Isaacs Russell

Screen Relations

The Limits of Computer-Mediated Psychoanalysis and Psychotherapy

Increased worldwide mobility and easy access to technology means that the use of technological mediation for treatment is being adopted rapidly and uncritically by psychoanalysts and psychoanalytic psychotherapists. Despite claims of functional equivalence between mediated and co-present treatments, there is scant research evidence to advance these assertions. Can an effective therapeutic process occur without physical co-presence? What happens to screen-bound treatment when, as a patient said, there is no potential to "kiss or kick?" Our most intimate relationships, including that of analyst and patient, rely on a significant implicit non-verbal component carrying equal or possibly more weight than the explicit verbal component. How is this finely-nuanced interchange affected by technologically-mediated communication? This book draws on the fields of neuroscience, communication studies, infant observation, cognitive science and human/computer interaction to explore these questions. It finds common ground where these disparate disciplines intersect with psychoanalysis in their definitions of a sense of presence, upon which the sense of self and the experience of the other depends.

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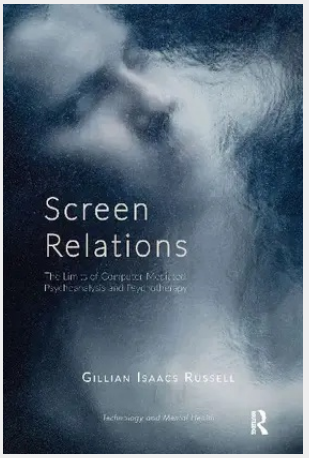

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