

# ***Transformational Affect: An Integrated Understanding of Emotions from Catholic Anthropology and Accelerated Experiential Dynamic Psychotherapy (AEDP)***

## ***Outline of Key Clinical Movements***

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### **1) Introducing Diana Fosha's Accelerated Experiential Dynamic Psychotherapy and some of its major tenets:**

- A) the innate drive/telos of "transformance" and its affective dynamism
- B) the role of attachment for the dyadic regulation of affect and intention in actualizing of this drive
- C) the disruption of the integrative and growth inducing capacities of transformance in times of emotional need with lack of safe, attuned attachment
- D) dissociative symptoms with the experience of self and between the self and others as a result of disrupted attachment—a defense against the overwhelming experience of unwilled and unwanted aloneness in times of great need
- E) the role of True Other/True self relating in the undoing of dissociative disintegration and the welcoming of *glimmers* of the re-emergence of transformance in its integrative and growth inducing power

### **2) Exploring affective states and their therapeutic accompaniment:**

- A) Anxiety and defensive secondary affect—avoiding unbearable aloneness in need and helplessness:
  - i) Validate, validate, validate (undoing of shame) reason for defenses; access somatic states for movement, ex "It was probably important to go numb—that sounds like it was so confusing and isolating!" explore alternative possibilities, build affective tolerance
  - ii) Build capacity for emotional experiencing through dyadic regulation: "Can we stay with that a little longer?" (Work to expand the window of tolerance for experiencing when accompanied)
  - iii) Encourage awareness of somatic states "As you are talking now, what are you noticing is going on in your body (look for areas of constriction or flow)? What does that want to do (look for action tendencies that create flow)" "If that tightness in your chest could loosen just a little bit what would you notice starts to happen?"
  - iv) As client is ready, enact portrayals to activate, move through and integrate frustrated action tendencies in service of self and truth

B) Glimmers of primary/core affect and true self— look for and share your moment-to-moment awareness of glimmers of emerging self

- i) Mine for glimmers. Parts work, mining for motivation and desire: “I am hearing that the depression has been suffocating, and yet you got here today. Can you tell me about that part of you? The part that made the decision to risk seeking help?”
- ii) Bring awareness and language to client inchoate and split-off experience. Stay close to the client’s experience “Let me see if I am understanding. On the one hand (defensive affect and ideas) and yet on the other hand there is this part of you (emerging glimmer of the true self). Is that right? Would it be ok to be interested together in that part for a minute?” “It looked like your eyes moistened as you talked about that? Am I seeing that right? Can you help me understand what those tears are about?”
- iii) Validate and honor re-emerging defenses that serve to protect against vulnerability, disappointment, and shame “It is quite a brave risk to step into a different possibility and a part of you is saying ‘be careful, don’t trust this’. Am I seeing this right?”
- iv) Explore the client’s awareness of your presence and of dyadic capacities in the relationship. “What is it like for you to let me know about this? To be looking at this together?” “What do you notice is going on with me as you tell me about that?” “What do you make of that...?” “As I see you doing this, I am feeling a new energy in the room, a part of me wants to cheer you on” Validate or gently clarify or amplify observations. Validate any ambivalent feelings about letting you in
- v) Invite deepening attention and awareness: “What else are you starting to notice as we are looking at this/staying with this experience?”

C) Breakthrough of core affect—temporarily disorganizing/reorganizing

- i) Understanding tremulous affects as harbingers of integration
- ii) Honor: “Wow—that was a big wave—that was so brave—how are you doing?”
- iii) Process for cognitive integration “Let’s see if we can understand together what just happened”
- iv) Share your experience in the service of working towards understanding
- v) Meta-therapeutic processing of the “good” or “right” feeling, the recognition of the “click”—in experiencing core affect ex. pain, sorrow, hope, joy
- vi) Anchor emerging understandings in somatic, cognitive, affective and relational channels
- vii) Don’t be surprised about regression and return to defenses—observe and validate both the old and the new way of experiencing

D) Mastery affects—new freedom, capacity to take risks, swimming in the deep end

- i) "What is it like to see that you can go there?"
- ii) Share your experience of the work as the therapist: sincere admiration, joy
- iii) Compare your meaning making
- iv) Welcome revision of ideas of self (competent, capable, brave) and of self-in-relationship

E) Healing affects—self-compassion allows for the grieving and acceptance of self-by-self, lost opportunity "Late have I loved thee"

- i) Validate grief of lost time, wasted capacity and efforts in light of new possibilities
- ii) Validate new self's compassion for the old self, self-forgiveness
- iii) Savoring new sense of freedom and ease in experiencing
- iv) Affirm new relational capacities: forgiveness, gratitude

F) Core state—new vision of self and others, affects of spontaneous acceptance, forgiveness, gratitude, sense of solidity and goodness of the self as beloved and loving—Deeply spiritual awareness, often religious images and imagination

- i) Metaprocessing: honoring truth, celebrating vitality and growth--dyadic amplification through shared experience
- ii) Anchoring new experiences in thought, soma, affect
- iii) Welcoming gratitude, forgiveness, deep acceptance as they present
- iv) Being aware of a new emerging sense of connection and purpose in the world, the de-centering of the self from the ego (Miller, D'Baca in *Quantum Change*) (Augustine-"You were closer to me than I was to myself")

3) Concluding remarks, Question and Answer