

Embodying relational psychoanalysis

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In this pre-conference we will present a complimentary approach to our traditional reliance on verbal dialogue. This will be done by demonstrating how we can learn more about the patient, the analyst and their relationship from focusing on the analyst's body. The theoretical underpinnings of this approach aimed at integrating experiences of self, other and interaction, will be outlined. The perception of the other is found in the embodied experience we have of ourselves while we perceive the other. The experience of the world resonates in our own body through a constellation of more or less precise sensations, little movements, affects or emotions, mostly implicit and non-conscious.

We will offer practical demonstrations by inviting participants to explore first own bodily states for extending sensitivity and self-other consciousness, and then clinical situations of their choice by using an embodied supervision model. In this model, the therapist is asked first to explore his/her embodied subjectivity. After that he/she will be asked to 'be' his/her patient, to try and assume the patient's physicality. Being in this state, inhabiting the patient's physical presence, will afford an opportunity to explore embodied empathy. Finally the therapist is asked to move to a third position for reflecting upon the experiences in the two preceding positions.