

Treating Personality Disorders Using a Systems Approach in Individual Psychotherapy

Most studies of the background of clients diagnosed with personality disorders shows a high percentage of subjects have a history of child abuse, invalidation, or other features of family dysfunction. However, most therapy models do not deal directly with current family interactions, which often trigger and reinforce repetitive dysfunctional behavior throughout the client's adulthood. The psychotherapy outcome literature shows mainly that current models of psychotherapy helping with symptoms of different disorders, but do little for the clients' problems with love, work, and play. This seminar will describe systemic factors over several generations that result in the formation and maintenance of personality disorders, elucidating the family dynamics of many of them. It will then focus on how therapists can get the full family history from reluctant clients while handling clients who come in with hostility or acting out with the therapist. We will then look at strategies for altering the family relationships teaching clients how to enact them through the use of role playing and role reversal. Last, it will discuss how clients can handle family relapses into old patterns.

Target Audience		
Psychologists Therapists	Social Workers Psychiatrists	Counselors Nurses
Course level: Intermediate		

Learning Objectives

- At the end of this seminar, participants will be able to:
1. Explain how concepts from evolutionary psychology, sociology, and family systems provide a wider understanding of interpersonal problems in clients with personality disorders
 2. Describe how clients in dysfunctional families read one another's motives.
 3. Describe common family processes that create certain personality disorders.
 4. Use new ways to get clients to open up regarding family interactions
 5. Describe therapeutic techniques for helping clients empathically confront attachment figures to stop the process of their triggering and reinforcing repetitive self-defeating behavior.

Seminar Schedule

The webinar outline is attached. See the Live Webinar page for the start and end times.

Outline

Webinar begins at 11 AM ET

A Wider View of Personality Disorders

- Dysfunctional Family Roles and Personae
- Historical factors that can lead to shared family conflicts
- Family Process

12:30 Break – 15 minuets

Psychotherapy of adults with personality disorder.

- Getting the whole story
- Planning strategies for client to empathically (even while being attacked) confront their parents with problematic family issues
- may interfere in the process.
- Teaching client how to handle inevitable family relapses and client's post-individuation groundlessness. Discuss strategy for avoiding games without ends.
- If necessary, encourage client to experiment with new and better ways to act in previously problematic situations in love, work, and/or play.

End 2:15 PM ET

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The Presenter

David M. Allen is Professor Emeritus of Psychiatry and was the Director of Psychiatric Residency Training at the University of Tennessee Health Science Center in Memphis for 16 years. He received his medical degree from U.C. San Francisco, and did his psychiatric residency at the Los Angeles County - University of Southern California Medical Center. While at UT, he supervised psychotherapy training for both psychiatry residents and psychology interns, and ran the psychotherapy seminar for the residents. The seminar was described in a journal article in Academic Psychiatry. He has done research into personality disorders and is a psychotherapy theorist. He is the author of three books about integrated psychotherapy: *A Family Systems Approach to Individual Psychotherapy*, *Deciphering Motivation in Psychotherapy*, and *Psychotherapy with Borderline Patients: an Integrated Approach*, as well as numerous journal articles and book chapters. He is also the author of the self-help book, *Coping with Critical, Demanding, and Dysfunctional Parents*. He is a former associate editor of the *Journal of Psychotherapy Integration* and treasurer for the Association for Research in Personality Disorders. Over his career, he has practiced psychotherapy in a variety of clinical settings including private and academic practice and at a VA hospital. His psychotherapy model has particular applications in the treatment of borderline personality disorder.

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