SOMA AS CANVAS:
UNREPRESENTED PSYCHIC EXPERIENCE AND SOMATIC STATES
BPSI ELECTIVE, 11/29/18-1/24/19
Instructors:
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This elective will explore the development of the ability to think about feelings. Without this ability, the original body ego does not develop into a mature psychically represented ego, but stays fixed in somatic phenomena or action, lacking thought or words to contain feelings. We will consider somatic representations of conflict, concrete thinking and attachment difficulties as expressed by such conditions as psychosomatic illness, panic attacks, eating disorders, and addictions. We will also consider the treatment of unrepresented experience as it appears in the treatment through projective identification, containment, transference and counter-transference phenomena. Finally, through case presentations we will look at the path to psychic representation and the use of words to express feelings. Participants will be encouraged to present case vignettes with unrepresented or poorly represented states.

**Week One:** We will look at the nature of the thinking apparatus. We will discuss how a sense of containment is achieved in normal attachment, giving the young child a sense of safety and facilitating the development of body boundaries, body integrity and the ability to use words to represent affects. We will consider projective identification as a normal developmental phase.

**Readings:**
Learning Objective: At the conclusion of the session, participants will be able to define psychic reality and external reality and offer one example of the distinction between the two in the young child.

Week Two: We will look at the development of psychic representation as it affects the young child’s ability to think and to link thoughts to feelings and words. We will discuss the result of failures in development in these abilities in somatic states and enactments.

Readings:


Additional Readings:


Additional Readings:

Freud, S. (1920). Beyond the pleasure principle. In SE XVIII (1-64). PEP Web Link


Learning Objective: At the conclusion of the session, the participant will be able to define psychic representation and describe one clinical example of its failure to develop.

Week Three: We will discuss somatic disorders that link to unrepresented or poorly represented psychic states, such as Irritable Bowel Syndrome and fibromyalgia.

Readings:


Additional Readings:

Learning Objective: At the conclusion of the session, the participant will be able to describe one clinical example of somatization of stress.

Week Four: We will look at the phenomenon of panic disorder as an unrepresented state.

Readings:

Additional Readings:


Learning Objective: At the conclusion of the session, the participant will be able to explain how the inability to think about internal psychic states can cause panic disorders.

Week Five: We will discuss the dynamics and etiology of eating disorders.

Readings:


Additional Readings:


**Learning Objective:** At the conclusion of the session, the participant will be able to demonstrate how the inability to think and feel one’s feelings relates to eating disorders.

**Week Six:** We will examine the various theoretical underpinnings of Addiction.

**Readings:**


**Additional Readings:**

**Learning Objective:** At the conclusion of the session, the participant will be able to describe one example how the inability to tolerate and name feelings can lead to addictions.

**Week Seven:** Transference and Countertransference Considerations in the Treatment of Unrepresented or Poorly Represented States.

**Readings:**
Bonovitz, C. (2016). On seeing what is not said: the concrete mode of psychic functioning and the development of symbolization. *Psychoanalytic Dialogues, 26*, 280-293. [Available in the library: Download in the library, check the reading folder or request from library@bpsi.org.]


**Additional Readings:**


**Learning Objective:** At the conclusion of the session, the participant will be able to describe transference phenomena likely to occur in working with this patient group and to give one example of the countertransference responses typically elicited in the analyst.

**Week Eight: The Road to Structure and Representation.**

**Readings:**


**Additional Readings:**

Busch, F.N. (2017). A model for integrating actual neurotic or unrepresented states and symbolized aspects of intrapsychic conflict. *Psychoanalytic Quarterly, 86*(1), 75-108. [Available in the library: check the reading folder or request from library@bpsi.org.]


**Learning Objective:** At the conclusion of the session, the participant will be able to explain how psychoanalytic work can help to create the space for symbolization, representation, and thought in the patient.
BIBLIOGRAPHY:


Bonovitz, C. (2016). On seeing what is not said: the concrete mode of psychic functioning and the development of symbolization. Psychoanalytic Dialogues, 26, 280-293. [Available in the library: Download in the library, check the reading folder or request from library@bpsi.org.]


Busch, F.N. (2017). A model for integrating actual neurotic or unrepresented states and symbolized aspects of intrapsychic conflict. Psychoanalytic Quarterly, 86(1), 75-108. [Available in the library: check the reading folder or request from library@bpsi.org.]


Freud, S. (1911). Formulations on the two principles of mental functioning. In SE XII (213-226). PEP Web Link


