

# TRANSFERENCE VS COUNTER-TRANSFERENCE

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# Setting the Record Straight

- **We all transfer and counter-transfer; all the time; in every encounter.**

# What is Transference?

- It is defined as a client's unconscious conflicts that can cause problems in everyday life.

# What is Counter-Transference?

- When you find yourself responding back to the way the individual is treating you.

# Transferring

- It is where the individual transfers feelings and attitudes from a person or situation in the past on to a person or situation in the present.

**Also...**

# Transferring

- **The individual transfers feelings based on feelings experienced with influential people and early life experiences onto you.**

# Types of Transferences

- **Transferences can be positive or negative.**

**For example...**

# **No One is Exempt**

- **Transference is a general phenomena that is acted out by everyone.**



# The Power of Transference

- Transference contributes to the decisions we make about those we choose as friends and partners as well as towards those we may not like without that person doing anything other being him or herself.

# Unconsciousness

- **Transference and Counter-Transference are both unconscious feelings the patient/client/victim/inmate and the chaplain/counselor may experience towards each other.**

# Example of Transference

- Your patient/client/victim/inmate may have had painful experiences and finds trusting people difficult and is therefore mistrustful of you and what you are offering or what you represent.

## **e.g. of Counter-Transference**

- You find yourself feeling under pressure to placate and reassure your patient/client/victim/inmate over and above the way that you would normally feel or behave.**

# **The BIG Clue**

- **One big clue that you may be experiencing a Counter Transference is where you find yourself experiencing feelings and/or acting outside of your normal pattern of behavior towards a patient/client/victim.**

# **Subtle Counter-Transferring**

- You might not be aware that you have allowed your boundaries to slip – say in relation to how much time you offer one patient/client/victim/inmate over and above that which you would normally see as being part of a spiritual care visit. Also...**

# Subtle Counter-Transferring

- On the other hand, you may come to realize that you are much harsher with one particular patient/client/victim/inmate compared to the way you are with others.

# **Beware!**

- **Forming a positive Counter-Transference can have a downside as although you may like your client you might find yourself colluding with the individual and not encouraging your client to face challenges where it would be helpful for him or her to do so.**



# Explore

- **Exploring your transferences with a seasoned chaplain, supervisor or therapist in relation to your work with your clients may reveal how these concepts may be affecting your visits.**

# Easier Said than Done

- **Transference and Counter-Transference are not the easiest of concepts to understand and even some veteran practitioners may find these difficult to recognize.**

# **In Conclusion**

- **Transference and Counter-Transference may seem like difficult concepts, but they can be a useful tool that can be used effectively in the spiritual care process.**

**Thank you!**

- **I'd be more than happy  
to answer any  
questions.**