

Couples Treatment: An Object Relations Perspective

Most therapists recognize the power of the past as it is revealed in the way partners respond to each other. The therapist can be baffled by emotionally intense reactions that seem way out of proportion to the moment. Repeated conflict themes also suggest that the ways partners interpret each other's behavior can only be understood by exploring their individual lived experience. This seminar presents an overview of an object relations approach to working with couples, and describes dynamics that are unique to this clinical approach. You will understand how unfinished business from the past and each partner's relational past can unfold in patterns and postures that work against intimacy. You will also be able to understand how extreme emotional reactions and black & white thinking create instability and specific relationship problems. The seminar will explain a range of techniques that can help couples acquire new ways of responding to each other and strengthening intimacy. You will also understand how the therapist's intuition and reaction to partners is an important source of information that allows insight into the core themes and facilitates the partners ability to heal past wounds while forging deeper intimacy.

Target Audience

Psychologists
Therapists
Social Workers
Psychiatrists
Counselors
Nurses
Course level: Intermediate

Learning Objectives

At the end of this seminar, participants will be able to:

1. Define the concept of splitting and describe a helpful psycho-education intervention
2. Identify a projective identification sequence and understand how unfinished business from the past is repeated in the present.
3. Identify the processes of identification and disidentification and the ways that the family of origin influences relationship expectations and dynamics.
4. identify how changes in their own emotional state may be related to the couple's dynamics, and consider ways to bring that information into the session.
5. Identify how countertransference is a form of projective identification.

Seminar Schedule

Typically begins at 12:00 PM and ends at 3:10 PM Eastern time. There is one 10 minute break. However, check the webinar schedule.

Outline

Begin 12:00 EST

Key Concepts (60 minutes)

The Representational World

Functions (internalizing, soothing and esteem)

Structure (splitting)

Content (projective identification and disidentification)

The Therapists Use of Self (30 minutes)

Exploring the Present in Relation to the Past

Countertransference as a form of Projective Identification

10 minute break

Interventions (90 minutes)

Working with splitting

Identifying the themes in Projective Identifications

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Continuing Education Credit

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The Presenter

Judith Siegel is a Professor at the Silver School of Social Work at New York University where she is Director of the Post Masters Certificate Program in Child and Family Therapy and the Coordinator of the online Post Masters Certificate Program in Advanced Clinical Diagnosis and Assessment. Dr. Siegel also serves as the Editor-in-Chief of the Journal of Family Social Work. She is a recognized leader in the field of couple treatment, and represents an approach that draws from Object Relations, systems and neurobiology. Her books include *Repairing Intimacy* (Jason Aronson), *Countertransference in Couples Therapy* (co-authored with Marion Solomon and published by Norton Press), *What Children Learn From Their Parents Marriage* (Harper Collins) and *Stop Overreacting* (New Harbinger). She has presented her work on Object Relations Couple Treatment throughout the United States, Canada, England, Israel and Australia, and is a regular presenter at the Ackerman Institute for The Family in New York.

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This seminar has been reviewed and approved by Keith Hannan, Ph.D., Phil Rich, LICSW, Daphne Fatter, Ph.D., and Loreen Yearick, MSN, RN. This approval expires on March 1, 2025.

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