

EDUCATING PSYCHOANALYSTS IN TODAY'S REGULATED WORLD: LICENSING AND OTHER MATTERS

by Paul W. Mosher, Mary Beth Cresci, CJ Churchill,
Phee Rosnick, Sy Coopersmith, and Arlene Richards

The opening panel of The Future of Psychoanalytic Education conference was chaired by Paul Mosher who, with Arnold Richards, has spearheaded an investigation of the problem of “ exclusivity” in the American Psychoanalytic Association (APsaA). Mosher, in his introduction, described himself “ as someone who has been deeply interested in the history of the development of psychoanalysis as a profession in the United States.” Mosher pointed out that “ Freud believed psychoanalytic training should be open to anyone [who] had the appropriate interest and motivation.” He further indicated that “ Freud abhorred the idea that psychoanalysis should be a sub-specialty of psychiatry.” Mosher then went on to say that the battle over so-called “ lay analysis” almost led to the expulsion of the APsaA from the International Psychoanalytical Association (IPA).

Mosher pointed out that the new New York state law in psychoanalysis followed closely on Freud's views, including the requirement for medical oversight of licensed psychoanalysts who lacked prior training in mental health. In addition, he indicated, “ only practitioners who are Licensed Psychoanalysts, or licensed in one of the exempt professions, may use the term ‘psychoanalyst’ – or any similar term – in connection with any therapeutic practice in New York.” Finally, he pointed out how this new law has impacted various groups of psychoanalysts.

Mosher then introduced Mary Beth Cresci, whose presentation was “ It's a Buyer's Market: Psychoanalytic Education Today.”

Mary Beth Cresci indicated that voluntary self-regulation has existed for some time, in organizations such as APsaA, the Accreditation Council for Psychoanalytic Education (ACPE), and the National Association for the Advancement of Psychoanalysis (NAAP). But now, she pointed out, we have to contend with state-imposed regulation. This, she suggested, has affected the nature of the candidate market such that instead of its being a seller's market, it has become a buyer's market. Candidates have more freedom to choose from a number of institutes and this affects the quality of training, particularly in terms of the selection of (training) analysts and supervisors.

According to Cresci, institutes are selected by prospective candidates for geographical convenience, class scheduling, the prestige of the institute, and affordability. Cresci emphasizes, however, that “ without agreed upon standards for psychoanalytic education,” the survival of institutes cannot depend solely upon factors such as affordability and convenience. Accordingly, Cresci continued, candidates who are not otherwise licensed as mental health professionals, and are seeking a license as psychoanalysts, will have to train at institutes that are registered and approved by the state. Candidates who are already licensed as mental health professionals will most likely not seek training under the new licensing law because it is considered too restrictive.

As Cresci indicates, the new licensing law has not impacted the quality of psychoanalytic education; it has confirmed licensure of masters' level practitioners, such as mental health counselors. The change in admissions standards has not, according to Cresci, affected the quality of training in our institutes. As a result, institutes must work harder to attract the best candidates and ensure that the training provided is of the highest quality.

Mosher then introduced the panel's second speaker, Sy Coopersmith, who presented his paper, "The Future of the Training Analysis." In his introduction, Coopersmith described himself as a psychoanalyst on both sides of the psychoanalytic political fence, as a member of both the IPA and NAAP. He opened his presentation by illustrating the significance of the Training Analysis (TA) to the future of psychoanalytic education. He pointed out that training analysts are usually selected politically, from within the profession, in mainstream psychoanalytic institutes. As such, the value of the TA has been challenged by the Australian researcher Douglas Kirsner (*Unfree Associations*), for the politicizing of the TA process and the political selection of Training Analysts.

An external variable, which challenges the viability of the TA process, has been introduced in New York State, with the passing of a new law, which licenses psychoanalysis. This law mandates payment of fees to the institute rather than directly to the analyst, as has been historically and universally accepted at institutes. Vociferous objection to this new mandate was raised by over 20 free-standing institutes in New York. The position of the state was seen as an external threat to the "personal analysis" and, as such, a further challenge to the viability of the TA process. This "intrusion" by the SED raised further questions about the continuity of the TA process.

Considering the TA in terms of the future of psychoanalytic education, Coopersmith raised the question as to whether the TA process should be revised, or, perhaps, even eliminated. This was proposed as a central focus of consideration for future psychoanalytic education conferences. At the conclusion of Coopersmith's presentation, Mosher introduced CJ Churchill and Phee Rosnick, who collaborated on "Taking License: Ramifications of the New York State Psychoanalytic Licensing Law." This paper focused on reactions to the new licensing law.

Churchill, a candidate in training at the New York Freudian Society, reported on interviews with 13 analysts, all of whom, with one exception, are pursuing or have the New York State Psychoanalytic License. A number of items were formulated as interview questions focusing on the value of the New York State license in psychoanalysis. Responses varied, as expected, on a continuum from tri-discipline to non-tri-discipline analysts. The authors' findings were "that candidates at institutes that embrace the license reflect a positive attitude, but candidates at institutes at which there is ambivalence lean toward the negative evaluation." Churchill and Rosnick thought "it would be beneficial for these candidates to find common cause, and to help each other identify with being and becoming lay analysts." They concluded by indicating that they advocate a common understanding rather than deeper chasms of hostility.

Finally, Mosher introduced the fourth panelist, Arlene Kramer Richards, who was presenting on "Why

Do I Want to Include Our Colleagues in Licensing as Psychoanalysts?” Richards went immediately to the central issue: the polarizing of two different groups in terms of treatment technique. One camp, she suggested, advocates three or more times per week of treatment, which constitutes the essence of analysis, while the other camp argues that “psychoanalysis is, as Freud himself defined it, the use of the concepts of transference and resistance to understand the unconscious and especially unconscious affects, wishes, prohibitions, and fears.” Who is right?

The question was posed as having “theoretical and practical” aspects. It led further to the nature of psychoanalysis and the tendency, during the past century, towards exclusivity as a modality within the profession. Richards pointed out that some [people] have argued that all analysts do the same thing regardless of the theory they espouse.” She concluded, however, that greater frequency of sessions leads to better work, in the eyes of many analysts. Richards herself advocates greater frequency, but does not insist on, for example, 4- or 5-times-per-week frequency as constituting psychoanalysis for all people.

Richards tackled the issue of patient referrals, minimizing the idea that competition creates difficulty in psychoanalysis. She asked, “Does one get more referrals if one excludes others, or does one get more referrals because one has a wide network of friends?” Richards, of course, opts for the latter, and suggested, in closing, that “psychoanalysis needs more friends, not a common enemy.”

Paul Mosher then opened the meeting for questions and discussion and a lively session followed.