

THE BOSTON PSYCHOANALYTIC SOCIETY AND INSTITUTE, INC.

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Writing Class

The opening of a clinical account, when it works, has all the feel of the inevitable. It leads the reader to feel: how else would one begin to tell this story?

-Tom Ogden (2005, p. 17)

Dear All,

Welcome! We will begin our eight week writing seminar on April 7.

The goal of the course is to gain skill and confidence writing about analytic process using material from your analytic cases (or therapy cases). How best to understand, frame, and describe what happens in the course of treatment? How to bring the work to life on the page?

The format of the class differs from that of other seminars. We will read together pieces of analytic case-writing and discuss them as a group. In each class two people will have time to present material. We should be able to discuss segments by each class member at least once during our time together.

So that we can get started right away, please read Stephen Bernstein's paper, "Writing About the Psychoanalytic Process," *Psychoanalytic Inquiry*, 28:433-449, 2008. [PEP Web Link](#)

A second reading you might enjoy (suggested, not required): Tom Ogden's "On Psychoanalytic Writing," *IJPA*, 86:15-29, 2005. Especially useful for our purpose is the section in Ogden's paper headed "An experience in clinical writing." [PEP Web Link](#)

For the first class, ***we need two volunteers*** to present a two or three page report, double spaced, of an analytic segment (a good guide: 500-750 words). Consider this piece of writing a first draft, written to illustrate (for example) how you established an alliance, or analyzed a resistance, or understood a transference reaction, a dream, or a piece of counter-transference, or (simply!) how the patient first entered the room. You may choose anything you like to exemplify the work. What's important is how you show yourself and the patient working together.

Your segment can be taken from any phase of the treatment. Bernstein presents a template for writing sections of process. You may choose to adopt his approach, or some other, but your draft should include a narrative description of process ("experience near"), and a reflective passage indicating how you thought about and understood (or didn't understand) what happened ("reflecting section"). Please bring ten copies of the draft to class.

If you have questions about any aspect of this (e.g. confidentiality concerns), don't hesitate to contact one of us before we begin.

Please let us know if you would like to present some pages in the first class. (If there are no volunteers by Sunday, we'll ask two people to go first.)

We look forward to our meetings, and anticipate that this seminar will be fun and productive for all of us. We urge everyone to get started right away, writing about your work!