

Groups and Dreams (OYPSS, Fall 2024)

“All groups stimulate and at the same time frustrate the individuals composing them; for the individual is impelled to seek the satisfaction of his needs in his group and is at the same time inhibited in this aim by the primitive fears that the group arouses.” (Bion, 1961, p.188)

“The interpretation of dreams is the royal road to a knowledge of the unconscious activities of the mind.” (Freud, 1900, SE 5, p 608)

In VPSG’s fall OYPSS offering, we will explore two fascinating areas: (1) groups, and (2) dreams. An introductory approach will be taken to whet the appetite and bring forth basic concepts in these two areas.

The first 3 classes will dive into the ingenuity of Wilfred Bion’s observations and explorations of group processes and the tension that exists between two types of mental activities present in all groups: the “work group” experience, and the dynamical push-pull of the “basic assumptions.” We will learn of the unconscious pressures and anxieties that any group affiliation can elicit, as the mind wrestles with “...the need to be a member of groups and its need to know the truth of its experience...” (Schneider, 2015). Bion’s work in groups also hints at the development of pivotal Bionian concepts to come – concepts that will broaden and deepen psychoanalytic thinking overall. Consideration will be given to how Bion’s group concepts can inform one’s own experience of learning in groups.

The second set of 3 classes will focus on dream interpretation and its relevance in clinical practice. We will read certain classical and contemporary theories of dreams to begin to delineate several concepts important to working with dreams. More specifically, we will see how dreams offer glimpses into intrapersonal and interpersonal dynamics. And we will consider how joint exploration by the therapist and client of dreams can help build trust in the therapeutic dyad (a group of sorts) and help the delicate process of uncovering inner conflicts, traumas, and repressed desires.

Dates:

Tuesday evenings, 7:00 – 8:30

October 1, 15, 29; November 12; December 3, 17

Place: 4 sessions will be in person (Oct 1, 29; Nov 12, Dec 17)

Hotel Vermont, American Room

41 Cherry Street, Burlington, VT

2 sessions will be online using Zoom (Oct 15, Dec 3)

Faculty: Betsy Sprague and Johanna Boyce

Fee: \$330

Registration information on VPSG website: vermontpsychoanalytic.org

- For further questions about the course itself, please contact Betsy Sprague, OYPSS Coordinator at ecs4i@comcast.net
- For further questions regarding enrollment, please contact Denise Russell at admin@vermontpsychoanalytic.org