

This document is a copy of Chapter 12 from the following edited book.
Please ask permission of the author(s) before distributing it:

Ringer, M., Gordon, R. and Vandenbussche, B. Eds. (2022). The collective spark: Igniting thinking in groups, teams and the wider world. Gent, Grafische Cel.

Citation reference for this chapter:

Susanne Broeng. (2022). Creating movement in group thinking. The collective spark: Igniting thinking in groups teams and the wider world. M. Ringer, R. Gordon and B. Vandenbussche. Gent, Grafische Cel: 170-182.

The book can be purchased from the following on-line bookshops (From 1 November 2022):

Idea Books: <https://www.ideabooks.nl>

Or Copyright Books: <https://www.copyrightbookshop.be/en/>

Erratum:

Bob Hinshelwood's name is incorrectly listed as "Rob Hinshelwood" the table of contents for Chapter 8. Apologies from editors and publisher.

The Collective Spark

Igniting thinking in groups,
teams and the wider world

This book shows how to think together with others and to help others to think together with you. The chapters are written from a rich store of knowledge, experience and understanding that illuminates the hidden complexities occurring whenever people meet to collaborate, plan, review, innovate, learn, teach, consult or facilitate.

From their various professions and work areas, the authors delve beneath the surface of visible interactions to reveal the knowledge and wisdom that exists in intuitive and unconscious processes. The result is a profound and informative book that is engaging, accessible and readable, to inform everyday practice in groups, teams, committees, organizations and communities.

Martin Ringer
Rob Gordon
Bert Vandebussche
Richard Morgan-Jones
András Gelei
Rosealeen Tamaki
Bob Hinshelwood
Susanne Broeng
Barry Jones
Marina Mojovic
Efrat Ginot
Kristina Karlsson

1. Igniting the Collective Spark
The relevance of thinking together 8-21
- >2 How did we get to here?
Martin Ringer & Rob Gordon 22-36
- (3) The social nature of thinking
Martin Ringer 37-50
- 4 The neuroscience of thinking together
Efrat Ginot & Martin Ringer 51-68
- ### The Collective Mind in Group and Teams.
Rob Gordon 69-82
- ⑥ Development of the Mind in a Group Environment.
Rosaleen Tamaki 83-98
- 7- The Language of the Group Skin:
What gets under the skin, attacking the capacity of teams to think
Richard Morgan-Jones 99-113
- N°8 Thinking together (or not)
Rob Hinshelwood 114-124

----- Section 2: Applications and examples -----

- NINE** Reflective Opportunities and
Collective Thinking in
Teams under Stress.
Rob Gordon 126-141
- X** Lost in the elsewhere
Barry Jones 142-154
- #11** Self as an instrument
Treating oneself as a possible instrument
of diagnosing and transforming groups
András Gelei 155-169
- 12:** Creating movement in
group thinking
Susanne Broeng 170-182
- [13]** Storm tossed but not submerged:
Developing individual and collective knowing
in organisations during crises and beyond.
Kristina Karlsson 183-196
- 14-** A radical educational
experiment in dialogue
Bert Vandenbussche 197-210
- 15** Thinking Together in
Reflective Citizens
Marina Mojović 211-224

----- Section 3: Summary and conclusions -----

- 16/16** Kindling the Collective Spark
Rob Gordon 226-239

Collective bibliography/References	241-256
Author's biographies	257-260
Acknowledgments	261-263
Index	265-269

12: Creating movement in group thinking

Susanne Broeng

Introduction

I have organised this chapter in four parts. Firstly, the case, and the need for change will be introduced. In part two, the theories of 'belonging groups' and how these thoughts inspire the process of creating movement are introduced. Part three introduces reflections and how this creates development in thinking. I will also discuss how this process influenced me as supervisor and consultant for the group and the leader. Finally, part four discusses the idea of reflections on thinking in groups as part of a system-as-a-whole, in which the capacity of integrity in thinking and reflecting has a central role.

The leader of the case discussed in this chapter invited me to work with the organisation as a professional supervisor and as a consultant on how the experiences of this work influence the workgroup and the organisation as-a-whole.

Case

My work takes place in a sector of an organisation called Cotton Place (not the real name of the organisation), which has been through several major organisational changes over the past 10 years. Within Cotton Place there is one group of employees established by two groups, group A and group B. Group A consists of three former institutions which have joined Cotton Place. Group B is made up of the original employees from Cotton Place. Group B identify Group A as an 'adopted child', who have moved into their large family. Cotton Place developed dysfunctional working patterns between the two groups and in relation to the rest of the organisation sectors and the leaders found it difficult to manage and develop them professionally.

Cotton Place's main task is to train, observe, evaluate and report on families with problems, in relation to the idea of good-enough parenting.¹ Cotton Place's two groups, group A and group B, each work with families with children of different ages. Group A work with pregnant families and families with children from the ages of zero to three, while group B work with families with children from the age of three to eighteen. This study looks at group A.

In April 2016 a new leader, Lisa, was hired at Cotton Place. She was given the task to work with group A and group B to develop the professional relationships between the two groups, and to restructure Cotton Place so that both groups are working collaboratively on families with children of all ages. Both groups were originally trained in family therapy and were used to having their work supervised. Before the employees in group A joined Cotton Place they had been working with family issues for seven to twenty years and had worked together with several supervisors during those years which provided them with extensive experience. The group consists of a midwife, a social worker and four pedagogues². One of the pedagogues was the coordinator for the group. The social worker in the group had only been a part of the organisation for less than a year. Because of the dysfunctional working patterns in the sector and the extensive experience of the other employees, she found it very difficult to work in her role. Despite this, as a supervisor and consultant, I was welcomed.

Working with Group A

During the first session we began with developing agreements about boundaries for the contract and the processes for our working relationship. These processes focused on the importance of individual reflection to contribute to working dialogue and the importance of having one's own perspective. The aim of this was to identify the hidden dynamics within the group and in their work. At the first meeting I, along with three of the employees: the social worker, the mid-wife and one of the pedagogues, worked with one family-case. I noticed that when these three employees referred to themselves they used words like 'we' and 'us' which made it very difficult for me to identify their individual thinking. Questions as "do they all think as one? What are the differences? And what about the disciplinary differences?" came to my mind. Soon I recognized that this was the point where my thought world was meeting a membrane around their thought world which at that time I could not readily penetrate. I encouraged them to reflect individually after completing the work as a group, so that they could express more of their own thoughts, extend working dialogue and allow space for a second opinion.

At the second session the mid-wife, on behalf of the group expressed to me in a critical tone that they had discussed the first session, and believed my way of working was 'good enough'. They indicated that they preferred working collaboratively as a group rather than expressing individual thinking. The way the group addressed the problem of my way of working validated the problems I had identified with them in the first session. I was unable to determine if the entire group held the same opinions, or if some preferred my way of questioning their working. I noted this as something I should be aware of in the future while working with the group.

At the third session, the social worker, who was fairly new

supervision on her work. The rest of the group were unaware of her intention to request supervision apart from the group and they reacted with surprise. It became clear to me that the social worker may not hold the same opinions as the rest of the group. After we began supervising her work, one of the pedagogues said that she believed she should be a part of the supervised work because of her role in this case. The pedagogue was angry because she was not originally included by the social worker. When working with this relationship I noticed, that the boundaries for their work relationship and roles were very unclear and at the same time the boundaries in the supervision also became unclear and broken. The employees were not respecting the guidelines made in the first session working with the contract and reflecting this, it seemed to be the first sign where the group thinking was breaking down: the social worker tried to find independent thinking together with me as the supervisor but it seemed like the pedagogue broke in to prevent this.

In the fourth session the group wanted to improve their relationship with Lisa, the overall leader of groups A and B. Group A that I was supervising believed improving their relationship with Lisa would improve their group dynamics, rather than focusing on how they could improve the relationships within their own group. I refused to work with the relationship with Lisa because she was not present and was not a part of the session and because my task was to supervise the employees in working with their task. During this discussion I noticed a split between Lisa and the working group expressed through a 'paranoid' opinion in the group. The understanding in the group was, that Lisa, a part of the leadership, didn't support their work, didn't listen to them and didn't want to involve them in the changes to come.

During these four sessions I felt criticised, and similar to their feelings about Lisa, they believed I was not supporting their way of working. It became obvious to me, that they unconsciously didn't want thinking and reflection, they wanted validation through my response and I had a strong feeling that they wanted me to say that they were right about their critique of Lisa and about their positive self-regard. The group were more focused on the relationship between them and the leadership rather than their actual work. As a result of this reflection in session five, I stopped the supervision and explained to the group that I couldn't supervise them further until we had established a new working contract, which included the leader Lisa. I volunteered to set up a meeting with Lisa to begin work on this new contract.

At the meeting with Lisa it became clear that there had been several different supervisors in my position and they were all evaluated negatively by the group and had to stop their work. An organisational consultant had worked with the group a few months before I began my work and he had made a similar observation to me. He made a list with ten rules for the group to follow. I had not been

informed about this earlier. Lisa and her leader, Peter, were reluctant to utilize more resources on the group. At this point Peter wanted the group to accept my way of working as well as follow the ten rules the previous consultant had established, or they would have to leave the workplace. I requested a change in my contract from focusing on supervising the employees' work with the family cases to working as a consultant with the employees' internal relationships within the group. This included: the critical and judgemental culture of the group, the group's outlook on the split between Lisa and themselves, the lack of boundaries in meetings and the 'paranoid' thinking in the group. To improve the group's outlook on the split between Lisa and themselves, the new contract stated that she would be involved in all further meetings with the group. After discussing this contract change, Lisa agreed. Although Peter was skeptical, he accepted.

At meeting six with the group, which now included Lisa, none of the members in the group remembered the reasons from session five for why I stopped our work. The group didn't understand why we had to change the contract to focus solely on the relationships within the group. They had a shared belief that they worked well together. The group were not conscious of their thought world and its boundaries, since they only worked within it, and Lisa's and my thoughts were surprising them. They viewed the previous consultant's work as a demonstration that he, like Lisa and Peter, had a lack of understanding of their work situation. They were angry that Lisa was now a part of the working process and expressed anxiety towards the outcome of the process. It became clear to me, that their shared understanding of being a step-child in the organisation formed their identity and, based on this understanding, they saw themselves as being separate from Lisa and they excluded her as a stepmom and perhaps felt unwanted by her. This kind of unconscious thinking became a boundary forming function for the group and their identity. They understood themselves as competent experts left on their own. They were not processing the reality of the work and their shared understanding which became a medium for maintaining themselves against Lisa. This undermines the basis for thinking and it became an object in itself for defining them.

Lisa and Peter wanted the group to work with the dynamics in the group and Figure 1 represents the current group dynamics and the dynamics the group had to move towards. In this work I used a consultant tool 'Pick a Picture'³ to help the group to move beyond words and the shared understanding. The words in the grey circle represent the current group dynamics and the words in the black circle highlighted the dynamics wanted within the group. The illustration was developed together with the group. This process of creating movement within the group is referred to as 'thinking in the group' and is a change in the mindset of the group's culture. The group didn't see the necessity of the process, they had a shared understanding

and working 'as-one' which was seen by them as highly professional. It was their thought world, it was self referencing and it did not support professional thinking and understanding seen from Lisa and Peter's point of view.

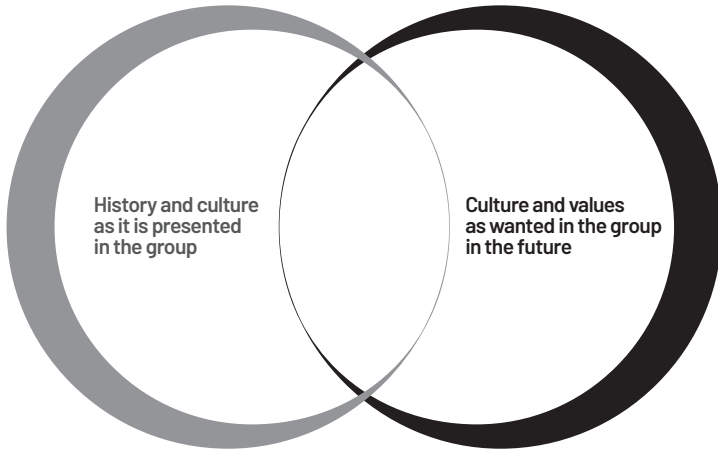


Fig. 1: Illustration of the movement

When I worked with the group, being an individual and having different beliefs to the others in the group, a feeling of being incompetent and not understanding developed in me. I felt like I was losing power and was not being loyal to the group. Reflections on these feelings led me to the understanding that the loss of power and loss of effective thinking could be associated with the feeling of separation and an identification with the group's experience of being abandoned by their parent organization, and then being subsumed into a new parent organization as an 'unwanted step child'. It became clear, that these were the feelings the group were experiencing unconsciously and represented in their shared understanding of the group. Sharing these thoughts with Lisa, she also recognised these feelings in her relationship to the group and she continued by saying, that these feelings had made her "close her eyes" and not take responsibility of the dynamics in the group. The transference made Lisa unable to think about the group as she recongized that she saw them as perhaps unwanted and problematic step children. Their unconscious effect on her prevented her using her own thinking about the group's situation. From Lisa's point of view, a change in the group's dynamics would be necessary despite the group's resistance and inability to understand how this could impact on their work with the families.

From this study of the group and their processes I will now share my theoretical reflection on the dynamics of the group and how these influenced the group's thinking through their shared understanding and shared emotions. During the first sessions together with the group, my

reflections had centered around the fairytale by H. C. Andersen⁴, 'The Emperor's New Clothes'. In this fairytale the Emperor was enticed to believe that he was walking around in new clothes that were invisible to the ignorant and stupid, but in actual fact he was walking around in underwear. When the Emperor paraded and showed off his new clothes to the people, everyone praised the Emperor because they didn't want to appear as ignorant and stupid. Everyone except a little boy, who shouted: 'He's not wearing any clothes'. These first reflections on the Emperor's new clothes were a significant metaphor for my coming work processes. I related my feelings to the fairytale as I didn't want to feel ignorant and stupid. The transference made me feel that it was necessary to be like the young boy in the story, and express what I saw and heard. But by interpreting the different roles of the characters in the fairytale in a metaphorical mode, I was able to better understand the group dynamics and how they felt anxious to have their own opinion and how they feared being stupid and ignorant. This impacted the social control and helped me to understand the dynamics of 'thinking in the group'.

Belonging groups – a theoretical view

A belonging group interacts with and forms part of a larger group in the 'system-as-a-whole', which in this case is the department and the wider municipal system. The theory of open systems⁵ offers a fully developed organisational model for studying the relationship between the social and technical aspects of a system. The model also allows for analysis of the relationships between: the parts and the whole, the whole and the environment, including the individual and the group, and the group and the organisation. Members' capacity to think in groups, as well as the way shared fantasies take form, is influenced by the defenses the group uses to manage anxiety. The theory of open systems allows an analysis of boundaries where the existence and survival of a system depends on a continuous interchanging with the surrounding environment, whether this takes the form of products, people, knowledge, information, ideas, values or fantasies⁶. Belonging to both an organisation and a distinct group with specific tasks thus offers the members the sense of belonging to a community. 'Belonging groups' are created as they work alongside each other year after year, sharing experiences and ideas, in relation to working life, as well as family life⁷.

The concept of the 'belonging group' is linked to the understanding of the 'family as the first organisation'⁸. Family forms the foundation of the identity by the processes in the first group in life, while in the secondary group the identity is formed by "conforming, protecting and institutionalising identifications"⁹. Shapiro and Carr (1991) elaborate on this by saying:

The basic premise is that individuals carry with them a model

is derived from their early family experiences and their roles within the family. They learn customary ways of relating to authority, listening to the experiences of others, and collaborating around shared tasks.

In the holding environment of a healthy family, the 'belonging group' helps develop and sustain our identity and integrity by teaching us empathetic interpretation, the value of others' experience, and to contain conflict, aggression and sexuality. The family can thus be understood as an organisation for the management of social and emotional experience; the individual's different tasks and roles are integrated and relate the family to organisations in general¹⁰. From this perspective, our early experiences are the basis on which we relate and respond to change and conflict solutions in organisational life.

Group members in organisations under change are facing a loss of the belonging group in which they felt safety and shared their thoughts about other groups and the organisations as a whole. The breakdown of the network of psychological contracts, which tied them to the old structure, leads to experiences of failure, guilt and anger¹¹. In such painful situations, members tend to retreat into new subgroups with shared basic assumptions¹² and they will struggle with a fear of loss of the holding environment, and therefore attempt to avoid annihilation¹³. The subgroup offers cohesive forces supported by communal fantasies about an external enemy, for example, in the shape of the management or by making a scapegoat of the new leader. The purpose of retreating from the community is to obtain a relatively anxiety-free state¹⁴ and to free oneself from the blockages to the capacity to think.

It is crucial to focus on the relationships between the individual, the organisation and the context, rather than on employees or leaders in isolation. Their shared responsibility for the professional quality of the work¹⁵ makes it difficult to place responsibility for difficulty and fear; they may thus be projected onto an external enemy, or into the person's self, leading to a sense of despair and powerlessness¹⁶.

The importance of the belonging group and the way the group can turn to a variety of unconscious defenses in order to manage anxiety that can work against the stated task of the group, together with the importance of naming and understanding the reasons for these defenses in order to help the group reclaim its task. In this case, the feelings of being an 'adopted child' not accepted by 'the new mother' leads to social defence related to anxiety, paranoid thinking and projections as a sign of the group struggling with the conflict in an attempt to avoid annihilation¹⁷ and fighting to keeping the belonging group together.

Reflections

It is difficult to change the group's identity of being the 'adopted child' who must fight and help the group to mourn their losses. And it is also difficult for the group to realize that this sign of their shared understanding undermines the necessity of working with their

diversity and ‘the thinking in the group’. By helping the group to move from a ‘fighting defensive stance’ to one where they can face and mourn the loss of their previous institution and identity, in order to allow space for authentic thinking and feeling in the group helped them begin to embrace their current group and relation to the ‘system as a whole.’ Moving towards insight, the risk related to shared understanding and the lack of an open space for investigating diversity, opened the importance of having a mind of one’s own and accepting that others have their own way of perceiving information which may be different from your own.

Through the process of moving from ‘blue’ to ‘red’ culture (see the illustration) and values for interpersonal relationships, every member of the group, including the leader, needs to reflect on what personal process it would require to make this movement — what fear, losses, experiences of failure, guilt and anger, and relief. The crucial point was that the shared understanding amongst the group was: ‘we are “excellent” and the new leaders and organisation do not understand this’. Working with their dysfunctional mirroring and resistance to change, was a doorstep to open the process.

The story of the Group

The shared story of the group is important, but even more are the reflections and understanding of the story and the impact the shared story has on the work life here-and-now. By helping the group to share their story and helping them to go beyond the story as it has been told in the belonging group, to remember, reflect, and look for ‘the untold stories’ which were keeping them together, the group began to open up to more critical issues in their relationship.

Given their shared experiences two of the members began to talk about the difficulties in the group as they came in contact with their unthought known¹⁸. The coordinator explained how difficult it had been for her to work on the boundaries between the leadership and the group, and she described the experience as not being allowed to stand out from the group. The social worker explained that she was proud of the highly professional level of their work and she had been proud of getting the job months before, but it was difficult for her to work by herself even though she was an experienced social worker, because of the sense of control she felt by the group. After hearing these experiences from two of the group members, I was able to start mirroring the group, based on my experiences of working with them. From this point on we began investigating the personal processes needed to move the group from working in the ‘grey’ to working in the ‘black’ (as illustrated), and the group began taking personal ownership of their work. As mentioned earlier I used pictures to symbolize feelings, positions and their way to understand the task for the group. To strengthen their personal view they chose a picture which they believed represented them in the ‘blue’ zone and a picture of how they would like to be seen when working in the ‘red’ zone.

personal words and sentences to the two pictures together with explaining their choice of picture, and they reflected on this process within the group. The members of the group then became witnesses and were asked to support the process of each member by understanding and recognising the difficulties of the movement. By expressing their situation (representing them to each other) they form a common world of thoughts and began to think together about the work and their own structures.

Holding environment

The role of the leader is important. Organisations are, beyond their rationally identifiable goals, relational and psychological structures of meaning, actions and experiences that interact with, and sometimes against, social, economic and political structures. It would be destructive for the organisational 'holding environment'¹⁹ and the employees' feeling of safety if the interaction between leadership and the group leads to anxiety. Anxiety affects the psychodynamics, with a risk of losing focus on the main task²⁰, losing motivation and employees and managers defining each other as 'problem-creating' or 'insensitive and incompetent'. An experience of being positively mirrored, recognised and appreciated is crucial for developing processes in organisations. Regression inhibits the group from thinking together, which underlines the importance of the leader's role in developing an organisational culture that facilitates the group's ability to think together.

Lisa's role as leader, was to create a functional holding environment where the group was able to speak up. If not, employee silence would affect the personal well-being of employees, increase stress, and give rise to feelings of guilt, especially in the organization where employees were prone to experience psychological problems, and find it difficult to see the possibility of change²¹. Silence can also prevent group thinking and perhaps paralyse individual thinking. Beheshtifar, Borhani and Moghadam, (2012) points out that the reason for silence seems to be:

"fear, embarrassment, narrow conceptions of ethical responsibility, implicated friends, lack of opportunity for 'voice' and a lack of organizational political skill"

Considering the understood potential negative consequences associated with voice, it does not come as a surprise that studies have found employees to be more likely to engage in verbal discussion, when they have a greater sense of psychological safety, and are more likely to remain silent when they perceive verbal discussion to be unsafe. The more personally risky that voice is perceived to be, the less inclined an employee will be to voice their ideas or concerns²². There must be an awareness within the organisation, not to create a culture of silence, in which the employees, as a group, are relating²³.

Because of this, Lisa, together with the group, needed to investigate how she as a leader could help create an organisational holding environment, in which the members of the group could talk about significant relationships in the group and the organisation.

Being an individual in the group

Shifting the group environment from 'we' to 'I' was difficult and depended on the feeling of safety, the organisational holding environment and their shared experiences, creating the 'belonging group'. During the process, feelings of anxiety, guilt, shame, sorrow, aggression, fear and emptiness were the background for the themes the group worked with.

While working with the group, two of the sessions were nearly silent. I asked: "is there something we need to talk about?" and very slowly the members of the group started to describe how difficult it felt to disagree with others' opinions. They also explained that it was difficult to work with different professions, that they felt they were being controlled by the others and they felt they were misunderstood.

Two of the members carried very difficult feelings, one of the members was very paranoid in her thinking and the other very aggressive in her way of relating. These strong feelings were projected onto me as the consultant, because of my role, and in their understanding, they explained, that I must think it was their fault, that they were not professional and therefore my work was based on misunderstandings. The 'paranoid' and 'aggressive' expressions were strong and portrayed difficult feelings. I started to doubt myself — did I misunderstand the situation, blame or problematise something I shouldn't? I had a strong feeling of how difficult it was to avoid identification with these projections, and in this way I understand, how strong these projective identification feelings were in the group. I knew that the effect of their projections was, that they kept their understanding and thinking and no change would be.

By talking about their diverse professions as social worker, midwife, pedagogue and coordinator, and their diversity in age and personal history, the members of the group slowly began to reflect their role and background which changed their thinking. The midwife picked up two pictures in the first part of the process. One was a picture showing a duck together with other ducks representing the 'grey - history', and a picture of a swan representing her role in the 'black - future'. In this phase of work the midwife said: "The picture of the swan shows me the importance of rising my head, looking wider" and "the picture of the ducks shows me the role I have had until now", "Now I want to talk as the swan, individual and with a wider perspective" and "When I reflect as the swan, I want to talk from my profession as a midwife" which gave the group the ability to visualize the two different ways to relate to themselves.

When these personal reflections and personal points of view on their roles and positions in the group began to open, I personally felt this very strongly. I felt the ability to breathe, not being an evil person, and not having a sense of hurting the group, and at this point the focus shifted to the relationships and understanding of the roles of

As a part of the process, the group made a drawing representing their understanding of themselves, the coordinator and leader, and their positions in the hierarchy of the organisation. In this drawing it became clear that they related to the coordinator, Eva, as the leader and related to Lisa with neglect. They saw Eva as a promoted sibling²⁴ who had to take care of them in the absence of parents. By clarifying this picture of the leadership structure, Eva reacted strongly and said “No! — I’m not the leader, I like Lisa as the leader”. Eva regarded Lisa highly, which in turn opened the dialogue around the roles and task for leadership. It also allowed for discussion around the relationships between the members of the group, the group and Eva, the group and Lisa, and Lisa and Peter, the overall leader and head of the organisation.

Thinking in groups

Movement on thinking in groups takes place on different levels: individual, group and system, and as this case presents, dysfunctional interaction must be worked with in the group, relating to the processes in the ‘system-as-a-whole’. Creating processes where the members of the group can develop a personal interpretative stance²⁵, from which they can reflect their work life, create a shared culture that allows for reflection and interpretation, and take each member’s experience seriously as meaningful to the group-as-a-whole. The process is a kind of ‘emotional divorce’ from the stance of a belonging group to the personal interpretative stance, and relies on trust and space, allowing feelings of anxiety and fear and to question and express emotions. Accepting emotions and thoughts creates the opportunity to adjust and organise actions, while bringing forward the relational and emotional experiences and also taking one’s emotional experiences seriously as meaningful and important data for oneself and for the group, taking these experiences for granted, through awareness, involvement, dialogue and containment. Thinking requires a space in the organisation, formed by an organisational culture of psychological safety and the leadership of the organisation must build on values of speaking up related to an understanding of the importance of the groups capacity to work and interact with a personal interpretative stance. In the organisational holding environment the “knowledge of acquaintance”²⁶ is important, Stapley (2004):

The distinctions’ (referred to by Miller, 1989) made by William James between ‘knowing about’ and ‘knowing of acquaintance’ are a helpful means of explaining what is meant by experiential learning. ‘Knowing about’ is what might be termed the acquisition of readily existing knowledge, and it involves an intellectual or cognitive process. This sort of knowledge ‘can be communicated through words and symbols which may be understood in the same way’ (Stapley, 1996). According to Miller (1976), learning from experience — acquiring ‘knowledge of acquaintance’ — starts with oneself. As a prerequisite of knowing more about the roles and

relationships in which I am involved and about managing myself in them, I have to learn more about me.

On behalf of this, it is important to question whether Lisa is acting on a personal interpretative stance or as the mom in the 'The Emperor's New Clothes' who asks her child to be quiet and not to speak up. In this case, there was a culture asking the employees not to speak up. Speaking up in the way the group did was problematized by Peter. He wanted the group to accept their belonging to Cotton Place and did not understand their shared feeling of being related to as a step child.

Developing thinking in groups is a process where the leader has to develop knowledge of acquaintance, by learning more about herself, how she sees and interacts with the signs in the organisation, and how she develops action capabilities to create dialogue, and actions, as processes between the members in the organisation that address these signs of their different understanding. The importance of the leader is in communicating, that she takes her own experience seriously, as well as the experience of everyone in her organization as meaningful and important. This is crucial to creating a culture where employees feel authorized to bring forward their experiences, rather than worrying that they will be stigmatized or left alone with them.

The team examined in this chapter saw itself as a step child in the organisation and the group developed a shared understanding of their work that was so strong that they refused thoughts which challenged their own professionalism. The group formed their identity based on being different from their leader and hence thinking in the group became a boundary forming function rather than a way of processing the reality of the work. During the psychodynamic process, feelings of anxiety, guilt, shame, sorrow, aggression, fear and emptiness were the background for the themes the group worked with. The dialogue between the group members and the dialogue between myself and the group, as well as the leaders, represented signs of how 'thinking in the group' had developed. An experience of being positively mirrored, recognised and appreciated was crucial for developing processes in the organization. The leaders' role in developing an organisational culture which facilitated processes whereby the members of the group could develop a personal interpretative stance was important. The experiential learning perspective on the psychodynamic process formed by 'knowing of acquaintance' was helpful to the group and gave rise to individual, personal and professional growth through understanding the importance of having their own thoughts and value and accepting when others think differently.

1 Winnicott, (1971).

2 In Denmark a pedagogue is a professional, working with

care, education, instruction and guidance of children, youth and adults. Most pedagogues work in the public sector.

It may be in kindergarten,
treatment homes, nursing
homes and hospitals. Common
to the jobs is the work
with people who need support
and guidance to a greater
or lesser extent. In other
countries the professional
role is related to the work
of a teacher.

3 'Pick a Picture' from www.
pickapicture.dk. This
consultant tool makes it
possible to work with pro-
jections through pictures.

4 H. C. Andersen was a Danish
poet and author. He is world
renowned for his fairytales
and papercut. H. C. Andersen
was born the 2. of April
1805 and died the 4. of
August 1875.

5 von Bertalanffy, (1969);
Miller, (1989)

6 Miller, (1989)

7 (Prodgers, 1999)

8 (Shapiro & Carr, 1991)

9 (Rouchy, 1995)

10 (Shapiro & Carr, 1991)

11 (Visholm, 2004)

12 (Bion, 1961)

13 The basic assumption of
Incohesion: Aggregation/
Massification or (ba) I:A/M
derives from the fear of
annihilation and the charac-
teristic forms of protection
against it (Hopper, 2009:
223).

14 (Prodgers, 1999)

15 (Dalsgaard & Jørgensen,
2010)

16 (Bion, 1961)

17 (Hopper, 2009)

18 Christopher Bollas (1987).
Internalized experiences
from early relationships
create "the shadow of the
object" and "the unthought
known" which is represented
by signs in communication,
projective identification and
countertransference.

19 (Stapley, 1996)

20 (Bion, 1961; Visholm, 2004)

21 (Bagheri, 2012)

22 (Morrison, 2014)

23 (Stapley, 2004)

24 (Visholm, 2013)

25 (Shapiro & Carr, 1991)

26 (Stapley, 2004)