on some occasions, or even disagree with it. Rather than merely imitating the trainer, the trainee may also start experimenting with styles other than the trainer's.

However, while embarking on the journey of differentiation, the trainee still experiences rather strong dependency needs. At this point, then, the trainee's need for increased differentiation coexists with dependency needs. The second stage of training is characterized by the intensification of these conflictive autonomy-dependency

needs (Stoltenberg, 1981). Thus, the training ecology of dependence (stage one) evolves into an ecology of autonomy-dependency conflict (stage two).

Within the training ecology of autonomy-dependency conflict, the trainee typically fluctuates between feeling over confident in newly acquired skills, and experiencing increasing stress and confusion as a result of advanced training. Experiencing these contradictory emotions, the trainee may become ambivalent towards the implications of continued training. For example, the trainee may at times strongly believe that he or she is capable of functioning totally independent and should therefore be left alone by the other members of the training system, especially by the trainer. On other occasions the same trainee may seriously doubt his or her own ability to act appropriately and therefore desire the advice and expertise of the trainer.

As the trainee continues to struggle between the two counterpoints of autonomy and dependency, his or her feelings of ambivalence are likely to intensify. In trying to deal with the increasing ambivalence, the trainee may again emit provocative messages.

It is assumed that each trainee at this stage of his or her development has started to emancipate as a systemic therapist, albeit tentatively, and therefore that his or her

provocation would basically be the same as that of the other trainees. The trainee's provocation at this stage, then, may be summarized as follows: "I want to protect my need for cohesion within the group (explicit request), while fulfilling my need to differentiate as a systemic therapist (implicit request)."

It is also important to note that each trainee is likely to emphasize different elements of this basic provocation. What the trainee emphasizes will depend upon his or her level of emancipation. The more emancipated the trainee, the more his or her provocation will favour the need for differentiation (autonomy) over the need for cohesion (dependency), and vice versa.

Furthermore, the more emancipated trainee's need to belong to a cohesive group may be expressed more as requesting support than as asking for help, instructions and expert advice. For example, a trainee may agree and go along with the trainer's instructions and advice during training sessions (need for cohesion), but do something completely different during his or her therapy consultations with clients (need to differentiate). The trainee may then request support from the trainer and other trainees for these endeavours (need for cohesion). Thus, although this trainee may no longer want to be dependent, he or she may want support from the trainer and the other trainees for his or her endeavours to become more autonomous.

The trainer's main task at this stage is to co-create a training context which favours processes of increasing differentiation. The trainer has to find a way in which the trainee's needs for autonomy and support together with his or her feelings of ambivalence may be utilized to facilitate the creation of such a context. In other words, he or she has to formulate an appropriate training strategy - a counter-provocation - in response to the trainee's provocation.

#### Trainer Counter-provocation

During the first stage of the proposed model both the trainer and the trainee become part of the group set by assuming and/or receiving specific positions within the training system. The trainee initially provokes a dependent position vis-à-vis the trainer. The trainer, in turn, responds by assuming the position(s) of teacher, instructor, therapy expert and so on, in ways which amplify the dependency of the trainee.

The compression of the dependency functions of the members of the training system forces them to start confronting the limitations accompanying these functions (Snyders, 1986). Beginning to confront these limitations may, in turn, lead to the trainee experiencing feelings of ambivalence with regards to separating from, and belonging to, the training system.

The trainer may respond to this situation in various ways. Following Andolfi and Menghi (1981), he or she may regulate the dynamic equilibrium between belonging and separation to favour the progressive individuation of each trainee therapist. While guaranteeing full support and respect, the trainer may provoke, challenge, amplify, or criticize the trainee's idiosyncratic behavioural patterns, functions and feelings (Andolfi & Menghi, 1981; Andolfi et al., 1983).

This provocation by the trainer signals the beginning of the end of the dependency relationship formed between trainer and trainee during the first stage of the training process. As such, it may elicit fears of separation. It may also generate considerable stress, confusion and pain within the trainee therapist. However,

the stress and confusion caused by the [trainer's] input are necessary stages in the evolution of the [training] system, as it moves from one level of integration to the next through a process of progressive individuation of the individuals (Andolfi & Menghi, 1981, p.194).

Therefore, instead of protecting the trainee from the

escalating tension and intensity which may result from continued individuation within the group, the trainer may utilize the systemic tension to facilitate increasing openness and differentiation (Andolfi & Menghi, 1980). In this regard the trainer has to calibrate the degree of stress and confusion brought about through this process according to each trainee therapist's levels of experience, competence and stage of development (Andolfi & Menghi, 1981).

If the trainer is successful in creating a context within which increasing openness and differentiation is facilitated, the trainee may develop the capacity to "distance oneself from a part of one's own history and to have less to do with the people with whom one has constructed it" (Andolfi, Angelo, & De Nichilo, 1989, p.136). This capacity to face all the changes and accompanying pain linked to the process of separation may, in turn, enable the trainee to form different, more varied and flexible relationships with the trainer, fellow trainees, clients and other significant persons.

There are various ways in which the trainer may influence the training context so that trainees differentiate increasingly from each other and separate from the trainer. Some of these are mentioned below.

### Languaging Separation and Individuation

The trainer may make deliberate adjustments to the training language to promote separation and individuation. For example, rather than merely talking a "we" and "our" language, the trainer may use an increasing amount of "I" and "you" language as the second stage unfolds (Watkins, 1990). This kind of phrasing parallels the trainer's "growing recognition of separateness and supports a differentiated, individuated identity" (Watkins, 1990, p.205).

### Regulating Participation and Separation Processes

In order to compress dependency needs, the first stage of the training program may be structured so that the trainee almost never operates independently. Trainees function within a group, a subgroup or with a partner and mostly in the presence of the trainer. The trainer may facilitate increasing differentiation and separation by restructuring this aspect of the training program for the duration of the second stage.

While certain training activities may still take place within the aforementioned "group" contexts, the trainee may now also be required to operate independently. For example, as a trainee the author learned and practiced certain



therapy skills together with other trainees under the guidance of the trainer. At some point the author was required to leave this relatively safe environment once a week to do practical work on his own at a therapy agency. Afterwards, he had to join the trainer and other group members again to review his therapy cases, receive feedback, learn and practice appropriate skills and so on.

Following Andolfi et al. (1989), the trainer may become "an active component in the continual movement of joining and separating" (p.139). Therefore, the trainer may begin to vary his or her participation and level of involvement in training sessions. For example, instead of always participating actively, the trainer may become passive at times. Furthermore, instead of acting as the omnipotent problem-solver, the trainer may fail deliberately so that the trainee may succeed. In the trainee group setting the trainer may provoke a power struggle with an uninvolved trainee. Following Snyders (1986), the trainer may also join very strongly with a specific trainee and may support this trainee's particular strengths, only to separate later by assuming observer status only.

### Exploring Different Therapy Approaches

Considering that the trainee is beginning to experiment with different therapeutic styles, the trainer may

facilitate individuation by encouraging and supporting the trainee in exploring various approaches to therapy (Watkins, 1990). A training exercise described by Boston and Draper (1985) illustrates, amongst other things, an innovative way of encouraging such exploration.

In the exercise the trainer introduces as the presenting problem the sudden change of Gregor into a "dung beetle" in Kafka's (1983) *Metamorphosis*. Background information about Gregor's family members are provided from the piece of fiction. Trainees are then divided into three groups: each group representing a systemic family therapy orientation (structural, strategic, Milan). It is the task of each group to present their conceptualisation of the case, their use of the history and an intervention typifying their orientation. Each group then meets with this fictitious family at a point in the story prior to Gregor's fate being sealed.

Importantly, an exploration of this kind should not merely focus on the approaches available, but also focus on the personal relevance of the different approaches to the trainee (Watkins, 1990). Analysing how the assumptions, concepts and strategies of a certain approach "fit" with a particular trainee may contribute to the development of his or her own therapist identity.

As a trainee, the author was instructed in different systemic family therapy approaches (ecological, structural, strategic, and Milan) during a certain stage of training. Initially, exploration of these approaches was encouraged, as was experimentation with the therapeutic style that each advocated. Later on, the author was encouraged to make one approach, or a blend of the various approaches, his own and was then assisted to refine it further.

### Constructing and Re-constructing Emancipation Stories

During this stage the trainer may also create a context in the training group in which the emancipation stories of trainee therapists can be co-constructed. One of the goals of constructing emancipation stories may be to improve the trainee therapist's capacity to join and separate flexibly. Because emancipation stories are in the making as this very stage of the training process unfolds - and therefore may have no absolute beginning, middle, end, or finality - it may be antithetical and constrictive to suggest a linear, rote method of organizing and facilitating the process of narration. Nevertheless, the following elucidate some of the principal points of the process of constructing emancipation stories for trainee therapists.

The trainer may ask each trainee to narrate moments and events deemed to be important or critical to his or her

emancipation as a person. Because certain experiences in the trainee's family-of-origin may be of particular importance in this regard (Haber, 1990; McDaniel & Landau-Stanton, 1991), the trainer has to ensure that it forms part of the trainee's story. Following Haber (1990), it is the task of the trainer to then notice which parts of the trainee's story seem to possess the most energy. Cues to the nodal points of the trainee's story may include language and metaphors; nonverbal presentation; as well as the images, relatedness, crazy thoughts and kinesthetic reactions within the trainer (Haber, 1990).

Moreover, the trainer may creatively become a co-author of the trainee's emancipation "script" by using metaphors, metaphoric objects, stories, sculptures, or myths to dramatize certain aspects of the trainee's process of emancipation. In particular, the trainer's dramatization may focus on the difficulties and pain that the trainee may have experienced in emancipating and how these, in turn, influence his or her flexibility within the training and therapeutic systems. Following Haber (1990), the indirect, unpredictable and symbolic quality of this intervention, may open up possibilities of re-constructing the story so that the trainee is encouraged to deal creatively with current problems and pain experienced with emancipating in the training and therapeutic systems.

### Utilizing Space and Time

According to Andolfi et al. (1989) the process of separation takes place in a spatial dimension and a temporal one. The first dimension refers to a space "where each person's past experiences in their respective contexts are brought into the present" (Andolfi et al., 1989, p.214). Following Andolfi and Menghi (1980), the hot seat is an incisive technique which illustrates how space may be utilized in training to facilitate increased trainee separation.

After placing a chair in the centre of the room, the trainer may invite each member of the trainee group in turn to occupy the chair and to tell something about his or her origin family. The other members of the group, sitting in a circle, listen without commenting. By giving each trainee this personal space he or she becomes differentiated from the anonymity provided within the circle. The trainer also takes the hot seat.

Any member who says that he or she cannot do it, is asked by the trainer to explain this difficulty from the hot seat. While the physical act of going to that seat contributes to the overcoming of the difficulty of separation, it also ensures that all the members of the group actively participate in the exercise.

According to Andolfi and Menghi (1980) the active participation of all group members (including the trainer) contributes largely to the success of this exercise. By the simple rearrangement of individuals in space, the trainer creates the opportunity to use emotional expression released by the processes of exclusion or inclusion; emotional closeness or distance. In addition, through their own direct experience trainees are able to discover ways of working which they could apply once they start working with families in therapy.

According to Andolfi et al. (1989) the second dimension reflects the developmental time of the system: the time that is needed to "separate from old types of relationships in order to reconstruct them anew and to become aware of the changes" (p.214). In training, then, this dimension may include time in the narrow sense of period, phase, and season, as well as tempo in the musical sense of rhythm, timing or pace. In order to maintain an optimum training momentum, the trainer may consider the timing and pace of his or her input, the moment when input should be delivered, taking into account the present context and the phase of the training process. For example, at a certain stage of the author's own training process the frequency of training sessions was decreased while the intervals between the sessions were increased.

Andolfi and Menghi (1980; 1981) described the importance of space and timing in supervision. The principles and techniques which they outlined may also be applied in training. While a thorough discussion is not warranted here, reading their work may stimulate ideas of how this may be done.

### Conclusion

At this stage of the proposed model the trainee is actively engaged in processes of differentiating himself or herself from the other trainees. He or she is also beginning to separate from the trainer. Through these processes the trainee begins to develop a distinct systemic therapist identity and becomes more self-sufficient.

The progressive individuation of the trainee therapist permits him or her to begin to relate in new and more varied ways in both training and therapeutic systems. Importantly, this increased trainee flexibility is based upon choice rather than upon necessity (Andolfi & Menghi, 1981).

## CHAPTER 6

### THE TRAINING ECOLOGY OF CONDITIONAL DEPENDENCE

"Does it happen all at once, like being wound up," he asked, "or bit by bit?"

"It doesn't happen all at once," said the Skin Horse. "You become. It takes a long time. That's why it doesn't often happen to people who break easily, or have sharp edges, or who have to be carefully kept. Generally, by the time you are Real, most of your hair has been loved off, and your eyes drop out and you get loose in the joints and very shabby. But these things don't matter at all..."

"...once you are Real you can't become unreal again. It lasts for always."

Williams (1922, pp.5-8)

#### Introduction

During the second stage of the proposed model the trainee struggles to come to terms with conflictual autonomy and dependency needs. While providing full support, the trainer escalates the tension created by this conflict. He or she co-creates a context within which the trainee is forced to continue to confront the limitations and suffering



accompanying his or her co-existence at a functional level in a more open and direct manner. In this way the trainee is provoked to increasingly differentiate from the other trainees and separate from the trainer.

As a result, the trainee may now enter a stage of the training process where he or she begins to show "conditional dependency with increased empathy" (Stoltenberg, 1981, p.63). Thus, the training ecology of autonomy-dependency conflict (second stage) has started to evolve into an ecology of conditional dependence (third stage). This ecology is characterized by increasing autonomy of the trainees, as individuals within the training system and as a trainee group.

#### Trainee Autonomy

As the training ecology evolves the students in the trainee group should be differentiating themselves within various systems and subsystems. They may begin to act with professional self-confidence, experiment with new interpersonal arrangements, offer novel and useful systemic hypotheses and interventions and so on. As a result, each trainee's personal systemic therapist identity should become more evident. Members of the trainee system have then started progressing from "co-existing at the functional level to choosing to co-exist at the personal level" (Andolfi & Menghi, 1980, p.195).

Because of this shift the trainee may begin to deal more autonomously with the difficulties of becoming a systemic therapist. Whereas at the beginning of training the students in the trainee group may have expected to delegate all the responsibility for change to the trainer, the entire group may now be participating actively in the training process. They may also now be more willing to risk change, despite the intrinsic threat to a previously attained equilibrium.

As a result of the increasing trainee autonomy, the trainer may now become less central in the training system. His or her main task at this stage is to test the autonomy of the trainee group and by doing so, facilitate greater autonomy.

#### Testing the Trainee Autonomy

During the third stage of training the student therapists should be functioning as autonomous individuals in terms of their idiosyncratic contributions to the process of psychotherapy training, while simultaneously co-existing as an autonomous group (Snyders, 1986). The trainer may test this group autonomy by, for example, expressing doubts concerning the group's desire for autonomy. Following Snyders (1986), the trainer may also facilitate greater autonomy by positioning himself or herself peripherally to

the group, and by refusing to take the initiative. Some of the ways in which this may be accomplished are mentioned below.

### Allowing Trainees to Train

During the first two stages the input of the trainer has an overriding influence on the type of training contexts that are created. The trainer determines to a large extent how training will proceed during these two stages. However, during the third stage the trainer may change this situation by toning down his or her input. In this way the trainees may be allowed to have more of an influence in the creation of training contexts appropriate to their evolving needs.

For example, the trainee group may be put in charge of their own training sessions, with the trainer acting as an observer. Importantly, this challenge should be presented in the form of expecting creativity on each trainee's part rather than as an evaluation of their abilities. The trainees will then have to decide what input they desire, determine what would constitute appropriate training for them at this stage of their development, negotiate a training structure, indicate who will be responsible for each particular training session, select appropriate literature, find a creative way of conducting the training, and so on.

### Restructuring the Therapeutic System

Following Snyders (1986), the trainer may also restructure the therapeutic systems in which members of the training system operate. The trainer may put the trainee therapist in charge of the pre-session and post-session discussions, with the trainer relinquishing his or her leadership role and retiring to an observer role. He or she may also request the trainee group to move from observing to supervising roles. This transition will require the trainee group to reorganize. They will have to elect a spokesperson to convey team messages to the therapist, select literature for gaining a better understanding of the specific type and stage of therapy, and organize their discussions to fit with the therapeutic interactions in the therapy room (Snyders, 1986).

### Redefining Training as Consultation

Following Snyders (1986) and Liddle (1988), the trainer may also redefine training as consultation during this stage. By acting as a consultant the trainer assumes a more distant position from the trainee group. In maintaining this peripheral position, the trainer is able to assist the group in achieving greater autonomy. For example, the trainer may withdraw from the trainee therapist, being available for consultation only, and only on request.

According to Snyders (1986) the trainer may even decline to be present at therapy sessions, attending only the pre-session and/or post-session discussions and viewing of video tapes. During these discussions the trainer may allow the trainees to arrive at their own conclusions, to generate their own strategies, hypotheses and interventions, and to evaluate their work on their own. The trainer remains available to the trainee therapists as a resource person, but from a peripheral position (Snyders, 1986).

#### Separating from the Training System

When the members of the trainee group consistently demonstrate that desired changes are taking place and that they are able to function more autonomously, the trainer may begin to separate from the group. Following Andolfi et al. (1980), the trainer's actions at this time should lead to his or her own decentralization in the training system. If the trainer fails to give up his or her centrality, the movement toward greater trainee autonomy may be curtailed. The trainer should therefore move away from perturbing the trainee group to observing their new patterns of interaction.

While progressively distancing himself or herself from the trainee group, the trainer may encourage the individual

trainees to achieve further personal autonomy. Following Snyders (1986), the trainer's role may now change from Devil's Advocate to fellow human being to the trainees. Consequently, the trainer should now be "generous with support and encouragement, highlighting, indeed celebrating, the acquired skills and changes" (Liddle, 1988, p.165).

Following Snyders (1986), members of the trainee group may express fears of being left alone by the trainer, anxieties concerning a relapse and a strong desire to remain partially dependent upon the trainer. The trainer may respond by reassuring the group members concerning the changes that have taken place. He or she may also help them to understand the process of change more clearly. This may be done by the trainer encouraging each member of the trainee group to re-examine the changes that have been brought about in the course of the training process. The trainer may also demarcate some significant changes in therapist thinking and action by recollecting where the trainee therapists started and what they have accomplished (Liddle, 1988). A useful procedure to demonstrate such changes may be to review with trainees a video-tape of one of their early sessions (Liddle, 1988).

After the current situation has been jointly analysed, the trainer may ask each trainee to set himself or herself specific goals for future development. The trainees should

be encouraged to be creative in the setting of such goals. While these goals should be challenging, they must also be realistic.

Finally, the time has arrived for the trainer to terminate the training process. This may be done by prescribing rituals of separation (Snyders, 1986) to the trainee group. For example, during the final stages of the author's training each trainee was requested to complete a systems analysis of the training program. In this report the trainee had to, *inter alia*, document his or her construction of the evolution of the training system, as well as the moments deemed critical to his or her development as a systemic therapist. This task served as an appropriate and instructive ritual of separation.

A trainee task described by Sprenkle (1988) may be adapted slightly to form another ritual of separation. As preliminary examination, each trainee may be asked to prepare a scholarly referenced paper detailing his or her personal theory of systemic therapy and its relationship with the existing body of systemic therapy theory. This paper is then defended before the faculty and other trainees. The precepts in the paper have to be illustrated by means of video-taped therapy segments.

Another separation ritual may be to ask each trainee to present his or her "therapeutic self" as the final part of

examination. The trainee then has to find a creative way of showing how his or her "self" may be used in therapy, how it evolved, how it may contribute to the co-creation of a therapeutic impasse, and so on.

### Conclusion

As training comes to an end the trainer may declare himself or herself available for further periodic meetings. However, his or her availability is no longer as a trainer but rather as a resource person (Snyders, 1986). Thus, while the trainer and trainees may meet again at some stage in the future, they are now disengaged.



## CHAPTER 7

### CONCLUSION

"Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to walk from here?"

"That depends a good deal on where you want to get to," said the Cat.

"I don't much care where..." said Alice.

"Then it doesn't matter which way you walk," said the Cat.

"...so long as I get somewhere," Alice added as an explanation.

"Oh, you're sure to do that," said the Cat, "if you only walk long enough."

Carroll, L (1929, p.76)

### Introduction

As much as there is no single way to train psychotherapists (Bor, 1984, 1989; Snyders, 1986), there is no single way to describe the phenomenon of psychotherapy training. It is therefore possible to create a variety of alternative descriptions of psychotherapy training. In this

study an attempt was made to create one such description. It is by no means more true or valid than any other description of psychotherapy training. Any suggestion that this description may fit better than others and is therefore more useful, should be considered the construction of the author. It is also not an attempt to obtain closure as to the essence of psychotherapy training. It merely allows the observer a temporary understanding of the phenomenon of training in a dynamic system as a training group. As such it represents "a minute slice of the [training] reality and ways of constructing and developing it" (Snyders, 1986, p.24).

## New Epistemology and Psychotherapy Training

### Introduction

The description of psychotherapy training in this study is based upon the new science and physics, and Batesonian evolution (Auerswald, 1985). This new epistemological perspective has a number of significant implications for thinking about psychotherapy training. Amongst other things, this perspective clearly demands a move towards a second-order - a constructivist - view of psychotherapy training. From a second-order view the training system may be thought of as a linguistic, problem-determined system.

### Towards a Second-order View of Training

The term second-order view simply means "taking a position that is a step removed from the operation itself so that you can perceive it reflexively" (Hoffman, 1990, p.4). These views about views facilitate an awareness of how the observer's relationship to the operation influences it (Hoffman, 1990).

Applied to the psychotherapy training situation, a second-order view allows one to see that a particular description of the training context is self-referential and therefore only one among many possible versions. Acknowledging the diversity of descriptions increases the alternatives and meanings for the trainer when dealing with trainees. It also encourages training activities which show respect for the preferences and dignity of all participants.

The application of a second-order view to cybernetics led to the idea that living systems are not programmable from the outside, but rather self-creating, autonomous entities (Hoffman, 1990). Accordingly, the training system can be described as comprising two or more living systems which are informationally closed.

From this point of view, psychotherapy training is not about directly trying to influence people. Instead, it is

the provision of a context where a learning process can unfold. Thus, trainers cannot directly influence trainees, they can only influence the training context. They cannot specify change, they can only set a context for change. They can also not exclude themselves from what must change. And, finally, they cannot predict or unilaterally control the behaviour of the training system, they can only provide perturbations which may or may not be critical to the system's organization.

### Language Systems and Training;

#### Problem-determined Systems

The central role that language plays in shaping human activity has already been emphasized elsewhere. This emphasis on language has a number of important implications for thinking about psychotherapy training.

Following the work of Maturana, Le Roux (1987) concluded that human systems are always embedded in language. Put differently, human systems can be described as always existing in language and communicative action (Anderson & Goolishian, 1988). Hence, the training system, like any other human system, is a communicative or linguistic system (Anderson & Goolishian, 1988).

This view implies that "social organization is the product of social communication, rather than communication

being a product of organization" (Anderson & Goolishian, 1988, p.378). Hence, social organization and structure in the training context evolve through communication and discourse, and a training reality is created in and through dialogue. This view is similar to the theory of structural determinism (Maturana & Varela, 1987), as discussed elsewhere. What people say and hear in training is therefore determined by their structures, not by the social organization of the training context.

Distinguishing the training system on the basis of communicative interaction rather than pre-determined concepts of social organization (trainer, trainee; individual trainee, trainee group and so on), necessitates a focus on "those who are in active linguistic coupling" (Anderson & Goolishian, 1988, p.379).

Therefore, as Anderson and Goolishian (1988) pointed out: "systems do not make problems; languaging about problems makes systems" (p.379). Thus, a training system includes everybody who is organized around learning as a problem in a languaged context. In other words, a training problem is defined and a system develops around it as attempts are made to solve it. Describing the training system in this way is coherent with what has been termed a 'problem-determined system' (Anderson & Goolishian, 1988; Anderson, Goolishian, & Winderman, 1986; Hoffman, 1985, 1988).

This perspective implies a different definition of the parameters of the training system. The unit of training is no longer defined as individual trainee, trainee group, larger system, etcetera. Rather, when dealing with individual trainees, or trainee groups,

our thinking is punctuated in terms of the communicative networks (the related actors) and dialogical exchanges that define the problem, and is not punctuated in terms of predetermined social structure (Anderson & Goolishian, 1988, p.379).

Thinking about the training system as existing in a linguistic domain (the world of meaning, understanding, and narrative) rather than Parsonian reality, liberates the creative abilities of trainers and trainees to think and act effectively. In training

no communicative account, no word, is complete, clear and univocal. All carry unspoken meanings and possible new interpretations that require expression and articulation... all communicative actions are an infinite source of possible new expression and meaning (Anderson & Goolishian, 1988, p.380).

From this perspective the trainer should avoid monological conversations. Instead, he or she should create a communicative space or context in which dialogical conversations can take place. In such a communicative space, all the members of the training system should be able to participate creatively in the process of co-evolving new meanings, new realities, and new understandings. In this way training may become an emancipatory discourse. This emancipatory discourse should inherently be an ambiguous discourse - a creative language - which attempts to

say in a novel way what is already said, not yet said or can't be said. Born in ambivalent mood it becomes an antidotal language for the clarity of singular descriptions. Con-fusions enter... in the creation of double meanings, metaphoric substitutions and tales, apparently illogical juxtapositions, amplifications, absurd questions and humour (Byrne & McCarthy, 1988, p.180).

### Organizing Training Frames

Ideas for thinking about psychotherapy training from a new epistemological perspective may be linked in a number

of ways to create suitable contexts for psychotherapy training. In this dissertation ideas reflecting a new epistemological perspective are linked in a model describing the training of systemic psychotherapists. This model represents a set of organizing principles or frames designed to aid the trainer in the process of creating training contexts in which various orders of learning can occur. The following are viewed as some of the more important of these frames.

1. The training system consists of contexts within contexts. Each context affects and is affected by the other contexts. The context of the trainee system may therefore be viewed as existing within other contexts, such as the family-of-origin system, the trainee group system, the therapeutic system, the training system, and so on. Through analysing and experiencing the differences within and between these systems, the trainees are "learning to learn" (Bateson, 1972, p.293) how to think and intervene contextually in the systems in which they are members.

2. The training system is a relational system in constant transformation. To acknowledge this evolutionary nature of the training system it may be depicted in terms of developmental stages. Three stages of the training process are proposed in this dissertation namely, the ecology of dependence, the ecology of autonomy-dependency



ambivalence, and the ecology of conditional dependence. These stages are arbitrary punctuations (constructions) attempting to represent a progressive evolution of the learning context. They do not form tightly compartmentalized units since they are intermingled. It is therefore possible that "signs" of the first stage of the training process might already be "present" in the first stage and vice versa.

3. Processes of joining and separating are at work in training systems. These processes have been discussed in detail in this study. Suffice to mention at this point that the trainee therapist has to learn to engage and separate more clearly and flexibly within various contexts, such as the trainee group system, the therapeutic system, and so on. It is the task of the trainer to create contexts in which the trainees have to differentiate from each other and to separate from the trainer. If the trainer succeeds in creating an emancipatory context, the trainees will eventually perceive themselves as distinct and self-sufficient entities, capable of varying their own ways of relating over a period of time.

#### Limitations of the Study

The limitations of this study lie in the subjective nature of its text. This narrative is the subjective

punctuation (construction) of the author. It is an inter-text between the author's own experiences of psychotherapy training, his interpretation of other persons' ideas about training, and his imagination of what training could be.

The subjective nature of the text may limit the possibilities for generalization. Each reader's own self-referential nature will determine to what degree interaction with the text is useful. It may fit in some way with one reader and result in some "new" co-evolved understanding (map) of training. It may also be of little, or no use to another reader. It may not fit sufficiently with the reader's own experiences of, and ideas about training or with the context(s) he or she is operating in to be perceived as having any significant value.

### Training as a Never Ending Story

Stoltenberg (1981) proposed four stages of psychotherapy training. He envisaged that the training process culminates in a situation where the trainee therapist is able to separate from the training system to enter the stages of conditional dependence, and eventually, master therapist (Stoltenberg, 1981). However, the idea that it is possible to arrive at some end point in psychotherapy training may be limiting. As a therapist one

is likely to continuously find oneself in contexts where one has to emancipate again and again. It may therefore be more useful to view training as an ongoing process, where the end of one training experience signals the beginning of another.

One implication of this view is that it becomes possible for the therapist to also create training contexts for himself or herself. However, to create appropriate training contexts for himself or herself the therapist should be able to re-search his or her own story as a therapist. A future study could research how a person may conduct a re-search of his or her own therapist story so that it yields the information necessary to create one's own training contexts.

Following White (1992), it may now be concluded that the story of a psychotherapist's training is always indeterminate. This inherent ambiguity and uncertainty implies that a therapist's training story may never be final or concluded. Every training context invites a re-authoring of the story of the participant's "life as therapist" (White, 1992, p.76). Training becomes a never ending story.

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