

creditation come to represent the internalisation of the shadow of the social environment.

If the social system as a whole is seen as a corporate client of the profession as a whole, then it is clear that client and therapist are locked in a collusional pattern of transference and counter-transference, mirroring each other's neurosis, preserving each other's defences and effectively blocking any possibility of progress towards maturation, health, wholeness and the releasing of human potential. Breaking out of the present deadlock requires dedication to excellence and competence, not only in the field of individual dynamics but also in the understanding and management of the psychodynamics of social systems. It is essential to gain access to and resolution of the most profoundly occluded areas of our common unconscious if we are to cast any light on the Shadow of accreditation.

ACCREDITATION - a personal view

by Robin Shohet

I have been asked to write a short piece on accreditation because I have strong views on the subject. The truth is, as it often is, more complex - something like: on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays I have strong views, on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays I am confused, and on Sundays I want to pretend that the whole issue won't affect me as I'll probably get by on the grandfather clause.

Anti

I am basically anti-accreditation of the sort that requires filling in forms to send to an external authority whom one has never met for approval. I think the idea of accrediting courses has more merit, but I am suspicious of the whole idea of professionalisation generally. It would be easy to point out some of the anomalies of accreditation and professionalisation - people who lie on accreditation forms, the restrictive practices of other bodies who have been professionalised, the fact that there are no studies to show accreditation produces better therapists, courses which have become more fear based since the whole issue was raised, and hence have reduced openness to learning. However, this of itself would be of very little use. Pro-accreditors would say that we are still in our infancy and we will develop better procedures. Already we are better than other bodies because accreditation has to be renewed rather than being fixed for life. The fact that there is restrictive practice in other professions does not mean there will be in ours. Anyway better to have some restriction than mavericks

and there will be less gross malpractice even if the system can still be abused. As for studies, these would take years to do well with follow-ups, and it would be so difficult to isolate the variables that they could well be inconclusive. Finally the courses which have supposedly become more fear based - in the act of justifying themselves to an outside body, they have also improved their standards. In short many, if not all the arguments I could muster can be reasonably countered.

Authority

So it was back to me and what was going on inside me. If there were clearly arguments for and against, something was going on for me to be so anti. I then hit on the idea of treating accreditation as if it were a client with whom I was having difficulty, and so I would need to look at the client's and my projections, transferences and counter-transferences as I normally did. In this way to say accreditation was wrong would be like making the client out to be wrong, and even if I disagreed with many of the things he/she did, it was my responsibility to examine my countertransference, for not everyone would find this particular client difficult. By seeing the problem like this I felt I was taking more responsibility for my reactions and was examining my relationship with accreditation rather than just accreditation per se.

Father

Briefly this course of action has led me to examine deeply my authority issues. I wanted to be a psychotherapist since the age of 14, and feel very fortunate that all the training, courses, personal therapy and supervision I have done has been because I have wanted to, not to satisfy an external body. Where I have had to satisfy an external body, in getting a psychology degree, teaching and social work diplomas I found I had to work the system and have used very little of what I was supposed to have learnt. How bitterly I resented being assessed by people who were frightened of losing their authority and could

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not accept my difference. This led me back to my father, who had a lot to offer, but could not deeply accept me and hid with a mixture of pseudo-insight and wisdom that left me confused, feeling judged and very angry. However, my views on accreditation did not really change until I went on a very gruelling 10 day Vipassana meditation. On about the sixth day I went to the teacher, full of rage

at the restrictions. Having expressed them I laughed at myself for I knew that I had chosen to come of my own free will and knew what the course entailed as I had been on one before. And I realised how in other circumstances I would have neatly turned this into authority issue, and rebelled, but here there was only me. No-one was requiring anything of me that I hadn't chosen and there was no qualification at the end.

Own my Process

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So my strong views are not anti-accreditation. The understanding from the meditation has softened my stance considerably, and I already feel a lot of good has come from the debate. No, my strong views are to say that whatever position you take, treat it as if it was some kind of countertransference, and examine your motives as deeply as possible. Examining ourselves is part of being counsellors and therapists, and while external realities should not be avoided, I am wary of the argument of saying that it (accreditation) will happen anyway, so let's get on with it, for we and our unconscious motivations are helping to shape this so-called external reality. Very crudely, as a gross generalisation, I suspect that those who run the courses have some agenda round power, those busy filling in the application forms are fuelled by fear (probably very appropriately), and those like me who want to resist are rebels. My wish is by owning more of our own processes, we become less polarised in whatever position we take.

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