

CONFERR

presents

Reviewing Cure

What is the Goal of Contemporary Psychotherapy?

How do we recognise a healthy outcome to a therapeutic relationship?

How do we conceive mental health in the 21st Century?

How do our values shape therapeutic outcomes?

What happens when our hopes for our clients conflict with their own?

Clinical issues unravelled

2- Day International Conference

Friday 17 (evening) and Saturday 18 June 2005



Information

Venue

The London Voluntary Sector Resource Centre
356 Holloway Road, London N7

Dates

17 and 18 June 2005

Fees

If you are paying for yourself

Paying for yourself£120
Funded by an organization£150
Student at CAPP£100

Refreshments

Teas and coffees are included. A light conference lunch can be booked for an additional £10.

CPD: 6 hours of tuition

Certificates of Attendance will be given.

Further information

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www.confercpd.com

Director of Confer: Jane Ryan

Project Consultant: Judy Yellin

Academic Consultant: Brett Kahr

Programme Manager: Barry Christie

Organisational Consultant: Liz Scott

Booking Conditions

Your place is for your own use only.
Fees must be paid in full before the event.
A 50% refund will be given if you cancel in writing before 3 June 2005

To Book

Please complete the attached booking form and return with payment to Confer, 36a Mildmay Road, London N1 4NG

Confer Ltd Company No. 4962966

Introduction

Confer's project is to bring together the most innovative, experienced and challenging psychotherapeutic thinkers to present work that deepens our thinking about psychotherapy. The theme of this conference goes to the heart of that process: our values and beliefs. We will be asking whether psychotherapy is determined by values that are rarely discussed but which actually guide every therapeutic intervention? How far do our own values (and those implicit in our training) determine the goal and destination of each patient's therapeutic journey?

The inspiration for this event came from Dr Neil Altman's exceptional paper on the subtle role of values in each theoretical school. He explores how each orientation has its own distinct notion of the good life the therapist wants for each patient/client – Plato's term to describe healthy and virtuous living. Following his acceptance to speak, we then started to search for other eminent psychotherapists who are questioning current notions about mental health and the goal of psychotherapy.

Fresh questions began to arise: what is right for the patient? And how do we know? How far is our own notion of mental health a fragile construct that is only relevant to a particular cultural moment? Or can we apply any universal criteria to grasp the nature of the psyche and the psychotherapeutic goal? How do we work therapeutically with a person who holds quite different beliefs about what is right?

We finally assembled an excellent list of speakers from the disciplines of psychology, psychoanalysis, anthropology and philosophy. We are especially delighted to welcome some new speakers to Confer: Dr Neil Altman from New York, Dr Carlo Strenger, who is coming from Israel to present his highly acclaimed work, and Dr Fiona Bowie, a social anthropologist from Oxford and Bristol universities, who has studied the sense of self in different cultures.

Please join us in this fascinating discussion.

Jane Ryan

Programme

Friday evening

7.0 pm **Making the Unconscious Conscious ...? The therapeutic task under review**

Dr Maggie Turp

For many years we have worked on the premise, which can be traced back to Freud's writing on catharsis, that traumatic experiences should on all accounts be consciously remembered and worked through. We have continued for the most part to subscribe to this point of view in spite of new insights generated by neuroscience studies, which indicate that the brain is structured and memory so that repressing and forgetting are sometimes the best way forward. Our assumptions have been shown to be especially questionable where non-English speaking cultures are concerned. And at home and abroad, premature attempts to remember are likely to lead to breakdown rather than to better functioning. Drawing on case examples, I will consider the continuing overvaluation of the concept of catharsis in the face of contrary clinical experience and scientific evidence.

7.45 **Reviewing the Psychotherapeutic Project** **Dr Carlo Strenger**

In offering some challenging ideas about reconstructing psychoanalysis in the context of a fast-changing world, Carlo Strenger will ask what contemporary psychoanalysis can bring to the understanding of Generation X, a generation that is bombarded with material and creative possibility, but which suffers from despair, confusion, and depression. He explores the psychology of young adults who have grown up in a cultural universe defined largely by their contemporaries, and whose developmental path is charted less by conflicts with authority than by the imperative to "design thy self". Strenger will take up a task central to analytic theorists of earlier generations but much neglected in recent years: the shaping impact of cultural experience on psychological development and its implications for a refreshed clinical approach.

8.45 **Drinks reception**

10.0 **End**

Saturday

10.30 am **The Hidden Goals of Psychotherapy and Psychotherapist** **Dr Neil Altman**

Do psychotherapists guide their clients in particular directions, underpinned by personal and cultural notions of what is good and bad? What are the cultural origins of psychotherapy, and what is the culture of psychoanalytic psychotherapy? Neil Altman will assert that theories and technical practices of psychotherapy contain value judgments that are culturally based and often invisible to practitioners and their clients alike. Individual therapists also have idiosyncratic value systems that form an important part of countertransference reactions. The contemporary focus on the impact of the therapist's subjective experience as a crucial part of the psychotherapeutic process directs our attention to these hidden values as a crucial, yet elusive, element in any psychotherapy. This presentation will seek to elucidate some of the hidden moral values in various forms of psychoanalytic therapy and how these values have evolved with recent changes in psychoanalytic theory and practice.

Conference chairpersons: Brett Kahr and Professor Andrew Samuels

11.15 **Discussion**

11.30 **Coffee**

12.0 **Sickness and Sanctity: Cultural Constructions of Well-Being**
Dr Fiona Bowie

What one society considers holy and admirable, another might view as mental illness and stigmatise because social, physiological and spiritual processes are interwoven within specific cultural contexts. Using examples of religious behaviour in medieval Europe, in contemporary Africa, in the Americas, and among Arctic shamans, we will explore some of the religious meanings that various cultures attribute to fasting, possession and drug use.

12.40 **What is the Goal of Good Psychotherapy?**
Dr Susie Orbach

When a patient has a life threatening eating problem that is simultaneously a way of controlling their internal objects, what is the goal of therapy? Susie Orbach will respond to Fiona Bowie's proposition that an eating disorder in western societies might be considered a virtue or strength in another context.

13.15 **Lunch**

14.15 **Bringing hidden value judgments to light: a relational psychoanalytic approach to conflict of beliefs between analyst and analysand**
Dr Neil Altman

Examining the fundamental role of values in the therapeutic task, this presentation will take specific case vignettes to illustrate the type of self-reflection and interactive work necessary to bring hidden value judgments to light. The cases presented will take up situations when there is a specific difference in values between patient and therapist, e.g. around politics, differences in life-style choices, or commitment to religious values such as faith. There will also be cases in which work with a patient may require the therapist to re-think some of the values traditionally thought to be intrinsic to psychoanalytic psychotherapy, such as the privileging of thought and reflection over action.



15.0 **Whose Cure?**
Judy Yellin

Who sets the goals of a therapy – the therapist or the client? How is the therapeutic alliance tested when the client's desires and goals are outside the therapist's frame of reference? Does 'cure' inevitably involve the transplanting of the therapist's values? What, if any, are the limits of a non-judgmental stance? These questions will be considered in the context of some clinical dilemmas – the client's wish to 'change sex', the client's attachment to so-called 'perverse' sexual practices – and how we might begin to conceptualise relational therapeutic goals in such contexts.

15.20 **The Therapist in Conflict**
Dr Carlo Strenger

In compelling clinical stories, Carlo Strenger will introduce us to psychoanalytic patients from Generation X - people for whom the project of re-creating the self has become an adrenalin driven game aimed at chronic high excitement. Through these cases, he will explore how he found a point of useful therapeutic access by working with the dark side of these patients' sense of power. Analytic inquiry revealed the fatherlessness that accompanied the absence of clearly felt authority; the terror of aging that coexisted with post-adolescent norms of sexual attractiveness; the sense of financial failure plaguing those who fell short of the well-publicised success stories of their cultural icons; and the quandary signaled by the competing pulls of ethnic identity and the desire to be part of the global village.

16.0 **Tea**

16.30 **On Endings: how relevant is the concept of cure for psychotherapy?**
Dr Joseph Schwartz

The relationship of psychotherapy to a medical model has always been problematic. And even within medicine the concept of cure is problematic. As the old saying within medicine goes: "I supply the treatment. God supplies the cure". Using clinical vignettes from endings, I will explore to what extent our clients experience shifts in perception, of narrative, of a sense of self, of a capacity to relate and to what extent can we say that they are "better". Put another way, how do we know when a client is "better"? I will raise the question of whether a linguistic model of psychotherapeutic action might in some cases be a more accurate description of what therapy accomplishes: our clients learn to speak about their feelings, which results in making inner conflicts apparent, leading to their resolution. In a linguistic model, can we call learning to speak about our feelings a cure?

Speakers

Neil Altman

Neil Altman, PhD is Associate Clinical Professor in the Postdoctoral Program in Psychotherapy and Psychoanalysis at New York University. He is co-Editor (with Jody Messler Davies) of the leading edge psychoanalytic journal in America, *Psychoanalytic Dialogues: A Journal of Relational Perspectives*. He is author of the book *The Analyst in the Inner City: Race, Class, and Culture through a Psychoanalytic Lens* and co-author of *Relational Child Psychotherapy*.

Fiona Bowie

Dr Fiona Bowie is a social anthropologist at the University of Bristol, and member of Wolfson College Oxford. She carried has out fieldwork in West Africa (Cameroon) and in Wales and has written and taught in the areas of the anthropology of religion, gender, spirituality, ethnicity and identity and kinship. Her published works include *Beguine Spirituality*, SPCK, (1989), *Hildegard of Bingen*, SPCK, (1990), *Women and Missions* (co.ed.) Berg, (1993), *The Coming Deliverer* (ed.), University of Wales Press, (1997), *The Anthropology of Religion*, Blackwell, (2000), and *Cross-Cultural Approaches to Adoption* (ed.), Routledge, (2004).

Brett Kahr (Chairing)

Brett Kahr is Senior Clinical Research Fellow in Psychotherapy and Mental Health at the Centre for Child Mental Health in London, and the Winnicott Clinic Senior Research Fellow in Psychotherapy at the Winnicott Clinic of Psychotherapy. He is also Visiting Clinician at the Tavistock Centre for Couple Relationships, and Senior Lecturer in Psychotherapy in the School of Psychotherapy and Counselling at Regent's College, London. He is the author of several books including *D.W. Winnicott: A Biographical Portrait*, which won the Gradiva Prize for Biography, as well as books on infant mental health, exhibitionism, and forensic psychotherapy. He is the Series Editor of the Forensic Psychotherapy Monograph Series for Karnac Books, and most recently, he has been appointed as the Resident Psychotherapist on BBC Radio 2, hosting the BBC campaign "Life 2 Live".

Susie Orbach

Susie Orbach, PhD is a psychotherapist and writer whose theoretical worked is centred on the therapy relationship, the construction of femininity and rethinking the relationship between the body and mind. She has published extensively on these themes. She was co-founder, with Luise Eichenbaum, of both the Women's Therapy Centre (London) and the Women's Therapy Centre Institute (New York). She is Visiting Professor in the sociology department at the London School of Economics. Her recent books include *The Impossibility of Sex, Towards Emotional Literacy and On Eating*.

Joseph Schwartz

Joseph Schwartz, PhD is a psychoanalytic psychotherapist, supervisor and trainer at the Centre for Attachment-based Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy in London. Trained originally as an experimental physicist at the University of Berkeley, he worked for many years in mental health research before becoming a clinician. His interests include the history of psychoanalysis, intersubjectivity and the psychology of men. Having published widely on the social context of science, his latest book is *Cassandra's Daughter: A History of Psychoanalysis in Europe and America*.

Professor Andrew Samuels (Chairing)

Andrew Samuels is a psychotherapist, university professor and prize-winning author who has been developing ideas about values, politics, masculinity, fathers, gender and sexuality in clinical, cultural and political contexts for many years. Relevant books include *The Father* (1985), *The Plural Psyche: Personality, Morality and the Father* (1989), *The Political Psyche* (1993) and *Politics on the Couch: Citizenship and the Internal Life* (2001).

Carlo Strenger

Carlo Strenger, PhD was born and raised in Switzerland, and was trained both in psychology and philosophy. He has published three previous books and numerous papers on psychoanalytic, philosophical, social, and political topics and lectures widely in the United States and Europe. He is a practicing psychoanalyst and currently holds the post of Senior Lecturer in the Department of Psychology at Tel Aviv University. He is a founding member of the Tel Aviv Institute of Contemporary Psychoanalysis, and previously held teaching appointments at the Philosophy Department of Hebrew University in Jerusalem. Strenger's written work has met with great acclaim. His 1998 book *Individuality: The Impossible Project* was described by as "deeply intelligent and sensitive" (Irvin Yalom) as "illuminating and inspiring .. compelling and accessible" (Christopher Bollas): Joseph Sandler wrote, "Strenger emerges as a unique voice in blending psychoanalytic and existential thought in his courageous investigation of processes of self creation." In his latest book, *The Designed Self: Psychoanalysis and Contemporary Identities*, He explores the psychology of young adults for whom the weight of cultural, familial, and religious traditions has seemingly vanished and the particular challenges that this creates for the psychotherapist working with Generation X.

Maggie Turp

Maggie Turp, PhD is a psychoanalytic psychotherapist and supervisor in private practice and a lecturer on the MSc in Psychodynamic Counselling with Children and Adolescents at Birkbeck College, London. She runs training workshops for counsellors and psychotherapists, helping practitioners to think about and work with the physical expression of psychological distress. These workshops are also a forum for exploring the relationship between symptoms such as self-harm and emotional deprivation, narcissistic wounding and trauma. She is a member of the Editorial Boards of the journals 'Psychodynamic Practice' and 'Infant Observation' Her publications include several journal papers and two books, *Psychosomatic Health: the body and the word* (Palgrave) and *Hidden Self-Harm: narratives from psychotherapy* (Jessica Kingsley). Correspondence is welcomed on maggieturp@aol.com

Judy Yellin

Judy Yellin is a psychoanalytic psychotherapist working in private practice with people of all sexualities and genders from a relational perspective. She also teaches on the psychotherapy training at the Centre for Attachment-Based Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy. As a former lawyer, Judy also has a continuing interest in the relationship between psychotherapy and the law, and provides training on legal topics relevant to therapists and counsellors.

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