AEDP: Transformative Processes in Psychotherapy

AEDP Harnesses Attachment & Affective Neuroscience to Promote Accelerated Change in Psychotherapy

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At its essence, AEDP is change-based & healing-oriented in its therapeutics:

- At its essence, **AEDP is transformation-based & healing-oriented** in its therapeutics, i.e., its theory of therapy.
- We already all believe in quantum change. It is called trauma. **AEDP is about quantum change in the realm of healing**.
- In AEDP, healing is not just a desired outcome; it is also a **process: an experience, and a dispositional tendency always at the ready.**
- Healing from the get-go: **transformation**.
At its essence, AEDP is about transformance neuroplasticity in action

• Innate dispositional tendencies reflecting a wired drive toward growth, learning, healing, and self-righting lie wired deep within our brains and press toward expression when circumstances are right. Unlike the conservative motivational strivings under the aegis of resistance, which consume and drain psychic energy, transformance-based motivational strivings, when actualized, are energizing and vitalizing.
• Positive markers—vitality affects—energy and vitality
• Moment-to-moment
• Always present as dispositional tendencies
• Always in balance with the forces of resistance

The Credo of AEDP
the magnificent seven

1. Hearing from the Get-Go: Transformance Detection guided by positive somatic affective markers

2. Transference-based emotionally engaged: Engendering, affect-facilitating, attuned and emotionally engaged; validation, affirmation, explicit empathy. NOT neutral

3. Unifying Alliance: co-creating safety and conditions for exploration
   • Dyadic affect exploration
   • Secure base from which to launch exploration
   • Intersubjective delight

4. Access, facilitate, deepen expressions of core adaptive emotions and other adaptive affective-change processes
   • Affective change processes: adaptive, wired in, adaptive action tendencies
     • Emotion, somatic experiencing, relational experiencing, moment of meeting, the empathic reflection of self, etc
   • Seek specificity, the concrete example

5. Work with defenses
   • Regulate the inhibitory affects (anxiety, shame, etc)
   • Amplify glimmers of adaptive experience
   • Seek specificity, the concrete example

The Credo of AEDP
the magnificent seven (cont’d)
The Credo of AEDP
the magnificent seven (cont’d)

6. Work to Transform Traumatic Emotions
   i.e., the “negative emotions” associated with trauma and emotional suffering,
   - Affective change processes
   - Positivistic affect markers
   - Process to completion, where completion is defined as the affective shift from a negative valence to a positive valence
   - Release of adaptive action tendencies and clarity about the core needs of the Self

7. Process Transformational Experience
   and the transformational affects, the positive affects associated with change for the better
   - Metatherapeutic processing
   - Transformational affects, always positive
   - Spiraling or cascading transformations
   - Culminates in corestate, an integrative state; its somatic marker is the felt sense of truth

Change in the presence of a caring, wise attachment figure

At its essence, AEDP is relational

AEDP: Attachment-Based Therapeutic Stance rooted in The Caregiving Behavioral System (Rabbiy)
Love & care in the face of distress
At its essence, AEDP is relational

The patient needs to have an experience...

- The patient needs to have an experience, a new experience. And that experience should be good.
- From the first moment of the first contact, and throughout the treatment thereafter, the aim and method of AEDP is the provision, facilitation, and processing of such experiences.
- AEDP theory, stance and technique are oriented to insure that the experience is good. AEDP achieves its aim through entraining and harnessing the healing power of naturally occurring affective change processes, such as emotion, dyadic affect coordination, empathic reflection, somatic experiencing, and metatherapeutic processing.

The felt sense of change for the better

"There is a distinct physical sensation of change, which you recognize once you experienced it... When people have this even once, they no longer helplessly wonder for years whether they are changing or not. Now they can be their own judges of that" (Gendlin, 1981, p. 7)
At its essence, AEDP is phenomenological.

- Not a manual, but a map
- The phenomenology of the transformational process guides clinical action: The 4 states and 3 state transformations
- The arc of transformation

At its essence, AEDP is about privileging transformation and the vitality effects that accompany it:

- At its essence, AEDP is about privileging transformation, MORE SPECIFICALLY the experience of transformation and the sense of aliveness that marks it
- The explicit focus on the experience of transformation activates a transformational process
- Metaprocessing is the experiential processing of transformational experience, constituted of alternating waves of experience and reflection

At its essence, AEDP privileges the positive

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At its essence, AEDP is about privileging emergence.

- At its essence, AEDP is about privileging emergence.
  - the novel. the new.
  - the moment of change
  - the experience of change in the moment of change
  - The daisy

Transformation, Positive Affects & Positive Interactions

- Transformation: Positive affects, positive interactions and the process of healing transformation are organically intertwined.
  - Resilience and Brain Growth: Positive, attuned, dyadic interactions are the constituents of healthy, secure attachments and the correlates of neurochemical environments conducive to optimal brain growth (Panksepp, 2001; Schore, 2001; Trevarthen, 2001)
- Flourishing, Well-being: Positive affects are the constituent phenomena of health, resilience, mental health, and well-being (Frederickson)
- Meta-processing: AEDP work has revealed that the transformational process is accompanied moment-to-moment by positive somatic/affective markers (Fosha, 2004; Fosha & Yeung, 2006; Russell & Fosha, 2008; Yeung & Cheung, 2008).

At its essence, AEDP is about privileging the positive Broaden & Build, Promote Thrival

- Vital Saturation: why positive affects & positive affective interactions
- Vitality & energy: fuel for life
- Positive affective interactions
  - Constituents of secure attachment (Schore, Panksepp
  - Contributors to resilience (Tronick, Trevarthen)
  - Quality of relationships over time (Frederickson, Gable, Algoe)
- Positive affects Flourishing (Frederickson)
- Neural energy (Panksepp): The Seeking System
- Motivation to learn, explore: Zest
  - “We shall not cease from exploration” T. S. Eliot
  - Memory consolidation (Adcock, LaBar)

At its essence, AEDP is about privileging emergence.

- the novel, the new.
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- sustained positive emotion (transformance, metaprocessing)
- recovery from negative emotion (processing to an affective shift)
- empathy, altruism and pro-social behaviour (yes, what he said)
- Mindfulness, and ‘affective stickiness,’ or emotion-captured attention

While Richard Davidson (2015) says that “how these four constituents may synergistically work together has not been studied,” they have: they do work synergistically in AEDP, where a single session might well contain all those constituents as you will soon see.

**Fundamentals of AEDP: Dimensions**

- Healing Orientation – *Transformance – Healing from the Get-Go –*
  The healing is within – *Positive Somatic Affective Markers*
- Relationship – *Attachment & Intersubjectivity. Safety, Connection, Dyadic Affect Regulation*
- Experience: emotional experience, relational experience, receptive experience, transformational experience, experience of new, good
- Differential Phenomenology – *Phenomenology of the Transformational Process –*
  - Privileging emergent transformational experience: the new, the good, the emergent

**State 1: Transformance Detection & Co-Creation of Safety**

Therapist as safety-engendering other

1. Healing orientation. transformance detection (Fosha, AEDP)
2. Unfolding phenomena: safety, social engagement, connection, attachment, intersubjectivity – (Forges) so many aspects of the relationship
   - connecting, safety, containing, regulation: the affective world (i.e., the work patient)
   - providing care, empathy, validation, help, accompaniment
   - acceptance, affective experience, being in the present (afforded and being concomitant for understood
3. access to experience – somatically based, moment-to-moment guided by positive somatic affective markers. bottom-up, not top-down, experiential not narrative in the first phase of the process
4. removing obstacles to the experience and expression of affective change processes

1st state transformation
- green signal affects
- glimmers of emotion
State 1: Transformance Detection & Co-Creation of Safety
Therapist as safety-engendering other

Goals of State 1 Work:
- Transformance, Safety, Access Somaically-Based Experience

1. Get transformance on board
2. Co-construct safety
3. Focus in on somaically-based emotional experience
4. Minimize inhibitory impact of defensiveness to minimize their impact (including successful bypassing of them)
5. Minimize impact of inhibitory affects (anxiety, shame, guilt) to minimize their inhibitory impact
6. Heighten gimmers of core affect

State 2: Emotion Processing
Therapist as affect facilitating other

Goals of State 2 Work:
- Dyadic affect regulation
- Work with one affective change process at a time.
  Categorical emotions (biggest bang for the buck)
- Accessing, deepening, processing through and “completing” a wave of core affective experience till there is a shift from a negative valence (feared, painful overwhelming) to a positive valence — and the adaptive action tendencies, positive motivation for change (Adcock) and clarity about implications for self and action are released

Drop down, Work Through, Process to Completion

1. Focus in on specific emotion (or affective change process)
2. Drop down: Access somaically based emotional experience — “lose your mind and find your senses” (Fritz Perls)
3. Dyadically regulate; deepen
4. Process emotion and concomitant experiences associated with it
5. “Complete” Emotional Sequence: Work toward an affective shift from a negative valence to a positive valence till adaptive action tendencies and/or post-breakthrough affects are released
Emotion: William James

“Emotional occasions . . . are extremely potent in precipitating mental rearrangements. The sudden and explosive ways in which love, jealousy, guilt, fear, remorse, or anger can seize upon one are known to everybody. Hope, happiness, security, resolve . . . can be equally explosive. And emotions that come in this explosive way seldom leave things as they found them.” (William James, 1902)

Emotion: Peter Levine

“Through transformation, our nervous system regains its capacity for self regulation. Our emotions begin to lift us up rather than bring us down. They propel us into the exhilarating ability to soar and fly, giving us a more complete view of our place in nature.” (Levine, 1997, p. 193).

The irony is that the life-threatening events prehistoric people routinely faced molded our modern nervous system to respond powerfully and fully when we perceive our survival threatened. To this day, when we exercise this natural capacity, we feel exhilarated and alive, powerful, expanded, full of energy and ready to take on any challenge. Being threatened engages our deepest resources and allows us to experience our fullest potential as human beings. In turn, our emotional and physical well-being is enhanced” (Levine, 1997, pp. 42-43; emphasis added).
Human emotion is not just about sexual pleasures or fear of snakes. It is also about the horror of witnessing suffering and the satisfaction of seeing justice served; about our delight at the sensuous smile of Jeanne Moreau or the thick beauty of words and ideas in Shakespeare's verse; about the world weary voice of Fischer-Dieskau singing Bach's Ich habe genug and the simultaneously earthly and otherworldly phrasing of Maria João Pires playing any Mozart, any Schubert; and about the harmony that Einstein sought in the structure of an equation. (Damasio, 1999, p. 35-6)

"When the mind regards itself and its own power of activity, it feels pleasure: and that pleasure is greater in proportion to the distinctness wherewith it conceives itself and its own power of activity" (de Spinoza, 177/2005, Part 3, Proposition LIII; emphasis added).

- a new set of categorical affects, the transformational emotions
- gratitude, receptivity to gratitude and other feelings: oxytocin
- also the excitement of dopamine and exploration: the seeking system, motivation (Panksepp, Adcock)
- emergence, the new

3rd State Transformation
- "Upward spiral of mutual responskeness, promoting the quality of the relationship over time" (Algoe & Way, 2014)
- flourishing
State 3: Metaprocessing: The Processing of Transformational Experience
Therapist as true other

- Goals of State Work: "Work it out"
  Process transformational experience & the positive affects associated with it: keep doing it
  1. Identify emergent specific transformational affect, i.e., positive affect associated with transformational experience
  2. Experientially explore
  3. Reflect on experience
  4. Focus on new emergent transformational affect and concomitant experiences associated with it, as previous transformational affect becomes a launching pad (or platform) for emergence of new affect
  5. Repeat with each emergent transformational affect, alternating between experience and reflection

State 4: Core State
I/Thou relating: Therapist as witnessing other

- Somatic marker: the felt sense of truth
- Clarity
- Creativity
- Compassion and self-compassion
- Generosity
- Wisdom
- Consolidation of therapeutic work
- Coherent and cohesive autobiographical narrative

State 4: Core State
I/Thou relating: Therapist as witnessing other

- Goals of State 4 Work:
  Integration, New Meaning, New Experience
  1. Integration
  2. Understanding
  3. New meaning, New truth
  4. Increasingly "coherent and cohesive autobiographical narrative" (Mary Main)
  5. New experience of Self: "This is me"
AEDP
Safety, Experience, Affirmation, Integration:

1. Co-Creation, Safety, Dialectic Emotion, Undo alienation & create barriers to emotionally based experience
2. Facilitate and Process Emotional Experience and the Experience of other Affective Change Processes
3. Affirm Transformation and Process Transformational Experience
4. Promote & Foster Reflection & Integration, New Meaning, Core States the sense of truth

For more information about AEDP go to:
www.aedpinstitute.com
# The Phenomenology of the Transformational Process

## The 4 States and 3 State Transformations

### State 1: Transformance
- **Glimmers of resilience, health, strength; manifestations of the drive to heal**

### State 1: Stress, Distress, and Symptoms
- **Defenses; dysregulated affects; inhibiting affects (e.g., anxiety, shame)**

### Transitional Affects
- **Heralding Affects:**
  - Glimmers of core affective experience
- **Green Signal Affects**
  - Announcing openness to experience, signaling safety, readiness to shift

### State 2: The Processing of Emotional Experience
- Categorical emotions; attachment experiences; coordinated relational experiences; receptive affective experiences; somatic “drop-down” states; intersubjective experiences of pleasure; authentic self states; embodied ego states and their associated emotions; core needs; attachment strivings.

### State 2: Transformation
- **The emergence of resilience**

### Adaptive Action Tendencies
- **Post-Breakthrough Affects:**
  - Relief, hope, feeling stronger, lighter, etc.

### State 3: The Metaprocessing of Transformational Experience
- **The Transformational Affects**
  - The mastery affects (e.g., pride, joy); emotional pain associated with mourning-the-self; the tremulous affects associated with the experience of quantum change; the healing affects (e.g., gratitude, feeling moved) associated with the affirmation of the self; the realization affects (e.g., the “yes!” and “wow” affects; the “click” of recognition) associated with new understanding

### State 3: Transformation
- **The co-engendering of secure attachment and the positive valuation of the self**

### Energy, vitality, openness, aliveness

### State 4: Core State and the Truth Sense
- Openness; compassion and self-compassion; wisdom, generosity, kindness; clarity; calm, flow, ease; the sense of things feeling “right”; capacity to construct a coherent and cohesive autobiographical narrative
AEDP REFERENCES

**DVDs on AEDP**

**BOOKS on AEDP**

**BOOKS: Discussions of AEDP**
BOOK CHAPTERS and JOURNAL ARTICLES


Fosha, D. (2009). Healing attachment trauma with attachment (…and then some!). In M. Kerman (Ed.), *Clinical pearls of wisdom: 21 leading therapists offer their key insights* (pp. 43-56). New York: Norton.


**RESEARCH: Articles, Dissertations**


