



The New Jersey Institute for Training in Psychoanalysis

#S204 - Countertransference

Instructor: Wilda Mesias, PhD

Spring 2024

Via Zoom

Course description: This course addresses the concept of countertransference in psychoanalysis. Countertransference, narrowly defined, is the analyst's transference. The term initially described situations in which the analyst's feelings, attitudes, and reactions toward the analysand are the product of the analyst's early life. The term has evolved to signify all of the analyst's reactions to the patient's conscious and unconscious, the analyst's identification with the internal objects of the analysand, and a relational/constructivist mutually-influenced phenomenon.

Using as a point of departure Freud's notion of countertransference we will track the evolution of the term, moving from a classical perspective to views presented by ego psychology, object relations, self psychology, and contemporary relational perspectives. We will gain a deeper understanding of the concept and the invaluable tool it represents in treatment, paying close attention to the self-scrutiny of the analyst.

We will address the different types of countertransference inherent in different diagnoses via case presentations and reading material. We will see how countertransference has received increased attention in the literature, mainly as a result of an increased interest in the analytic relationship.

Course objectives:

- 1) To analyze and examine the concept of countertransference.
- 2) To show the evolution of the concept from its inception to contemporary perspectives
- 3) To consider the many ways in which countertransference presents during treatment.
- 4) To illustrate how different schools of thought might approach the use and analysis of countertransference.
- 5) To analyze and consider countertransference in reference to intersectionality.

Course requirements:

A four-to six-page final paper that highlights your understanding and application of the concepts.

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:

You will need the following text available on Amazon:

Waska, R. (2022). *Projective identification: A contemporary introduction*. Routledge.
{hereinafter Waska, R. (2022).}

The rest of the readings will be found on a Dropbox folder I will make available to all of you.

Class and reading list:

Class I: Introduction to the concept. We will begin with an introduction to the concept of countertransference and its historical evolution.

Required readings:

Gelso, C. J. & Hayes, J. (2007). *Countertransference and the therapist inner experience: Perils and possibilities*. Routledge. Chapters 1 & 2.

Freud, S. (1912). Recommendations for physicians on the psychoanalytic method of treatment. *Standard Edition, XII*, 109-120.

Freud, S. (1913). On beginning the treatment. *Standard Edition, XII*, 121-144.

Required viewing:

Hewitson, O. (2014). VIDEO - Jaques Lacan on Obsession and the Rat Man. *Lacan Online*.
<https://www.lacanonline.com/2014/06/video-jacques-lacan-on-obsession-and- the- rat-man- case/>.

Class II: Development of concept. We will see the concept of countertransference undergo further development. We will analyze how the analyst's experience in relation to the patient's transference informs the psychoanalytic encounter.

Required readings:

Gelso, C. J. & Hayes, J. (2007). *Countertransference and the therapist inner experience: Perils and possibilities*. Routledge. Chapters 4 & 7.

Ferenczi, S. (1949). Confusion of tongues between adults and children: The language of tenderness and of passion. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 30, 225-230.

Jacobs, T. (1999). Countertransference past and present: A review of the concept. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 80(3), 575-594.

Borgogno, F. (2016). A special learning experience about transference and countertransference. Dynamics at the beginning of my psychoanalytic training. *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 76 (2), 99-110.

Suggested reading:

Kernberg, O.F. (1979). The contributions of Edith Jacobson: An Overview. *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, 27, 793-819.

Class III: Countertransference as a source of information. We will describe and explain how the experience of countertransference may be used as a source of information in understanding the patient's symbolic, pre-verbal, verbal and non-verbal communications.

Required readings:

Waska, R. (2022). Chapters 1 & 2.

Heimann, P. (1950). On counter-transference. *The International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 31, 81-84.

Winnicott, D.W. (1949). Hate in the countertransference. *The International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 30, 69-74.

Buechler, S. (2019). Fear in the transference and countertransference: An interpersonal perspective. *International Forum of Psychoanalysis*, 29 (3), 129-131.

Bass, A. (2019). Ordinary unconscious communication in the therapist/patient relationship. *Psychoanalytic Inquiry*, 39, 189-197.

Stefana, A., Hinshelwood, R.D., & Borensztein, C.L. (2021). Racker and Heimann on countertransference: Similarities and differences. *The Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, 90(1), 105-137.

Suggested reading:

Racker, H. (1988). Chapter 6. Transference and countertransference (full book available on Dropbox). *The International Psycho-Analytical Library*, 73, 1-196.

Class IV: Countertransference and character/personality disorders. We will discuss the process of transference-countertransference: reactivity and inter-reactivity, particularly in the context of patients that exhibit character and personality disorders.

Required readings:

Gabbard, G. (1991). Technical approaches to transference hate in the analysis of borderline patients. *The International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 72, 625-636.

Kernberg, O.F. (2007). The almost untreatable narcissistic patient. *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, 55 (2), 503-539.

Brown, L. (2018). Deconstructing countertransference. *The Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, 87 (3), 533-555.

Anthi, P.R. (2020). Wilhem Reich's character analysis revised. *Scandinavian Psychoanalytic Review*, 43, 40-49.

Class V: Schools of thought. We will evaluate other perspectives on countertransference from different psychoanalytic schools of thought.

Required reading:

Bollas, C. (1982). On the Relation to the self as an object. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 63, 347-359.

Bromberg, P. (2001). Treating patients with symptoms—and symptoms with patience. *Psychoanalytic Dialogues*, 11(6), 891-912.

Reichenthal, B. (2017). The broken self: Injured states in the transference- countertransference Matrix. *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*. 65 (3), 395-421.

Waska, R. (2022). Chapters 3 & 4.

Suggested reading:

Bollas, C. (1983). Expressive uses of the countertransference—Notes to the patient from oneself. *Contemporary Psychoanalysis*, 19, 1-33.

Aisenstein, M. (2020). A view of patients with somatic painful conditions. *Romanian Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 13(1), 1-28.

Class VI: Enactment-Part I: We will analyze the different views and approaches to the concept of enactment in the therapeutic encounter.

Required reading:

Gabbard, G.O. (1995). Countertransference: The emerging common ground. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 76, 475-485.

Ivey, G. (2008). Enactment controversies: A critical review of current debates. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 89, 19-38.

Katz, G. (2014). *The play within the play: The enacted dimension of psychoanalytic process*. Routledge. Chapters 3 & 4.

Abbasi, A. (2018). The analyst's bodily sensations as important information in clinical work. *Psychoanalytic Inquiry*, 38, 530-540.

Waska, R. (2022). Chapters 5 & 6.

Suggested reading:

Davies, J. (1994). "Love in the afternoon": A relational consideration of desire and dread in the countertransference. *Psychoanalytic Dialogues*, 16, 665-686.

Ogden, T. (1979). On projective identification. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 60, 357-373.

Class VII: Enactment-Part II. We will continue to consider the enacted dimension and will evaluate how the analyst can work with enactment.

Required reading:

Katz, G. (2014). *The play within the play: The enacted dimension of psychoanalytic process*. Routledge. Chapters 5, 6, & 8(subsequent chapters are on Dropbox for your review if you choose to read them).

Maroda, K. J. (2019). Working with enactment: The analyst's willingness to be both confrontive and vulnerable. *Psychoanalytic Inquiry*, 39(3-4), 234-240.

Atlas, G. (2018). Has sexuality anything to do with relationality? *Psychoanalytic Dialogues*, 28, 330-339.

Barratt, B. B. (2021). Notes on free-associative listening: "I Am Also a Stranger Here". *Psychoanalytic Review*, 108, 251-27.

Waska, R. (2022). Chapters 7, 8, 9, & 10.

Suggested reading:

Ogden, T. (2004). The analytic third: Implications for psychoanalytic theory and technique. *The Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, 73(1), 167-195.

Class VIII: Intersectionality, countertransference, and final thoughts. We will address intersectionality and countertransference. We will evaluate the course as a whole.

Required reading:

Waska, R. (2022). Chapter 11, 12, 13, & 14.

Kite, J.V. (2008). Ideas of influence: The impact of the analyst's character on the analysis. *The Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, 77 (4), 1075-1104 .

Goedert, M. (2020). Racism in the Countertransference. *Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, 89 (4), 715-740.

Aibel, M. (2018). The personal is political is psychoanalytic: Politics in the consulting room. *Psychoanalytic Perspectives*, 15, 64-101.

Suggested readings:

Alford, C.F. (2018). Trauma and psychoanalysis: Freud, Bion, and Mitchell. *Psychoanalysis, Culture and Society*, 23, 43-43.