

RESEARCH PROGRAMMING HIGHLIGHTS

RESEARCH TRACK:

PSYCHOANALYSIS: AN EXPERIMENTAL SCIENCE

Tuesday, February 2, 2027, 4:30 P.M. – 6:30 P.M.

This session is designed for psychoanalysts, psychotherapists, candidates, and trainees interested in the experimental validation of psychoanalysis as a scientific theory. While substantial research supports psychoanalysis as a therapy, less attention has been given to testing its theoretical propositions through rigorous, falsifiable methods. Presenters, including Ariane Bazan and Paul Siegel, under the moderation of Robert Galatzer-Levy, will present findings from studies supported by the American Psychoanalytic Association. These studies demonstrate that core psychoanalytic concepts—such as defense mechanisms and psychodynamic unconscious processes—can be operationalized and empirically tested. The session aims to show that experimental approaches strengthen, rather than reduce, the complexity of psychoanalytic theory, providing clinicians with scientifically grounded tools applicable in multi-theoretical clinical settings.

SYMPOSIUM:

MISSING THE MARK: ERRORS AND PROBLEMS IN THE REVISED STANDARD EDITION

Wednesday, February 3, 2027, 8:30 A.M. - 10:30 A.M.

The Revised Standard Edition (RSE) of Freud's works, edited by Mark Solms, is a landmark in psychoanalytic scholarship. Peter L. Rudnytsky points out errors in the RSE and argues they are symptomatic of Solms's neglect of scholars considered by "true believers" to cast Freud in an unduly negative light. Solms's refusal to comment on the significance of fault lines in Freud's writing is contrasted with Strachey's editorial practice. The RSE is viewed as an ideological production that reflects Solms's "anointment" as the descendant of Anna Freud. The paper concludes that the RSE has not superseded the Standard Edition, which remains the only canonical version of Freud in English. Mark Solms has graciously agreed to respond to Rudnytsky's paper.

RESEARCH TRACK:

THE NEUROBIOLOGY OF INFANTILE AMNESIA

Thursday, February 4, 2027, 11:00 A.M. – 1:00 P.M.

The concept of infantile amnesia has a central place in the history of psychoanalysis. Freud conceptualized it broadly under the heading of "repression." Modern neuroscience suggests that it has more to do with the maturation of the brain than with psychodynamic mechanism—the brain structures in question concern declarative memory and executive functioning.

INTERVIEW WITH A MAJOR SCIENTIST FROM AN ALLIED DISCIPLINE

Thursday, February 4, 2027, 2:00 P.M. – 4:00 P.M.

This is an interview with one of the world's leading neuroscientists. In his early research, Professor LeDoux pioneered the study of the brain mechanisms of emotion, focusing mainly on fear memory and the amygdala. His recent research has been more integrative in nature, focusing on what is conscious and what remains unconscious. The relevance of both of these topics for psychoanalysts and psychotherapists is obvious.

APSA SCIENTIFIC PAPER PRIZE: CO-SPONSORED BY THE PSYCHOTHERAPY DEPARTMENT

"MODERATORS OF SHORT- AND LONG-TERM OUTCOMES IN PANIC CONTROL TREATMENT AND PANIC-FOCUSED PSYCHODYNAMIC PSYCHOTHERAPY"

Thursday, February 4, 2027, 4:30 P.M. – 6:30 P.M.

This session is designed to help APsA members stay abreast of contemporary research that pertains to psychoanalysis. Our prize-winning paper has been awarded to Rolf Sandell, Ph.D., and his research team,

headed by Thomas Nillson, Ph.D., and Martin Svennson, Ph.D. The paper, “Moderators of short- and long-term outcomes in panic control treatment and panic-focused psychodynamic psychotherapy,” was published in 2025 in Psychotherapy Research, and highlights factors that were linked to improvement in patients with panic disorder in either CBT or PFPP, a psychoanalytic psychotherapy that treats panic disorder, from these investigators’ eight-site replication study in Sweden. This session will highlight the Swedish PFPP project, focusing specifically on whom PFPP works best for among patients with panic disorder. PFPP is the psychoanalytic/ psychodynamic psychotherapy with the most robust evidence base for anxiety disorders, having been shown to be efficacious and having been replicated in four separate independent randomized controlled trials. A clinical case of a patient with panic disorder will be presented. Dr. Milrod, the developer of PFPP, will discuss the research and the clinical presentation.

POSTER SESSION

RESEARCH RELEVANT TO THEORY AND PRACTICE IN PSYCHOANALYSIS

Thursday, February 4, 2027, 10:30 A.M. – 4:30 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.

A NEW THEORY OF INTERACTION FOR MOTHER-INFANT AND ADULT TREATMENT NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION

Friday, February 5, 2027, 8:30 A.M. – 10:30 A.M.

This session, relevant for all clinicians, presents research on mother-infant face-to-face communication (Beebe et al., 2016), which documented four principles of self- and interactive regulation, showing these processes to be intimately related as a dynamic, dyadic system. Strikingly parallel findings are presented in an empirical study of nonverbal communication in face-to-face adult treatment (Beebe & Lachmann, 2020). This work provides a lifespan theory of nonverbal interaction. This will be followed by live video microanalysis of the first 30 seconds of several adult treatment sessions on split-screen-zoom, revealing subtle, split-second, complex relating that we cannot otherwise grasp. This form of analysis is a new tool for studying clinical process and functioned as interventions for the therapists, with immediate relevance for supervision and education.

A FIRST LOOK AT RESULTS OF THE MODE STUDY: MULTI-LEVEL OUTCOME STUDY OF PSYCHOANALYSES OF CHRONICALLY DEPRESSED PATIENTS WITH EARLY TRAUMA

Friday, February 5, 2027, 11:00 A.M. –1:00 P.M.

In this program, relevant for all clinicians as well as researchers, the Principal Investigators of the MODE Study, will present an initial look at the long-awaited results of the study. The international, multi-center, randomized controlled study compared the results of high versus low-frequency psychoanalytic treatment for vulnerable, chronically depressed patients with early trauma. Outcomes were assessed using validated psychological tests of symptoms, psychoanalytic structural criteria, dream diaries, and repeated studies of brain MRI imaging. A control group of normal subjects was included for comparison with patients' MRIs. It is significant that notable brain changes were seen in as little as one year of treatment. Clinical material will be provided to illustrate treatment processes.

PSYCHOANALYTIC RESEARCH STUDIES IN PSYCHOTHERAPY WITH RESPONSES FROM A CLINICIAN

Friday, February 5, 2027, 2:00 P.M. – 4:00 P.M.

This discussion group is designed for journal editors and reviewers; psychoanalytic teachers, researchers, and writers; and psychoanalysts, psychotherapists, candidates, and trainees interested in empirically supported clinical practice. Presenters will discuss current research on psychodynamic treatment and outcomes with trauma survivors, pathological narcissism, and anticipating countertransference reactions based on personality pathology, and a clinician/editor will discuss the studies’ relevance to clinical practice. The session will highlight the challenges in bringing empirical support to psychoanalytic practice. It will provide a forum for researchers, writers, and clinicians to interact about how to improve inclusion and implementation of empirically supported practices in psychodynamic settings, and also to engage in conversation about how to enhance clinician/researcher/teacher communication.