

# Understanding and Using Dreams

## Introduction and Syllabus

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There are two primary goals we have in this class:

To increase our knowledge of the history of how clinicians have understood dreams and viewed the place of dreams in therapeutic work

To expand our capacity to listen and think about technical choices when a dream appears in a session

To achieve this, we will spend some time discussing a number of papers that present theoretical views of dreams and consider the usefulness of these theories in our own clinical work. The class sessions will often be split between a consideration of the papers and a detailed exploration of a particular clinical example.

The course is divided into two four-week segments. During the first segment, we will read the sections of Thompson and Cutlove's chapter on modes of listening to dreams. We will explore the classic wish fulfillment model, self-states, trauma dreams and dreams as communication.

During the second segment, we will dive into reading parts of Freud's Interpretation of Dreams. We will focus on some of his core concepts and how he came to them through the investigation of his own and his patients' dreams.

From the outset, we will use part of each class to approach our own dream examples by applying to them Freud's model for analyses of dreams. Consider this part of our class a laboratory that is different from what happens in the treatment room but *is* still a related experiment. We will take turns presenting a patient's dream (see below) and then discuss it using the following format:

- 1) Apply as a group some of the associative techniques to see if it can clarify the wishes and defenses of the patient.
- 2) What is the relationship between the manifest content and latent content, and what do we mean by those terms?
- 3) How can we develop a strategy for making the latent content as clear as possible to ourselves?

As you are anticipating the class, it will be helpful to begin focusing on case examples in your practice. Perhaps you can begin to develop case examples by jotting them down.

During the course, we have two written requirements:

- 1) We want written feedback after each class in the form of an email to the two of us by the Friday of the same week of the class. We'd like you to answer two questions:
  - a. What did you learn?
  - b. What questions and reservations do you have about the week's readings?
- 2) We would like you to keep a journal for 2-3 weeks out of every 4-week phase wherein you reflect on a dream or dreams from your clinical work. The goal of the journal is to apply what you are reading to a clinical case. We will collect these at the midpoint of the course and at the end. (These are due on November 17 and December 15)

Cases for our discussion:

Once or twice in the seminar, you are expected to present a dream example. Please describe the dream as a patient told it to you and any associations that emerged in the hour (and/or that you have to the dream including what you know about the patient). Please be prepared to say just a little bit about the context (e.g. when in the treatment and what is going on- please don't spend too much time on the context). One of the teachers will bring a case example for the first class, and we will assign weeks for case examples on the first day. Please plan to bring printed copies for everyone of the manifest dream, itself, when you are presenting.

## References

Thompson, J. M. and Cotlove, C. (2005). Listening. *The Therapeutic Process: A Clinical Introduction to Psychodynamic Psychotherapy* (pp. 93-134). Jason Aronson.

The Thompson and Cotlove reading focuses on analytic listening using several different models for listening. We will read the chapter over a period of weeks as background for the topics we'll be discussing (pages for the weekly readings are given below).

### Session 1: Wish Fulfillment/Defense

Concepts: Manifest dream and latent dream, day residue, dream-work

- 1) Thompson, J. M. and Cotlove, C. (2005). *The therapeutic process: A clinical introduction to psychodynamic psychotherapy* (pp. 93-107). Jason Aronson.
- 2) Greenson, R. (1970). The exceptional position of the dream in psychoanalytic practice. *Psychoanalytic Quarterly* 39, 519-549

### Session 2: Trauma

How do we think about traumatic dreams? Do they have elements of wish fulfillment

- 1) Thompson, J. M. and Cotlove, C. (2005). *The Therapeutic Process: A clinical introduction to psychodynamic psychotherapy* (pp. 107-112). Jason Aronson.
- 2) Brunkow, K. (1996). Working with dreams of survivors of violence: Facilitating crisis

intervention with a psychoanalytic approach. In J. Edward and J. Sanville (Eds). *Fostering health and growth a psychoanalytic social work approach* (pp. 212-225). Jason Aronson.

- 3) Adams-Silvan, A., Silvan, M. (1990). A dream is the fulfillment of a wish: Traumatic dream, repetition compulsion, and the pleasure principle. *Int. J. Psycho-Anal.*, 71, 513-522.

### **Session 3: Self-States, Dreams and Affect-**

From the perspective of self psychology, how might we think about the dream as a reaction to threats to the sense of self? How about the ideas of dreams as an attempt to organize our emotions and thoughts?

- 1) Kohut, H. (1977). Restoration of the self. *IUP*, 108-111.
- 2) Thompson, J. M. and Cotlove, C. (2005). *The therapeutic process: A clinical introduction to psychodynamic psychotherapy* (pp. 113-119). Jason Aronson.
- 3) Fosshage, J.L. (2007). The organizing functions of dreaming: Pivotal issues in understanding and working with dreams. *Int. Forum Psychoanal.*, 16(4), 213-221.

### **Session 4: Dreams as communications/ mixing models; Technical implications**

- 1) Thompson, J. M. and Cotlove, C. (2005). *The therapeutic process: A clinical introduction to psychodynamic psychotherapy* (pp. 119-124). Jason Aronson.
- 2) Luepnitz, D. (2009). Interpreting dreams in psychotherapy with couples: Moving between the upper and the lower worlds. In Laskas, C and Pocock, D. *Systems and psychoanalysis: Contemporary integrations in family therapy* (pp 37-71). Karnac Books.
- 3) Thompson, J. M. and Cotlove, C. (2005). *The therapeutic process: A clinical introduction to psychodynamic psychotherapy* (pp. 127-132). Jason Aronson.

### **Session 5: Using Associations; Manifest Dream/ Latent Dream**

In the next few session , we will focus on Freud's works about dreams. In this session, we will focus on the concepts of manifest and latent content and day residue.

- 1) Freud, S. (1900). Method of interpretation of dreams: An analysis of a specimen of a dream. In Strachey (Ed. & Trans). *The Standard edition of the complete psychological works of Sigmund Freud* (Vol 4, pp. 96-112). Hogarth Press.
- 2) Freud, S. (1900). Distortion in dreams. In Strachey (Ed. & Trans). *The Standard edition of the complete psychological works of Sigmund Freud* (Vol 4, pp. 137-162). Hogarth Press.
- 3) Pulver, S. (1987). The manifest dream in psychoanalysis: A clarification. *J. Amer. Psychoanal. Assn.*, 3, 99-118.

### **Session 6:** Day Residue / Dreams and Memory

- 1) Freud, S. (1900). Botanical monograph dream. In Strachey (Ed. & Trans). *The Standard edition of the complete psychological works of Sigmund Freud* (Vol 4, pp. 169-176). Hogarth Press.
- 2) Palombo, S.R. (1988). Day residue and screen memory in Freud's dream of the botanical monograph. *J. Amer. Psychoanal. Assn.*, 36, 881- 904.

### **Session 7:** Dreamwork

In this session we will discuss the ideas of dreamwork and “means of representation.” How is sleeping mentation different from waking mentation?

- 1) Freud, S. (1900). The work of condensation. In Strachey (Ed. & Trans). *The Standard edition of the complete psychological works of Sigmund Freud* (Vol 4, 277-304). Hogarth Press.
- 2) Freud, S. (1900). The work of displacement. In Strachey (Ed. & Trans). *The Standard edition of the complete psychological works of Sigmund Freud* (Vol 4, 305-309). Hogarth Press.

### **Session 8:** Means of Representation and limits of Representability

- 1) Freud, S. (1900). The means of representation in dreams. In Strachey (Ed. & Trans). *The Standard edition of the complete psychological works of Sigmund Freud* (Vol 4, 310-338). Hogarth Press.
- 2) Freud, S. (1900). Considerations of representability. In Strachey (Ed. & Trans). *The Standard edition of the complete psychological works of Sigmund Freud* (Vol 5, 339-349). Hogarth Press.

### Other Readings of Interest:

- 1) Fosshage, J.L. (1988). Dream interpretation revisited. *Progr. Self Psychol.*, 3, 161-175.
- 2) Ogden, T.H. (2003). On not being able to dream. *Int. J. Psycho-Anal.* 84, 17-30.
- 3) Da Rocha Barros, E.M. (2002). An essay on dreaming, psychical working out and working through. *Int. J. Psycho-*, 83, 1083-1093.
- 4) Ogden, T. H. (2017). Dreaming the analytic session: A clinical essay *Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, 86, 1-20.

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