



CAPCT

CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF PSYCHOANALYTIC CHILD THERAPISTS

**CAPCT Committee for Continuing Education
and Professional Development**

**Follow-up on Jack: Therapy with an Asperger's Adolescent –
Transference, Defenses, Self**

PRESENTER

Robin Holloway, Ph.D.

Dr. Robin Holloway provides psychoanalytic psychotherapy to children and adolescents. He is a graduate of CICAPP (The Canadian Institute for Child and Adolescent Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy) where he is a supervisor and a faculty member. He participated for 20 years in weekly diagnostic intake meetings for children with autism spectrum disorders. He is now in private practice at The Willow Centre in Toronto. Here, he has continued to provide psychoanalytic psychotherapeutic treatment to a wide range of children and adolescents, including those suffering from high-functioning autism and Asperger's Disorder. Previous publications include an article (2013) in the *Journal of Child Psychotherapy* dealing with high-functioning autism and a book (2016) published by Karnac entitled *Asperger's Children: Psychodynamics, Aetiology, Diagnosis and Treatment*.

TIME AND PLACE

**Monday, May 30, 2016
7:30 p.m. – 9:30 p.m.
8 Rean Drive, Meeting Room
Toronto, Ontario**

ABSTRACT

The focus of the presentation is the autistic-like defenses employed by Jack and how these have played out in both the transference and countertransference. Specifically, Jack has been able to articulate quite clearly his need for walls, barriers, and protective fortifications. My capacity as therapist to respect these needs and to be able to talk about them with Jack seems to have been an important factor in allowing his therapy to proceed.

Jack aspires to become an architect and the drawings he has made are detailed and skilled in nature. I plan to present, for example, a wonderfully detailed drawing of a protective castle made by Jack, and our therapeutic conversation about this.

Theoretically, I suggest that two central defenses with Asperger's children involve splitting of the self into victim and bully aspects, and projective identification into remote objects. In his drawings, Jack has drawn



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many different split off aspects of his internal geography, and has attempted to show me in his drawings how he feels these different aspects are related to one another.

I will describe how, over time, how Jack's autistic-like defenses have shown themselves and will relate aspects of our discussions about these defenses. We have, for example, talked about the **walls** he needs to set up, including a very thick wall between him and me. We have also talked about his smart phone and how he uses it to play computer games during our sessions. I initially experienced his phone use as an annoying barrier and an emotional wall, but he was able in response to tell me how it facilitates his participation in our sessions and how much he needs to use it.

As part of the presentation, I will suggest that there are different subtypes of Asperger's disorder, and how Jack may fit into this scheme. There will also be an opportunity for additional comments about what may be needed to do successful psychoanalytic psychotherapy with Asperger's adolescents, and how Jack's treatment has contributed to this understanding

*NOTE: Jack's treatment began in 2013. **Earlier** aspects of Jack's treatment, roughly his first year of psychoanalytic psychotherapy, were presented orally at a meeting of the CAPCT and were also dealt with in a book chapter. The current presentation builds on the earlier one, and uses it as a springboard to discuss more recent developments in Jack's therapy. This roughly includes the second year and a half of his therapy. The presentation will be mostly original material not presented previously.*

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. To understand the probable sub-types of Asperger's disorder, and the psychodynamics underlying these sub-types;
2. To appreciate the split-off (or dissociated) sectors of self (self-states) typical of Asperger's from *both* the patient's and the therapist's points of view;
3. To learn about some of the autistic-like defenses (walls, barriers, fortifications, encapsulations, psychic retreats) often used by Asperger's children;
4. To further learn how these defenses can be explored, understood from the patient's point of view, and used to *facilitate* the treatment; and,
5. To gain some appreciation of the unfolding of the transference/countertransference dialectic with Asperger's adolescents.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

These continuing education hours can be used toward the required "750 hours of practice in the Profession" when applying for the Grandparenting option to the College of Registered Psychotherapists of Ontario (CRPO)

Please Note: Open only to CAPCT members. Registration is FREE.
For more information and to RSVP please contact 416.690.5464 or [EMAIL](#).
RSVPs appreciated.