

# **Psychoanalytic Perspectives on Addictive Disorders: Integrating Contemporary Theory and Traditional Treatment Approaches**

One Credit Course

Debra Rothschild, PhD

## **Overview:**

For some time there has been a misconception that psychoanalysis is not relevant to the treatment of substance misuse and that analysts should either refer patients who misuse substances to others who use different techniques or abandon their analytic perspective when doing this work. In this class we will explore the many ways a psychoanalytic perspective and particularly a relational psychoanalytic orientation is not only relevant but extremely useful in treating substance use and addictive disorders.

Analysts have been addressing addictions since the early days of psychoanalysis and much of what they contributed is only now being recognized by the field of addiction psychology. With an emerging new paradigm of Harm Reduction Therapy that includes understanding addiction in the context of a “whole person psychology”, “meeting the patient where the patient is at,” and engaging in a mutual, collaborative effort, psychoanalysis has an ever increasing role to play in this treatment .

The class will introduce students to analytic ideas about the understanding of addictive disorders, review the traditional treatment of these disorders, and will elaborate how more current approaches to treatment integrates ideas from both fields, an integration enabled by recent shifts in each that we will explore in the class.

We will begin our study by discussing current trends and techniques in addiction treatment and also exploring students’ experience and expectations of doing such treatment. We will then review some historic writings on substance misuse and discuss how they impact our thinking today and what contributions they have made to current treatment approaches, followed by a look at contemporary relational theories to see how they apply to substance use treatment. In weeks 5 and 6 we will review modalities and techniques frequently engaged in substance use treatment such as cognitive behavioral therapy, sobriety coaching, group and family therapy, psychopharmacology and involvement in 12 step and other self help programs. We will then consider how to integrate these with relational psychoanalysis and see how a relational psychoanalytic context can enhance the effectiveness of these treatments. Throughout the course we will be discussing cases presented by students and instructor and also considering countertransference reactions to specific patients as well as to substance misusers as a group. In the final class we will synthesize what we have learned with in-depth discussions of specific case material from a relational psychoanalytic harm reduction orientation.

## **Class 1: Introduction to Harm Reduction Therapy and Discussion of Therapist Attitudes and Expectations when Treating Substance Misuse**

After exploring students' initial expectations, their experiences with treating substance misusers and some of their preconceptions about it, an overview of the class will be presented, with an explanation of the context in which the class will be taught: Substance use treatment from a Harm Reduction Relational Psychoanalytic perspective. We will talk about some typical countertransference reactions to substance using patients and discuss these in context of students' own experiences and expectations. We will also talk about the place of psychoanalysis in the treatment of substance misuse historically and today and how recent evolution of both fields has brought them closer together. The principles of Harm Reduction therapy will be discussed and brought to life with clinical examples.

### Reading

Rothschild, D. (2007) Bringing the pieces together: Relational psychoanalysis and harm reduction therapy in treatment with substance abusers. Psychoanalytic Perspectives, 5, 69-94

Denning, P. and Little, J. (2012) Practicing Harm Reduction Psychotherapy: An Alternative Approach to Addictions (second edition), Guilford Press:

Principles of Harm Reduction Therapy: pp. 37-46

What Does it Take to Practice Harm Reduction Therapy: 292-296

Objective: Students will become aware of their feelings and attitudes about treating substance misuse and will be introduced to the concepts of Harm Reduction and Integrated Psychotherapy for Substance Use Disorders.

## **Class 2: Classical Psychoanalysis through Ego Psychology: Substance Use as Regression or Adaptation**

Freud and most of his contemporaries framed substance use as a maladaptive, regressive behavior understood through a drive or structural theory model. Other early psychoanalysts wrote about addiction from a perspective in which substance use was seen as an attempt at adaptation, or as Glover termed it, a "progression" in psychopathological states. These laid the ground for the ego psychological views that led to the "Self-medication hypothesis" which continues to inform much of the analytic thinking about substance misuse today. We will review this history, then consider the self-medication hypothesis and the drug of choice phenomenon which both Wurmser and Khantzian describe as a guide to understanding underlying psychopathology. Wurmser comes from a drive theory perspective, while Khantzian sees drug use as an attempt to cope with impaired ego functions, or what he later called psychological vulnerabilities.

Reading (note: This week has a lot of reading. If it is too much, the class will split reading Rado and Glover and a brief synopsis will be given of each in the class)

Freud, S. (1897) Letter no. 79 in The Origins of Psychoanalysis: Letters, Drafts and Notes to Wilhelm Fliess (1887-1902). Also available in, Levin and Weiss (Eds.) The Dynamics and Treatment of Alcoholism: Essential Papers (1994), pp. 51-52. Northvale, NJ: Aronson

Simmel, E. (1929) From Psychoanalytic Treatment in a sanatorium International Journal of Psychoanalysis, 10, 83-86. Also available in Yalisove, D. (1997) Essential Papers on Addiction, New York University Press, pp.69-71

Rado, S. (1933) The psychoanalysis of pharmacothymia (drug addiction), Psychoanalytic Quarterly, 2, 1-23. Also available in Levin and Weiss, pp. 121-134, and in Yalisove, pp.52-68

Glover, E. (1932) On the aetiology of drug addiction. International Journal of Psychoanalysis, 13, 298-328. Also available in Levin and Weiss, pp. 74-80, and in Yalisove, pp. 24-51

Wurmser, L. (1974) Psychoanalytic considerations of the etiology of compulsive drug use, Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association, 22, 820-43. Also available in Yalisove, pp.87-108

Khantzian, E. (1985) The self-medication hypothesis of addictive disorders: Focus on heroin and cocaine dependence, American Journal of Psychiatry, 142, 1259-64. Also available in Yalisove, pp.429-40

Optional: Fenichel, O. (1945) Dynamics of Addiction, in The Psychoanalytic Theory of Neurosis by Fenichel, pp 375-380. Also available in Levin and Weiss, pp 98-104

Objective: Students will learn the history of psychoanalytic perspectives on substance misuse and will learn the concept of framing substance use as an attempt at adaptation rather than a regression or negative act of self-destruction

### **Class 3: Object Relations and Self Psychology Theories of Substance Misuse**

The addict's relationship to the substance of choice and its position as a love object, a transitional object, or a substitute for human relations or functions is a focus of study for several theorists who write about substance misuse from an object relations perspective. We will explore this through the work of Joyce McDougall and Henry Krystal, who talk about addicts' impaired abilities for self-soothing and self-care and the use of the substance as a "transitional object". Similarly, self psychologists also see substance misuse as related to failures of internalization and consequent inability to self-soothe or regulate self-esteem. Self psychologists, such as Kohut, Levin, and Ullman and Paul, see the object of an addiction as serving the function of a selfobject or as Levin puts it, an attempt to make up for missing structure. We will discuss these theories and their implications for treatment.

#### Reading

McDougall, J. (1985) Theaters of the Mind, pp 65-69

Krystal, H. (1977) Self- and object-representation in alcoholism and other drug dependence: Implications for therapy, in Psychodynamics of Drug Dependence, Research Monograph 12, National Institute of Drug Abuse, pp. 88-100. Also available in Levin and Weiss, pp. 300-309.

OR - Optional expanded version, Ch. 10, Self-representation and the capacity for self-care, in Krystal, H. (1988) Integration and Self Healing: Affect, Trauma Alexithymia , Analytic Press

Kohut , H. (1977) Preface to Psychodynamics of Drug Dependence, JD Blaine and DA Julius (eds), National Institute on Drug Abuse Research Monograph Series #12, pp. vii-ix. Also available in Levin and Weiss, pp. 344-346

Levin, J. (1991) Alcoholism and regression/fixation to pathological narcissism, Ch. 27 in Levin and Weiss , pp. 370-385

Optional: Ullman, R.B and Paul, H. (1989) A self-psychological theory and approach to treating substance abuse disorders: The “intersubjective absorption” hypothesis, Ch. 8 in Goldberg, A. (ed.), Dimensions of Self Experience , Analytic Press, pp. 121-141

Objective: Students will learn how object relations and self-psychological theorists conceptualize and treat substance misuse.

#### **Class 4: Contemporary Relational Theories and their Application to Treating Substance Misuse**

This week we consider the treatment of substance misuse from a relational psychoanalytic perspective, beginning with readings that introduce the concepts of dissociation and enactment and reading Lisa Director’s paper that applies these concepts to a clinical case.

##### Reading

Bromberg, P. (1998) Shadow and Substance, in Standing in the Spaces: Essays on Clinical Process, Trauma, and Dissociation, Guilford Press. Section: Dissociation and Conflict, pp. 181-187

Stern, D.B. (2010) Partners in Thought: Working with Unformulated Experience, Dissociation, and Enactment, Routledge, pp. 48-57

Director, L. ((2002) The value of relational psychoanalysis in the treatment of chronic drug and alcohol use, Psychoanalytic Dialogues 12 pp. 551-580

Optional: Burton, N. (2005) Finding the lost girls: Multiplicity and Dissociation in the treatment of Addictions, Psychoanalytic Dialogues, 15: 587-612

Optional: Director, L. (2005) Encounters with omnipotence in the psychoanalysis of substance users, Psychoanalytic Dialogues, 15: 567-586

Objective: Students will learn to apply relational psychoanalytic concepts, particularly the self-state model and the use of enactments to the treatment of substance misuse

## **Class 5: Cognitive Behavioral Approaches and Their Integration**

Cognitive Behavioral approaches have always been central to the treatment of addictive disorders, a condition in which recovery rests on revising behaviors. We will read some of the classic cognitive behavioral literature on treating addictions and discuss how these techniques can fit with a psychoanalytic approach. Marlatt focuses on relapse prevention, recognizing that relapse is a part of most addicts' journey toward recovery and offering clinicians help in accepting and working with it. Miller and Rollnick's Motivational Interviewing has become a standard text for the treatment of substance misuse and is now applied to a variety of conditions by cognitive behavioral therapists. We will see how Miller and Rollnick put several of the basic concepts of psychotherapy, and even psychoanalytic practice, into cognitive behavioral language. We will discuss these in the context of my article which shows how integrating these approaches with a relational psychoanalytic understanding can enhance their effect and deepen the treatment.

### Reading

Witkiewitz, K. and Marlatt, G.A. (2004) Relapse prevention for alcohol and drug problems: That was Zen, this is Tao, American Psychologist, 59, (no.4, May-June), pp. 224-235

Miller, W. and Rollnick, S. (1991) Motivational Interviewing: Preparing People to Change Addictive Behavior, Guilford, ch. 5, Principles of motivational interviewing, pp 51-63

Rothschild, D. (2015) Integrating Relational Psychoanalysis and Traditional Substance Use Treatment in Harm Reduction Therapy, ch. In Bresler, J. and Starr, K. (eds) Relational Psychoanalysis and Psychotherapy Integration, (pp. 161-179)

Objective: Students will learn how cognitive behavioral therapists treat substance misuse and how to integrate these techniques within a psychoanalytic perspective. The ways in which relational psychoanalytic understandings can enhance the effectiveness of behavioral interventions will be demonstrated.

## **Class 6: A Team Approach: Auxiliary supports and treatments**

Addiction is considered a bio-psycho-social condition and treatment often reflects that either when it is provided in an intensive comprehensive inpatient or outpatient program or even when an analytic therapist works with a substance using patient who is also in other treatments, possibly including medication management, group or family therapy, or attending 12 step or other self help meetings. We will discuss these multiple modalities in one half of the class and in the second hour, we will learn about specific medications and the implications of their use.

Readings:

Alcoholics Anonymous ("The Big Book"), Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc. Ch.5, How it works, pp. 58-71

Meyers, R.J. and Wolfe, B.L. (2004) *Getting Your Loved One Sober: Alternatives to Nagging, Pleading and Threatening*, Hazelden. Ch 1, The Program, pp. 1-14

Denning, P. and Little, J. (2012) *Harm Reduction Psychotherapy in Groups*, Ch 10, in Denning and Little, *Practicing Harm Reduction Psychotherapy: An Alternative Approach to Addictions*, second edition, Guilford Press , pp. 249-253

A contemporary review of current medications used to treat addictive disorders at the time the class is underway will be assigned.

Optional: Zweben, J. (1995) *Integrating Psychotherapy and 12-Step Approaches*, ch.6 in Washton, A. (ed), *Psychotherapy and Substance Abuse: A Practitioner's Handbook*, Guilford Press. pp. 124-140

Optional: Khantzian, E., Halliday, K. and McAuliffe, W. (1990) *Addiction and the Vulnerable Self: Modified Dynamic Group Therapy for Substance Abusers*, Guilford Press, ch.1, MDGT: An Overview, pp.1-14

Objective: Students will learn what happens in group and family therapy for addictive disorders. Students will also learn about 12 step programs and how to work with patients who are involved with them as well as how to help patients who can benefit from 12 step become involved. Students will also learn about current psychopharmacology for addictive disorders.

### **Class 7: Countertransference considerations, synthesis and case discussion**

Addicts and substance users are the object of cultural stereotyping and stigmatization and therapists are inevitably affected by these in a variety of ways. Given our culture, being addicted often evokes shame and dynamics even beyond the complex factors that may have led to substance misuse in the first place. These, along with each individual's personal experience and attitudes toward substance users complicate an already complicated phenomenon, countertransference in the analytic encounter. In this final class we will bring together what we have studied over the semester and what we have become aware of in terms of our own attitudes and potential countertransference and apply it to cases. Class members will have the choice to read one or more of several different clinical case presentations or to bring a case of their own to class for discussion. We will use this clinical material to integrate and synthesize what we have learned over the year and to explore final questions and concerns. Discussion will also explore how participants' attitudes and ideas about treating substance misuse may have changed as a result of the class.

### Readings

Selzer, M. (1957) Hostility as a barrier to therapy in alcoholism, *Psychiatric Quarterly*, 31, 301-305

Imhoff, J., Hirsch, R. and Terenzi, R. (1983) Countertransference and attitudinal considerations in the treatment of drug abuse and addiction, *International Journal of the Addictions*, 18, (4). Also available in Yalisove, ch. 16, pp. 292-311

Choose one:

Frankfeldt, V. (2002) Donnie: A Life Apart, Chapter 5 in Tatarsky, A., Complex Problems Require Complex Solutions, pp. 140-155

Hammer, G. (2002) Michael: A Delicate Balance, Chapter 4 in Tatarsky, A., Trust and Relationship as Cornerstones of Successful Psychotherapy, pp. 114-132

Rothschild, D. (2010) Partners in treatment: Relational psychoanalysis and harm reduction therapy, In Session, 66, pp. 164-174

Tatarsky, A. and Kellogg, S. (2010) Integrative harm reduction psychotherapy: A case of substance use, multiple trauma, and suicidality, In Session, 66, pp. 123-135

Objective: Students will learn some common countertransference pitfalls of treating a substance using population and will explore their own attitudes and potential countertransference reactions. They will learn to apply the psychoanalytic theory and ideas we have discussed throughout the course to their clinical work.



