

Self Psychology Theory -- 2020-2021

Instructors: Daniel Goldin, MFT, Psy.D.

Time: Fridays, 8:30 – 11:00 am, Saturdays, TBA

Dates: September 11 & 12, 2020; October 23 & 34, 2020; December 4& 5, 2020;

January 29 & 30, 2021; March 19& 20, 2021; April 30 & May 1, 2021

Total Instructional Hours: 2.5 hours/class, Total = 30 hours

Course Description

In the second half of the twentieth century, there were two major disruptions to the hegemony of ego psychology in the United States, Self Psychology and Relational psychoanalysis. Both schools shifted the clinical orientation from an isolated observation of the patient to a view that understood the patient as constituted in relationships, including the relationship between patient and analyst. However, self-psychology emphasized the developing self of the patient rather than valorizing mutual recognition.

When Kohut died in 1981, his ideas about a psychology of the self were still regarded as heretical by much of the American psychoanalytic establishment. Today many, if not most, of his ideas have been incorporated by other schools. The idea that empathy is the primary mode of observation in psychoanalysis, the significance of rupture-repair-sequences, and an emphasis on attuning to “forward-edge” movements over the analysis of pathological distortions are mainstays of contemporary psychoanalytic practice across theoretical orientations. This core course is devoted to an examination of the writings of Heinz Kohut, the founder of self psychology, and those who have been inspired by Kohut’s theories to carry them forward in a wide variety of directions since his death.

Goal for the course

The goal of the course is twofold: to place Self Psychology in its historical context relative to psychoanalysis as a whole, and to develop an understanding of the clinical usefulness of Self Psychological concepts.

Objectives for the course

Class 1

1. Explain the personal and cultural context within which Self Psychology theory developed.
2. Describe how self-psychology emerged from classical theory and diverged from it.

Class 2

3. Differentiate the neutral stance of the classical psychoanalyst from a Kohutian attitude emphasizing empathy as a mode of observation
4. Describe Kohut's treatment of narcissistic personality disorders.

Class 3

5. Contrast Kohut's ideas of infant development with Freudian libido theory.
6. Explain the self-object function and relate Kohut's theory of the self-object to clinical practice.

Class 4

7. Demonstrate through clinical examples the effects of an unempathic early environment on a fragile, easily fragmented self.
8. Describe the relationship between the child's "potentialities" and parental "expectations."

Class 5

9. Define the self-object transferences.

10. Differentiate the self-object transferences, as outlined in the self-psychological model of development, from the classical view of transference as distortion and resistance.

Class 6

11. Be able to define the nuclear self
12. Describe the tension arc between ambitions and ideals and relate to the model of the nuclear self

Class 7

13. Apply Kohut's principles of interpretation to clinical situations.
14. Discuss Kohut's critique of Freudian "maturity morality" and his views on the role "truth" plays in psychoanalysis.

Class 8

15. Describe Kohut's expansion of his own idea of empathy and relate to clinical situations.
16. Explain what Kohut means by the phrase "compensatory structures."

Class 9

17. Describe Kohut's theory of "optimal frustration."
18. Describe how self-psychology understands the relationship between rupture-repair sequences and a consolidated self.

Class 10

19. Describe and contrast developments in self-psychology after Kohut's death
20. Demonstrate knowledge of the importance of affect in Stolorow's reconceptualization of self-psychology.

Class 11

21. Describe Tolpin's notion of "forward-edge transference" and apply to clinical situations.
22. Explain how Kohut's "environmental" theory of development expanded into a view that all understanding of the other requires an elaboration of context, as conceptualized by intersubjective systems thinkers.

Class 12

23. Apply Brandchaft's ideas about pathological accommodation to clinical situations.
24. How does "relational self-psychology" expand the constructs of self-psychology.

Readings

You may wish to use some pre-Semester time getting started on *The Restoration of the Self*. (Since we will be reading both *The Restoration of the Self* and *How Does Analysis Cure?* in their entirety, you may wish to purchase one or both of them ahead of time.)

Please note that you have regular assigned readings that we will be discussing when classes begin on September 16.

Week 1: 9/22-9/23**Contexts and Foundational principles**

Our first weekend will focus both on Kohut the man and on Kohut the author and reluctant revolutionary. Geoffrey Cocks' introduction to Kohut's correspondence, and the Curtis article give a sense of the theoretical context in which Self Psychology emerged, defended itself, and grew. Geist provides an excellent and lucid introduction to self psychology theory.

The first two Kohut articles, "Introspection, Empathy and Psychoanalysis—An Examination of the Relationship between Mode of Observation and Theory" (1959) and "Forms and Transformations of Narcissism" (1966), are seminal, although sometimes abstruse. They reflect the agony Kohut felt instigating what would become a serious theoretical break with ego psychology and the psychoanalytic establishment. Kohut's reluctance to surrender the language and conceptualizations of classical analysis, and his place in the elite leadership of American psychoanalysis, is reflected in his cautious, even tortured, efforts to pour the new wine of Self Psychology into the old bottles of classical theory. This reluctance helps account for the great difficulty in understanding the radical message he was communicating in his writings prior to the 1970s. The dual contexts furnished by Kohut's personal and professional lives and his theories are inextricably linked, and understanding something of the former will help us to understand more of the latter.

Readings: week 1/class 1

Geoffrey Cocks (1994), "Introduction," *The Curve of Life: Correspondence of Heinz Kohut 1923-1981*, University of Chicago Press, pp. 1-31; 317-319; 324-325.

Geist, Richard (2009), "Empathic Understanding: the Foundation of Self-Psychological Psychoanalysis," in Nancy Vanderheide and William Coburn, ed., *Self and Systems*, pp. 63-71.

Heinz Kohut (1959), "Introspection, Empathy and Psychoanalysis: Examination of the Relationship between Mode of Observation and Theory," *The Search for the Self*, Volume I, International Universities Press, 1978, pp. 205-232. (Also found in the *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association [JAPA]*, 1959 VII, pp. 459-483.)

Joe Lichtenberg (1971), "Review: Analysis of the Self."

Readings: week 1/class 2

Robert D. Stolorow (1986), "Beyond Dogma in Psychoanalysis," Arnold Goldberg, ed., *Progress in Self Psychology*, Volume 2, pp. 41-42 only.

Heinz Kohut (1966), "Forms and Transformations of Narcissism," *The Search for the Self*, Volume I, International Universities Press, 1978, pp. 427-460. (Also found in the *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association [JAPA]*, 1966, XIV:243-272.)

Heinz Kohut (1968), "The Psychoanalytic Treatment of Narcissistic Personality Disorders: Outline of a Systematic Approach," *The Search for the Self*, Volume I, International Universities Press, 1978, pp. 477-509. (Also in *The Psychoanalytic Study of the Child* (1968), Volume 23:86-113.)

Week 2: 11/03-11/04

Narcissistic line of development

Our second and third weekends will focus on a discussion of Kohut's work between 1972 and 1979, most prominently marked by the publication of *The Restoration of the Self* in 1977. The goal in this section is to trace how Kohut's thinking matured into his break with classical ego psychology.

The first class will focus on Kohut's development of the theory of narcissism as a separate line of development, distinct from Freud's "object-instinctual line." He understands the self as initially inchoate, expansive and fantasy-imbued, alternating between grandiosity and

fragility. The child/patient relies on the parent/analyst for a integrated sense of self almost as if the analyst were part of his body. It is through minute frustrations that the patient begin to lay down psychic structure of his own that allows him to function as an holistic entity independent of the analyst.

The second class will focus on Kohut's revised view of the narcissistic transferences, at the time conceptualized as consisting solely of mirroring and idealizing transferences, reflecting the child's need to have his grandiose ambitions mirrored and also to be able to rely on an omnipotent presence to hold him/herself together.

Readings: week 2/class 1 and class2

Heinz Kohut (1972), "Thoughts on Narcissism and Narcissistic Rage," *The Search for the Self*, Volume II, International Universities Press, pp. 615-658.

Heinz Kohut (1977), *The Restoration of the Self*, pp. xiii-170.

Week 3: 12/8-12/9

The narcissistic line of development (continued)

The goal for this weekend is to refine our understanding of the self-object transferences and the treatment process from a Kohutian perspective.

Readings week 3/class 1 and class 2

Finish *The Restoration of the Self*. pp. 171-312. (except for chapter on Oedipus complex)

Kohut, H. (1985). On Courage. In H. Kohut & C. B. Strozier (Authors), *Self psychology and the humanities: Reflections on a new psychoanalytic approach* (pp. 5-50). New York: W.W. Norton.

Heinz Kohut and Ernest Wolf (1978), "The Disorders of the Self and Their Treatment: An Outline," *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, Volume 59:413-425.

Heinz Kohut (1979), "The Two Analyses of Mr. Z," *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, Volume 60:3-27.

Week 4: 1/26-1/27 **The expansion of self-psychology**

This weekend we will look closely at Kohut's later thinking. Kohut increasingly saw the self as the primary focus of psychoanalysis and reconceptualized Freudian concepts along self-psychological lines.

In the first class, we will consider what Kohut saw to be the ultimate purpose and method of psychoanalysis: establishing an empathic line to the patient and consolidating the self through the analysis of inadvertent frustrations.

The second class will look at ways Kohut expanded his view of empathy, seeing it now not just as the primary method of data collection but as an act with potential healing power in itself. We will go on to examine the therapeutic attitude implicit in Kohut's new expanded approach by considering Donna Orange's distinction between interpretations founded on suspicion, as in the classical approach, and interpretations founded on trust, as in the self-psychological approach. This new more trusting attitude generated a revised view of resistance and defense.

Readings week 4: class 1 and 2

Heinz Kohut (1984), *How Does Analysis Cure?*, University of Chicago Press, ALL.

Orange, D. M. (2011). The Hermeneutics of Trust [Chapter 2]. In *The suffering stranger: Hermeneutics for everyday clinical practice*. New York: Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group.

Week 5: 3/23-3/24 **New directions in self-psychology**

The final one-third of the course addresses the development of self psychology since Kohut's death in 1981. Kohut's work attracted the attention of many bright and creative psychoanalysts who were thereafter regarded as self psychologists, but during the 1980s and early 1990s, many of them began building on his work to move in directions of their own. In some instances, they continued to regard themselves as adherents to Kohut's ideas; in other instances, they came to distinguish their work from Kohut's, even while acknowledging his impact on the formation and re-formulation of their identities.

In following the world of post-Kohut self psychology for the final two weekends, we will draw selectively from a pool of authors who include (from ICP) Bacal, Shane and Shane, and Stolorow, and (from beyond our own local ranks) Doctors, Lichtenberg, the Ornstein(s), and the Tolpins. While far from being all-inclusive, the work of these authors demonstrates the breadth of the living legacy of self psychology at the cutting edge of contemporary psychoanalytic thought. The goal is to analyze and explain how current Self Psychology concepts have been incorporated into other contemporary psychoanalytic perspectives.

The first class will focus on an overview of the many shifting ideas in self-psychology before homing in on the most important breakout theories.

The second class will consider Lichtenberg's expanded view of the empathic vantage point and Stolorow's new emphasis on affect, ideas which sowed the seeds of later theories.

Readings: week 5/class 1

Doctors, Shelley R. (2017), "Brandchaft's Pathological Accommodation—What It Is and What It Isn't," *Psychoanalysis, Self and Context* XII.1, 45-58.

Stolorow, R.D. Atwood, G.E. Brandchaft, B. (1992). Three Realms of the Unconscious and Their therapeutic Transformation. *Psychoanal. Rev.*, 79(1):25-30.

Readings: week5/class 2

Magid, Barry and Estelle Shane (2017), "What Self Psychology and Relationality Can Learn from Each Other," *Psychoanalysis, Self and Context* XII.1, 3-18.

Weekend 6/4-6/5 Contemporary outgrowths of self psychology

In the first class, we will look at some major contemporary ideas that are more than mere offshoots of self-psychology, ideas deeply influenced by Kohut's work but that diverge from his core concepts and begin to take on a life of their own.

In the final class, we will look at "relational self-psychology," a recent attempt to reconcile self-psychology with relational concepts that many had seen as opposed to Kohut's theories.

Readings: week 6/class 1

Gallagher, S. (2014). The cruel and unusual phenomenology of solitary confinement. *Frontiers in Psychology*, vol. 5, no. 585, pp. 1-8.

Readings: week6/class 2

None assigned