

Relational Core Course 2020-2021

Institute of Contemporary Psychoanalysis

Instructors: Robin S Cohen, PhD and Stacy Berlin, PsyD

Time: Saturdays 2:30-5:00pm and Sundays 11:30-2:00pm

Dates: 9/12-9/13, 10/24-10/25, 12/5-12/6 (2020), 1/30-1/31, 3/20-3/21, 5/1-5/2 (2021)

2.5 hours per meeting – 30 hours total

Relational Core Course Description: We will teach seminal and recent Relational approaches to psychoanalysis, taking a contextual approach to the historical development of Relational ideas out of Ferenczi, Object-Relations and Interpersonal theories. We also aim to provide a container and a play space for understanding the development of Relational ideas. Relational theory is interesting in the same way that object-relations is, in that it is not an organized and built-upon monolithic theory, but it's a way of understanding development and relationships through the lens of mutual influence and mutuality.

Course Objectives:

- 1) Candidates will be able to evaluate the historic origins and context of the development of contemporary Relational thinking.
- 2) Candidates will be able to define the theoretical and clinical attributes unique to Relational perspectives.
- 3) Candidates will be able to demonstrate Relational theory using clinical examples.

WEEKEND 1: The Origins of Relational Thinking (Robin Cohen)

Saturday September 12, 2020:

Goal: Evaluate how earlier theories and concepts contributed to the development of contemporary Relational perspectives

Objectives:

- 1) Candidates will be able to identify and understand the theoretical and social background that influenced the development of relational perspectives in psychoanalysis.
- 2) Candidates will be able to compare and contrast the main theoretical contributors to contemporary relational psychoanalysis.

Readings:

Levenson, E.A. (1992) Harry Stack Sullivan: From Interpersonal Psychiatry to Interpersonal Psychoanalysis, *Contemporary Psychoanalysis*, 28: 450-466

Aron, L. (1996). A Meeting of Minds: Mutuality in Psychoanalysis. Chap. 5: Aspects of Mutuality in Clinical Psychoanalysis, pp. 123-158

Mitchell, S.A. (1993). Hope and Dread in Psychoanalysis. Chap. 1: What Does the Patient Need: A Revolution in Theory, pp. 13-39

Sunday September 13, 2020

Goal: Describe the principles of Relational thinking.

Objectives:

- 1) Candidates will be able to identify the methods by which Relational analysts address psychoanalytic concepts of resistance, transference and countertransference.
- 2) Candidates will increase their understanding of relational concepts such as mutual influence, mutuality, dialectical thinking, intersubjectivity.

Readings:

Mitchell, S.A. (1997). Influence and Autonomy in Psychoanalysis. Chap. 2: The Therapeutic Action: A New Look, pp. 33-62.

Hoffman, I.Z. (1994) Dialectical thinking and Therapeutic Action in the Psychoanalytic Process. *Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, 63: 187-218

Mills, J. (2005) A Critique of Relational Psychoanalysis. *Psychoanalytic Psychology*, 22(2), 155-188.

WEEKEND 2: Holding, Recognition, Subjectivity and Intersubjectivity (Robin Cohen)

Saturday October 24, 2020

Goal: Comparing Object-Relations and Interpersonal Influences on Relational psychoanalysis.

Objectives:

- 1) Candidates will contrast object-relations and interpersonal influences on Relational thinking.
- 2) Candidates will evaluate developmental concepts associated with Relational perspectives.
- 3) Candidates will evaluate the role of the analyst's subjectivity in psychoanalytic work.

Readings:

Benjamin, J. (1990). An Outline of Intersubjectivity: The Development of Recognition. *Psychoanalytic Psychology*, 7S(Supplement):33-46

Slochower, J. (1996). Holding and the Fate of the Analyst's Subjectivity. Psychoanalytic Dialogues, 6(3): 323-353.

Bass, A. (1996). Holding, Holding Back, and Holding On: Commentary on Paper by Joyce Slochower. Psychoanalytic Dialogues, 6(3): 361-378.

Symington, N. (1996). An Inquiry into Mental Processes Commentary on Paper by Slochower. Psychoanalytic Dialogues, 6(3): 355-360.

Slochower, J. (1996). Reply to Commentaries. Psychoanalytic Dialogues, 6(3): 379-390.

Sunday October 25, 2020

Goal: Exploring countertransference and self-disclosure from a Relational perspective.

Objectives:

- 1) Candidates will evaluate concepts related to subjectivity and intersubjectivity within a relational context.
- 2) Candidates will explore countertransference and self-disclosure through a relational lens.

Readings:

Aron, L. (1996). A Meeting of Minds: Mutuality in Psychoanalysis. Chap. 8: On Knowing and Being Known: Theoretical and Technical Considerations Regarding Self-Disclosure, pp. 221-251

Davies, J.M. (2004). Whose Bad Objects Are We Anyway?: Repetition and Our Elusive Love Affair with Evil. Psychoanalytic Dialogues, 14:711-732.

Grossmark, R. (2012). The Unobtrusive Relational Analyst. Psychoanalytic Dialogues, 22:629-646.

Optional Reading:

Mitchell, S.A. (1988) Relational Concepts in Psychoanalysis: An Integration. Chap. 6: Clinical Implications of the Developmental Tilt, pp. 151-172.

WEEKEND 3: Unconscious Communication, Enactment and Self-States (Stacy Berlin)

Saturday December 5, 2020

Goal: Evaluate Unconscious Communication, Enactment and Self-States

Objectives:

- 1) Candidates will define the following concepts: “self-organization,” “consciousness states,” and “dissociation.” They will also explore how self-reflection becomes possible through enactment in the analytic relationship and will examine how intrapsychic bridges are built between a patient's self-experiences, which previously could not be contained in a relationship with the same object.
- 2) Candidates will explore how developmental trauma influences personality and contributes to affect dysregulation. They will evaluate unbearable affects and explore how the patient-analyst relationship can decrease patients’ hyperarousal. Candidates will examine enacted (dissociated) communications and the process of relieving terror through “safety and risk.”

Readings:

Bromberg, P.M. (1994). “Speak! That I May See You”: Some Reflections on Dissociation, Reality, and Psychoanalytic Listening. *Psychoanal. Dial.*, 4(4):517-547

Bromberg, P.M. (2008). Shrinking the Tsunami. *Contemp. Psychoanal.*, 44(3):329-350

Sunday December 6, 2020

Goal: Evaluate Unconscious Communication, Enactment and Self-States

Objectives:

1) Candidates will explore the subjectivities of analyst and patient, “the analytic third” or co-reacted unconscious life of the dyad. They will investigate how the analyst’s reverie is used to identify and symbolize what occurs in the dyad, including overriding the subjugated third through mutual recognition.

2) Candidate will explore the deepest meaning of Winnicott's “Fear of breakdown, and examine his thinking about the patient's drive and need to find the foundation of her fears, and how she feels that parts of herself are missing and she must find them to become whole. What remains of her life feels to her like a life that is mainly unlived.

Readings:

Ogden, T.H. (2004). The Analytic Third. *Psychoanal. Q.*, 73(1):167-195

Ogden, T.H. (2014). Fear of Breakdown and the Unlived Life. *Int. J. Psycho-Anal.*, 95(2):205-223

WEEKEND 4: The Interpersonal Edge of Experience (Stacy Berlin)

Saturday January 30, 2021

Goal: Candidates will investigate the “Interpersonal Edge of Experience”

Objectives:

1) Candidates will describe the analyst’s inevitable unconscious collusion and enactment and explore what it meant to work at the “intimate edge” of the analytic relationship. They

will investigate enactments and explain the value of the unconscious aspects of power and eroticized transference.

2) Candidate will explain the differences between the relational/interpersonal and classical analytic perspectives. power of unconscious communication between patient and analyst.

Readings:

Ehrenberg, D.B. (2005). Working at the "Intimate Edge". *Psychoanal. Inq.*, 25(3):342-358

Ehrenberg, D.B. (2010). Working at the "Intimate Edge". *Contemp. Psychoanal.*, 46(1):120-141

Sunday January 31, 2021

Goal: Candidates will investigate the "Interpersonal Edge of Experience."

Objectives:

- 1) Candidates will examine D. B. Stern's most important ideas and describe some of his broad and influential statements. They will explore the necessity for the resolution of enactments, and how this opens the self and the field for a wider range of witnessed experience for the analytic dyad. Candidates will be able to describe how patients learn about themselves by imagining how they are being heard by their analyst, leading to a freer story.
- 2) Candidates will explore how freedom in the field reinforces therapeutic action; including how novelty arises and what allows one to freely formulate experience. Even though it is inevitable that analyst will constrict the relational field, candidates will evaluate how to open it up again and again after constriction.

Readings:

1. Stern, D.B. (2009). Partners in Thought: A Clinical Process Theory of Narrative. *Psychoanal. Q.*, 78(3):701-731

2. Stern, D.B. (2013). Relational Freedom and Therapeutic Action. J. Amer. Psychoanal. Assn., 61(2):227-255

WEEKEND FIVE: Clinical Case Conference from a Relational Perspective (Robin Cohen and Stacy Berlin)

Saturday March 20, 2021

Goal: Candidates and teachers will demonstrate relational thinking through discussion of clinical cases.

Objectives:

- 1) Candidates will demonstrate clinical knowledge of relational thinking through case presentations and discussion.
- 2) Candidates will evaluate relational theory from a clinical perspective.

Sunday March 21, 2021

Goal: Candidates and teachers will continue to demonstrate relational thinking through discussion of clinical cases.

Objectives:

- 1) Candidates will explicate and/or demonstrate clinical methods unique to relational theory such as mutual influence, mutuality, recognition, enactment and self-disclosure.
- 2) Candidates will have the experience of a case discussion based on Relational theory.

WEEKEND 6: Inner and Outer Worlds (Robin Cohen and Stacy Berlin)

Saturday May 1, 2021

Goal: Exploring contemporary relational thinking in social equity.

Objectives:

- 1) Candidates will demonstrate the application of Relational theory to areas of social equity such as racism, LGBTQ and misogyny.
- 2) Candidates will explicate how Relational theory can make a unique contribution to social equity.

Sunday May 2, 2021

Goal: Demonstrating the ability to apply Relational concepts.

Objectives:

- 1) Candidates will illustrate their reactions to Relational ideas.
- 2) Candidates will present their reactions Relational ideas to their colleagues.

Candidates will have completed a presentation in the Relational area of their interest.

More details to be developed.

Readings: TBA