



boston psychoanalytic  
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Year III, Winter II 2020

## **Self Psychology**

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As a post-Freudian psychoanalytic theory, self psychology is continually undergoing changes and transformations. These changes have two major sources:

The first is related to the fact that the theory as it was originally articulated by Heinz Kohut over a period of less than two decades, contained ideas the meanings of which could only become clear with time and increasing clinical experience. The best example of this is the selfobject concept: originally a purely intrapsychic concept, the concept now includes intersubjective and relational perspectives.

The second major source of changes is related to the fact that there is a continuous, imperceptible influence that all psychoanalytic theories exert on each other. While each theory attempts to preserve its “purity,” discussions of clinical material reveal that analysts’ private theories (Sandler) have multiple theoretical sources.

This course of eight, one and a half hour sessions can only be an overview in which we will focus on the most essential features of self psychology. We will aim for a systematic presentation recognizing that all psychoanalytic theories have to meet the criteria of inner consistency: all clinical theories are based on clinical observations (transferences) which have to be supported by a theory of development and a theory of psychopathology.

CME Objective:

Self-psychology is a clinically focused theory that bridges theory of development, psychopathology therapeutic process and curative action. By demonstrating knowledge of the precepts of this theory participants will be more skilled in treating a wide range of patients with a sophisticated psychoanalytic approach.

**February 6, 2020:** Why and how did Heinz Kohut develop a theory of the psychology of the self? What is the place of self-psychology in the history of psychoanalysis?

Ornstein, P.H. & Kay, J. (1990). Development of psychoanalytic self psychology: A historical-conceptual overview. In Tasman, A., Goldfinger, S. & Kaufman, C. (Eds.) *Review of Psychiatry*, 9, 303-322. Hillsdale, N.J.: Am. Psych. Press. [Available in the library: check reading folder or request from [library@bpsl.org](mailto:library@bpsl.org)]

Kohut, H. (1971). *The analysis of the self* (pp. 283-295). NY: Int. Uni. Press. [Available in the library: check reading folder or request from [library@bpsl.org](mailto:library@bpsl.org)]

Learning Objective: At the conclusion of this session candidates will be able to compare Self Psychology to Ego Psychology and describe a deficiency that Self Psychology attempted to fix.

**February 20, 2020:** The methodological underpinning of self psychology: Empathy as a mode of observation and the definer of the field.

Kohut, H. (1959). Introspection, empathy and psychoanalysis: An examination of the relationship between the mode of observation and theory. *JAPA*, 7, 459-483. [PEP Web Link](#)

Teicholz, J.G. (2000). The analyst's empathy, subjectivity, and authenticity: Affect as the common denominator. *Prog. in Self Psychology*, 16, 33-53. [PEP Web Link](#)

Learning objective: At the conclusion of this session candidates will be able to define empathy and explain its use as the primary tool of psychoanalytic observation.

**February 27, 2020:** The basic concepts of self psychology; definitions and developmental considerations.

Tolpin, M. (1986). The self and its selfobjects: A different baby, *Progress in Self Psychology*, 2, 115-128. [PEP Web Link](#)

Optional:

Teicholz, J. (1999). The concept of the selfobject. In *Kohut, Lowald and the postmoderns*. Hillsdale, N.J.: The Analytic Press. [Available in the library: check reading folder or request from [library@bpsl.org](mailto:library@bpsl.org)]

Learning Objective: At the conclusion of this session candidates will be able to define a "self-object" and explain how this concept is used clinically.

**March 5, 2020:** Clinical Application of Self Psychology: An updated review and integration

Halpern, J. & Ornstein, S. (2018). Self-experience within intersubjectivity: Two clinicians' use of self-psychology. In Chambers, M. (Ed.), *Introduction to contemporary psychoanalysis: Defining terms and building bridges* (Chapter 8, pp. 165-190). London: Routledge. [Available in the library: check reading folder or request from [library@bpsl.org](mailto:library@bpsl.org)]

Learning Objective: At the conclusion of this session candidates will be able to utilize recognizing and differentiating the types of self-object transferences. Candidates will be able to integrate this knowledge with current concepts of a two-person psychology.

**March 12, 2020:** Questions related to the Oedipus Complex

Ornstein, A. (1983). An idealizing transference of the Oedipal phase. In Lichtenberg, J. & Kaplan, S. (Eds.), *Reflections on self psychology* (Chapter 12, pp. 135-161). Hillsdale, N.J.: The Analytic Press. [Available in the library: check reading folder or request from [library@bpsl.org](mailto:library@bpsl.org)]

Optional: Kohut, H. (1997). The Oedipus complex and the psychology of the self. In *Restoration of the self*. NY: Int. Uni. Press. [Available in the library: check reading folder or request from [library@bpsl.org](mailto:library@bpsl.org)]

Learning Objective: At the conclusion of this session candidates will be able to compare the classical conception of the Oedipus Complex with the Self Psychological reformulation.

**March 19, 2020:** The psychoanalytic process: the selfobject transferences and countertransference in an intersubjective perspective.

Stolorow, R. & Lachmann, F. (1984). The transference: The future of illusion. *Annual of Psychoanalysis*, 12, 19-37. [PEP Web Link](#)

Brandchaft, B. (1991). Countertransference in the analytic process. *Progress in Self Psychology*, 7, 99-105. [PEP Web Link](#)

Learning Objective: At the conclusion of this session candidates will be able to apply the Self Psychological understanding of Transference to a clinical vignette.

**March 26, 2020:** The Interpretive Process, the Process of Working Through and the influence of the analyst's subjectivity on the analytic process

Ornstein, P. H. & Ornstein, A. (1985). Clinical understanding and explaining: The empathic vantage point. *Progress in Self Psychology*, 1, 43-61. [PEP Web Link](#)

Jacobs, T.J. (1996) Analysis, mutual analysis, and self-analysis; on the interplay of minds in the analytic process. *Canadian J. of Psychoanalysis*, 4, 255-277. [PEP Web Link](#)

Learning Objective: At the conclusion of this session candidates will be able to define how self-psychology understands the working through process.

**April 2, 2020:** Assertiveness, Anger, Rage and Destructive Aggression; the clinical and theoretical significance of narcissistic rage.

Kohut, H. (1972). Thoughts on narcissism and narcissistic rage. *Psa. S. Child*, 27, 360-400. [PEP Web Link](#)

Ornstein, A. (2012). Self-abuse and suicidality: Clinical manifestations of chronic narcissistic rage. In Holtzman, D. & Kulish, N. (Eds.), *The clinical problem of masochism*. NY: Jason Aronson. [Available in the library: check reading folder or request from [library@bps.org](mailto:library@bps.org)]

Learning Objective: At the conclusion of this session candidates will be able to define narcissistic rage and explain the Self Psychological approach to helping patients who demonstrate narcissistic rage.

Suggested supplemental readings:

Baker, H. and Baker, M. (1987). Heinz Kohut's self psychology: An overview. *American J. Psychiatry*, 144(1), 1-8. [Available in the library: check reading folder or request from [library@bps.org](mailto:library@bps.org)]

Bacal, H.A. (1985). Optimal responsiveness and the therapeutic process. *Prog. in Self Psychology*, 1, 202-227. [PEP Web Link](#)