

# Transactional Analysis – History and Background

## Development

Transactional Analysis (TA) was developed by Eric Berne in the 1950s and 1960s. Berne was a Canadian doctor of medicine who became a psychiatrist and served with the US army in the Second World War. His observations there contributed to his dissatisfaction with the treatment of mental patients that he experienced when in practice in California after the war.

Working particularly with groups, Berne made observations that led him to develop his ideas of ego states, based on earlier ideas from Federn, with whom he worked in his own psychoanalysis. As Berne developed TA concepts he drew further away from traditional psychiatric practice. Berne became known to a wider audience with his publication of “Games People Play” in 1964, a book still in print, which has sold several million copies.

## The Place of TA Today

TA spread under the auspices of the International Transactional Analysis Association (ITAA) which itself developed from the meeting series inaugurated by Berne in San Francisco. As a result of this growth, the European Association for Transactional Analysis (EATA) was formed and this body today has more than twenty affiliates in European countries and has outstripped the ITAA in member numbers. The ITAA continues to represent TA through affiliates in many countries of the world with major organisations for TA in Latin America, India, Australasia and the Pacific region and in many other countries.

Operationally TA has developed over this time with new theory supplementing the work of Berne and the pioneers. Whilst other applications of TA are noted below, our focus is on the practise of psychotherapy and

psychotherapeutic counselling. A major drive for Berne was the use of simple everyday language in TA and the avoidance of psychoanalytic language which tends to mean little to the lay person. The use of every day words in naming concepts such as games, strokes and rackets is a benefit to clients who can relate the ideas to their everyday experience; however it has led, at times, to wide misunderstandings in undervaluing TA as a psychological modality and it has been labelled a “pop psychology”. Any serious examination of TA and its theory will dispel this myth. TA can be used effectively at different levels; it is an in-depth methodology for relational psychotherapy usually working with clients over many months or even years and it is effective as a solution based cognitive methodology in time limited or brief therapy or counselling.

## TA in the UK

TA was pioneered in the UK in the late 1970s leading to the formation of the Institute of Transactional Analysis (ITA). The ITA has played an active role in developing TA in Europe and establishing itself as the governing body for TA in the UK. Formed to represent the development of the four fields of TA: psychotherapy, counselling,

organisational and educational, the ITA grew by 2000 into an organisation with nine hundred members representing EATA in the organisation of training and examinations. The ITA also organises an annual conference for the UK and has twice organised European conferences for EATA and in 2005 a world conference for EATA and ITAA. In 2004

interests representing organisational and educational TA decided that they would benefit by organising an institute dedicated to these applications and the Institute of Developmental Transactional Analysis (IDTA) was formed. The ITA continues to represent all fields of TA but inevitably focuses primarily on psychotherapy and therapeutic counselling.

### **TA Future Developments**

The ITA currently has over 1,100 members in the UK of whom the majority, more than half, are training or qualified in the psychotherapy field. Continued growth is expected as we move towards statutory regulation of counselling and psychotherapy. The ITA is a member organisation of the United Kingdom Council for Psychotherapy, playing an active part in its organisation since its foundation. Through the UKCP the ITA is keeping a close watching brief in the development of regulation and contributing where appropriate.

TA in the UK has focused on the training and provision of psychotherapy, knowing that the

### **TA at CPTI**

CPTI uses TA as the core modality in the delivery of a counselling and psychotherapy training. As noted above, we value TA both as an in-depth psychotherapy and as a cognitively based brief therapy or counselling method. CPTI do not see these as alternatives but rather therapeutic methods that provide choice to the therapist depending on the client

CPTI is a Registered Training Establishment of the ITA and all CPTI trainers are members of EATA through the ITA. CPTI trainees join the ITA initially as Regular Members, an interest membership category open to all who have completed the TA101 Introduction to TA course. Trainees become student members on completion of the foundation year of training.

comprehensive training provided by TA enables practitioners to work with most categories of client in a counselling or psychotherapeutic setting. It seems likely the government will differentiate between counselling and psychotherapy and may apply different standards to training and practice. The ITA is following this development carefully and is considering whether to parallel their current membership of the Humanistic and Integrative Section (HIPS) of the UKCP with membership of the Psychotherapeutic Counselling Section (PCS).

need and the circumstances in which therapy is required.

CPTI will continue to develop training programmes to meet the demands of clients and to fulfil the requirements of professional bodies and the government in relation to future registration

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*See other CPTI Training Information Sheets for detailed descriptions of the training programmes, TA and the available qualifications. Training Information Sheets are downloadable from [www.cpti.info](http://www.cpti.info) in PDF format or can be requested as emails from our office.*

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