

# Perspectives on Change

## Change Processes and Change Mechanisms in ISTDP

Conference and Immersion Training  
Friday 26th – Saturday 27th April 2024

### Programme Details



#### **Dr Leo Russell**

**Presentation:** Mechanisms of change in ISTDP for functional symptoms

**Summary:** Functional disorders for some people can be understood as a kind of psychological autoimmune disorder. In this presentation, Dr Leo Russell provides a framework for making sense of the links between adversity, emotional processing, and functional symptoms. He then illustrates mechanisms of change drawn from ISTDP through a series of video vignettes.

#### **Dr Rohan Naidoo**

**Presentation:** The Fire & The Sponge: Defence restructuring as a mechanism of change in the fragile patient

**Summary:** Rohan will be presenting work with a patient on the fragile end of the spectrum of psychopathology. Looking at material over two sessions, the sequence of excerpts shows a range of change processes in ISTDP, which weave together into a pattern that, when repeated, creates the conditions for positive clinical change.



#### **Dr Sharon Lewis**

**Presentation:** Theoretical and technical differences/innovations of the AB-ISTDP model

**Summary:** This presentation will explore theoretical and technical aspects of Attachment-Based ISTDP as they have been developed by Dr Robert Neborsky, MD. AB-ISTDP applies the clinical insights and techniques of Davanloo's ISTDP further informed by research on attachment and emotion regulation. This approach emphasizes the importance of identifying and challenging internalised working models which are based on earlier insecure or pathological attachment bonds. Effective techniques for identifying and working with the pathological superego early in the treatment process is a key focus. The AB-ISTDP therapist then works with the patient to create a new 'earned secure' working model where internal experiences are attended to, explored and valued. A lecture explaining the key elements of AB-ISTDP will be followed by a clinical presentation.

#### **Dr Susan Hajkowski**

**Presentation:** Moments of unlocking: Uncovering 'hidden' change processes in ISTDP

**Summary:** Achieving breakthrough and subsequent unlocking of the unconscious are considered the end goal of the Central Dynamic Sequence (CDS). This is based on the central idea that this provides a direct route to accessing unconscious material and mental processing, and that it is in this phase of the CDS that permanent change in ego restructuring occurs. Dr Susan Hajkowski will present clinical material and observations that demonstrate unexpected ways that breakthrough and unlocking may occur when working with patients with ego fragility. These potential 'moments of unlocking' will be considered alongside phenomenological indicators of unlocking and ways that these 'moments' may be differentiated from other clinical manifestations and processes such as the Unconscious Therapeutic Alliance (UTA) and the operation of mental defences. A focus will be on how these 'moments of unlocking' may be observed, and recognised and how these potential change process may be missed when working with patients with ego fragility.



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**Dr Stephen Buller**

**Presentation:** Mobilising the unconscious and rescuing poor ego.



**Summary:** In this presentation I want us to have a good look at ourselves as therapists, and what we think we are doing when we engage with patients. Why do people suffer distress, emotional hardship, and physical and psychological symptoms? Why do we do what we do to help these people? What is it that we say and do that we think makes a difference to our patients? And when we say and do these things what is that happens to our patients that makes a difference to them? The model of ISTDP devised by Davanloo and Malan provides a complex array of possible things to say and do dependent on equally complex criteria and

understanding of why we might say and do anything at any moment in time. How can we make this useful, particularly in relation to how we understand a patient?