

Anna Król-Kuczkowska

From Interpretation to Intersubjectivity. How the Concept of Mentalization Changes the Role of a Therapist in the Process of Psychotherapy

For a while we have been witnessing significant changes in understanding the role of a psychotherapist and the healing aspect of therapeutic relationship. The beginnings of this revolution are rooted in John Bowlby's attachment theory, but they also stem from empirical findings ascribed to modern proponents of this paradigm. Observations of early mother-child interactions (Edward Tronick, Daniel Stern and others) provided us with new ways of understanding the dynamics of therapeutic dyad and how a deep and sustainable change is achieved during psychotherapy. Today we know that not only it has to do with what therapist does during the session, but also with how he does it, that is with the relational aspect of therapeutic work.

In this presentation we will take a look at the stages of evolution of the role of a therapist: from a distant observer to a member of therapeutic couple. We will analyse the new interpretations of transference and countertransference proposed by Daniel Stern, Boston Change Process Study Group and other theoreticians of psychotherapy. We will analyse the relational psychoanalysis' and children development research's contribution to the understanding of relational matrix that bonds the patient and the therapist. I will speak about the newest research (including neuroscientific research) on learning process and show the possibilities of applying these findings in the therapeutic practice.

By referring to the examples of certain psychotherapeutic interventions I will show the differences in the style of shaping the therapeutic relationship by a therapist. I will also present the research demonstrating the correlation between therapists' style of attachment and their tendency towards functioning in a particular way within the therapeutic relationship – i.e. how do they regulate their distance and engagement, to what extent they receive patients' feedback and how do they nurture their patients' ability to mentalize.