



Advanced Training Program in Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy, Year II

Fall 2017

## **Neurosis and Neurotic Character**

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Psychoanalytic treatment is predicated on the assumption that surface level behaviors and symptoms, and stable recurrent patterns of personality, have a relationship with deep internal psychic structures. Early classical psychoanalytic models of treatment focused on making conscious the unconscious dynamics that are the underpinnings of symptomatic difficulties. However, later therapeutic models addressed the recognition that for most patients, treatment must address not only symptomatic dynamics, but also characterological deficits and defects. The language around this diagnostic area is confusing, and yet, important to understand.

The main goals of this course are: 1) to clarify the concepts of character, (psycho)neuroses, character neurosis, and character/personality disorders; and 2) to develop a working knowledge of different psychoanalytic models of symptom formation and character organization with neurotic, borderline, and psychotic levels, and the respective defenses that are employed at each level. We will look at the value of diagnostic assessments in aiding our clinical work, particularly in how such formulations help us to understand the transference and countertransference responses of the therapeutic dyad. We will meet a cast of neurotic characters with stereotypic patterns of interactions who will help us make a bridge between our theoretical understanding and its clinical relevance. Students are encouraged to relate the theories to their clinical practices, and to use the exploration and the questions arising from this learning to further elucidate our group's understanding.

Basic Text: McWilliams, Nancy, Psychoanalytic Diagnosis, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (2011) NY: Guilford Press. All of the syllabus references to McWilliams will be from this book. [On reserve in the library. For specific excerpts, check the reading folder or request from [library@bpsi.org](mailto:library@bpsi.org)]

***Week 1: Terminology: What is meant by Character, Neurosis, and Character Pathology?***

***Readings:*** 1. Baudry, F. (1984) Character: A Concept in Search of an Identity. J. Amer. Psychoanal. Assn., 32: 455-477. [[PEP Web Link](#)]

2. La Planche, J. & Pontalis, J-B. (1973) The Language of Psycho-Analysis. Actual Neurosis; Psychogenic Neurosis; Character Neurosis; Traumatic Neurosis; Libido; Organization of the Libido; Pre-oedipal; Oedipus Complex [Available in the library. Check the reading folder or request from [library@bpsi.org](mailto:library@bpsi.org)]

**Learning Objectives:** At the conclusion of this session students will be able to describe the terms character, neurosis, and character pathology and discuss the relevance to clinical work. [Questions to consider: a) as you work to make these terms more familiar, which patients come to mind for them? b) are there patients or circumstances where it is less clear to you whether there is a symptom or an aspect of character in the presentation? c) how do you understand this in light of the readings?]

**Week 2: Psychoanalytic Character Diagnosis: A review of the basic psychoanalytic models using different lenses to elucidate an understanding of the development of symptoms and character traits/organization.**

**Readings:** 1. Mc Williams, N., Ch. 2 “Psychoanalytic Character Diagnosis”, pp19-37.

2. Mc Williams, Ch. 3 “Developmental Levels of Personality Organization”, pp 40-65.

3. Familiarize yourself with the diagram, “Developmental and typological dimensions of personality,” in Mc Williams, p92.

**Learning Objectives:** At the conclusion of this session students will be able to describe the focus of classical drive theory, ego psychology, object relations theory, and self-psychology with respect to character and symptom development. [Questions to consider: a) are there particular models that work best at understanding the dynamics of certain patients or at particular moments with patients in general? b) are there particular models that you seem to gravitate to? c) describe a time when the model you may have used with a patient seemed not to work as well with what was going on with the patient. d) have there been times when you have shifted models and learned something new about your patient’s presentation?]

**Week 3: Defenses: Primitive and Higher Order Levels of Defensive Processes.**

**Readings:** 1. Mc Williams, N., Ch. 5 “Primary Defensive Processes”, pp96-115.

2. Mc Williams, Ch. 6 “Secondary Defensive Processes”, pp 117-144.

**Learning Objectives:** At the conclusion of this session students will be able to describe three defenses from each of the two levels and identify examples of when patients in your clinical practice have used these defenses. [Questions to consider: a) what are the defenses addressing?]

b) describe a vignette about a patient using her/his defenses: how did you become aware of the defensive patterns of your patient? c) have you seen primitive defenses in higher functioning patients, and higher order defenses in more characterologically disturbed patients? how do you understand this?]

#### **Week 4: Narcissistic Personalities**

**Readings:** 1. Mc Williams, N., Ch.8, “Narcissistic Personalities”, pp 168-188.

2. Pulver, S. (1970). Narcissism—The Term and the Concept. J. Amer. Psychoanal. Assn., 18: 319-341. [[PEP Web link](#)]

**Learning Objective:** At the conclusion of this session students will be able to describe the manifestations of narcissistic personalities. [\*\*\*Questions to consider: a) prepare a brief vignette that demonstrates the narcissistic traits of a patient you treat. b) what were the challenges you faced with this patient? c) what dynamics occurred in the transference-countertransference relationship? d) What in the readings caught your attention, and what did you discover about narcissistic personalities or dilemmas?]

#### **Week 5: Depressive and Manic Personalities**

**Readings:** 1. Mc Williams, N., Ch 11 “Depressive and Manic Personalities.” Pp 227-257.

2. Jacobson, E. (1954). Transference Problems in the Psychoanalytic Treatment of Severely Depressed Patients., J. Amer. Psychoanal. Assn, 2: 595-606. [[PEP Web Link](#)]

**Learning Objectives:** At the conclusion of this session students will be able to describe the manifestations of depressive and manic personalities. [\*\*\* See Narcissistic Personalities *Questions to Consider* and apply to Depressive & Manic personalities]

#### **Week 6: Masochistic (Self-Defeating) Personalities**

**Readings:** 1. Mc Williams, N., Ch. 12, “Masochistic Personalities”, pp 257-277.

2. Grossman, W.I. (1991). Pain, Aggression, Fantasy, and Concepts of Sadomasochism. Psychoanal. Q., 60: 22-51. [[PEP Web Link](#)]

**Learning Objectives:** At the conclusion of this session students will be able to describe the manifestations of masochistic personalities. [\*\*\*See Narcissistic Personalities *Questions to Consider* and apply to Masochistic personalities]

### **Week 7: Hysterical (Histrionic) Personalities**

**Readings:** 1. Mc Williams, N., Ch 14 “Hysterical Personalities”, pp 301-322.

2. Yarom, N. (1997). A Matrix of Hysteria. *Int. J. Psycho-Anal.* 78: 1119-1134. [[PEP Web Link](#)]

**Learning Objectives:** At the conclusion of this session students will be able to describe the manifestations of hysterical personalities. [\*\*\*See Narcissistic Personalities *Questions to Consider* and apply to Hysterical personalities]

### **Week 8: Obsessive and Compulsive Personalities**

**Readings:** 1. Mc Williams, N., Ch 13 “ Obsessive and Compulsive Personalities”, pp279-300.

2. Shengold, L.(1985). Defensive Anality and Anal Narcissism. *Int. J. Psycho-Anal.*, 66: 47-73. [[PEP Web Link](#)]

**Learning Objectives:** At the conclusion of this session students will be able to describe the manifestations of obsessive and compulsive personalities. [\*\*\*See Narcissistic Personalities *Questions to Consider* and apply to Obsessive and Compulsive personalities]

### **Week 9: Schizoid Personalities**

**Readings:** 1. Mc Williams, N., Ch 9 “Schizoid Personalities”, pp189-204.

2. Bromberg, P. (1984). Getting Into Oneself and out of One’s Self: On Schizoid Processes. *Contemp. Psychoanal.*, 20: 439-447. [[PEP Web Link](#)]

**Learning Objectives:** At the conclusion of this session students will be able to describe the manifestations of schizoid personalities. [\*\*\*See Narcissistic Personalities *Questions to Consider* and apply to Schizoid personalities]

### **Week 10: The Therapist’s Character//A Synthesis of Our Course Work.**

**Reading:** 1. Fromm, E. (1991) Causes for the Patient’s Change in Analytic Treatment. *Contemp. Psychoanal.*, 27: 581-601. [[PEP Web Link](#)]

2. Baudry, F., “A Silent Partner to Our Practice: The Analyst’s Character and Attitudes”. Ch 21 in Essential Papers on Character Neurosis and Treatment, ed. Ruth Lax. (1989). NY: New York University Press. [Available in the library. Check the reading folder or request from [library@bpsi.org](mailto:library@bpsi.org)]

***Learning Objective:*** At the conclusion of this session students will be able to describe an interaction in a treatment when your character or attitude had an impact on the patient.