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Lawrence E Hedges Routledge 2011 ISBN 978-0415873529

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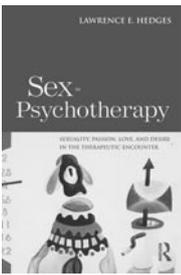
Reviews

Sex in psychotherapy: sexuality, passion, love, and desire in the therapeutic encounter

Lawrence E Hedges

Routledge 2011

ISBN 978-0415873529 £19.99



By the time I reached the second part of this book I was sure the exciting title was just a way to encourage people to buy what was looking like quite a dull volume. However, by the end I had changed my mind. I found myself moved and humbled by stories of courageous and skilful accounts of therapeutic work.

The book begins with a scholarly historical and cross-cultural survey of how sex and sexuality have been regarded over the ages. This is quite interesting, though for my taste at least, slightly dull. The rest of the book is divided into three parts. The first part sets out the different perspectives of sex and sexuality, beginning with the traditional heterosexual perspective (which Hedges robustly and rightly states has no place in the current day) through personal identity, race/ethnicity/sexuality, and ending with Hedges' own 'Relatedness Listening Perspectives' approach, which is not the snappiest of titles. He makes the interesting suggestion that perhaps in today's climate, our ethnic heritage may be less important than our sexual identity. Despite these interesting asides, this part of the book is nearly as dry as it sounds. It was at this point that my heart sank.

However, the second part of the book, an analysis of published accounts of different therapists (including Susie Orbach) working with erotic transference and

countertransference in dealing with issues of sex or sexuality, is as fascinating as the title promises. Much of the work described is with clients who were in long-term analytical therapy, and I confess to a pang of envy at the depth to which it is possible to go when time is not an issue. I did wonder why nearly all the clients described (though not the therapists) were men. The third part is analysed accounts of three of Hedges' own client work, written in the form of extended case studies. Again, this is absolutely fascinating, more especially as one client came only for three sessions.

Hedges is a psychologist/psychoanalyst steeped in psychoanalytical interpretations. I found some of his interpretations difficult to swallow (or to follow) although I appreciated the ways in which he has updated some Freudian truisms. (For example, sometimes a foot fetish is just a foot fetish.) The gist of the book is that erotic transference/countertransference happens and needs to be taken seriously and engaged with. If therapists are willing to do this, then work of enormous relational depth can happen. The therapists involved in the work demonstrate an enormous appetite for self-analysis and self-knowledge. The case studies are absolutely engrossing and thoroughly depressing. Fascinating because here are case studies of therapists working at the very edges of both their skills and acceptable boundaries, but depressing because the skills, the courage, and the dedication of these therapists are so far ahead of my own. Read the book and take from it, if nothing else, the reminder that good therapy demands constant vigilance of one's own process.

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Healthy attachments and neuro-dramatic-play

Sue Jennings

Jessica Kingsley Publishers 2010

ISBN 978-1849050142 £18.99



This book focuses on the practice of neuro-dramatic-play (NPD) as developed by the author, and shows how this can be implemented in various contexts, including, but not limited to, children with attachment needs, children on the autistic spectrum, children with learning difficulty and teenagers and young adults. It also devotes chapters to the definitions and theories of NPD and to NPD and attachment, play/play therapy, resilience and empathy, as well as exploring NPD during pregnancy and birth. Jennings emphasises the importance of NPD during this time, and in the first six months of the baby's life outside the womb and in her/his attachment to the mother.

The book is pioneering in drawing together some previous groundwork in attachment theory, neuroscience, drama therapy and play therapy, whilst adding some new dimensions and insights that open the way for further exploration and experimentation. Because attachment and relational needs are so fundamental to human development – not only in babyhood and childhood but also across the lifespan – this makes the book important reading for all areas of developmental and psychotherapy work. It will be useful for practitioners and students across various disciplines, from play therapy to arts therapies, psychology, psychotherapy and counselling, as well as students and specialists in neuroscience. It will also benefit pregnant women and new mothers as well as midwives, children's nurses and paediatricians