WORKING WITH AFFECT

International Psychotherapy Institute
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Neuroscience & Analytic Therapy

AIMS OF NEUROSCIENCE

- data from research studies
- neurochemical, neurostructural, or neuroimaging investigations
- models aim to explain why brain regions are activated or suppressed

AIMS OF THERAPY/ANALYSIS

- we infer meanings & unconscious fantasies/ conflicts
- we work in the transference/countertransference field
- proof/truth is gathered over time & unique to a given analytic pair
Interdisciplinary Field of Neuropsychoanalysis

Analytic Therapy/A  "NPA"  Neuroscience
Applications of Neuroscience to Psychotherapy

- Explains and validates psychotherapy (Neuropsychoanalysis)

- Therapy as a developmental opportunity (Neuroplasticity)

Appel, S., Neuroscience and Psychotherapy, 2011
CORE CLAIMS OF PSYCHOANALYSIS

(1) The infant is not a "blank slate;" born with built-in needs.

(2) Learning the methods of meeting these needs is the primary task of development.

(3) Such methods are primarily unconscious.
(1) Innate needs exert pressure, or demand upon the mind.

(2) Core needs of the human infant are felt as affects (pleasure/unpleasure).

(3) Drives become mental when they are felt.
DRIVE DEMANDS ARE FELT AS AFFECTS

Mark Solms Presentation, IPI Weekend, April 2022
Affect is a Value System

- Pleasurable feelings signal bodily states that increase chance of safety and reproduction

- Unpleasurable affects signal bodily states that risk undermining safety and reproduction
7 Core Emotional Systems: Jaak Panksepp

- **SEEKING**
- FEAR
- RAGE
- **LUST**
- CARE
- PANIC
- **PLAY**

Non-social Survival Systems

- SEEKING (expectancy)
- FEAR
- RAGE

Highly interactive social systems

- LUST
- CARE
- PANIC
- PLAY

Core Emotional Systems in Love

- thrusting urgency of LUST
- the caress of CARE
- SEEKING urgency

Investigating the Mind & Brain

Brain's reward circuit

- very old circuit that senses & reinforces pleasurable behaviors
- ventral tegmental area
- Also: amgydala, hippocampus, nucleus accumbens
- subcortical to prefrontal cortex: +ve rush with food, drugs, sex, & love

Fisher, 2005
Investigating the Mind & Brain

CONCLUSION


5. Yovell, Y. (2008) Is there a Drive to Love? Neuro-Psychoanalysis, 10 (2) (pp. 117-144)