NYU Postdoctoral Program Course PDPSA.4588.002
The Psychoanalysis of Work and Organizations: Clinical and Consulting Approaches

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Course Rationale and Description
Work, career, and organizational life are critical arenas in which personality growth occurs, offering the psychoanalyst opportunities to apply clinical skills and play an innovative role both inside and outside the consulting room. This course will help candidates build the competencies necessary to intervene more effectively in work, career, and organizational life, and to learn the basics of psychoanalytically oriented organizational consulting.

Candidates will learn how to apply a psychoanalytic approach along a continuum from work-related issues in clinical practice to executive coaching and organizational consulting. A number of building blocks comprise the foundation of psychoanalytic organizational consulting, each of which will enhance the candidate’s overall clinical competence. These include: understanding the individual’s relationship to work, appreciating the adult developmental dynamics of a career, learning about the executive role and leadership more generally, and utilizing a systems approach to organizations. The aim of the course is to help candidates develop their own model for increased engagement and effectiveness with issues of work, career, and organizational life.

There is a tradition of psychoanalytic writing on work and organizations, and we will cover the key contributions of different theoretical orientations. Candidates will also read some of the relevant non-psychoanalytic literature on career, executive role, and leadership. Required readings are in bold typeface. Case presentations, candidates own experiences in organizations, and examples from my consulting practice will all be used to give participants a greater feel for work in this area.

Course Schedule (all classes meet at 60 W. 13th St., LC)
Saturday, March 14 9AM to 1PM
Saturday, March 28 9AM to 1PM
Saturday, April 11 9AM to 1:30 PM
Session 1 – Work and Clinical Practice

- Introduction
  - A Course in Applied Psychoanalysis
  - Expanding the psychoanalyst’s role
  - Course objectives

Readings

- Work and Clinical Practice
  - Psychodynamics of work – theoretical framework
  - Concept of work disturbance
  - Case presentations – work-related problems and how to treat them

Readings


- How to Work with a Patient’s Career Issues
  - Typical issues in psychotherapy
  - Framework for understanding person/career fit
  - Adult development and career growth
  - Career transitions – loss, change, growth
  - What a career counselor does

Readings


- How Organizational Life Enters the Consulting Room
  - Our own experiences in groups and organizations
  - Authority, role, structure, and culture in our patients’ lives
    - What do we need to know and why
  - Candidate vignettes

- Special issues
  - Changing nature of work and careers
  - Gender issues

Readings:


Session 2 – Organizations on the Couch

- The psychoanalytic tradition
- Principles of systems thinking

Readings


- The Group Relations/Tavistock approach
- Contemporary psychoanalytic frameworks for organizational consultation

Readings


- Organizational diagnosis/assessment
- Interventions
- Candidate and instructor case studies

**Readings:**


Session 3 – Leadership and the Executive Role

- Leadership – the dynamics of power, influence, and status
  - Experiential exercise – personal experiences with leadership
  - Core competencies of leadership
  - Special problems in leadership

Readings


- The executive role
  - Emotional tasks and challenges
  - Interplay of personality and executive functioning

Readings


- Coaching and advising executives
  - What is executive coaching? How is it different from therapy?
  - Different approaches to coaching
  - Psychoanalytic framework for 1:1 work with executives
• Case studies

Readings:


• Learnings and Reflections
  o Can you see yourself in a consulting role?
    ▪ What are facilitating factors and barriers?