

NWRPA Friday Seminars

Binge Eating: on the other side of the pleasure principle

Paul Melia

Friday 10 March 2017

6.30pm-8.30pm, free to members, £7.50 to non-members

We'll listen to a 20-minute radio programme of women in a therapy group talking about binge eating: the programme - '*I Wanted to Explode*' - is available here, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p045vff0>. As one woman comments, 'I think the thing to realise is that [binge eating has] nothing to do with normal eating. It's not a little bit extra, it's not having a pudding when you shouldn't or over indulging occasionally. It's a kind of robotic, almost pleasureless loss of control...' We'll see how binge eating has nothing to do with instinct and everything to do with drive: that strange, silent world on the other side of the pleasure principle - indifferent to our happiness, indifferent to our well-being, indifferent to our life.

Paul Melia is therapist and supervisor at Therapy in Manchester, a counselling and psychotherapy service in Manchester, see <https://therapyinmanchester.co.uk/>

Zen and the Art of Gestalt Therapy

Rodney Hill

Friday 7 April 2017

NB Because of the Easter Holidays the April Seminar is one week earlier than usual.

Venue:

**The Manchester Institute for Psychotherapy
454 Barlow Moor Road
Chorlton
Manchester M21 0BQ**

A map of our venue and more information about the Association is available on our website at: www.nwrpa.org.uk

Renew your NWRPA membership for 2017

We hope you have enjoyed the seminars in 2016 and want to renew your membership. We began a new membership year in January 2017 and membership will last for the calendar year up to the end of December 2017.

Membership of the NWRPA is £25 a year - or £20 if you are a student, unwaged or retired - which represents a generous saving of 66% on the cost of the ten seminars we will have in 2017.

To renew please send a cheque made out to the NWRPA. Our postal, email and website addresses are at the end of this newsletter. If you would prefer to pay online please email Frank Kelley at nwrpa2010@ntlworld.com for details of our online bank account

If you are not a member and want to join there is information on how to do this on our website at www.nwrpa.org.uk. Membership of NWRPA is open to qualified and trainee psychotherapists and counsellors, to members of related professions and to individuals who have a longstanding interest in psychotherapy and counselling. To apply for membership you will need to live or work in the North West of England and subscribe to a professional code of ethics that is recognised by the Association.

Newsletter hyperlinks

In each newsletter you will find a number of hyperlinks, for example <https://therapyinmanchester.co.uk/> And others earlier in this page. If you are connected to the Internet you can click on these hyperlinks and be taken directly to the relevant website or email address. If any of these hyperlinks do not work please let me know by clicking on our email hyperlink of nwrpa2010@ntlworld.com

“It’s gone... what it is...”

Amanda Onwuemene

Friday 10 February 2017

Amanda Onwuemene is an integrative psychotherapist and clinical supervisor, and manages Psychotherapy and Counselling North West, a psychotherapy service based in Liverpool and Manchester. See <http://www.pcnw.co.uk>

We had rather a small attendance for this seminar. Being the NWRPA this was still an enthusiastic and involved group. We have appreciated Amanda’s talks in the past and this was as clear, informative, practical and involving as before. She can also be intriguing and, even before she opened the this seminar, we were fascinated to know what her title meant.

By her intention, and our request, she ended with the kind of meditation which her clients, and those attending, find very helpful. She noted that, as we were talking about language, that her meditation is based on simple and repeated words.

In her workshop Amanda invited us to pay attention to the power of language in the therapy room. Her title of *It’s gone... what it is...* is something she said in a client’s therapy session in a confused state which she found unhelpful and had a big emotional effect on her.

When clients are in an emotional or fearful state she will ask them to to speak about this experience. This helps with the primary emotions of fear, anger, pleasure, sadness and disgust. She may ask where in the body they experience that feeling; what colour it is; what size; whether it is hot or cold; solid or empty; hard or soft; heavy or light; and what happens when they are or were having those experiences.

All things are possible.. Who you are is limited only by who you think you are. This is a quote from the Egyptian *Book of the Dead*. What we say is what we are. This includes the use of imagery and silence. What we say is woven into a narrative which profoundly affects how we feel. We can weave a negative and unhelpful narrative in our lives. This principle also underlies the usefulness of therapy through conversation. In therapy we can weave a conversational narrative which leads to our experiences becoming less scary.

This way of working can unlock past emotions. However times past and present will be confused in the client’s speech and particularly at times of greatest distress. The therapeutic untangling of past and present can be very helpful.

During here seminar she asked us to form into twos and tell our neighbour five things about our self that began with *I am . . .*

She asked us to imagine what if everything we said came true. What if we were required to follow what we said. To notice when we confuse fact with opinion. To be aware of our own and our clients’ ambiguous and negative language. To ask if our language would change if we told ourselves to speak directly.

Eric Berne, the founder of Transactional Analysis, believed that we could unlock most of the mysteries of human psychodynamics if we learned to observe people like a Martian who is visiting Earth. To illustrate this point Amanda asked us to imagine a version of *Little Red Riding Hood* as if we were Martians.

We told the Martian version of this story and this cast a different light on a familiar tale. Using this literal technique it was possible to reverse Red Riding Hood’s and the Wolf’s roles as aggressor and victim. Retelling a narrative as a Martian is a good techniques to use when talking with clients about how they got to be in their predicament.

When we are powerful we tend to use I statements. When less powerful we use unclear and ambiguous statements. This comes from the victim part of the drama triangle. One example of this is still using I to start statements but with a noticeable silence before it. Often these tactics minimize a fear of rejection

Some communications, or rather, non-communications, from the victim position are *I’ll try*, which gives the victim permission to keep trying or failing, and *verbal run off*, which diffuses the power of what we say by using too many, many words.

CPD certificates

If you would like a CPD certificate for the NWRPA seminars you attend please email Frank Kelley at nwrpa2010@ntlworld.com

“It’s gone... what it is...”

We use powerless communication from all parts of the drama triangle. Rescuers often find it hard to say directly what they want. Persecutors appear to be speaking clearly and powerfully but this is just as negative and ineffective as communications from the other parts of the triangle. (There is a diagram of the Drama Triangle below.)

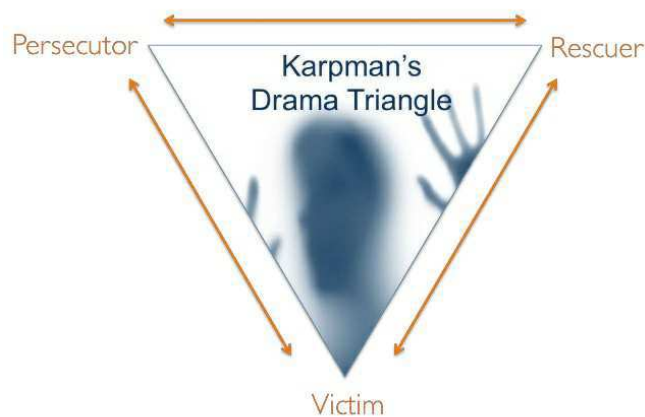
Clients often speak in a way which becomes a negative and self defeating prophecy. For example saying *I am stupid* is likely to lead to us speaking and acting in a stupid way. To counter unhelpful ways of talking Amanda will ask clients to speak in the first person, speak in the now and be specific. Another unhelpful way of talking is to use vague terms like *I could* and *I should*. Instead she asks her clients to rephrase this as *I can, I will*.

One influence on Amanda is the idea of Clean Language. This was first developed by David Grove, a counselling psychologist from New Zealand, in the 1980's as a result of his work on clinical methods for resolving clients' traumatic memories. He realized that many clients naturally described their symptoms in metaphor, and found that when he enquired about these metaphors *using their exact words*, their perception of the trauma began to change.

Therapists can also use clean language to describe their clients body language. Amanda is also influenced by Transactional Analysis and believes most of our body language comes from the child position.

As we had talked about the unhelpful confusion of past and present we then said we can add to this confusion with our anxieties about the future. During this discussion one of our members recommended *The Power of Now* by Eckhart Tolle. He wrote *Realize deeply that the present moment is all you have. Make the NOW the primary focus of your life.*

As we ended I regretted that I have retired and no longer see clients. This means I cannot put into practice all these useful ideas Amanda offered us. This was quickly followed by my appreciation that she offered us ideas that are not only very useful for therapy but also invaluable for the way we live our lives.



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