

Neutrality – the essence of the psychoanalytic cure

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Abstract Content (EN)

Neutrality is one of the most misunderstood concepts of psychoanalysis. Neutrality refers to technique, to the function of the analyst, and not to the emotional presence of the analyst in the analytic situation. Technical neutrality does not mean being indifferent, cold, or insensitive – the analytic situation is an analytic *relationship*, and the analyst is intimately involved in this relationship. Neutrality refers to a position in relation to the transference, to a radical non-judgmental attitude which provides patients freedom to express themselves without moralistic evaluation. In this paper, I argue that neutrality may be regarded as a fundamental curative principle of psychoanalytic treatment. In line with the rule of abstinence, neutrality implies that wished-for-relationships are not gratified but *analysed* – to gratify is to deprive patients of analytic help to understand their own share in their suffering. Neutrality comes forward as essential in assisting the individual's process towards greater freedom and selfdetermination.