The New Jersey Institute for Training in Psychoanalysis
#F503 - Case Seminar: Termination
Fall 2024/2025
Via Zoom

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Course Description:

Beginning with Freud's "Analysis Terminable and Interminable", this course will look at carefully planned termination as well as unexpected and premature terminations, considering the role of misalliances, mistiming, misattunements, transference, countertransference, and resistance. It will also explore how, in psychoanalytic treatment that is not focused on symptom reduction, we "know" when it is appropriate to consider termination and whether that determination should be made by the patient, the analyst, or both.

Learning Objectives:

1. To show the capacity to present a clinical case that identifies the dynamics of termination.
2. To analyze issues of termination even as they present in the earliest phase of treatment.
3. To formulate and consider the issues that lead to premature terminations and work effectively with patients toward meaningful and useful terminations.
4. To describe the theoretical basis for interventions around termination.

Course organization:

Each week, we will look closely at one article that engages with the problem of termination, and students will present case material that touches on the theme of the course. Beginning with Freud's "Analysis Terminable and Interminable," we will move through the psychoanalytic literature chronologically, examining how it evolves as the theory evolves, moving from a more one-person psychology rooted in the resolution of the oedipal phase to a two-person psychology rooted in the resolution of relationship patterns set down in early object relations. Students may choose to present an ongoing case or a case that has terminated. It is perfectly fine to present premature or unexpected terminations (perhaps even better) so that we can collaborate in exploring what factors may have led to the termination and to explore how enactment or unrecognized resistance can be better understood. The presentations should focus on problems of termination in some way.

Course Requirements:

● **Attendance is required**. There are only 8 classes, and time spent in class comprises a significant portion of the learning. Absences are excused at the discretion of the instructor. However, if you must miss a class, you will be required to write a short (2-3 pages) reflection paper on the readings for the missed class.

● **Recommended (not required) weekly writing assignments**: The weekly writing assignments are for your benefit. They are designed to get you to grapple with the reading more deliberately than you might if you just read. This is an opportunity for you to engage more deeply with the reading in preparation for class, and it should make the seminar discussion more valuable for all.
That said, since there is a final paper for this class, I am not requiring these assignments. They are an invitation to you to deepen your thinking and work, and I suspect that they will help you when it comes to writing the final paper. I offer the following prompts to help guide your weekly writing. If you want to submit any of these to me, I would be happy to read them and return them to you with comments.
If you have a draft of your paper in advance of the deadline (last day of class), I would be happy to read that draft and offer feedback before you turn in the final draft.

Prompts for optional weekly reflections:

○ If you struggled with some part of the reading, this is your chance to write about it and make sense of it.
○ If you disagree with something, try to articulate a rebuttal.
○ If something in the reading resonated with your own personal or professional experience, write about how the reading helped you
to understand this experience in a new way.
○ Try to connect theory with practice.
○ Try to be self-reflexive. How do you relate to this theory? How might you use it? How might you change the way you work in the future because of something you learned here?

Required Writing Assignment :

A short paper of 4-6 pages is required and should be submitted by the last day of class. This paper should discuss the dynamics in one of your cases in which either you experienced a termination (planned or otherwise) or in which the subject of termination was discussed or came up indirectly in the treatment. Using at least 2 of the readings
from the semester to frame your remarks with theory, develop some ideas about what themes or conflicts the patient expressed in either terminating or discussing endings, loss, and death.

Weekly Assignments:

Class 1: Grappling with Termination

In Class 1, students will be asked to consider their own experiences with and feelings about therapeutic termination, as patients and analysts. We will discuss possible goals for analysis that one might consider met before an appropriately timed termination. We will do a close reading of Bass's article.

Reading: Bass, A. (2009). "It aint 'over 'til it's over": Infinite conversations, imperfect endings, and the elusive nature of termination. *Psychoanalytic Dialogues*, *19,* (6), 744-759.

Recommended Reading: Volkan, V. (2021). Sixteen analysands and large groups 'reactions to the Covid-19 pandemic. *International Journal of Applied Psychoanalytic Studies,18,* 159-168.

Class 2: History of Thoughts About Termination

In Class 2, we will take up Bergmann's historical survey of the early psychoanalytic thoughts about termination. We will explicate Bergmann's reading of Freud on termination and also discuss the role of mourning and the acceptance of the imperfect nature of psychoanalysis. One student will present case material to be discussed in light of the readings.

Reading: Bergmann, M. S. (1997). Termination: The Achilles heel of psychoanalytic technique. *Psychoanalytic Psychology*,*14 (*2), 163-174.

Recommended Reading: Zimmer, R. (2021). Post-termination self-analysis and the relinquishment of the psychoanalytic frame: Thoughts on a fragment of self-analytic work following a traumatic termination. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis,102*, 1116-1137.

Class 3: Analysis Terminable and Interminable: Is analysis ever complete?

In Class 3, we will discuss Freud's seminal piece on termination, understanding, in part, as Freud's grappling with his own questions and disappointments with psychoanalytic theory and technique as well as trying to sort out what in Freud is still relevant to practice today. One student will present case material to be discussed in light of the readings.

Reading: Freud, S. (1937). Analysis terminable and interminable. *Standard Edition*,*13*, 209-254.

Recommended Reading: Werbart, A. & Lagerlöf, S. (2022). How much time does psychoanalysis take? The duration of psychoanalytic treatments from Fre*ud s cases to the Swedish clinical practice of today. International Journal of Psychoanalysis,103*, 786-805.

Class 4: Understanding Ego Psychological Approaches to Termination, part 1.

In Class 4, we will do a close reading of Dewald's exploration of a variety of factors involved in the decision to terminate, with a focus on transference and countertransference implications in the decision to terminate, as well as a focus on the wide range of emotional responses triggered by termination. One student will present case material to be discussed in light of the readings.

Reading: Dewald, P. A. (1982). The clinical importance of the termination phase. *Psychoanalytic Inquiry, 2,* (3), 441-461.

Recommended Reading: Mahalel, A. T. (2021). “Are we dead?”: Time in H. D.’s dialogue with Freud. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis,102*, 297-314.

Class 5: Understanding Ego Psychological Approaches to Termination, part 2.

In Class 5, we will focus on Novick’s understanding of the themes termination evokes as well as the technical expertise required to skillfully manage termination in psychoanalytic treatment. We will also discuss different types of termination: agreed upon, forced, premature, unilateral. One student will present case material to be discussed in light of the readings.

Reading: Novick, J. (1982). Termination: Themes and issues. *Psychoanalytic Inquiry, 2* (3), 329-365.

Recommended Reading: Picard, S. (2022). The end of the hour: A therapist’s reflections on closing a practice. *Psychoanalytic Dialogues, 32*, 419-430.

Class 6: Understanding the Role of Mourning in Termination.

Using Loewald, Class 6 will deepen an understanding of the dynamics of mourning in the termination process. We will also discuss the role identifications, projections and introjections play in the unconscious experiences surrounding termination and how our awareness of such dynamics deepens and improves our work with patients.

Reading: Loewald, H. W. (1988). Termination analyzable and unanalyzable. *The Psychoanalytic Study of the Child*, 43, 155-166.

Recommended Reading: Abramovitch, H. (2021). When is it time to stop? When good enough becomes bad enough. *Journal of Analytical Psychology, 66,* 907-925.

Class 7: A Relational Look at Termination: The Incomplete Nature of Termination.

In Class 7, we will wrestle with anxieties evoked by the tension between the finality of a last session and the awareness that aspects of the analysis have been internalized and will live on in both patient and analyst long after the analysis has ended. We will also explore how the end of analysis evokes death anxieties for patient and analyst and how these anxieties may be managed during the termination phase. In addition, we will explore how gender and race impact the therapeutic dyad around issues of termination and how the power dynamics can get played out. One student will present case material to be discussed in light of the readings.

Reading: Bonovitz, C. (2007). Termination never ends: The incompleteness of psychoanalysis. *Contemporary Psychoanalysis, 43,* (2), 229-246.

Recommended Reading: Gabbard, G. O. (2021). The “dragons of primeval days”: Termination and the persistence of the infantile. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis, 102*, 595-602.

Class 8: An Intersubjective Look at Termination: Unconscious Communication Around Separation and Loss During Termination.

Class 8 will examine how the intersubjective/analytic field is impacted by the prospect of termination. We will explore how unconscious themes of separation and loss that may not have been fully explored in a treatment emerge in the termination phase and how they may make themselves known through the analyst's reverie and dreams, providing the analytic couple an opportunity for deepening the work in the final phase.

Reading: Slochower, J. (2022). Sequels. *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association,* 70, 845-873.

Recommended Reading: Cancelmo J. A. (2019). Unconscious communication in the intersubjective analytic field at times of separation, loss and termination. *Psychoanalytic Inquiry, 39,* (3-4),198-212.

All of the required readings are available on PEP. I will provide you with copies of the recommended readings, which are too new to be available on PEP