

Neutrality in relation to atrocities and dehumanisation

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Abstract Content (EN)

Neutrality in the clinical situation is understood as technical neutrality, an attitude and an optimal position to understand and relate to conflict. This position is dependent on a common ground and a shared code for the clinical relationship and is secured by the setting of the psychoanalytic encounter. Technical neutrality aims at securing the analytic encounter when under pressure for example by high projective pressures and enactments

This will be explored in meetings with patients exposed to human rights violations. The power relations and aggressions related to atrocities can dominate for longer or shorter times. Technical neutrality will be explored relating to contexts where it is not relevant to be "neutral" in the sense of not expressing a stance in relation to patients' experience of being dehumanised. Clinical examples will be given.

In situations of social upheaval, massive aggression, extreme victimisation and where realities are obscured by propaganda, common understanding is broken and dialogue and the rule of law is under attack. How psychoanalysis and psychoanalysts (including their organisations) can relate and possibly make meaningful interventions will be discussed. What can be the meaning of neutrality in contexts characterised by strong group transferences (dehumanising and demonisation of others) prevail?