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Cure or Well-Being? A Counseling Perspective

by Sylvie Monin

What TA concepts do you use to understand the origin of psychological problems? Show how this relates to your ideas on psychological well-being or 'cure.' (EATA, 2014a, p. 7)

When trainees in their third year of counseling training at the Centre AT Genève [TA Center Geneva], Switzerland, answered this question from the Certified Transactional Analyst (CTA) written exam, a lively discussion ensued about what "cure" means and whether counselors speak about cure or well-being. For some, cure implied that there was an illness or some pathology. A further question arose: If we talk about pathology to be cured, when and what do we consider to be pathology? With the notion of cure also comes the notion of health and what health means.

Two definitions emerged from the trainees' presentations. The first one, from the World Health Organization (2018a), has not been amended since 1948: "Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity" (para. 2). This sounds a bit grandiose and raises a further question: What is considered physical, mental, and social well-being?

The second definition, from the 1986 Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion (World Health Organization, 2018b)



starts to answer these questions: Health is the ability to "identify and to realize aspirations, to satisfy needs, and to change or cope with the environment. Health is, therefore, seen as a resource for everyday life, not the objective of living" (para. 3). This seems close to TA's definition of autonomy: to have awareness and the capacity for spontaneity and intimacy. In their presentations, most of the trainees actually concluded that their notion of psychological well-being or cure was, indeed, autonomy.

Let us now look at some definitions of counseling. Research conducted in the United States among 31 major counseling organizations over a 2-year period resulted in the following definition: "Counseling is a professional relationship that empowers diverse individuals, families and groups to accomplish mental health, wellness, education and career goals" (Kaplan, Tarvydas, & Gladding, 2014, p. 366). This is quite

similar to the TA definition of counseling as

a professional activity within a contractual relationship. The counselling process enables clients or client systems to develop awareness, options and skills for problem management and personal development in daily life through the enhancement of their strengths, resources and functioning. Its aim is to increase autonomy in relation to their social, professional and cultural environment. (EATA, 2014b, p. 2)

It is interesting to note that this definition uses almost the same words as the Ottawa definition of health.

As for the first part of the question raised at the beginning of this article —“What TA concepts do you use to understand the origin of psychological problems?”—it was interesting to learn that most counseling trainees thought that all TA concepts could be developed and analyzed

to understand such problems but that most concepts led to the idea of script.

Looking at the evolution of TA theory, I find the concept of script to be particularly inspiring. At the 2010 TA EATA conference in Prague, during a roundtable with some of the authors from the book *Life Scripts: A Transactional Analysis of Unconscious Relational Patterns* (Erskine, 2010), I was fascinated to hear Fanita English tell Richard Erskine, with humor, something like, “We’ve had this conversation on script many times and while you are talking about healing from the script, I do not want you to touch my script. I am proud of it!” That was the first time in my TA training that I had heard script talked about as a resource rather than a pathology that one needs to be cured of.

When Steiner (1966) developed the script matrix, he drew it in a way that gave the impression that the child is only the recipient of parental messages rather than an active member of the triad. Cornell (1988) later introduced the notion of reciprocal influence whereby the child is active in the triad and has an impact on the environment.

Summers and Tudor (2000) went a step further in their coconstructive vision, introducing other important parental figures and then later many more actors from multiple horizons, cultures, and genders.

In these perspectives, the accent is more on the evolving aspect of script. As English (2010) wrote, “Script development is a normal process that occurs for all of us” (p. 224) as a way to give meaning and structure to the chaos rather than viewing it as pathological. It allows us to blossom rather than inhibiting our development.

The script, as I understand it, is a never-ending process of evolution and, as Tosi wrote (2010), “an ongoing narrative construction” (p. 29). As I am writing this now, my script is evolving, my frame of reference is opening. Considering script as an ongoing process in constant evolution and a resource rather than a pathology one needs to be cured of is particularly significant for counselors who are focusing on work in the here and now.

Fassbind-Kech (2013) reminded us that one of the core competencies of counselors is to work with the resources of the client and the environment. She presented the resources on an axis of time, from birth to death, from past, present, and future. On this axis, the resources of the script are proposed as a resource from the past. However, thinking of script as an ongoing process of change and evolution, I propose that it is a constant resource in our life: past, present, and future.

I see counseling as a means for stimulating an active Adult. Working in the here and now, through and with the Adult ego state, the counselor’s task is to hold that tension between the past and the future, working at that fine line between fear and hope, the old and the new, the known and the unknown (Monin, 2016). As Cornell and Bonds-White wrote (2008), “The therapist’s curiosity about the meaning the client has made of his or her lived experience can awaken the client’s curiosity and lead to an examination of and reflection on underlying basic assumptions” (p. 75). Awakening the client’s curiosity will help the person strengthen his or her Adult ego state and gain greater capacity for observation of self, others, and the situation, thereby shedding new light on his or her own experience and developing a differ-

the SCRIPT

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ent perspective from that of the Child. As Grégoire (2007) wrote, the Adult system is sensitive to the way reality works, independently at the same time of our own experience or subjective desires and of others' reactions and judgments (p. 123). It is the entry door to both reflection that allows for change and to a lucid conscience, one of the aspects of autonomy (p. 127). Working with and through the Adult ego state will have an impact on both the Parent and Child (Maystadt, 2007, p. 56) by stimulating a greater fluidity of energy and interaction between the three systems. I view the Adult like a conductor who skillfully and artfully orchestrates the symphony of all the internal voices and feelings, both in their dissonances and in their harmonies.

One of the specific qualities of the counseling field is the infinite variety of jobs counselors do and environments in which they work. To name just a few:

- A primary counselor accompanies a client after the brutal and tragic murder of both of her parents.
- A deacon in a palliative care unit accompanies a patient who has just a few more weeks to live.

Sylvie Monin, PTSTA (counseling), has a Swiss Federal Diploma of Counsellor in the psychosocial field. She maintains a private practice in Geneva working with both individuals and groups. She is a partner and a member of the teaching and supervising team of the TA-Center Geneva, where she is in charge of the counseling curriculum. Sylvie is also one of the coeditors of the *Transactional Analysis Journal* and can be reached at sylvie.monin@bluewin.ch.

- A human resource manager accompanies an employee who has difficulty integrating into a new team.

In such counseling situations, do we talk of cure or well-being? I would say neither.

My understanding of counseling is that it involves helping the client to find a new sense of self-agency, to build the capacity, with a more lucid Adult, to cope better with his or her life, and at times to learn to bear and live with the unbearable. Script, as meaning making and giving structure to the chaos, is, then, a resource. Counseling aims to help someone look at his or her script with profound respect, lucidity, curiosity, and tolerance, marveling at one's creativity and life's amazing process, even when it is profoundly troubling, distressful, challenging, infuriating, or painful. Its goal is to help the person develop the capacity for sound aggression and the fierceness to live a life closer to his or her aspiration.

In this sense, I view the work of counselors as promoting health rather than cure or well-being, considering health as "a resource for everyday life" as stated in the Ottawa Charter.

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Upcoming TAJ Theme Issue: New Perspectives in Educational Transactional Analysis

by Giles Barrow and Diana Deaconu

We are delighted to announce that we are coediting an upcoming special issue of the *Transactional Analysis Journal* on “New Perspectives in Educational Transactional Analysis.”

It has been 15 years since the last *TAJ* theme issue dedicated to the

“The interest in what goes on in the educational arena has continued, and various authors have looked for ways to reflect on and communicate about their professional experience. At times, this has concerned educational work with parents, children, and young people.”

educational field, and so much has been happening! A number of publications have come out, including a revised edition of *TACTICS*, the popular trainer’s handbook (Napper & Newton, 2015). The more recent *Educational TA: An International Guide to Theory and Practice* (Barrow & Newton, 2016) brought togeth-

er over 20 educators to share new ideas about educational TA. There have also been several well-attended educational symposia at regional and international conferences. The TA Proficiency Award for Children and Young People (TAPACY), which was a fledgling initiative back in the early 2000s, has now been implemented in many countries and featured in the *TAJ* (see Hay & Widén, 2015).

The interest in what goes on in the educational arena has continued, and various authors have looked for ways to reflect on and communicate about their professional experience. At times, this has concerned educational work with parents, children, and young people, as explored by Papaux (2016):

How do we consider children in our society? What kind of messages are we giving them regarding their abilities? What kind of opportuni-



Giles Barrow



Diana Deaconu

ties are we providing so that they might have an impact on their environment? And how might they become progressively our fellow citizens? (p. 109)

Or, in the case of Shotton (2016), there has been a concern with the theme of power in education:

My quest as an educator is to . . . explore life’s possibilities, to question: . . . Who benefits from these teaching and learning structures? Who loses out? My attitude has occasionally been described as anarchic. . . It means “without rulers.” . . . I could interpret it as meaning “without (archaic) Parent.” (p. 27)

Educator identity and educational purpose remained a central issue as explored by Napper (2016):

As a trainer I am changed through my meeting with the learner. . . . My own style verges on the provocative—learning is a disturbance to my frame of reference. . . . A profound disturbance is a naturally arising phenomenon which cannot be engineered or designed. (p. 201)

As coeditors, we are inviting contributions to this new theme issue of the *TAJ*, which will address contemporary interests, concerns, and innovation in educational transactional analysis. Possible themes for discussion, from contributors across all fields of application, might include:

- educational philosophy and transactional analysis theory
- educational transactional analysis curriculum, training, and examination
- on being an educator
- teaching, learning, and education

In the 2004 special issue, the editors considered that the field had arrived at the stage of identity and power (Emmertson & Newton, 2004). So, where are we now?

The deadline for submissions is 1 February 2019. Authors need to review the *TAJ* Submissions Guidelines here and should follow the instructions there carefully.

Submissions should be sent to *TAJ* Managing Editor Robin Fryer at robinfryer@aol.com.

If you have questions, we would be happy to address them. Please contact Giles Barrow (giles.barrow@virgin.net) and/or Diana Deaconu (dianardeaconu@gmail.com)

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TAJ Theme Issues

“Transgenerational Trauma”

Coeditors: Jo Stuthridge and Helen Rowland

Deadline: 1 November 2018

“New Perspectives in Educational Transactional Analysis”

Guest Editor Giles Barrow and Coeditor Diana Deaconu

Deadline: 1 February 2019

Please follow the submission requirements posted [here](#).

Email manuscripts to *TAJ* Managing Editor Robin Fryer, MSW, at robinfryer@aol.com.

EXAM CALENDAR

Exam Date	Exam	Cert. Body	Location	Application Deadline
3-4 May 2018	CTA	COC	Padua, Italy	*
8 Jun 2018	CTA	IBOC	Dunedin, New Zealand	8 Mar 2018
3-4 Jul 2018	CTA	COC	London, UK	*
15-16 Aug 2018	CTA	IBOC	Kochi, India	15 May 2018
1-2 Nov 2018	CTA	COC	Lyon, France	*
8-9 Nov 2018	CTA	COC	Köln-Rosrath, Germany	*
3-4 Jul 2018	TSTA	COC	London, UK	*
15-16 Aug 2018	TSTA	IBOC	Kochi, India	15 Feb 2018
1-2 Nov 2018	TSTA	COC	Lyon, France	*
8-9 Nov 2018	TSTA	COC	Köln-Rosrath, Germany	*
20-21 Aug 2018	TEW	IBOC	Kochi, India	20 Apr 2018
1-3 Dec 2018	TEW	COC	Zagreb, Croatia	*

*For CTA and TEW deadlines see the EATA Handbook or contact the EATA Supervising Examiner.

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For further information on COC exams, see www.eatanews.org/examinations/.



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Following My Intuition

by Gabriela Popescu

I am a psychologist and a TA psychotherapist in private practice under supervision living in a beautiful Romanian mountain town called Brasov. It is in the center of the country, in a region called Transylvania.

I have always been curious to find out more about myself, and studying psychological matters makes me feel alive.

Some people might describe me as introverted and shy, and to some extent I perceive myself that way too. However, there are also moments when I like to open up and talk about myself and share things. For a long time, I did not accept my introverted side and felt pressure to talk more, to be an extrovert, as if being introverted and shy were bad. I would hear comments such as “You are shy, there is something wrong with you” as an attack. Now I allow myself to withdraw and say nothing when I have nothing to say and to speak when I have something to say. I am trying to be honest with myself and the people around me as much as I can.

At the 2017 World TA Conference in Berlin, a presenter’s question in one of the workshops stuck in my mind: “What is the message I want to send to the world?” I do not know

if that was the actual question, but it is the shape it takes now as I write this article: What is the message I want to send to the readers of this newsletter?

The topic I was invited to address in this article is, “As a young psychologist, what led you to want to become a transactional analyst?” I was a student with the Faculty of Psychology in Bucharest and was exploring psychotherapy methods and schools when I discovered an advertisement about a transactional analysis workshop. I went and it was an

“Reflecting on my journey throughout the training, I understand that what was really important in my decision to study TA was to experiment with the concepts of permission, protection, and belonging.”

overwhelming experience for me. The trainer invited the participants to have lunch together the following day, which scared me because



back then that was too much for me. Two years later, I participated again in a TA workshop and loved it. At that point, intimacy did not scare me so much. In that second workshop, I felt there was something

in it for me, something about the TA approach. That is how I decided to continue participating in that training program, by following my intuition.

Now, reflecting on my journey throughout the training, I understand that what was really important in my decision to study TA was to experiment with the concepts of permission, protection, and belonging. In various TA workshops and conferences, I received permission to exist, to be the way I am. I received encouragement to express myself and permission to be close and to belong. I received validation for my way of thinking, expressed through the trainers’ encouragement to ask questions whenever we had any. They assured us that questions are valuable and there are no wrong

“Transactional analysis offers me the opportunity to satisfy my curiosity about human beings and their psyches and to find a way to establish deep contact between the individual and the world.”

ones. The fact that everyone’s opinion was taken into account, that the framework for every workshop was set (including confidentiality and other administrative rules), that at the end of the workshops we were invited to greet each other before leaving, that we usually had lunch together in order to get to know each other better: All these played a part in my growing sense of feeling safe, contained, and like I belonged.

Transactional analysis offers me the opportunity to satisfy my curiosity about human beings and their psyches and to find a way to establish deep contact between the individual and the world. All of these experiences represent the many reasons I found a safe space where I could be myself. At the same time, TA theory suits my inner structure well and offers me the opportunity to understand human relationships on a deep level.

I have recently watched the 2005 commencement speech Steve Jobs gave at Stanford University, and I resonate with his words about his perceptions about life. As my closing here, I want to share two of his ideas that I liked and felt inspired by; they reflect the place in which I now find myself in my life on both a professional and a personal level:

Gabriela Popescu can be reached at psihoterapeut@gabrielapopescu.ro ; website: www.gabrielapopescu.ro/psychologist-brasov .

- “You’ve got to find what you love. And that is as true for your work as it is for your lovers. Your work is going to fill a large part of your life, and the only way to be truly satisfied is to do what you believe is great work. And the only way to do great work is to love what you do.”
- “When I am able to feel I belong, I feel safe, and when I feel safe, I can explore, manifest my curiosity, study and work, be close and love. I love what I am doing, I want to take part in this world, not just be a mere observer. This is my message to the world now: It is important to love what we do and to manifest our love to the world.”

Reference

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Write for *The Script*

We invite you to become a contributor to *The Script*. We are especially interested in hearing from members who are using transactional analysis in socially responsible efforts to impact the world in a positive way. We also want to hear from practitioners who use TA in all four fields (psychotherapy, counseling, organizations, and education). Send us your articles (around 1000 words) and letters (around 400 words). Or if you have other ideas for *Script* material you think our readers would be interested in, please get in touch. Contact *Script* Managing Editor Robin Fryer at robinfryer@aol.com .

Welcome to New Members

FEBRUARY 2018

Miyuki Aoki, Japan
Coleman Cosgrove, USA
Rob Costigan, UK
Paul Dewhurst, UK
Orsolya Frank, Hungary
Mirjana Frankovic, Slovenia
Rosanna Giacometto, Italy
Kim Heekyung, Korea
Noriko Imanishi, Japan
Uma Iyer, India
Tina Kastelic, Slovenia
Sonal Kothari, India
Sunitha Krishnamurthi, India
Jackie Lovell, UK
Laura Meffan, UK
Karen Nolan, UK
Seema Pradhan, India
Amanda Reddington, UK
Ritu Shukla, India
Gillian Smale, South Africa
Sally Smith, UK
Chika Sumiyoshi, Japan
Sarah Tribe, UK
Gunjan Zutshi, India

MARCH 2018

Charlotte Foulkes, UK
Jane Hughes, UK
Lucia Ionas, Romania
Jasmine Johnson, UK
DongJin Jung, Korea
Maja Koren Kocjancic, Slovenia
Sonia Pedreira, Brazil
Jeannette Phillips, UK
Pamela Potter, UK
Mirjana Radovanovic, Slovenia
Ellaine Sweeting, UK
Martin Wells, UK

Membership Dues Payment Options

The options for paying your ITAA membership dues now include Pay Pal and wire transfer. Please contact Ken Fogleman at ken@itaa-net.org for details.



The Dance of Culture

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August 17-19, Kochi, Kerala, India



presenters from over
15 countries

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Conference
Inauguration
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18 May, 2018

www.saata.org/conference2018/

What Is Transactional Analysis?

Transactional analysis is a social psychology developed by Eric Berne, MD (d.1970). Berne's theory consists of certain key concepts that practitioners use to help clients, students, and systems analyze and change patterns of interaction that interfere with achieving life aspirations.

Who can attend:

Managers, executives, parents, teachers, students, counselors, psychotherapists, physicians, psychiatrists, consultants, trainers, coaches, healers, and anyone who's interested in self-growth and change and in helping others grow and change.



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International Transactional Analysis Association
(ITAA)



The South Asian Association Of Transactional Analysts
(SAATA)

SOCRAT's 7th Colloquium:

“Recognition and Mentalization.” In November 2010, a number of French-language TA advanced practitioners in three fields came together to create a new association for theory and research in TA. Every year, they organize a colloquium around a theme

with one or two speakers. The name they chose for their group, SOCRAT, is almost the Greek philosopher's name “Socrates” (in French, Socrate with an “e”) and stands for Société de Recherche en Analyse Transactionnelle [Society for Research in TA]. To quote the president's description, “SOCRAT is neither a school of research, nor a school for training, nor a school of thought. Rather, it is a place where researchers and all people trained for or interested in research can meet and compare their thinking and writing in TA or all of the human and social sciences. It is also a place meant for stimulating writing.” The tradition at SOCRAT is to hold a meeting on the first Sunday of February. This year, the two guest speakers were Brigitte Evrard, who spoke about recognition and attachment, and Laurie Hawkes, who talked about the development of mentalization. For more information, visit www.atsocrat.org/.



Laurie Hawkes (left) and Brigitte Evrard take questions at SOCRAT's 7th Colloquium

I. A. Mohanraj, CTA (O), has been honored with the first South Asian Association of Transactional Analysts (SAATA) Service Award in recognition of his continued commitment in serving their community in various capacities since before and from the inception of SAATA. Mohan is a founder trustee of SAATA and served as its treasurer from 2007 to 2013 and later as secretary for a year. In both positions, he contributed significantly to the establishment, advancement, and growth of SAATA as an organization promoting transactional analysis in the region. He demonstrated high standards of integrity and discipline in the way he managed these two important positions from an OK-OK position



with a spirit of generosity and, when needed, firmness from the commitment to its founding principles, policies, and procedures. Mohan also played a key role in all three international conferences in India and served on the ITAA Board of Trustees. The award will be presented at the ITAA-SAATA conference in Kochi this coming August. Congratulations can be sent to Mohan at mohanrajia68@gmail.com.

The **TA Study Circle Madras** recently celebrated its Ruby Jubilee on 13 January 2018. For the past 40 years it has been hosting monthly sessions on transactional analysis where experts and amateur learners share their learnings and experiences.

Book Reviews and Reviewers Wanted

The *Transactional Analysis Journal* is looking for book review submissions. Books published within the past 3 years are preferred, and reviews are limited to 1,000 words. We are looking for reviews that offer readers a solid critique that reflects substantially on the book rather than one that is primarily an endorsement. For more details or to discuss a possible book review, please contact TAJ Book Review Editor Ed Novak at edtnovak@gmail.com.



In February 2018, 35 Singapore-based individuals completed their USATAA Level 1 training [which is not related to IBOC-related qualifications/certification]. All have a minimum of a master's degree in counseling, which gives them a solid foundation to appreciate the richness and applicability of TA. The event facilitator was Dr. Jessica Leong, TSTA (ITAA) and TAPI (USATAA) (sixth from left, front row).



Tony White (second row, seated in center) with the participants at his workshop on bodyscripting in Kiev, Ukraine, in October 2017.

Tony White traveled to Russia and Ukraine in October 2017 to run a series of workshops, including rededication therapy groups, rededication relational therapy groups, and workshops on bodyscripts. The workshops were conducted to coincide with the publication of the Russian translation of his book *Working With Suicidal Individuals*. The organizer of the Ukraine workshop and the publisher of the book is Isaieva Nataliia. The organizer in Saint Petersburg, Russia was MIR TA and Gradova Julia Knjaziuk Svetlana.

Advertise in The Script!

Reach transactional analysts around the globe by advertising your workshops, books, conferences, and other events in *The Script*. Rates are reasonable: twelfth page: \$50; sixth page: \$100; third page: \$200; half page: \$300; full page: \$400. Deadlines—15th of the month prior to the month of publication (e.g., 15 April for the May issue). We are happy to work with you to design and produce your ad, so contact us by emailing managing editor Robin Fryer at robinfryer@aol.com.

Every Member Bring a Member

Dear *Script* Readers:

I'd like to share with you an idea that I think could have a positive impact on the ITAA in several ways. It is simple and straightforward: Each current ITAA member (maybe former members as well) brings one other person into the organization. This could be via a paid membership at the most basic and modest cost level. Each of us as members can sponsor (pay for) a new member or help someone to get to a TA IO1 and then assist them in following through on their ITAA application for beginning membership. This needs to be easy, accessible, and simple.

Here's how I am doing this. Our son, Coleman Kidd Cosgrove, will graduate from medical school on 2 June 2018. He then has 4 years of residency (psychiatry is his specialty). He participated in a TA IO1 with Vann Joines in 2006, so he already knows the practical usefulness of TA in his chosen field of work. I will pay for his basic ITAA membership throughout his residency and beyond as he gets going in his psychotherapy and psychiatry profession.

He will also be heir to all of my books on psychology and counseling and my *TA Bulletins* and *Journals*. (I have all of them except for one journal. Perhaps when I determine which issue I am missing, someone can help me to complete my collection.)

I truly believe that those of us who have an appreciation, understanding, and dedication to the healthy

growing existence of the ITAA and TA as a useful tool in psychotherapy, counseling, education, and organizational development will gladly embrace the opportunity to bring one person (or more if they choose) into the ITAA.

I know this is a viable, doable idea—one that can add members and revenue in substantial numbers—all to the benefit of the ITAA, an organization we members love and want to see succeed and thrive.

We can do this—now and worldwide!

Steve Cosgrove
(Regular Member since 1975),
Auburn, Alabama, USA

Editors' Note: *We'd love to hear what others think about Steve's idea—please send your comments to Script Managing Editor Robin Fryer at robinfryer@aol.com.*

Transactional Analysis Conferences Worldwide

11-13 May 2018: Vienna, Austria. 38th DGTA Conference.
Contact: <https://www.dgta-kongress.de/workshop-registrierung/>

16-17 June 2018: Third Bulgarian Association for Transactional Analysis (BATA) Conference. Contact: <http://batanews.org/>

5-6 July 2018: London, England. EATA/IARTA Theory Development and Research Conference. Contact: <https://eata2018.london/>

17-19 August 2018: Kochi, India. ITAA-SAATA Conference.
Contact: www.saata.org/conference2018/

3-4 November 2018: Lyon, France. First Tri-National French-Language TA Conference (IFAT/ASSOBAT/ASAT-SR).
Contact: info@ifat.net

23-24 November 2018: Singapore. Australian Transactional Analysis Association and Transactional Analysis Association of Singapore Conference. Contact: Tony White at agbw@bigpond.com

16-23 February 2019: Frenchman's Cove, Jamaica. USATAA Gathering.
Contact: usataa.org