

Syllabus

CPSY-590-01 Rethinking Countertransference

GRAD - Fall 2014

10/04/2014-10/11/2014 Lecture Saturday 09:00AM - 05:30PM

York Graduate Center, Room 115

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Countertransference is typically understood as something that can get in the way of helping your clients. This class will give you tools to decipher when your countertransference is about you and when it is useful clinical information about your client. Using a mindfulness-based approach, you will learn how to turn your experience sitting with clients into insightful perceptions about their inner world.

CLASS OBJECTIVES

- a basic understanding of the theory and practice of mindfulness
- an understanding of what transference is
- understanding how and why transference occurs
- being able to know the signals of when transference is happening (defenses)
- discerning the difference between subjective and objective countertransference
- a general awareness of what the student's personal areas are where they might have some unresolved issues that might show up as subjective countertransference
- aware of the signs when subjective countertransference might be at work
- understanding the vital role mindfulness plays in managing countertransference (that is, working to distinguish between different kinds of countertransference).
- recognizing the different kinds objective countertransference
- exploring the role of intuition in objective countertransference
- recognizing the role the body plays in countertransference management
- Seeing every client and every session as an opportunity for growth
- What managing countertransference outside the session looks like (developing resources & self care)
- Exploring disclosure as a tool to use based on our countertransference & when it might be clinical appropriate to do so for a client

WHAT TO EXPECT

- a mixture of presentation, working in pairs & small groups, large group discussion, individual work, mindfulness exercises
- regular use of mindfulness exercises where you'll be asked to sustain an internal awareness of yourself for 5 minutes or more.
- lots of noticing. You'll be asked to constantly notice your experience throughout the class. You might get a little annoyed at constantly being asked to observe your experience.

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- personal material may be accessed. Please honor your boundaries of what and how much you wish to share, if any. **There is no pressure whatsoever to get into your sensitive areas.** Please go only as deep as you are comfortable.
- you may become activated in the class. This may include having uncomfortable feelings, past memories surface, nervous system activation (fight, flight or freeze). If so, feel free to take some time and space if you need it. And also feel free to come check in with me at a break or after class.
- this is the first time this class is being offered. I created and developed the curriculum for this class based on my own clinical experience and some of my training. The next stage of development is the class itself. Because of this, your questions are welcome. Your questioning minds will help this class evolve and become further developed. I may not have an answer to all your question but we will use your questions to shape the class.
- having said that, sometimes there might not be time to get to all your questions so we can cover all the material.
- you might be overwhelmed by expecting yourself to you understand all of what is being taught this class. This class is less about understanding concepts and ideas and more about developing the important skill of mindfulness. And using that skill a tool to manage countertransference.

WHAT NOT TO EXPECT:

- Don't expect a huge scientific explanation of countertransference. There's a lot happening currently around interpersonal neurobiology that I recommend reading about.
- Don't expect a lot from the psychoanalytic or psychodynamic traditions. This class certainly draws from it as well as other traditions, however the understanding of countertransference in this class will pull from mainly from experiential and mindfulness approaches to therapy.
- Don't expect a lot of interventions. This class is mainly about how to manage our countertransference. However, through managing our countertransference well, then we are both engaging in tools of assessment and intervention.
- Don't expect to get everything we touch on. My hope is that seeds will be planted for your future as a therapist. And over time, those seeds will open and grow. **Remember, more than anything, I want you to walk away from this class knowing that your inner experience of sitting with a client matters and can be used in creative and therapeutic ways.**

4 MAIN SECTIONS:

- mindfulness
- transference
- countertransference
- disclosure

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ASSIGNMENTS

Assignment #1

Due the first day of class.

Write 1-2 pages for each article and 4-5 pages for the book (6-9 pages total). These are not meant to be formal papers. They are self-reflection papers about what you read.

Use the following questions to start your reflections for the writing:

- 1.) What do you agree with? Why?
- 2.) What do you disagree with? Why?
- 3.) What surprised you?
- 4.) What inspired you?
- 5.) What was your favorite quote from the readings? Why?

Assignment #2

Due two weeks after the last day of this class on October 25th.

Please email me your paper to jmanalis@lclark.edu

Write a 5-7 page reflection paper on how you imagine yourself managing countertransference as a therapist. Feel free to share your fears, strengths, expectations, hopes and vision for yourself as a therapist in creating therapeutic relationships with your clients.

In your writing, consider the following:

- what you've learned in this class
- what role mindfulness will play in your work as a therapist
- your gifts of perception & intuition
- your unique worldview
- resources you already have as well as potential resources that you could develop

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CPSY DEPARTMENTAL ATTENDANCE POLICY

Class attendance is expected and required. Any missed class time will be made up by completing extra assignments designed by the instructor. Missing more than ten percent of class time may result in failure to complete the class. This would be 1.5 hours for a 15 hour class (1 credit.) In case of extreme hardship and also at the discretion of the instructor, a grade of incomplete may be given for an assignment or the entire course. In such cases, the work to be submitted in order to remove the incomplete must be documented appropriately and stated deadlines met. Students are expected to be on time to class and tardiness may be seen as an absence that requires make-up work.

REQUIRED READINGS

Germer, Christopher K., Siegel R.D. & Fulton, P.R. (2008) *Mindfulness and Psychotherapy. 1st Edition*. New York: Guilford Press. (Chapter 1 & 3 only)

Richo, David. (2008) *When the Past is Present: Healing the Emotional Wounds that Sabotage our Relationships*. Boston: Shambala Publications, Inc.

Rubin, Dan. (2005) *Countertransference and Mindfulness: Definitions, Applications, & Dialogue: The Contribution of Mindfulness to the Clinical Utilization of Countertransference*. Los Angeles: Alliant International University.

RECOMMENDED READINGS

Lewis, T., Amini F., Lannon R. (2001) *A General Theory of Love*. New York: Random House.

Nummenmaa L., Glereana E., Harib R., and Hietanend, J.K. "Bodily maps of emotions" in PNAS January 14, 2014. (<http://www.pnas.org/content/111/2/646.full>)