

TREATING COMPLEX TRAUMA IN ATTACHMENT RELATIONSHIPS

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Workshop Description

This day-long workshop addresses the challenges for patients and therapists in the treatment of a wide range of problems stemming from trauma in early attachment relationships. The concept of “mentalizing” will be employed as a fulcrum for understanding both the nature of the trauma and the means of overcoming it; the essence of mentalizing is attentiveness to mental states in oneself and others, that is, holding mind in mind. In a process of intergenerational transmission of trauma, mentalizing failures in parenting beget impaired mentalizing in children which may continue into adulthood. Conversely, mentalizing begets mentalizing, which is the essence of treating persons who have been traumatized in attachment relationships. This workshop will review the multifaceted nature of attachment trauma, ways of promoting mentalizing in trauma treatment, and the emotional challenges for therapists in treating patients who have suffered attachment trauma.

Workshop Objectives

1. Participants will understand the various facets of attachment trauma and its distinctiveness from other forms of trauma.
2. Participants will learn the developmental factors that promote and impair mentalizing.
3. Participants will learn ways to balance processing of traumatic memories with strategies for containment, both of which depend on mentalizing on the part of the patient and the therapist.
4. Participants will appreciate the importance of applying what they learn to themselves in managing the stress associated with treating trauma.

Workshop Schedule

Morning Session

Attachment Trauma and Complex Psychopathology
The Role of Mentalizing in Trauma and Healing

Afternoon Session

Balancing Processing and Containment in Promoting Mentalizing
Coping with Trauma for Therapists