

Paper Session A-1

Addiction and Structures of Accommodation: Impediments to the Utilization of Alcoholics Anonymous

Presenter: Bradley Jones, LCSW

Moderator: Salee Jenkins, PhD

Discussant: Todd Walker, PsyD

Abstract:

This paper explores the application of intersubjective systems theory of addiction, and more specifically, to the tenets of Alcoholics Anonymous. Utilizing Bernhard Brandchaft's ideas about derailed differentiation processes in early development, the author suggests that for addicts who have developed an adaptive styles of pathological accommodation, the compulsive use of substances or sex can reflect a powerful life or death struggle to hold on to one's vital and authentic sense of self. The author shows that AA's implicit demand for compliance and conformity as a condition necessary to free the addict from his compulsive behaviors reflects classical psychoanalytic ideas. The author then suggests that the implicit pull for conformity of this more traditional psychoanalytic perspective may cause an aversive response in the addict/accommodator making it impossible for him to tolerate AA. Brief case examples are illustrated.

At the conclusion of this presentation, participants will be able to identify the convergence of structures of accommodation and addictive behavior in some patients, and how this may reflects an unconscious attempt at unhinging from pre-reflective compliance. Participants will also have a deeper understanding of some of their patient's negative therapeutic reactions to AA and 12-step facilitation.

Paper Session A-2:

Making Sense of Error: An Intersubjective Systems View of The Origins and Treatment of Perfectionism

Presenter: Thomas Greenspon, PhD

Moderator: Leslie Smith, MSW

Discussant: Lisa Bialkin, LCSW, JD

Abstract:

Research on perfectionism has generally left open the question of its developmental history and its meaning in lived experience. A clinical vignette illustrates a contemporary psychodynamic approach to these questions and a resulting approach to overcoming perfectionism, with its burdensome effects on individuals and intimate relationships. Theoretical developments in contemporary relational psychology and psychoanalysis, most notably intersubjective systems theory, along with the author's clinical experience as a psychotherapist, provide source material.

Perfectionism is understood as a desire for perfection, a fear of imperfection, the equating of error to personal defectiveness, and, ultimately, the emotional conviction that perfection is the route to personal acceptability and the repair of threatened selfobject ties.

At the conclusion of my presentation, the participant will be able to describe an intersubjective systems approach to the origins and treatment of perfectionism.

Paper Session A-3:

The Search for Therapeutic Traction, in Working with the Unlovable Patient: A Clinical Presentation

Presenter: David Wyner, MSW

Moderator: Elizabeth Carr, MSN

Discussant: Marilyn Metz1, PhD

Abstract:

This is a presentation of an ongoing treatment with a psychotic woman. The chaos and hatred evoked by the patient in the "real world" were powerfully repeated in the therapy. Working through the disruption/repair patterns, and establishing a milieu of empathic attunement helped to establish a safe-enough space for relational procedures (including enactments and co-construction of some boundaries) to nudge the work forward. However it was not until the psychotherapist could access and contain his negative feelings that significant progress occurred. Ironically, this progress further destabilized the therapist who had achieved so much therapeutic traction from his own internal investigation. At the same time, the patient's newly achieved relational and affective gains have helped to create a spark of hope for further progress.

At the conclusion of my presentation, the participant will be able to describe some clinical tools and attitudes (drawn from self-psychological and relational perspectives) that can be effective in treating patients who evoke negative responses in the therapist.

Paper Session A-4:

Self Delineating States

Presenter: Barry Segal, MBBCh

Moderator: TBD

Discussant: Nancy VanDerHeide, PsyD, PsyD

Abstract:

This paper suggests that relational pauses, or time-outs, in interactions are opportunities for self-delineating states in which one's sense of self can be consolidated. Relational pauses occur during phase shifts when there is an attenuation of mutual interaction, such as reduction in visual or auditory messages. Self-delineating states are a component of general processes of self- and interactive-regulation, and they facilitate these processes with consolidations of a sense of self. The capacity for self-delineating states is acquired in parent-child relationships where there is healthy mutuality and empathic attunement to self-delineating needs. Disorders of self may be expressions of specific deficits in the area of self-delineating states. This paper presents a case example which suggests that patients with these deficits can develop improved capacities for self-delineating states as a result of psychoanalytic therapy.

At the end of the presentation those who attend will have increased awareness of temporal aspects of self-delineation. They will have more understanding of the role of relational pauses and self-delineating states in the formation of the sense of self, which will allow them to develop new perspectives on the relationship between relational and self experience.

Paper Session A-5:

Attachment, Abandonment, Murder

Presenter: Galit Atlas-Koch, PhD

Moderator: Carol Shyer, PhD

Discussant: Sandra Kiersky, PhD

Abstract:

In this presentation I shall address abandonment, disruption and the question of reparation in the therapeutic relationship. Through reference to infant research and the use of attachment theory, I hope to raise questions that bridge relational psychology and self psychology. My focus will be on the fragmentation and anxiety associated with abandonment and loss as they transpire in the therapeutic relationship. I hope to shed light on the manner in which insecure attachment can be traumatically repeated between therapist and patient. Ambivalent fantasies will be explored, including the fantasy of weaning from the object as from drugs, food, or alcohol; the confusion between murder and abandonment- the former stemming not from hatred in the Kleinian sense - but from love as it is described by Kohut, in which narcissistic rage erupts in response to empathic failure and selfobject loss. The case demonstrates the traumatic repetition of an insecure attachment and we reveals aspects of the therapist's behavior that echo the preoccupied parent's handling of similarly overwhelming affect. We will attempt to grasp the original disruption that is associated with ambivalent attachment, and whether the therapist can repair pieces of the original trauma through the therapeutic relationship. What happens when the therapist fails in precisely the same manner as the ambivalent parent did? To what extent are the therapist's attempts to ignore the co-construction related to the original disruption, thereby repeating a trauma with respect to attachment and affecting the possibility for reparation?

At the conclusion of my presentation, participants will be able to demonstrate the extent of wordless pain that emerges at times of separation, vacation, and session endings, all of which are linked to the legacy of the early attachment experience. I hope to enrich the listeners' perspectives on fantasies that are related to ambivalent attachment and the manner in which they are expressed in subsequent relationships throughout life and in the therapeutic relationship. Based on the conception of self as co-constructed through relational experience, we shall try to answer the question whether and in what manner repair is possible, or, as my patient asks, is she destined to forever go on killing those that she loves, without being able to revive them? The discussion of ambivalent fantasies will serve to show how the subject takes on the responsibility for what has occurred and

wishes to repair herself. We shall examine how the therapist can release the patient from this responsibility by addressing what has happened to the dyadic couple, rather than only focusing on the patient's intrapsychic processes.

Paper Session A-6:

Full of Yourself: How Eating Disorders Encode a Relational History

Presenters: Heather Ferguson, LCSW and Sarah Mendelsohn, LCSW

Moderator: Linda Marino, PhD

Discussant: Peter Schou, PhD

Abstract:

This paper explores how the concretized symptoms of eating disorders serve to maintain a needed tie to the caregiver while simultaneously expressing self-delineating and self-soothing needs. The complex origins and functions of eating disorder symptoms are seen as arising from the context of an intersubjective matrix. Drawing on the concepts from infant research, contemporary self psychology, and Winnicott, the authors trace the dislocation of an experience of agency. Using two clinical reports, the authors illustrate the experience of misattunement from caregivers and show how the experience of desire and agency get organized and derailed.

At the conclusion of this presentation, participants will be sensitized to thinking about the meaning of the symptoms of disordered eating. Participants will consider the clinical utility of viewing these symptoms as a concretization of an intersubjective dilemma and as an attempt to achieve a sense of agency.

Paper Session A-7:

This Better Be Good! A Complex Systems View of the Dread of Influence

Presenter: Margaret Sperry, PsyD

Moderator: Christa Paulinz, MA

Discussant: Rosemary Segalla, PhD

Abstract:

The ability to engage in collaborative dialogue and use the influence of an other are central factors in the process of change. Consequently, the dread of the influence of an other represents a major barrier to psychoanalytic work. The contexts which lead to the establishment and maintenance of a dread of influence are examined. The role of the analyst's subjectivity and alterity in the treatment of a person who dreads influence is discussed and illustrated as is the importance of the analyst's willingness to be influenced by the patient's subjectivity. It is concluded that influence is most profitably viewed as a bi-directional, dynamic process which is a property of the system, rather than of either individual in isolation. Therefore, the patient's willingness to be influenced by the analyst is mediated through knowing that he also can influence the analyst.

As a result of this presentation participants will be able to identify and discuss factors which contribute to the dread of influence in the therapeutic relationship. At the conclusion of the presentation, participants will be able to describe the bi-directional and mutually determined nature of the ability to use the influence of an other.

Paper Session A-8:

Agency within Sociality: Reconfiguring Psychology

Agency in Intersubjective Contexts

Presenter: Roger Frei, PsyD
Moderator: Mildred Antonelli, PhD
Discussant: Maurizio Pinato, PhD

Abstract:

The theme of agency in psychoanalysis, past and present, is complex, and its conceptual status remains uncertain. I suggest that the evolution of psychoanalysis has given way to significant changes in theory and technique, yet agency remains a central, unresolved problematic. I will address the conceptualization of agency in the development of a contemporary intersubjective and relational psychoanalysis. I begin with a brief overview of the perspectives of Freud and Sullivan, and then turn to the traditions of phenomenology, hermeneutics and contemporary social theory. I develop a theory is "situated agency," is an inherently interactive, emergent, and contextualized process, not an isolated mental phenomenon. In contrast to the static, materialistic agent that informs the basis of traditional definitions of free will, I propose a fluid, dynamic conception of agency that is fundamentally intersubjective and embodied.

At the conclusion of my presentation, the participant will be able to define agency as a fluid, intersubjective process that bears no relation to traditional definitions of free will and self-mastery, and is directly relevant to the ongoing development of a contemporary intersubjective psychoanalysis.

Paper Session A-9:

The Meaning of Melodies

Presenter: Tomas Videgard, PhD

Moderator: Susanna Federici-Nebbiosi, PhD

Discussant: Alan Dolber, PhD

Abstract:

Spontaneous humming, singing or whistling have not attracted much interest in psychoanalytic writings. Freud and Jung mention the phenomenon in passing; the only psychoanalytic book published is Theodor Reik's "*The Haunting Melody*" from 1953. The present author claims that spontaneous humming is a fruitful phenomenon for self psychology to study. In several examples it is shown how the meaning of melodies can be understood selfpsychologically. The music and the lyrics seem to be channels for the self's expression of authentic feelings and truths not being allowed full awareness. The humorous, ironic, truth-telling, creative, surprising character of the melodies are compared to Frank Lachmann's and Kohut's ideas about transforming narcissism. It is contended that similar qualities that are, according to them, needed in the treatment of narcissism also characterize the aha-like experience of understanding the meaning of the melodies. Finally Lachmann's theory that genuine self-transformation may occur outside the therapeutic context and outside an intersubjective dialogue in artistic work is compared to the experience of spontaneous melodies.

At the conclusion of my presentation, the participant will understand more about the the phenomenon of spontaneous singing or humming and get inspired to observe and interpret instances of that phenomenon.

Paper Session A-10:

**Analysis Over the Phone. An Exploration of the Phenomenon of
Distance as an Emergent Property of the Analyst-Patient
System**

Presenter: Margaret Allan, MSW

Moderator: Suzanne Lachmann, PsyD

Abstract: Joan Rankin, PsyD

Abstract:

This paper explores a telephone analysis. Within the context of this atypical medium, it looks at a sense of connection as an emergent property of the patient analyst system from an Intersubjective Systems perspective. While the analytic treatment takes place over a distance of fifteen hundred miles, the author uses a startling moment of actual meeting as a pivotal point in exploring the notion of connection and the meaning of distance.

You might expect to learn about an Intersubjective Systems perspective in understanding the nature of a sense of connection between analyst and patient and appreciate the notion of shifting relational contexts in this regard.

**Paper Session A-11:
The Path to Individuality: From Self Idealization to
Self Realization**

Presenter: Anna Carusi, PsyD
Moderator: Stephen Richmond, MD, PsyD
Discussant: Susana Martinez, LP, MPhil

Abstract:

In this paper individuality is seen as the realization of the nuclear self. The development of the nuclear self can be paralyzed by the false self, a configuration which affects the whole personality, with its own organizing principles, its system of values and its relational patterns. Self-contempt and self-hate seem to be the central feature of the false self, the result of a self idealized image illustrated in this paper through the case of an 11 years old boy with obsessive symptoms. The paper explores how the analytic treatment can gradually dismantle the self idealized image in order to enhance individuality and different intersubjective patterns.

At the conclusion of my presentation, the participant will be able to:

describe the difference between nuclear and false self
explain the correlation between the false self and specific distortions in selfobject relationships
illustrate possible ways of tackling the anxiety provoked by the challenge of the false self