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# THE ETHICS OF COUNTERTRANSFERENCE

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Chaz Franke, MSW, LCSW

LIGHT SOURCE

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## WHAT IS COUNTERTRANSFERENCE?

**-Transference** is a projection of a relationship dynamic that you as an individual have, onto another person. Usually this relationship dynamic mirrors the one you have with one of your parents. So you either project your relationship dynamic with your mother onto others, or your relationship with your father onto others. In therapy this occurs spontaneously, but it is also prevalent in our normal day to day relationships with friends, bosses, partners and others.

-Where it becomes really interesting is that when you transfer onto someone, they adopt the behaviour of the person that your transference mimics. So in other words, if you are transferring onto the other person your relationship dynamic with your mom, that other person will relate back to you as if they are your mom – with the same dynamic. **This is called counter-transference.**

**(Center for Applied Jungian Studies)**

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## WHAT IS COUNTERTRANSFERENCE?

- > **Inevitable**
  - > **To be respected**
  - > **An important part of understanding what is going on with you (the therapist), the client or patient, and the relationship.**
  - > **Potentially problematic ( See Jung)**
  - > **Potentially significant as a growth point for both people in the relationship.**
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## WHY ETHICS?

- > **Many of our classic ethical dilemmas and/or issues have countertransference included in them.**
  - > **To understand your countertransference is to understand what kind of ethicist you are.**
  - > **How you respond to clients is the foundation of your ethical self.**
  - > **Internal and External Accountability.**
  - > **Self Disclosure**
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## THE OVERLAP OF ETHICS AND COUNTERTRANSFERENCE

- › **Daily examples**
    - › **Fees**
    - › **Personal morals**
    - › **Classical transference responses**
    - › **Employer pressures**
    - › **Loss of connection**
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## RESPECTING THE CLIENT EXPERIENCE

- › **Meeting the client where they are at ( a true countertransference concern)**
  - › **How much room are you taking up?**
  - › **Staying in the role of the therapist ( not coach, boss, transference object)**
  - › **Communicating your experience without dominating the experience.**
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## RESPECTING THE THERAPIST EXPERIENCE

- > **Transference is not an excuse to avoid accountability**
  - > **Can you convey what is needed for effective therapy without putting all the responsibility on the client?**
  - > **Taking responsibility without taking over**
  - > **Asking for help**
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## EXAMPLE

- > **Countertransference related to Fees (Roberta Satow, PhD.)**
    - You feel that you are above thinking about money and your work is more noble than that;
    - You feel you don't do this work for money but for love, to save your patients, to give them what you didn't get;
    - You feel talking and thinking about money is crass and maybe you associate it with certain class or ethnic identifications with which you want to disidentify;
    - You feel that the patient will not feel you are worth that much money and you don't want to be rejected;
    - You feel the patient will get angry and you want to be the "good" analyst; or,
    - You identify with the patient and never worked out your [anger](#) at paying your analyst.
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## EXAMPLE CONTINUED

› **Transference related to fees (Roberta Satow, PhD.)**

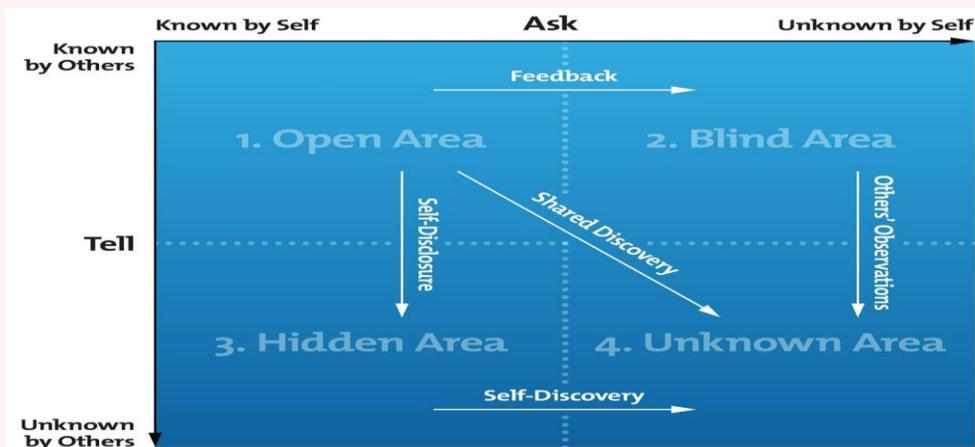
- The patient may feel powerful and special because he/she can get the analyst to do what they want;
  - The patient may feel merged with the analyst rather than confront being separate people with boundaries and different needs;
  - The patient may feel guilty for paying less; or,
  - The patient may imagine the therapist resents being paid less.
- <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/life-after-50/201905/transference-and-countertransference-issues-related-fees>
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## INNER EXPLORATION AND CURIOSITY

- › **Supervision**
  - › **Reflective supervision**
  - › **How does my countertransference contribute( case to case)?**
  - › **Can my inner exploration contribute to my connection and passion?**
  - › **Shield against burnout and a booster for grit**
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## INNER EXPLORATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY



## COMMON COUNTERTRANSFERENCE CONCERNS

- › **Over-Relating**
- › **Under-Relating**
- › **Gossip**
- › **Overwhelm as an excuse for disconnection**

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## COMMON CONTRIBUTIONS OF COUNTERTRANSFERENCE

- › **Is this how everyone reacts to this person?????????**
  - › **Positive Countertransference**
  - › **Deepens connection and safety**
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## TWENTY COUNSELING MAXIMS JANET H. FONTAINE AND NANCY L. HAMMOND

- › **Monitoring Personal Process**
    - › Trust yourself. Your reactions are a reflection of how others experience the client. Use that information.
    - › It is not necessary for you to protect clients- they are not as fragile as you may believe.
    - › Don't worry about whether your client likes you.
    - › Take the risk of trying something new. Go outside your comfort zone.
    - › It is not your responsibility to solve the clients' problems.
    - › Be open to all sources of information, and actively challenge your own impressions.
    - › Compare. Use your frame of reference of what is,"normal," to assess your clients' behavior.
    - › Always have your client's interests at heart. Ask yourself whose needs would be met if you said or did thus and so.
    - › Carefully self monitor your responses to the client, particularly the strong emotional responses you might have in either direction .
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## TWENTY COUNSELING MAXIMS JANET H. FONTAINE AND NANCY L. HAMMOND

- > **Client Process**
    - > Behavior speaks more loudly than words
    - > Its ok if your client is uncomfortable at times.
    - > Don't let a client hide behind other people. Have them talk about themselves and their reactions.
    - > What's good for one client may not be good for another, even if they share the same issue.
    - > General statements about relationships and former counselors usually imply something about the client's relationship with you.
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## TWENTY COUNSELING MAXIMS JANET H. FONTAINE AND NANCY L. HAMMOND

- > **Moving the therapy process forward**
    - > Many times clients are aware of their issues and avoid talking about them. Don't collude in this with the client.
    - > When discussing events of interest in therapy, remember the three C's: Be concrete in getting specific details about the event, ask about the context of the event, and look for conceptual themes in the client's stories about his or her life.
    - > Attend to the structural aspects of the counseling process. These can be summarized by the concepts of timing, windows, and bridges.
    - > Constantly ask yourself why. Why does this issue arise now? Why in this fashion? Why am I following up on this topic and not another? Why? Why?
    - > Share your perceptions of and insights about your client's behavior with them. This information is valuable feedback.
    - > You do not have to address every issue or discrepancy you see. But do not lose it either. File it for later.
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**CHAZ FRANKE, MSW, LCSW**  
**LIGHT SOURCE**  
**[FINDYOURLIGHTSOURCE.COM](http://FINDYOURLIGHTSOURCE.COM)**

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