

Ability to maintain an analytic/dynamic focus

Knowledge

An ability to draw on knowledge that ‘maintaining an analytic focus’ describes two distinct activities:

maintaining the primary focus on the exploration of the client’s unconscious experience (i.e. maintaining an analytic attitude)

remaining focused on a particular theme to the relative exclusion of others for the duration of the therapy (which typically applies to brief therapeutic approaches)

Application

Ability to approach all aspects of the work with an analytic attitude

An ability to stay focussed on:

exploring the client’s unconscious, “internal world” of relationships

identifying and responding to the transference and countertransference

An ability to prioritise the focus of the interventions on the here-and-now therapeutic interaction:

an ability to identify when such a focus is not appropriate so as to attend to other material that carries a strong affective charge

Ability to “track” a specific dynamic theme/conflict

An ability to relate the content of interventions to the interpersonal and affective themes and unconscious conflicts that the formulation identifies as the focus of the therapy

An ability to help the client explore themes relevant to the agreed focus through the use of techniques such as clarification, confrontation and interpretation

An ability to work on the agreed focus by exploring the vicissitudes of the therapeutic relationship:

an ability to help the client identify relevant interpersonal and affective patterns through exploration of interpersonal narratives and (where relevant) their elaboration in the transference

An ability to help the client identify and explore the meaning of diversions away from the agreed focus (e.g. because it is too painful to address)