Friday, October 14th

Paper Session A-1

Why It Is Good to Be Good:
Ethics, Kohut’s Self Psychology, and Modern Society

Presenter: John Riker, PhD

Discussant: Gabriella Mann, PhD

Abstract:

The paper is a summary of my recently published book Why It Is Good to Be Good: Ethics, Kohut’s Self Psychology, and Modern Society. I argue that modernity, by undermining traditional religious and metaphysical grounds for moral belief, has left itself no way to explain why it is personally good to be a morally good person. Further, modernity’s regnant concept of the self as an independent agent organized around the optimal satisfaction of desires and involved in an intense economic competition with others intensifies the likelihood that modern persons will see morality as a set of limiting constraints that stand in the way of personal advantage and will tend to cheat when they believe there is little likelihood of getting caught. This cheating has begun to severely undermine modernity’s economic and social institutions. I propose that Heinz Kohut’s psychoanalytic understanding of the self can provide modernity with a naturalistic ground for saying why it is good to be good because the self is both the source of vitalized personal existence and in need of reliable selfobject support. I then show that the best way to sustain reciprocal selfobject relations in adulthood is by becoming an ethical human being—someone who can be empathic with others, exhibit the Aristotelian moral virtues, operate with a sense of fairness, and whose internal self-integrity demands an extension of empathic ethical concern to those beyond their selfobject matrixes.

Objective: At the conclusion of my presentation, the participant will be able to understand how the regnant concept of human nature undermines the motivation to be moral in modern society and why Kohut’s concept of the self can offer good reasons for wanting to be ethical persons.
Friday, October 14th

Paper Session A-2:

A Phenomenological-Contextualist Psychoanalytic Perspective

Presenter: Robert D. Stolorow, PhD

Interlocutor: Michael Pariser, PsyD

Discussant: William J. Coburn, PhD, PsyD

Abstract:

This presentation will give an overview of the evolution of the basic ideas in Stolorow’s intersubjective-systems theory, his phenomenological-contextualist psychoanalytic perspective. This framework is phenomenological in that it investigates and illuminates worlds of emotional experience; it is contextualist in that it holds that such organizations of emotional experience always take form within relational or intersubjective contexts. Intersubjective-systems theory entails a move from mind to world and from drive to affectivity.

Objectives

1. Participants will learn how to engage in psychoanalytic investigation conceived as a form of phenomenological inquiry.
2. Participants will learn how to investigate the contexts in which emotional conflict and the various forms of unconsciousness take from.
3. Participants will acquire skill in investigating the context-embeddedness and existential significance of emotional trauma.
Friday, October 14th

Paper Session A-3:

Emerging from a Faustian Dilemma or Whose Soul is it Anyway? A Relational Journey Towards Liberation from Pathological Accommodation

Presenter: Margaret Amerongen, MSW
Moderator: Shelley Doctors, PhD
Discussant: Jane Jordan, PsyD

Abstract:

This paper recognizes the seminal contribution made by Brandchaft with his theory of pathological accommodation. However, it argues that there is something in the exquisitely intertwined nature of the therapeutic context and the extent and nature of the therapist’s subjectivity that is in play that is missing in Brandchaft’s discussions of his clinical work. In addition to empathic responsiveness, provision of various self object experiences, and analysis of state shifts signaling usurping organizing principles, therapeutic action includes recognition of the centrality of the analyst’s subjectivity and promotion of new ways of interacting. Detailed clinical material illustrates the importance of the analyst’s cultivating openness to her moment to moment experience (including what is difficult to know) so as to truly address the “mutual” in intersubjective systems of reciprocal mutual influence. This sensibility promotes similar expansion of experience for the patient. In addition, systems of pathological accommodation are addressed directly in the transference and countertransference.

Objective

At the conclusion of my presentation, the participant will be able to appreciate the centrality of the analyst’s subjectivity in the clinical exchange, and how this sensibility can promote rich opportunities for new experience in the context of a truly mutual collaborative process.
Friday, October 14th

Paper Session A-4:

The Fetish in Nicole Krauss’ Great House and in Clinical Practice: A Relational Account

Presenter: Joye Weisel-Barth, PhD, PsyD
Moderator: Mary Walters, LCSW
Discussant: Christine Kieffer, PhD

Abstract:

I began thinking about fetishes while reading Nicole Krauss’s novel Great House. George Weisz, one of the principal characters in the novel, demonstrates how in the context of trauma the process of personal symbol formation can go haywire. That is, the construction of a personal fetish—in Weisz’s case a desk—involve transforming and reducing a living complex symbol, reverberate and evocative of people and/or places and/or cultural life, into a fixed idol. In this paper I will argue that fetish making is a dissociative process, one that occurs as a result of the subjective experience of overwhelming traumatic loss and that reflects temporal, affective, and cognitive dislocation. Absent available mentalizing figures, the person is left in terror of the human surround, in a state of existential anxiety. The creation of a fetish represents an effort to regulate that anxiety. It is a process in which the affects of vitality and passion are invested in a symbol from the past. This psychic process is recursive, occurring initially in response to a sense of lifelessness in the present; and, at the same time, in its temporal turning toward the past, it confirms the present—separate from the fetish—as emotionally empty, lacking in interest and any sense of agency. I will use Krauss’ novel and some case material to illustrate my ideas.

Objective: At the end of the presentation, participants will understand a relational conception of fetishes. They will be able to connect the conception to the larger area of trauma and dissociation and will also be able to identify fetishes in clinical practice.
Friday, October 14th

Paper Session A-5:

Bringing A Dialogic Sensibility Into "Re"Search: A Lightly-Held Study on the Experiential World of Hair-Pulling

Presenter: Jane Lewis, LCSW
Moderator: George Hagman, MSW
Discussant: Judith Pickles, PhD, PsyD

Abstract:

This paper represents an inquiry into the meanings and value of research when it is conducted with a dialogic, dynamic systems sensibility. Its focus on hair-pulling is illustrated through the use of vignettes of three people who pull out their hair as well as the author's own experience. While histories of unrelenting, secretive, intergenerational unmourned losses and deaths continued to emerge throughout this study, all meanings are viewed solely as an outgrowth of the intersecting, mutually influential experiential worlds of the author and her seventy-five research partners. This paper also explores the complex ways in which "attitude" affects all that emerged within the context of this study.

Objective
At the conclusion of my presentation, the participant will be able to explain the meanings and value of conducting a research study on the experiential world of hair-pulling with a dialogic, dynamic systems sensibility.
Friday, October 14th

Paper Session A-6:

On the Razor’s Edge: How It Cuts Both Ways

**Presenter:** Heather Ferguson, LCSW

**Moderator:** Sanford Shapiro, MD

**Discussant:** Kati Breckenridge, PhD

**Abstract:**

In this paper, a series of tipping points--affectively charged moments in the treatment--challenged the analyst to express her authentic reactions, provide containment, and negotiate aspects of the treatment with the patient. In the wake of unfolding memories of sexual trauma, the patient experienced the analyst’s choice to share her disjunctive subjectivity as centrally mutative in establishing trust and providing a new relational experience. Russell’s notion of the necessary “treatment crunch” describes these decisive moments that carry the weight of the patient’s history, specifically, the repetitive dimension that carries both a plea for attachment and a dreaded fear of disappointment and abandonment.

**Objectives**

1. Participants will consider the complex function of the repetition compulsion and the necessary “treatment crunches” in illuminating the patient’s inner experience; the hope for a new experience and the dread of disappointment.

2. Participants will consider the mutative role of the therapist’s authentic self-expression in the establishment of trust and the development of a new relational experience.

3. Participants will consider the function of limit-setting, containment, and negotiation of aspects of the treatment frame in work with patients with childhood sexual trauma.
Friday, October 14th

Paper Session A-7:

An Attachment Perspective on the Use of Therapist Self-Disclosure

Presenter: Ginger Schwartz, PsyD
Moderator: Roger Segalla, PhD
Discussant: Brenda Solomon, MD

Abstract:
There are many factors for a therapist to weigh regarding the deliberate use of therapist self-disclosure. This article presents a framework combining intersubjective systems theory and attachment theory to explore the potential benefits and risks of therapist self-disclosure as a function of individual differences in attachment style with a specific focus on preoccupied and dismissing attachment organization. The point of reference for evaluating the variable impact of therapist self-disclosure due to these factors is a model of therapeutic action highlighting three critical elements: activation of secondary attachment strategies, affect tolerance, and reflective capacity. The attachment styles of both the therapist and the patient are considered to explore what might facilitate or hinder the therapeutic process for a particular patient, blended with an awareness of the therapist’s own tendencies regarding self-revelation.

Objectives
At the conclusion of my presentation, the participants will be able to identify the characteristics associated with preoccupied and dismissing attachment styles, illustrate potential benefits and risks of the use of therapist self-disclosure, describe three elements of therapeutic action according to the proposed model and apply that understanding in the clinical setting to further support their decision-making process when presented with the opportunity to disclose or refrain from disclosing.
Friday, October 14th

Paper Session A-8:

The Survivor-Analyst as Analysand:

An Autobiographical Account of an Analytic Treatment of Complex Trauma

Presenter: Johanna Tiemann, PhD
Moderator: Cheryl Chenot, PsyD, MFT
Discussant: Carol Mayhew, PhD, PsyD

Abstract:

Inspired by Robert Stolorow’s “Trauma and Human Existence” (2007), an autobiographical account of an analytic treatment of complex trauma is presented. A rationale for self-disclosure of treatment process by analyst/patients is discussed with an emphasis on its potential for furthering our understanding of how analysis heals trauma. The analyst/patient is conceptualized as living at the interface between the clinical as a trauma survivor and the theoretical as an analyst. These survivors are thus seen as having the ability to elucidate the experience of trauma through the language of psychoanalysis and as holding a special capacity to evaluate the usefulness of treatment interventions and their theoretical bases. In a highly personal manner, the author describes her traumatic history of early surgeries and chronic parental neglect and the onset and of dissociative symptoms which included passive influence/interference experiences. Comparing her experience of healing of her trauma with Stolorow’s, she shares her view of how specific aspects of her analysis have served to mitigate these symptoms.

Objectives
1. Students will learn about the phenomenology of trauma in a case where early medical interventions occurred within a malattuned environment.
2. Students will learn about the benefits of an intersubjective approach to treatment of trauma.
3. Students will learn about the phenomenology of passive influence/interference experiences, a variety of dissociative experience.
Friday, October 14th

Paper Session A-9:

An Accidental Pokemon Expert: Contemporary Psychoanalysis on the Autism Spectrum

Presenter: Christina Emmanuel, MFT
Moderator: Rosemary Segalla, PhD
Discussant: Lester Lenoff, MSW

Abstract:

Autism is the exception that proves the rule, the fascinating difference or lack that highlights just how interpersonal our minds are. Contemporary psychoanalysis makes little reference to autism and has not embraced it as a psychological condition to be conceptualized or treated. Instead, the medical model has prevailed, with its focus on intensive psychiatric and behavioral interventions. My intention in writing this paper is to demonstrate that autism can find a therapeutic home in contemporary psychoanalytic theory, particularly Relational Psychoanalysis. It is my observation that the experience of autism has at its core difficulty in the sensorimotor domain, with staggering consequences flowing from this deficit, including, most importantly, the failure to develop the ability to relate intersubjectively, defined here as the capacity for mutual recognition. Given this failure, no other theoretical approach is as explicitly and specifically suited to address the core deficit in autism as is Relational Psychoanalysis, though up until now this theory has not been explicitly applied to this population. Leading with radical empathy and a commitment to know an autistic individual’s phenomenological experience as closely and deeply as I can, I find that specific concepts from Relational Psychoanalysis guide us to turn up the volume, so to speak, in the areas in which autistics experience their impairments the most. As the most radically “two-person” approach in the contemporary psychoanalytic canon Relational Psychoanalysis offers interventions that guide us to support development of recognition and mutual recognition by emphasizing aspects of embodied subjectivity and by offering helpful and lively metaphors from theatre and music to help us attend to more subtle, implicit factors that are typically overlooked by autistics.

Objective
At the conclusion of my presentation the participant will be able to describe strategies from the contemporary psychoanalytic canon, particularly Relational Psychoanalysis, to conceptualize and treat individuals with autism.
Friday, October 14th

Paper Session A-10:

Inclusion: Attitudes Toward Otherness For Clinical Therapeutics

Presenter: Donna Orange, PhD, PsyD
Interlocutor: Arthur Gray, PhD
Discussant: Lynne Jacobs, PhD

Abstract:

Martin Buber theorized, and his friend Frieda Fromm-Reichmann exemplified, an attitude of inclusion for clinical therapeutics. This contribution explains what Buber meant: inclusion as a dialogic alternative to classical conceptions of empathy, and as mutual participation that heals the wounds of exclusion. Fromm-Reichmann described, in her schizophrenic patients, a loneliness so profound that few could recognize or touch it, but only those who worked inclusively might begin. Sandra Buechler offers suggestions for the clinician’s survival if we work in this inclusive spirit.

Objective: Participants will be able to explain Buber’s view of the attitude of inclusion.