

Online WOE Course

Working the Organizing Experience: Transforming Psychotic, Schizoid, and Autistic States

Instructors: Lawrence E. Hedges, Ph.D., ABPP and Joyce Hulgus, Ph.D.

About the Instructors:

Lawrence E. Hedges, Ph.D.

Dr. Hedges is a popular lecturer on therapeutic topics and specializes in dealing with narcissistic, borderline, and organizing level issues and countertransference. He received his doctorate in clinical psychology from the University of Iowa and studied four years at the Reiss-Davis Child Study Center in Los Angeles. He began as a private practitioner in 1970 in Newport Beach and currently practices in the city of Orange, specializing in individual and group consultation with practicing therapists. He is the founding director of the Newport Psychoanalytic Institute where he serves as a training and supervising psychoanalyst. He holds a faculty appointment at the University of California, Irvine, Medical School, Department of Psychiatry. He is the author of ten advanced psychotherapy text books including *Listening Perspectives in Psychotherapy* and *Interpreting the Countertransference*. He is the director of a thirty year clinical research program into the origins of personality as manifest in the transferences, resistances, and countertransferences of psychotherapy.

Joyce Hulgus, Ph.D.

Dr. Hulgus is a clinical psychologist and private practitioner in Corona, California. She is involved in extensive community services as a featured speaker and has been a guest speaker in Alaska for the Chaplain's Division of the Army. She has been interviewed frequently on Christian radio and television programs. She is founder and director of the Lay Counseling Ministries program at her local church and is a contributing editor to "Your Better Self". She was formerly an associate professor and chairperson of the Marriage, Family, and Child Counseling program at Biola University.

Course Description:

Drs. Hedges and Hulgus present clinical work illustrating the most fundamental and treacherous of transference phenomena, the emotional experiences retained from the first few months of life. Hedges holds that it is these transferences that frequently give rise to recovered memories of abuse and false accusations against therapists. The "Organizing Experience" is a term that describes the infant's primary life task of organizing channels to the human nurturing environment--first physiological connections to the mother's body and later psychological connections to the mind of mother and others. Pre-and postnatal infant research demonstrates that many serious problems in forming connections to the physical and psychological environments can and do occur to a greater or lesser extent with all babies. The scars of infantile trauma show up in

psychotherapy in many surprising and not so obvious ways.

The universal traumas in infancy inevitably leave memory traces that affect subsequent interpersonal relationships. The central feature of the organizing transference is the way in which each person disconnects from potentially over- or understimulating interpersonal situations. Infants do not make a reliable distinction between psyche and soma or between self and other so that failed connection between the infant and care-giver is experienced as an excruciatingly painful, agonizing, and terrifying gap in the infant's capacity to maintain control over the essential features required for a sense of well being and aliveness. What becomes conditioned during the organizing period is an avoidance of certain kinds of interpersonal connections, because they have been found by the infant to be traumatizing. Hedges will delineate the ways in which primitive disconnecting experiences manifest themselves in therapy along with a variety of techniques for working with these puzzling and often dangerous forms of transference.

After more than a century of psychoanalytic study into the nature of transference phenomena and transference psychosis, it is now possible to discern exactly how experiences of perceived environmental failure in infancy are manifest in the therapeutic relationship. This course seminar will demonstrate through theory, research, and case illustration how internalized emotional experiences transferred from the organizing period of infancy can be secured for analysis in the psychotherapeutic setting.

Learning Objectives:

- To contextualize work with psychotic transferences within a major paradigm shift that is happening in psychotherapy today,
- To learn a Listening Perspective for responding to organizing (psychotic) experience—whether in limited pockets or in pervasively experienced forms,
- To be able to state how symbolization operates differently in primitive mental states than in more differentiated mental states,
- To be able to state how nonhuman imagery, focus on physical sensations, and orientation in time and space operate in psychotic states,
- To be able to discuss how the organizing transference operates in psychotherapy and how transformation can be achieved through affective connections, nonverbal interpretations, and interpretive touch, and
- To be able to consider how many subjective concerns of the organizing experience can be understood, responded to, and managed in psychotherapy.

Course Outline

Part I

- A. The Nature of the Organizing Experience
- B. Mary: Pervasive Organizing Experience
- C. Charlotte: Pockets of Organizing Experience
- D. The Thought Paradigms of Psychoanalysis
- E. The Paradigm Shift
- F. Relatedness Issues: Four Listening Perspectives
- G. Mythic Relatedness Themes

Part II

- A. The Path to Relatedness
- B. Why People Fail to Organize Psyche
- C. Issues on the Organizing Path
 - 1. The Quest for Contact
 - 2. The Reflexive World
 - 3. The Non-human
 - 4. Body Parts and Sensations
 - 5. The Experience of Touch
 - 6. Transformation
 - 7. Mutual Cueing
 - 8. Confusion of Identities
 - 9. Transitional Activities
 - 10. Primary Identification
 - 11. Idiosyncratic Symbols
 - 12. Disruptions in the Analyst
 - 13. Contact Failure
 - 14. Breaking Contact
 - 15. Psychotic Transference
 - 16. The Mimical Self
- D. THEMES OF THE ORGANIZING EXPERIENCE
 - 1. Private Madness is Universal
 - 2. Terror of Contact is Central
 - 3. The Organizing Transference Functions to Prevent Bonding
 - 4. Resistance is to the Emergence of the Psychotic Mother Transference
 - 5. Interpretation is Concrete and Paraverbal
 - 6. Countertransference Brings its Own Madness
 - 7. All Organizing States are Transformable
 - 8. The Backdrop is Sustained Contact
- E. THE PARADIGM SHIFT IN PSYCHOANALYSIS
 - 1. From Healing to Consciousness Raising
 - 2. Scientific Objectivity to Systematic Subjectivity
 - 3. Historical Truth to Narrative Truth
 - 4. Relative to Quantum Realities

5. Mythical Beasts to Listening Perspectives
6. Frame Techniques to Variable Responsiveness

F. LISTENING PERSPECTIVES

1. The Personality in Organization:
The Search for Relatedness
2. Symbiosis and Separation:
Mutually Dependent Relatedness
3. The Emergent Self:
Unilaterally Dependent Relatedness
4. Self and Other Constancy:
Independent Relatedness

G. COUNTERTRANSFERENCE TO THE ORGANIZING EXPERIENCE

1. The belief that the person is somehow so defective that they can only be treated chemically, physically, or supportively.
2. The fear of psychotic energies being directed at the person of the analyst.
3. Organizing transferences stimulate the analyst's own organizing yearnings, traumas, and fears.
4. An analytic listener may break contact out of empathy with the analytic speaker.

H. COMMON SUBJECTIVE CONCERNS OF THE ORGANIZING EXPERIENCE

1. I feel very crazy.
2. I feel like I'm falling apart or dying.
3. I fear I won't be able to find you when I need you.
4. If I cannot hold onto mother I'll die (need, failure, persuasion, defense).
5. I am overwhelmed by what seems easy to you.
6. I need not to be pressured or rushed.
7. There must be time and space for my spontaneous gestures to be met.
8. I must be allowed to establish a continuity of being and a rhythm of safety.
9. I need to hear, see, smell, and feel you.
10. I need to have a total body experience.
11. I need you to be alive to me.
12. Please be available or don't tantalize me.
13. I need you to relate to my sense of time and space.
14. Don't expect me to have more ego skills than I do.
15. Show me in practical, concrete ways how I can hold onto you long enough to organize myself.
16. Please don't kill the baby.
17. Don't agree to hold me if you intend to drop me.
18. Don't assume I'm connected when I'm not.
19. Please search for my sense of life. Show me how to connect to you with it.