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## TRANSACTIONAL ANALYSIS TECHNIQUES: A STRATEGY FOR CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

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### Abstract

This paper focused on Transactional Analysis Technique as a strategy for conflict resolution in early childhood education. The paper x-rayed Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic dynamic system of the mind structure, comprising the Id, Ego and Super-ego with a paradigm shift of focus to Eric Berne Transactional Analysis, which is the analysis of people ego interaction with one another as the source of human conflict rather than the internal psychological dynamics of the psychoanalytic of Sigmund Freud. The concept of the ego-state and how it affects human behaviour, action and intelligence were highlighted. Transaction or communication and Transactional Analysis and its meaning as well as benefit were explained. The concept of Transaction or communication among the ego-states and the type of communication behaviour, language and action people engaged in were also described. Some ways the ego manifest in human lives were further explained. The benefits of conflict resolution were highlighted. Among the recommendations made were Creating opportunities to help the Adult ego-state become the strongest and controlling part of one's personality and appropriately govern and control the other ego-state. Create an opportunity to recognize patterns and identify recurring and unproductive patterns of communication that contribute to conflicts. Provide an opportunity to identify behaviours, among other things.

**Key words:** Transactional Analysis, ego-state, transaction, conflict resolution, transactional analysis techniques

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### Introduction

Sigmund Freud conceived a dynamic system of energies comprising the 'Id', the 'ego' and the 'superego' as representing the biological, the psychological and the social forces respectively that determine human behavior. The id is the basic, primal part of personality, it is present from birth. The ego begins to develop during the first three years of a child's life. Finally, the superego starts to emerge around age five According to

Sigmund Freud; there are three components of personality – Id, Ego, and Superego. The Id deals with the part of the mind that manifests innate instinctive impulses and primary processes. The Id consists of the totality of the individual's wishes arising from his physiological needs including food, sleep, sex, water and defecation. It operates on the pleasure principles based on the gratification or satisfaction of its immediate needs, wishes, dreams, and aspiration. It is so



irrational, illogical, and immoral or amoral as it makes its demand on the ego. It has no idea of reality and is not subject to law of logic and reason. Incapable of making any judgment concerning good or bad, just and unjust, hence, it has no sense of values. Freud stated that Id works on the irrational or emotional part of the mind; the ego works on the rational side, whereas the superego works on the moral side. The id is the dark, inaccessible part of our personality. It is filled with energy reaching it from the instincts, but it has no organization, produces no collective will, but only a striving to bring about the satisfaction of the instinctual needs subject to the observance of the pleasure principle".

Conscious awareness resides in the ego, although not all of the operations of the ego are conscious. The ego is the sense of self and the surface of the personality, the part we usually show the world. The ego is governed by the 'reality principle', or a practical approach to the world. It seeks to turn the id's drive to behavior which brings benefits in the long term. The ego is that part of the id which has been modified by the direct influence of the external world. The ego represents what may be called reason and common sense, in contrast to the id, which contains the passions. The ego act as a check and balance to the id, just like a horse rider who control the movement of the horse to a desired direction and its task is to find a balance between primitive drives and reality while satisfying the id and super-ego. "Thus the ego, driven by the id, confined by the super-ego, repulsed by reality, struggles bringing about harmony among the forces. The superego includes both a punishing and a rewarding function. The superego consists of two parts, the conscience and the ego-ideal. The Conscience The conscience is composed of the rules for which behaviors are considered bad. When we engage in actions that conform to the ego ideal, we feel good about ourselves or proud of our accomplishments. When we do things that our conscience considers bad, we experience feelings of guilt. The conscience, which includes ideas about which behaviors and thoughts are improper, unacceptable, and wrong, carries out the punishing function. The conscience decides what course of action one should take. The

conscience punishes misbehavior with feelings of guilt. The Ego Ideal is the part of the superego that includes the rules and standards for good behaviors. These behaviors include those that are approved of by parental and other authority figures. Obeying these rules leads to feelings of pride, value, and accomplishment. Breaking these rules can result in feelings of guilt. The ego ideal is often thought of as the image we have of our ideal selves; the people we want to become. It is this image of the ideal individual, often modeled after people that we know, that we hold up as the standard of who we are striving to be. The ego ideal, which includes ideas about what behaviors and thoughts are admirable, acceptable, and worthy of praise, carries out the rewarding function. The ego-ideal is an idealized view of one's self. It aims for perfection of an ideal outcome. It comprises that part of the personality, mainly Unconscious, which includes the individual's Ego ideals, spiritual goals, and the psychic agency (commonly called "conscience") that criticizes and prohibits his or her drives, fantasies, feelings, and actions.

Both parts of the super-ego develop through experience with others or via social interactions. According to Freud, a strong super-ego serves to inhibit the biological instincts of the id, while a weak super-ego gives in to the id's urgings. The superego is a cluster of internalized parental or societal moral values and censoring stances that are held within. Freud's conclude that the superego does not begin to develop until the age of 5 or 6, and probably is not firmly established until several years later. Because it is formed during early childhood, the superego tends to be harsh and unrealistic in its demands. It is often just as illogical and unrelenting in its search for proper behavior as the id is in its search for pleasure. When a child thinks about behaving in a morally unacceptable way, the superego sends a warning by producing feelings of anxiety and guilt. The superego is developed through a process called identification. Motivated by love, fear, and admiration, children actively imitate their parents' characteristics and internalize their parents' values. Through identification, parents' values become the ideals and aspirations of their children. In this way, the moral standards of



society are transmitted from one generation to the next. Freud offered the concept of the superego as the internalization of the parents' values and prohibitions. He described it as developing out of the ego and becoming a full-fledged structure in its own right as part of the child's oedipal resolution. In essence it functions both as a conscience and as an internalized set of ideals, both of which are significant motivators of behavior. Freud's superego is the component of personality that delivers mental reward or punishment for a person's actions. It includes the internalized ideals we've acquired from our parents and society and is responsible for producing feelings of pride and satisfaction as well as feelings of shame and guilt. The superego works to suppress the urges of the id and tries to make the ego behave morally rather than realistically. The ideals that contribute to the formation of the superego include not just the morals and values that we learn from our parents, but also the ideas of right and wrong that we acquire from society and the culture in which we live. The primary action of the superego is to suppress entirely any urges or desires of the id that are considered wrong or socially unacceptable. It also tries to force the ego to act morally rather than realistically. Finally, the superego strives for moral perfection, without taking reality into account. Freud believed that neuroses are caused by an overly dominant superego, while psychoses are caused by an overly dominant id. The symptoms occur when the ego tries to regain control from the superego or the id (Freud, 1961, Lapsley & Stey, 2011).

Psychoanalysis is a therapeutic approach and theory, founded by Sigmund Freud, that seeks to explore the unconscious mind to uncover repressed feelings and interpret deep-rooted emotional patterns, often using techniques like dream analysis and free association. The primary assumption of psychoanalysis is the belief that all people possess unconscious thoughts, feelings, desires, and memories. According to Freud, neurotic problems in later life are a product of the conflicts that arise during the oedipal phase of development. These conflicts may be repressed because the immature ego is unable to deal with them at the time. (Laplanche & Pontalis, 1973).

### • **Basic Assumptions**

- Psychoanalytic psychologists see psychological problems as rooted in the unconscious mind.
- Manifest symptoms are caused by latent (hidden) disturbances.
- Typical causes include unresolved issues during development or repressed trauma.
- Freud believed that people could be cured by making conscious their unconscious thoughts and motivations, thus gaining insight.
- Treatment focuses on bringing the repressed conflict to consciousness, where the client can deal with it. (Mitchell & Black, 1995 Snowden, 2006, *Snowden and Ruth 2006*).

Transactional analyses (TA), opposed this Freudian hypothesis and postulated in addition three "ego states" the Parent, Adult and Child ego states—which were largely shaped through childhood experiences. These three are all part of Freud's ego; but are not represented in the id or the superego. TA shifted its focus and attention from internal psychological dynamics to the dynamics contained in people's interactions. Rather than believing that increasing awareness of the contents of unconsciously held ideas was the therapeutic path, TA concentrated on the content of people's interactions with each other. Changing these interactions was TA's path to solving emotional problems. While the Freudian psychoanalysis focuses on increasing awareness of the contents of subconsciously held ideas. Eric Berne developed the concept and paradigm shift to transactional analysis. That is to say that, while it has its roots in psychoanalysis, it was designed as a dissenting branch of psychoanalysis in that it put its emphasis on transactional rather than "psycho-" analysis. In Freudian psychoanalysis, the individual's final emotional state is the result of inner dialogue between different parts of the psyche, Berne believed that it is relatively easy to identify these inner dialogues and that the ability to do so is parentally suppressed in early childhood. In transactional analysis, the ego state is altered as a way to solve emotional problems. Berne considered how individuals interact with one another, and how the ego states affect each





set of transactions. **Transactional analysis** is a psychoanalytic theory and method of therapy wherein social interactions (or "transactions") are analyzed to determine the ego state of the communicator (whether parent-like, childlike, or adult-like) as a basis for understanding behavior. (Schlegel, 1998, Solomon, 2003). TA "is a theory of personality and a systematic psychotherapy for personal growth and personal change." As a theory of personality, TA describes how people are structured psychologically. It uses the ego-state (Parent-Adult-Child) to explain how people function and express their personality in their behavior.

### **Purpose of Transactional Analysis**

Transactional Analysis aims to help individuals realize what is shaping their communication and interactions. Helping them become self aware creates a change and allows them to speak from their adult ego, instead of the parent or child ego.

It looks at how we speak and respond to others and the roles the ego play in a problem situation. Its goal is to improve these interactions so they become healthy and balanced (Hollins, 2011, Novey, 1999, *Ohlsson, 2010, Dusay, 1981*).

### **Objectives of the Transactional Analysis Theory**

- Be a very self-aware person.
- Recognize and alter patterns in oneself.
- Examine your feelings, tics, and actions.
- Stay in the Adult Ego-State.

### **Concept of Ego**

Philosophically the ego means "a conscious thinking subject". According to Psychoanalysis definition of Ego, which says - "it's the part of the mind that mediates between the conscious and the unconscious and is responsible for reality testing and a sense of personal identity". The ego is involved in perception of the external world, self-awareness, problem solving, control of motor functions, adaptation to reality, memory, reconciliation of conflicting impulses and ideas, and regulation of affect (Tudor, 2010) However, transactional Analysis suggests that the word "Ego" is infamously considered as a person's sense of self-esteem or self-importance.

Someone's ego is **their sense of own worth**. When people have a large ego, they think they are very important and valuable. They never would admit being wrong and as a result sees the ego as source of human conflict. The ego is an unhealthy belief in our one own importance, arrogance and self-centered ambition. It's that petulant child inside every person, the one that chooses getting his or her way over anything or anyone else. The need to be better than, more than, recognized for, far past any reasonable utility. It is the sense of superiority and certainty that exceeds the bounds of confidence and talent. This can keep one out of touch with reality, creates unrealistic expectations and entitlement and makes one dependent on external validation

### **Keeps you out of touch with reality**

The ego can keeps one out of touch with reality and prevents one from hearing critical but necessary feedback from others. Ego makes people over-estimate their abilities and worth, and under-estimate the effort and skill required to achieve goals by others. Causing one to lose touch with reality and miss opportunities to improve, to connect with others, and to achieve goals. The ego is the voice that tells people that they are better than what they really are. For this reason inhibiting true success by preventing a direct and honest connection to the world around us

### **Creates unrealistic expectations and entitlement**

Ego makes people assume that they "deserve" some outcome; it creates a feeling of entitlement. Entitlement assumes: This is mine and I deserves it. It overstates our abilities to others, it renders generous judgment of our prospects, and it creates ridiculous expectations."

### **Makes people dependent on external validation**

The ego needs and craves for external validation in order to feel satisfied, the ego needs honors in order to be validated and is always seeking for external recognition and compensation. When the ego takes too much control of people, they become incredibly dependent on external validation. This validation may take the form of;





- Press coverage, mentions within internal company communications, applause from a crowd
- The praise and admiration of family, friends, boss, and colleagues
- Extrinsic signals like a higher compensation, big house, fancy car, expensive vacations, impressive title
- Social media likes and follows

The flip side of a healthy ego where it becomes a source of challenges and limitations, if the ego becomes too dominant or distorted, it can lead to self-centeredness, arrogance, and a skewed perception of reality. An inflated ego may prevent us from truly understanding and connecting with others, hinder personal growth, and create barriers in our relationships.

### Highly destructive egoistic behaviours includes

#### 1. Need for Validation

- Healthy Ego: Thriving on intrinsic value, a healthy ego appreciates recognition but doesn't solely rely on external validation for self-worth.
- Unhealthy Ego: Seeking constant external validation, an unhealthy ego feels unfulfilled without continuous praise or acknowledgment from others.

#### 2. Insecurity

- Healthy Ego: Secure in self-image and abilities, a healthy ego can weather setbacks without significant damage to self-esteem.
- Unhealthy Ego: Insecurity is a hallmark of an unhealthy ego. Individuals may constantly compare themselves to others, feeling threatened by perceived competition.

#### 3. Defensiveness

- Healthy Ego: Accepting responsibility for actions and openness to admitting mistakes characterize individuals with a healthy ego.
- Unhealthy Ego: An unhealthy ego tends to be defensive, deflecting blame onto others or external factors to safeguard its

self-image.

#### 4. Lack of Accountability

- Healthy Ego: Healthy egos involve taking accountability for one's actions and decisions.
- Unhealthy Ego: Avoiding accountability is a trait of an unhealthy ego, where individuals blame circumstances or others for failures instead of acknowledging their role.

#### 5. Difficulty in Relationships

- Healthy Ego: Healthy egos contribute to positive, balanced relationships where individuals can give and receive support.
- Unhealthy Ego: An unhealthy ego often leads to difficulties in forming and maintaining relationships, as individuals struggle with collaboration and compromise. (Chuah, 2024)

### Ego States

Ego states are who we are, The parent is our "Taught" Concept of life, Child is our "Felt" Concept of Life, Adult is our "Thought" Concept of life. The three ego-states that people consistently use are;

#### 1. Parent ego state "Taught Concept of Life"

The "Taught" ego state develops consistently taking inputs from the figure of authorities in the environment, where the child grows. It's the part that holds the Taught values & beliefs stemming from the cultural, familial, religious conditioning, unique to a person's environment. Represents learned behaviors, values, and beliefs from early experiences. Influences how we perceive and respond to authority figures and our own inner voice. *Parent* ("extero-psyche"): a state in which people behave, feel, and think in response to an unconscious mimicking of how their parents (or other parental figures) acted, or how they interpreted their parent's actions. It is learned from an influential figure in childhood. Parental figures are often either more *nurturing* (permission-giving, security-giving) or more *criticising* (comparing to family traditions and ideals in generally negative ways). **The Parent**



**state** is when we play, often unconsciously, a "parent type" role – we imitate what our parents would have done in a situation. These can be things like criticizing, scolding, advising, nurturing, and caring actions. Individual with the parent ego state think, feel, and behave as a parent and play the role, copy the same thing that our parents did to us in the past. When the **Parent** is involved, the language used, are 'never', 'always', 'should', and 'ought'. There may also be gestures such as finger-wagging and head-shaking. The events recorded in the first five years of an individual's life are replayed when the person is in the parent ego state.

## 2. Child ego state “Felt Concept of Life”

Ego States refer to three distinct modes of thinking, feeling, and behaving, categorized as Parent, Adult, and Child. From the time a human is conceived, it experiences "Felt" concept of life, and packs it all in its Child ego state right from the somatic developmental stage, which reflects in their personality right from the time of birth. Represents emotions, spontaneity, and creativity Influences our level of openness, vulnerability, and ability to connect with others.

*Child* ("archaeopsyche"): a state in which people behave, feel, and think similarly to how they did in childhood. The Child is the source of emotions, creation, recreation, spontaneity, and intimacy. Individual with this ego state, playback the behavior that was recorded during childhood, both parent and child ego states are related to the past; hence trouble in an individual's relationship occurs and this source of conflict can be traced from the child past experience. Mainly emotions and feelings are recorded in our brain as a child, and those are repeated when we are in the same ego state. The internal events recorded as a child are linked to the external events observed as a child. According to Berne, our creativity, spontaneous actions, and wonder come from this ego state. It is also the home of other actions and feelings – like sulking, brooding, pouting, showing displeasure, or sudden anger. Childhood behaviors are either more natural (free) or more adapted to others.

## 3. Adult ego state “Learned Concept of Life”

It's believed though the Adult begins to develop early on from the age of 6-8 months, it continues till 24 yrs. It's the state that is rational & aware & rightly called the "Thought" Concept of life, for it's responsible for our response to the here & now.

Represents a rational and objective state of mind, Enables us to think, analyze, and make decisions based on logic and reason.

**Adult ("neopsyche")**: a state of the ego which is most like an artificially intelligent system processing information and making predictions about major emotions that could affect its operation. Learning to strengthen the Adult ego state is a goal of TA. While people are in the Adult ego state, they are directed towards an objective appraisal of reality. The adult ego state is a more mature ego state where we are in a position to take our decision by reasoning. The data that is stored in the Parent ego state is validated in this ego state, and the person can reason the information and act accordingly. **The Adult state** is the most objective of the three. It's stable, reasonable, and able to observe what's going on in the moment to make a rational decision.

Transactional Analysis aim is to strengthen the Adult ego state, promoting autonomy and facilitating personal growth. The **Adult** manifests through fact-finding. The goal of Transactional Analysis is to help people understand that each role has its place and importance, but that, in most situations, people should play the Adult role. The basic language of the Adult is a series of questions: who, what, why, where, how?(Berne, 1964, Berne, 1972, Harris, 1996),

## Transactions

The term **transaction** refers to the fundamental unit of social interaction or communication exchanges between people. When two people engage in a discussion, one person gives a transaction stimulus by starting the conversation, and the other person replies with a transaction response. Transaction is a communication exchanges between people and is made up of stimulus and response.



Communication is the actionable transfer of information from one person, group, to another by writing, speaking, or using a medium that provides a means of understanding. It is the transfer of facts, information, ideas, suggestions, orders, requests, grievance from one person to another. Berne (1996) suggests that when two people encounter each other, one of them will speak to the other. This is called the Transactional Stimulus. The reaction from the other person he called the transaction Response. The person sending the message or stimulus is called the agent. The person who responds is called the respondent. When individuals communicate, their ego-states interact to create transactions. If the ego-states interact and blend in a healthy way, transactions tend to be healthier. The healthiest Ego State is the **Wise Executor**. When people are in the Wise Executor Ego State, they operate in the here and now. They are supportive of others, but not overly enabling. People in the Wise Executor Ego State have developed their own personal set of moral values, which they use to help them make decisions. They are able to strategize to solve problems rather than try to manipulate other people. The Wise Executor Ego State develops later than the others. In many people, it does not develop until they are around eight years old. In some people, it might be developed later. But, sometimes ego-states can contaminate each other to create a distorted view of the world. The unhealthy ways that the Ego States interact are: Selfish, Pleaser, Rebellious, Master Manipulator, Critical, and Enabling.

**Selfish:** In the Selfish ego state, people are reckless and demanding. They try to have fun without thinking of the consequences.

**Pleaser:** People who are Pleasers obey the rules, but do not necessarily believe in the rules. They are obedient in the hopes of “flying under the radar”. They are more concerned with looking like a good person than being a good person.

**Rebellious:** The opposite of the Pleaser would be Rebellious. Rebellious people are openly oppositional. They resent and reject control by others. Also, they reject the ideas of cooperation or compromise.

**Manipulator:** Manipulators have no regard for rules that get in the way or their own interests. They will exaggerate, distort the truth, or try to play psychological games with others. Their intention is to serve themselves at the expense of others.

**Critical:** people try to control other people by being demanding or judgmental. They might also use sarcasm. The intention is to dominate other people.

**Enabling:** People who are enabling try to eliminate other people's suffering in order to make themselves feel more comfortable. They feel it is their responsibility to make other people happy or successful. While Enabling people believe that they are being nurturing, the message that they send to others is that other people are not capable of caring for themselves (*Ahlstrom, 2024*). Many of our problems come from transactions from the unhealthy ego state which are unsuccessful, unproductive or counterproductive which is a signs of ego state problems. Berne suggests that virtually everyone has something problematic about their ego states and that negative behavior can be addressed by "treating" the ego state that creates the problem. Individuals in these roles interact through different types of ego state transaction.

It is based on two notions, first that we have three part of ego state i.e the parent, child and adult to our personality, secondly that these ego state converse or interact with one another in transaction.

### **Types of Ego State Transaction Complementary Transaction**

At the core of Berne's theory is the rule that effective transaction (i.e successful transaction) must be complementary. As far as transaction is complementary, communication continues between people. Complementary transaction occurs when both people communicating are in the same ego state and level. Both are often communicating and thinking in the same direction and level as such communication is easier (Adult to Adult role, Child to Child role) The conversations were clear because both





people were communicating in the same roles and levels. A complementary transaction takes place when the sender's and receiver's ego states are parallel. When complementary exchange occurs between individuals, it reduces conflicts. The combination of the complementary ego states can be anything child to child, parent to parent, adult to adult, parent to child, and so on. It depends on the stimulus that was send.

### **Crossed Transactions**

Unfortunately, many of us communicate in ways that are unhealthy as well. These unhealthy communications are called, "crossed transactions," wherein communication breaks down and each party no longer feels seen, heard, or understood. In this transaction, If the stimulus is from the Parent ego state and a response from the child ego state is expected, which raises the confusion. The conversation will not last long in a crossed transaction as the person does not get expected responses. As stated earlier when people communicate on the same level such as Adult to Adult or Child to Child communication is often easy. Nothing is misunderstood, and no frustration occurs. However, when people communicate on different levels such as Adult to Child or Child to Parent then true communication often breaks down. This can lead to feelings of frustration, anger, or inadequacy and it can damage relationships and cause conflict.

Many of us communicate in ways that are unhealthy as well. These unhealthy communications are called, "crossed transactions," wherein communication breaks down and each party no longer feels seen, heard, or understood. There are multiple combinations for crossed transactions, but they all maintain a similar feature: communication breaks down. In order for communication to be restored, the transactions must once again be complementary so that there is a mutual understanding on both sides.

### **Ulterior Transactions**

According to Dr. Berne, communication between two people occurs on two levels – social and psychological. On the social level, we say something whereas, on the psychological level, we mean something. When what we say and what we mean are different ulterior transaction

happens. Ulterior transactions is when people say one thing but mean another, When there is an overt transaction with a covert message that is communicated simultaneously, we said that it is an ulterior transaction. The overt transaction is what is audibly spoken, but the covert transaction is the psychological message that is actually being communicated and responded to. This is more complicated and can also lead to conflict. This ulterior communication can make one to react either positively or negatively. Two messages are sent at once. There is an underlying message that is sent from the sender's child or parent state. Those messages can be sent consciously or unconsciously by the sender.

### **The Concept of Analysis**

An analysis is the process of breaking a complex topic or substance into smaller parts to gain a better understanding of it. It means breaking a topic or concept down into its parts in order to inspect and understand it, and to restructure those parts in a way that it makes sense. It is also a detailed examination of anything complex in order in order to determine its nature or to determine its essential features. Through this analysis source of problems and conflicts in relationships are discovered. Transactional Analysis is therefore a statement of thorough and careful examination and analysis of the source of ego state conflict. Through the analysis of transactions, individuals can identify communication breakdowns and understand why conflicts occur. By gaining insight into these breakdowns, individuals can take proactive steps to prevent conflicts or address them constructively when they arise. This empowers individuals to replace unproductive patterns with **healthier communication strategies**. TA offers a unique approach to **conflict resolution** by analyzing transactions, the ways people interact with one another. According to Hollins (2011) Transactional analysis is a method of analysing communication. *The basics of interpersonal communication* (Poole, & Ahmed, 2008).

### **Transactional Analysis**

Sigmund Freud inspiration of psychoanalysis laid to Eric Berne foundation of Transactional analysis theory. That is to say that, while it has its roots in [psychoanalysis](#), it was designed as a



dissenting branch of psychoanalysis in that it put its emphasis on transactional rather than "psycho-" analysis. TA shifted its focus and attention from internal psychological dynamics to the dynamics contained in people's [interactions](#). Rather than believing that increasing awareness of the contents of unconsciously held ideas was the therapeutic path, TA concentrated on the content of people's interactions with each other. Changing these interactions was TA's path to solving emotional problems and conflicts among people and groups.

While the Freudian psychoanalysis focuses on increasing awareness of the contents of subconsciously held ideas and inner dialogue between different parts of the psyche, Transactional analyses opposed this internal Freudian hypothesis and postulated in addition three external "ego states" interactions-the Parent, Adult, and Child states-which were largely shaped through childhood experiences. These three are all part of Freud's ego; but are not present in the id or the superego. Transaction Analysis (TA) is a psychotherapeutic approach that incorporates certain elements of psychoanalytic theory, especially regarding early childhood experiences it distinctively emphasizes the "transactions" or interactions between people and introduces concepts like the Parent, Adult, and Child ego states.

**Transactional analysis** focused on social interactions (or "transactions") between the ego states which are analyzed to determine the ego state of the communicator (whether parent-like, childlike, or adult-like) as a basis for understanding behavior and the source of conflict. The ego-state (Parent-Adult-Child) explain how people function and express their personality through their ego state and behavior that result to conflict. The main aim of Transactional Analysis is to strengthen the adult-ego state and helps individuals communicate more from themselves or adult ego state, unbiased by the parent-ego state or the child-ego state. Transactional Analysis help individual become self aware and creates a change and allows them to speak from their adult ego, instead of the parent or child ego. These ego states shape how we respond to the world, and understanding

them is crucial in improving communication. It looks at how we speak and respond to others and the roles the ego play in a problem situation. Its goal is to improve these interactions so they become healthy and balanced. Transactional Analysis operates on the premise that successful communication hinges on recognizing and responding to the ego states involved in social transactions. People use this process to analyze the communication that they receive which helps process what they heard, how they feel about what they heard, and what they think after the transactional experience (Solomon, 2003, Stewart, 1992).

### **Importance of Transactional Analysis**

#### **Build Better Relationships**

When it comes to fostering healthier and more fulfilling relationships, Transactional Analysis (TA) offers invaluable insights. By gaining a deep understanding of your own and others' ego states and transactional patterns, you can transform the way you relate to those around you. This enhanced self-awareness and empathy pave the way for establishing meaningful connections and building trust and intimacy in your relationships, be it with family, friends, or colleagues. TA provides a framework for recognizing and analyzing the different ego states that influence behavior – the Parent, Adult, and Child. By discerning these states in yourself and others, you can better empathize with their experiences and respond effectively to their needs. This heightened empathy serves as a foundation for meaningful connections, enabling you to forge bonds that are built on understanding and compassion. TA empowers you to respond to others' needs with empathy and create more meaningful connections.

#### **Self-Awareness and Personal Growth**

Transactional Analysis encourages **self-awareness**, allowing individuals to gain insight into their own behavior and emotions. By understanding their own **ego states** (*Parent, Adult, and Child*), they tends to identify their **emotional responses** and **thought patterns** in various situations that leads to a conflict. This **self-awareness** is a crucial first step towards **personal growth** and self-improvement. When a child develops self-awareness through



Transactional Analysis, such child becomes more attuned to his behavior actions, reactions, and underlying motivations. Self-awareness is the key that unlocks **personal growth**. It allows you to break free from automatic **thought patterns** and emotional reactions, giving you the ability to respond in a more deliberate and intentional way.” Through self-awareness, the child can identify any limiting ego state communication or **thought patterns** that may be responsible for the problem situation.

This shift in thinking is essential for personal growth and enables one to make positive changes in all areas of life. Self-awareness also allows the child to gain a deeper understanding of his emotions. By recognizing ones **emotional responses**, the child can explore the underlying reasons behind them and learn to manage them effectively. This **emotional** awareness helps the child navigate relationships, communicate more effectively, and make better decisions.

### **Empowering positive change and personal growth**

Transactional Analysis therapy strengthens the Adult ego state, empowering individuals to make more reasoned and autonomous decisions. This emphasis on personal responsibility and the capacity for positive change contributes to long-term personal growth. TA's goal is not just symptom relief but also equipping individuals with tools for self-improvement.

It encourages individuals to reflect on their own behavior, thought patterns, and emotional responses. This introspection enables them to identify areas for personal growth and make conscious choices that contribute to more positive and fulfilling relationships. Transactional Analysis helps individuals gain a deeper understanding of their own communication style and how it may impact their interactions with others.

Transactional Analysis, can help unlock the potential for **improved communication** and establish **meaningful connections** with those significant others. By actively engaging in the analysis and understanding of **communication**

**styles** and patterns, you will become a more effective communicator, fostering understanding, **empathy**, and cooperation in your relationships. TA equips one with the tools to achieve effective communication. By understanding transactional patterns – the way people interact and communicate one can identify any hindrances to effective communication. This awareness allows children to break free from unproductive patterns and adopt healthier communication strategies, leading to clearer and more fulfilling interactions.

### **Improving interpersonal relationships**

One of the significant benefits of Transactional Analysis lies in its ability to improve interpersonal relationships. Individuals can communicate more harmoniously and effectively by recognizing and adjusting ego states during transactions. TA helps create complementary transactions, reduce conflicts, and foster healthier connections, both in personal and professional spheres.

### **Creating a Productive Work Environment**

Transactional Analysis equips individuals with the tools to create and maintain a productive work environment. By fostering positive and healthy communication, people can establish trust, encourage collaboration, and facilitate open dialogue. By encouraging open and constructive dialogues, conflicts can be resolved more effectively, preventing them from escalating into larger issues that can disrupt team dynamics.

### **Stress Reduction**

Understanding the principles of Transactional Analysis can be a powerful tool in reducing stress and promoting **mental** and **emotional well-being**. By recognizing and addressing **negative patterns** of thinking and behavior and manner of communication one can effectively manage stress and lead a more balanced life.

Transactional Analysis provides valuable insights into how our thoughts and behaviors contribute to stress. It allows us to identify unproductive patterns and make conscious





choices to change them.

### **Objectives of the Transactional Analysis Theory**

- Be a very self-aware person.
- Recognise and alter patterns in oneself.
- Examine one feelings, tics, and actions.
- Stay in the Adult Ego-State.

### **Conflict**

A **conflict** is a situation, in which unacceptable differences in interests, values, opinions, and expectations, occur in or between individuals or groups. It is also a disagreements, discrepancies, and frictions that occur when the actions or beliefs of one or more members of the group are unacceptable to one or more other group members and are rejected by them. Conflict involves the perception that one person's interests, needs, desires or values are incompatible with those of another person. A conflict is usually a matter of interests, needs, priorities, goals or values interfering with each other; and, often, a result of different perceptions more than actual differences. Conflict is: "an active disagreement between people with opposing opinions or principles." Actually, conflict in itself is not necessarily a negative thing. When handled constructively it can help people to stand up for themselves and others, to evolve and learn how to work together to achieve a mutually satisfactory solution. But if conflict is handled poorly it can cause anger, hurt, divisiveness and more serious problems. It is an interactive process that manifests itself in incompatibility, in thinking, imagination, perception and/or feeling and/or wanting in such a way that an impairment disagreement or dissonance within or between social entities occurs. It is a state of tension that arises because there are irreconcilable contradictions between two or more parties with regard to their opinion, interest, need and want. Conflict occurs when people does not share common goals, interest, want opinion or common ways to reach a particular goal or objective. Conflict occurs also when there is direct or indirect competition between people or when someone may feel excluded from a particular activity. Differences in ego communication or poor communication

are also significant reasons to start a conflict, to misunderstand a particular situation and to create potentially explosive interactions. Ego state is another source of conflict between individuals, Feeling of superiority, injustice, vulnerability, mistrust, and helplessness, envy and contempt can cause conflict (*Heigl, 2014*).

### **Conflict resolution**

Conflict resolution is the process by which two or more parties engaged in a disagreement, dispute or debate reach an agreement resolving it. Conflict resolution is conceptualized as the methods and processes involved in facilitating the peaceful ending of conflict. Conflict resolution is a social situation where the conflicting parties (voluntarily) enters agreement and resolve to live peacefully with – and/or dissolve - their basic incompatibilities and henceforth cease the conflict. Conflict resolution is a transformative process that requires effort and commitment from all parties involved. Conflict Resolution involves three dimensions that include cognitive, emotional and behavioral dimensions. Cognitive resolution is the way disputants understand and view the conflict, with beliefs, perspectives, understandings and attitudes. Emotional resolution is in the way disputants feel about a conflict, the emotional energy. Behavioral resolution is reflective of how the disputants act their behavior. The goal of conflict resolution is focused on reaching a settlement and transforming the parties, achieving social justice, or deeper understanding, and satisfaction of interests. (Ramsbotham, Woodhouse, & Miall, 2011).

### **Transactional Analysis Techniques as a Conflict Resolution Strategy**

#### **Transactional Analysis Techniques**

By utilizing TA techniques, individuals can foster smoother interactions and build better relationships. TA provides a framework for expressing needs, communicating effectively, and understanding the needs of others. This leads to improved **conflict resolution** and a more harmonious environment.

#### **Transactional Analysis techniques:**



These techniques guide individuals through exploring their ego states, transactional dynamics, and behavioral patterns.

#### **Ego state awareness:**

- **Objective:** Increase awareness of the three ego states-Parent, Adult, and Child.
- **Technique:** Individuals identify and label their predominant ego states in various situations through guided introspection.
- **Benefits:** Enhances recognition of default responses and promotes conscious interaction choice.

#### **Script analysis:**

- **Objective:** Explore and challenge life scripts developed in childhood.
- **Technique:** Reflect on early experiences, identifying self-limiting decisions and ingrained beliefs.
- **Benefits:** Facilitates understanding of how past decisions influence current behaviors, enabling script rewriting.

#### **Transactional analysis games:**

- **Objective:** Illustrate transactional dynamics playfully.
- **Technique:** In role-playing scenarios, demonstrate complementary, crossed, and ulterior transactions.
- **Benefits:** Provides a practical and interactive way to grasp TA concepts and their real-life implications.

#### **Strokes and recognition:**

- **Objective:** Explore the concept of strokes in interpersonal communication.
- **Technique:** Encourage individuals to identify positive and negative strokes received and given.
- **Benefits:** Heightens awareness of the impact of social recognition on emotional well-being.

#### **Life position exploration:**

- **Objective:** Assess and challenge life positions-“I'm OK, You're OK” or other variations.
- **Technique:** Reflect on life events to identify and adjust underlying life positions.
- **Benefits:** Promotes a more positive and

constructive approach to self and others.

#### **Reparenting techniques:**

- **Objective:** Address unmet needs from childhood by providing nurturing experiences.
- **Technique:** Engage in activities that fulfill emotional needs unmet early in life.
- **Benefits:** Facilitates healing and developing a more resilient Adult ego state.

#### **Time structuring:**

- **Objective:** Manage time effectively to balance life domains.
- **Technique:** Develop time-management strategies aligned with the Adult ego state.
- **Benefits:** Improves organizational skills and reduces stress through conscious time allocation.

#### **Games people play analysis:**

- **Objective:** Analyze social games and identify recurring interaction patterns.
- **Technique:** Review and discuss scenarios from daily life, recognizing game dynamics.
- **Benefits:** Raises awareness of manipulative behaviors, fostering more authentic communication.

#### **Script change dialogue:**

- **Objective:** Rewrite and challenge negative scripts to promote positive change.
- **Technique:** Engage in dialogues challenging self-limiting beliefs and encouraging script revisions.
- **Benefits:** Supports individuals in reframing negative narratives and adopting more constructive perspectives.

#### **Mirroring and validation:**

- **Objective:** Enhance empathy and connection in interpersonal relationships.
- **Technique:** Practice mirroring-reflecting emotions-and validating others' experiences.
- **Benefits:** Strengthens communication by fostering understanding and emotional resonance.



### Empty chair technique:

- **Objective:** Address unresolved conflicts or communicate symbolically with significant figures.
- **Technique:** Role-play conversations with an empty chair representing a person or issue.
- **Benefits:** Facilitates emotional expression, closure, and resolution in a therapeutic context.

### Discounting recognition exercise:

- **Objective:** Address self-esteem issues related to discounting positive feedback.
- **Technique:** Identify and challenge discounting behaviors, recognizing and internalizing positive feedback.
- **Benefits:** Promotes a more positive self-perception and increased receptivity to acknowledgment.

### Life script art exploration:

- **Objective:** Express and analyze life scripts through artistic mediums.
- **Technique:** Encourage individuals to create visual representations of their life scripts.
- **Benefits:** Provides a creative outlet for script exploration, integrating artistic expression into therapy.

### Problem-solving dialogues:

- **Objective:** Develop effective problem-solving skills in daily life.
- **Technique:** Engage in structured dialogues that focus on collaborative solutions.
- **Benefits:** Enhances approaching challenges with a rational and solution-oriented mindset.

### Journaling and reflection:

- **Objective:** Promote self-reflection and insight through written expression.
- **Technique:** Encourage regular journaling to explore thoughts, emotions, and transactional patterns.
- **Benefits:** Facilitates ongoing self-awareness and documentation of personal growth.

### Conclusion

By understanding the influence the ego-state had

on human communication, it becomes easy to identify ego-state and their transaction as source of human conflict. Being aware of the analysis of these transactions and communications and games the ego play is the first step to resolving and overcoming conflict brought about by the ego state communication and transaction.

### Recommendations

By actively managing the ego, one will be more receptive to diverse perspectives that challenge thinking by creating opportunities for others than one takes for themselves.

Opportunity to learn a skill called insight management. It is the act of managing one's own ability to understand the motives and reasons behind own actions. Without this skill for self awareness interpersonal relationships may degenerate into a web of unproductive and manipulative games with no real winners, and no real intimacy.

Creating opportunities to help the Adult ego-state become the strongest and controlling part of one's personality and appropriately govern and control the other ego-state.

Create an opportunity to recognize patterns and identify recurring and unproductive patterns of communication that contribute to conflicts.

Provide an opportunity to identify behaviors actions and communications that Triggers and lead to **communication breakdowns** and conflicts.

Provide an opportunity for people to express their and Address their Emotional Needs. Opportunity that encourages each and every one to express their emotional needs Teach Assertive Communication create opportunities for people to be confident and direct in expressing their thoughts and feelings while respecting the views of others.

Provide a common Ground Search for areas of agreement and common goals to build upon and create mutually beneficial solutions.

Create an opportunity for people to learn and





practice effective conflict resolution skills and transaction analysis techniques.

Encourage individuals to practice active listening by listening actively to fully understand

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