

THE BOSTON PSYCHOANALYTIC SOCIETY AND INSTITUTE
141 Herrick Road, Newton Centre, Massachusetts 02459

Dear All,

Welcome. We will begin our eight week writing seminar on April 6.

The goal of the course is to gain skill and confidence writing about analytic process using material from your analytic cases (or therapy cases if an analytic case can't be used). How best to understand, frame and describe what happens in the course of an analysis? How to bring the work to life on the page?

I am hoping that, along the way, we can think about and take pleasure in reading and writing per se. While the majority of our time will be spent on reading and discussing together pieces of analytic case-writing, I would like us to begin by reading a non-analytic essay, George Orwell's 1946 "Politics and the English Language." This essay gives a sense of why precision and clarity in writing is an ethical as well as an aesthetic issue. The essay is available in many collections as well as online [[Linked Here](#)]. **Please read it before the first class meeting so that we can discuss it at that time.**

For the second class, on April 13, please read Stephen Bernstein's paper "Writing About the Psychoanalytic Process," *Psychoanalytic Inquiry*, 2008; 28: 433-449 ([PEP Web Link](#)). A second reading you might enjoy is Thomas Ogden's "On Psychoanalytic Writing," *IJP* 2005; 86: 15-29 ([PEP Web Link](#)). Especially useful for our purposes is the section in Ogden's paper headed 'An experience in clinical writing.' This article is suggested, not required.

Starting on April 13, each of you will have a chance to present clinical writing. We can decide on the order of presentations at our first meeting. Consider this piece of writing as a first draft. It should be a two or three page report, double spaced (approximately 750 words) of an analytic segment. You may illustrate any aspect of analytic work you choose, e.g. the communication of a dream, the establishment of an alliance – or a moment of misattunement; a transference or counter-transference response; a patient's physical appearance or manner, if that is striking to you. Your segment can be taken from any phase of treatment. You may choose anything you like to capture the work. What's important is how you show yourself and the patient working together. Please bring five copies of the draft to class.

Bernstein presents a template for writing which includes a narrative description of process (experience near section) and a passage indicating how the clinician thinks about what happened (reflective section.) While his model is very useful, each of us needs to find our own way of conveying process. The work of the group will be for us to help one another in this effort.

If time permits, I hope that in the final class meeting we will be able to share with each other a short piece of writing of any kind that has been meaningful to us and that is written as we imagine we might like to write. This should be enjoyable and also give us a sense of each of our very different literary 'ego ideals' – useful to keep in mind even when writing clinical material.

If you have questions about any aspect of this, e.g. confidentiality concerns, please be in touch with me.

I very much look forward to our meetings.

Frances Lang LICSW