ABSTRACT

This paper illustrates a method for using brief film and TV clips as a significant part of training therapeutic community practitioners. This paper starts by arguing that it is important that trainee TC staff develop the insight and confidence not just to analyze what has happened, but to be able to generate "good enough" hypotheses in real-time that they can, if they choose, intervene. Further, the paper argues that it is vital that TCs have a theoretical framework, and there must be some formal training for new staff in this framework. The core of the paper is explaining the author's own technique for use within various theoretical seminars, as a particularly powerful way of supporting trainees to make the bridge from understanding a situation after it has occurred to understanding it whilst it is occurring. In this method, carefully chosen clips are shown to the students with little context to the clip provided. The students do know the theoretical topic(s) of the seminar and are sometimes also set questions to guide their observation. After watching the clip, the group discusses what they have observed. The paper illustrates this process, taking two clips which can be used with relatively junior trainees: one from a seminar on projective identification and one from a seminar on containment.

The Use of Film and TV Clips for Training Therapeutic Community Practitioners

Introduction

Karl Marx (1845/1888) famously declared "The philosophers have only *interpreted* the world, in various ways. The point, however, is to *change* it."[1] Applied to the smaller "world" of a therapeutic community, what Marx is reminding us is that it is not enough just to be able to *analyse* the dynamics. Staff need, at times, to be able to *intervene* in ways which will modify those dynamics. Moreover, a central component of the therapeutic community is the living-learning experience (Kennard, 1998, p.62) and as such, much of the most powerful work is done in the here-and-now. One consequence of this is that it is frequently more helpful for practitioners to be able to arrive quickly at a rough but "good enough" hypothesis about the current dynamic, so that they may attempt an intervention right now, rather than a profound and exquisitely detailed analysis of the dynamics which is only arrived at following reflection after the event. How can one do "opportunity led work" (Ward, 2003) if one cannot see the opportunity in front of us?

One answer is that therapeutic communities are structured to include many spaces for reflection and processing. A central one of these is the Staff Review meeting (Kennard, 1998, p.61) where staff review the Community Meeting which has just taken place. There may also be Case Discussions, Work Discussions, and other forums such as staff dynamics or sensitivity meetings.[2] By engaging with these spaces, staff are practising "reflection-on-action" (Schön,1983) but we also hope for more than this: we hope that staff develop their skills at "reflection-in-action." We reflect on the experience *after* the event, but with the intention that over time we become better at reflecting whilst having the experience, which then opens up the possibility of also intervening and avoids the danger of falling into the trap that Marx mentions.) Bion (1967) advises us to approach each session "without memory or desire." At first, this may appear to make our task even harder: the understanding I reach in today's Staff Review meeting about today's Community Meeting cannot be used in tomorrow's Community Meeting since it is a (processed) memory. However, the apparent paradox resolves itself when we realise that it is less the specific insights gained in a reflective space that one makes use of and more that the process develops our ability to "think under fire" (Brown, 2012.)

The approach described above is crucial to the concept of a therapeutic community. At the same time, this should not mean that we stop looking for innovative ways to develop staff reflective capacities which can augment the traditional forms. This paper will explore an

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[1] In Freud's writings, there is not the same sharp distinction, since he frequently writes as if interpretations are, in themselves, change-inducing. However, his concept of "interpretation" is rather more specific than what Marx meant.

[2] There is a plethora of names for such meetings. See Haigh (2000) for a relatively comprehensive list.

approach that I have used very effectively as a training tool, using brief film and TV clips to help TC practitioners develop their skills at understanding interpersonal dynamics in the moment, as they unfold. The core psychodynamic concept being illustrated here is projective identification: this has been chosen because it is "the main language of the therapeutic community" in the words of Stokoe (2003, p.86) and provides a conceptual bridge between the intrapsychic and the interpersonal (Ogden, 1979, p.357) The structure of the paper is as follows. I start by describing my perspective on the place of training within therapeutic communities. The method of using film clips is then described. Next, there is a brief re-cap of projective identification and other related concepts which are relevant for the clips. This is followed by two examples of clips which are analysed. This not only demonstrates how the clips are used to illustrate the concepts in a lively way, but also leads to implications for the students' practice. The core analysis of each clip is then followed by a brief section of bonus material, indicating ways in which the analysis could be taken further, for example if being used with more experienced trainees. Finally, conclusions are drawn about the use of this method.

Training in Therapeutic Communities

The Need for Theory At this stage, it is helpful if I am transparent about my own personal and professional biases, specifically around the place of training in TC work. I am strongly of the belief that therapeutic community work does need to be underpinned by theory, for reasons congruent with those offered by Barton, Gonzalez and Tomlinson (2012, p.30-31) Specifically, "well-intentioned but ill-informed approaches" may be, at best, neutral and, at worst, re-traumatizing. Moreover, a common theoretical framework offers a useful beacon for staff in the midst of what can often been bewildering and emotionally exhausting work. The fact that it is common across the staff group acts as an anchor for building consistency and reliability. Further, for any particular TC, this framework should be a synthesis of a theoretical basis for TC work in general with theory relevant to the specific client group. In this respect, my own background leans heavily towards work with traumatised children, although I have also worked in a prison-based TC with adult males.

The Need for Formal Training Not only do I believe that there should be an explicit theoretical framework: I also believe that this theory cannot be learnt entirely "on the job" and that there must in addition be some form of formalised training as part of staff development. (Collie in Ward *et al.* 2003, Roberts in Kennard, 1998.) Opportunity-led training for staff is a powerful tool, and an excellent counterpoint to the opportunity-led work for residents, but cannot provide the whole theoretical underpinning. One mental model I find helpful is of building a bridge: theory is on one bank of the river and practice is on the other. Clinical supervision tends to start with practice ("which of your clients shall we start with today?") and a good supervisor will build the bridge back towards theory where necessary, elucidating concepts and their application. In this context, opportunity-led training tends to be a form of live, or at least "still warm," supervision. By contrast, training in theory builds the bridge starting from the theory bank and building towards practice ("here's a definition of transference; this is what it means; this is what it might look like; this is how you might work with it.") The bridge needs to be built from both sides.

The Method

The heart of the method is that the students are shown, as a group, some brief clips (ideally, under 5 minutes) which have been chosen in advance. The clips have been chosen because they depict certain concepts and dynamics. As much as possible, the students are given no prior information about the characters. For example, in the first clip that will be discussed, the students are not told in advance that the two younger characters are brother and sister. The reason for this is that it is an exercise in observation. As opposed to being given context, the students are usually given some guidance on what is being looked for: this is natural, since the clip is shown in the context of a theoretical seminar, so the students already know the conceptual focus of the whole session. Moreover, this is in line with the philosophy above, that theory training starts from an exploration of a theoretical concept or cluster of related concepts. Following the clip, the students feedback their answers and we analyse the clip in greater depth.

Another core aspect is that the students are asked to look for *how* the processes occur. This is re-inforced during the de-briefing after the clip. For example, the trainer gives positive feedback to precise answers, such as:

> her father says 'you're not being…naughty.' This micro-communication could be a way of reminding her of what role she is expected to take in the group, and perhaps chiding her for not doing so.

When more vague answers are given, the trainer probes for more. For example, if a student says "throughout the clip, her family were scapegoating her" the trainer may ask, "can you give one example of how they did this?"[3]

Generally, the clip would not be shown again, partly due to issues of time, but also because it might imply an approach that is not being looked for: the idea that this is a sort of close reading, in the language of literary criticism, looking to plumb the depths of the clip. On the contrary, we are more interested in fast but good enough interpretations. However, when a key aspect of the clip has been missed, or misunderstood, it can be helpful to replay that part specifically and, if necessary, explicitly point out something as it happens.

Depending on the focus of the seminar and the level of development of the students, they may also be set a question about whether they would intervene, and if so, when and how. One question that has been particularly helpful with this is to ask if there are any "Sliding Doors" moments[4]: were there moments when the trajectory could have gone in a significantly different direction? If so, why did events unfold the way they did, and what might have been necessary to nudge them in a way more likely to lead to health and/or insight?

Finally, the trainer should be aware that students may offer accurate observations which are tangential to the main topic of the seminar or, excitingly, identify aspects that the trainer themselves has missed. In such cases, it is beneficial if the trainer has the confidence to allow

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[3] The above examples are taken from a clip from *Fleabag* (2019) which is not one of the clips in this current paper.
[4] Based on the 1998 film "Sliding Doors."

some exploration of this whilst also managing the time so that the key pre-planned learning points are covered. The current writer is particularly grateful to various students whose answers have highlighted his own blind-spots with regard to various gendered dynamics in the two clips in this paper. These are reflected in the bonus material.

It should be noted that a similar method has been described in Waller et al. (2013), a paper which only came to my attention after I had developed this technique. There are two core areas of convergence (beyond the obvious one of the use of clips.) The first is what they call "thin-slicing" and refers to the aspect of showing short clips ideally with no context provided. The second, and related, is the idea that the process is about developing students' skills at formulating accurate hypotheses about the dynamics in real-time. There are, however, also areas of divergence. The first is that we draw from rather different theoretical frameworks, with the framework of this paper being primarily psychoanalytic. This is highly significant since psychoanalytic thinking has as its core concept the Freudian unconscious and so it is a significant statement to say that we can explore the workings of the unconscious by what we observe in this way. The second is that the Waller paper appears to focus much less on these questions of exactly how the individuals are influencing in each other and how the network of such influences leads to group dynamics as emergent behaviour.

The Concepts

Projective identification. Ogden (1979) describes this in three phases: an initial phantasy of splitting off part of the self and projecting it into another who is then "taken over" by the projection; interpersonal pressure from the projector to the recipient, nudging the latter to "think, feel and behave in a manner congruent with the projection"; and then a re-internalization by the projector, following a certain amount of processing by the recipient. Of particular relevance for us is the second phase, since that is what we are most likely to observe: an individual (or group) exerting pressure through actual interactions onto the intended recipient, possibly inducing them to conform to the projection.

Valency and *Containment* are both intimately linked to Projective Identification. *Valency* refers to the idea that each of us is more susceptible to certain projections than to others; we are more likely to take on certain projected feelings or roles (Hinshelwood, 1987, p.250.) *Containment* refers to the ability to accept a projection, de-toxify it, and then hand it back at a manageable rate, in a tolerable form, to the original projector. (Bion, 1989.)

Role Suction is a concept that comes from Redl (1942.) It is fundamentally a group concept, the idea that groups, mainly unconsciously, generate a phantasy that not only do they need certain roles to be filled but that they know which member of the group should fill the role. Pressure (suction) is then applied to that group member, to encourage them to take on the assigned role. If this person also has a valency for this role, these may mesh creating a persistent (although not necessarily healthy) pattern. Indeed, the concept *co-creation* is especially relevant here: it refers to any situation where a particular pattern of interaction has emerged from the mutually-interlocking contributions of multiple agents rather than being just the product of what one person does to another. Watzlawick et al. (1967) give an example in a couple where one person is pushing for something and the other is withdrawing. The "withdrawer" believes they withdraw because the pusher is pushing; the pusher believes they need to push more because the withdrawer is withdrawing. The point is that it often

makes more sense to think of the whole cycle of interaction of escalating pushing and withdrawing as a co-created pattern, rather than trying to ascertain who "started" it.

Location of Disturbance. This concept comes from Foulkes who states:

> If one looks at a psychological disturbance as located…*in between persons,* it follows that it can never be wholly confined to a person in isolation. (1948, p.127, italics in original.)

The core idea is that disturbance only *appears* to be located in one person, or between two people: in fact, it belongs more properly in the matrix of the group and that the group unconsciously finds a way to act as if it is located in only one place.

Triangulation. Bowen (1985) describes triangulation as when a pair of people involve or invoke a third person, with the aim of having some particular effect on the initial pairing.

The Clips

Clip 1: Dinner with the Parents, *Friends, Series 1, Episode 2 (1994)*

This is in the context of a seminar on Projective Identification. Before showing them the clip, the students are set the following questions.

Questions:

1. *Who is the main projector?*
2. *Who is the main recipient?*
3. *What is the experience that the projector wants the recipient to accept and identify with?*
4. *How does the projector apply interpersonal pressure to get the recipient to identify?*
5. *Why do you think the projector may be doing this?*

Core Analysis and Applications

Answers 1 to 3. The answers to the first three questions should be fairly straightforward: Judy (the mother) is the main projector; Monica (the daughter) is the main recipient; and the experience is in the area of not being good enough, never getting it right, being inadequate.

Answer 4. The interesting part is when we get to question 4. There are at least 12 short moments which could be offered as evidence, and they generally fall into one of three broad categories: verbal comments to (or about) Monica; non-verbal communications; and perhaps most subtly, verbal communications to or about someone else which may indirectly be attacks on Monica.

Examples in the first category are fairly clear: "oh, we're having spaghetti, that's …easy." Examples in the second category are brief moments like when she pointedly fluffs up the cushions. Examples in the third category are perhaps more open to interpretation. For example, Judy repeatedly praises Ross. At times, this seems so excessive that we might wonder whether it is more about another way of making Monica feel inadequate. A more

blatant example is when Judy says, of one of Monica's friends, "at least she had a chance to leave a man at the altar."

The responses students give to question 4 offer a strong sense of where their understanding is currently at. A common exchange in seminars is that I ask the "how" question and I get an answer like "by scapegoating her." So then I ask, "and what did you actually see that was evidence of her being scapegoated?" "Well, the Mum was being really passive-aggressive." Now, this may be accurate, but we are also going around in circles. Students often need a nudge, with the trainer giving them one or two examples of what they have seen before the penny drops. Similarly, despite the laugh track and the camera panning to Monica's indignant face when Judy plumps the cushion, people often don't mention non-verbal examples. And the third type of example, which is an example of triangulation, is often not spotted at all.

Now, this gives an excellent opportunity to make links between theory and practice. For example, if I know a student works closely with a particular child, I might ask them if they've recently had a time when they've felt anxious around that child. This often happens when the worker first comes on shift. So then I might ask "what did the child say that led to you feeling anxious?" and the answer is often along the lines of "well, it wasn't so much what he said it was his body language (or the way he was wearing his hoodie, or the fact he had his ear-buds in, or…)" Hopefully, by this stage, the students are seeing the connection: that they are often responding to and being affected by non-verbal communications, whether or not they are conscious of them. However, it is still important to check out that they have understood what the concept of projective identification would imply in this case. Without the concept of projective identification, the interpretation of this situation might be along the lines of "I am feeling anxious because I know from experience that this presentation from this child is often a precursor to challenging behaviour." Whereas with the concept of projective identification, the interpretation might be "I am feeling anxious, so maybe the child is feeling anxious and they don't know how to tolerate this feeling and so they are asking me to hold it for them because they hope I can process it better than they can." Similarly, with the third category: when I highlight to the students that praising Ross may be a way of criticising Monica, I may be met with scepticism, or at least surprise that I would expect them to spot such a subtlety. So then I ask the keyworkers if they've ever had a situation where their keychild goes around to other members of staff, ostentatiously being affectionate or warm towards them and clearly with half an eye on the keyworker that they are not treating likewise. And almost all of them have had this experience, and they know exactly what it means.

Answer 5. This brings us to the fifth question, which gets at this core aspect of projective identification. Projective identification does not just claim that people emotionally impact each other, a fairly uncontroversial statement. Projective identification insists that when someone is emotionally impacting us, we consider whether that emotional state belongs, at least in part, to that other person, and that they have found a way to give it to us because they don't believe they can handle it. In this case, it would mean that Judy is not just a bad mother or an unpleasant person (or a socially clumsy one.) She *herself* feels deeply inadequate and her method of handling this is to make her daughter feel inadequate instead.

Links with theory and applications

The answer to 5 links naturally to an application of the theory which is this: when we start to notice that we are having an emotional response to someone, we ask ourselves to what extent this is actually "our" emotion and to what extent it might be an emotion that the other person is asking us to hold for them. Would things have been different if Monica had thought to herself "I'm feeling inadequate, but maybe this is not all my own feeling. Maybe I don't have to take it on as my own"? What does it look like if we try to cultivate this sort of attitude towards our clients in the TC? Would we arrive at a different understanding of their inner worlds, and could this lead to a different sort of response?

Students sometimes raise the question of why Judy might feel inadequate in herself which is officially outside the scope of the clip. And if they don't, the trainer may raise it themselves. An obvious possibility is that she was treated similarly by her mother. If the conversation moves in this direction, I actually have a brief follow-up clip which would appear to confirm this. (Friends, 1994, Series 1, Episode 8.) The evidence is that Judy actually tells Monica that "Nana" (i.e. her mother) was "critical of everything [I] did." Intriguingly, Monica appears now to understand more why her own mother is the way she is and rather than attack her for hypocrisy she is able to initiate a tangential conversation, ostensibly about Nana and Judy's relationship but also (unspoken) about Judy and Monica's. And this also helps Judy reach some dim awareness, for example she catches herself about to "improve" Monica's hair and instead compliments her ear-rings. This also has very fruitful links to applications in the TC: the importance of finding a third position which is neither defensive nor counter-attacking (as Monica was at the dinner); the importance of seeing parallels; and the fact that the answer is not always to talk directly about difficult matters. Sometimes, a tangential conversation can be even more effective.

Bonus Topic: The men, and group dynamics

Beyond the brief discussion of "triangulation," the above has mainly focussed on the interaction between Judy and Monica. Group dynamics has not been discussed in depth, in particular the question of how at one point the Dad intervenes as if to protect Monica but then ends up doing something similar to the Mum, and the question of Ross' role in all of this, since he appears both to be aware of what is happening and have some sympathy for his sister. Students generally find Ross' behaviour easier to explain. Whilst the focus of the scene is on Monica being made to feel inadequate, this is only part of the wider family system. In fact, the system is Monica as scapegoat/black sheep and Ross as the chosen one/blue-eyed boy. And as such, Ross appears to understand that for Monica's position to be raised, his must be lowered. He would like to help his sister, but he knows it will cost him.

The Dad's actions are perhaps harder to understand, and his way of saying what he says could be interpreted as a sign that he is just clumsily trying to protect his daughter: "don't listen to your mother" would suggest that he has some awareness that his wife is being negative towards her. However, at the end of the evening, he's going home with Judy. He's got a vested interest not to upset her, so perhaps his protection of Monica is performative: he gets to look like the good Dad whilst not risking upsetting his wife. Moreover, a question that group analysis has taught us is that it is not just important what happens, it is important when it happens. When does he step in to defend Monica? Ironically, at the one point where she is actually just about to stand up for herself, by challenging Judy. Perhaps it's not ironic, perhaps it is presented as protection of Monica but is in fact protection of Judy. He cuts in

when Monica is just about to call Judy out (Judy: "it's an expression." Monica: "no, it's not.") And the effect of that is that it derails Monica's challenge and he then ends up actually re-enforcing Judy's position.

There are many other aspects of the clip which could be explored but they would take us too far afield. One of the most interesting is the specifics of how Judy triangulates in Rachel and leaving a man at the altar, and Jack triangulates in Rachel's parents with respect to the impact her decisions had on them. This introduces important consideration about gender-based expectations of what constitutes good behaviour and, ultimately, success. Again, it is not just about what those expectations are, but about the webs of communication which continually co-create and co-maintain such implicit systems of belief.

Clip 2: A Dinner Scene, *Inside Out (2015)*

This clip is shown in the context of a seminar on Containment. A key aspect of this movie is that we frequently go inside the minds of the main characters, wherein we witness interactions between various parts of themselves which represent five "core" emotions: Joy, Sadness, Fear, Anger and Disgust. Riley, an only child who is a young adolescent, has "lost" Joy and Sadness as they have been swept out of the main control centre.[5] Before showing them the clip, the students are set the following questions.

Questions:

1. *How is the inner world depicted here?*
2. *Who is "in charge" in Mum's inner world?*
3. *Who is "in charge" in Dad's inner world?*
4. *Which two parts of which two characters end up in an escalating interaction?*
5. *What other two parts of Dad are needed to "put the foot down"?*
6. *Why does Dad think a disaster has been avoided?*
7. *Why does Mum think it was a disaster?*

As trainer, I also have potential follow-up questions in mind that I will use to deepen the exploration, depending on what emerges from the particular group, but also drawing on my experience of what tends to come up in the group.

Core Analysis and Applications

Answers 1-3: The first three questions are intended as a warm-up. Getting them correct gives the student confidence, and if for some reason they don't then it allows the trainer to clarify rather than push on and risk confusing the student further. The answer to the first question is that the camera periodically "zooms" inside the head of a character, where we see the five mini-versions of the main character, in different colours to represent five "primary" emotions. There is also a control console that the mini-characters use to shape the characters external responses and it should be fairly clear that in Mum's inner world this

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[5] This lead in may appear to contradict the earlier statement about minimising the context given to the students. However, this has been included here to give the reader the best opportunity to understand the clip if they haven't got access to actually watch it: this is obviously not needed for the students.

is Sadness and in Dad's, Anger. This is because in both cases they sit at the centre of a horseshoe arrangement, and they instruct the other emotions.

Whilst these questions should be easy, the question of who is "in charge" leads naturally on to a follow-up question: how might this link to the concept of "valency"? Again, the answer is straightforward, offering encouragement to the students: we expect that the character will have a particular valency for whichever emotion is represented by the mini-character who is in charge in their inner world.

This then brings us to the next follow-up question: was there any evidence in the clip to support this hypothesis? Notice how we are now moving into this area that is crucial for the method: what do we actually observe and what is it evidence for?

Question 4: Students may have spotted that it is Mum's Sadness that picks up that something is wrong with Riley. Even if they haven't, they should have spotted how Dad's Anger picks up on Riley's Anger since that is the answer to the next question ("Which two parts of which two characters end up in an escalating interaction?) Again, even though the answer to the actual question is relatively simple, a lot more can be said. One key aspect is that the phrasing of the question itself invites a different way to talk about, and therefore think about, group dynamics. The everyday description would be closer to "Dad and Riley end up in an escalating interaction" rather than "Dad's Anger and Riley's Anger end up in an escalating interaction." This second description is an important reminder that we all contain multiplicities, and that how we appear at any moment may say more about which part of us has been activated rather than being a global statement about us as an individual. More subtly, it gestures towards another possibility that is worth considering: could other parts of other individuals have ended up in an escalating interaction? And I would say that the answer is yes. When Mum tries to understand what's wrong, Riley's anger gets activated: "She's probing us." It is not too hard to imagine that, if Mum had responded from her anger, this could have escalated. For example, Mum could have replied in an irritated way along the lines of "I'm trying to help you and you're not letting me." Instead, Mum's Sadness steps in and defuses the situation. Even more clearly, when Mum then tries to get help from Dad, he feels angry at being given an unclear request. Interestingly, he doesn't express this directly, instead looking blankly at Mum. Internally, Mum's Anger says "I could strangle him right now." Again, we may only be one more angry comment from an escalation, and Mum's Sadness again defuses this.

The group-analytic concept of location of disturbance is useful here. The hot potato of anger is passed around. It could manifest between Riley and Mum but it doesn't. It could manifest between Mum and Dad but it doesn't. But like a bubbling reservoir of lava it still exists beneath the surface and will find a way to break through where the crust is at its thinnest: in this case, between Riley and Dad. The core conceit of the film (going inside characters' heads) is here used to great effect as we see that the real, latent, situation is that all characters carry aspects of anger (and all other emotions). However, interpersonal processes lead to the anger manifesting explicitly as an issue just between two of them.

Answers 5-7: In the clip, two character's have keys that they must both use to unlock the mechanism to "put the foot down." These are Dad's Fear and Dad's Disgust. The group may discuss the symbolism of this, how what manifests as anger may be underpinned by other emotions, and the question of how accurate it is that it may be these two emotions. Moreover, Dad's Fear plays a very active role in pushing on Dad's Anger to take action. For

example, Dad's Fear says things like "Sir! She just rolled her eyes at us" and "Sir! Reporting high levels of sass!" This naturally segues into question 6 and 7.

The scene ends with Dad's Anger saying to his other emotions "Good job, Gentlemen. That could have been a disaster." Immediately afterwards, we see Mum's Sadness say "Well, that was a disaster." The students generally laugh at this, amused by the juxtaposition of their diametrically opposed thoughts, and instinctively understanding why each character would see the interaction in their own way. What is important, though, is to tease out with them explicitly why they feel the way they do.

Presumably, for Dad the disaster is about losing control, not managing to exert his authority. And whilst his authority is exerted through his angry response, the underlying emotion is one of fear: fear of what it means if his daughter is allowed to "get away with" such things as displaying "high levels of sass" and rolling her eyes. He saw the interaction as primarily a battle of wills, and he felt that it was vital, as the parent, that he "won."

What of Mum? Mum has picked up from early on that something is not right with Riley. Furthermore, Riley is very reluctant to be open with her parents about what is bothering her. From this perspective, Mum can see that not only have we learnt nothing about what was originally bothering Riley but now she is also upset about something else, and even less likely to open up to her parents. Viewed thus, it is clearly a disaster.

Links with theory and applications.

The reader may, at this point, like to ask themselves whether they have remembered what the theoretical topic of the seminar containing this clip was: the students by this stage have often forgotten, since they are so engrossed in analysing the clip. This is therefore a good time for the trainer to ask "what is the relevance for our topic today, which was Containment?" The starting point is that Mum recognised that Riley was in need of containment. She felt unequal to the task of doing this on her own and indicated to Dad to help ("we'll need support. Signal the husband.")

This is extremely relevant for therapeutic work with looked after children, especially when the children have experienced complex trauma, as is often the case for clients who need therapeutic communities. On the surface, it would be understandable if Mum regretted inviting Dad to help and wished she'd chosen to try to support Riley alone. However, there are nuances to be teased out, so the trainer may now ask a question such as "how does this relate to your work?" A common answer may be "it's a problem if staff are not on the same page" and this is true, it can be a problem. Yet we can also go deeper, so the trainer may ask "if our responses often come from our valencies, would it be best if all staff had the same valencies so that they all responded in roughly similar ways?" This normally serves to unlock deeper thinking, since most staff will have experienced that having colleagues who pick up on different things from them can ultimately be very beneficial. Once this is established, we can think again about what has happened here. Even if she is not consciously aware of it, has Mum asked for Dad's help not just for "back up" but because she is unconsciously aware that she is unlikely to be able to tune in to the whole picture and he may tune in to different aspects? Riley has multiple strong emotions as do the children the staff work with. The challenge is this: not only does very strong sadness feel intolerable (and so needs to be

projected) and not only does very strong anger feel intolerable (and so also needs to be projected) but *strong sadness and strong anger together feel almost explosive,* and so need to be projected *to different places.* This happens frequently within staff teams who work with troubled children, as described in James (2002) but also with other troubled client groups (for example, Main, 1957.)

Now, what does this mean in terms of Containment? It is not just that Mum needs to contain the sadness and pass it back detoxified and Dad needs to contain the anger and pass it back detoxified: there is something about the intolerable conflict between the two which needs to be contained and detoxified before being passed back. Put another way, staff members are not just taking it in turns to provide dyadic containment: the staff group *as a group* needs to provide containment. Sadness may get projected into Mum and Anger into Dad. But the "sadness-anger conflict" has not been projected into either of them, it has been projected into *the space between them* and so containment can only be provided by them working together. If students can grasp this powerful but subtle concept, the use of the clip will have been justified.

Bonus Topic: Mental Load

It is recognised that, within households, women very frequently hold the majority of the "mental load." (Daminger, 2019.) Mental load refers to overseeing, planning and managing tasks whether or not that person is themselves the one who carries out the task. Ciciolla and Luthar (2019) identify four key areas:

(i)   keeping household routines,
(ii)   organizing schedules,
(iii)   maintaining order, and
(iv)   providing emotional support to children

Within the first thirty seconds of the clip, we see Mum taking on responsibilities in at least three of these areas and, importantly from a group dynamic point of view, we see how both Riley and Dad leave her to do this. It is co-created and co-maintained.

At the start, Mum is telling them which of their new bins are for what (keeping household routines.) Not only has she already taken on the task of finding this out but she is presumably trying to engage them to at least take some responsibility for the bins now that she has told them what to do. Instead, she gets a very non-committal response and it appears very likely that they will need reminding again at a later date. Tellingly, when Mum signals Dad later, one of his thoughts (in an angry internal dialogue) is that she may be hinting at the bins. But even here he seems annoyed with her for not being clear enough ("what is it, Woman, what?!?") as opposed to recognising that the reason he doesn't know is because he zoned out.

Mum then goes on to tell Riley that there are trials for a local ice-hockey team. This is primarily "organising schedules." It also has an element of emotional support, in that she is trying to get Riley enthused about something positive. Riley doesn't sound positive: perhaps this is understandable but more to the point Dad has not noted it, and again it seems likely that he will need reminding about this. Again the effect of this dynamic is that Mum is inviting them to share the mental load and they are leaving it with her.

And then, when Riley's response gives away that maybe there is something more than her just daydreaming, Mum switches more definitely into "providing emotional support to children." Moreover, notice how that means that Mum's ability to recognise subtle clues and shift gear accordingly implies she is constantly needing to be vigilant, not only to perform these meta-tasks but to perform the meta-meta-task of deciding at any point which of the meta-tasks to perform! By contrast, it is because Dad has not been paying attention to such tasks that he is so thrown when the time comes to change gear, assuming it is more about regulatory matters (the bins, as mentioned, but also leaving the toilet seat up.) And interestingly, when Dad does start to act, he ends up assuming he has been called in to perform the other task, "maintaining order", which is not correct and so the situation worsens. It is not hard to imagine that, following this, Mum will feel called upon to maintain order (calm down Riley) and then offer emotional support.

Whilst such considerations are not directly about containment in the psychoanalytic sense, one could make a link with Winnicott's concept of "holding", the question of all the things that need attending to if we are to "hold" the environment. Moreover, they may raise very interesting questions about the division of labour within the trainees' workplaces, whether that be along gender lines or different divisions, and frequently provides very fruitful exploration of unconscious assumptions about who should be doing what and why.

Conclusion

TV and film clips are a very effective way of training therapeutic community practitioners with regard to core psychodynamic, group dynamic and systemic concepts. The clips serve to bring to life ideas which on paper can seem abstract despite the fact that they generally refer to phenomena that are constantly occurring in all human interactions. Moreover, the use of brief clips coupled with an interactive style of training supports students to strengthen their observation skills in real-time, giving them a much firmer foundation for developing their ability to choose when and how to intervene in actual situations within their workplace.

Although the majority of the clips are fictional[6], we are fortunate to be living in what has been described as a "Golden Age" for television (Pichard, 2011). As a result, most clips contain much more than just the processes that the trainer has chosen to focus on for the topic of the seminar. This means that when students are working at a deeper level they can also get more from the discussion, as illustrated by possibilities shown for each of the clips above.

In addition, students almost always find this a very engaging and memorable way to learn. As a result, they are more likely to retain what they have learnt, both through being more engaged in the session as it happens and more likely to reflect back on it at a later date.

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[6] And both clips described in this paper are, although I do also use clips from documentaries and similar.

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