**AGPA Connect 2023 Presenter Information**

**Course Code:** 59

**Course Title:** “Container-Contained”: Exploring Bion’s Theory in a Group Setting.

**Course Times:** 2:00 PM - 4:30 PM

**Course Dates:** Saturday, March 11

**Instructors:** Carolyn Ehrlich

**Course Description:** Bion defined a container as a space that processes our experiences. His “Container-Contained” theory was inspired by his need to make sense of the world around him, and it’s impact on group dynamics. We are living in an emotionally evocative time of acute polarization, heightening our challenge to act as, and create flourishing containers for ourselves and the groups we lead. Exploring Bion’s theory, we will apply it to case examples, and consolidate our learnings through an experiential process and discussion.

**Learning Objectives**

The attendee will be able to:‎

1. ‎‎‎‎‎‎‎Define one key characteristic associated with each of the following “Containers”: Symbiotic; ‎Parasitic; and Commensal.‎
2. ‎Compare how the Symbiotic, Parasitic, and Commensal “Containers” discriminate and integrate ‎differences differently.‎
3. ‎Assess in which “Containers” the identified patient and scapegoat dynamics are more likely to occur.‎
4. Describe how the Parasitic “Container” will only exist within a state of survival.‎

**Significant Articles:**

1. Agazarian, Y.M., Gantt, S.P., & Carter, F.B. (2021). Systems-centered training: An illustrated guide for ‎applying a theory of living human systems. London, UK: Routledge.‎
2. Bion, W. R. (1961). Experiences in groups. London: Tavistock. (1977).‎
3. Gantt, S.P. (2021). Systems-centered theory (SCT) into group therapy: Beyond surviving ruptures to ‎repairing and thriving. International Journal of Group Psychotherapy, 71 (2), 224-252.‎
4. Billow, R.M (2000) Relational Variations of the "Container-Contained". International Journal of Group ‎Psychotherapy, 24 243-259‎
5. Gantt, S.P., & Agazarian, Y.M. (2017). Systems-centered group therapy. International Journal of Group ‎Psychotherapy, 67(sup1), S60-S70.‎

**Agenda**

1. Introduction: 10 minutes.
   1. \*State goal of workshop.
   2. \*State timeline of workshop.
2. PowerPoint presentation, combined with case examples: 25 minutes.
   1. \*Didactic. (Each of the 4 learning objectives addressed here, one at a time.)
   2. \*Application of didactic information to case material. (Each of the 4 learning objectives addressed here, one at a time, as they apply to the case example).
3. Q&A: 10 minutes.
   1. \*Interactive exploration of didactic information. (All 4 learning objectives addressed here).
4. Experiential group process: 60 minutes. (All 4 learning objectives addressed here)
   1. \*Exploration and application of didactic information to self and to group as a whole.(All 4 learning objectives addressed here).
   2. \*Exploration of group experience.
5. Debrief, Q&A: 30 minutes.
   1. \*Consolidation of observations, experiences and learnings. (All 4 learning objectives addressed here).
6. Break time + wiggle room time: 15 minutes.

**Assessment Questions:**

Question 1 (include possible answers)

According to Bion, unprocessed experience is referred to as: (a) beta element. (b) alpha element. (c) alpha function. (d) the parasitic container.

Correct Answer 1

(b)

Question 2 (include possible answers)

Alpha function is: (a) beta element + alpha elements. (b) eta element - alpha element. (c) converting beta element into alpha element. (d) converting alpha element into beta element.

Correct Answer 2

(c)

Question 3 (include possible answers)

The container that we are all born into is the: (a) symbiotic. (b) parasitic. (c) commensal. (d) reciprocal.

Correct Answer 3

(a)

Question 4 (include possible answers)

An effective symbiotic container teaches us how to: (a) contain our experience without reliance on others. (b) be exclusively in the commensal container. (c) never to be in the parasitic container. (d) contain our experiences with others.

Correct Answer 4

(d)

Question 5 (include possible answers)

A symbiotic container is ineffective when it: (a) insufficiently converts beta into alpha elements. (b) blocks out differences at the expense of the development of those within it. (c) differs from the parasitic container. (d) all of the above.

Correct Answer 5

(d)

Question 6 (include possible answers)

The experiential hallmark of the parasitic container is: (a) intense anxiety. (b) the destruction of meaning. (c) depression. (d) numbness.

Correct Answer 6

(b)

Question 7 (include possible answers)

It is possible for group members to inhabit different containers within the same group. True or false?

Correct Answer 7

True.

Question 8 (include possible answers)

When a group is in a parasitic container, it is important for the group leader to always: (a) tolerate silence. (b) process anxiety. (c) share observations. (d) contain violent projections.

Correct Answer 8

(d)

Question 9 (include possible answers)

A dynamic achieved in the commensal container is: (a) maladaptive role-pairing. (b) merging. (c) projection. (d) ability to negotiate differences.

Correct Answer 9

(d)

Question 10 (include possible answers)

New groups will not find themselves in the: a) symbiotic container. (b)parasitic container. (c) commensal container.

Correct Answer 10

(c)