What is Special Fields TA?

by Julie Hay

Until a few years ago, "special fields" was the term applied to non-clinical applications of TA. Nowadays, the Training and Certification Council of Transactional Analysts (T&C Council) refers to three field "specializations": clinical, educational, and organizational. In Europe counseling is recognized as a fourth field.

T&C Council Definitions

The T&C Manual refers to the special fields relative to competency in applying TA:
- for clinical certification: "In clinical work for the accomplishment of contractual change."
- for educational certification: "In educational work for the accomplishment of contractual goals, the contractual presentation of structures to support people in meeting their own goals for acquiring skills, learning theory, exploration, developing support, completing tasks, or creating plans or models."
- for organizational certification: "In a career of consulting or training to or with organizations as a competent behavioral scientist, organizational development specialist, and/or organizational trainer."

EATA's View

The Training Manual for the European TA Association’s (EATA) Commission of Certification (COC) describes the fields of TA application in even more detail.
- The Clinical field of application is chosen by trainees whose activities are directly aimed at curing clients, i.e., at relieving their symptoms and/or helping them to restructure their personalities and/or their social frames of reference.
- The Educational field of application is chosen by trainees working with children, juveniles, or adults in the educational area, at or outside schools. Their work is aimed at education and/or growth of the personality as well as development, within the social frame of reference.
- The Organizational field of application is chosen by those trainees who work in or for organizations, taking into account organizational references as well as the organization’s development. Their work is aimed at the development and growth of people and the increased effectiveness of individuals working within organizations.

These descriptions suggest that clinical TA is concerned with cure and restructuring, whereas the other fields are about development and growth. But is it really that simple? Can we have cure without growth, development without some restructuring?
three corners—analyst, organization, individual—and possibly more.

Presented as a scale (Figure 1), it is clear that specific skills are needed to deal with multiparty contracting. Educational and counseling applications may be closer to either end of the scale, depending on the circumstances.

**Approaches:** Or, what methods and techniques will be appropriate? This depends on the degree of the impasse, for example, issues that can be dealt with in the here-and-now versus those requiring regression. With the former, work is with the client’s (Integrated) Adult. For deeper impasses, the (Introjected) Parent and (Archaic) Child are involved.

**Where This Leads Us**

Linking these ideas of clients and approaches to the work provides a way to differentiate the various fields of TA application. For example, if using regression, appropriate protection must be provided. One way to achieve this is to ensure ongoing therapeutic support and confidentiality.

When working in settings where organizations are party to the contracts, one has less control over circumstances. For example, organizations and educational institutions may cancel the contract for financial reasons, employees may change jobs and become ineligible to participate, and confidentiality cannot be guaranteed in groups of colleagues.

I want to emphasize that I do not believe that one should avoid working with feelings in non-clinical fields, or that it is even possible to do so. When working with Integrated Adult, Parent and Child are incorporated and the full range of feelings and thoughts will be present. Our introjected and archaic ego states will be there whether we like it or not! However, we can avoid inviting clients to reenter these archaic relics without the protection of an appropriate therapy contract. Instead, we can work with them to remember the past and to plan new ways to deal with the present and the future.

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