Integrated Psychodynamic Therapy of Panic Disorder:
Case Study

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Abstract: Findings of epidemiological studies have demonstrated Anxiety Disorders to be among the most common and heterogeneous disorders in adults. About 7.2% of general population suffers from such disorders, whereas only about one fourth of them seek treatment. Panic Disorder is one of the common chronic and debilitating Anxiety Disorders, with a life-time occurrence rate of 1.5% to 3%. Medication, of course, has proved to be helpful in the short-term treatment of the disorder, but its long-term consequences and complications are not clear. Moreover, many of those suffering from it show no interest in medication or cannot tolerate its side-effects. Researchers have thus developed an interest in designing and promoting psychodynamic models for treating the disorder. The purpose of the present case study was to treat Panic Disorder through application of the psychodynamic approach. The client was a 23-year-old female university student who was diagnosed with Panic Disorder, according to clinical interview, DSM-IV-TR criteria, MMPI results and the psychiatrist's diagnosis. The method consisted of exposing her to psychodynamic therapy, focusing on Object Relations, Ego Psychology and Self Psychology. The techniques used in this method were Free Association, emphasis on the unconscious, processing the repressed emotions of childhood, enhancing the Ego defense mechanisms, and analysis of transference. According to the results, the techniques were highly efficient in the treatment of the subject diagnosed with Panic Disorder. The client developed a more integrated feeling of herself by reviewing, observing and examining her personality construct, including the "ego", and by gaining insight into her relationships with her significant objects. Finally, consistency of the results with the literatures, limitation of the study and future suggestion, are discussed.

Key words: Anxiety Disorders, Panic Attacks, Psychodynamic Psychotherapy, Object Relations, Ego Psychology, Self Psychology.