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Goodbye

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Goodbye

SAYING GOODBYE. A CASEBOOK OF TERMINATION IN CHILD AND
ADOLESCENT ANALYSIS AND THERAPY

edited by Anita G. Schmuckler, D.O.
Hillsdale, N.J. The Analytic Press, 1991

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Steven M. Sokoll, M.D.

Anna Freud wrote that termination of psychoanalysis of a child occurs when the path toward progressive development is restored (1). A consensus of clinicians who address the appropriateness of termination underline the forward development of the structural assemblage, affective awareness, and conflict resolution (2,3). Yet there is not a circumscribed literature on the technique of termination, not only the "how to" and "when to" but also manifestations of transference and countertransference, extra-analytic influences and reactions, "premature" termination, and the question of transference neurosis. Dr. Schmuckler's volume brings together authors who focus broadly on the technique of termination and address the above concerns in child and adolescent psychoanalysis.

This is a fascinating and well-designed work. Two sections comprise the volume: the first section, ten chapters, includes individual clinical cases in progressing age of analysis and from analysts who describe their working knowledge of termination through rich clinical material. The authors address the situation surrounding the referral, analytic material, and analytic material in the termination phase, including the variable "incubation period" (that time, as described by Novick (4), between the first musings of termination and setting the actual date), the termination phase proper, and any post-termination phase. The second section comprises "Theoretical Papers," which present topics relevant to the ideas introduced by writers in the first section.

The first section, that of the clinical contributions, progresses sequentially with cases from early latency through late adolescence. Though this age-specific selection of cases reflects more or less the manifest developmental situation in the narrative, that is all that is predictable about the situation. The content is bold, for Dr. Schmuckler has selected psychoanalysts with a broad range of attitudes toward aspects of termination. These aspects include criteria for termination, temporal technique of termination (such as continuing the same number of sessions per week until the end versus tapering down the number of sessions per week), and the relative rigidity of termination (terminated and free to return as desired, versus terminated and expected to return repeatedly in a post-termination phase). Cases include those

in which the termination process is not decided upon by patient and analyst: Dr. Brinich describes a mother's unilateral decision to decrease sessions from five times to two times a week, and the analyst's decision to set a termination date as he prepares to leave the country. Several authors comment on parental involvement in the analytic situation, including Dr. Gonzales' account of a parent's need to mourn the loss of the analyst. All clinical contributions are analytic cases; there are no psychotherapy cases.

The second section, "Theoretical Papers," is no less bold. Dr. Chused addresses with sensitivity the development of the transference neurosis, which she feels is a pivotal element in child analysis, and describes its relevance to the work of termination. Dr. Weiss discusses transference more broadly and articulates termination as a recapitulation of the analysis, allowing for a reworking of separation-individuation issues. Drs. Novick describe similarities in adolescent and adult analyses with their discussion of the wide-ranging hold of omnipotent fantasies which interfere with the emergence of more meaningful pleasure and self-esteem. Dr. Burgner tackles those adolescents considered unanalysable, including patients with primitive, severely masochistic characters. Dr. Kernberg outlines specific termination criteria. Finally, Dr. Gillman addresses termination in psychotherapy, describing the modification of goals for psychotherapy and termination. Only this chapter addresses psychotherapy as distinct from psychoanalysis.

I applaud Dr. Schmuckler on this volume. She has assembled thoughtful clinicians who learn with their patients about the process and goals of termination. In working with children, as Dr. Kernberg states (page 321), "indeed, there is no other situation in which the child can so fully explore the experience of separation and loss in all its genetic and current aspects and be aided by someone who is close but objective." Just as the authors recognize termination as an essential component in the analysis, they do not limit their discussion to the termination phase. They comment on other techniques of psychoanalysis, including superbly readable clinical material. Attention is paid to patients' resistances, defenses, transferences, wishes, fantasies, and play, to the analyst's countertransference, formulation of the case, and interventions, and to the parents. This is also a volume that richly describes the entire psychoanalytic process with children and adolescents. Dr. Smuckler's care in preparing this volume is reflected in her informative prefaces to the volume and to each chapter in the first section of the book. I recommend this volume with enthusiasm to clinicians well-versed in psychoanalytic technique and work with children and adolescents.

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