C-1: Psychoanalytic Training and the Quest for Integrated Selfhood

Speaker: Ida Roldan, PhD  
Discussant: Roger Segalla, Jr, PhD  
Moderator: Thetis Cromie, PhD  

Abstract:
Using a clinical example, this paper examines the interweaving of my personal history, with my supervisory relationship and the relationship with my patient, and how these systems of reciprocal mutual influences shaped my growth and development as an analyst. Highlighted will be the interplay of the intersubjective field created in these relationships and how it points to an important aspect of the bidirectional influences constantly at work out of our awareness that can only emerge and be analyzed within a relational context. Through the intersubjective rupture that occurred with my patient and within the relational context of supervision, I came to know an aspect of myself that had remained sequestered in a sector of my personality. This process prepared the ground for transforming the analytic process with my patient as well as furthering my growth as an analyst. This paper further examines how important it is to consider how we work with our personalities and those aspects of ourselves that can make it impossible for us to listen and empathize with particular patients. Yet, if the analyst is able to regain her self-reflective capacities and find a way to decenter from her own organizing principles of her subjective world, the analyst can recognize and respond to the analysand’s subjective world in a way that will promote empathic understanding and analytic insight for the analytic dyad.

At the conclusion of this discussion, participants will be:
1. Introduced to the transformative opportunities that can occur during psychoanalytic training by discussing the learning experience of one candidate that highlights the interplay of the intersubjective field created by the candidate’s personal history, her supervisory relationship and her relationship with her patient.
1. Participants will have a deeper understanding of Bernard Brandchaft’s concept of pathological accommodation.
C-2: The Bonds of Empathy: Beyond the Selfobject Concept

Speaker: Frank Summers, PhD
Discussant: Steven Knoblauch, PhD
Moderator: Margy Sperry, PsyD

Abstract:
In Kohut’s last paper he depicted the self psychological concept of mental health in the story of Odysseus risking his life by going off to war rather than run over his son with his plow. Kohut described this act as empathic identification, not a use of the selfobject. It is the thesis of this paper that Kohut implicitly went beyond the selfobject concept in his last formulation of mental health from a self psychological viewpoint because of limitations in the concept itself. This idea is buttressed by an argument that the self is formed from the gaze of the other recognized as a subject. This view of self formation means that the concept of the selfobject as a function for the child is not sufficient to account for self development. It is argued that Kohut made empathy the hallmark of mental health, but the selfobject concept limits the ability of self psychology to account for the development of the capacity for empathy. The clinical implications of this view of self formation are brought out and contrasted with the use of the selfobject concept.

At the end of this presentation the audience should be able to:
1. Describe the process of self formation in development.
2. Describe the relationship between empathy and self formation.
C-3: Helping Newtown: Reopening a School in the Aftermath of Tragedy

Speaker: George Hagman, MSW  
Discussant: Rosemary Segalla, PhD  
Moderator: Johanna Tiemann, PhD

Abstract:  
The week after the Sandy Hook Tragedy the school of Newtown reopened. This paper is a first hand account by the leader of a team intervention which was implemented to support the students, teachers, and parents in one elementary school. The goal was not just to restore the school system in its educational role, but also sustain it as a source of psychological and emotional support. The team provided whatever was needed in the way of clinical and supportive assistance to help them get through the first school days and begin the recovery process. Despite the fact that no one at the school had been directly threatened, nor had any observed the death of others, many of them (adults and children) had ties to Sandy Hook which made the tragedy feel very close and acutely threatening. Using a trauma informed psychoanalytic framework, the author describes the step by step process by which clinical and supportive services were developed and provided. Specific issues related to managing anxiety in an institution are demonstrated. The importance of a sustained empathic approach broadly applied and attuned to individual needs is emphasized.

At the conclusion of this discussion participants will be able to:  
1. Develop assessment skills regarding the impact of trauma on communities.  
2. Learn specific interventions which can help individuals and groups cope with trauma.  
3. Be more aware of the vicissitudes of counter transference in disaster relief work.
C-4: Borrowed Lives, Transgenerational Forms and Transformations of Connectedness

Speaker: Andreas, Bachhofen, PhD  
Discussant: Martin Gossmann, MD  
Moderator: Dorienne Sorter, PhD

Abstract:
Based on Intersubjectivity Theory, Complexity Systems Theory and on B. Brandchaft’s work on Systems of Pathological Accommodation the author examines the transgenerational dimension of trauma. He shows two “meta-systems” of pathological accommodation which are always developing if a developmental trauma does not find a relational home. Especially he focuses a system he calls, corresponding to the Hollywood movie, the “Truman-Show-Syndrome”. It is characterized by the fact that children of traumatized parents often have to be the guarantors of a future that had collapsed before under the impact of the traumatic experience. To these children live was not a gift. It was unconsciously borrowed instead with a livelong duty to stabilize the parent’s destroyed or shattered worlds of experience. On the case of Maria the author shows how he had been affected by the trauma of the parents of his patient and how difficult it is even to recognize this dimension in a psychoanalytical therapy.

After listening to my speech the participants are able to:
1. See mechanisms of transgenerational transmission of trauma  
2. The will be sensitive for the inevitable entanglement of the therapist with the traumatic experiences even across the borders of generations.
C-5: Bodies In Dialogue: Empathic Connectedness in the Realm of the Unspeakable

Speaker: Jane Lewis, LCSW
Discussant: Maxwell Sucharov, MDCM, FRCP
Moderator: Denise Davis, LCSW

Abstract:
This presentation joins in contemporary psychoanalysis' ever-expanding conversation about the "something more" than spoken language, that has long been privileged in our profession. Specifically, the notion is explored that infant research's conceptualization of mind as dialogic in origin -- that we are prewired from birth to participate in nonverbal affective communication-- is consistent with the position that an embodied, dialogic, empathic connectedness can evolve with severely traumatized, frozen patients whose experience is not just "unformulated but unspeakable." This is illustrated with an in-depth account of a difficult therapeutic journey with a highly intelligent man whose social relatedness hid a world of frozen grief and terror of violation. It was only when the therapist could connect with trauma-generated aspects of herself that had remained frozen, could she find an empathic way of being-with and ultimately understanding her patient's wordless, frozen world. During the course of the year-long, initial phase of this predominantly "silent", dialogic treatment, the therapist recalls her own childhood fantasies involving an "imaginary camera"; Roland Barthes and Susan Sontag's philosophical reflections on photography; as well as self psychological and relationally-informed theories to explicate the transformation to an increasingly symbolized, worded dialogue which occurred during this unusual therapeutic journey.

At the conclusion of this presentation, participants will be able to:
1. Explain how as analysts, we may be called upon to build and sustain prolonged, wordless, embodied dialogues with our severely traumatized patients for whom experience is not only "unformulated but unspeakable."
2. Explain how the therapist may have to locate destabilizing, trauma-generated aspects of her own experiential world and "find herself in her patient" in order to forge an empathic sense of connectedness with her patient's wordless, frozen world.
3. Describe how infant research, self psychological, relationally-informed theories explicate the transformation of an embodied, dialogic connection with a patient, to an increasingly symbolized, worded dialogue which occurred during this unusual therapeutic journey.
C-6: Beyond the Words: Some Implicit Dimensions of Psychoanalytic Treatment - Contributions From Neuroscience

Speaker: Judith Rustin, LCSW  
Discussant: Estelle Shane, PhD  
Moderator: Elizabeth Carr, MSN, BC

Abstract:
This paper uses 2 concepts from neuroscience, implicit memory and connectionism to demonstrate how neuroscience concepts and self psychology, two seemingly divergent theories, converge. Using the concept of implicit memory, I show how it expands opportunities for empathic immersion and increases possibilities for a more tailored fit in a two-person, inter subjective interaction. The concept of connectionism, suggests a dynamic interplay at play between patient and analyst in the emergence of memory. The analyst, an integral part of initiating, shaping, and constructing the memory as it unfolds in treatment then participates fully in the transformation of memory and ultimately in the patient’s relational transformation. This concept grounds our existing theory. A clinical example demonstrates how I used these concepts to facilitate and enhance a meaningful therapeutic engagement with a patient.

At the end of this presentation, participants will be able to define:
1. Implicit Memory  
2. Explicit Memory  
3. Connectionism
C-7: Ghostly Intrusions:
Unformulated Trauma and It's Transformation in the Therapeutic Dyad

Speaker: Heather Ferguson, LCSW, MSW
Discussant: Christine Kieffer, PhD, ABPP
Moderator: Ruth Gruenthal, MSS

Abstract:
In this paper, I describe the affective intersection of my history and my patient’s, ghostly ties that haunted us both, illuminated by a personal dream, which clarified our impasse and awakened necessary mourning. My intent is to illustrate how living out previously unprocessed and unformulated feelings, in the therapeutic dyad, becomes a powerful form of psychoanalytic witnessing, facilitating forestalled mourning. In this intense, non-conscious affect exchange, the therapist becomes an alive other capable of “living through” and containing intense negative affects in contrast to the psychically dead or absent parent. In this process, the patient’s experience of unwitnessed loss, manifested as a solitary experience of deadness and hopelessness, becomes transformed into an experience of being an alive participant. In allowing myself to be deeply unsettled, greater empathic connection with my patient and his experience of unmourned loss ensued, mobilizing therapeutic change.

At the end of this discussion participants will be able to:
1. Describe the impact of unwitnessed loss in the patient’s history.
2. Discuss treatment impasses that include foreclosures in mourning for patient and analyst.
3. Describe various treatment stances, including creating continuity with the deceased loved one, which will facilitate mourning for the patient.