MELANIE KLEIN AND THE NEO-KLEINIANS

Instructors: James Barron, PhD & Stephen Kerzner, MD
Dates: 2017 - February 9, 16, 23; March 2, 9, 16, 23, 30  Time: 5:30 – 7:00PM

Course Description

Melanie Klein boldly reimagined the developing mind of the infant and child and the powerful influence of the early maternal-infant dyad in shaping the mind of the adult. Klein and her followers described phantasies as psychic representations of libidinal and aggressive drives and expressions of primitive anxieties and terrors, as well as defenses against them. Differing from Freud, Klein proposed that the infant has the capacity for phantasy formation from birth on and experiences precursors of the Oedipus complex in the first year of life.

In this course, we will focus on a selection of Klein’s writings as well as on some creative elaborations by several “Neo-Kleinians”. We will explore key concepts: the internal object world populating the theater of the mind; processes of introjection, projection, and projective identification; and dynamic oscillations between paranoid-schizoid and depressive positions. We will also consider how projective identification shapes the unconscious mutual influencing in the therapeutic dyad. Throughout the course we will discuss clinical examples from the readings and from our own work with patients that illustrate these theoretical concepts.

Syllabus

Session 1: 2/9/17 Klein’s Conceptualization of Early Ego Development

Learning Objective: At the conclusion of this session, candidates will be able to summarize Klein’s conceptualization of early ego development, including the infant’s introjection of ‘good’ and ‘bad’ objects and the beginning of symbol formation.

Recommended:
Session 2: 2/16/17 The Depressive Position

Learning Objective: At the conclusion of this session, candidates will be able to explain Klein’s view of the early precursors and anxieties associated with the Oedipus Complex and the characteristics of the depressive position.


Recommended:

Session 3: 2/23/17 The Paranoid Schizoid Position

Learning Objective: At the conclusion of this session, candidates will be able to define the characteristics of the paranoid-schizoid position and identify the oscillation between the paranoid-schizoid and depressive positions.


Recommended:

Session 4: 3/2/17 Klein’s Concept of Phantasy

Learning Objective: At the conclusion of this session, candidates will be able to discuss how Klein’s concept of phantasy encompasses the infant’s experience of libidinal and aggressive drives, primitive anxieties and terrors, and defensive mechanisms.

Session 5: 3/9/17 Projective Identification as Unconscious Communication

Learning Objective: At the conclusion of this session, candidates will be able to discuss the connections among projective identification, unconscious communication, and therapeutic action.


Session 6: 3/16/17 Klein’s Concept of Envy

Learning Objective: At the conclusion of this session, candidates will be able to utilize Klein’s concepts of envy and gratitude in a clinical example.


Recommended:

Session 7: 3/23/17 Bion’s Concept of Container and Contained

Learning Objective: At the conclusion of this session, candidates will be able to compare Klein’s conceptualization of early ego development to Bion’s concept of container and contained.


**Session 8: 3/30/17 Implications of Bion’s Thought: Waking Dreams and Meaning Making**

**Learning Objective:** At the conclusion of this session, candidates will be able to discuss Bion’s theory of thinking and how it applies to waking dreams, meaning making and affective experience.