

Autonomy - Individuation

Socio-emotional development level equivalent to 18-36 months of age

Typical Socio-Emotional Capacities

- Clients are able to achieve a certain degree of personal autonomy (with reassurance from a transitional/comfort object)
- Clients need a lot of attention and a strong bond with an attachment figure
- Clients are secure enough to test the bond with attachment figures by behaving defiantly
- Clients begin to differentiate themselves from others and assert a certain degree of independence ("I can do it myself!")
- Clients begin to acquire first social skills (e.g. adapting interaction patterns)
- Clients begin to develop motivation to reach personal goals
- Clients have little grasp of/regard for social rules and norms
- Clients can imagine what they themselves would want/feel in a given situation, but are not yet truly able to see things from others' perspective (egocentric empathy) and have not yet developed a sense of right and wrong
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Typical Emotional Needs

- Clients generally need the security of a transitional/comfort object
- Clients increasingly seek to assert their independence and their need for physical contact and closeness with attachment figures gradually lessens
- When clients want something they can't obtain themselves, they typically demand that others meet their needs immediately (*they are unable to wait*)
- Clients need to know their bond with attachment figures is secure, so they frequently test it by displaying oppositional, defiant behaviour
- Clients need constant accompaniment and reassurance by attachment figures even in familiar environments/social contexts
- Clients are eager to try out new skills and abilities
- Clients want to be rewarded for good behaviour and accomplishments
- Clients gain self-esteem and a sense of achievement when they receive recognition from attachment figures (not peers) for abilities/accomplishments

Examples of Typical Challenging Behaviour

- Clients' emotional distress may be manifested physically (somatisation)
- Clients may be unable to stand being alone, even though they are largely preoccupied with themselves and their own needs
- Clients may display selfish and seemingly anti-social behaviour
- Clients may react with aggression/desparation when thwarted or confronted with limits
- Clients may constantly seek attention from attachment figures (not peers) by acting up and by any means possible
- Clients may come across as defiant and rebellious like typical teenagers, but unlike adolescents they have little interest in or empathy for peers
- Clients may suddenly strike out at peers for no apparent reason
- Clients may be prone to wild exaggerations and lying and insist on an exaggerated sense of superiority (in some cases, grandiosity can develop into full-fledged delusions of grandeur/ psychosis)

General Aspects – SEO 3

- Clients' inner tension may manifest itself in restlessness, fidgeting, disorganization and hyperactive or erratic behaviour
- Clients may abruptly switch interaction patterns without regard to the situation
- Clients may consume excessive amounts of food/beverages if no one stops them
- Clients often push the limits to see how far they can go / what they can get away with