**AGPA Connect 2023 Presenter Information**

**Course Code:** 48a

**Course Title:** The Integration of Mind, Body and Skin in Modern Analytic Group Psychotherapy

**Course Times:** 9:30 AM - 12:00 PM

**Course Dates:** Saturday, March 11

**Instructors:** Stacy Nakell

**Course Description:** This workshop will bring to life a psychodynamic approach that attends to the mind, body and skin of group members. We will explore the modern analytic concept of psychic skin, a key to understanding and treating skin-focused disorders of self regulation such as hair pulling and skin picking. This workshop will immerse attendees in the exploration of our literal and symbolic skin as insulating, contact-seeking, and boundary making in relationships. Didactic portions will help attendees integrate their experiences in the experiential groups.

**Learning Objectives**

The attendee will be able to:‎

1. ‎‎‎‎‎Define the modern analytic concept of the psychic skin and identify its key role in early ‎development.‎
2. ‎Demonstrate an awareness of how attention to the skin and skin-focused behaviors in therapy ‎groups can deepen group work.‎
3. ‎Describe the perfectionism defense and its connection to the suppression of aggressive energy
4. ‎State the three modern analytic tools that are useful in integrating mind, body and skin in group ‎therapy.‎
5. ‎Name the four main triggers for skin-focused repetitive behaviors

**Significant Articles:**

1. Anzieu-Premmereur, C. (2015). The skin-ego: dyadic sensuality, trauma in infancy, and adult narcissistic ‎issues. Psychoanalytic Review, 102(5), 659-681.‎
2. Aukerman, Nakell & Jafferany (2022). Psychodynamic approach in the treatment of trichotillomania. ‎Dermatologic Therapy, 35(2), 10.1111/dth.15218.‎
3. Bick, E. (1968). The experience of the skin in early object-relations. International Journal of ‎Psychoanalysis, 49, 484–486.‎

**Agenda:**

1. The psychic skin, the narcissistic wound, and difficulty with sensory processing (30 min, Obj. 1, 2, 3, Experiential/discussion/lecture)
   * Mind/body/skin scan/discussion
   * The psychic skin and early attachment disruptions
   * Aggression suppressed/expressed toward the self
   * Sensory processing disorder as a precursor to skin-related repetitive behaviors
   * Triggers for skin-focused repetitive behaviors, psychosocial and sociocultural factors
   * Modern analytic tools: the group contract/bridging
2. Group process (90 min, Obj. 1, 2, experiential)
   * Members get an experience of utilizing sensory objects in group \*Reactions to didactic components
3. Working through the perfectionism defense (30 min, Obj. 3, Obj. 4, Lecture, case study)
   * Societal validation of perfectionism
   * Modern analytic tool: Turning aggression outward/Transference and countertransference
   * Case study: putting words to aggression/releasing tension
4. Group process (90 min., Obj. 3, 4, experiential)
   * Deepen exploration of 'negative' emotions like anger, grief
5. Debrief 2 didactic and process group experiences (25 min, Obj. 1, 2, 3, 4, Q&A)
6. Healing at the level of the psychic skin (30 min, Obj.1, 2, lecture, case study, discussion)
   * integration of mind, body, skin
   * processing/letting go of pre-verbal trauma
   * case studies/earned secure attachment/emotional regulation
7. Participant evaluations (5 min)

**Assessment Questions:**

Question 1 (include possible answers)

True or false: Letting group members utilize fiddle toys in groups tends to get in the way of their progress toward putting thoughts and feelings into words.

Correct Answer 1

False

Question 2 (include possible answers)

What is a key defense mechanism common to people with skin-focused repetitive behavior disorders? a. Perfectionism b. Somatization c. Turning anger inwards d. All of the above

Correct Answer 2

d.

Question 3 (include possible answers)

What are the three key modern analytic tools that help resolve the perfectionism defense?

Correct Answer 3

The group contract, bridging, turning aggression toward the therapist

Question 4 (include possible answers)

For people who present as perfectionists, what feeling are they most reluctant to express? a. Anger b. Happiness c. Fear

Correct Answer 4

a. Anger

Question 5 (include possible answers)

What is the correct definition of the psychic skin? a. Clairvoyance b. Emotional insulation developed in early attachment relationships c. A bond between friends

Correct Answer 5

b.

Question 6 (include possible answers)

What are the four main triggers for skin-focused repetitive behaviors?

Correct Answer 6

Frustration, isolation, boredom, sense of being trapped

Question 7 (include possible answers)

What elements need to be in place for the development of the psychic skin? a. Relaxed attachment figure b. Space to completely relax c. Attachment figure can help metabolize difficult emotions d. All of the above

Correct Answer 7

d.

Question 8 (include possible answers)

When we work to add insulation to the psychic skin in this model, what age range are we attending to? a. 0-2 b. adolescence c. older age

Correct Answer 8

a.

Question 9 (include possible answers)

What do we know about what triggers animals to engage in skin-focused behaviors?

Correct Answer 9

They have the same triggers as humans: isolation, frustration, boredom, and being trapped in too small of a space

Question 10 (include possible answers)

What does an integrative approach include? 1. Attention to somatic experience 2. Focus on the therapeutic relationship 3. Cognitive and behavioral strategies 4. All of the above

Correct Answer 10

4