

THE BOSTON PSYCHOANALYTIC SOCIETY AND INSTITUTE, INC.

141 Herrick Road, Newton Centre, Massachusetts 02459
Telephone: 617.266.0953 | Fax: 857.255.3253 | www.bpsi.org

Syllabus for BPSI Elective April 16 - June 2, 2015

Psychoanalytic Theories on Narcissism and their Application to Personality and Treatment

Elsa Ronningstam, Ph.D.

General Objectives:

1. Provide overview of theoretical conceptualizations of narcissism and narcissistic personality from Freud to most recent contributions
2. Identify narcissism in terms of conceptual identifiers and personality functioning
3. Discuss treatment implications and strategies with clinical case examples

Session 1

Theories on Narcissism: overview from Freud to object relations motivation and intersubjectivity

Objective 1: Identify the conceptual development of narcissism within different theoretical traditions

Objective 2: Connect theoretical models with treatment approaches and interventions.

Suggested Reading

Freud S: (1914). On narcissism. In J. Strachey (Ed. and Translator), The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Vol XIV. London: Hogarth Press, pp 66-102.

[PEP Web Link](#)

Optional :

Kernberg O. (2001). Object relations, affects and drives: Towards a new synthesis.

Psychoanalytic Inquiry, 21:604 – 619. [PEP Web Link](#)

Fiscalini J, Grey A (1993). Narcissism and the Interpersonal Self. New York, Columbia University

Green A. (2002). A dual conception of narcissism: positive and negative organizations.

Psychoanalytic Quarterly LXXI: 631-649. [PEP Web Link](#)

Kohut, H. (1972). Thoughts on narcissism and narcissistic rage. *The Psychoanalytic Study of the Child*, 27:360-400. [PEP Web Link](#)

Meissner WW. (2008 b) Narcissism as a motive. *Psychoanalytic Quarterly* LXXVII: 755 – 798
[PEP Web Link](#)

Session 2

Narcissism: the range from normal to pathological and malignant - developmental aspects and implications for treatment

Objective 1: Differentiate normal from pathological and malignant narcissism in developmental theory and personality functioning

Objective 2: Discuss implications for integrating normal and pathological aspects of narcissism in treatment

Suggested Reading:

Kernberg P (1998). Developmental aspects of normal and pathological narcissism. In: E. Ronningstam (Ed). *Disorders of Narcissism: Diagnostic, Clinical and Empirical Implications* Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Press, pp: 103 - 120. [available in [the library](#)]

Kohut H. (1966). Forms and Transformations of Narcissism. *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, 14: 243-271 [PEP Web Link](#)

Stone M. (1998). Normal narcissism: An etiological and ethological perspective. In: E. Ronningstam (Ed). *Disorders of Narcissism: Diagnostic, Clinical and Empirical Implications* Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Press, pp: 7 – 28 [available in [the library](#)]

Kernberg O. (2014) An overview of the treatment of severe narcissistic pathology. *International Journal of psychoanalysis* 95:865-888. [available in [the library](#)]

Session 3

Identifiers of narcissism I:

Self -agency - authorship of own actions, internal control and goal directedness

Objective 1: Identify theoretical definitions and clinical indicators of self-agency

Objective 2: Discuss strategies to attend to and engage patients' sense of agency in psychoanalytic treatment focused on narcissism

Suggested Reading

Brandchaft B. (1993). To free the spirit from its cell. Progress in Self-Psychology 9:209-230 [PEP Web Link](#)

Modell A. (2008). Horse and rider revisited. The dynamic unconscious and the self-as agent. Contemporary Psychoanalysis 44:351 - 366 [PEP Web Link](#)

Levinson D, Attwood G (1999). Life of one's own: A case study of the loss and restoration of the sense of personal agency. Progress in Self-Psychology 15:163-181 [PEP Web Link](#)

Optional

Knox, J. (2011). Self-Agency in Psychotherapy. New York, W.W. Norton & Company.

Session 4

Identifiers of narcissism II:

Empathy - empathic competence, motivation and functioning, and a psychoanalytic treatment strategy

Objective 1: Integrate psychoanalytic perspectives on empathy with recent neuropsychological research on empathic functioning and pathological narcissism

Objective 2: Discuss implications for treatment interventions addressing empathic functioning

Suggested Reading

Bolognini S (2006). The complex nature of psychoanalytic empathy: A theoretical and clinical exploration. Paper presented at PINE, Cambridge MA.

Baskin-Sommers A, Krusemark E, Ronningstam E. Empathy in narcissistic personality disorder: From clinical and empirical perspectives. Personality Disorder: Theory, Research and Treatment. 2014, 5(3): 323-333.

Buie D. (1981). Empathy: Its nature and limitations. Journal of American Psychoanalytic Association , 29:281-307. [PEP Web Link](#)

Optional

To be added

Session 5

Identifiers of narcissism III:

Self-esteem – ideals, perfectionism, self-criticism and vulnerability

Objective 1: Identify psychoanalytic perspectives on self-esteem and factors affecting narcissistic self-esteem regulation.

Objective 2 : Discuss psychoanalytic strategies for increasing patients' ability to recognize their patterns of self-esteem regulation and to chose alternatives.

Suggested Reading

Kris A (1990). Helping patients by analyzing self criticism. Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association, 38(3), 605 – 636. [PEP Web Link](#)

Sorotzkin B. (1985). The quest for perfectionism. Avoiding guilt or avoiding shame? Psychotherapy , 22(3), 564-571.

Solan R. (1980). Narcissistic fragility in the process of befriending the unfamiliar. American Journal of Psychoanalysis, 58 (2): 163-186. [PEP Web Link](#)

Optional

Meissner WW. (2008 a) Narcissism and the self: Psychoanalytic considerations. Journal of The American Academy of Psychoanalysis and Dynamic Psychiatry. 36(3):461-494. [PEP Web Link](#)

Reich, A. (1960). Pathological forms of self-esteem regulation. The Psychoanalytic Study of the Child, 15: 215-232. [PEP Web Link](#)

Blatt S. (1995). The destructiveness of perfectionism. Implications for treatment of depression/ American Psychologist 50(12):1003 – 1020

Westen D. (1990). The relations among narcissism, egocentrism, self-concept, and self-esteem: Experimental, clinical and theoretical considerations. Psychoanalysis and Contemporary Thought, 13 (2): 183 – 239 [PEP Web Link](#)

Session 6

Identifiers of narcissism IV:

Emotion regulation - fear, shame, envy and rage in narcissistic personality functioning

Objective 1: Define and recognize the most essential emotions in narcissistic personality functioning

Objective 2. Discuss psychoanalytic strategies to integrate patient's emotional reactions and experiences in treatment

Suggested Reading

Trumbull D. (2003). Shame: An acute stress response to interpersonal traumatization. *Psychiatry*, 66(1): 3-64. [Link to Online Publication](#) available for purchase \$40

Kohut, H. (1972). Thoughts on narcissism and narcissistic rage. *The Psychoanalytic Study of the Child*, 27:360-400. [PEP Web Link](#)

Klein M. (1975). Envy and gratitude. In: Klein M. *Envy and Gratitude and Other Works 1946-1953*. New York, Macmillan. [PEP Web Link](#)

Ronningstam E, Baskin-Sommers AR (2013). Fear and decision-making in narcissistic personality disorder—a link between psychoanalysis and neuroscience. *Dialogues in Clinical Neuroscience - Vol 15 . No. 2*. 2013. [Link to Online Publication](#) (fulltext available for all)

Modell A. (1975). Narcissistic defense against affect and the illusion of self-sufficiency. *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, 56: 275-282 [PEP Web Link](#)

Optional

Kernberg O. (2007). The almost untreatable narcissistic patient. *Journal of American Psychoanalytic Association*, 55 (2), 503 – 539). [PEP Web Link](#)

Kernberg OF. (1992). *Aggression in Personality Disorders and Perversions*. New Haven Yale University Press. [PEP Web Link](#)

Morrison A (1989). *Shame: The Underside of Narcissism* Hillsdale, NJ: Analytic Press. [available in [the library](#)]

Session 7

Narcissistic trauma - developmental aspects and implication for treatment

Objective 1. Identify and compare different psychoanalytic conceptualizations of narcissistic trauma

Objective 2: Discuss treatment strategies for addressing narcissistic trauma in psychoanalytic treatment

Suggested Reading

Gerzi S. (2005). Trauma, narcissism and the two attractors in trauma. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 86:1033-50. [PEP Web Link](#)

Krystal H. (1998). Affect regulation and narcissism: Trauma, alexithymia and psychosomatic illness in narcissistic patients. In: E. Ronningstam (Ed). Disorders of Narcissism: Diagnostic, Clinical and Empirical Implications Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Press. [available in [the library](#)]

Maldonado J L. (2006). Vicissitudes in adult life resulting from traumatic experiences in adolescence. International Journal of Psychoanalysis, 87(5): 1239-1257. [PEP Web Link](#)

Bell D. (1998). External injury and the internal world. In Garland C. (Ed). Understanding Trauma. A Psychoanalytic Approach. Second Enlarged Edition. The Tavistock Clinic Series. London, UK. Karnac, pp 167 – 180. [available in [the library](#)]

Optional
To be added

Session 8

Narcissistic susceptibility to suicide - eminent risk or life sustaining fantasy

Objective 1. Identify narcissistic regulatory functions and contributing factors to suicide
Objective 2. Describe and apply suicide risk assessment and treatment strategies to address patients' suicidal ideations and intents.

Suggested Reading:

1. Ronningstam E. Narcissistic Vulnerability to Suicide. In Tatarelli R, Pompili M, Giardi P.(Eds). Suicide in Psychiatric Disorders. New York, Nova Editorial Inc. 2007, pp 181 – 192 (to be distributed)
2. Maltzberger JT, Ronningstam E, Weinberg I, Schechter M, Goldblatt MJ. Suicidal fantasy as a life sustaining recourse. Journal of the American Academy of Psychoanalysis and Dynamic Psychiatry, 2010, 38:611-624. [PEP Web Link](#)
