

## MFT-557 Action Methods in Family Therapy

Daniel J. Wiener, Ph.D.

### MFT as Theater

A) Theater and Therapy: Theoretical Descriptions (Boal, Holt, Moreno)

B) Warm-up: **Answer as Someone Else** (Eye contact bet. questioner [in center of circle] and another member; the person seated to the right of the member asked answers, saying what s/he thinks the target person would say).

### C) Therapeutic Narrative as Performance

Validation of Narratives Exercise (One Teller, Four Listeners)

1. 5 Students form a group. One plays the part of Teller and the other 4 of Listeners. The Teller narrates a brief, fictional story involving both him/herself as a character and a fictional third party, implicitly conveying his/her impression or judgment of the third party, e.g.: Angry at his insensitivity, Compassionate at her misfortune, etc. It is important that the Teller not explicitly offer his judgment, only to think of the characteristics or his/her own judgments of the third party and of his own intention to convey these.
2. Each of the four Listeners (a, b, c, & d) improvises his response in one of these predetermined ways with the following subtext(s):
  - (a) in support of the viewpoint of the Teller;
  - (b) in opposition to the viewpoint of the Teller (possibly "taking sides with" the third party);
  - (c) ignoring the "facts" and focusing on the feelings of the Teller (i.e. playing 'therapist').
  - (d) narcissistically focusing on self (= not listening) and attempting to get Teller to attend to him.

The scene that ensues between Teller and each Listener is played out until, in the judgment of the other Listeners, it has become dynamically repetitive. At this point, they signal the scene's end and the Teller offers the same story to the next Listener until each of the 4 scenes have been enacted.

3. The Teller answers the following questions, addressing each Listener regarding the scene between them:
  - a) How comparatively easy/difficult was it to tell your story to each Listener?
  - b) What feelings did your character experience when playing each scene?
  - c) Did the story change depending on which Listener it was told to? How?
4. Each Listener shares his/her experience of the scene briefly.

**D) "Dichotomization of the Aesthetic Space" (Boal)**

1. A volunteer (Protagonist) narrates some real event which was emotionally evocative and that involved self as the central character at an earlier time to two student Therapists, "A" & "B"
2. "A" focuses on the "I-as-was," the character of the narrated event
3. "B" focuses on the "I-am," the narrator in the present
4. The instructor directs an Empty Chair encounter between Protagonist's character and narrator
5. The instructor directs a Staged Enactment with the Protagonist authoring the encounter between character and narrator

**Storytelling Games (RfG):** Therapist Mantra(s); Directed Story, Poet's Corner, Typewriter, Movie Critics

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**Homework (for 6/19/01):** Create a 2-sided cardboard mask that is wearable. Make sure the mask has eye-holes so that you can see others while wearing the mask. On one side, paint/draw/decorate the socially conventional side of your Fictional Family character (the social mask); on the other side, an aspect of that same character seldom seen by others.

**Homework (for 6/26):** Bring to class some food item that meets the following conditions: (1) you have personally prepared the food in some way (cooking, cutting, arranging); (2) the food has some personal significance to you that you are willing to talk about in class; (3) the food can be served in bite-sized pieces or portions to everyone in class (16 persons).