

***“My life is a train wreck”:* Imagery, Metaphor and Story in the Therapeutic Process**

The “boundary of experiences” is the interface of our inner world and the external world. Gaining access into and understanding our clients’ inner world is a basic tenet of psychodynamically informed treatment models. Likewise, helping our clients navigate their external world is equally imperative to healthy functioning. Spontaneous images, metaphor, and “story” may be understood as direct communications between internal and external realities. Respecting the relational context of a two-person psychology, we will identify interventions designed to help our clients understand and make use of internal images, metaphor, and the stories they share to communicate their experiences. We will explore the constructive use of such client-generated communications and discuss interventions based on story-telling, metaphor and imagery. Similarly, we will explore the constructive use of therapist-generated communications and discuss interventions based on story-telling, metaphor and imagery. Special attention will be given to issues of difference/similarity and its impact, meaning, and usefulness in our work with clients.

Seminar Learning Objectives:

1. Participants will gain a richer appreciation for the relevance of internal imagery and client-generated metaphors and their therapeutic meaning.
2. Participants will gain understanding of the influences of cultural variables in how images and metaphors are experienced and expressed.
3. Participants will gain practical intervention/interpretive skills to help client/clinician explore the meaning and utility of client-generated images, metaphors, and story.
4. Participants will gain practical intervention/interpretive skills to explore the meaning and utility of therapist-generated images, metaphors, and story.