

SELF PSYCHOLOGY

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Welcome to our course on Self Psychology. Our objective is to co-create with you, a safe and dynamic learning environment. We will be exploring the central foundations of Self Psychology as a theoretical framework, how the theory of Self Psychology informs clinical practice, and applying Self Psychology to contemporary issues which affect all of us each day. We will read some of the original works by the founder of Self Psychology, Heinz Kohut, as well as scholarly articles by other notable and contemporary Self Psychologists. Our goal is offer diverse readings that will stimulate curiosity and class discussion.

Unless otherwise stated, all articles are accessible on PEP Web. Any article or chapter not on PEP Web will be made available as a PDF file prior to the first class.

Learning Objectives:

At the end of this course, the clinical associates will be able to:

1. List the central concepts of Self Psychology, as originally conceived by Kohut. This will provide an important and distinctive (from traditional Ego Psychology) way of understanding and treating our patients.
2. Describe and distinguish Kohut's views on the following concepts, to understand and apply Self Psychology to our work with patients.
 - description and diagnosis of disorders of the self
 - the "bipolar self" and associated transferences: mirroring, alterego and idealizing
 - the "vertical and horizontal split"
 - how analysis cures: transmuting internalization, structure building, and the emergence of the nuclear self
3. Describe the contemporary and clinically applicable Self Psychological views on:
 - Empathy
 - empathic failures
 - optimal frustration
 - shame
 - rage and aggression
4. Apply Self Psychology to contemporary race and cultural issues, which will provide us with an understanding of how to work clinically with diverse groups of people, and have an impact on the social issues of our time.

Class 1, January 4, 2019 – Introduction

This class will provide an introduction to the major concepts in Self Psychology, as well as an introduction to the work of Heinz Kohut, the founder of Self Psychology. To help explain Kohut's classic paper (it is quite dense), we'll use an excerpt from Wolf's book to make his concepts clearer and more digestible.

- Kohut, H (1968). The Psychoanalytic Treatment of Narcissistic Personality Disorders – Outline of a Systematic Approach. *The Psychoanalytic Study of the Child*, 22: 86-113
- Wolf, E (1988). Treating the Self. The Guilford Press, New York. Chapter 3, Basic Concepts of Self Psychology, pp.23-49. **(Not available on PEP.)**

Class 2, January 11, 2019 – Selfobjects and Selfobject Transferences

This class will provide an introduction to selfobjects, as the subjective aspect of a self-sustaining function, performed by a relationship of the self to objects. We will discuss types of selfobjects and how they function to sustain the self. Then, we will explore selfobject transferences, and how these displaced needs onto the therapist represent archaic and age-appropriate selfobject needs.

- Kohut, H. (1971) The Analysis of the Self. International Universities Press, Inc. **(Not available on PEP.)**
 - Chapter 2, The Idealizing Transference, pp. 37 - 55
 - Chapter 5, Types of Mirror Transferences: A Classification According to Developmental Considerations, pp. 105 - 132

Class 3, January 18, 2019 – Disorders of the Self

This class will cover the variety of disorders of the self, including developmental considerations, aetiology (primary and secondary disorders of the self), psychopathology and symptomatology, and treatment considerations. Again, Wolf's paper is used to clarify the Kohut and Wolf paper, and bring us to more recent time.

- Wolf, E. (1994). Varieties of the Disorders of the Self. *British Journal of Psychotherapy*, 11 (2): 198-208
- Kohut, H and Wolf, E (1978). The Disorders of the Self and their Treatment: An Outline. *IJP*, 59: 413-425

Class 3, January 25, 2019 – Empathy

This class will explore the process of empathy as a means of accessing another's psychological state, by feeling oneself into the other's experience. This is a means of data collection and also a self-sustaining experience for the patient. Additionally, we will explore more contemporary views that push the envelope from empathy as a depth oriented technique toward more authentic feeling states that present within a treatment.

- Perlit, D. (2016). Beyond Kohut: From Empathy to Affection. *International Journal of Psychoanalytic Self Psychology*. 11: 248-262.
- Bacal, H. (1995). The Essence of Kohut's Work and the Progress of Self Psychology. *Psychoanalytic Dialogues*, 5 (3): 353-366

Class 4, February 1, 2019 – The Vertical Split and Horizontal Split

This class will explore and explain the often confusing concepts of the vertical and horizontal splits. Goldberg is clear and cogent in his writing, so the reading should be easy. We will cover the phenomenology of the vertical split, the function of disavowal and dissociation, and varieties of splits.

- Goldberg, A. (1999). Being of Two Minds, The Vertical Split in Psychoanalysis and Psychotherapy. The Analytic Press, Inc., Hillsdale NJ. **(Not available on PEP.)**
 - Chapter 1: Introductory Remarks. Pp. 3-6
 - Chapter 2: The Problem, pp. 7-20
 - Chapter 3: the Failure of Synthesis, pp. 21-42
 - Chapter 10: Varieties of the Split, pp. 139-150

Class 5, February 15, 2019 – Treatment

This class will explore Kohut's definition of a therapeutic goal as, mobilization of narcissistic needs within in the transference, in the effort to build psychic structure through the process of transmuting internalization. The role of the empathic bond between therapist and patient will be discussed in a variety of contexts including the process of optimal frustration, correct interpretations, and the formation of patients' own empathic acceptance of themselves.

- Kohut, H. (1984). How Does Analysis Cure? University of Chicago Press, Chicago. **(Not available on PEP.)**
 - Chapter 6, The Curative Effect of Analysis: The Self Psychological Reassessment of the Therapeutic Process, pp. 80 – 110
 - Chapter 9, The Role of Empathy in Psychoanalytic Cure, pp. 172 - 191

Class 6, February 22, 2019 – Other Important Concepts

This class will explore important concepts in Self Psychology; the role of aggression and rage, and the importance of the "Forward Edge" transference. Self Psychology has often been criticized by more classically trained analysts for "avoiding" aggression and rage. But as you will see in the paper by Stozier, et. al. that aggression is important. It is just not based on drive theory. The Forward Edge transference is important as it refers to remobilized and still healthy strivings in the patient that should be recognized and fostered.

- Stozier et al (2017). Heinz Kohut's Theory of Aggression and Rage. *Psychoanalytic Psychology*. 34 (3) 361-367 **(Not available on PEP.)**
- Tolpin, M (2002). Chapter 11, Doing Psychoanalysis of Normal Development: Forward Edge Transferences. *Progress in Self Psychology*, 18: 167-190.

Class 7, March 1, 2019 – Race and Self Psychology

This class will explore the application of Self Psychology to deepen our understanding of race and diversity.

- Phillips, T (2016). Kohut Memorial Lecture: Race, Place and Selfie. *International Journal of Psychoanalytic Self Psychology*. 11: 97-114
- Manuel, J. (2011). Finding a Compass in an Urban Storm: Toward the Use of a Self Psychological Perspective in Facilitating an African American Adolescent Self-Expression Group. *International Journal of Psychoanalytic Self Psychology*. 6(1):26-45

Class 8, March 8, 2019 – Contemporary Cultural Application of Self Psychology

This class will explore the application of Self Psychology to two of the social issues of our time; gun violence and aging. Part of the increasing trend of mass shootings relates to the importance of guns as selfobjects for these mass shooters and gun owners. And as we are all aging as we speak (scary, isn't it!), the Wolf paper addresses changes in the self and our selfobjects through the life span.

- Feldman, T. and Johnson, P. (1992). The Selfobject Function of Weapons: A Self Psychology Examination. *The Journal of the American Academy of Psychoanalysis and Dynamic Psychiatry*. 20 (4) 561-576
- Wolf E. (1997). Self Psychology and the Aging Self throughout the Life Curve. *The Annual of Psychoanalysis*, 25: 201-215

Class 9, March 15, 2019 – Film: “Reflections on Empathy” with comments from Strozier. (No reading assignment.)

This poignant film is a classic. This was Kohut's last presentation before he died a few days later. Kohut reflects on the importance and relevance of empathy, taking him back to the beginning of the development of Self Psychology. We will provide some context to the film, watch it and discuss it.

Class 10, March 22, 2019 – Contemporary views on Self Psychology

This class explores what it means to be a well-analyzed individual. It explains the limitation of Kohut's framework of an analytical cure through interpretation and internalization, and how a contemporary shift of technical strategy is needed. This shift allows patients the freedom to pursue the ambitions and ideals embedded in the nuclear self.

- Summers, F. (2011). Kohut's Vision and the Nuclear Program of the Self. *International Journal of Psychoanalytic Self Psychology*, 6(3): 289-305.