



# What's going on here?: Understanding our own, others and organisations' feelings

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Taking a moment and noticing our feelings...



# Feelings come first...

'The primitive feelings generated by complex, unpredictable situations can have the effect of disrupting cognition and fragmenting thought processes. Such experiences make it difficult for an individual or group to think coherently about a situation' (Ruch, 2007)

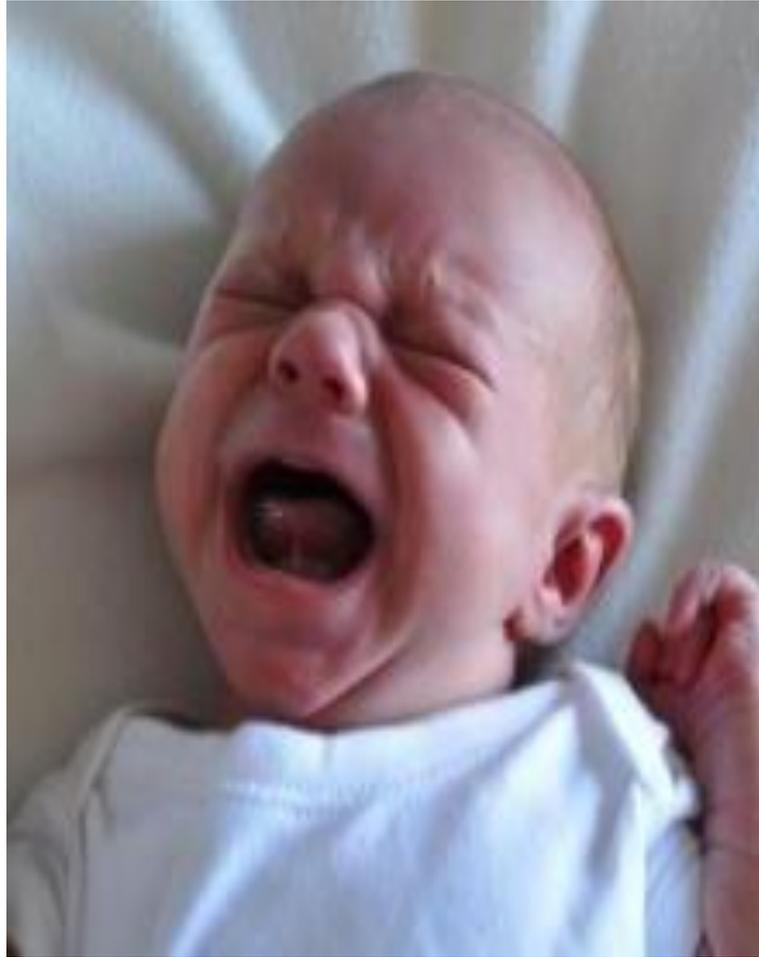


# Anxious, austere and avoidance practice

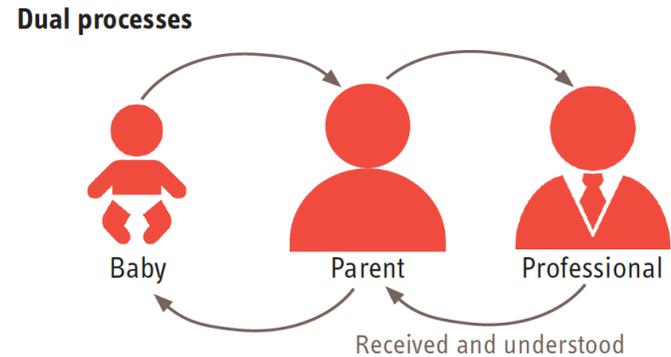
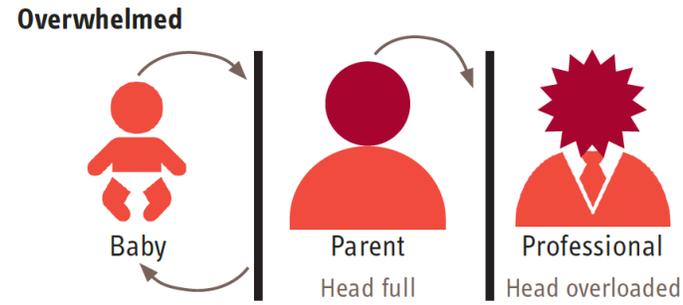
What is it, at root, that is being avoided?... Of particular relevance are frequent examples of “turning a blind eye” – that is failing to see what is before one’s eyes because to do so would cause too much psychic disturbance – and of various forms of “attacks on linking” – that is systematic disconnection between things which logically belong together, again a defence which is employed because to make the link would be a source of painful anxiety.

(Rustin, 2005:12)

# Offering containment



# The dynamics of containment



Received, understood, held in mind: sensitive response to babies cues. Reflective functioning: mind-mindedness

(Earle *et al*, 2017)

# Working with our own and others' feelings: Kleinian perspectives

| Individual dynamics | <b>Paranoid/schizoid position</b><br>It must be your fault<br>What are you going to do about it?             | <b>Depressive position</b><br>Am I to blame here?<br>What can I do to improve the situation?  |
|---------------------|--|---|
| Group dynamics      | <b>Anti-task Ba defences</b><br>The problem is out there, we will find a way of protecting ourselves from it | <b>On task work group</b><br>How can I/we help this group to thoughtfully address the task, face internal difficulties and work more effectively? |

# Working with our own and others' feelings: Bion's Basic Assumption and Work Mentality Groups I

- BaD- Dependency – an individual (team manager) is responsible for caring for individuals' needs; heaviness and resistance to change
- BaF – Fight/Flight - must identify with the internal/external enemy and lead the fight or flight
- BaP – Pairing - a pre-occupation with alternative futures and being responsible for effecting them

# Working with our own and others' feelings: Bion's Basic Assumption and Work Mentality Groups II

- In work group mentality, members are intent on carrying out a specifiable task and want to assess their effectiveness in doing it. By contrast, in basic assumption mentality, the group's behaviour is directed at attempting to meet the unconscious needs of its members by reducing anxiety and internal conflicts (Stokes, 1994, p.20).

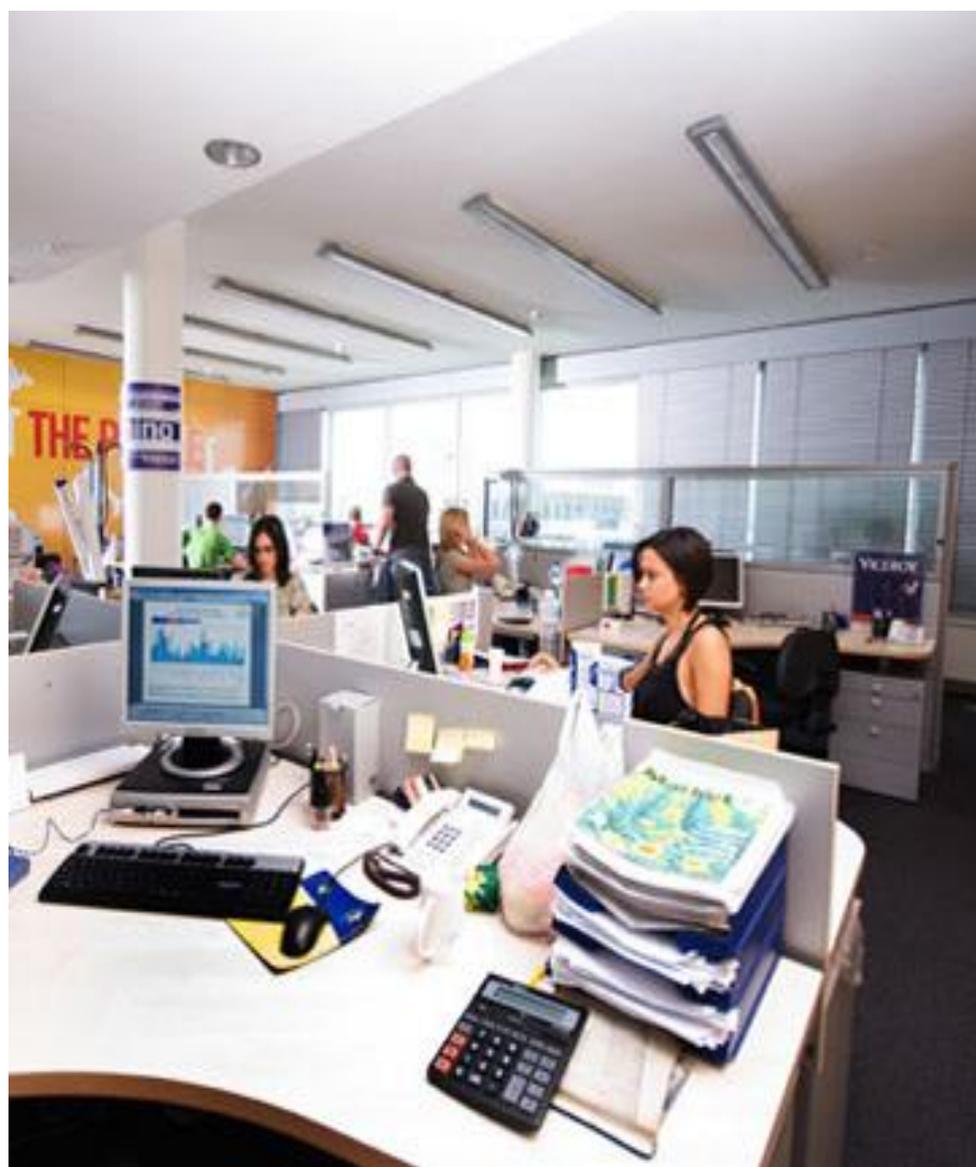
# Working with our own and others' feelings: making it work III

- Basic assumption dependency
- Basic assumption fight-flight
- Basic assumption pairing
  
- Effective work requires:
  - ✓ tolerating frustration
  - ✓ facing reality
  - ✓ recognising difference among group members
  - ✓ learning from experience



# Characteristics of professionally anxious and austere practice

- Certain
- Simple
- Risk-free and averse
- Doing
- Cognitive/Rational
- Objective
- Outcome-driven
- Techno-bureaucratic competence
- Evidence-based practice
- Uncertain
- Complex
- Risk-ridden and tolerant
- Being
- Affective/Irrational
- Subjective
- Relationship-based
- Emotional intelligence
- Practice-informed evidence







# Social systems as defences against anxiety

(Menzies Lyth, 1988)



Fragmenting of the nurse-patient relationship – series of tasks



De-personalising of the patient



Ritual task performance

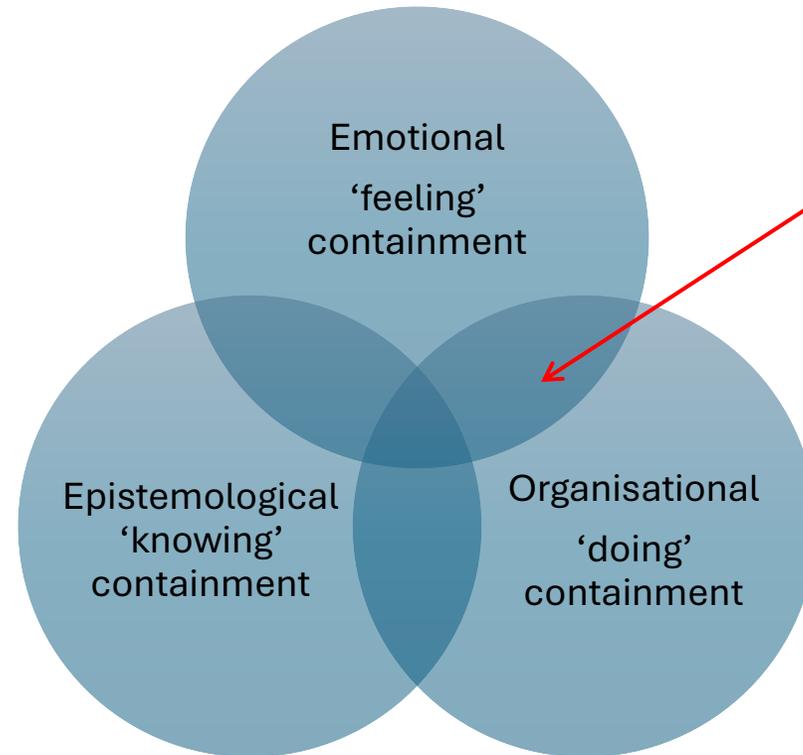


Delegated decision-making



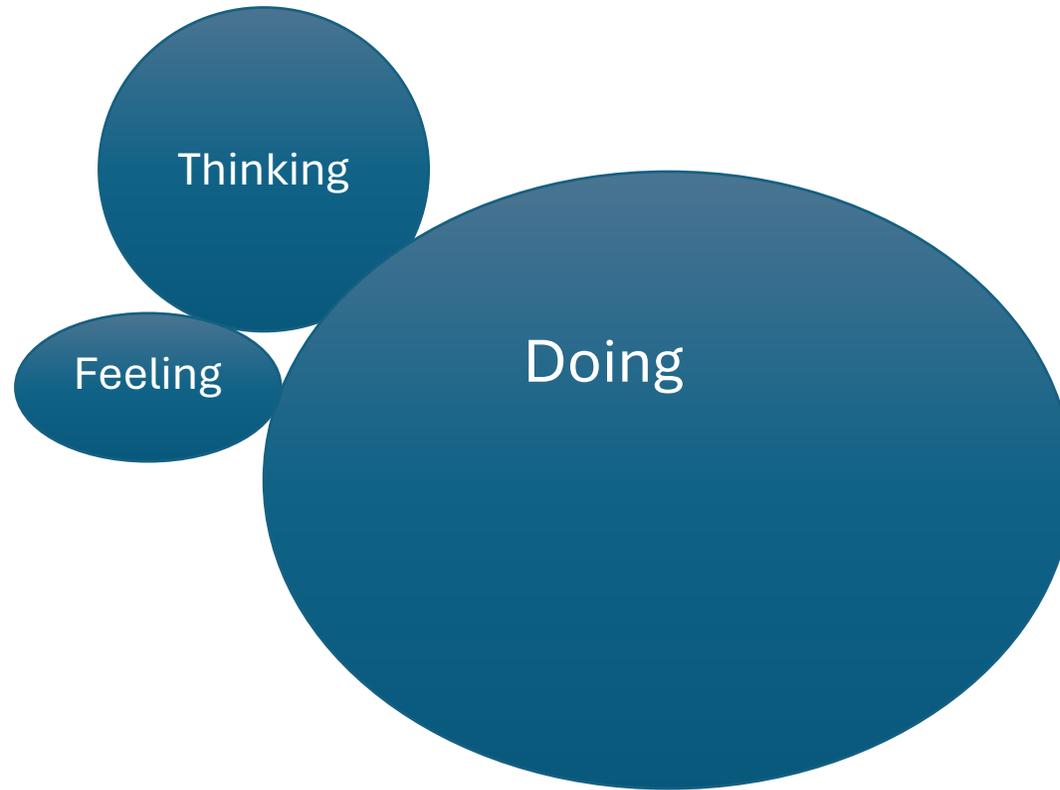
Recognition that the social defences themselves also generate anxiety and are not 'the solution'

# Offering containment and promoting relationship-based practice I (Ruch, 2007)



Holistic containment  
via reflective supervision  
creates relationship-based and reflective  
leaders and practitioners

# Offering containment and promoting relationship-based practice II



How are you feeling now?

