



"... multigenerational transmission of trauma is an integral part of human history. Transmitted in word, writing, body language and even in silence, it is as old as humankind."

Dr Yael Danieli

## Introduction

Hidden, and often shrouded in shame and silence, the traumas of our parents, grand-parents and ancestors are deeply woven into the psychological fabric of the living, operating within the psyche as an unseen but potent force, often manifesting as a psychological fixity that leads to vulnerability throughout life.

This seminar, led by two leading American psychotherapists with a special interest in inter-generational trauma, will provide a space to consider how trauma is passed from one generation to the next; how the past traumas of parents or grandparents can manifest in the lives and psychological structures of their descendents and - most importantly - what skills we need to recognise intergenerational trauma, to work therapeutically to break the cycle and free the next generation.

The workshop element of the day will pay attention to the ways in which our own past traumas impact on our clinical engagement with the client/patient's trauma.



## Speakers

### Dr Doris Brothers

Doris Brothers PhD is a psychologist/psychoanalyst whose work is informed by self psychology and intersubjectivity theory. She is a co-founder and training and supervising analyst at The Training and Research Institute for Self Psychology (TRISP) in New York. Her books include *The Shattered Self: A Psychoanalytic Study of Trauma*, which was co-authored with Richard Ulman; *Falling Backwards: An Exploration of Trust and Self Experience*; and *Toward a Psychology of Uncertainty: Trauma-Centered Psychoanalysis*.

### Ms Elizabeth Corpt

Elizabeth Corpt is a practicing psychoanalyst in Arlington Massachusetts, a suburb of Boston/Cambridge. She is a supervising analyst and on the faculty of the Massachusetts Institute for Psychoanalysis, and a teaching associate and clinical supervisor at Harvard University, Department of Psychiatry, Cambridge Hospital Program for Psychotherapy.

## Programme

### 10.0am Engaging Our Dead: intergenerational trauma and the therapeutic relationship

#### Doris Brothers, Ph.D.

Although silent and invisible, the traumatized ancestors of both patients and therapists figure importantly in the therapeutic encounter. Attachment theorists might explain their presence in terms of the largely nonverbal, moment-to-moment relational exchanges that occur between parent and child. According to Dr. Brothers, the resulting traumatic attachments, which involve dissociative processes that reduce the complexity of lived experience and produce rigid and constricting modes of relating, are transmitted from generation to generation. A clinical example illustrates how intergenerational traumas in the histories of both patient and therapist made it impossible for either to fully mourn her dead. Instead, both felt compelled to join them by dissociating aspects of their aliveness. A therapeutic crisis could not be resolved without the recognition of these trauma-generated attachment patterns.

### 12.0 Intersubjectivity and analytic generosity in the treatment of intergenerational trauma

#### Elizabeth Corpt

Analytic generosity - the analyst's use of the whole of her experience for the benefit of her patient - is of particular importance in work with intergenerational trauma. In the case presented, American philosopher Fingarette's concept of spelling-out, or the conscious action of turning oneself toward the knowing of something, is an important aspect of this inter-subjectively informed therapeutic work. We will consider how spelling-out can lead to a break through in disrupting the cycle of trauma being passed from generation to generation, and what that involves.

### 2.30 Workshop: Intergenerational trauma and the therapist Led by Dr Doris Brothers and Elizabeth Corpt

This workshop will provide an opportunity for therapists to explore the ways in which past traumas in their own families affect their work with patients.

### 5.0pm End