



**The New Jersey Institute for Training in Psychoanalysis**  
**#F402 - Self Psychology**

**Via Zoom**

Fall 2023

Instructor:

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**Course Description:** This course will introduce candidates to one of the post-Freudian psychoanalytic theories, Self Psychology. The historical context in which this theory emerged will be presented, beginning with the work of Heinz Kohut. The recognition of the individual's need to organize his/her/their psyche into a cohesive configuration will be explored. Key concepts such as the role of empathy, idealization, mirroring, twinship, and the establishment of self-sustaining relationships between the self and its environment will be analyzed, along with the narcissistic transferences. The evolution of Self Psychology since Kohut will be explored by looking into contemporary Self Psychology theory, relational analysis, and intersubjectivity.

**Course Objectives:**

1. To examine the historical context in which Self Psychology emerged. To analyze what led Kohut to the development of a psychology of the self.
2. Candidates will be able to describe the key concepts in Kohut's Self Psychology.
3. Candidates will be able to apply the principles of Self Psychology to their clinical work.
4. Candidates will be able to analyze and consider the evolution and inclusion of Self Psychology into contemporary perspectives.

**Course etiquette and confidentiality:** Given that we will be having our class discussions on Zoom, it is critical that we all be respectful and mindful of one another's time and space. As such, please keep your cameras on and mute yourselves while others are presenting their thoughts. Additionally, because our case discussions and other discussions may feature confidential clinical information (or other sensitive information not to be disclosed outside of

the learning environment), it is imperative that you **(1) find a place in which to log in to the class that is private and in which you and others cannot be overheard and (2) refrain from discussion of the above-mentioned confidential or sensitive information outside of our class time**

**Readings and material:** All of the readings required for the course will be found on a Dropbox folder I will make available to all of you.

### **Class and Reading List:**

**Class I: Introduction to self psychology.** This class will explore the history of Self Psychology in psychoanalysis. The radical innovation brought by Kohut to the field of psychoanalysis will be addressed.

#### **Required readings:**

- Kohut, H. & Wolf, E. (1978). The disorders of the self and their treatment: An outline. *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, 59, 413-425.
- Kohut, H. (1979). The two analyses of Mr Z. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 60, 3-27.
- Ornstein, P.H. & Ornstein, A. (1995). Some distinguishing features of Heinz Kohut's Self Psychology. *Psychoanalytic Dialogues*, 5, 385-391. (Use the one in Dropbox).
- Baker, A. (2020). A defense of Kohut's "Self". *Psychoanalysis, Self, and Context*, 16, 85-93.

**Class II: The centrality of empathy in self psychology.** This class will analyze Kohut's premise of empathy as "vicarious introspection". The individual's capacity (or lack of capacity) to be aware and able to perceive another's mental states will be discussed.

#### **Required readings:**

- Kohut, H. (2010). On empathy: Heinz Kohut (1981). *International Journal of Psychoanalytic Self Psychology*, 5, 122-131.
- 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.

- Dufresne, R. (2021). Empathy in psychoanalysis. *Canadian Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 29, 20-27.

**Class III: Selfobjects.** Kohut's idea of how an individual's sense of self develops and is sustained will be analyzed. The premise of narcissism as the manifestation of a vulnerable self attempting self-cohesion/organization will be examined.

**Required readings:**

- Tolpin, M. (1986). The self and its selfobjects: A different baby. *Progress in Self Psychology*, 2, 115-128.
- Basch, M. F. (1991). Chapter 1: Are selfobjects the only objects? Implications for psychoanalytic technique. *Progress in Self-Psychology*, 7, 3-15.
- Doctors, S. R. (2020). The selfobject concept: The heart of Kohut's psychology of health. *Psychoanalysis, Self, and Context*, 15, 25-32.
- Gardner, J. R. (2020). Discussion of Richard Geist's interpretation as carrier of selfobject functions: Catalyzing inborn potential. *Psychoanalysis, Self, and Context*, 15, 348-352.

**Class IV: Self object transferences.** The notion of the displacement onto the analyst of the analysand's need for a responsive self matrix in the context of analysis will be unpacked. The narcissistic transferences will be reviewed.

**Required readings:**

- Kohut, H. (1972). Thoughts on narcissism and narcissistic rage. *Psychoanalytic Study of the Child*, 27, 360-400.
- Abrams, E. K. (1976). The narcissistic transference as a resistance. *Modern Psychoanalysis*, 1, 218-230.
- Afek, O. (2019). Reflections on Kohut's theory of self psychology and pathological narcissism—limitations and concerns. *Psychoanalytic Psychology*, 36, 166-172.

**Class V: Evolution of self psychology. Part I.** This class will begin to analyze how certain aspects of self psychology have been incorporated in contemporary psychoanalytic theory. We will begin with the impact of Self Psychology on relational psychoanalysis.

**Required readings:**

- Bacal, H. A. (1995). The essence of Kohut's work and the progress of self psychology. *Psychoanalytic Dialogues*, 5(3), 353-366.
- Coburn, W. J. (2021). Relationalizing self psychology: Commentary on Magid, Fosshage and Shane's The emerging paradigm of relational self psychology: An historical perspective. *Psychoanalysis, Self, and Context*, 16, 327-337.
- Shane, E. & Carr, E. M. (2021). Afterward — The many faces of self psychology: Two reflective essays. *Psychoanalytic Inquiry*, 41, 213-226.

**Class VI: Evolution of self psychology. Part II.** This class will analyze the impact of Self Psychology on intersubjectivity. The impact of the therapist on the clinical process will be explored.

**Required readings:**

- Gossmann, M. (2021). Self psychology in a pluralistic world: A position paper. *Psychoanalytic Inquiry*, 41, 159-173.
- Clement, C. (2010). A self psychological discussion of mutual recognition. *International Journal of Psychoanalytic Self Psychology*, 5, 364-366.
- Stolorow, R. D. (2014). Undergoing the situation: Emotional dwelling is more than empathic understanding. *International Journal of Psychoanalytic Self Psychology*, 9(1), 80-83.
- Teicholz, J. G. (2021). Existential reckoning in self psychology and Stolorow's intersubjectivity theory: A discussion of John Riker's paper and a consideration of intersubjectivity in psychoanalysis. *Psychoanalysis, Self, and Context*, 16, 355-362.

**Class VII: Clinical applications.** This class will describe and demonstrate how Self Psychology theory can be applied to clinical material. The application of Kohutian theory and of contemporary perspectives will be explored.

**Required readings:**

- Miller, H. J. (1985). How Kohut actually worked. *Progress in Self Psychology*, 1, 13-30.
- Adler, G. (1989). Uses and limitations of Kohut's self psychology in the treatment of borderline patients. *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, 37, 761-785.

- Herzog, B. (2020). A tale of two farms (of template discordance and shame). *Psychoanalysis, Self, and Context*, 16, 74-84.
- Fosshage, J. L. (2021). How does contemporary psychoanalysis work? The two analyses of Dr. R.F. *Psychoanalytic Inquiry*, 41, 345-350.
- Perlitiz, D. (2019). The implicit analyst: Qualities of salience. *Psychoanalysis, Self and Context*, 14(4), 428-444.

**Optional reading:**

- Cucchi, A. (2020). Borderline personality disorders: From the developmental theory of the “self” and mentalizing to “systems”. *Journal of Psychological Therapies*, 5, 168-188.

**Class VIII: Intersectionality and concluding remarks.** Contemporary Self Psychology in relation to race, class, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion, and other sociocultural markers will be addressed. We will evaluate the course as a whole.

**Required readings:**

- Stephens, M. A. (2021). Collisions in the dark: Invisible intersectionality and the black female psychoanalyst. *Contemporary Psychoanalysis*, 57, 165-197.
- Kottler, A. (2021). Can we stay home long enough to confront and dismantle the truth—That all humans are equal, but some are more equal than others. *Psychoanalytic Inquiry*, 41, 418-425.
- Friedman, H. J. (2021). Discussion of “A Battle Cry for Our Moment: Revisiting the two analyses of Mr. Z” by Jenny and Peter Kaufmann. *Psychoanalysis, Self, and Context*, 16, 69-73.
- Lazar, F. E. (2020). Learning from Brisbane: The politics of identity and the promise of empathy. *Psychoanalysis, Self, and Context*, 15, 187-198.