



B P S I

boston psychoanalytic
society & institute

**THE BOSTON PSYCHOANALYTIC SOCIETY AND INSTITUTE
141 Herrick Road, Newton Centre, Massachusetts 02459**

Year III Winter Semester, 2022

Self Psychology

Instructors: Holly Blatman, MD and Alison Phillips, MD

Self psychology is a clinically focused theory that bridges theory of development, psychopathology, therapeutic process and curative action. In this overview course, we will focus on the most essential features of self psychology, aiming for a systematic presentation which illuminates the powerful implications of this theory on the understanding and treatment of a broad range of patients. In addition, we will address some of the changes and transformations that self psychology has undergone and its influences on contemporary psychoanalytic thinking.

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.

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 17, 2022

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, Jerald (1990) Development of Psychoanalytic Self Psychology: A Historical-Conceptual Overview. *Review of Psychiatry Vol. 9* (eds.) Tasman, A., Goldfinger, S., Kaufman, C., Am. Psychiatric Press, Hillsdale, N.J. pp. 303-322. [Download from the [Reading folder](#) or request from library@bps.org].

Kohut, H. (1971). The Analysis of the Self. New York. IUP. (Clinical vignette of Ms. F) ppg-283-295. [Download from the [Reading folder](#) or request from library@bps.org].

Learning Objective: At the conclusion of this session candidates will be able to discuss one deficiency that self psychology attempted to fix in ego psychology theory.

February 24, 2022

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, also in: Search for the Self (ed.) P.H. Ornstein, 1978, 1:201-232. [PEP Web Link](#)

Teicholz, J.G. (2000) Chapter 3 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 identify one clinical example of the use of empathy as the primary tool of psychoanalytic observation.

March 3, 2022

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*, The Analytic Press, Hillsdale, N.J. pp. 83-113 [Download from the [Reading folder](#) or request from library@bps.org].

Learning Objective: At the conclusion of this session candidates will be able to demonstrate one clinical example of how the concept of a "selfobject" is used.

March 10, 2022

Clinical Application of self psychology: an updated review and integration.

Halpern, J. and Ornstein, S. (2018) "Self-Experience within Intersubjectivity: Two clinicians' use of self psychology." In: *Introduction to Contemporary Psychoanalysis: Defining Terms and Building Bridges*, Marilyn Chambers (Ed.) pp. 165-190 [Download from the [Reading folder](#) or request from library@bpsl.org].

Learning Objective: At the conclusion of this session candidates will be able to apply one example of the integration of the concept of selfobject transferences within intersubjective theory to a clinical vignette.

March 17, 2022

Questions related to the Oedipus Complex.

Ornstein, A. (1983) An Idealizing Transference of the Oedipal Phase. In: *Reflections on Self Psychology* (eds. Lichtenberg, J. Kaplan, S. 135-161, The Analytic Press, Hillsdale, N.J. [Download from the [Reading folder](#) or request from library@bpsl.org].

Optional: Kohut, H. (1997) The Oedipus Complex and The Psychology of the Self In: *Restoration of the Self*, Int. U. Press. [Download from the [Reading folder](#) or request from library@bpsl.org].

Learning Objective: At the conclusion of this session candidates will be able to explain two differences between the classical conception of the Oedipus complex and the self-psychological reformulation.

March 24, 2022

The psychoanalytic process: The selfobject transferences and countertransference from 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 identify one of the self psychological transferences in a clinical vignette.

March 31, 2022

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 one clinical example of a self-psychology framework exemplifying the working through process.

April 7, 2022

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, also in: *The Search for the Self* (ed.) Ornstein, P.H., 1978. [PEP Web Link](#)

Ornstein, A. (2012) Self-Abuse and Suicidality: Clinical Manifestations of Chronic Narcissistic Rage, *The Clinical Problem of Masochism* (eds.) D. Holtzman & N. Kulish, Jason Aronson, N.Y. pp. 113-127 [Download from the [Reading folder](#) or request from library@bpsl.org].

Learning Objective: At the conclusion of this session candidates will be able to discuss one example of a self- psychologically informed approach to a patient's expression of narcissistic rage.

Suggested supplemental readings:

Baker, H. S. and Baker, M. N. (1987). Heinz Kohut's Self Psychology: An Overview, *American Journal of Psychiatry*. 144:1 January 1987, pp 1-8. [Download from the [Reading folder](#) or request from library@bpsl.org].

Bacal, H. A. (1985). 16 Optimal Responsiveness and the Therapeutic Process. *Progress in Self Psychol.*, 1:202-227. [PEP Web Link](#)