

Psychotherapy Guidebook

INFORMATION FEEDBACK

Jaques Kaswan
Leonore R. Love

Information Feedback

Jaques Kaswan and Leonore R. Love

e-Book 2016 International Psychotherapy Institute

From *The Psychotherapy Guidebook* edited by Richie Herink and Paul R. Herink

All Rights Reserved

Created in the United States of America

Copyright © 2012 by Richie Herink and Paul Richard Herink

Table of Contents

[DEFINITION](#)

[HISTORY](#)

[TECHNIQUE](#)

[APPLICATIONS](#)

Information Feedback

Jaques Kaswan and Leonore R. Love

DEFINITION

Information Feedback is a set of procedures developed to facilitate people's ability to scan, actively and objectively, their own perceptions and behavior, and to trace the impact of these on their interpersonal interactions. The approach is based on the assumption that much behavior that is ineffective for the self, or noxious for others, results from habituated attitudes of nonattention to the interpersonal arena; learning to attend, in new ways, produces new information that opens up opportunities for new behavioral choices.

An important emphasis in this approach is that people identify for themselves any changes they consider appropriate or desirable. The role of the professional is that of a relatively impersonal consultant who provides opportunities for viewing and attending in novel ways to characteristics of self and others. His techniques help to explicate, in specific, active and objective ways, personal and interpersonal patterns in the people with whom he works; but the motivation for and choice of behavioral change is left to the clients involved.

Information Feedback, therefore, is neither a therapy process nor a treatment intervention in the usual sense. It is a set of experiences designed to improve interpersonal interactions within people's existing motivational and response repertoires.

HISTORY

The Information Feedback procedures were developed and evaluated in the Psychology Department Clinic at the University of California, Los Angeles, between 1960 and 1970, as a demonstration program titled "Consultation for Psychological Problems of Children." The goal was to enable parents and teachers to identify perceptions and behavior on their part that served to provoke or maintain ineffective, uncontrolled, or undesirable behavior in elementary school children. If adults could identify and improve such disturbing behaviors on their own parts, it was hypothesized that the quality of the interpersonal environment in which the children were living would be bettered, and the children's behavioral difficulties would in turn be ameliorated.

The effectiveness of Information Feedback was compared with two standard interventions for children's behavior problems: counseling for the parents and psychotherapy for the child. Using the children's behavior and grades in school as outcome criteria, it was found that the two interventions

that focused on the adults' role in the children's difficulties (Information Feedback and parent counseling) resulted in significant improvement for the children over a two-year period. Differences in the families of children in these two groups were clearly related to socioeconomic factors, with more highly educated and economically successful parents responding more favorably to Information Feedback, and lower socioeconomic parents improving more when offered the suggestions and advice characteristic of the parent counseling approach. Psychotherapy provided for the child did not result in significant improvement in the child's effectiveness at school.

TECHNIQUES

Techniques are of two types. In one, videotapes of interactions provide complete, objective data against which individual expectations and assumptions about appearance, voice, interactional style, and the like can be tested. Or more generally, parallel sets of verbal instruments (adjective ratings and inventories of behaviors) are administered to participants. These elicit perceptions, judgments, and reports about frequency, range, and contexts of interpersonal behavior. Responses to these are translated by the consultant into visual displays (usually superimposed graphs) that highlight similarities and differences between respondents. This feedback is the stimulus for the participants' consideration and decision making about their interactions.

APPLICATIONS

In the original project, the main focus of feedback was on the parents and teachers of troubled children. In later work at UCLA, the techniques have been adopted as a format for a Family Check-up Service for families who wish to improve their functioning, even though they do not seek clinical services for any specific problems.

Additionally, the formats have been adapted to facilitate group discussion of interpersonal relationships in some Los Angeles junior and senior high schools.

In Ohio, Dr. Kaswan has used this conceptual approach as a framework for consulting with various types of community groups and agencies.