Memo from Dr. Carol Mayhew

** Required Reading from Kohut’s book How Does Analysis Cure? How Does Analysis Cure? (Hardcover) by Heinz Kohut (Author), Arnold Goldberg (Editor) can be purchased online www.amazon.com.

Course Purpose:
The purpose of this course is to introduce the basic concepts of Self Psychology, including their early development and the contemporary transformations they have undergone. It is also to explore the post-Kohutian perspectives that are impacting contemporary psychoanalysis and to illustrate their application to clinical work.

Course Goals:
1. To understand the development of Self Psychology.

2. To understand the basic concepts in Self Psychology, e.g., grandiose self, idealized parent imago, mirror transference, idealized transference, empathy, selfobject, etc.

3. To understand Self Psychology’s departures from classical theory and technique.

4. To formulate psychoanalytic issues from the Self Psychological perspective.

5. To ascertain the value of Self Psychology for clinical work.

6. To understand the contemporary trends in Self Psychology, e.g., intersubjectivity theory, self and motivational systems theory, developmental systems self psychology, specificity theory, pathological accommodation, etc.

7. To reconceptualize key psychoanalytic concepts, e.g., transference, countertransference, defense, resistance, development, therapeutic action, motivation, affect, etc., through the lenses of classical and contemporary Self Psychology.

8. To apply classical and contemporary Self Psychology perspectives to clinical work.

Commentary for the First Session
Arthur Malin, M.D.
The first 2 sessions in the course on Self Psychology will be an introduction to the work of Heinz Kohut. I am including a bibliography of Kohut’s basic works in Self Psychology for your reference. I am also including a page on Self Psychology: Basic Concepts and a page of Definitions in Self Psychology.

For the first session please read the required readings as well as the Commentary on the
COMMENTARY ON THE BIBLIOGRAPHY

This Seminar will offer an introduction to Self Psychology mainly through the writings of Heinz Kohut. Other writers are now making original contributions to the literature on Self Psychology, but Kohut’s work is the primary source for an understanding of the development of his approach in psychoanalysis.

It will be difficult to cover all the essential papers and books in 3 sessions. I will attempt to deal with this problem by covering a good part of the material in lecture form while allowing time for discussion.

"Introspection, Empathy and Psychoanalysis: An Examination of the Relationship Between Mode of Observation and Theory," (1959, # 1) is of particular significance. Although this paper was written during the time when Kohut was still a classical analyst and ego psychologist, his comments on empathy as a mode of observation are central to the development of the theory of Self Psychology. The significance of empathy in psychoanalytic treatment is discussed in more detail in the two books that are required reading (#6, #9)

In “Forms and Transformations of Narcissism,” (1966, # 2) Kohut introduces the concept of a separate line of development for narcissism. In addition, there is a discussion of early archaic forms of narcissism, what is referred to in this contribution as the narcissistic self and the idealized parent imago. It is interesting to note that this paper was delivered as the plenary address at the meeting of the American Psychoanalytic Association in Dec. 1965.

"The Psychoanalytic Treatment of Narcissistic Personality Disorders: Outline of a Systematic Approach," (1968, # 3) introduces a number of important concepts. The term grandiose self replaces narcissistic self introduced in the 1966 paper. The two basic archaic narcissistic configurations are the grandiose self and the idealized parent imago. In this paper Kohut also introduces the concept of narcissistic transferences. The idealizing transference is the therapeutic activation of the idealized parent imago, and the mirror transference is the therapeutic activation of the grandiose self. There are also significant comments on countertransference reactions during the therapeutic mobilization of the narcissistic transferences. This is one of the first times that the diagnosis of Narcissistic Personality Disorder is described in the literature.

In many ways, the 1968 paper is the outline for Kohut's first major book, THE ANALYSIS OF THE SELF. (1971, # 4) This book contains a detailed discussion of the themes already mentioned, namely, narcissism as a separate line of development, archaic narcissistic structures consisting of the grandiose self and the idealized parent imago, narcissistic transferences consisting of the mirror transference and the idealizing transference, and countertransference reactions when working with narcissistic personality disorders. The concept of self-object is first introduced in this book, as well as the concept of optimal frustration which leads to transmuting internalization and structure building of the self.

However, there is still the recognition of instinctual drives and structural theory. The new ideas of Self Psychology presented in this book are considered parallel to structural Oedipal conflicts which are seen mainly in the neuroses. This is the idea of complimentarily. In other words, at the time of the publication of this book the theory of the Psychology of the Self did not rule out the classical psychoanalytic theory of the predominance of drives, structural conflict and the Oedipus complex in the neuroses. This is a difficult book to read but if you become interested in Self Psychology you will find this book rewarding.
"Thoughts on Narcissism and Narcissistic Rage," (1972, #5) was published only one year after the ANALYSIS OF THE SELF but contained a significant departure from instinct theory in the classic analytical point of view. Rage is described as the reaction to frustration and therefore not a manifestation of instinct. This paper was written at a time when there were rumblings of dissatisfaction by a number of analysts regarding concepts of psychic energy, libido theory and metapsychology.

THE RESTORATION OF THE SELF, (1977, #6) Kohut's second book, is a very significant departure from classical analysis and can be properly seen as the beginning of Self Psychology as an independent theory in psychoanalysis. In this book the claim is made that in the Psychology of the Self in the broad sense, the self is seen as the "center of the psychological universe." In the narrow sense, the self is seen as a “content of the mental apparatus”. Kohut never gave up some allegiance to the concept of complementarity, meaning that the Psychology of the Self can exist parallel to structural, Oedipal theory. This book is a more theoretical, philosophical and speculative work, but offers an important view of a turning point in Kohut’s development of Self Psychology. The concept of self-object transference is introduced to replace narcissistic transference. His book makes a major argument that the theory of the Psychology of the Self is necessary to psychoanalytic understanding. We will discuss the implications of these significant departures from classical analytic theory and technique. Even the goals of termination can sometimes be different as exemplified in the first chapter.

"The Disorders of the Self and Their Treatment: An Outline," (1978, #7) is an excellent summary and also contributes a discussion of varieties of self pathology. In this paper, and from then on, the spelling of selfobject is without the hyphen.

“The Two Analyzes of Mr. Z”, (1979, #8) is a well known paper in which Kohut describes the difference between a first, classical analysis and then a second, Self Psychological analysis with the same patient.

HOW DOES ANALYSIS CURE?, (1984, #9) is an attempt to answer the critics of Self Psychology, and an important final summary statement. Kohut goes over all of his main contributions and introduces a third selfobject transference, the alter ego or twinship transference. This book was published posthumously and Kohut worked on it right up to the time of his death.

BIBLIOGRAPHY
4. The Analysis of the Self 1971, N.Y., IUP.
SELF PSYCHOLOGY: BASIC CONCEPTS
1. Selfobject transferences
   a) Mirror Transference
      i) in the narrow sense
      ii) merger through extension of the grandiose self
   b) Idealizing transference
   c) Alter-ego transference
2. Psychoanalytic cure
   a) Structure formation via optimal frustration and transmuting internalization
   b) Move from archaic modes of contact to empathic resonance
   c) Empathy with one’s self
3. Lines of development in self psychology
   a) Narcissism as a separate line of development from object love
   b) Lines of development of the bi-polar self in all three sectors, from archaic to adult
   c) Lines of development of aggression
      i) Aggression alloyed with assertiveness
      ii) Destructive aggression secondary to frustration
      iii) (Contrasted to aggression as a breakdown product)
   d) Line of development of libido (healthy affection contrasted to libido as breakdown product)
4. Empathy, the vicarious introspective stance of the analyst
5. Countertransference responses to selfobject transferences
6. Interpretation: understanding and explaining
7. Disintegration anxiety as contrasted with classical situations of danger
8. Defensive structures and compensatory structures
9. Self psychological concept of defense and resistance

DEFINITIONS IN SELF PSYCHOLOGY

EMPATHY
I. Vicarious Introspection
   II. The capacity to think and feel one’s self into the inner life of another person.
   III. A mode of listening - from the point of view of the other
   IV. A method of affective communication.

SELF
I. An independent center of initiative.
   II. An independent recipient of impressions.
   III. The organization of experience (therefore a structure).
   IV. The self develops as an independent center for initiating, organizing and integrating motivation. The sense of self arises from experiencing that initiating,
organizing and integrating. Experience has an active (agent) and a passive (receptor) mode.

SELFOBJECT
I. A person or a thing or an abstract concept such as country, which is experienced by the individual as part of the self. Selfobjects develop from the primitive, archaic states to mature selfobjects. Essentially it is selfobject functions which are greatest significance.

SELFOBJECT TRANSFERENCE
I. The transference in which the selfobject function of the therapist is of great importance.