



RESEARCH PROGRAMMING HIGHLIGHTS

Discussion Group 4:

RESEARCH IN PSYCHOANALYSIS: CHARACTEROLOGICAL TRANSFERENCES: FORTY YEARS OF FOLLOW-UP STUDIES

Wednesday, February 5, 2025, 9:00 A.M. – 11:00 A.M.

Forty years ago, Robbins and Schlessinger began a collaboration using psychoanalytic interviews of patients who had completed analysis. A template of categories guides the organization of data collected from the treating process notes from the analysis's inception sessions during which the decision to terminate occurred, and the concluding sessions from the analysis and from the follow up interviews. Effective treatments displayed changes in a phasic pattern of a phenomenon designated as the characterological adaptive transference. The modifications resulted from the activation of painful and maladaptive emotion schemas in a new interpersonal context, in which they can be tolerated, examined, and reconstructed. The process facilitates the capacity to use self-analytic functions to interrupt characterological transferences and to use it constructively. Findings and methods are described.

Research Seminar:

RESEARCH SEMINAR

Wednesday, February 5, 2025, 4:30 P.M. – 6:30 P.M.

This interdisciplinary research seminar will present two studies. Ilana Gratch will present a study in using machine learning techniques to examine nonverbal behaviors of clinical interviewers and suicidal young adults. Her results showed the importance of attending to the preverbal and unformulated information not just in the patient but also the clinician in detecting suicidality. Dr. Jamie Daniels will present a qualitative study examining the experience of Black women in labor unions and how these experiences influence their mental health. Her findings emphasized that participation of the unions is an "arc of engagement" for Black women and have significant implications on their mental health. Each presentation will be followed by clinically oriented discussions exploring the applicability of research findings to applied psychoanalytic practice.

DPE Research Education Dialogue:

CAN NARCISSISTIC PATIENTS CHANGE AND HOW DO WE ASSESS IT?

Thursday, February 6, 2025, 11:30 A.M. – 1:30 P.M.

Individuals with Pathological Narcissism (PN) and Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD) oscillate between grandiosity and vulnerability, devalue and envy others, exhibit compromised empathy, and a fear of dependency. These traits engender significant distress in self and others, impairments in love and work, and pose clinical challenges and impediments to change in psychotherapy. In this session findings from two studies of trajectories of change in individuals with PN will be presented. Case material from patients in Transference Focused Psychotherapy (TFP) adapted for NPD will highlight techniques that affect changes in suicidality, social functioning, love, and work over 18 months. Another study highlights the process of change in alliance building, emotion regulation, interpersonal engagement, and sense of agency in 8 patients with NPD in multi modal treatments.

APSA SCIENTIFIC PAPER PRIZE:

CO-SPONSORED BY THE PSYCHOTHERAPY DEPARTMENT: REFLECTIVE FUNCTIONING AND ITS POTENTIAL TO MODERATE THE EFFICACY OF MANUALIZED PSYCHODYNAMIC THERAPIES VERSUS OTHER TREATMENTS FOR BORDERLINE PERSONALITY DISORDER

Thursday, February 6, 2025, 2:00 P.M. – 4:00 P.M.

This is a presentation of a research study about reflective function in borderline personality disorder. The intended audience is the general membership, as these matters are of clinical utility in treatment of many patients. The brief clinical presentation, by Olga Fridman, will facilitate translation of the research findings into the clinical setting. Additionally, the scientific paper prize is designed to help educate the general membership about research methods and cutting-edge issues pertaining to psychodynamic psychotherapy and psychoanalysis.

Poster Session

RESEARCH RELEVANT TO THEORY AND PRACTICE IN PSYCHOANALYSIS

Friday, February 7, 2025, 11:15 A.M. – 4:00 P.M.

The American Psychoanalytic Association sponsors this annual research poster session designed to promote stimulating conversations and mutual learning among psychoanalytic practitioners, theorists, and researchers. Submissions have relevance to psychoanalytic theory, technique, practice, and effectiveness of psychoanalysis or interdisciplinary scholarship addressing research questions in neighboring fields.

Research Symposium

THE MODE STUDY (MULTI-LEVEL STUDY OF PSYCHOANALYSES OF CHRONICALLY DEPRESSED PATIENTS WITH EARLY TRAUMA): FINDINGS IN THE BASELINE DATA

Friday, February 7, 2025, 11:30 A.M. - 1:30 P.M.

The MODE Study is a randomized controlled trial comparing low versus high frequency psychoanalysis for chronically depressed patients with early trauma. There is a healthy untreated control group. The major hypothesis is that both interventions will lead to significant improvement, but high frequency treatment will produce demonstrably better outcomes compared to less frequent psychoanalytic treatment. Treatment progress is assessed by symptom reduction (using standard psychological measures), structural change (defined by psychoanalytic methods), and neurobiological change (assessed using MRI). In this session, investigators will present baseline data assessing differences between depressed patients and controls, including MRI and psychological findings. Marianne Leuzinger-Bohleber will present clinical psychoanalytic material illustrating the transformation of dreams in a treatment with a MODE patient in “emerging adulthood.”

Research Track:

INTERVIEW WITH A MAJOR SCIENTIST FROM AN ALLIED DISCIPLINE

Friday, February 7, 2025, 2:00 P.M. – 4:00 P.M.

The standing of psychoanalysis in the world of intellectual discourse depends on its ability to interact productively with other disciplines. This program, intended for analytic clinicians, researchers, academics, and science journalists, will create an informal exploration of common interests between Dr. Mark Solms, a leading psychoanalyst and Dr. Michael Levin, participating via Zoom, a leading scientist in an allied discipline. In their spontaneous exchange, issues likely to be discussed include neurophysiology, the neural basis of consciousness, artificial intelligence, behavioral neurology, and the neural bases of feeling and the sense of self. This conversation may have implications for several pressing psychoanalytic issues. The conversation between the two presenters in this program, and with the audience, will illuminate the potential for psychoanalysis to participate actively in the broad scientific enterprise of understanding the human mind.

Research Track:

DEFENSE MECHANISMS: ADAPTATION AND CHANGE

Saturday, February 8, 2025, 9:00 A.M. - 11:00 A.M.

This session will bring together empirical studies on defense mechanisms throughout the lifespan. This includes how we accurately assess defenses, learn defenses, how defenses affect adaptation, and how they change over psychotherapy and psychoanalysis. Participants will gain a renewed appreciation for the value of focusing on defenses in their clinical work as psychoanalysts and psychoanalytic psychotherapists.

Research Track:

ON THE WAY TO PDM-3: BACKGROUND, LITERATURE REVIEW, AND UPDATE

Saturday, February 8, 2025, 2:00 P.M. – 4:00 P.M.

This session is intended for candidates and trainees, practicing psychoanalysts and psychoanalytic psychotherapists. This presentation will describe and discuss the changes to the Psychodynamic Diagnostic Manual, 2nd Edition (PDM-2; Lingardi & McWilliams, 2017). The presentation will begin with a review of the four major sections of the PDM/PDM-2, followed by a review of the reliability and validity of the sections. Lastly, a description and rationale for the changes that went into the PDM-3 will be presented.