

A TA-Based Approach to what happens after Lockdowns

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This article has been prompted by questions about what TA can contribute to the process as lockdowns end and people move back into what tends to be called the 'new normal'.

What might this be in the various contexts of TA application? What are likely to be the impacts of previous events on clients, participants, students, employees, schoolchildren, teachers, managers ? I will begin this article with some thoughts about what are the main psychological impacts of the pandemic. I will go on to include a brief review of what has been published in this newsletter already, followed by some ideas we might borrow from psychoanalysis that may help us in terms of considering the overall context within which we are experiencing the pandemic. I will conclude with ideas, prompted by TA theory, of what might be needed as the 'new normal' begins to come into effect.

As you read on, you might like to consider how these issues are evidence of concepts mentioned below – uneven development and negative hallucination. It is unlikely that this article will be read by anyone who happens to live in an area of the world where there is no individual freedom, or where life is likely to be extinguished through war, famine or natural disasters. In such circumstances, Covid may not be the top priority to worry about so we might want to remember how lucky we are to live within circumstances where we can think about a 'new normal', especially if we have not lost anyone close to us to Covid.

When I began to write this article, I had the title as 'What happens after Covid' but then realised that we are only at this stage of potentially ending lockdowns – Covid will still be there and we have no idea yet of when it may be gone, if ever. This is of course one of the psychological themes that we need to take into account. The way in which people refer to the 'new normal' is a constant reminder that we will not be returning to how things used to be. Everyone is being required,

forced, compelled, obliged, coerced ... to go through a significant change in how they construct and make meaning of the world (Allen and Allen 1987).

There have been a number of articles about Covid in previous issues of this newsletter. In June 2020, when we advised that the ITAA, EATA, UKATA, IARTA and FTAA Presidents had announced the cancellation of the world TA Conference, there were two articles: about online training for volunteers on Covid hotlines (Vinokurova 2020), and using Functional Fluency (Bishop 2020). These were followed in September 2020 by considerations of several TA concepts applied to isolation (Wilson 2020), and in December 2020 by an item about working online (Hay 2020). In March 2021 there was an update about the cancelled conference, alerting readers that only very small refunds would be made (which has since been confirmed by the insolvency administrators). In the same issue, IDTA announced that it had joined the World Online TA Association, whose launch is progressing well.

Hence, we cannot ignore the positive and negative impacts of Covid on the international TA community. We lost the conference when the five associations refused to postpone it, we lost an alternative online conference when the same associations withdrew their support – but since then there has been a huge increase in online events being run by associations and training institutes – and a massive increase in the availability of discounted fees. Also, there is now a World Online Association as a way for individuals interested in TA to be in contact with other individuals, and to check out what TA qualifications exist and how they compare, what programs are available and how each can lead to various qualifications, what separate events and CPD opportunities are available, and what conferences are being planned.

Psychoanalysis and Covid

The following thoughts are about how we might understand the negative impacts of the pandemic, seen from the perspective of psychoanalysis. They are based on material

within a recently published book edited by Levine and de Staal (2021).

The first chapter is by Christopher Bollas (2021). Although he positions his comments in the USA and in the recently ended Trump era, much of what he writes is just as relevant more generally. He invites us to consider how there are two viruses – the biological virus but also the virus of fake news, and how the latter has led to "collapse of structures crucial to large group functioning" (p.4) so that people have reverted to a feudal style of follow the leader. He reminds us that our first group was our family, in which we learned love and law. Hopefully, the love was unconditional and the law comprised behaviours that we would need for future participation in groups.

Bollas goes on to comment that groups, and the individuals within them, will normally engage in neurotic and psychotic processes. However, whereas the neurotic processes involve conflicts between contents of the mind and we make ongoing attempts to unravel these, the psychotic processes involve conflicts between parts of the mind and we are more likely to deny those parts and project them onto others who we then hate. Within TA, we might consider the neurotic processes as being contaminations that we may well eliminate in dialogue with others, whereas the psychotic processes might be exclusions of complete ego states within ourselves so that we conclude that it is the others who are behaving so negatively.

He goes on to suggest that we might 'manage' these processes by developing a 'faith', such as 'born again' Christianity or capitalism – ""Let market forces decide strategies" fits very well with "Let this be in God's hands"" (p.9). He suggests that we also then ignore ethics, empathy and otherness, such as when we rebel against lockdowns and social distancing even though this means we are valuing our own freedom of choice regardless of the hospitalisations and deaths of others that will be the results of our behaviours. We then "experience the loss of these parts of the self as evidence of having been invaded and diminished by an enemy." (p.12) and adopt conspiracy theories, often with negative

hallucinations [in TA – discounting]. We "keep the unpleasant outside consciousness" (p.15), especially when we regard the situation as too complex. The larger the group, the greater likelihood for sociopathy and "the unaccountability of leaders to the large group for their actions that leaves us inside the sociopathic vacuum: one that sucks the ethical life out of themselves as they become deeply embedded..." (p.20). Within the TA community, the faith will tend to be I'm OK, You're OK, with the same disregard of any factual information, and might explain the ways in which those calling for an independent enquiry about the 2020 TA conference cancellation are told that the matter is too complicated.

Michael Rustin (2021), in the following chapter, refers back to the Russian Revolution and Trotsky for the idea of uneven development and suggests Bion's (1975) notion of containment as an explanation, due to the collapse of many containing structures. Although experiences of containment occur first in our family of origin, we come to depend on the wider environment for a secure relation between container and contained. Covid has challenged our trust in governments, which in turn intensifies the resentments associated with uneven development as it applies to social groups. Our membership of the TA community container probably becomes so much more important when the various national containers we live within seem to be less than effective in dealing with the pandemic.

Bollas and Rustin have concentrated on group processes and leadership. Other authors in the same book raise some other aspects that are worth thinking about:

- Rocha Barros and Rocha Barros (2021) refer to the way that Brazilian sailor/explorer Amyr Klink rowed alone across the South Atlantic for 100 days in a small boat that was therefore invested with a sense of adventure and accomplishment – only for him to discover that it became an extremely negative place to be when he decided to spend another 100 days in the same boat

as a form of quarantine during the pandemic. The authors go on to give several other examples of clients interpreting events during the pandemic as if they are 'boggarts' - the shape-shifting creature in the Harry Potter books and movies that takes on the appearance of whatever is most frightening to whoever is seeing it.

- Lévy (2021) describes a time when he needed to take a break from being a psychoanalyst and advised his clients that their analysis must be stopped but as soon as he was available again it would "resume where it left off", only to have a client respond that it would continue from "where I will be then". (p.162).
- Levine (2021) points out that the pandemic has exposed us to an awareness of mortality that we are 'normally' able to deny. Like Bollas and Rustin, he also mentions the realisation that the political leaders cannot be relied upon.

Summarising the themes from these psychoanalytic authors, it seems that the pandemic has threatened our sense of reliance on our national governments, on our leaders, even our sense that life for us will continue in much the same way that we have experienced it before the pandemic. Will we again be able to predict our future by discounting the possibility of bad things happening to good people?

How might TA concepts contribute to the 'new normal' for individuals

Because I am writing this for publication by the Institute of Developmental TA, I will not directly address psychotherapy practice although similar considerations will apply as for the other one-to-one practices of counselling or coaching, and for therapy groups the ideas below about work and educational groups are likely to be relevant. I will, however, mention a couple of ideas from psychoanalysis that I noted in the book referred to above.

Levine (2021) refers to Parson's (1999) explanation of the typical analytic setting being a representation of the internal mental

structure, in that lying down on the couch, the frequency of sessions, and the silence of the analyst are all meant to negate ordinary circumstances. This prompts me to recognise that TA one-to-one working is also meant to be different to ordinary circumstances; TA practitioners are not there as friends, family members, colleagues, authority figures, advisers, etc. Ferro (2021) helpfully refers to how the "increasing freedom and playfulness... that the non-traditional setting [of being online] evoked an even greater improvisational atmosphere... [and]... it enabled a new, free circulation of emotion to open up. After all, is theatre necessarily more involving and emotionally impactful than cinema?" (p.100). I also reviewed the advantages and potential shortcomings of working online (Hay 2020).

The following material is therefore written more about whether we are working with individual clients who are likely to be going back into organisational and/or educational contexts, or whether our clients (or we) have responsibilities that involve bringing individuals back into those types of contexts.

Strokes

I mention this as the first TA concept because it is so relevant to what has been happening with lockdowns. In Hay (2020) I described how people may have lost much or even all of their stroking patterns with their families, friends, colleagues. They may be experiencing new patterns online but these will often be less intense than strokes exchanged face-to-face, especially when we factor in the loss of touch stroking even though that may only be handshakes or brushing of cheeks. They may be going back into circumstances where they expect to experience the stroking patterns that they had before Covid emerged and this is likely to be unrealistic. Individuals who have been experiencing reduced levels of stroking may not be able to easily go back to old patterns – they may no longer believe that the magic fuzzy bags (Steiner 1970) will always contain a stroke. Individuals are likely to be stroke-starved and therefore may conclude that strokes at 'normal' intensity are somehow not genuine. They may have

readjusted their beliefs in the stroke myths (Steiner 1971) and have become reluctant to give or accept strokes, or may appear to be stroking themselves more than seems appropriate.

We might suggest that people review their stroking patterns before, during and after lockdown. Invite them to consider the different contexts, such as family, friends, work, studying, etc. They might complete Table 1 for different contexts. People might consider first the strokes they GET (receive) and then consider the strokes they GIVE. How satisfied are they with each pattern?

For people who have struggled with online strokes because they perceive them as having less value, reviewing whether the strokes are visual, auditory or kinaesthetic may be especially helpful for them to understand the stroking process. Kinaesthetic strokes cannot

be exchanged online but the individual can think about how they might be discounting visual and auditory strokes as if they were kinaesthetic, when they can still see and hear the other person.

For each different context, individuals might consider whether there are any elements of 'cancellation' through the common process of always matching a stroke with a return stroke of similar nature or intensity? This happens generally in face-to-face contact anyway but it might feel more negative when it is being moderated through an online process.

Working styles versus drivers

Working styles are our characteristic strengths (Hay 2009) which become our drivers (Kahler 1975) when we are stressed. Keep in mind that we will recognise all of the styles but most of us will have one or two that are more characteristic for us.

Context:	Before Lockdown	During Lockdown	After Lockdown
Identify four or five people that you had or expect to have contact with			
What were typical strokes that were being exchanged, or what do you expect the strokes to be in the future?			
How intense were those strokes or how intense do you expect, or hope, them to be?			
Through which representational systems did they come – visual, auditory, kinaesthetic?			
Were they, or will they be, 'moderated' such as through Zoom or some other online platform?			
What might you want to do now to get the best stroking pattern for the future?			

Table 1: Stroking Patterns Before, During and After Lockdown.

Also, we are likely to have been more stressed than usual because of Covid and lockdowns, so we may have fallen into more of the traps of driver behaviours. The following are some examples of what might have happened for each working style/driver. The examples relate to our working life but similar patterns may apply to our personal relationships.

- Hurry Up – lockdowns save a lot of time because we do not have to make any journeys – we can instantly connect with other people online – although we may become very impatient if they are not familiar with online working and cannot log in as quickly as we expect. Because we may only be showing our head and shoulders online, we can save a lot of time in terms of how we are dressed below that level 😊
- Be Perfect – again lockdowns may seem an advantage because we do not have to plan journeys and visits – it may be easier to plan for online meetings, especially if we are familiar with software that handles appointment making as well as software for running meetings – and we may particularly like the idea that we can now record the conversations so that our notes afterwards will be more accurate. We may worry that we are not giving the correct impression of ourselves if other people cannot see how smart and business-like our appearance is.
- Please People – this style may well be the cause of the most distress about lockdowns because we cannot be with people, and it may be harder to use our intuition to work out how to please someone. We may also be disappointed that our efforts to dress to please the 'eye of the beholder' may be irrelevant when they can only see our head and shoulders – our colourful clothing and jewellery may go unseen.
- Try Hard – we may also prefer to be with people but we may approach the idea of communicating online with enthusiasm – especially when we realise that our range of contacts can be so much wider – we can connect online with people in many areas of the world, with quite different

interests – although this may mean that we go off on too many tangents and do not finish what we are meant to be doing.

- Be Strong – we may prefer lockdowns because we do not have to be with other people – we can get on with our work, we can do the tasks we need to do, and we can do these alone without interruptions. It will be easier to focus on the task when we are having online meetings, and to avoid small talk – in TA terms we can concentrate on working and minimise the time spent in rituals and pastiming.

We might introduce people to the working styles/drivers if they are not already familiar with this concept, and link the various styles to the preferred channels of communication. Although linking ego states to drivers is a simplification, if people are extra stressed because of Covid they are likely to be more extreme and therefore likely to engage their 'default' behavioural ego state as follows:

- Be Perfect – will prefer a Functional Adult-Functional Adult interaction that is logical;
- Please People – will respond best to a Nurturing Parent-Natural Child interaction where they feel that you care about them;
- Try Hard – will tend towards a Natural Child-Natural Child interaction where you are both being very enthusiastic;
- Be Strong – may expect a Controlling Parent-Adapted Child interaction within which the more senior person tells the other person what to do;
- Hurry Up – may prefer whatever matches any secondary working style they have but may respond well as long as the communication is quick, regardless of the ego states involved.

We can also help individuals understand that our working styles are more likely to become our drivers when we experience the stress of circumstances changing. This means that the styles will have become stronger when lockdowns began and will probably become stronger when lockdowns end. We will not simply go back to being how we were before Covid emerged. Depending on what may have happened around us during lockdowns, we may be even more stressed when we have to

begin grappling with the 'new normal', especially when we are not clear about what it will really be like:

- Hurry Up – may need to be encouraged to be more patient and not expect everyone to know exactly how to behave once lockdown ends;
- Be Perfect – may need to be steered away from expecting to spend a lot of time to produce a 'perfect' plan before they are prepared to move out of lockdown;
- Please People – may need plenty of nurturing as they come out of lockdown, with clear indications that others are pleased to see them;
- Try Hard – may need to be constrained from experimenting with too many different ways of establishing the 'new normal';
- Be Strong – may respond best to clear instructions about when and where they are expected to be once lockdown ends.

Discounting

Discounting was defined by Schiff and Contributors (1975) as an internal process whereby we minimise or ignore some aspect of ourselves, others, or the situation. We do not know when we are discounting. People who learn TA will sometimes confuse discounting with when somebody genuinely does not know something. We need to be careful that we do not believe that people are discounting the processes of moving into lockdown and moving out of it again. Most of us do not have experiences of pandemics before this one, so most of us are not discounting elements of the situation when we do not know what to expect.

However, we may be discounting elements of ourselves when we believe that we cannot cope. It can be useful to invite individuals to use the steps to success model (Hay 2009). As they will all have experienced going into lockdown, they can use that experience to analyse how the levels of discounting might have impacted on them then. They can then consider how that may allow them to forecast how they are likely to deal with coming out of lockdown. In Table 2, there are two columns for the future:

one refers to the general context such as for the country or geographical area and the other is intended to be used for thinking about returning to work, or having more contact with family or friends – whichever situation the individual is concerned about.

How might TA concepts be applied within organisations to contribute to the 'new normal'

Any of the concepts mentioned above can of course also be applied within organisational settings, as can some other concepts I will describe below. Hopefully, managers and/or human resource professionals will be familiar enough with the cultures of their organisation to consider how the various TA concepts can serve as frameworks for action. They might also consider whether it will be helpful to involve the employees in the decision making and planning process.

The benefit of so much online activity due to lockdown makes it possible to conduct surveys before bringing people back into the organisation. This can include questionnaires to be completed on phones, laptops, ipads, etc - or even done by post! Online allows one-to-one interviews and focus groups or similar, all more conveniently and at lower costs than on-site. In addition to being a source of information, such contacts also demonstrate that employee opinions are valued - provided any subsequent decisions are seen to take those opinions into account! There are likely to be unexpected benefits also when employees provide innovative suggestions - the best way to sweep the floor is often in the mind of the person who wields the broom.

Steps to Success

Leaders of organisations might complete a variation of the steps to success suggested above, with the questions suggested in Table 3.

Striking Patterns

Those leading the organisation might also consider the striking patterns of the organisation, with particular attention to what

Level of discounting	Going into lockdown	Coming out of lockdown – general context	Coming out of lockdown – specific context
Situation	How did you find out what was required e.g. TV, newspapers, someone told you?	How are you finding out what is going to be required? How are you assessing the reliability of your sources of information?	How can you check out with other people (managers, friends, family) what their expectations are?
Significance	What were the requirements and how did they affect you?	What will the requirements be and how will they affect you? How much might that be the same as before Covid emerged? What significant differences might there be?	What will the requirements be and how will they affect you? How much might that be the same as before Covid emerged? What significant differences might there be?
Solutions	What did you need to do differently? From whom or where did your ideas and options come?	What will you need to do differently? From whom might you get ideas and options? How will you stimulate your own creativity?	What will you need to do differently? From whom might you get ideas and options? How will you stimulate your own creativity?
Skills	What new skills did you need to learn (e.g. working online)?	What skills do you already have that might be appropriate in the 'new normal'? What new skills might you need? How can you acquire them? Will other people be helping you to develop new skills?	What skills do you already have that might be appropriate in the 'new normal'? What new skills might you need? How can you acquire them? Will other people be helping you to develop new skills?
Strategies	How did you put together your plan for how to behave during lockdown? What steps did you include?	How will you now put together a plan for how to behave in the 'new normal'? What support might you need from other people and how will you arrange to get that?	How will you now put together a plan for how to behave in the 'new normal'? What support might you need from other people and how will you arrange to get that?
Success	How did you motivate yourself and avoid sabotaging yourself? Do you respond better if you think about positive ideas for the future or if you remind yourself of negative consequences if you do not do what you need to do? Are you more motivated if you carry out plans on your own or is it better for you if you have the support of other people?	How will you motivate yourself and avoid sabotaging yourself? Think about gain versus pain – what will encourage you to behave appropriately – and what negative consequences do you want to avoid? What contacts are you going to have with other people – will they be helping or hindering you to succeed? How might they do that and how can you avoid anything that is not helpful?	How will you motivate yourself and avoid sabotaging yourself in this particular situation? Think about gain versus pain in this particular situation – what will encourage you to behave appropriately – and what negative consequences do you want to avoid? What contacts are you going to have with other people in this particular situation – how can you avoid anyone who might be unhelpful?

Table 2: Steps to Success applied to Lockdowns and Contexts

Level	Going into lockdown	Coming out of lockdown
Situation	What requirements did your government set? What other factors influenced the decisions made by your organisation?	What requirements is your government now setting? What other factors might you need to take into account (e.g. views of employees, customers, service users)?
Significance	How did government requirements and any other factors determine what you needed to do within your organisation? What was the impact on your 'productivity', including goods and services produced? What was the impact on the motivation of your employees?	How will the current situation impact on the functioning and the culture of your organisation? What problems will you need to overcome? What might be the impact on motivation of your employees (and your managers)?
Solutions	What did you decide to do? Who suggested useful options?	What will you need to do differently? What new opportunities might you need to create? How might contribute ideas or options?
Skills	What new skills did your employees need to acquire, such as working from home, working online, wearing protective equipment, etc? What arrangements did you make for them to acquire the skills?	What skills do your employees (and managers) have that will still be relevant? What new skills might they need? How will you help them to acquire the new skills?
Strategies	What strategies did you follow as you went into your organisational lockdown arrangements? How did you share your plans with your managers, your employees, your consumers, customers, service users? Were there any other stakeholders to take into account?	What do you need to include in your strategic plan for the 'new normal' within your organisation? How will you communicate the details of this plan to your managers, employees, service users, etc? Are there other stakeholders who should be communicated with?
Success	How did you motivate people to follow the strategy? Did you emphasise the positive benefits of staying safe? Did you emphasise the potential negative consequences of not changing? Did you make arrangements for people to still be in contact with others or was it more appropriate for them to work individually?	How will you motivate people to follow the strategy? How will you emphasise the positive benefits and the potential negative consequences? How will you deal with anyone who fails to follow the new arrangements?

Table 3: Steps to Success applied to Organisations

they were before lockdown and what they might appropriately become after lockdown. Many people will have been stressed by the pandemic, whether they continued attending their workplace or not. Their individual stroking patterns will have been impacted and they are likely to be coming out of lockdown with a stroke deficiency – in other words, they may well be rather like people coming out of solitary confinement and somewhat desperate to receive as many strokes as they can to make up for what they have been missing. As I mentioned above, they may have lost their trust in warm fuzzy bags, which will

mean that they are unwilling to give out strokes as well as not expecting them from others. This will apply to managers just as much as to their subordinates. It will not be realistic to expect to easily create a culture in which stroke-starved managers are giving a much higher level of stroking to employees than was customary before lockdown. Innovative solutions may be needed for ways in which managers can be given sufficient positive strokes so that they are able, in turn, to provide these to the employees. It may take some time before a healthy stroking pattern can be re-established.

Stage/Potential Problems	Before Lockdown	During Lockdown	After Lockdown
Being – the individual may not feel they have the right to exist	How did your organisation let employees know that you valued them?	What changes did you make in order to still let employees know that you valued them when they were working from home or under other arrangements?	What additional activities do you need to introduce now that your employees will be stressed and likely to need more nurturing than previously?
Exploring – the individual may struggle with new circumstances	How did you support your employees as they became aware that change was needed due to Covid?	How have you supported your employees to work from home or under other arrangements? How did you identify those who needed additional support?	How can you set up return to work processes that allow flexibility of how much time employees need to explore the new circumstances? How will you identify those who need additional support?
Thinking – the individual may believe that it is dangerous to think for themselves	What did you do to ensure that your managers invited employees to offer their own thinking?	What did you do to encourage employees to share their thinking with their managers about the best ways to function during lockdown?	How are you seeking the thoughts of your employees about what needs to happen after lockdown? What are you planning to do when you identify employees who seem afraid to think for themselves?
Identity – this relates directly to the script of the individual	What did you do to recognise that individuals have different life positions and different drivers?	How did you help those with negative life positions deal with the stresses of going into lockdown? How did you help those with each of the drivers?	What will you do to invite individuals to move into an I'm OK, You're OK perspective as they return from lockdown? What will you do to help in terms of each driver so that it becomes applied as a working style?
Skills – this will ordinarily refer to how the individual acquired life skills from role models	What did you customarily provide for individuals to learn the skills they needed to do their work? Did you provide training in skills such as communication, relationships, conflict handling?	What did you do to provide additional training or coaching to individuals who needed extra skills to do their work during lockdown? Did you provide any training in change management?	What might you need to do now to extend, refresh or add to the skills that individuals already have so that these can be applied in the new circumstances?
Integration – how has the individual pulled together the previous stages	How aware were you of which employees still felt as if they were going through a change process versus those who felt established in their roles?	What did you do to support individuals so that they became used to working from home or under different arrangements?	What might you need to do now to reintroduce employees into the post-lockdown circumstances? How might you need to counteract any previous successes that might mean that people would prefer to continue working at home or under different arrangements?

Table 4: Competence Curve applied to Organisations Before, During and After Lockdown

Working Styles

In addition to organisational stroking patterns, organisations often have characteristic working styles or drivers. These may be connected to the nature of the work – emergency services dealing with horrendous accidents may need people who have the characteristic calmness of a Be Strong characteristic; marketing services may need the creativity of Try Hards; accountants and lawyers may be more effective if they are Be Perfect; the caring professions will often attract Please People; and Hurry Ups are needed in organisations where short deadlines must be met. If an organisation, or a department within it, has developed a characteristic working style, it will make sense to plan to take that into account as people return from lockdown. The suggestions above for individuals might just as easily be applied within an organisation when there may be groups who share characteristic styles.

Competence Curve and the Change Process

Another TA concept which might be particularly useful within organisational settings is the competence curve (Hay 2009) which is based on Levin-Landheer's (1982) cycles of development. Levin described the various developmental tasks we need to complete as children, and what happens due to our inevitable failures in some areas. Levin pointed out that the original cycle repeats throughout life, so that we get further opportunities to deal with the outstanding tasks, subject to the problem that we may simply fail to deal with them in the same way that we were unable to do so in childhood. I converted this to allow us to use Levin's ideas as a way of understanding the change process, on the basis that each change will initiate its own cycle. Obviously these cycles will be shorter than the major life cycles which Levin identified as of 13 and 19 years – they will depend on how significant the change is for the individual, such that becoming a manager for the first time might involve a cycle of two or three years whereas moving to a different desk might take only an hour.

We might use the same process with this as I have done for several of the other TA concepts above, by inviting individuals to compare their answers across the stages of before lockdown, during lockdown and what they expect to happen after lockdown. From an organisational perspective, however, we can invite managers and/or HR professionals to consider what they may need to change based on what was done before lockdown and during lockdown.

In Table 4, the first column shows the stage and brief details of the problems likely to be encountered by individuals if they were unable to complete the necessary tasks successfully in childhood or since. It is important that consideration is given to the psychological as well as the physical aspects of how the organisation supports the individuals.

Table 4 includes references only to individuals in respect of them being within the organisation, being outside the organisation during lockdown, and then coming back to functioning within the organisation. However, some of those individuals will have suffered illnesses and bereavements. Leaders might like to consider the same questions but directly related to any special arrangements that might be needed for employees who may be grieving. Perhaps support groups might be set up for them, with or without professional facilitation. It may also be necessary to pay more attention to those who may have long Covid or may no longer have the state of health they had before lockdown.

Organisational Culture

I mentioned above that the pandemic has threatened people's perspective in terms of their reliance and trust in leaders and their ability to predict what will happen in the future. Individuals are likely, therefore, to struggle to hold a positive predictive picture of what it will be like within an organisation after lockdown. It seems unlikely that organisations can recreate exactly what existed before lockdown – hence the 'new normal' will be anticipated and managers and/or HR professionals need to consider

carefully the culture of the organisation as it will become after lockdown.

In the March issue of this newsletter (Hay 2021) I suggested we reconsider how we apply Berne's (1961, 1963) concepts of etiquette, technical and character of an organisation. I proposed that technical become 'Today' and that we use dashed and fuzzy lines instead of diagramming them as if they are the three ego states. I also illustrated different options to indicate the ways in which different individuals may have different perceptions of the relative impact of the three elements, reproduced here as Figure 1.

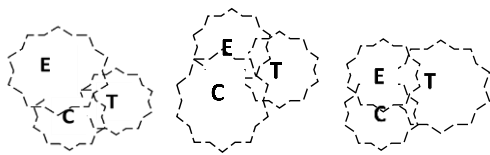


Figure 1: Unbalanced ETC (Hay, 2020, p.13)

We can use this diagram to stimulate a review of how leaders are preparing their organisations for operation after lockdown:

- If **Etiquette** is most prominent – the expectation may be that management will determine how people are meant to behave and will tell them clearly what the requirements are. This may be useful when it is applied to the technical elements but may end up as a long list of parent-like instructions which will invite employees to behave rebelliously, or to develop high levels of anxiety in case they do something wrong, or stimulate high levels of paranoia and conspiracy theories on the assumption that the leaders cannot be trusted.
- If **Character** is most prominent – the expectation may be that employees will largely decide for themselves how they will behave. This may mean that they will be aware of the best practices being recommended for staying healthy but it may mean that they will be ignoring or even deliberately flouting those practices. If management assume that Character will be positive, they may fail to introduce enough procedures to ensure appropriate behaviour. If management assume that

Character will be negative, they may invite that response by focusing too much on detailed Etiquette procedures.

- If **Today** is most prominent – if everyone is operating in the here-and-now, the expectation will be that management will have been considering what is needed before they invite people back into the organisation after lockdown. They may well have invited employees to submit their comments during a period of preparation, and employees will expect that their ideas and opinions will definitely be listened to once they are back within the organisation. Much of this will of course be influenced by how much management have involved employees in decision-making during lockdown.
- We might here revert to Berne's original **Technical** label – in order for individuals to return after lockdown and do whatever work is needed within the organisation, leaders will beforehand have arranged aspects such as rules about hygiene arrangements and distancing, ventilation, sanitising processes, refreshment areas, toilets, masks, screens, vaccinations, whether to stagger arrival and departure times, what temperature or other checks may be conducted at what intervals, and any other requirements related to the particular production or service provision processes conducted by those within the organisation.

To Conclude

There are many TA concepts that will help us consider how to make experiences for individuals after lockdown as positive as possible.

If you are a TA practitioner, hopefully the ideas above can be shared with your clients, whether they are individuals who function within organisations or they are leaders of organisations.

And if you are an 'amateur' who enjoys TA, I encourage you to go ahead and share any of the ideas with others, and thereby contribute to positive experiences for as many people as possible.

I'm happy to respond to questions sent by email to julie@juliehay.org, although if you send so many that you start using more than about 30 minutes of my time, I might suggest that you book for supervision 😊 (for which I charge you 50% more than your own average hourly income – which is zero if you have no income).

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