

Anxiety A Phenomenological Approach in Ten Compartments



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Burlingame, California | December 6 - 9, 2018

Ericksonian Assumptions

- Resource elicitation.
- Orienting toward.
- Not based on “psychoeducation.”
- “Knowing” and “Realizing.”
- Staying Structural
- Being Experiential
- Utilize!



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I. Defining Anxiety

- Defining Anxiety:
 - Impending doom
 - Unresolved arousal
 - Anticipatory tension - fear of not being good enough/failure



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The Panoply of Anxiety Disorders:

- Adjustment reaction;
- Simple phobia;
- Agoraphobia;
- GAD;
- PTSD;
- Panic Disorder;
- OCD;
- “Co-morbidity.”



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II. Distinctions

- Mr. Fear says: “There is threat: React!”
- Mr. Anxiety/Phobia says: “There is perceived threat: Prepare!”
- Mr. Depression says: “There is perceived threat and nothing I can do will help: Ignore! Collapse!”
- Mr. Panic says, “I am afraid of dying or losing control!”
- Mr. Stress says: There is pressure: React.
- Mr. Burnout says: “There is no way to achieve my essential goals. I have had it.”



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IV. “Doing” Anxiety

- How does the person “DO” anxiety:
- Anxiety-ing
- Create a map
- What is the phenomenology?
- Turn the problem into a process.
- If the problem is nominalized, turn it into a verb.
- Turn it into a relationship pattern
- Etc.



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Elements of Communication



III. Elements of Communication

- Use the elements of communication to determine the phenomenology of anxiety;
- Mapping the structure of the problem (and solution) vs. mapping the developmental history.
- Promoting systemic change.



Elements of Communication *

Primary

1. Feeling
2. Thought
3. Behavior
4. Sensory (perceived and represented)
5. Relational
6. Biological

Secondary

1. Attitude
2. Context
3. Qualitative
4. Ambiguous
5. Symbolic
6. Idiosyncratic
7. Cultural
8. Etc



Source

From "Symptom Prescription Techniques: Clinical Applications Using Elements of Communication," by Jeffrey Zeig, Ph.D., The American Journal of Clinical Hypnosis, Volume 23, Number 1, pp. 23-33.



Major Categories for Maps:

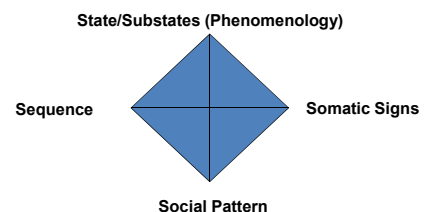
- Phenomenology (States and sub-states)
- Systemic Aspects (Social patterns)
- Process (Sequences)
- Physiology (Somatic Signs)

Versus

- (History)
- (Psychodynamics)
- (Deficits in knowledge)



The "Maps" Diamond



“Love”

- Take
- Obvious
- Pleasure
- In
- Another’s
- Happiness



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VII. The Phenomenology of Anxiety (primarily intrapsychic)

- Project into the future
- Suffer anticipatory shame
- Suffer anticipatory anxiety: fear of symptom or trigger and oversensitive to each
- Fear possible loss of control
- Summate “reach back” and “after burn”
- “What if”
- “I can’t stand it!” “Get away!” “I can’t” “it will never end”
- “I am not adequate enough”
- Agitate
- “Looping” (Preoccupation)
- Worry



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VII. The Phenomenology of Anxiety (primarily intrapsychic) (cont.)

- Religionize doubt
- Sensitive – internally
- Irritability
- Hyper-vigilant externally
- See threat - failure of denial
- Magnify threat
- Magnify uncertainty
- Magnify sensations
- Magnify deficits
- Imagine the negatives
- Generalize negatives



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VII. The Phenomenology of Anxiety (primarily intrapsychic) (cont.)

- Negative judgment
- Self – attack
- Minimize positive
- Suppress feelings
- Feel trapped
- Constrict/restrict behavior
- Move fast
- Risky Behavior
- Gesture inwardly
- Compulsivity including sexual compulsivity, gambling, etc.



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VII. The Phenomenology of Anxiety (primarily intrapsychic) (cont.)

- Behaving intuitively (Doing a neutralizing activity)
- Trying to hard to succeed to succeed
- Perfectionism—especially with panic
- Procrastination
- Over function
- Over control
- Dissociate
- Possibility into probability



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VII. The Phenomenology of Anxiety (primarily intrapsychic) (cont.)

- Focus on things that cannot be changed
- Overwhelm (with responsibilities for example)
- Memory of previous anxiety (flashbacks)
- Magical thinking (Cognitive distortions)
- Belief systems (the world is a scary place)
- “Seefeeldo” [see diagram]
- Try to relax. Expecting relaxation.



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Social/Interactional Aspects

- Relinquish control (relational)
- Disconnect/distance (relational)
- Doubt—failure of reassurance (relational)
- Defensiveness (relational)
- Helpless (relational)
- Social aggression (relational)
- Social suspicion (relational)
- Grasping/Clinging (relational)
- Mind-reading (relational)
- “Hot potato” (relational)



Social/Interactional Aspects (Cont.)

- “Over adapt” (relational)
- Jealousy (relational)
- Family feeling (relational habit)
- Controlling (relational)
- Acting Out (relational)
- Reveal too much. T.M.I. (relational)
- Playing “chicken Little” (relational) (“The sky is falling down!”)
- Finding Nervous people to be with (relational)
- Rejecting Structure in the relationship



Physiology (Somatic Sensations)

- Rapid heartbeat
- Sweating
- Clenching
- Breathing shallow and rapid
- Dry mouth
- Stomach tightness/aches
- Light-headed/Dizzy
- Restlessness
- Hot
- Cold



Physiology (Somatic Sensations) (Cont.)

- Restlessness
- Visual disturbances
- Crying
- Insomnia
- Parathesias (tingly and numbness)
- Choking
- Lump in throat
- Difficulty swallowing
- Nausea
- Muscle spasms
- Chest pain



Physiology (Somatic Sensations) (Cont.)

- Depersonalization
- Agitation
- Breathlessness
- Shallow Breathing
- Disorganized Breathing
- Flushing
- Blinking
- Increased blood pressure
- Somatization
- Gasping



Process/Sequence Process A. (General Example)

- “What if _____?”
- Tension (trigger sensation)
- Exaggeration of tension
- “Oh no! It is happening again!”
- Symptom generalization
- Panic
- Social withdrawal
- “Why didn’t you _____?”
- Shame



VIII. Redefine Early

- Interest on a debt you do not owe/Interest on borrowed trouble
- False energy/Excess Energy
- Breathing problem
- Arousal
- Any amount of worry is too much
- You don't have anxiety; you have worries.
- Possibility into a probability
- Failure of Reassurance
- Symptom as a sign/gift. Gilligan
- Symptom as an enemy. R.Reid Wilson. Anxieties.com



Cases

- MHE phobia
- MHE iron bars
- JKZ Sumo
- Driving out of town
- Getting lost
- Gertie
- Kathy
- Erickson fainting case



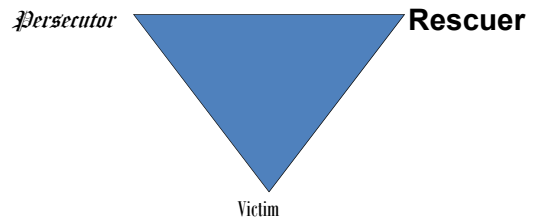
IX. USING "MAPS" TO ESTABLISH TREATMENT STRATEGIES

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <u>MAP</u>• Phenomenology• Physiology• Process• Pattern of Interaction• <u>Versus</u>• Development• Deficits in Knowledge• Biology | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <u>STRATEGY</u>• "Flip it"• Somatic work (Interoceptive desensitization)• Pattern Disruption• Interactional Solution• <u>Versus</u>• Interpretation• Psycho-education• Medication |
|--|---|



Heuristic

When in terror, play out the terrorizer!



X. Advantages of Anxiety

- Garlic / Onion



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