



COMMUNITY
WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA COMMUNITY
FOR PSYCHOANALYTIC THERAPIES

Syllabus:

Exploring Projective Identification in Theory and Practice

Class 1: Foundations of Projective Identification

Speaker: Loren Sobel M.D.

Date: Tuesday, January 14, 2025

Time: 6:15 pm – 9 pm

Seminar

2.75 CE Credits

Fee: Free to Members; Pay-What-You Can Model to Non-Members per our
Seminar Series Guidelines

For general programming questions email: inquiries@wpacommunity.org

Description This class introduces participants to the theoretical underpinnings and foundational dynamics of projective identification. Using readings by Elizabeth Spillius (*Clinical Experiences of Projective Identification*) and Michael Feldman (*Splitting and Projective Identification*), we will explore how projective identification extends beyond defense to function as a fundamental relational mechanism. Participants will engage with the historical development of the concept and its role in shaping our understanding of psychic processes such as splitting, projection, and the construction of internal and external object relations. Special emphasis will be placed on considering what projective identification reveals about the nature of unconscious communication and the structure of the psyche.

Learning Objectives:

1. Explore the evolution of projective identification as a psychoanalytic concept, considering its origins and significance in understanding unconscious processes.
2. Describe how splitting and projective identification contribute to the development of internal object relations and the psyche's capacity to manage anxiety.
3. Explain the broader implications of projective identification for understanding human relationships and unconscious communication.

Required Readings:

1. Spillius, E. (1992). *Clinical Experiences of Projective Identification*. *New Library of Psychoanalysis*, 14, 59–73.
2. Feldman, M. (1992). *Splitting and Projective Identification*. *New Library of Psychoanalysis*, 14, 74–88.

Optional Readings:

1. Nielsen, A. C. (2019). Projective identification in couples. *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, 67(4), 593-624. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0003065119884943>
2. Aronson, S. (2023). Karl Abraham, the origins of projective identification and the day of atonement. *The Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, 92(3), 499-514. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00332828.2023.2272609>

The Speaker: Dr. Loren Sobel earned his medical degree from the University of Chicago Pritzker School of Medicine and completed his psychiatry residency at the Western Psychiatric Institute and Clinic at the University of Pittsburgh where he served as Chief Resident for Psychotherapy Training. He is a graduate psychoanalyst in adult psychoanalysis from the Pittsburgh Psychoanalytic Center. Dr. Sobel is a volunteer Clinical Faculty member at the University of Pittsburgh, and an active Faculty member at the Western Pennsylvania Community for Psychoanalytic Therapies where he teaches psychoanalytic theory and technique. Dr. Sobel serves on the board for the Clinic Without Walls, a low-fee clinic that provides psychodynamic psychotherapy to the community for those who are uninsured or underinsured. He provides ongoing supervision and consultation to psychiatry residents and psychotherapists in the community.

For additional information on the background and experience of the speaker, or to request the speaker's CV, please contact inquiries@wpacommunity.org or see our faculty section on our website at www.wpacommunity.org

Who Should Attend and Instructional Level of Activity: Psychologists, psychiatrists, social workers, counselors with interest in advancing their understanding and application of contemporary psychoanalytic concepts. Instructional level is suited for practicing mental health clinicians. Intermediate level of instructional programming.

<p>Continuing Education Credits: 2.75 The Western Pennsylvania Community for Psychoanalytic Therapies is approved by the American Psychological Association to sponsor continuing</p>
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education for psychologists. The Western Pennsylvania Community for Psychoanalytic Therapies maintains responsibility for this program and its content.

Attendance: To receive continuing education credit, you must sign in and be present for the entire seminar. You will be asked to complete an evaluation at the end of the session.

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