ATP II
Neurosis and Neurotic Character
Faculty: Rachel Dresner Jacobs Ph.D.

While the symptom neurosis was foundational to early psychoanalytic work, therapeutic models increasingly began to recognize the importance of character pathology as a central focus of treatment. Character pathology is viewed by psychoanalysis as a bridge between ongoing behaviors and attitudes, and the deeper psychic structures underlying. This course will explore the development, components, and functions of neurotic character. We will review the basic concepts of character formation, levels of personality organization, and the higher order and more primitive mechanisms of defense. We will become familiar with an array of psychoanalytic lenses through which to understand the development of character pathology. Once equipped with these theoretical constructs, we will examine in depth six different neurotic personality organizations, focusing on developmental fixations, core conflicts and affects, defensive and adaptive processes, early contributing relational patterns, and transference/countertransference phenomenon. The course will end with a developmental synthesis and a consideration of how the therapist's own character can impact a treatment. Students will be encouraged throughout to relate the material discussed to their clinical practices and share examples from their work.

Basic Text: McWilliams, Nancy, Psychoanalytic Diagnosis, 2nd Edition (2011) NY: Guilford Press. All our McWilliams readings will refer to this text. Since partial chapters and partial articles are sometimes assigned, be attuned to page numbers listed.

(1/7) Week I: Terminology: Character, Neurosis, Character Pathology.
Learning Objectives: Distinguish between neurotic, borderline and psychotic levels of organization. Understand how symptom neurosis is different from Freud's concept of "alterations in the ego," ie. character pathology. Become familiar with some of the central components of character.

Readings:
Baudry, F. (1984) "Character: A Concept in Search of an Identity." J. Amer. Psychoanal. Assn., 32: 455-477. PEP Web Link.

Baudry, F. (1989) "Character, Character Type and Character Organization." J Amer. Psychoanal. Assn., 37: 664-671, 676. PEP Web Link.

McWilliams, N. pp 46-58 (from Chapter 3). [Download from the Reading folder or request from library@bpsi.org].

(1/14) Week II: Comparative Lenses: How different theories illuminate the development of symptoms and character formation.
Learning Objectives: Compare different psychoanalytic models of development and fixation. Learn the central contribution of Ego Psychology, Object Relations Theory and Self Psychology to our understanding of character pathology. Be able to apply different theories to the Case of Little Hans and try to project his character pathology.

Readings:
McWilliams, Chapter 2, pp. 21-41. [Download from the Reading folder or request from library@bpsi.org].

Kenny, Dianna, Bringing Up Baby (2013). NY: Routledge, pp. 39-48. [Download from the Reading folder or request from library@bpsi.org].

(1/28) Week III: Primitive and Higher Order Defensive Processes.
Learning Objectives: Understand the difference between more primitive and higher order defenses. Be able to describe the workings of at least three defenses from each of the two levels and identify in your own clinical work examples of specific defenses at play.

Readings:
McWilliams, N. pp. 100-124, pp. 126-147 (from Chapters 5 & 6). [Download from the Reading folder or request from library@bpsi.org].

(2/4) Week IV: Narcissistic Personalities
Learning Objectives: Understand the polarity in self-experience of narcissistic personalities and the defensive function of fantasies of omnipotence and self-sufficiency. Describe two main ways of relating therapeutically with narcissistic personalities and their rationales.

Readings:
McWilliams, pp. 176-192 (from Chapter 8). [Download from the Reading folder or request from library@bpsi.org].

Almond, R. (2004). "'I Can Do It All Myself' Clinical Technique with Defensive Narcissistic Self-Sufficiency." Psychoanalytic Psychology. 21 (3): 371-384. PEP Web Link.

Optional: Kohut, H., Wolf, E.S. (1978) "The Disorders of the Self and Their Treatment: An Outline." The International Journal of Psychoanal, 59 (4): 413-425. PEP Web Link

(2/18) Week V: Depressive Personalities
Learning Objectives: Understand the dynamics of "melancholia" according to Freud and the resulting "impoverishment of the ego." Become familiar with the central defensive processes in depressive personality.

Readings:
McWilliams, pp. 235-254 (from Chapter 11). [Download from the Reading folder or request from library@bpsi.org].

Freud, S. (1917) Mourning and Melancholia. S.E. XIV pp. 243-252. PEP Web Link.

(2/25) Week VI: Masochistic Personalities
Learning Objectives: Masochism has long been described as pleasure in pain. However, relational analysts believe failures in mentalization are the problem. Be able to describe two aspects of mentalization.

Readings:
McWilliams, pp. 267-285 (from Chapter 12). [Download from the Reading folder or request from library@bpsi.org].

Arnd-Caddigan, M. (2009) "Failure to Mentalize Self and Masochistic Functioning." Psychoanal. Soc. Work, 16: 139-157. PEP Web Link.

(3/4) Week VII: Hysterical Personality (Guest Teacher)
Learning Objectives: Be able to describe two ways a person might protect themselves from knowing something they can't bear to know.

Readings:
McWilliams, pp. 311-327 (from Chapter 14). [Download from the Reading folder or request from library@bpsi.org].

Bromberg, P.M. (1996). "Hysteria, Dissociation and Cure: Emmy von N Revisited." Psychoanal. Dial., 6 [1]: 55-71. PEP Web Link.

Optional: Mc Williams, pp. 338-345 (from Chapter 15). [Download from the Reading folder or request from library@bpsi.org].

(3/11) Week VIII: Obsessive and Compulsive Personalities
Learning Objectives: Understand how fixation at the anal phase contributes to O-C personality. Learn the basic affective conflict and defensive processes in O-C personalities. Identify relational patterns contributing to O-C development.

Readings:
McWilliams, Chapter. 13, pp.289-310. [Download from the Reading folder or request from library@bpsi.org].

Optional: Brandchaft, B. (2001) "Obsessional Disorders: A Developmental Systems Perspective." Psychoanal. Inquiry, 21: 253-288. PEP Web Link.

(3/18) Week IX: Schizoid Personalities (Guest Teacher)
Learning Objectives: Learn the difference between schizoid and depressive reactions to internalized bad objects. Understand how introversion relates to the central wish/fear/conflict for schizoids. Consider how schizoid phenomenon play out in the transference and in relationships in general.

Readings:
Guntrip, H. (1977) Early Perceptions of the Schizoid Problem. In J. Hazell (Ed) Personal Relations Therapy. MD: Jason Aronson Publications. Pp. 41-58. [Download from the Reading folder or request from library@bpsi.org].

McWilliams, pp. 198-203 (from Chapter 9). [Download from the Reading folder or request from library@bpsi.org].

Week X: Developmental Synthesis and The Therapist's Character
Learning Objectives: Consider Blatt's dimensions of relatedness and self-definition as they apply to the character pathologies covered in this course. Consider how the therapist's character engagement can advance a treatment and notice moments of engagement between your character and that of your patients.

Readings:
Blatt, S., Levy, K. (2003) "Attachment Theory, Psychoanalysis, Personality Development and Pscyhopathology," Psychoanalytic Inquiry 23, pp 106-116. PEP Web Link.

Baudry, F. A Silent Partner to Our Practice: The Analyst's Character and Attitudes. In Essential Papers on Character Neurosis and Treatment, ed. Ruth Lax (1989). NY: New York University Press. [Download from the Reading folder or request from library@bpsi.org].