

Section 3: Book Reviews

Book Review

***One-to-One Psychodrama Psychotherapy: Applications and Technique.* Edited by Anna Chesner. Routledge, 2019.**

Clark Baim, PhD

Although psychodrama is mainly considered a group method, in recent years, there has been a notable growth in the application of psychodrama, psychodrama techniques, and action methods in one-to-one contexts. Authors including Figusch (2009), Cukier (2007), Morley (2016), and Casson (1997) have helped to advance our understanding of the theory and practice of one-to-one psychodrama. (Figusch has contributions from eight authors writing on different aspects of one-to-one psychodrama.) Casson's article even offers J. L. Moreno's own words in support of adapting psychodrama for one-to-one contexts. Although applying psychodrama "a deux" is mainstream in practice, it is under-theorized given its increasing prominence. Anna Chesner's new edited volume, *One-to-One Psychodrama Psychotherapy: Applications and Technique*, is a much-needed addition to the literature on working one to one and offers an informative and moving account of practice from an array of scholar-practitioners.

The book has 13 chapters and is divided into two sections. The six chapters in part one set the scene by focusing on essential theory, principles of practice, and adaptations for addressing special issues. In chapter one, Chesner deftly connects underpinning theory, such as spontaneity-creativity, encounter, expressionism, the therapeutic frame, and key ideas about rhythm and pace, as a way of laying out the essential ideas about how psychodrama can be highly effective as a one-to-one method. The chapter is helped by illustrations that neatly capture the essential theoretical points offered. I was particularly impressed by a section in this chapter addressing the thorny topic of touch and how clinicians need to think critically as they adapt and adjust their practice in one-to-one versus group settings.

Chesner herself has written five of the chapters in part one, and her close collaborator Jinnie Jefferies contributes essential theory on role analysis and role theory in chapter two. Jefferies and Chesner have worked closely together running the London Centre for Psychodrama for many years, and in this chapter, Jefferies explains how the London Centre's approach to psychodrama is strongly informed by role theory and role analysis. This is a particularly fascinating chapter and essential reading for anyone using classical forms of psychodrama that include tracking back and work focused on locus and status nascendi. Jefferies also makes

welcome reference to the work of Dalmiro Bustos, Anthony Williams, Max Clayton, and Blatner and Blatner with sections on each.

In chapter three, Chesner offers a highly practical chapter on concretization, playing with perspective, and the use of miniatures. The chapter offers superb insight based on clinical examples and is greatly enhanced by photos of the miniatures and a diagram of how the miniatures are positioned on the protagonist's "stage." A particularly impressive section of this chapter includes Chesner's suggestions about working with transference issues. Here, the use of concretization and projective methods can be particularly useful.

In chapters four through six, Chesner offers a masterclass on the use of role (chapter four), adaptations and techniques for working with people who are addicted to substances (chapter five), and working with dreams (chapter six). Chapter five also offers an insight into how Chesner uses action genograms and transgenerational approaches in her one-to-one practice. Fans of the work of Anne Ancelin Schützenberger on transgenerational genosociograms will find additional inspiration here.

For part two of the book, Chesner hands the baton on to a series of superb scholar-practitioners who offer accounts of their one-to-one practice in a range of settings and with different clinical populations. Paula Davies, in chapter seven, provides an excellent integration of theory and practice in her account of working with children in one-to-one contexts in schools. Her work is clearly transformative for the children.

In chapter eight, Anna Napier presents several case studies, critical analyses, and essential theory on working one to one with clients who experience profound shame. Napier's moving and instructive case studies include a description of how she includes art, narrative work, "as if," and concretization in her sessions. Her chapter is positive and uplifting, offering much hope for clients who experience debilitating shame.

Lydia Mak, in chapter nine, offers a case study on working with the themes of grief and loss. Eva Koumpli follows this in chapter 10 with a case study focused on eating disorder, which includes essential theory on incorporating body work and trauma-informed practice. In chapter 12, Esther Tang offers a case study from her practice in Hong Kong. This is a complex case involving a young woman with dissociative identity disorder, who emerged from a highly traumatized family background. A standout feature of Tang's chapter is her description of how her client moved from working one to one into a group. This was an important next step in her social development.

The book is rounded off with Maxine Daniels' chapter providing an insight into her work offering brief one-to-one sessions to professionals in a corporate setting. This is an important example of how psychodrama can be used not only as a one-to-one method, but also in nonclinical settings. Daniels brilliantly captures the moment at which her client role reverses with the customer, and I was left thinking (once again and as many of us do) that psychodrama has applications in most settings and is needed everywhere.

I declare an interest in writing this review: I have known Anna Chesner for many years as a colleague in the British Psychodrama Association. She is a prolific

author and editor, and this work, among her many others, should be celebrated and considered essential reading for students and practitioners.

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