

April 2022 Newsletter



ICP+P Board Elections

Thank you to members whom have already voted. If you have not, please use this link <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/HDDN3V5> to complete the ballot for ICP+P's Board of Directors and amendments to the Bylaws.

VOTE NOW! Voting will end on April 15th.



RPI II Conference #3: Thinking and Working Relationally with Transgender Patients with Avgi Saketopoulou, Psy.D. By Robert Benedetti, Ph.D.

The third weekend of the Relational Perspectives Institute II: Expansion, Challenge and Opportunity featuring Avgi Saketopoulou, Psy.D. and chaired by Robert Benedetti, Ph.D. took place on February 26, 2022 before an international Zoom audience of over 150 participants. The conference, entitled "Thinking and Working Relationally with Transgender Patients" began with a rich theoretical presentation which Dr. Saketopoulou dedicated to her mentor, Dr. Muriel Dimen.



Robert Benedetti, PhD

Her tour de force talk was heavily Influenced by the work of Piera Aulagnier and Jean Laplanche. Dr. Saketopoulou offered a theory of gender/transgender encapsulating her idea that "all genders require the oxygen of recognition." Threaded through her lecture were ideas from Ken Corbett, Virginia Goldner, Dominique Scarfone and Sigmund Freud in a return to his "Three Essays on Sexual Theory." An active question and answer session following the morning lecture.

Both theoretically, and clinically, Dr. Saketopoulou described the syndrome she has termed "massive gender trauma." She emphasized the need to treat gender not as a symptom, but as a viable subjective reality. She further described how unconscious fantasy can be mobilized to manage the painful experience of gender/body mismatch once it has been formed.

The afternoon's clinical presentation described Avgi's work with a trans girl, "Jenny" originally detailed in her award winning 2013 paper, "Mourning the body as bedrock: Developmental considerations in treating transsexual patients analytically, Journal of the

American Psychoanalytic Association, 62(5): 773-806. Dr. Saketopoulou has continued to work with Jenny, and was able to provide a sense of her experience in the years that followed. Conference participants attended small group discussions after the clinical presentation and returned as a large group for a final segment of lively questions and interaction with Dr. Saketopoulou.



A View of Play in Light of Contemporary Psychoanalytic Theory and Practice with Steven Cooper, Ph.D. By Tom Holman

On March 26, Dr. Steven Cooper presented a well-integrated combination of theory and illustrative clinical vignettes on the nature of play in psychoanalysis. The presentation focused on work with adults, though many parts were applicable to child work as well. Following Winnicott, Cooper did not try to give a precise definition of play, but regarded it as a “cluster concept.” He said that psychoanalysis integrates play as therapeutic action. Some thought provoking concepts emphasized by Cooper included being in potential space, being real and pretend at the same time, and bringing the therapist’s self into being able to play. He also discussed how play occurs at the moment of dawning awareness of transference and countertransference enactment. He cited Vygotsky’s work on how external language is internalized in imaginative play. He also discussed mourning as a part of play, including mourning the loss of an unconscious fantasy. Making ourselves available for play with our patients allows patient and therapist to face profound experiences of absence and disappointment with internal objects, and to actively engage this experience in real time within the therapeutic relationship.

Four clinical vignettes were artfully interspersed with theory, as were questions and discussion from the participants. These 4 vignettes often featured the conversion of repetitive patterns into playful exchanges that led to new insights.

A final part of Cooper’s presentation included his insightful discussion of a beautiful poem by Elizabeth Bishop. The poem was a beautiful evocation of coming to terms with loss and observation of the self in different developmental contexts.

It is important to mention that this otherwise wonderful conference did not feature any focus on diversity. Fortunately, two participants brought up issues of play in their work, in relation to their own diversity.



ICP+P Annual Conference

Three Characters in Search of a Story: Empathy as a Complex Relational Achievement

**Featuring Hazel Ipp, PhD and Malcolm Owen Slavin, PhD
Saturday, April 30, 2022**

9:45 am - 4:00 pm Eastern

This conference is appropriate for clinicians at all levels of experience and offers 5.0 CEs

CLICK HERE TO LEARN MORE + REGISTER



We share multiple realms of experience with our patients. Very often, what feels real—what we both deeply trust—emerges through a process of probing and negotiating the universal, human existential challenges around otherness and loss that we inevitably share with our patients. Hazel Ipp and Malcolm Slavin will basically try to show this—show it as it developed over time in an ongoing therapeutic relationship. Their story will revolve around Mal’s treatment of his patient, Adam. We’ll hear Hazel re-narrating how Mal and Adam communicate—how they try to connect and make meaning. Mal resumes his story. Hazel continues to comment. Back and forth, we hear the story develop. What emerges is what Hazel and Mal come to see as a complex form of empathy: A valued empathy that, however, is neither a “stance,” nor a learned “technique.” Rather, through an “adaptive probing” of what is hidden, conflicted and multiple in the other, a kind of complex empathy emerges over time in this relational context. Eventually Adam, Mal’s patient, reads and responds to the story as Mal tells it. He reflects and directly speaks to us through his written commentary on Mal’s story of their years of therapy. As Adam brings us inside his inner dialogue, we hear his subjective experience of the empathic process that Hazel and Mal have come to understand and to call a complex relational achievement.

At the conclusion of this conference, participants will be able to:

1. Describe how empathy can be a complex relational achievement.
2. Identify how adaptive probing, coming to know and be known, works in the process of building trust.
3. Describe how patients may change and develop internally without putting significant parts of their experience into words.
4. Critique Dr. Ipp and Slavin’s concept of complex relationally achieved empathy and apply it to their clinical work through engagement in a small group discussion.

Register Here Now!*

**** If you have already registered for the RPI II Conference Series, you do NOT need to register for this conference. It is the fourth RPI II conference in the series.***



**New Study Group –
The Collective - Cultural, Political, and Spiritual
Dimensions of Relational Work
By Alan Nathan, Psy.D.**



Nathan Alan, PsyD

I'm interested to gather relational clinicians to explore how collective experiences show up in our work. How do we articulate and struggle through collective forms of gaslighting and other attacks on thinking? And how do we open spaces to reignite generative or creative development and transformation on the personal and collective levels. I envision the group having space to learn together through intellectual exploration (e.g., readings, podcasts, etc.) and through discussion of our clinical work.

Leader – Alan Nathan, PsyD (would like to see rolling leadership)

Time – First Friday of the Month 11:30am to 1pm

Location – Bethesda, MD (Planning first session virtually via Zoom)

If interested contact me via email at drahnathan@gmail.com



Training and Education

Fellowship Program 2021-2022

ICP+P's Psychoanalytic Training Program welcomes applications for the 2022-2023 class of its Fellowship Program in Contemporary Forms of Psychoanalysis. The Fellowship Program introduces participants to the ways psychoanalysis has evolved as a relevant clinical practice for the 21st century. This free program gives participants a feel for the types of learning experiences available in ICP+P's training programs and professional community. Seminars draw from a variety of contemporary psychoanalytic perspectives, including self psychology, relational theory, intersubjective systems theory, motivational systems theory, attachment theory, and findings from infant studies. Applications will be accepted between May 2 and July 15, 2022, followed by interviews scheduled with the Fellowship Co-Chairs. Admissions will occur on a rolling basis. There are 9 monthly meetings with different presenters on Saturdays from 2:00pm - 4:00pm.

[Click here to learn more about the program...](#)



News + Notes

Zoom Therapy Group has (2) openings for adults: (1) female and (1) non-binary. Relational approach; leader is Certified Psychoanalyst and Certified Group Psychotherapist with 30 years' experience collaborating with individual therapists and serving clients of many cultures. The group focuses on improving relationships with self and others (partners, family, friends, colleagues) and issues in members' lives. It is open to women, men and gender non-conforming persons (adults of all ages). All cultures welcome. Thursdays at 5 pm. Leader is licensed in MD, DC and VA. For more information, contact (or have client contact) Jonathan Lebolt, PhD, CGP at <https://Doctor-Jon.com>, Therapy@Doctor-Jon.com or (240) 507-7696.



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Please send articles, announcements, artwork, etc. to
Nilou Mostofi, ICP+P Administrator, at icpeast@km-direct.com

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