

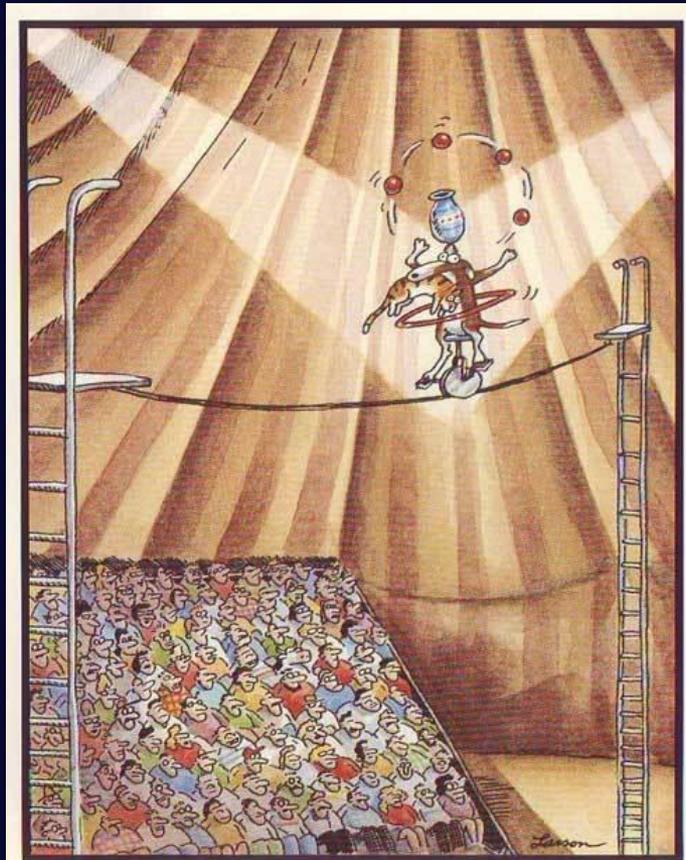
Dialoguing the emergent future of family therapy:
On the complex adaptive dynamics of
collaborative practice



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Learning something new is risky



High above the hushed crowd, Rex tried to remain focused. Still, he couldn't shake one nagging thought: He was an old dog and this was a new trick.

Dialoguing



I have a problem... Is the following statement true?



- ❧ "There is still a rather strong antiscience streak within the family therapy community, which serves to magnify the split between empirical research on the one hand, and clinical theory on the other.... As a result, family systems theory has seen little change over the past 30 to 40 years."
- ❧ Pincus (2009) Coherence, Complexity, and Information Flow: Self-Organizing Processes in Psychotherapy

Flight plan

Destination: The Future



- ✧ Position, wings and aims
- ✧ Complex adaptive systems
- ✧ Emotional dynamics
- ✧ Collaborative practice

Position



- ❧ Ass. Professor, Gjøvik University College, Norway, Post-graduate course in network meetings and relational competence
- ❧ Adjunct lecturer at Hedmark University College, Recovery-oriented Green Care Services
- ❧ PhD student at Karlstad University, Interactional dynamics of open dialogues in network meetings
- ❧ Nordic Research on Social Networks (NORSNET)
- ❧ Towards a Nordic Model of Dual Diagnosis Treatment: A Social Network Approach to Recovery-oriented Services

Wings



- ∞ Consumers, Survivors, Clients, Patients, Users
- ∞ Valdres; Reidar Andreassen, Bodil Nysveen, Hanne Grøneng
- ∞ Akershus; Ulla Rosengren
- ∞ Jaakko Seikkula; Open Dialogues in Network Meetings

Aims



- ❧ There is a need to rid us of traditional psychiatry's three assumptions
 - ❧ There is an unambiguous dividing line between mentally well and mentally ill
 - ❧ There are a finite and countable number of different mental illnesses
 - ❧ These illnesses can be primarily explained in terms of aberrant biology
- ❧ Allows us to both understand and explain the experiences of persons whom are mentally ill
- ❧ Accounts for mental illness in terms of processes that are important in everyday life
- ❧ Opens for a balanced transdisciplinary approach to mental illness
 - ❧ Richard Bentall (2003) *Madness Explained: Psychosis and Human Nature*

*Philosophy begins with a sense
of mystery and wonder at what
any sane person regards as too
obvious to worry about.*

- John Searle

Complex Adaptive Systems



- ❧ Consist of interdependent agents involved in networks of multiple relationships which interact and adjust their behaviour in unpredictable ways
- ❧ Multiple positive and negative feedback loops lead to oscillations of non-equilibrium system behaviour
- ❧ Boundaries are diffuse and dynamic creating complicated webs of relations between agents within and outside the system
- ❧ System change is dependent on initial conditions and is path-dependent
- ❧ Behaviour is adaptive, self-organizing and co-evolutionary
- ❧ Local interaction is fundamental to understanding emergent collective behavior
 - ❧ (Guastello, et al, 2009 *Chaos and Complexity in Psychology*, Edgren 2008, Schneider & Somers 2006, Pearce & Merletti 2006)

Understanding complexity



The goal before us is to understand complexity. To achieve that, we must move beyond structure and topology and start focusing on the dynamics that take place along the links. Networks are only the skeleton of complexity, the highways for various processes that make our world hum. To describe society we must dress the links of the social network with the actual dynamical interactions between people.”

Human interaction

- ∞ Evaluational and emotional
 - ∞ Based on intrapersonal and interpersonal regulation
 - ∞ Based on working models of security/value/efficacy
- ∞ Relational and transactional
 - ∞ Reactions are contingent on the resource-based actions of others
 - ∞ There are negotiations regarding the fulfillment of needs
- ∞ Structural and systemic
 - ∞ Social place – power and status hierarchies giving differential access to valued resources
 - ∞ Network dynamics – trust, status & power

The experiential ecology of emotional exchange networks



- ❧ A set of connected relationships characterized by repeated emotional transactions.
- ❧ An emotional transaction is a social interaction which generates affective processes for one or more of the actors involved.
- ❧ Emotional exchange relationships entail two related aspects:
 - ❧ emotional reactions to outcomes in exchange networks
 - ❧ Lawler, E. (2001) An affect theory of social exchange. *AJS*, 107
 - ❧ the exchange of emotions *per se* (eg. contagion, escalation)

Experiential ecology



- ❧ The ecology of experience
- ❧ Ecology; the scientific study of the relations organisms have to each other and their natural environment
- ❧ Experience; an ecology of mind, neurophenomenology, experiential semantics, embodied cognition, subjectivities and subjectification

Network theory



- ☞ Position is power

A --- B --- C

D --- A --- B --- C --- E

- ☞ High intensity emotional experience is usually shared with 6 persons within the first hours and days, each of these in turn share with 2, who in turn share with 2 more (Rime, et al. 2003)
- ☞ Social inclusion and exclusion are network phenomena
- ☞ Persons with mental health problems experience shame and fear of exclusion, a sense of loneliness, and their primary goal is to be able to participate in reciprocal relationships (Granerud & Severinsson, 2008)

Social exchange



❧ Rules of exchange

- ❧ Productive, reciprocal, negotiated and generalized

❧ Resources of exchange

- ❧ Particular vs. universal, concrete vs. symbolic
- ❧ Love, information, money, goods and services

❧ Outcomes

- ❧ Trust, commitment, status, esteem, power, influence, justice, legitimacy, solidarity, fairness, generosity, gratitude, forgiveness
- ❧ Edward Lawler, Linda Molm, Karen Cook, Shane Thye, David Willer, Barry Markovsky, Jeongkoo Yoon, Michael Lovaglia

Emotions I



☞ "Attachment theory postulates a universal human need to form close affectional bonds. At its core is the reciprocity of early relationships which is a precondition of normal development.... The experience of security is the goal of the attachment system, which is thus first and foremost a regulator of emotional experience. In this sense it lies at the heart of many forms of mental disorder and the entire psychotherapeutic enterprise."

☞ Fonagy 1999

Emotions II



☞ ”Hardwired to connect with each other, we do so through emotions. Our brains, bodies, and minds are inseparable from the emotions that animate them. Emotions are at the nexus of thought and action, of self and other, of person and environment, of biology and culture.”

☞ Fosha, Siegel, Solomon (2009) *The Healing Power of Emotion*

Emotions III



☞ "Emotions have healing power because they are the *active regulators* of vitality in movement and the primary *mediators of social life*.... Therapists seek to ... find ways to engage with the motives that light up body and mind with emotions. Thus, they must move with the patient in the performance of real desired projects and tasks, not only tasks that exist as stories in talking. The rhythmic expressive foundation of emotional dynamics is the same for all spoken and unspoken 'dances' of the mind. Emotions are how we dance together and doing so is at the heart of the human enterprise."

☞ Colwyn Trevarthen (2009)

The socioemotional economy



”In this economy, this more-or-less orderly exchange system ... people give and withhold emotional resources, form social bonds and divisions, negotiate microhierchal arrangements, and derive identity and worth”

Identity dynamics



- ❧ Self-identity is a reflexive process, it is an achievement which needs to be worked on (Giddens 1991)
- ❧ “image consumption”, “identity capital” and “identity politics”;
 - ❧ “The individual invests in a certain identity (or identities) and engages in a series of exchanges at the level of identity with other actors. To do this in a complex, shifting social milieu requires certain cognitive skills and personality attributes...” (Côté 1996:424)

Ruling passions in human life drive emotional dynamics



- ❧ the desire for power,
- ❧ the desire for prestige,
- ❧ and the desire for property.
 - ❧ (Ricoeur 1965, in Brennan & Pettit 2004)
- ❧ But... Thorstein Veblen wrote in 1905, regarding the desire for property and the pursuit of accumulation, ‘the struggle is substantially a race for reputability on the basis of invidious comparison’

A passion for trust...



❧ For it is mutual trust, even more than mutual interest that holds human associations together.

❧ H. L. Menken 1929

❧ In a networked world, trust is the most important currency.

❧ Eric Schmidt 2009

Social determinants of mental health



- ❧ Trust; Belonging -> connectedness and sense of community
 - ❧ Social exclusion, isolation, inequality
- ❧ Status; Esteem -> recognition and sense of worth
 - ❧ Social disintegration, stigmatization, discrimination
- ❧ Power; Control -> autonomy and sense of efficacy
 - ❧ Economic marginalization, excessive job demands, exposure to violence
 - ❧ Dalgard 2006, 2008

The forces of social exchange



Trust

'expectations of cooperation and/or positive exchange'

Power

'the capacity to extract valued resources'

Status

'an actor's standing in terms of valued resources'

∞ Adapted from Thye, et al. 2008

Trust



- ❧ Built on mutual, reciprocated exchanges creating security, commitment, solidarity and cohesion
- ❧ Leads to greater willingness to exert effort, desire to maintain the relationship and tendency to forgive when norms are broken
- ❧ “The lack of trustworthiness in one’s relational world is the primary pathogenic condition in human life”
 - ❧ Boszormenyi-Nagy 1987:230

The emotional dynamics of trust



- ❧ Risk and uncertainty create higher levels of trust and positive affect
- ❧ "Reciprocal exchanges ... produced higher levels of trust, more 'resilient' trust, and stronger affective bonds than negotiated exchanges."
 - ❧ Molm, et al. 2009
- ❧ "Perceived trustworthiness (along with the degree of cooperation of the partner) is the main determinant of the affective relationship between the two parties"
 - ❧ Gerbasi & Cook 2008

Trust and mutual disclosure



☞ “To build up trust, an individual must be both trusting and trustworthy, at least within the confines of the relationship. Since it is so closely connected to intimacy, trust implies the same balance of autonomy and mutual disclosure necessary to sustain intimate exchanges”

☞ Giddens 1991:96

Trust, disclosure and mental health



☞ "Self-disclosure is not only an inevitable, but also an essential aspect of the therapeutic process."

☞ Binges, in Knox & Hill 2003

☞ "The very act of putting one's thoughts and feelings into language provides insight and perspectives on emotionally troubling events, makes hardships meaningful, and restores feelings of self-worth and other self resources. ...
Disclosure has measurable health consequences"

☞ Harber & Cohen 2005:383

'A sense of trust'



☞ "Gathering the patient, professionals and social network together created a new atmosphere for the patients. They felt they could talk freely about important things without fear. ... Striving for openness in the treatment meetings created a sense of trust between the patients and professionals, trust in the continuity of others and in the object-world."

☞ Piippo & Aaltonen 2004

Trust



☞ How do you facilitate the experience of trust in your practice?

The emotional dynamics of power



- ❧ "Equal power relations are more likely to yield exchanges, positive emotions, perceptions of relational cohesion and behavioral aspects of commitment."
 - ❧ Thye, et al. 2002

- ❧ Yet positive exchanges in *de facto* unequal power relations exchanges can lead to greater levels of equality, positive emotions, security and confidence.
 - ❧ Kemper 1984, 1990

Power, cooperation and regard



☞ Receiving another's expression of regard and relationship investment should prompt positive emotions. ... Positive emotions ... lead to positive evaluations – even in contexts of inequality – and 'relaxed' accounting systems that promote cooperation, trust, and solidarity.

☞ Molm 2008:184-186

Dialogue and power



- ❧ Discursive processes which sustain the dialogue and limit power
 - ❧ Uncertainty markers
 - ❧ Conversational questions
 - ❧ Non-intrusive curiosity
 - ❧ Speaking from within the conversation
 - ❧ Making transparent a non-investment in the content of one's questions and comments
 - ❧ Guifoyle 2003

Empowerment



☞ "Empowerment is a central theme of the recovery model in psychiatric rehabilitation. Empowerment is ... a process by which individuals or groups gain power and access to resources and control over their own lives"

☞ Sowbell & Starnes 2005:26

Power



☞ How do you facilitate the experience of power in your practice?

Status, structure and emotion



☞ "Connected resource flows form the fundamental interaction process of any social system. Indeed, system structures may be viewed as as connected resource flows. ... Emotional reactions are related to one's position in the social structure. Persons in status posititons that provide access to more resources are better able to verify their identities."

☞ Bruke 2008:76

Status, shame and anger



☞ “When there is a real or imagined rejection on one or both sides (withdrawal, criticism, insult, defeat, etc.), and the resulting emotions are not acknowledged, the deference-emotion system may show a malign form, a *chain reaction* of shame and anger between and within the interactants.”

☞ Scheff 1990:76

Status and self-stigma



☞ "It is the process resulting from the sociocultural response to these status variables, self-stigma, that is believed to be an intractable barrier for individuals with serious mental disorders."

☞ Sowbell & Starnes 2006:26

Status



☞ How do you facilitate the experience of status in your practice?

So what do we do?



❧ "The drama of the process lies ... in the emotional exchange among network members, including the professionals, who together construct or restore a caring personal community."

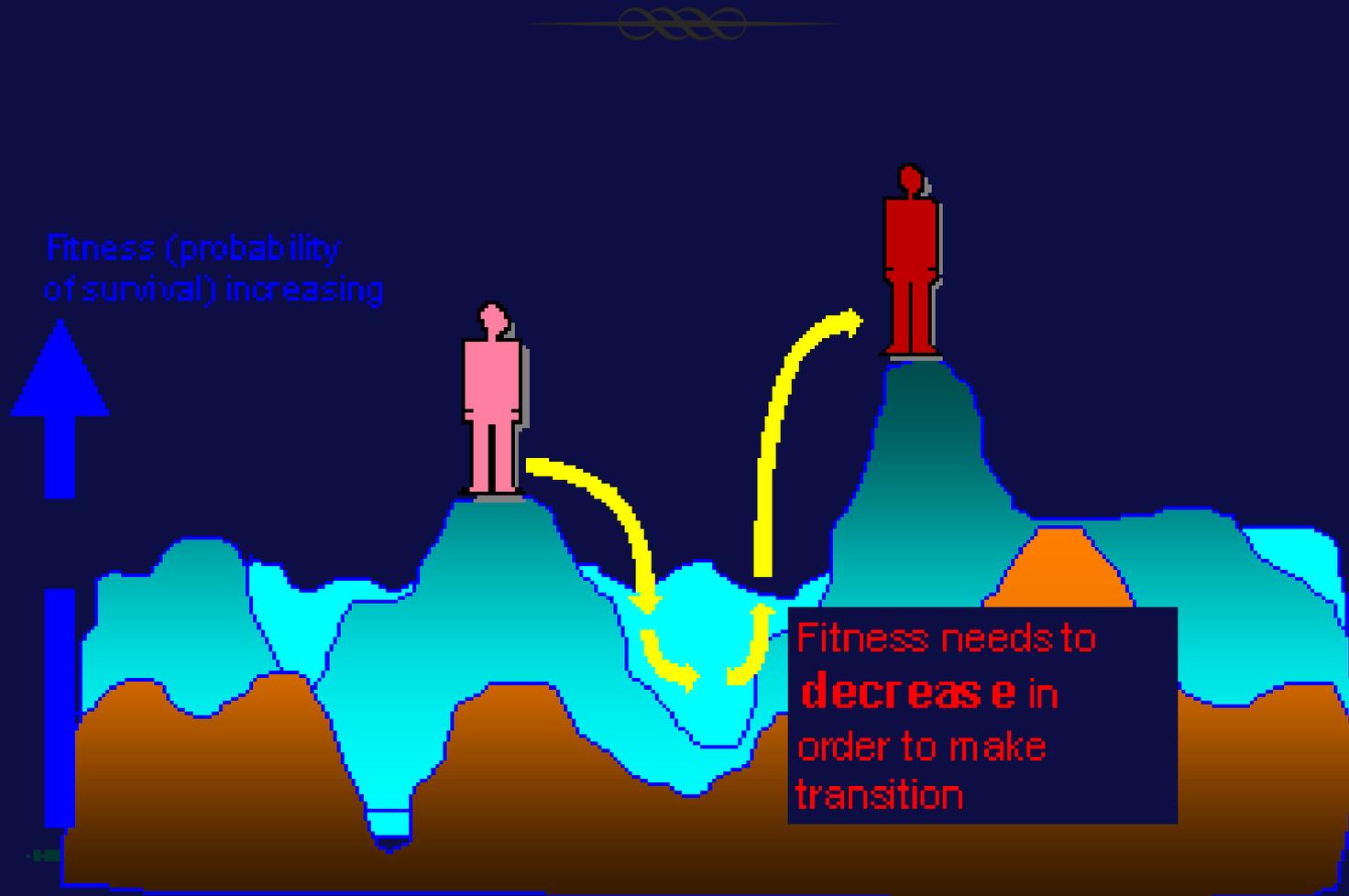
❧ Seikkula & Trimble (2005)

Complex systems collaboration



- ❧ Disequilibrium state
 - ❧ Embrace uncertainty, conflict and controversy
- ❧ Amplifying actions
 - ❧ Allow collective experimentation and fluctuations
- ❧ Self-organisation
 - ❧ Create coherence through recombination of language and symbols
- ❧ Stabilizing feedback
 - ❧ Integrate local connections
 - ❧ Lichtenstein & Plowman 2009

It may get worse before it gets better...



Collaboration and relational competence



- ❧ “Relational competence is the core competence in mental health work.”
 - ❧ Steihaug & Loeb (2007) De ressurskrevende brukerne innen psykisk helsearbeid; samhandling og organisering (Sintef)
- ❧ ”Relational competence is fundamental both regarding collaboration with the consumer and collaboration between professionals”
 - ❧ Grut (2007) Tverrfaglig samhandling i psykisk helsearbeid, s. 44
- ❧ Social competence and empathy
 - ❧ Topor 2004

Therapeutic alliance



☞ Attributes

☞ Flexible, honest, respectful, trustworthy, confident, interested, explicit, friendly, warm, open

☞ Skills

☞ Explorative, goes in depth, reflects, supports, reminds of successes, interprets correctly, expressive, validating, understanding, focus on subjective experience

☞ Ackerman & Hilsenroth 2003

Emotion as a systemic issue



☞ ”A systemic psychotherapy that takes emotion more seriously may need to revisit the personal work that family therapy trainees are required to undertake”

☞ David Pocock 2010

A methodological systemic unity



- ❧ How Does Motivational Interviewing Work? Therapist Interpersonal Skill Predicts Client Involvement Within Motivational Interviewing Sessions
 - ❧ Moyers, et al. 2005
- ❧ Mentalization-based Therapeutic Interventions for Families
 - ❧ Eia Olsen & Peter Fonagy 2011
- ❧ Relational Mindfulness and Dialogic Space in Family Therapy
 - ❧ Mishka Lysack 2008

The ethics of collaborative practice



- ❧ Transparency to further trust
- ❧ Equality to strengthen power
- ❧ Recognition to increase status
- ❧ Network to approach wholism
- ❧ Hope to ensure the future
- ❧ Love to ensure the present

Hope



❧ Never underestimate the strength of one person's dream, the power of one voice, the wind from a butterfly's wing or the light from one dim candle. That tiny candle may be the bright light out of someone's darkness.

❧ Kirsti Dyer

Love



- ❧ Love “...is the life force, the soul, the idea. There is no dialogical relation without love, just as there is no love in isolation. Love is dialogic.”
 - ❧ Patterson

- ❧ “The only transcendence of our individual loneliness we can experience arises through the consensual reality that we create with others, that is, through love.”
 - ❧ Maturana

- ❧ The strongest force in the universe is not overriding power, but love...
 - ❧ Carl Rogers

- ❧ Seikkula & Trimble (2005) Healing Elements of Therapeutic Conversation: Dialogue as an Embodiment of Love. *Family Process*

Collaboration, dialogue and love



☞ How do you facilitate the experience of collaboration, dialogue and love in your practice?

If only Tommy had wings...

