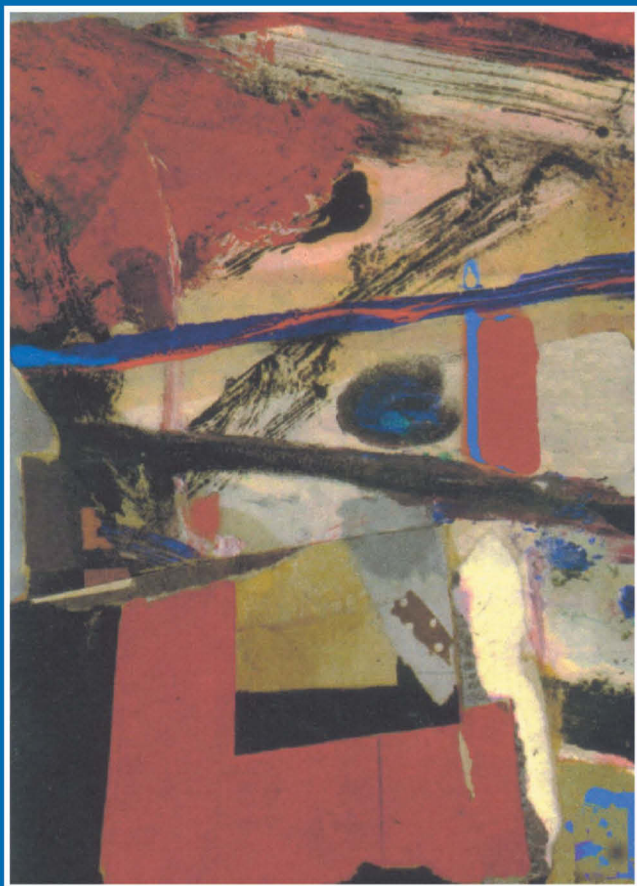


Challenges to Practice

PRACTICE OF PSYCHOTHERAPY SERIES:

BOOK ONE



EDITED BY: BERNARDINE BISHOP, ANGELA FOSTER,
JOSEPHINE KLEIN and VICTORIA O'CONNELL

CHALLENGES TO PRACTICE

THE LONDON CENTRE FOR PSYCHOTHERAPY

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Series Editors

*Bernardine Bishop, Angela Foster,
Josephine Klein, Victoria O'Connell*

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on behalf of

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All contributors to the book are members of the London Centre for Psychotherapy.

The London Centre for Psychotherapy (LCP) has its origins in the 1950s; it became a registered charity in 1974. Its activities are threefold:

- to offer training in psychoanalytic psychotherapy (including analytical psychology) in which the leading schools of analytic thought and practice are represented;
- to organize postgraduate professional activities; and
- to provide a psychotherapy service to the community through its clinic.

The Centre is the professional association of around 200 practising psychotherapists who are registered, through the Centre, with the British Confederation of Psychotherapists.

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PREFACE

This book is the first in a series on the practice of psychotherapy. Written by members of the London Centre for Psychotherapy, it addresses situations in which classical psychoanalytic technique, without losing its integrity, is adapted to the needs of particular individuals and groups of individuals.

The contributors' professional formation equipped them with the skills and techniques required for intensive psychoanalytic psychotherapy, in which the individual patient visits a psychotherapist three or more times per week. However, as all practising psychoanalytic psychotherapists are aware, it is increasingly unlikely that we will be spending the majority of our professional lives working in this way. There are many situations in which intensive psychoanalytic psychotherapy cannot be provided, is not wanted, or is not appropriate. This poses challenges to our practice.

Each of the five chapters in this book takes up an aspect of this challenge. In an open and enquiring manner, the authors invite readers to share in their thinking as they describe how they use their psychoanalytic skills to understand the nature of particular challenges. We believe that by expressing our fears and doubts as well as our achievements we are not only describing our individual experiences but also conveying something of the culture of the London Centre for Psychotherapy, which we value as a nurturing professional environment.

In chapter one, Josephine Klein invites the reader to consider in detail the differences in technique between counselling, analysing, and something she calls “theraping”. She argues that these three are distinct therapeutic activities and that the decision about which we do in the course of our work is determined by “what feels right” and by “what we feel the patient requires”: “The more talent we have, and the better we have been trained, the more often we make the right decision.” This valuable paper encourages us to closely examine our practice, sharpening our thinking about what we do, when, and why.

Chapter two follows on from the previous chapter, taking up the challenge of once-a-week work; it is written by Faye Carey, Praxoulla Charalambous, David Cohen, Felicity Criddle, Adrian Dickinson, Lynette Fraser, Margaret Goldwyn, Shanawaz Haque, Josephine Klein, and Victoria O’Connell, who formed a study group to explore what they thought and felt about working in this way. As they say: “All of us did some; none of us had been trained for it; we wanted to understand better what we were doing and why, and how we felt about it, and we wanted to learn from each other.” Their conclusion—that once-a-week work is intensive and demanding for the therapist and requires considerable skill—would suggest that this common pattern of work should have more professional recognition and attention than it currently attracts.

In chapter three, “Singular Attention”, Faye Carey makes a further contribution to this subject, offering the reader a detailed analysis of an episode of clinical work that pays particular attention to the unconscious dynamics of transference and counter-transference as they emerge in once-a-week therapy.

Chapters four and five are about work in the public sector; each addresses the challenges to therapeutic practice posed by the high levels of disturbance and chaos with which a worker may be faced. Joanna Roeber, in “Has Anyone Seen the Baby?”, describes some of the challenges she faces when choosing to work jointly with mothers and their babies. With careful sensitivity, she explores the pain and complexity of the unconscious three-way, three-generational dynamics in the consulting-room.

In the final chapter, Angela Foster describes her work as a psychoanalytic organizational consultant to teams working with some of the most disturbed and damaged people in our society. She analyses how the pressure of the organizational response to the “duty to care” can increase anxiety and lead to anti-therapeutic splitting, which, if not addressed, may reduce the therapeutic impact of the work and increase the danger to workers, their clients, the agency, and the general public.



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