

PACE Panel “Assistance in catastrophes and analytical neutrality. Between pain and destructiveness”

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Abstract Content (EN)

We would like to discuss analytical neutrality in times of catastrophe, presenting group work situations carried out by our committee together with analysts and psychotherapists who assist during environmental disasters and wars.

How do we consider the neutrality of psychoanalytic practice in supervision and Work Discussion Groups where death, terror, and hatred surround us?

Our goal in this presentation is to conceptualize our task from the perspective of analytical neutrality, understood as an attitude free of moral prejudice. Neutrality implies a lively, receptive, and restrained presence, where the analyst participates with the capacity to “endure” a complex emotional experience in which destructiveness and hatred predominate concretely. Neutrality in this sense means not imposing values or acting impulsively, but maintaining a committed mental function, accepting transformation by the emotional experience and returning it metabolized to the patient. This idea of neutrality proposed by post-Kleinian authors differs from the classical perspective of abstinence. Rigid neutrality, conceived in these terms, risks becoming a defense for the analyst against the intensity of transference and countertransference.

Neutrality in this sense is the capacity to withstand the patient’s projections without acting or defending prematurely.