

09-233b Working with Difficult Adolescents: Advanced Treatment Strategies from Object Relations and Relational Perspectives – 6 Hour Seminar

Susan Bliss, Ph.D., L.C.S.W.

Saturday, June 20, 2009 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Course Description

This seminar is geared toward practitioners who are interested in further developing their theoretical grounding as well as refining intervention strategies with difficult adolescents. The seminar will begin with a review of object relations theorists including Winnicott, Klein, Kernberg and Fairbairn and understanding their contributions as they relate specifically to adolescents. We will also touch on the writing of several Relational theorists such as Aron, Wachtel, and Renick, again applying their thinking to work with adolescents. Using theory as a foundation, we will re-examine the meaning of adolescent behaviors such as eating disorders, substance abuse, self-mutilation, and suicide. Case material from the instructor and participants will be used to focus on strategies for understanding the communications of adolescents and working with resistance, transference and countertransference, and projective processes in the treatment situation. There will be special consideration given to understanding borderline and narcissistic personality disorders in adolescence and the difficult treatment challenges they present, such as denigrating the therapist, silence, missed appointments, and dangerous acting-out between sessions.

Faculty: Susan Bliss, Ph.D., L.C.S.W. – Adjunct instructor Southern CT State University. Private practice, Ridgefield, CT. Former Senior Clinical Lecturer in Social Work, Adolescent Department, Tavistock Centre, London, UK. Former Psychotherapist, American Psychotherapy Associates, London, UK. Author.

Learning Objectives:

1. Participants will be able to identify major contributions of several important object relations and relational theorists.
2. Participants will be able to apply object relations theory and relational theory to clinical work with adolescents and increase their understanding of adolescent communications.
3. Participants will develop a variety of treatment strategies to work with difficult adolescents, specifically the ability to use the treatment relationship to address the adolescent's internal struggles and problematic behaviors.

References and Recommended Reading

- Anderson, R. (1998). Suicidal behavior and its meaning in adolescence. In R. Anderson & A. Dartington (Eds.), *Facing it Out: Clinical Perspectives on Adolescent Disturbance* (pp.65-78). Great Britain: Redwood Books, Ltd.
- Briggs, Stephen. (2002). *Working with Adolescents: A Contemporary Psychodynamic Approach*. Palgrave, Macmillan.
- Hughes, Judith (1989). *Reshaping the Psychoanalytic Domain: The work of Melanie Klein, W.R.D. Fairbarin, and D.W. Winnicott*. Berkeley: University of California Press.