

Managing High Risk Professional Relationships

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Course Outline:

- I. Introduction: Advances in Neuroscience, Trauma Theory, and Psychotherapy Research**
- II. Functional Relationships**
- III. Early-Learned Relatedness Modes**
- IV. The Relatedness Modes and Complaint Processes**
- V. When We Are Accused**
- VI. Summary**
- VII. Prevention of False Accusations**

Course Description:

Psychodynamic factors that constitute risks for clients and therapists alike are considered in light of the litigious atmosphere in which psychotherapy is currently practiced. Advances in neuroscience, trauma theory, and attachment research make clear that personality becomes organized according to the kinds of early relationships that are available in the caregiving surround. Modes of relating learned early in childhood tend to reappear in later emotionally significant relationships. Functional professional relationships rely on the capacities of two people to express their experiences with each other and to negotiate an ongoing mutually satisfying relationship. But modes of relating based on early developmental

traumas can mitigate against cooperative understanding and lead to dangerous ruptures in the professional relationship. Suggestions are made for how to manage transference- or resistance-based accusations so that perpetrators of traumas from the past do not become fused and confused with professionals in trust relationships in the present.

Learning Goals:

- To learn how neuroscience, trauma theory and attachment research demonstrate the importance of early relationships for later professional relationships.
- To learn how to identify four general relatedness modes and how they can endanger professional relationships.
- To learn common reactions to being accused that are counter-productive and how best to work with accusations.