



ATP II: 2018-2019

Neurosis and Neurotic Character

Faculty: Lucinda Di Domenico

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 characterologic deficits and defects. The language around this diagnostic area is confusing, and yet, important to understand. The goals of this introductory psychopathology course are: 1) to clarify the concepts of character, (psycho)neuroses, character neurosis, and particular 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 counter-transference 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, 1st (1994) or 2nd edition (2011) NY: Guilford Press. All of the syllabus references to McWilliams will be from this book. [Available in the library. Check the reading folder or request from library@bpsi.org.]

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

Learning Objectives: 1) Describe the terms and 2) 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?]

Readings:

1. Reich, Wilhelm. (1933). On the Technique of Character-analysis. In: Essential Papers on Character Neuroses and Treatment. (1989) Ed. Ruth Lax, N.Y. University Press, New York. Please read only pages 85-96 for the first class. [Available in the library. Check the reading folder or request from library@bps.org.]
2. Baudry, F. (1989) Character, Character Type, and Character Organization. J. Amer. Psychoanal. Assn., 37: 655-686. [PEP Web Link](#)

Optional:

1. La Planche, J. and Pontalis, J-B. [1973]. The Language of Psycho-Analysis. Actual Neurosis; Psychogenic Neurosis; Character Neurosis; Traumatic Neurosis; Libido; and Organization of the Libido. [Available in the library. Check the reading folder or request from library@bps.org.]

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.

Learning Objectives: 1) 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?]

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.
4. Auchincloss, E. Review the charts to supplement your reading in McWilliams. We will return to these throughout our seminar. [Available in the library. Check the reading folder or request from library@bps.org]

Optional:

1. Pine F. (1988) "The Four Psychologies of Psychoanalysis and Their Place in Clinical Work. J.Amer.Psychoanal.Assn., 36:571-596. [PEP Web Link](#)

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

Learning Objectives: 1) describe 3 defenses from each of the two levels and 2) give examples of when patients have used these defenses in your clinical practice. [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?]

Readings:

1. Mc Williams, N., Ch. 5 “Primary Defensive Processes”, pp96-115.
2. Mc Williams, Ch. 6 “Secondary Defensive Processes”, pp 117-144.

Optional:

1. Stolorow, R.D. & Lachman, F.M, [1978] The Developmental Prestages of Defenses: Diagnostic and Therapeutic Implications. *Psych Q*, 47: 73-102. [PEP Web Link](#)

Week 4: Narcissistic Personalities

Learning Objective: 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/counter-transference relationship? d) What in the readings caught your attention, and what did you discover about narcissistic personalities or dilemmas?]

Readings:

1. Mc Williams, N., Ch.8, “Narcissistic Personalities”, pp 168-188.
2. Almond R. (2004). “I can do it (all) myself”. *Clinical technique with defensive narcissistic self-sufficiency. Psychoanalytic Psychology*. 21(3):371 – 384. [PEP Web Link](#)

Optional:

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

Week 5: Depressive and Manic Personalities.

Learning Objective: Describe the manifestations of depressive and manic personalities. [*** See Narcissistic Personalities *Questions to Consider* and apply to D & M personalities. In the following weeks, please apply these questions to the relevant personality under discussion.]

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](#)

Optional:

1. Freud, S. [1917] Mourning and Melancholia. Std Ed. The Complete Works. [PEP Web Link](#)

Week 6: Masochistic (Self-Defeating) Personalities

Learning Objectives: Describe the manifestations of masochistic personalities. [***]

Readings:

1. Mc Williams, N., Ch. 12, “Masochistic Personalities”, pp 257-277.
2. Arnd-Caddigan, M. (2009). Failure to Mentalize Self and Masochistic Functioning. Psychoanal. Soc. Work., 16: 139-157. [PEP Web Link](#)

Optional:

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

Week 7: Hysterical (Histrionic) Personalities

Learning Objectives: Describe the manifestations of hysterical personalities. [***]

Readings:

1. Mc Williams, N., Ch 14 “Hysterical Personalities”, pp 301-322.
2. Bromberg, P.M. [1996]. Hysteria, Dissociation, and Cure: Emmy von N Revisited. Psychoanal. Dial., 6 [1]: 55-71. [PEP Web Link](#)

Optional:

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

Week 8: Obsessive and Compulsive Personalities

Learning Objectives: Describe the manifestations of obsessive and compulsive personalities. [***]

Readings:

1. Mc Williams, N., Ch 13 “Obsessive and Compulsive Personalities”, pp279-300.
2. Kulish, N. (1988) Precocious Ego Development and Obsessive Compulsive Neurosis. Journal of the American Academy of Psychoanalysis. 16.2. 167-187. [PEP Web Link](#)

Optional:

1. Brandchaft, B. (2001) Obsessional Disorders: A Developmental Systems Perspective. Psychoanalytic Inquiry, 21: 253-288. [PEP Web Link](#)

Week 9: Schizoid Personalities

Learning Objectives: Describe the manifestations of schizoid personalities. [***]

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

Revisited. Bromberg, P.M. (1996). Hysteria, Dissociation, and Cure: Emmy von N Revisited. *Psychoanal. Dial.*, 6(1):55-71. [PEP Web Link](#)

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

Week 10: A Synthesis of Our Seminar Work:

Learning Objective: 1) Review the course regarding our theoretical understanding about character and symptom development. 2) Review the case from Fosshage’s paper and offer your understanding about the case from the lenses of the seminar. [Questions to consider: Be prepared to address how the course helped you understand one of your clinical cases in a new manner. What did you discover about your identifications with particular theories or ways of understanding your clinical work? Did you find yourself experimenting with theoretical models? Have you found yourself creating diagnostic differentials with patients and how do you hold that in your work? Did you notice times when your character became an integral part of the clinical work and how did you make use of this?]

Readings:

1. Fosshage, J. [1990]. Clinical Protocol. *Psychoanal. Inq.*, 10 [4]: 461-477. [PEP Web Link](#)
2. Review sheets from Auchincloss, E. about the psychoanalytic diagnoses.