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**Year III, Winter Semester 2021**

## **Self Psychology**

**Instructors: Holly Blatman and Rafael Ornstein**

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.

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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 25, 2021

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 A. Tasman, S. M. Goldfinger & C. A. Kaufmann (Eds.), *Review of psychiatry* (Vol. 9, pp. 303-322). American Psychiatric Press. [Download from the [Reading folder](#) or request from [library@bpsl.org](mailto:library@bpsl.org)].

Kohut, H. (1971). Clinical vignette of Ms. F. *The analysis of the self: A systematic approach to the psychoanalytic treatment of narcissistic personality disorders* (pp. 283-295). International Universities Press. [Download from the [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.

## March 4, 2021

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. *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, 7, 459-483. [PEP Web Link](#)

Also in: Ornstein, P. H. (Ed.). (1978). *The search for the self: Selected writings of Heinz Kohut: 1950-1978* (Vol. 1, pp. 201-232). International Universities Press.

Teicholz, J. G. (2000). The analyst's empathy, subjectivity, and authenticity: Affect as the common denominator. *Progress 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.

## March 11, 2021

### 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. G. (1999). Kohut's concept of the selfobject. *Kohut, Loewald, and the postmoderns: A comparative study of self and relationship* (pp. 83-113). Analytic Press. [Download from the [Reading folder](#) or request from [library@bpsi.org](mailto:library@bpsi.org)].

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

## March 18, 2021

### 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 M. Chambers (Ed.), *Introduction to contemporary psychoanalysis: Defining terms and building bridges* (pp. 165-190). Routledge. [Download from the [Reading folder](#) or request from [library@bpsi.org](mailto:library@bpsi.org)].

Learning Objective: At the conclusion of this session candidates will be able to identify two types of selfobject transferences. Candidates will be able to integrate this knowledge with current concepts of a two-person psychology.

## March 25, 2021

### Questions related to the Oedipus complex.

Ornstein, A. (1983). An idealizing transference of the Oedipal phase. In J. Lichtenberg & S. Kaplan (Eds.), *Reflections on self psychology* (pp. 135-148). Analytic Press. [Download from the [Reading folder](#) or request from [library@bpsi.org](mailto:library@bpsi.org)].

Optional: Kohut, H. (1997). The Oedipus complex and the psychology of the self. *The restoration of the self* (pp. 220-248). International Universities Press. [Download from the [Reading folder](#) or request from [library@bpsi.org](mailto:library@bpsi.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.

## April 1, 2021

The psychoanalytic process: the selfobject transferences and countertransference in an intersubjective perspective.

Stolorow, R. D., & Lachmann, F. M. (1984). Transference: The future of an 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.

## April 8, 2021

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 Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 4(2), 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 15, 2021

Assertiveness, anger, rage and destructive aggression: the clinical and theoretical significance of narcissistic rage.

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

Also in: Ornstein, P. H. (Ed.). (1978). *The search for the self: Selected writings of Heinz Kohut: 1950-1978*. International Universities Press.

Ornstein, A. (2012). Self-abuse and suicidality: Clinical manifestations of chronic narcissistic rage. In D. Holtzman & N. Kulish (Eds.), *The clinical problem of masochism* (pp. 113-127). Jason Aronson. [Download from the [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 narcissistic rage and explain the self psychological approach to helping patients who demonstrate narcissistic rage.

Suggested supplemental readings:

Baker, H. S., & Baker, M. N. (1987). Heinz Kohut's self psychology: An overview. *The American Journal of Psychiatry*, 144(1), 1-9. [Download from the [Reading folder](#) or request from [library@bpsi.org](mailto:library@bpsi.org)].

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