Summary of The FiveStar Method of Dream Analysis
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Resources: "A New Approach to Dream Analysis Congruent with Contemporary Counseling Methods," and "The FiveStar Method: A Relational Dreamwork Methodology"

I. Sharing the dream and feelings

Dreamer shares the dream in the first-person, present tense. Meanwhile, the dream workers listen to the dream as if it's their own. If the dreamer is sharing without including feelings, the leader should interrupt the dreamer ask for feelings. After sharing the dream, the dreamer and dream workers review the feelings that arose during the dream narration. Be aware that dreams arise in response to felt dissonance; that is, the dream ego is become aware of something that is not integrated, which sets up a certain tension that generates the dream. Comment on the nature of the felt dissonance, if any, and ask the dreamer to relate to it, too, and identify the forces in tension.

I. Formulating the theme or process narrative

In collaboration with the dreamer, the dream workers distill the action in the form of a succinct summary. Avoid mention of specific images and names. Use generic nouns like "someone," "something," or "somewhere" to replace specifics names, objects and places. Example: "I am trying to get somewhere, and encounter an array of obstacles blocking my way, but I don't give up" or "Someone is trying to get away from a threat, but cannot find a place that feels safe Eventually the threat turns into something less imposing." (State the PN from the standpoint of "I am…" or "Someone is…" depending on the need for the dreamer to identify or maintain distance from the dream drama.)

Resources: "Viewing the Dream as Process: A Key to Effective Dreamwork"

III. Dreamer Response and Imagery Change Analysis

In collaboration with the dreamer, the dream workers highlight and troubleshoot the dreamer's responses to the dream content by simply focusing on where the dreamer responded or reacted to the dream situations and characters. The dream workers use "process questions" and "process descriptions" to highlight the circular relationship between the dreamer's responses and the imagery changes. An example might be: "When you (felt/thought/assumed/responded), the image changed, and then you ..." Follow up with questions such as these: "Is this a new response, or is it familiar?" or "What was constructive about your response?" or "What was unfortunate about your response?" Then ask, "What could you have done differently? How do you think the dream image would have responded to that?"

The dream workers may participate vicariously by saying, "If this were my dream, I can imagine myself feeling/thinking/assuming/acting..." A group leader may incorporate additional protective measures, such as discouraging eye contact with the dreamer, and speaking to the group instead of the dreamer, to make sure the dreamer's autonomy is preserved.

Resources: "Analyzing Chronic Dream Ego Responses in Co-Creative Dream Analysis"

IV. Imagery Analysis

This step may involve a variety of non-invasive methods of imagery analysis, which may include:

Amplification: The dreamer shares his or her associations with the images (amplification). The dream worker/dream group can also provide associations and ideas, as well (i.e. projective dream work), but this is optional based on the dream worker's style and philosophy, and protective measures may be implemented to make sure the dreamer's autonomy is preserved. Amplification may involve discussion of general universal meanings/archetypes.

Dialoguing: (Optional Advanced) As an added step, the dream worker/dream group may have the dreamer describe him/herself as the image, and then dialogue with the dreamer in order to enhance awareness and deepen the relationship with that part of him/herself. Experience with using Gestalt-congruent questions and prompts is important.

Metaphor Analysis: (Optional Advanced) What are the principal metaphors in the dream? What broad domain of experience does the image relate to? What concrete experience(s) of the dreamer anchors and makes understandable the broad domain?

Resources: "The Construction and Analysis of Dream Metaphors from the Standpoint of Co-Creative Dream Theory" and "Imagery Change Analysis"

V. Formulating a Plan of Action

At this stage, the dream worker asks the dreamer, "What would you like to do differently if this dream should arise again?" You may engage the dreamer in Dream Reliving to explore the impact of new responses. Also ask the dreamer, "Where else in your life can this new response be helpful? Where are you willing to enact this new response?" Any efforts to apply the dream in the dream state and/or waking life situations can be analyzed subsequently and new efforts formulated on the basis of the progress made or difficulties encountered.

As a prelude to having a member share a dream, the leader should say, **Please share your dream in the first-person, present tense, as if it were happening right now. Meanwhile, the group members and I will listen to it as it were our dream.** If the dreamer leaves out the feelings that arose during the dream, gently interrupt when it seems important, and inquire, **What are you feeling now?**

As a prelude to formulating the process narrative, the leader might say, **I'd like to explore a couple of dimensions of your dream before we discuss the meaning of the imagery or symbols, ok?**

Specifically, I want us to arrive at what's called a *process narrative*, which is the story line from beginning to end of the dream without regard to any of the specific names, places, objects, etc. It's a generic statement of what's happening. Then I'd like for us to examine your responses over the course of the dream—where you felt, thought, chose, or reacted in some way to what was happening.

(If the dreamer is familiar with the process narrative, ask him/her to formulate it. If not, you can formulate it, and then get the dreamer to ratify it, or suggest changes. If you're working with a group, then ask someone to offer one, then get the group and dreamer to modify it until it feels accurate.)

So, what I see happening in this dream is that you (or someone) …*Formulate process narrative with dreamer group and dreamer's participation.*

Now, as for your responses in the dream, it occurs to me that when a happens, you do b…*(all responses summarized sequentially)* **And then when y happens you respond by doing z.**

Let's look at what's familiar or habitual about your responses and how they impacted the dream characters or situations? *Go through them.*

Let's look at what's new or creative about your responses and how they impacted the dream characters or situations? *Go through them.*

What would you like to have done differently, and do differently in any future dreams?

Now, if necessary, conduct an analysis of the dream imagery, using dreamer-centered, non-invasive methods, such as amplification, the Interview Method, Gestalt role-play, or the Ullman-Taylor "If this were my dream…" interactive process. Then shift back to a co-creative model by encouraging a process bridge, as opposed to a content bridge. A process bridge explores relationship parallels (e.g. The way I reacted to the black cat in my dream is similar to the way that I react to my husband), whereas imagery analysis encourages a content parallel (e.g. The black cat represents the qualities I see in my husband.)

Are you aware of any relationships or situations in your waking life exhibit similar relationship challenges? What new, creative, and appropriate responses do you want to commit to in order to apply the dream work in your waking life?