



## **DISSOCIATION AND SELF-STATES; KNOWLEDGE FOR CLINICAL PRACTISE. Recognising and sensitively intercepting 'in-session' enactments of dissociation.**

Dissociation – i.e. disruption to integrated psychological functioning – occurs in a range of forms and spans a wide spectrum of experiences. These range from 'normal everyday' (e.g. daydreaming, absorption in a task, 'highway hypnosis') to protection from overwhelm (i.e. a response to trauma). Yet although manifesting in disordered, as well as healthy, expressions, dissociation is not well understood within the field of mental health and is problematically under recognized by clinicians.

This seminar introduces the phenomenon of dissociation in its various forms ('healthy and adaptive, pathological and self-protective'). It also addresses the high stakes of attending to dissociation in the context of therapy. Research shows the role of dissociation in normal personality structure as well as the many costs of failure to recognize and address its comorbid forms. A model of mind which takes account of dissociative processes provides a rich resource for enhanced therapeutic practice with respect to both severe disorders and ordinary 'problems in living'. Practically attuning to dissociation (i.e. the 'how' as well as the 'what') will be emphasized.

Specific exercises and 'in session' enactments within counselling and psychotherapy will be incorporated and handouts and reference lists will be provided.

### **Learning objectives of this training:**

- Define dissociation and provide illustrations of both its normative (healthy) and pathological forms.
- Describe the significance of dissociative processes to the developing mind and the role of positive relational experiences in generating a coherent identity and the capacity to link self-states.
- List the core dissociative symptoms and define the key dissociative disorders.
- Explain the phrase 'a healthy defense gone wrong' (Steinberg & Schnall, 2003) in terms of dissociation as a response to overwhelm (trauma).
- Describe the differences between implicit and explicit memory and attune to the role of somatic and non-verbal experience in dissociative processes.
- Understand the relationship between unformulated experience and enactments and ways of addressing/resolving these in therapy.

### **Trainer:**

**Pam Stavropoulos PhD** is a Sydney based educator, consultant and psychotherapist. A former Fulbright Scholar and twice winner of the Pierre Janet Writing Award for the best clinical, theoretical or research paper in the field of dissociation and/or trauma, she is a member of the International Society for the Study of Trauma and Dissociation (ISSTD) and co-authored the nationally and internationally endorsed Practice Guidelines for Clinical Treatment of Complex Trauma (2019, 2012).

Formerly Head of Research with the Blue Knot Foundation, Pam has held lectureships at the University of New England and Macquarie University, from which she left her tenured position to study and practise psychotherapy, and is a former Program Director of the Jansen Newman Institute, Sydney. The author of *Living under Liberalism: The Politics of Depression in Western Democracies* (2008) she has written research reports in the community health sector and is a clinical supervisor who specialises in complex trauma-related issues.

**N.B.** This training may qualify for Focussed Psychological Strategies (FPS) CPD. Please refer to the Dept. of Health <http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/content/mental-ba-focus#cpd> for more information.

A CPD certificate for 6 hours of training is issued in the week following attendance at this event.

Our continuing professional development events meet the quality standard recognised by many relevant professional associations including psychology, social work, occupational therapy, mental health nursing, community work, counselling, psychotherapy and more.

*We recommend checking with your association for the correct calculation of points for this event.*

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