

# The New Jersey Institute for Training in Psychoanalysis

## #S206 – Case Seminar: Working Alliance

Spring 2024

Via Zoom

Instructor: Michael DeNichilo, LCSW

### Course description:

Zetzel was among the first to use the term, “therapeutic alliance.” However, it was Greenson who described the therapeutic alliance as a working collaboration between analysand and analyst. It is based upon the idea that this particular alliance is an example of a largely non-neurotic, rational support that the patient derived from his/her analyst. To the degree that a sound therapeutic alliance is a good predictor of success in therapy, its importance can not be underestimated. Thus, we will focus on fostering, developing, strengthening, and ultimately solidifying a healthy bond between analyst and analysand.

### Assignment:

A written paper of approximately 4-6 pages on a clinical case which demonstrates some vestige of the working alliance with a patient. Consider describing a rupture and/or repair experience with a patient and the impact on the working alliance. Please use 2 or more readings from the class to illustrate how they informed or deepened your understanding of the working alliance. The paper will be due on the last session of class.

### Objectives:

At the end of this course the candidate will be able to:

- Define and describe the concept of working alliance.
- Describe how the understanding of the working alliance has changed over time.
- Identify the factors that contribute to a good working alliance.
- Identify several interventions that help work through breaches in the working alliance.

### Session 1 - COVID & THE IMPACT ON PSYCHOANALYSIS

How COVID-19 has affected the practice of psychodynamic psychotherapy and psychoanalysis will be explored.

Readings:

Merchant, J. (2021). Working online due to the Covid-19 pandemic: A research and literature review. *Journal of Analytical Psychology*, 66, 484-505.

Leutrum, M. (2022). The analyst as user illusion: Therapy in the time of COVID-19. *Journal of Analytical Psychology*, 67, 170-182.

## **Session 2 - TELECOMMUNICATION & PSYCHOANALYSIS**

This class will discuss the impact of technology on the psychoanalytic frame.

Readings:

Sharff, J.S. (2013). Technology-assisted psychoanalysis. *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, 61(3), 491-509.

Trub, L. & Magaldi, D. (2022). The phone in the room: How technology is reshaping analytic space. *Psychoanalytic Psychology*, 39(3), 253-265.

## **Session 3-INTRODUCTION TO THE WORKING ALLIANCE**

We will begin to discuss and analyze the concept of the working alliance.

Readings:

Greenson, R. (2008). The working alliance and transference neurosis. *Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, 77(1), 77-102.

Cooper, A.M. (2008). Commentary on Greenson's "The working alliance and the transference neurosis." *Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, 77(1), 103-119.

Barsness, R. E. (2021). Therapeutic practices in relational psychoanalysis: A qualitative study. *Psychoanalytic Psychology*, 38, 22-30.

## **Session 4 - THE ROLE OF ABSTINENCE & NEUTRALITY**

We will consider the role of abstinence and neutrality in the psychoanalytic treatment.

Readings:

Dewald, P.A. (2018). The "rule" and role of abstinence in psychoanalysis. *The Technique and Practice of Psychoanalysis*, 2, 35-157.

Brenner, C. (1979). Working alliance, therapeutic alliance and transference. *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, 27 (supp), 137-157.

## **Session 5 - THE REAL RELATIONSHIP**

We will explore the working alliances and the real relationship.

Readings:

Békés, V. & Hoffman, L. (2020). The “something more” than working alliance: Authentic relational moments. *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, 68(6), 1051-1064.

Viederman, M. (1990). The real person of the analyst and his role in the process of psychoanalytic cure. *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, 39(2), 451-489.

Shavit, Y. & Tolmacz. The therapist as an ally of lost good objects. *British Journal of Psychotherapy*, 39, 69-85.

### **Session 6- CULTURE & THE WORKING ALLIANCE**

This class explores intersectionality and its impact on the working alliance.

Readings:

Ulrich, H. E. (2022). Culture, empathy, and the therapeutic alliance. *Psychodynamic Psychiatry*, 50, 51-164.

Friedman, R. C. & Downey, J. (2022). Internalized homophobia and the negative therapeutic reaction. *Psychodynamic Psychiatry*, 50, 88-99.

### **Session 7- ALLIANCES WITH PATIENTS WITH PERSONALITY DISORDERS**

The working alliance in special situations/diagnostic categories will be the focus of this class.

Readings:

Adler, G. (1999). The Alliance and the More Disturbed Patient. *The Therapeutic Alliance*, (pp. 75-91). Classic Books.

Chaplan, R. (2013). How to help get stuck analyses unstuck. *Journal of American Psychoanalytic Association*, 61(3), 591-604.

### **Session 8 –REPAIRING ALLIANCE RUPTURES**

In our last we will evaluate the course as a whole and discuss ruptures and repairs.

Readings:

Safran, J., Muran, J. & Shaker, A. (2014). Research on therapeutic impasses and ruptures in the therapeutic alliance. *Contemporary Psychoanalysis*, 50, 211-232.

Miller-Bottomo, M., Talia, A., Safran, J. D., & Muran, J. C. (2018). Resolving alliance ruptures from an attachment-informed perspective. *Psychoanalytic Psychology*, 35(2), 175–183.