

CLINICAL IMPLICATIONS OF ADOLESCENT INTROSPECTION

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This article explores the nature and development of introspective activity during adolescence. It addresses the relationships among introspection, cognition, and ego identity development; defensive versus adaptive forms of introspection; the function of introspection in borderline and narcissistic adolescents; and the use of a patient's introspective capacities as a therapeutic tool. In addition, it focuses on the therapist's need to be sensitive to the tension in adolescents between the benefits of introspection and the anxiety it may engender.

Introspection, an inwardly focused form of psychological thinking (Appelbaum, 1973), is a process in which individuals actively and subjectively explore their inner worlds, experiencing and reflecting on their private thoughts, feelings, and fantasies. It demands a complex integration of cognitive and affective processes and involves aspects of curiosity, sensitivity, and insight. It has been studied empirically as "private self consciousness" (Buss, 1980; Fenigstein *et al.*, 1975)—the tendency to be self-reflective and to examine one's motives, goals, and dreams. In metapsychological terms, introspection can be re-

garded as a function of the autonomous ego, or more specifically, the self-observing ego (A. Freud, 1965; Hartmann, 1939/1958). It requires the ego to split itself into observing and experiencing parts and to undergo a partial and temporary regression (A. Freud, 1965; Kris, 1956). These processes are dependent upon development, maturation, and structural growth.

Introspection is of particular significance during adolescence when the need to establish a stable ego-identity catalyzes an increased awareness of self (Blos, 1962, 1967; Elkind, 1970). However, despite the central role of introspection in adolescent development, relatively little has been written about its developmental, dynamic, or cognitive aspects, particularly as these relate to adolescent pathology. Among others, Elkind (1970) has written about egocentrism and self-consciousness in adolescents, Broughton (1983) has discussed cognitive-developmental aspects of adolescent's conceptions of self and identity formation, and Blos (1962, 1967, 1970) and Anna Freud (1958) have described how adolescents experience and rework earlier infantile conflicts. But there are few references to the ways in which introspection either facilitates or interferes with healthy adolescent adjustment, or the forms that introspection may take in various types of psychopathology. The purpose of this article is to explore the clinical implications of introspective activity during adolescence, with particular reference to three issues: the adaptive and facilitative role of introspection in the adolescent's development of a stable identity; the more defensive and pathological uses of introspection, especially among narcissistic and borderline adolescents; and the psychotherapist's stance in regard to the multiple functions of introspection during adolescence.

Introspection, Cognition, and the Development of the Self in Adolescence

During puberty and early adolescence, individuals undergo a qualitative change in their cog-

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nitive abilities. With the advent of formal operational thought (Piaget, 1947/1976), adolescents become able to think conceptually and abstractly; they can deal with facts and hypotheses in an experimental fashion and consider all the possibilities in a system (Elkind, 1970; Ginsburg & Opper, 1969). In fact, in the adolescent's mind, reality becomes secondary to possibility (Inhelder & Piaget, 1958). A most significant characteristic of formal operations is the ability of adolescents to take their own (and others') mental constructions as objects and to "think about thinking." As a consequence, adolescents become able to reflect on their own mental processes and personality traits in a new way. They may question their own thoughts, compare themselves with an ideal, think philosophically of their place in the world, and obsess endlessly over how myriad others are viewing them. Adolescents can now observe themselves as they say one thing and think another, or as they think one thing and feel another. They can begin to acknowledge their fabrications and disguises as well as their often painful, inner truths. Even those theorists such as Blasi & Hoeffel (1974) who question the putative link between formal operational thinking and the attainment of an ego identity acknowledge that the new analytic skills of formal operations "add a new dimension" to one's subjectivity and self-perspective (p. 360).

The attainment of formal operational thought, affecting as it does the ways in which adolescents structure their world, doubtlessly modifies the nature of adolescent introspection. The exact relationship, however, between formal operational thought and introspective activity remains unknown as does even the percentage of those adolescents who develop formal operational capacities. Nevertheless, two assumptions seem likely: that although all adolescents do not obtain formal operational thinking, virtually all are introspective at least at times; and that while there is no clear empirical evidence to suggest that formal operations is a prerequisite for introspective activity it facilitates both the development and complexity of introspective thought.

As adolescents become preoccupied with their inner thoughts and feelings, they also become more possessive of them. They may come to regard their inner world as endlessly fascinating and may spend hours on end conversing covertly with themselves about themselves; however, they may also tenaciously guard their introspective thoughts from their parents and most other adults. The

product of their introspection—observations and insights about themselves, their world, and others—will instead fuel hours of intimate talk with friends, fill up countless pages in journals and diaries, and provide fodder for increasingly elaborate plans and fantasies.

Adolescents, particularly young adolescents, tend to overestimate their newly acquired cognitive abilities. Piaget (1976) regards this propensity to overvalue the subjective vis-à-vis the objective as a form of egocentricity that arises during the first substage of formal operations. Although the capacity to conceptualize others' thoughts as well as one's own would seem to mitigate the tendency toward egocentricism, it often does not. Adolescents often fail to consider that others' thoughts may be as profound, complex, or valid as their own. One explanation for this phenomenon is that adolescents recognize the thoughts of others but interpret and conceptualize them within a narcissistic and idiosyncratic context. This tendency contributes to the temporarily narcissistic nature of object relationships during early adolescence.

The rapid changes in the adolescent's cognitive capacities are accompanied by and related to equally significant changes in the adolescent's emotional life, particularly in terms of identity development (Coleman *et al.*, 1977; Rowe & Marcia, 1980; Weiss, 1984). While the self has a distinctive experiential shape based on its unique circumstances prior to the second year of life (Pine, 1982), it is during adolescence that the affective components of the self emerge most clearly and acquire a differentiated quality that they did not previously possess (Blos, 1962; Offer *et al.*, 1981). The role of introspection in adolescence is perhaps most salient in regard to the dual processes of identity development: disengagement from internalized parental objects and the development of a more differentiated sense of self.

Blos (1962, 1967) refers to adolescence as the second separation-individuation stage (the first of which is completed in the third year of life with the attainment of object constancy), in which individuals reexperience and rework earlier conflicts regarding separation and autonomy. He notes that what Mahler (1968) describes as the infant's "hatching" from a symbiotic membrane has its analogue in the adolescent's renunciation of familial dependence and infantile object ties. Common to both periods is emotional vulnerability and profound changes in intrapsychic structure. Ego regression is the most formidable work of ado-

lescence and is a precondition for the healthy reorganization of the psychic structure (Blos, 1962, 1967; A. Freud, 1958). However, the process of ego regression gradually exposes the defectiveness of the early ego and threatens the adolescent by a partial return to the undifferentiated phase in which ego and superego become involved with infantile object relations. As the boundaries between self- and object-representation become diffuse, the adolescent experiences a temporary loss of self, engendering high levels of anxiety and reactivating intense feelings of ambivalence regarding object ties. It is not until the close of adolescence that the self regains its cohesion and ability to function as a consolidated entity.

Erikson (1968) has noted that the relatively well-adjusted adolescent is structurally equipped as well as motivated to introspect: "the adolescent's ego development demands and permits playful, if daring experimentation in fantasy and introspection" (p. 164). How then do the adolescent's introspective capacities facilitate disengagement, psychic reorganization, and the development of a stable ego identity? In the process of decathecting from primary objects, the adolescent, at least initially, directs libidinal energies inward—in both a defensive and adaptive attempt to avoid the sensation of merging with primary, that is, parental objects. Moreover, the willingness and capacity to introspect, to get in touch with one's self, serves to facilitate structural cohesion. Introspection enables the adolescent to secure sufficient narcissistic supplies to maintain a sense of self-esteem and protect the boundaries and cohesion of his or her ego while separating from parental objects. As Blos (1962) explains, during the individuation process, the ego can compensate for its deficiencies not only by transient identifications but also by the "poignant internal perception of the self" (p. 98). Heightened introspection offers adolescents insight into their idiosyncratic needs and tendencies so that they can begin to selectively repudiate childhood identifications and replace them with partial identifications that are more in harmony with elements of their emerging identity. Thus, as adolescents begins to experience themselves as unique persons with individual thoughts, feelings, and fantasies, they become less overwhelmed by external demands for independence and autonomy (and paradoxically, conformity) and less vulnerable to the regressive pulls and periods of depersonalization which temporarily threaten the existence of the self throughout adolescence. In

short, the adolescent's introspective capacities enable him or her to develop an object relationship with the self. Through introspection the adolescent's internal world becomes an "ally" with which to consider possibilities, rehearse action, and confront the intrapsychic and psychological tasks of this period. This seemingly narcissistic process, that is, the development of an object relationship with the self, is most adaptive and restitutive in adolescence when the external world feels particularly chaotic, when demands come from a myriad of directions, and when relationships with peers become especially important and challenging. By cathecting themselves and their inner processes, adolescents are at least assured of a relationship with themselves.

Introspection is also a critical component of the development of object-related ideation and activity. As noted earlier, diaries, journals, fantasy, and daydreaming [which is at its peak during adolescence (Singer, 1966)] are among the manifestations of adolescent introspection. Despite their narcissistic quality, these activities serve to counteract adolescent isolation and facilitate social participation. Fantasy, for example, is a kind of experimental action and serves to bind the anticipatory anxiety which accompanies one's thoughts about future events. It is a form of rehearsal and preparation for object-related activity. Diaries actually take on an object-like quality and help to keep the adolescent's fantasy life closer to reality. They enable the adolescent to express and externalize wishes in a relatively safe manner, and thereby help to inhibit acting-out behavior.

Introspection, then, not only contributes to the development of object-related ideation but also facilitates the development of object-related interaction. The relationship between introspection and interpersonal interaction seems to lie in its connection to empathy. Kohut (1957) defines empathy as a form of vicarious introspection, and Deutsch (1967) posits that introspection and empathy are similar, if not identical, psychological processes characteristic of adolescence. Similarly, Offer *et al.* (1981) state that empathy "demands an openness to one's own experience, as well as an openness to the experience of others" (p. 27), and therefore demands introspection. Blos (1982) notes that introspection provides adolescents access to their feelings which in turn promotes "a state of delicate sensitivity and perceptiveness" (p. 125). Thus, those adolescents who are willing to introspect, and to get in touch with themselves and

their inner feelings, may be more capable of empathy than other adolescents who resist introspection and remain strangers to themselves and to others. Moreover, if the introspective process helps adolescents acquire a firm sense of self, they may be less threatened by the progression from primarily narcissistic relationships to more genuine and object-related friendships which require empathy, sensitivity, and self-disclosure.

The Vicissitudes of Introspection and the Development of Self

There is often an inherent tension between introspective activity and narcissism during adolescence that may temporarily interfere with or impede its adaptive functions. If the introspective process succeeds in promoting genuine insight into various aspects of the self, it may be accompanied by a desire for change. However, the adolescent's fragile and narcissistic character may work to prevent any internal changes that would disrupt its equilibrium and elicit anxiety. At times, therefore, adolescents attempt to modulate the intensity of their introspection such that it becomes a purely static and intellectual process that might better be described as pseudo-introspection.

Adolescents who are pseudo-introspective may, upon first examination, appear to be intuitive and self-reflective; they may speak as if they have done a fair amount of self-exploration and are genuinely interested in becoming more self-aware. However, it soon becomes clear that these individuals do not introspect in a manner which might foster the development of their inner selves, that is, they do not allow themselves the risk of becoming aware of aspects of themselves that are disturbing or frightening or discrepant with their self-image. They may be curious regarding the motives for their actions but this curiosity never extends to a serious consideration of the necessity for change. They become fearful beyond any relatively superficial level of self-exploration and their (pseudo-) introspective activities become another part of their system of narcissistic defenses. They may have some degree of insight into certain patterns of behavior (e.g., "I seem to find it hard to listen to those older than I am") but inevitably attribute the motivation of such behavior to external factors ("adults never take me seriously") rather than internal factors. Similarly, they may counter criticism from parents, teachers, or friends with the protestation that they "already know this" about themselves, but rather than adopting a thoughtful,

exploratory attitude toward this "flaw" they cut off further introspective thought, thus appearing to others as defensive or glib.

Although pseudo-introspection of this sort occurs occasionally in all adolescents (indeed, in all individuals), it is most common and most extreme in borderline and narcissistic adolescents who rely tenaciously upon their narcissistic defenses to protect their fragile sense of self and self-esteem. These adolescents tend to introspect in a manner which facilitates self-aggrandizement and self-confirmation in order to solidify their fluid sense of self. Thus, an introspective activity which threatens to promote change, or to wrest from these individuals their narcissistic defenses will be avoided and pseudo-introspective activity (or overt action) will come to predominate. As Piaget (1954) has observed, "It is precisely when the subject is most self-centered that he knows himself the least" (p. xii).

In a related manner, intellectualization may be used as a defense against introspection and the keen perception of one's inner self and libidinal desires. One sees this pattern most often in highly intelligent, obsessive males who escape into a world of facts, ideas, and abstract concepts. In addition, individuals use both intellectualization and pseudo-introspection as defense mechanisms, either in combination or alternately. It must be kept in mind, however, that intellectualization is a normal defensive process in adolescence, and unless it is used excessively, it does not inhibit or impede psychological growth. Indeed, intellectualization serves to link up instinctual processes with ideational contents and render them accessible to consciousness and amenable to control (A. Freud, 1936/1966). Furthermore, intellectual thought and introspection may be mutually facilitative. For example, better adjusted adolescents who use introspection as a vehicle toward self-discovery can then engage in intellectual processes in a more genuine and facilitative manner. This process is most likely to be seen in the stages of adolescence proper and late adolescence when self-identity has begun to be consolidated and when thought becomes increasingly less egocentric and narcissistic and more decentered and objective.

Infrequent introspection in adolescents may reflect a variety of psychological processes. It may indicate that formal operational thought has not yet been (or may never be) adequately established so that the adolescent's capacity to think abstractly is limited and a more concrete and primitive in-

tellectual orientation is, for the most part, maintained. Or, it may suggest that as a by-product of incomplete cognitive development and/or a lack of adequate self–other differentiation adolescents are incapable of regarding themselves as objects and splitting their egos into experiencing and observing parts. It may also reflect an avoidance of feelings of passivity or inactivity. Adolescence is a time in which individuals often seek to drain themselves of internal tension through action (Lidz, 1976); introspection, however, involves thought rather than action and requires impulse control and the capacity to tolerate frustration and delay gratification. This is not an easy task for those adolescents who feel overwhelmed by the sudden increase in libidinal impulses and threatened by the temporary weakness and fragility of their egos. For these adolescents, introspection may be experienced as unbearably confining and add to the fear of passivity. As Kohut (1957) points out, the reversal of the flow of energy that accompanies the introspective process opposes the direction through which one typically finds relief and may engender an unpleasant increase in tension and a heightened fear of inactivity.

More often, however, adolescents may be cognitively and structurally equipped but emotionally unwilling to introspect. Levinson *et al.* (1966) explained that some adolescents exhibit a motivated objection to looking within themselves and experience great anxiety when confronted with inner passions and feelings. Levinson *et al.* suggest that for these individuals, “beneath the surface of conscious experience and rational behavior lurk tendencies that must, at all costs, be kept out of awareness” (p. 8). Although there may be early developmental factors that influence the evolution of a generally introspective or anti-introspective orientation in individuals (cf. Farber, 1985; Miller, 1981; Sharaf, 1960; Singer & Schonbar, 1961), the relevant issue for this article concerns those factors specific to adolescence that affect the tendency or willingness to introspect. In this regard, both Elkind (1970) and Offer *et al.* (1981) suggest that some adolescents avoid self-exploration so that they can protect their sense of self-esteem, maintain the continuity of their self-image, and avoid anxiety. This notion is supported by the reported lower levels of anxiety among “foreclosed” individuals—those who have adopted identity roles without having gone through a period of crisis (Marcia, 1967). Thus, the absence of introspection may be seen to serve a defensive function similar

to that of pseudo-introspection. For some adolescents, though, even pseudo-introspection is not an adequate enough defense against the anxiety and pain of self-knowledge. For these individuals, any introspective activity poses the risk of exposing the more conflictual parts of themselves, of uncovering their feelings of love and hate, of pleasure and pain, and of exacerbating an already-established ambivalence in regard to separation and autonomy. In short, introspection for some adolescents reveals a discrepancy between ego ideal and perceived self, generating feelings of both anxiety and depression.

While some adolescents actively avoid introspection, others introspect excessively and appear obsessed with self-observation. In this case, introspection becomes an incessant mental activity employed to ward off or bind anxiety, most often anxiety connected with the necessity of doing or “acting.” As a mechanism of defense, it continues to be a function of the ego, but is no longer autonomous or conflict free. Kohut (1957) suggests that excessive introspection may be a result of the adolescent’s desire to escape from reality. Excessive introspection, notes Kohut, succumbs to the pleasure principle and “becomes a passive acceptance of fantasies” (p. 466). Adolescents who introspect excessively are searching for shelter and comfort within themselves, so that they may become less dependent upon reality for gratification. In a desperate attempt to find internal refuge they become enraptured in fantasy and narcissistic self-absorption.

But under what conditions does introspection become a purely narcissistic process rather than an adaptive intrapsychic activity with narcissistic components? Kris (1956) explains that introspection or “self-observation tinged as it may be, both by self-critical and self-loving components, is essentially characterized by its detachment, or . . . by the individual’s ability to achieve objectivity in his perceptions about himself” (p. 452). However, in more pathological situations, Kris suggests that self-observation becomes a form of “narcissistic introspection . . . a fundamentally not much modified variation of narcissism in its literal meaning, the self-admiration of the mirror image” (1956, p. 452). Similarly, Stolorow & Lachmann (1980) state that “mental activity is narcissistic to the degree that its function is to maintain the structural cohesion, temporal stability, and positive affective coloring of the self-representation” (p. 10). Thus, narcissistic introspection

may represent the adolescent's attempt to protect and defend against an empty and fragmented sense of self so that its narcissistic structure can be maintained. Narcissistic introspection should not be confused with the adolescent's normal introspective processes. It is a more primitive and defensive activity employed to ward off the anxiety which accompanies unresolved narcissistic psychopathology or a developmental arrest.

Introspection and the Borderline Adolescent

In recent years there has been increased professional interest in adolescents who exhibit borderline symptomatology. Masterson (1972; Masterson & Costello, 1980), for example, has described borderline adolescents as experiencing intense abandonment anxiety and depression, as having great difficulty with internal self-esteem regulation, and as feeling acutely threatened by the process of separation. According to Masterson, these individuals manifest a lack of adequate self-other differentiation and thus engage in a variety of primitive defenses such as projection, introjection, and ego and object splitting. These processes are often accompanied by poor frustration tolerance and impulse control, intense feelings of rage, impaired reality testing, and the development of a negative self-concept. The extent and intensity of these difficulties vary from individual to individual as a function of the time and severity of the developmental arrest. Despite a general proliferation of theoretical and clinical material pertaining to the etiology and treatment of borderline pathology in adolescents, references to the nature of introspection in such individuals are scarce and empirical investigations have been neglected.

Some borderline adolescents seem to use introspection as a means of avoiding or preventing individuation. They appear to resist separation on an intrapsychic level, that is, they hold on tightly to their internal objects. Since their early introjects have become such a primary part of their self-representation and are so merged with their experience of themselves, they fear that if they let go of their inner objects they will cease to exist. Thus, separation and annihilation are experienced as one and the same. These borderline adolescents begin to introspect excessively in an attempt to hold on to their internal objects so that their tentative and undifferentiated sense of self is not threatened by individuation or growth. As Kohut (1957) explains, "Persistent introspection in the narcissistic disorders and borderline states leads thus to the

recognition of an unstructured psyche struggling to maintain contact with an archaic object or to keep up the tenuous separation from it" (p. 170).

Other borderline adolescents exhibit a pattern of resistance to introspection quite similar to that of their less disturbed peers, that is, actively resisting introspective activity to avoid getting in touch with or acknowledging their internal chaos. These adolescents—borderline or otherwise—prefer that their feelings of rage, depression, and self-doubt remain submerged in their unconscious—split off from their conscious experience of themselves. For borderline adolescents, though, knowledge of their inner feelings and thoughts is especially frightening and painful, and further confirms the emptiness and void associated with abandonment depression and a depleted sense of self. If, however, the lack of introspective activity among borderline adolescents does not appear to be motivated by dynamic factors, it may simply represent their difficulty identifying their own individuated thoughts and feelings and differentiating their needs and wishes from those of their parents.

Most common, however, seems to be the case in which the borderline adolescent vacillates between excessive introspection and the active avoidance of introspection, just as he or she vacillates between other affective states, such as anxiety and depression. The tendency to vacillate between these two extreme patterns of introspective activity is but another example of the borderline adolescent's inability to make adaptive use of the middle ground and tolerate ambivalence.

Clinical Implications

Introspection is the means by which patients explore, experience, and communicate with their inner worlds. As such, it is an essential and indispensable component of the analytic process (Appelbaum, 1973; Kohut, 1957) and can, in fact, be considered the core of a patient's work. A patient must engage in an active process of introspection and self-observation in order to gain insight into thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. Thus, one of the criteria used to assess a patient's ability to participate in psychoanalytically oriented psychotherapy or psychoanalysis is the capacity to introspect and regard the self as both subject and object. As noted above, introspective activity requires the patient to split the ego into experiencing and observing parts during the therapeutic hour (A. Freud, 1965; Kris, 1956). During this process, the patient must be able to shift between different

levels of reality and fantasy, while maintaining some degree of objectivity and emotional stability. The patient must withstand the ego regression that accompanies introspective activity during therapy and be able to engage in analytic work without experiencing an overwhelming fear of psychic decompensation or loss of self.

If introspection is to be used as a therapeutic tool then it must be understood within a developmental context. Throughout this analysis, it has been emphasized that introspection is not a static intrapsychic process. Rather, it undergoes a dramatic and marked change during adolescence. Introspection is a powerful and ever-changing process during adolescence. It is a critical part of the adolescent's cognitive and affective life, and is intricately related to the struggle to develop a sense of self, and separate from internalized objects.

Historically, analysts have been reluctant to treat adolescent patients (A. Freud, 1958). Many have experienced great technical difficulties in all phases of their treatment of adolescents and have suggested that analysis was not an appropriate, effective intervention for this population. They posited that the weakness and immaturity of the adolescent's ego, coupled with his or her low frustration tolerance, decreased verbalization, and temporarily narcissistic-character complicated, if not fatally impeded, the therapeutic process (A. Freud, 1958; Spiegel, 1958). A. Freud (1958) concluded that "the analytic treatment of adolescents is a hazardous venture from beginning to end, a venture in which the analyst has to meet resistances of unusual strength and variety" (p. 261). A more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between normal (phase-specific) adolescent narcissism, intellectualization, ego-centric thought, and introspective activity may, however, greatly enhance our ability to communicate empathically with adolescent patients. If we begin to consider the defensive and adaptive components of introspection and their relationship to various forms of psychopathology, then introspection may actually prove to be a diagnostic tool in itself, and help the analyst to adapt or develop a more appropriate treatment modality with each adolescent patient.

For example, in the psychotherapeutic treatment of an adolescent who is beginning to engage in formal operational thought and is in the midst of some degree of emotional conflict, it is critical to determine whether or not to encourage the patient to introspect. The clinician must learn how to

distinguish between defensive or pseudo-introspection and genuine self-observation on both a theoretical and experiential level. This will enable the therapist to recognize when what appears to be "normal" adolescent introspection is a defense, a component of the patient's pathology, or an adaptive and relatively autonomous function of the ego.

Often the therapeutic treatment of an adolescent's disturbance will release his or her introspective potential. If the adolescent patient has acquired the capacity to introspect and dynamic conflict is interfering with introspective activities, then as Appelbaum (1973) suggests, the process of modulating and resolving conflict can help to release introspective potential. In this case, the clinician must help the adolescent work through those conflicts that most directly inhibit the capacity to introspect. Of equal importance, however, is the clinician's need to develop ways of working with those adolescent patients whose introspective potential is limited, as well as with those for whom introspection causes anxiety and interferes with the therapeutic process. Imagery techniques (cf. Singer, 1974), for example, might well be of value in training individuals to become more comfortable with their introspective capacities. If, on the other hand, introspective activity floods a patient with anxiety or induces too much regression, then other less insight-oriented, more ego-supportive therapeutic techniques should at least temporarily be considered.

Whatever therapeutic modality is employed, the therapist must be mindful of the fact that more passive (i.e., "blank screen") therapists do not generally do well with adolescents (cf. Blos, 1962). A purely passive therapeutic stance may engender feelings on the part of the adolescent of being neglected or, equally objectionable, being evaluated. Such a stance may threaten the adolescent's temporarily fragile and narcissistic defenses and actually inhibit the willingness to introspect. To foster a therapeutic alliance, to encourage the adolescent to get in touch with his or her inner world, and to make it safe for the adolescent to share introspective thoughts, the therapist must actively and directly engage the adolescent in the therapeutic process. Clinicians must recognize the point at which their encouragement of introspection and self-knowledge begins to be experienced by adolescents as dangerous and intolerably anxiety provoking. Thus, clinicians must be acutely sensitive to the inevitable tension in adolescents

between the gratification of introspection and the doubts it often engenders. Clearly, clinicians must help their adolescent clients to use their introspective abilities in an adaptive, personally satisfying, and minimally threatening manner. When experienced in this fashion, introspection may aid adolescents in their development of a deeper communication with their inner worlds and a more integrated sense of identity.

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