

Self-Psychology Through an Intersubjective Lens Clinical Case Seminar

Monday, September 15, 22, 29
10:00am - 11:30am EST

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Course Description:

In this three-session seminar, the teaching method will be lecture-based, reviewing articles from well-established, peer-reviewed journals. Students will be encouraged to share clinical vignettes to illustrate the key theoretical concepts.

Learning Objectives:

1. Students will be able to describe the multiple meanings of symptoms, identifying both adaptive and protective functions.
2. Students will consider the intersection of the therapist's and patient's less conscious contributions to treatment impasse.
3. Students will be able to discuss the applicability of an intersubjective and self-psychological approach to various clinical presentations, such as somatic complaints and other symptoms of dysregulation.

Course Outline and Bibliography:

Class 1 (September 15, 2025)

Kohut and the Hermeneutics of Trust and the Conditions of Care

- Orange, D. (2011). The Suffering Stranger, Chapter 6, Heinz Kohut Glimpsing the Hidden Suffering, pp. 175-204. (book chapter)
- Teng, B. (2025). On the Conditions of Care for Speaking About Racial Trauma and Othering, *Psychoanalytic Inquiry*, 21.

Question: Orange describes Kohut as an exemplar of the hermeneutics of trust, empathically receptive to the truth of the patient's experience. How might this perspective shift your clinical sensibility?

Class 2 (September 22, 2025)

Trauma and Affect

- Stolorow, R. & Atwood, G. (1992). *Context of Being*. Chapter 4 Trauma and Pathogenesis, pp. 51-59; The Analytic Press.
- Chapter 7 Varieties of Therapeutic Impasse pp. 103-122.

Question: Stolorow & Atwood (1992) describe a contemporary intersubjective perspective where therapist and patient form an indissoluble unit of mutual and reciprocal influence. These chapters describe intersubjective dysjunctions and conjunctions where the therapist's and patient's subjective experiences, similar and different, limit the therapist's understanding and co-create a therapeutic impasse. Identify a moment of intersubjective dysjunction or conjunction in your practice.

Class 3 (September 29, 2025)

Leading and Trailing Edge Perspective on Eating Disorders and Other Self Harm Behaviors

We will explore the concept of the leading/trailing edge perspective and the contribution of complexity theory to understanding and elucidating the meaning of symptoms. Apply Tolpin's (2002) concept of the forward edge transference and the leading and trailing edge meaning of symptoms to a clinical case example.

- Tolpin, M. (2002). Chapter 11 Doing Psychoanalysis of Normal Development: Forward Edge Transferences. *Progress in Self Psychology*, 18: 167-190. (pdf)
- Ferguson, H, and Mendelsohn, S (July 2011). Full of Your Self: How Eating Disorders Encode a Relational History, *International Journal of Psychoanalytic Self Psychology*, 6:352-376.