

Self Psychology

iCAPP January 25, 2021 – March 22, 2021, 6:30PM- 7:15PM

Instructor: Julie Wood, MA and Ray Gottesman, MSW

Welcome to Self Psychology! We look forward to our learning together.

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

Course Description

This course is designed to be an overview of self psychology. The course traces the emergence of this theory from classical psychoanalytic thought and ego psychology and its relationship to object relations theory. The course covers key concepts developed by Heinz Kohut, including the bipolar self, the vertical and horizontal split, role of self object needs and human relationship in development and the origins of psychopathology. The course outlines the curative process of therapeutic action, including the role of empathy, self-object transferences, optimal frustration, rupture and repair processes, and healthy self structure emerging from transmuted internalization in treatment. Kohut's critical value to the history of psychoanalysis is that despite his ardent belief and practice as "Mr. Psychoanalysis" in the classical tradition, his ideas produced a radical paradigm shift. He put human relationship at the center of both development, psychopathology, and cure. Rather than the psyche being tossed about by intrapsychic drives and instincts, he put the Self at the center. The self, no longer victim of the drives, could be cohesive, organized, and strengthened, leading to greater zest for life and resilience in the face of suffering.

It's helpful to understand the historical context in which a great thinker's ideas emerge. Heinz Kohut was trained as a psychoanalyst in the classical tradition. He was born in Vienna in 1913 to upper-middle class assimilated Jewish parents. His father was a classical pianist who went into business and his mother opened her own shop and prioritized socializing. His mother kept him at home with tutors until 5th grade. His studies were rich in Greek and Latin language and literature. He studied in Paris and became fluent in French. He began medical studies at University of Vienna in 1932. His father died from leukemia in 1937 and he began an analysis in 1938 with August Aichhorn, a close friend of Freud. By March of 1938, the Nazi's had invaded Vienna and all Jewish property was confiscated and all professors removed from the university, however Kohut had not yet taken his final exams. After much difficulty, he completed his exams, left as a refugee to Kent, England, and eventually was sponsored for a visa by a Viennese musician friend in Chicago. Most of his extended family died in the Holocaust. He completed neurology and psychiatry residency at University of Chicago. He was active in the Chicago Institute for Psychoanalysis and was president of APsA 1964-65. He reformulated his classical analytic stance into what we now call Self Psychology in his 50's and 60's. He married and had one son. He died from cancer in 1981.

Course Learning Objectives

Course participants will be able to:

- 1) Identify the central concepts of Self Psychology, as originally conceived by Kohut
 - a. Developmental: Self and self-objects, bipolar self, vertical and horizontal split, developmental needs for mirroring, idealizing, and twinship experience
 - b. Disorders of self: Redefining narcissism and its treatment
 - c. Treatment process: Self-object transferences (mirroring, idealizing, twinship), empathy, optimal frustration, and transmuting internalization
- 2) Articulate the role of empathy in the analytic process, and how it leads to transmuting internalization through the process of rupture and repair.
- 3) Describe the treatment process with your patient from a self psychology perspective, ie differentiate mirroring, idealizing, and twinship transferences; and the transmuting internalization over time.

WEEK 1 January 25, 2021 – Overview of Self Psychology

Mitchell, S. and Black, M. (1995). *Freud and Beyond: A History of Modern Psychoanalytic Thought*. NY: Basic Books. Ch. 6, pp. 139-169. [pdf](#)

WEEK 2 February 1, 2021 - Historical development within theories of psychoanalysis

Bacal, H.A. (1990). *Theories of Object Relations: Bridge to Self Psychology*. New York: Columbia University Press. Ch. 11, pp. 225-273. [pdf](#)

WEEK 3 February 8, 2021 – Basic concepts

Wolf, E.S. (1988). *Treating the Self: Elements of Clinical Self Psychology*. NY: Guilford. Chs. 3 and 4, pp. 23-63 [pdf](#)

WEEK 4 February 22, 2021 – Disorders of self

Kohut, H. and Wolf, E.S. (1978). The Disorders of the Self and their Treatment: An Outline. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 59: 413-425. PEP

WEEK 5 March 1, 2021 – Treatment: How analysis cures

Kohut, H. (1984). *How does analysis cure?* Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press. Ch. 6, pp 80-110. [pdf](#)

Togashi, K. (2012). Mutual Finding of Oneself and Not-Oneself in the Other as a Twinship Experience. *Int. J. Psychoanal. Self Psychol.*, 7(3):352-368 PEP

WEEK 6 March 8, 2021 – Treatment: Empathy

Kohut, H. (2010). On Empathy1. *Int. J. Psychoanal. Self Psychol.*, 5(2):122-131. PEP

Tuch, R.H. (1997). Beyond Empathy: Confronting Certain Complexities in Self Psychology Theory. *Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, 66:259-281. PEP

WEEK 7 March 18, 2021 – Self object function of the therapist

Buirski, P. and Haglund, P (1999). Chapter 3 The Self Object Function of Interpretation. *Progress in Self Psychology*, 15:31-49. PEP

Optional: Kohut Lectures, Chapter 5, Building Psychic Structure Regulates Self Esteem. **pdf**

WEEK 8 March 22, 2021 – Foundations of the intersubjective stance

Stolorow, R.D. (2014). Undergoing the Situation: Emotional Dwelling Is More Than Empathic Understanding. *Int. J. Psychoanal. Self Psychol.*, 9(1):80-83 PEP

Optional: Stolorow, R.D., Atwood, G.E. and Ross, J.M. (1978). The Representational World in Psychoanalytic Therapy. *Int. Rev. Psycho-Anal.*, 5:247-256 PEP

Optional: Stolorow, R. D. (1997) Dynamic, dyadic, intersubjective systems. *Psychoanal. Psychol.* 14:337-346.