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Technique with BPO Patients

**APP**  
**Ego Defense, Selfobject, Character Types**

**Technical terms**

Ego function: psychological capacity to integrate, stabilize, defend, and adapt to conflicts.

Ego Defense: is any effort to decrease psychic pain and to increase psychic repair.

Because psychic pain can be so intense, we use numerous ways to decrease it. Sometimes, a neurotic condition can drive an otherwise sane person to suicidal thoughts and even suicide attempts. To find oneself harming oneself, for example, while one's hated enemies and other sibling figures prosper, is enraging. To believe that "fate" has destined one to lose hold of good things is a distressing thought. Suicide becomes an attractive way to stop this form of repetition.

Selfobject: a parent or other person that performs ego functions for the infant, child, adult.

Selfobject inversion: the parental object attacks, ignores, or requires S/O response from the child. When the inversion is systematic, as with immature parents or a grossly impaired older sibling, the child learns to become a pseudo-adult, to create a False Self that appears integrated and more mature than it actually is.

Searching for Magical Objects: when we lose access to selfobject relationships we suffer tangible, but sometimes invisible losses. When this loss is invisible we cannot name it. Infants and children are especially vulnerable for they cannot comprehend the adult reasons for the suffering inflicted upon them nor can they name the source of their hurt. Sadistic parents, for example, must be believed and their actions accepted and even loved. Because the loss is invisible, and yet the (supposedly good) parent remains visible, the child becomes confused. In their confusion children struggle to repair their losses: they seek concrete representations of the "thing" that is gone. Yet what is lost is a quality, not a thing. Therefore, no actual object or action repairs adequately the sense of deficit.

**Selfobject relationship + dominant defense + cognitive organization = Character Type**

<b>S/O Response</b> (most punitive to most benign)	<b>Ego defense</b> (most damaging to least damaging)	<b>Personal Myth, Pathogenic beliefs: Cognitive errors</b> (most impaired to least)	<b>Character Pathology &amp; Actions</b> (most severe to best adapted)
Torture	Murder/counter-attack	The future is hopeless	Homicide / Suicide
Abuse	Severe dissociation (Double think, auto-hypnosis, etc.)	<u>Arguments from:</u> force, ignorance, numbers, authority	Brief, reactive psychosis
Psychosis	Denial	<u>Fallacies of:</u>	Severe NPD
Alcoholism, other impairments	Splitting	Accident, Hasty or sweeping Generalization	Severe BPO
Silence	Projection		Paranoid Personality
	Passive aggression		Dysthymic Disorder
	Acting out	<i>Post hoc ergo propter hoc</i>	Anti-Social
Death (not mourned)	Fantasy/schizoid retreat	Slippery slope	Schizoid
	Displacement	Bifurcation (either/or)	Dissociative
	Isolation		Phobic
S/O inversion: parent demands repair by the healthier child.	Intellectualization		Ob/Compulsive
	Repression	Perfectionism	Gen. Anxiety
S/O functioning: teaching, pleasure in the Other's pleasure.	Reaction Formation		=====
	Suppression	Artistic & spiritual experiences	Normal Character
	Sublimation/Humor/Play		=====
Love	Love	Wisdom	Extraordinary people: Ghandhi, M. L. King

References

See Heinz Kohut (1971), The Analysis of the Self; (1977), The Restoration of the Self;

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