

Short Course

From the Nursery to the Therapeutic Relationship – Developing a Sense of Earned Security with Elaina Vasserman Stokes, PhD, LPC and Elizabeth M Carr, APRN, MSN, BC

Early on in her training, Dr. Elaina Vasserman-Stokes gained valuable experience supporting mother-child pairs in a therapeutic nursery. Years later, while in an analytic training treatment with a young woman, she noticed striking similarities between what she had witnessed in the therapeutic nursery and in the clinical interactions with this adult patient. In this short course, we will describe the observable links between an insecure attachment presentation in the nursery and the differences/similarities in adult treatment. We will also illustrate the way knowledge of attachment research can support therapists during moments in which intense and potentially disruptive affects take center stage in the clinical encounter. These are often the times that developmental trauma powerfully enters the room, affecting the dyad's shared experience.

Included in this presentation is a clinical demonstration of an emerging secure connection between an analyst and a patient within a treatment marked by paralyzing fear and at-times-impassable sadness. Salient moments of conflict and growth will be described with a focus on the ways these exchanges allowed the patient and therapist to more fully visualize their existing connection, compare it to the patient's past experiences of being in intimate relationships, and illuminate the ways the patient begins to develop an emerging sense of trust in her analyst and a greater sense of self-acceptance.

We will also focus on the intersubjective process reverberating between the clinical couple and include a discussion of the therapist's expanding empathic connection with the patient vis-a-vis exploring her own traumatic states that became activated in the clinical work. The supervisory relationship will be highlighted as a mediator of this process. We will also incorporate a discussion regarding the cultural context of this treatment and describe the interactions that led to a deeper understanding of the patient's needs, struggles, and strengths. Specifically, we will highlight issues of belonging and otherness as they appear in this patient's experiences of sexuality, race, gender, and social justice.

This workshop is designed to help participants:

1. Describe the child-mother interactions in a therapeutic nursery setting that have been associated with insecure and disorganized attachment.
2. Identify features of a disorganized attachment, fear without solution, that can become activated in the adult clinical encounter.
3. Describe how understanding from attachment research facilitated Dr. Vasserman-Stokes's empathic responsiveness to her patient in their ongoing clinical engagement.
4. Describe how the activation of the therapist's own traumatic states and their subsequent exploration in supervision, enhanced Dr. Vasserman-Stokes's ability to empathically connect with her patient.

This program is appropriate for clinicians at all levels of experience and offers 2 CEs.

About our Speakers:



Elaina Vasserman-Stokes, PhD, LPC is a child and adult psychotherapist, an Advanced Candidate in the Psychoanalytic Training Program at ICP&P, a clinical supervisor, an adjunct professor at George Washington University Graduate School of Education and Human Development, a research scientist, and a yogi. In her career she has had the privilege of working with people of different ages, cultures, races, ethnicities, genders, and sexual identities. Her approach can broadly be described as insight-oriented and rooted in attachment and relational theories as well as self-psychology. Her expertise rests on meaningful personal experiences and on continuing rigorous training and teaching. She works in private practice with both children and adults. Her passion is play therapy with children under five, with a focus on strengthening early life parent-child relationships. She leans deeply into the values of honesty, complexity, empathy, life-long learning, depth, and humor. She is experienced in talk and play therapies and is bilingual in English and Russian.

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Elizabeth M Carr, APRN, MSN, BC is a Director Emeritus and a Founding Member of the Institute of Contemporary Psychotherapy and Psychoanalysis (ICP+P). She is Co-Chair and a faculty member of ICP+P's Psychoanalytic Training Program, a faculty member of ICP+P's CAPP Training Program, a faculty member of George Washington University Department of Psychiatry, and an Associate Editor of *Psychoanalytic Inquiry*. Publications include papers that explore developmental perspectives in psychoanalysis, contemporary self psychology, and motivational systems theory. She has participated for many years in an Attachment Study Group that focused on the intersection between attachment theory/research and clinical engagement. Participating with Dr. Vasserman-Stokes in this short course provides a way for her to share her enthusiasm for bringing developmental research into clinical practice.

References:

Lyons-Ruth, K. (2015). Dissociation and the Parent-Infant Dialogue: A Longitudinal Perspective from Attachment Research. *Attachment: New Directions in Relational Psychoanalysis and Psychotherapy*, 9, 253-276.

Slade, A. (2014). Imagining Fear: Attachment, Threat, and Psychic Experience. *Psychoanalytic Dialogues*, 24(3), 253-266.

Slade, A. (2014). "Ghosts in the Psychoanalytic Nursery": Response to Lieberman & Harris. *Psychoanalytic Dialogues*, 24(3), 282-286.

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REGISTRATION FORM

Limited space is available.

Name _____ License/Degree _____

Address _____ City, State, Zip _____

Email _____ Cell Phone _____

FEES:

- \$50 ICP+P Members**
- \$25 ICP+P 1st Year Members, 2nd Year Members, Emerging Professionals, MITs, Graduate Student Members, Fellows, and Unaffiliated Students**
- \$25 Unaffiliated Graduate Student Members and Fellows**
- \$70 Non-Members**

For more information or to register, please visit <https://icpeast.org/short-course/> or email administrator@icpeast.org. A refund for cancellation is available up to 10 days before the seminar.

Mail-in registrations should be sent to:
3298 Governor Drive, Suite 22270, San Diego, CA 92192

Continuing education credit: 2 CE credits available for full attendance. The Institute of Contemporary Psychotherapy and Psychoanalysis (ICP+P) is approved by the American Psychological Association to sponsor continuing education for psychologists. ICP+P maintains responsibility for this program and its content. ICP+P is approved by the Maryland Board of Social Work Examiners to offer Category I continuing education credit. As our CE program receives oversight from a licensed social worker, the CE credits we award are highly likely to be recognized by licensing boards in Virginia and the District of Columbia. These continuing education credits meet the ANCC standards for nurses. Marriage and family therapists licensed in the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia may submit these CE credits to their licensing boards. (Marriage and family therapists in other jurisdictions and licensed counselors should inquire with their local Boards regarding continuing education credit.) Attendees from the above professional groups will earn 2.0 CE credits for attending the CE activity. Full attendance is required to receive the designated CE credit. ICP+P is accredited by MedChi, the Maryland State Medical Society to provide continuing medical education for physicians. ICP+P designates this educational activity for a maximum of *2.0 AMA PRA Category 1 Credit(s)*[™]. Physicians should only claim credit commensurate with the extent of their participation in the activity.

** Elaina Vasserman Stokes, PhD, LPC and Elizabeth M Carr, APRN, MSN, BC, as presenters and planners, have informed us that they do not have a conflict of interest and have disclosed that they have no relevant financial relationships with any commercial interests pertaining to this educational activity. Any references to "off-label" (non-FDA approved) use of medication, products or devices will be explicitly disclosed in the presentation.*

CE Credit is granted to participants with documented attendance at individual workshops. Credit will not be granted to registrants who are more than 15 minutes late or depart more than 15 minutes early from a session.