

**Western Branch Canadian Psychoanalytic Society**  
**Victoria Extension Program**

**CHALLENGING CLINICAL ENCOUNTERS**  
**October 2106 to June 2017**

**Preamble:**

As mental health clinicians, we at times face difficult clinical encounters that cause us to feel doubtful or even defeatist, about our capacities and efforts. We may despair of what is occurring between ourselves and our patient, including the discovery that we have interacted with a patient in an uncharacteristic or unhelpful way. We can feel hopeless about the possibility of extracting ourselves from an impasse, or cynical about reaching someone who feels unreachable. In these situations, we struggle to understand why and try to learn to suffer in a way that can invigorate us.

The overarching aim of this series of seminars is to demonstrate how psychoanalytic technique and theory can provide a means, not only to survive, but to develop a capacity to feel enlivened in the various complex clinical situations in which therapists frequently arrive with their patients.

**Overall Course Learning Objectives:**

1. Participants will see clinical difficulties as presenting, not only threats to the work, but also potential opportunity and space for growth for both patient and therapist.
2. The participants will be able to recognize clinical situations in which the therapist may be provoked to be overactive in an attempt to avoid feelings of helplessness and powerlessness.
3. Participants will deepen their understanding of the experience and value of reverie in relation to difficult encounters.
4. Participants will be able to distinguish between analytic interpretations based on theoretical and technical knowledge and reflective responses to patients' material arising from the deeper unconscious flow of on-going emotional contact or it's absence between the therapist and patient.

**Schedule:** The seminars will be held on Thursdays from 7:30 pm – 9:30 p.m. There will be a theoretical segment for 1 hour followed by a 1 hour clinical segment in which participants will present clinical material.

**Dates:** October 27, November 17, 2016 (note the different week for November)  
January 26, February 23, March 30, April 27, May 25, June 29, 2017

**Organizing Committee:** Catherine Young, PhD; FIPA, Rose Vasta, PhD, FIPA; Elie Debbane, MD, FIPA, Joanne Hoffman, MD, FIPA

**Location:** Victoria: Room 135 Eric Martin Pavilion

**Cost:** \$320 General registration  
\$200 Students, Residents and Candidates

**Readings:** All readings will be made available at registration

**Faculty:** Catherine Young, PhD, FIPA, Rose Vasta, PhD, FIPA

**Withdrawal Policy**

The withdrawal policy of the Extension Program allows for a refund, minus a 10% administration cost, up to five business days before the first class. No refund will be granted as of the first meeting.

## COURSE OUTLINE

### SESSION 1

#### **Breakdown, Breakout or Breakthrough**

**Date: October 27, 2016**

**Facilitator: Catherine Young, PhD**

In this first class, the purpose will be to break out of the confines of theoretical structures and create the possibility of having a 'fire in the theatre' experience through discussion of difficult encounters with patients. At such moments, when the 'real' erupts, there is the possibility of experiencing one another. This will not occur without turbulence that may bring us, as clinicians, to the edge of our tolerance. At such times, the therapist may find the 'white heat' difficult to bear. The aliveness and depth of contact in these exchanges, however, may be transformative for each of the participants. An opportunity and possibility change arises. In the class, without an imposed structure, we will attempt to create a space for an experience together that may emerge out of our mutual reflections and associations as we bring to mind our feelings and images in response to conversation about unforeseen disruptions and eruptions in analytic encounters. In the spirit of bringing our difficulties forward, unbound by theory, the suggestion is to read the texts after the class if or when the desire arises.

#### **Learning Objectives:**

At the end of the class, participants will:

1. Deepen the experience of and have an opportunity to learn more about turbulence in the analytic dynamic.
2. Be able to think about and discuss how reverie and reflection increases one's capacity for analytic presence during intense emotional experiences with patients.

#### **Readings:**

1. Freud, S. (1915). "Observations on Transference-Love (Further Recommendations on the Technique of Psycho-Analysis III)". *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, Volume XII (1911-1913): The Case of Schreber, Papers on Technique and Other Works, p. 157-171.
2. Winnicott, D.W. (1974). "Fear of breakdown". *International Review of Psycho-Analysis*, volume 1, p. 103 - 107.
3. Civitaresse, G. (2005). "Fire at the theatre: (Un)reality of/in the transference and interpretation". *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, volume 86, p. 1299 - 1316.

### SESSION 2

#### **The "Absent" Patient**

**Date: November 17, 2016**

**Facilitator: Rose Vasta, PhD**

#### **Learning Objectives:**

At the end of this seminar, participants will:

1. Be familiar with mechanisms such as somatic exclusion, expulsion via action, splitting and decaathesis, in which the therapist may find him or herself in the presence of a patient who is not available for an analytic experience.

2. Have thought about how the types of personality structure we now routinely deal with in therapy has necessitated a shift in the theories we use to understand our patients.

**Readings:**

1. Green, A. (1975). "The analyst, symbolization and absence in the analytic setting (On changes in analytic practice and analytic experience)—*In memory of D. W. Winnicott*". *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, volume 56, p. 1 - 22.

**SESSION 3**

**The Non-Dreaming Analytic Couple**

**Date: January 26, 2017**

**Facilitator: Catherine Young, PhD**

**Learning Objectives:**

At the end of this seminar, participants will:

1. Be encouraged to think more about the dreaming<—>non-dreaming continuum with a greater understanding of the value of this conceptualization in working with non-symbolic areas of the mind in challenging analytic dynamics.
2. Be able to think about and discuss anxieties aroused in the analyst by the impact of dream material brought into the therapeutic endeavour and discover ways of working with and having creative use of these anxieties in the transference-countertransference.

**Readings:**

1. Cassorla, R., "In search of symbolization: the analyst's task of dreaming" Chapter 10, in Ed. Levine, H., Reed, G., and Scarfone, D., (2013) *Unrepresented States and the Construction of Meaning: Clinical and Theoretical Contributions*, London: Karnac Books, p. 202 - 219.
2. Meltzer, D., (1984) "Resistance to dream analysis in patient and analyst" in *Dream Life*, London: Karnac Books, p. 156-162.

**SESSION 4**

**The Exercise of Power in the Analytic Dynamic**

**Date: February 23, 2017**

**Facilitator: Rose Vasta, PhD**

**Learning Objectives:**

At the end of this seminar, participants will:

1. Be able to recognize clinical situations in which the analyst may be provoked to be overactive in an attempt to avoid feelings of helplessness and powerlessness.
2. Be able to describe ways in which therapists may hope to extricate themselves from these enactments so that they are better able to bear the sadness of the depressive position.

**Readings:**

1. Steiner, J., (2011). "Helplessness and the exercise of power in the analytic session", *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, volume 92, p. 135 - 147.

**SESSION 5****The Patient with No Words - The Disavowed Trauma****Date: March 30, 2017****Facilitator: Catherine Young, PhD****Learning Objectives:**

At the end of this seminar, participants will:

1. Have an understanding of Garon's idea of a 'psychic blank', how it presents as a difficulty in the analytic relationship and how it may be interacted with or against in the counter-transference.
2. Become more curious about how intergenerational trauma and its disavowal can lead to an interminable analysis.

**Readings:**

1. Garon, J. (2012). "From disavowal and murder to liberty". *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, volume 72, p. 33 - 45.
2. Garon, J. (2004). "Skeletons in the closet". *International Forum of Psychoanalysis*, volume 13, p. 84 - 92.

**SESSION 6****The Patient with a False Self****Date: April 27, 2017****Facilitator: Rose Vasta, PhD****Learning Objectives:**

At the end of this seminar, participants will:

1. Be able to describe some of the contributing factors in the development of a false self and have an idea of alterations in the frame that may make treatment of these individuals possible.
2. Have considered how a failure in the process of differentiation from, mourning and symbolizing the primary object can leave a void in the place of a representation of an internal object.

**Readings:**

1. Winnicott, D.W. (1956). "On Transference". *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, volume 37, p. 386 - 388.
2. Reed, G. S., (2009). "An Empty Mirror: Reflections on Non representation". *Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, volume 78, p. 1-26.

**SESSION 7****The Challenge of Autistic Barriers in Analytic Encounters and the Importance of the Internal Setting of The Analyst****Date: May 25, 2017****Facilitator: Catherine Young, PhD**

**Learning Objectives:**

At the end of this seminar, participants will:

1. Be able to think about and discuss Civitarese's perspective on patients who present with autistic constructs and how the analyst's reverie may be a path to emotional connection.
2. Understand the need of the analytic setting as a non-presence in the therapeutic process, especially with patients with symbiotic dependencies.

**Readings:**

1. Civitarese, G., "The inaccessible unconscious and reverie as a path to figurability" Chapter 11. in Ed. Levine, H., Reed, G., and Scarfone, D., (2013) *Unrepresented States and the Construction of Meaning: Clinical and Theoretical Contributions*, London: Karnac Books, p. 220 – 239
2. Bleger, J. (1967). "Psycho-Analysis of the Psycho-Analytic Frame". *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, volume 48, p. 511 - 519.

**SESSION 8****The Somatizing Patient**

**Date: June 29, 2017**

**Facilitator: Rose Vasta, PhD**

**Learning Objectives:**

At the end of this seminar, participants will:

1. Be able to give examples of how, in operational thinking, words are not used to signify things but to duplicate them, giving a sense of having things imposed on the subject.
2. Be able to describe the countertransference experience a therapist might have when encountering a patient with a psychosomatic or essential depression.

**Readings:**

1. Marty P. and de M'Uzan M. "Operational Thinking" in *Reading French Psychoanalysis* ed. by Acorn D., Leighton S. and Weller, A. (2010) London: Routledge, p.449-458).
2. Marty P. "Essential Depression" in *Reading French Psychoanalysis* ed. by Acorn D., Leighton S. and Weller, A. (2010) London: Routledge, p . 459-462.