

# Transference-Focused Psychotherapy

NEABPD Call-In

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[Borderlinedisorders.com](http://Borderlinedisorders.com)

[BPDResroucecenter.org](http://BPDResroucecenter.org)

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# Describing TFP - 1

## Indications / Disorders treated

- BPD and other severe personality disorders

## Frame of Reference and Conceptualization of disorder

- Psychodynamic Object Relations Theory

## What Changes and how

- Going from a fragmented to a coherent sense of self through reflection of the experience of self and other in the here-and-now

# Describing TFP - 2

## Treatment Frame

- 2x weekly, individual, frame set up in treatment contract – possible adjunctive treatments

## Therapist Stance

- “Neutral” with concern and periodic deviations, active

## Treatment Technique

- Setting a safe frame, containing and increasing awareness of intense affects, interpreting contradictory self states and views of others

# To simplify: our focus is Identity and Difficulty “reading” Self and Others

- Sense of self and others is fragmented, distorted and superficial
- Difficulty “reading” others... and self
- Lack of continuity of experience
- Feelings of emptiness
- The vicious circle of temperamental predisposition to emotional dysregulation and distortions in perception

# Change

- Identity consolidation
- More adaptive defenses (ways of managing stress and internal conflict)
- Increased modulation of emotions
- Better adaptation to the challenges of work and love

# Theoretical Underpinnings of TFP: Object Relations Theory

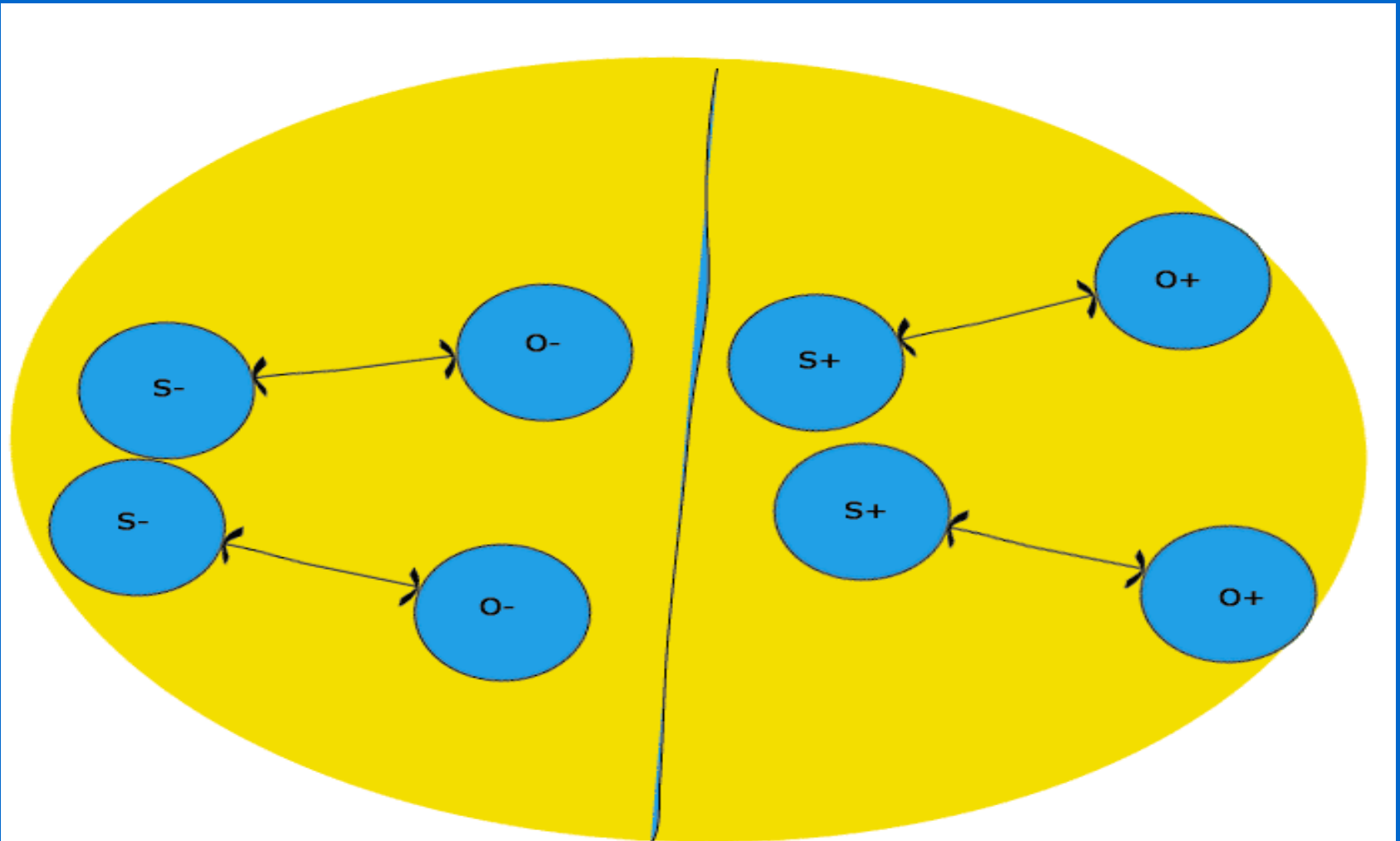


The Object Relations Dyad

# Dyads as Building Blocks

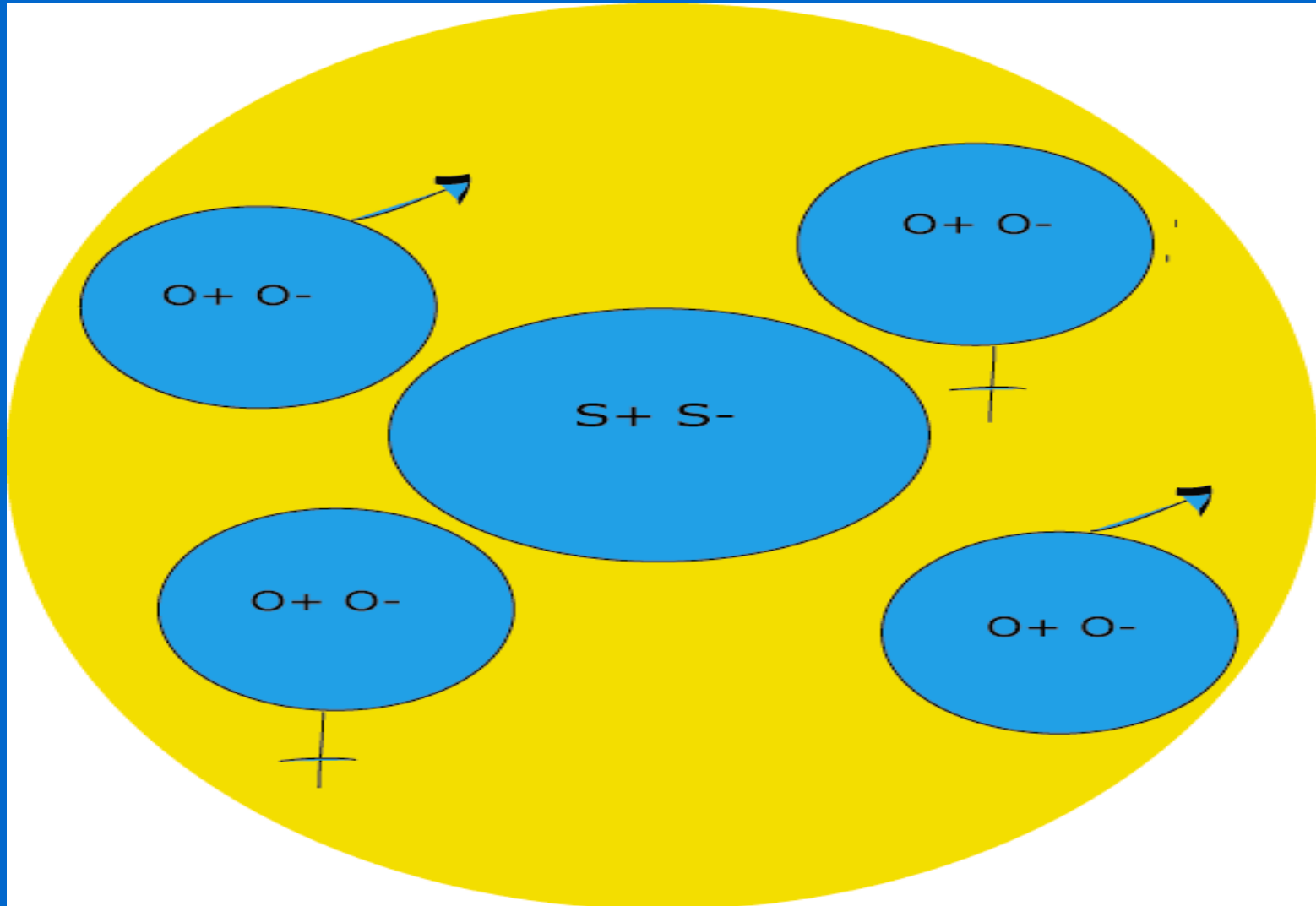
- These internalized relationship patterns - modified by fantasies and defenses
- The dyad exists within the individual and it's basic impact is on self relating to self, although it regularly gets played between self and others. The classic Abuser-Victim or Abandoner-Abandonee dyads
- Dyads of similar affective charge aggregate

# Split Organization: Consciousness of all-good or all-bad





# Normal Organization: Consciousness of Integration/complexity





*"I'm neither a good cop nor a bad cop, Jerome. Like yourself, I'm a complex amalgam of positive and negative personality traits that emerge or not, depending on circumstances."*

# The Evolution of Treatment

From Splitting to Integration;

From the **projection** of negative motivations to the capacity to **take responsibility** for one's thoughts, feelings, actions and **integrate** them.

(In older psychoanalytic terminology, to move from the Paranoid-schizoid position to the Depressive position)

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How does focusing on the transference facilitate this change?

# Transference

- The activation of internal object relations in the relationship with the therapist.
- An affect is the manifestation of an underlying imaged relationship
- Working with object relations that are activated in the immediate moment creates a therapy that is “experience-near” – the affect and the opportunity to reflect on it are present simultaneously

# Working with Transference

- Since transference is the activation of internal object relations leads to the activation of affects and conflicts, the basic strategy is to:
  - to tease out these internal relationships,
  - to help the patient
    - Gain and tolerate awareness of these internal relationship representations,
    - Integrate them into a coherent whole, and
    - Generalize the experience in therapy to other relations

# Patient's Internal World

S = Self-Representation

O = Object - Representation

a = Affect

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## Examples

S1 = Meek, abused figure

O1 = Harsh authority figure

a 1 = Fear

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S2 = Childish-dependent figure

O2 = Ideal, giving figure

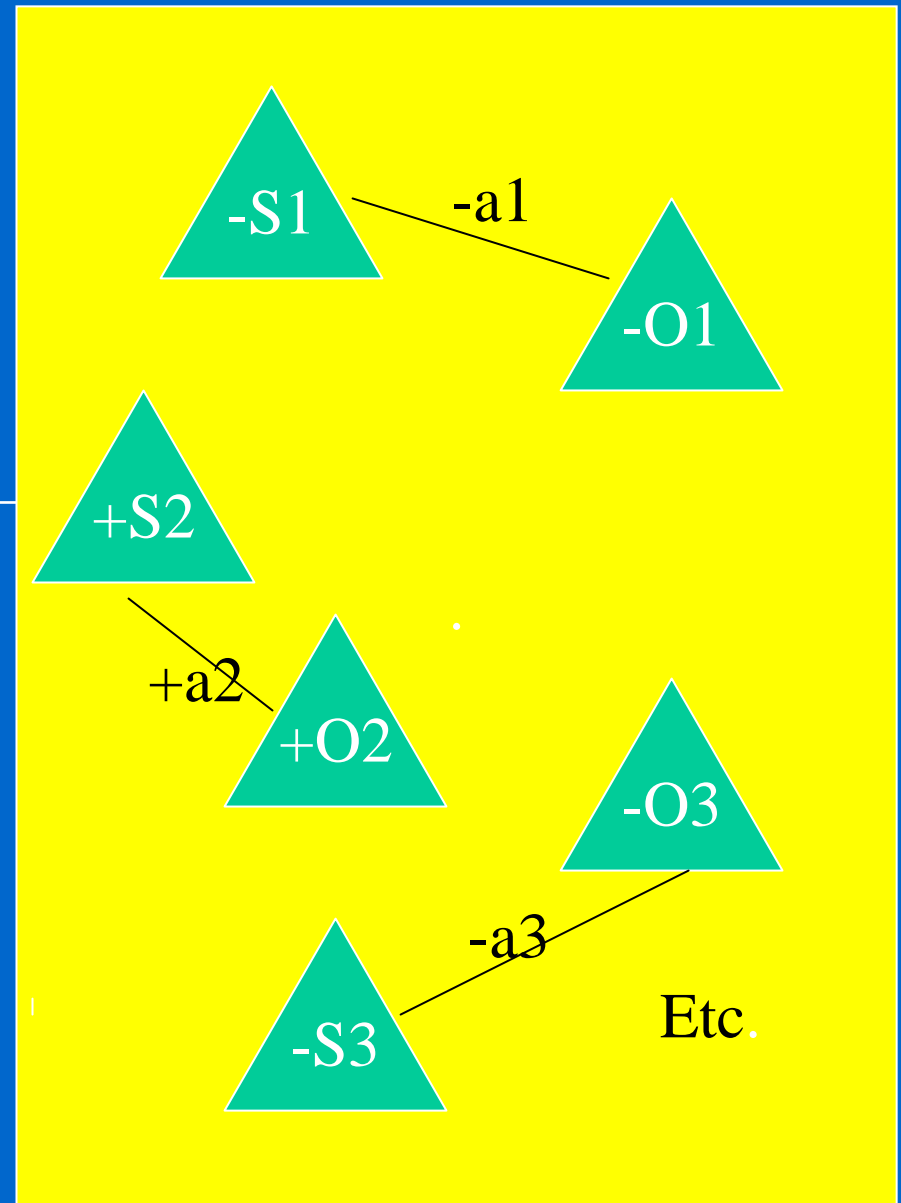
a2 = Love

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S3 = Powerful, controlling figure

O3 = Weak, Slave-like figure

a3 = Wrath

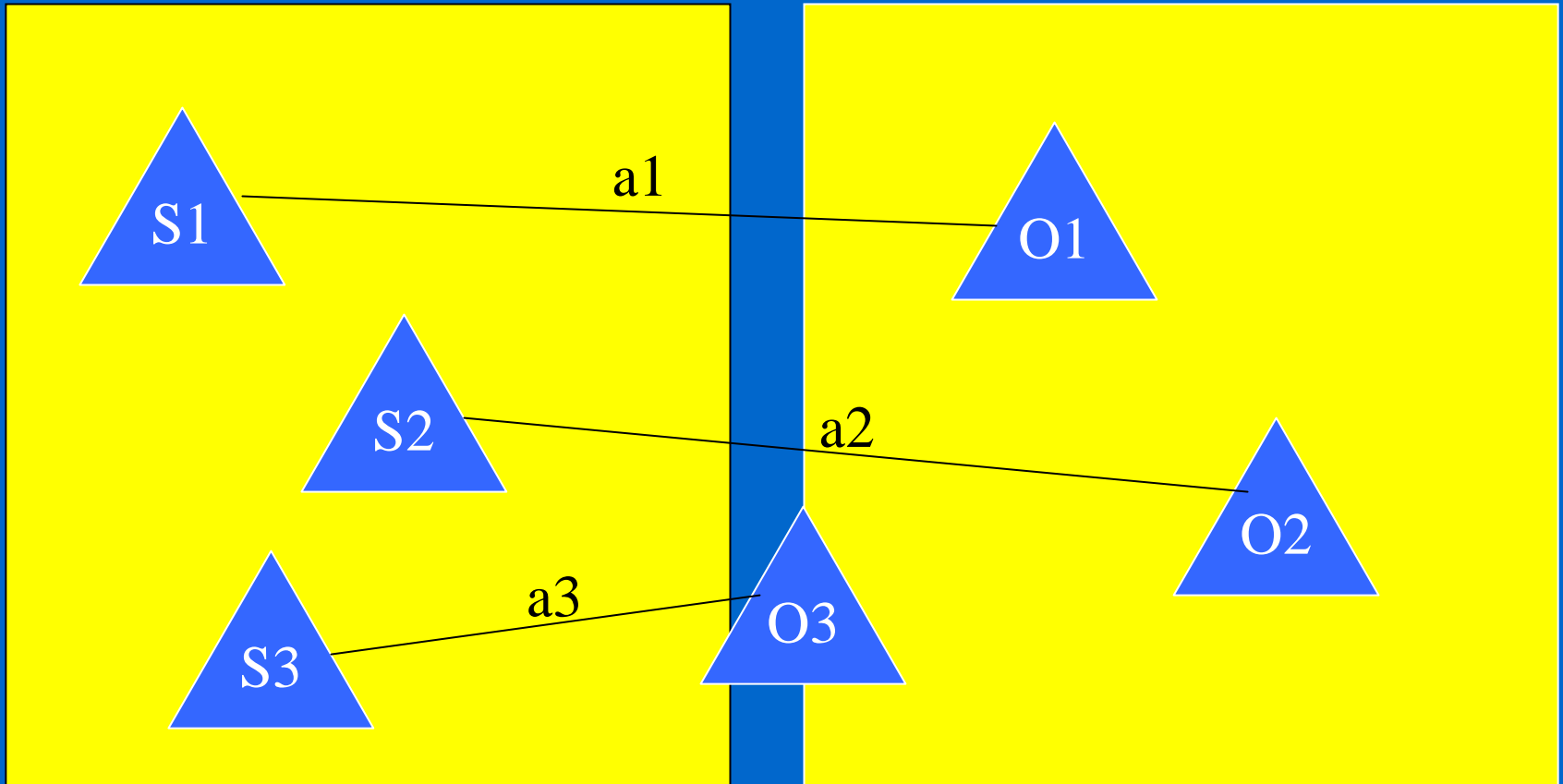


# Why focus on TRANSFERENCE?

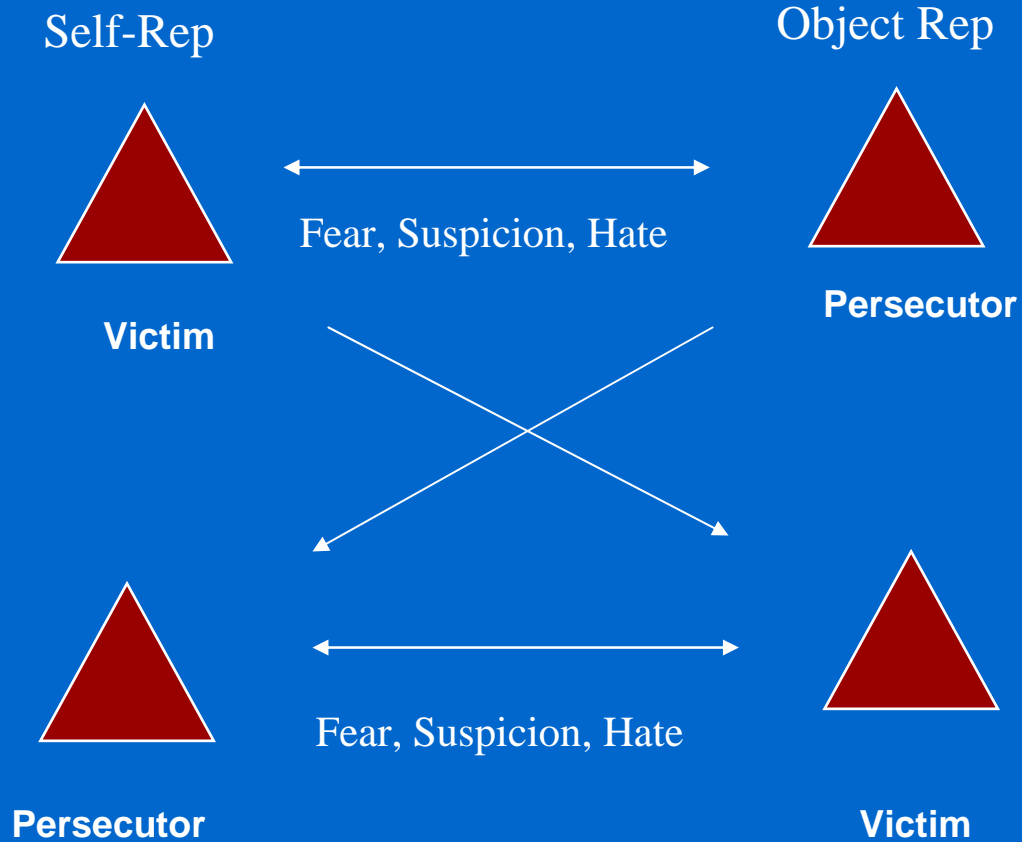
(the immediate experience of self and other)

- Experience of Self

- ...and of therapist



# OBJECT RELATIONSHIP INTERACTIONS: OSCILLATION

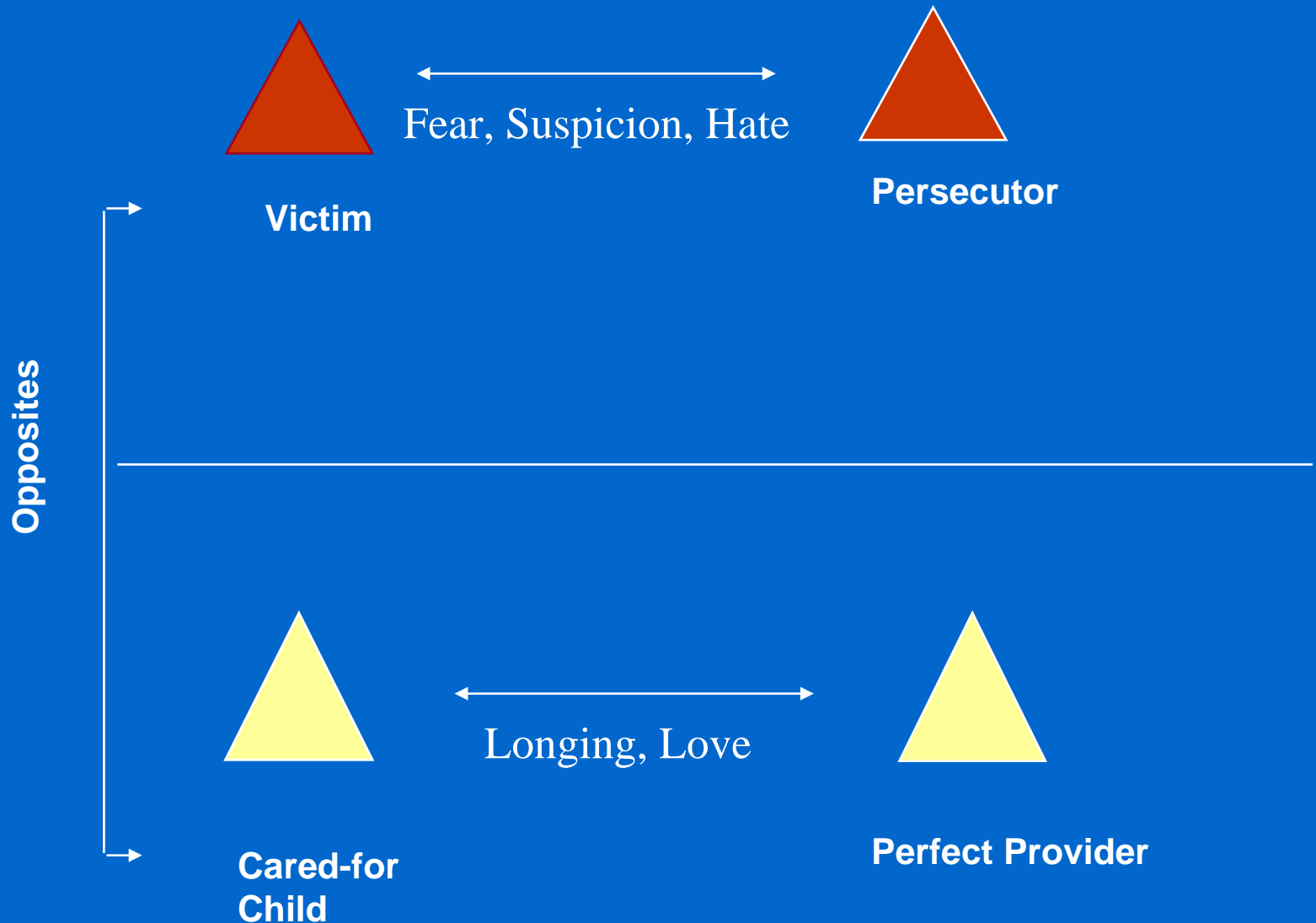


(Oscillation is usually in behavior, not in consciousness)



# OBJECT RELATIONSHIP INTERACTIONS:

## DEFENSE



# Basic Techniques

- Setting and maintaining the frame
- The interpretive process:
  - Clarification of internal states
  - Confrontation of contradictions
  - Interpretation of lack integration of the self

# TFP - What Changes?

Clinical improvement results from structural change

- Increased reflection, facilitated by:
  - Holding function of therapist
  - Interpretation
- Decreased splitting
- Identity consolidation