

Questions/Feedback Submitted & Sue Austin's responses, for Module 3 of The Therapy Relationship (Clinical Concepts, July-August 2024)

Question 1: *I love that there is an agreement that missed sessions are actually still held for the client. My question is, does the client still pay for this session?*

Sue's Response: Yes, my patients pay for missed sessions. During the year I take breaks which are the same as the State of New South Wales public (i.e., not private school) holidays & I give my term dates to my patients after the long summer break (end of January) for the coming year.

Question 2: *I understand the wanting to keep personal details private for the sake of the client. That said, what are your thoughts on the very presence and embodiment of the therapist - isn't there enough information given through body language, presentation of language, nervous system regulation, clothing choice, decorative choices, and even office space and location, etc, (known consciously or not) present for the client to create their own stories (real or not) about the therapist? If you feel it is better for them to create their own narrative about who the therapist is, I am curious why that is.*

Additional Observation shared by another participant (Sue responds to both below): *I think with the type of cases Sue works with, those who are developmentally so arrested that there is so little of the ego developed, that these people hardly have the ability to both know and ask for what they need. I kept thinking of her reference to Catch 22 and the description of "the shot-up insides" as pertaining to the mother and how the patient's anorexia was so important in how the system was maintained. At this point, my population is very often affluent families, whereby I have developed the specialty of meeting with several individuals from the same family. I must create an enormous container, often populated by different actors in the same story. It is also tricky in terms of how much I give to one versus another family member. I think I liken myself more to Samuels in that I also need to keep the container fluid, expandable, and delimiting. I appreciate all the various styles and comments. It helps me to learn from different mentors all the time.*

Sue's Response to Question 2 and Observation Shared: I've pasted in part of a paper given by a Jungian analyst as part of the Sydney Institute for Psychoanalysis' Psychoanalysisdownunder lecture series (see <https://www.psychoanalysisdownunder.com.au/articles/2007/1/3/using-a-Jungian-inheritance-of-lack-and-loss>). The paper's author - Giles Clark, now regrettably deceased, was an enormous influence on my thinking about the frame, and was also a close friend of

Samuels. I'm introducing some of Clark's ideas here firstly because I find his clinical thinking invaluable and secondly because his discussion of the 'what goes on in analysis' has embedded within it a way of thinking about the frame, office set-up, presence of books in my room etc:

“A psychotic, borderline or pathologically narcissistic person who feels that they are ‘basically damaged goods’ may think, feel and angrily express their urgency something like this:

“For me mind and body, fantasy and reality, inner and outer, my mind and your mind, my body and your body, you and me, are and must always be fused and undifferentiated, all one ... (but of course you must simultaneously sort out my confusion) ...

So realise that your mind is my mind, your body is my body.

Because I am starved of enough of anything good and have never had the necessary power to get the primary love I should have had and still need ... make it be that you loved me back then ... even though you did not, love me now ... even though you do not, love me forever ... even though you never shall. Because I love you it is outrageous and intolerable that you do not love me back, and for this I hate you, and because of this I will forcibly affect you.

I shall get into and possess your separate body-mind by infecting you psychosomatically. I shall confuse your thinking, attack your linking, somatize your symbolizing function.

My anger knows no bounds.”

From the other side, my mind might be based on an internal position something like this:

“The necessary and ethical law of this human world is ... No, you cannot have it all (me, others, parents) as you will; you cannot make me disclose my separate private self to your devouring knowledge, for that would preclude necessarily frustrating fantasies; you cannot make me, by force or seduction, love you in the way you wish. There is a limiting frame that others (me now) do and shall embody: a law of the Fathers, of the frustrating but necessarily carefully containing parents.

Your fantastic desires and hates are now for us to understand. So I shall use my separate thinking mind and reflect before I act.

Indeed, your anger recognizes no boundaries. But my boundaries and the world's necessities are actually your truest gain : an apprehension of free necessity. ”

Thanks & best wishes,

Sue