H. Please Don’t Let Me Be Misunderstood: How Contemporary Self Psychology and Relational Perspective Expand Our Understanding of Empathy and the Empathic Bond

Presenters: Maria Slowiaczek, PhD; Diana Lidofsky, PhD and Peter Kaufmann, PhD

Abstract:
The purpose of this workshop is to explore some of the ways that our understanding of empathy has expanded in recent years, and to illustrate advances in theory with clinical material. We will start with Classical Self Psychology—explicating Kohut’s description of empathy as an experience-near stance on the part of the analyst that is essential to the patient’s remobilization of a developmental process. We will then focus on current views of empathy, which appreciate the degree to which the empathic bond is affected by both patient and analyst, as well as by the state of their growing relationship. Contemporary Self Psychology further elaborates the ways in which a co-created feeling of connectedness results in a kind of mutual empathy. Finally, we will explore aspects of contemporary Relational theory, which proposes that various forms of empathy may be involved when the analyst is encountering and engaging with self states in a patient that have been dissociated. The workshop’s overarching goal will be to explore clinical examples from both the presenters and the participants to show the variety of forms and configurations that empathy can take—depending on the specific patient/analyst dyad, on the specific trajectory that has unfolded in treatment, and on the specific moment in time.

Learning Objectives:

At the conclusion of this workshop, participants will be able to:
1. explain how the concept of empathy has been expanded in contemporary self psychology to include a more mutual, co-constructed understanding between the patient and analyst;
2. recognize and use multiple forms of empathy, having explored their own uses of empathy in their therapeutic practices;
3. Assess the role that they choose for the analyst’s subjectivity in relation to understanding and pursuing the patient’s developmental needs.
Thursday, October 20th
1:30 pm – 4:00 pm

Pre –Conference PM Workshops

1. Erotic States and Boundaries: Deep Resonant Engagement within an Ethical Analytic Stance

Presenters: Nancy Bridges, LICSW and George Hagman, LICSW

Abstract:
Although sexual and loving feelings commonly arise in analytic work, they may present special challenges or catch the analyst by surprise. An understanding of the dynamics around such feelings can facilitate treatment progress and help protect against boundary crossings and ethical violations. In many cases, erotic phenomena represent an effort to repair and advance self-development or as a shield against intolerable dysregulation and fragmentation. Receptivity to our patients’ need for deep emotional contact and a responsive vitalizing attachment offers hope of a reparative developmental process. In the intersubjective mix, our deepest longings inevitably become activated, often disorienting the analyst and the analytic process. The workshop leader will share cases from her practice as a springboard for an interactive conversation about the experience of negotiating erotic states with those we hope to help and our selves.

Learning Objectives:

At the conclusion of this workshop, participants will be able to:
1. use erotic and accompanying anxiety-provoking feelings in the assessment of patients, while upholding requisite ethical standards and boundaries;
2. demonstrate increased compassion for their own inner experience and accept the inevitability of enactments by patients that may advance therapeutic aims;
3. assess the meaning of erotic states as metaphors about self and other that represent an effort to repair and advance self-development.
J. Toward Further Understanding of Transference: Theoretical Evolution, Contribution of Other Sciences, and Clinical Implications

Presenter: James Fosshage, PhD; Charles Finlon, LCSW; Noah Glassman, PhD; Susan Carroll Berck, PsyD, PhD; Jonathan Raffes, PhD and Johanna Tiemann, PhD

Abstract:
Our purpose in this Pre-conference Workshop is to delineate and further integrate the empirical findings and theoretical contributions from cognitive science, systems theory, infant and attachment research, social cognition research, and affective/cognitive neuroscience in our quest for an interdisciplinary empirically informed model of transference (Wachtel, 1980; Stolorow/Lachmann, 1984/85; Fosshage, 1994; Westen & Gabbard, 2002). In addition, our purpose is to elucidate the implications for clinical work, addressing some of the now outmoded “default” (Wachtel, 2006) technical assumptions. We will provide a relatively brief history of the concept of transference with an emphasis on the more recently developed organizing model, followed by sections detailing the specific and validating contributions of the above-mentioned disciplines. Lastly, we will address a number of what we consider to be the most important clinical implications and implicitly and explicitly provide a general theory of therapeutic action.

Learning Objectives:

At the conclusion of this workshop, participants will be able to:
1. List and describe the 3 fundamental models of transference: the displacement, totalist and organizing models.
2. Describe the contributions of cognitive science, systems theory, infant and attachment research, social cognition research, and affective/cognitive neuroscience to the further theoretical and empirical validation of the organizing model of transference.
3. use new ways of clinically working with transference—for example, analyzing organizing patterns both when they are activated in the analytic relationship as well as in other relationships and overcoming the traditional procedures of focusing relatively exclusively on the analytic relationship and all too often interpreting the content of a patient’s articulations as applying to the analyst.
Thursday, October 20th
1:30 pm – 4:00 pm

K. From the Ground Up: A Contemporary Self Psychological, Experience-Near Examination of The Gottman Method and Emotion-Focused Approaches to Couples Therapy

Presenter: Carla Leone, PhD and David Shaddock, PhD, MFT

Abstract: Manualized, behavioral models of couples therapy such as the Gottman Method and Emotion-Focused approaches have grown significantly more popular over the past several years and claim considerable empirical support. Are behavioral approaches compatible with a contemporary Self Psychological approach? If so how are we to understand their effect? In this workshop we will present an overview of each method and then “drill down” to examine what might be going on in a given clinical moment for the couple. We will be especially interested in viewing these methods through the selfobject, intersubjective systems and nonverbal-implicit lenses. Are these methods a pathway or an impediment to empathic attunement? Are they compatible with our understanding of each partner’s developmental histories and developmental yearnings? Given the many challenges involved in couples therapy - and the lack of training in couples therapy currently offered by most psychoanalytic training institutes - novice and experienced couples therapists alike are likely to welcome a thoughtful discussion of how findings from these models can be of practical help to them in their work.

Learning Objectives

At the conclusion of this workshop, participants will be able to:
1. List three areas of overlap between self psychological couples therapy and the Gottman Method.
2. Identify three areas of overlap between self psychological couples therapy and Emotionally-Focused Therapy for Couples (EFT-C).
3. Explain how both manualized models can be understood in terms of the implicit nonverbal communication between partners and between the therapist and each partner.
L. Pairings: The Question of the Fit in the Clinical Dyad

Presenter: Hazel Ipp, PhD and Jane Jordan, PhD

Abstract:
The question of the fit between analyst and patient is an important but relatively underexplored topic in the literature of psychoanalysis. A good fit—or, in Winnicottian terms, a “good enough” fit—is arguably an essential ingredient for a successful treatment. This workshop will focus on the elements that constitute as well as those that obstruct the goodness of fit in the clinical dyad. Drawing on relevant work of many Self Psychology theorists, beginning with Kohut’s foundational idea of twinship, the workshop will explore how that concept has been extended. We will also examine contributions by other Self Psychologists (e.g. Lichtenberg) as well as by theorists from other contemporary psychoanalytic schools: attachment, relational, Jungian, intersubjective systems theory, as well as findings from infant research. We will address questions such as:

• Who is best matched with whom and why? Who is not?
• How do tribal affiliations (ethnicity, class, gender, sexual orientation, etc.) affect the fit?
• What factors cause the fit to shift and in which directions?
• What happens to the fit in the event of conflicting socio-cultural values?

Workshop participants will be encouraged to bring in their own experiences to share with the group. Together we will contemplate the underlying theme: to what extent do we need to see ourselves in the inner and/or outer world of our patients, and to what extent do they need to see themselves in our inner and/or outer world as well?

Learning Objectives:

At the conclusion of this workshop, participants will be able to:
1. Describe Kohut’s idea of twinship and how it has been extended.
2. Discuss how tribal affiliations (ethnicity, class, gender, sexual orientation, etc.) affect the fit between analyst and patient.
3. Explain how changes in the subjectivities of both patient and analyst alter the fit.
Thursday, October 20th
1:30 pm – 4:00 pm

Pre – Conference PM Workshops

M. Attachment Security, Oedipal Phenomena, and Rekindled Love: Revisiting Attachment Theory through the Lens of Desire

Presenter: Jill Gentile, PhD
Co-Facilitator: Sarah Mendelsohn, LCSW

Abstract:
This workshop explores the idea that relationships of attachment security are simultaneously relationships of mutual desire. Seen through this lens, separation and reunion behavior become increasingly psychologically charged: Infant and mother as well as patient and analyst, must revisit their willingness to expose their desire in each encounter. By recognizing that personal agency is vital to both healthy attachment and romantic desire, we can begin to appreciate the dawning of romantic desire not so much as promoting “separation-individuation” as often conceived, but as exerting a gravitational pull to revisit an original love—one that is now erotically reconceived. We reclaim an original love but now in a relational context between mother and the Other, the pre-oedipal and the oedipal, the familiar and the stranger. As we (in the workshop) experiment with probing attachment classifications for a narrative of emergent desire, we will seek a reconciliation between attachment theory and contemporary psychoanalytic theories of intersubjectivity. The possibility of claiming a more robust conception of attachment security and of self and mutual recognition may emerge as we bridge the familiar and the stranger in Others and in ourselves, our security needs and our erotic desires.

Learning Objectives:

At the conclusion of this workshop, participants will be able to:
1. Articulate how attachment theory is both a behavioral system and, implicitly, a conception of the desiring and agentic subject.
2. Identify how attachment classifications (from insecure to secure) may be conceived along a phenomenological trajectory of signifying desire in a primary relationship.
3. Discuss a path whereby oedipal phenomena and the exposure of erotic desire enables us to contemplate a more robust conception of attachment security while affirming the project of self and mutual recognition between the familiar and the other/‘the stranger’
N. Effective and Efficient Supervision: Doing it in Group

Presenter: Arthur Gray, PhD

Abstract:
This six-step group supervision model is different from group therapy. It provides focused attention to the needs of the individual presenter while maintaining full participation of all other members within each step. All members receive supervision, through their participation. While the supervision model is based on self psychological theory of individual and group therapy, it is specifically responsive to the unique level of experience and theoretical orientation of each participant. The model avoids the usual chaos or constriction that can often be associated with group supervision.

Learning Objectives:

At the conclusion of this workshop, participants will be able to:
1. State the difference between group supervision and group therapy.
2. List the six steps of this group supervision model.
3. Elaborate the details of each of the six steps of the model.