

Preconference Workshops

Thursday, September 21, 2017

FULL DAY 8:30AM – 5:00PM

How and Why Therapeutic Assessment Works

Room 104

Stephen E. Finn, Ph.D. | Center for Therapeutic Assessment, Austin, TX

Many research studies now support the efficacy of Therapeutic Assessment (TA) with a variety of clients, and over the past 20 years a working theory has emerged about why and how TA works. In this introductory workshop, Dr. Finn will summarize the research on TA and explain current thinking about the therapeutic elements in TA. Dr. Finn will then review the basic steps in TA and illustrate each with “classic” videos of him working with actual clients. This training will focus mainly on TA with adults, but will also include case examples and discussions of TA with children, adolescents, and couples.

MORNING SESSION 8:30AM – 12:00PM

Ultra Brief Therapeutic Assessment: Simplicity is the Ultimate Sophistication

Room 107

Hilde De Saeger, M.S. | Viersprong Institute for the Study of Personality Disorders, The Netherlands

Pamela Schaber, Ph.D. | Center for Therapeutic Assessment, Austin, TX

The presenters will discuss the application of an ultra-brief (i.e., 2–3 hours) empirically supported model of Therapeutic Assessment (TA) with adult clients and illustrate it with video clip and role plays. This training is intended for clinicians who are interested in TA but are limited to implement the full model in their settings. The ultra-brief version of TA is most applicable to distressed, help-seeking clients in inpatient and outpatient treatment settings. Participants will learn how to conduct focused initial interviews, do optional, effective brief assessment intervention sessions, and give focused feedback. It requires expertise in one valid adult self-report inventory (MMPI-2, MMPI-2-RF, PAI, or MCMI-III).

Using the AAP in Therapeutic Assessment: Addressing the Origins of Adolescent Shame

Room 108

Melissa Lehmann, Ph.D. | Center for Therapeutic Assessment, Austin, TX

Carol George, Ph.D. | Mills College, Oakland, CA

This workshop will demonstrate how to integrate the Adult Attachment Projective Picture System (AAP, George & West, 2012) in Therapeutic Assessment with an adolescent in order to reduce shame. A specific focus will be paid to how this semi-structured assessment model can provide a supportive and therapeutic environment in which to talk about attachment information in order to increase the client’s understanding of her emotional difficulties and reduce shame attached to her life-long struggles. The workshop will begin with an introduction to the case in regards to relevant background information and family relationships. This will be followed by a brief discussion of shame and a summary of the client’s MMPI-A and Rorschach testing results. The presenters will then discuss attachment theory constructs, highlighting the use of the AAP within the Therapeutic Assessment model, and how understanding a client’s specific attachment pattern can help direct the therapeutic agenda and enhance client-assessor relationship. The workshop will then return to the case example and demonstrate how an extended inquiry of the client’s AAP stories helped initiate a discussion on shame, which allowed the client to begin seeing her difficulties in a new light. The presenters will then highlight how Therapeutic Assessment can help reduce shame and provide the assessor and client with an opportunity to begin weaving a new, more compassionate, life story.

Preconference Workshops

Thursday, September 21, 2017

AFTERNOON SESSION 1:30PM – 5:00PM

Using a Collaborative/Therapeutic Assessment Model in Diagnosing Adults with an Autism Spectrum Disorder

Room 107

Dale Rudin, Ph.D. | Center for Therapeutic Assessment, Austin, TX

Dr. Rudin will discuss how to utilize a Therapeutic Assessment approach in the assessment of adults who present with behaviors and concerns that are consistent with an Autism Spectrum Disorder. She will discuss differential diagnoses, useful assessment tools, and how to involve clients as collaborators in the assessment process. A key message will be that clinical judgment is essential in making a diagnosis of an ASD. Points will be illustrated with videos of actual clients, and participants will be actively involved in the workshop.

Missteps and Repairs in Therapeutic Assessment: Learning from Past Errors and Raising Awareness about their Potential

Room 108

Filippo Aschieri, Ph.D. | European Center for Therapeutic Assessment, Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Milan, Italy

Francesca Fantini, Ph.D. | European Center for Therapeutic Assessment, Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Milan, Italy

Missteps in Therapeutic Assessment (TA) can result in negative reactions to the assessor, experiences of misattunement, and even drop out. They can also hinder the achievement of the goals of TA, making it impossible to respond therapeutically to client's assessment questions and affect as it arises. Missteps are often bound to assessors' personality characteristics, misunderstandings about their role as a TA practitioner, and incomplete or inaccurate case conceptualizations. Each can negatively impact various TA steps and lessen the potential effectiveness of the model. Therefore, missteps can be important learning and growth opportunities that can increase self-awareness about how to provide responsive and effective professional help to clients and enhance capacity to integrate data to form more complete and accurate case conceptualizations about client's personality, needs, and struggles. This workshop will focus on missteps in initial sessions, in assessment intervention sessions, and in summary and discussion sessions. During initial sessions, participants will focus on missteps in negotiating the framework of the assessment (e.g., What does collaboration mean? What are the assessor's responsibilities? What are the responsibilities of the client?), and on balancing hope in the treatment and humility (i.e., How to cope with idealizing and devaluing transferences to the assessor). In intervention sessions, participants learn how to avoid missteps in their attempts to modulate the level of emotional arousal (i.e., Determining when the target of the intervention session is adequately arousing. Repairing when the session is too "challenging" for the client.). Finally, participants will learn about problems in writing fables for children at the end of the assessment and how to avoid overwhelming or hurting either the child or his or her parents. For each step of the TA, the workshop leaders will provide case scenarios and will lead small group discussion about the variables to take into account in avoiding the missteps that actually occurred in real TAs. Attending this workshop will be valuable for clinicians interested in fine tuning their TA skills by reflecting on the rationale of different clinical choices and techniques with TA clients.