Anxiety
A Phenomenological Approach in Ten Compartments

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

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

The Panoply of Anxiety Disorders:
- Adjustment reaction;
- Simple phobia;
- Agoraphobia;
- GAD;
- PTSD;
- Panic Disorder;
- OCD;
- “Co-morbidity.”

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.”

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.
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**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primary</th>
<th>Secondary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Feeling</td>
<td>1. Attitude</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Thought</td>
<td>2. Context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Behavior</td>
<td>3. Qualitative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Sensory (perceived and represented)</td>
<td>4. Ambiguous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Relational</td>
<td>5. Symbolic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Biological</td>
<td>6. Idiosyncratic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Cultural</td>
<td>7. Etc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Etc</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

* Refer to following slide for source information.

**Source**


**Major Categories for Maps:**

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

**The “Maps” Diamond**

- State/Substates (Phenomenology)
- Sequence
- Somatic Signs
- Social Pattern

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“Love”

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

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

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

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.

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

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.
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

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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

IX. USING “MAPS” TO ESTABLISH TREATMENT STRATEGIES

- MAP
  - Phenomenology
  - Physiology
  - Process
  - Pattern of Interaction
    - Versus
    - Development
    - Deficits in Knowledge
    - Biology
- STRATEGY
  - “Flip it”
  - Somatic work (Introceptive desensitization)
  - Pattern Disruption
  - Interactional Solution
    - Versus
    - Interpretation
    - Psycho-education
    - Medication

X. Advantages of Anxiety

- Garlic / Onion

Cases

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

Heuristic

When in terror, play out the terrorizer!

Rescuer

Persecutor

Victim

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Jeffrey K. Zeig, Ph.D., P.C.
Clinical Psychologist
1935 East Aurelius
Phoenix, Arizona 85020
(602) 944-6529