

# A practical course on Phenomenological Psychotherapy



## *THE PSYCHOPATHOLOGICAL BASES OF THE THERAPY OF SEVERE MENTAL DISORDERS*

**Florence April 9-10-11, 2015**

**Istitute Niels Stensen - Viale Don Minzoni, 25/G**

Organized by



EPA Section on Philosophy  
and Psychiatry and by the EPA



SCUOLA DI  
PSICOTERAPIA e  
FENOMENOLOGIA  
CLINICA

**Director of the Course**

**GIOVANNI STANGHELLINI** (*Chieti, I*)

**Faculty Members**

**GIOVANNI STANGHELLINI** (*Chieti, I*)

**THOMAS FUCHS** (*Heidelberg, D*)

**ANDREA RABALLO** (*Reggio Emilia, I*)

**BORUT SKODLAR** (*Ljubljana, SLO*)

Organized by

**EPA Section on Philosophy and Psychiatry**

**PARTICIPANTS**

**30 psychiatrists, psychologists or mental health professionals selected by the Faculty upon evaluation of CV and motivation letters**

**APPLICATION FILES SHOULD INCLUDE:**

- ▶ Curriculum Vitae
- ▶ Motivation letter
- ▶ Certificate of proficiency in English language

**Applications have to be sent no later than February 27, 2015 to the [info@schoolpsychopathology.eu](mailto:info@schoolpsychopathology.eu)**

**REGISTRATION FEE:**

- ▶ 1500 euros including teaching materials, accommodation in a 3-star hotel, travel and meals
- ▶ 1000 euros including teaching materials, accommodation in a 3-star hotel and meals
- ▶ 500 euros including teaching materials

## ► Phenomenological Psychotherapy

- P.H.D. System:
  - Phenomenological unfolding (P)
  - Hermeneutic analysis (H)
  - Dynamic analysis (D)
- Levels of Phenomenological Psychotherapy:
  - Unfolding of the patient's personal style of experience and action
  - Analysis of the pathogenetic situation
  - Analysis of vulnerable structure
  - Analysis of therapeutic situation
  - Re-construction of world-project

## ► Phenomenological Psychotherapy of the main vulnerable structures:

- Schizophrenia
- Melancholia and Mania
- Borderline personality disorder

## ► Case studies: supervision and intervision

As self-interpreting beings, we continuously strive to make a logos out of pathos, that is, to cope with and make sense of our vulnerability. However, in psychopathological conditions, abnormal experiences often exceed the horizon of such hermeneutic self-understanding leading to critical transformations of the individual life-world.

This understanding of mental illness – in which contingent clinical manifestations reflect underlying transformations of the personal way of being-in-the-world - condenses the core epistemic framework for of Phenomenological Psychotherapy (PP).

PP is sensitive to the constitutional fragility of human person and thus conceives mental illness as the result of a normative vulnerability intrinsic to being a human subject.

While acknowledging such subjective fragility, PP emphasizes our responsibility for our vulnerable self.

To become the person that we are, we must become aware of what we care about, and to take upon oneself the responsibility involved in one's vulnerability.

**Therefore, PP specifically addresses the following methodological and therapeutic kernels:**

► *Unfolding of the patient's personal style of experience and action.*

It consists in an in-depth, tactful exploration of the patient's experiences, of the meanings that the patient attributes to them, and of the life story in which they are embedded. It corresponds to the outcome of the P.H.D. exploration.

► *Analysis of the pathogenetic situation.*

It indicates the life situation that kindles the existential crisis and the psychopathological decomposition. The notion of *situation* shows both the active (the person actively concurs in creating the situation) and the passive roles (the persons does not consciously intends to create the situation). The pathogenetic situation is a boundary-situation in which the vulnerable structure of the patient appears.

- ▶ *Analysis of vulnerable structure.*  
It indicates a significant combination of stable characteristics that make up the ontological constitution around which the vulnerability of the person is organized. It is assumed that psychopathological symptoms and syndromes are the outcomes of the dialectics between vulnerability and person, that is of the person's position-taking and miscarried auto-hermeneutic of one's vulnerability.
- ▶ *Analysis of therapeutic situation.*  
It aims to make visible what happens in the clinician, in the patient and in the situation in which they are both engaged. In the therapeutic situation, time, space, body, otherness get a typical physiognomy for the clinician and for the patient that can be acknowledged, described and analysed. The therapeutic situation may actualise ways of being with the other in which the patient's and the clinician's thoughts, memories, emotions, values and expectations are enacted. It is a protected experiment of we-ness during which hidden aspects of being with the other can become explicit objects of visioning and discourse.
- ▶ *Re-construction of world-project.*  
It is assumed that psychopathological phenomena are the outcomes of a disproportion between experiencing and understanding (*pathos and logos*), emotions and rationality, otherness and selfhood, and the consequence of a miscarried self-interpretation. Once this disproportion has been enlightened, a more functional world-project may start.

**In sum, PP** focuses on the patient's subjective experience as the starting point of any clinical encounter.

- ▶ Through such phenomenologically-oriented clinical encounter, PP encourages the patient to reflect upon his experiences, to express them in a narrative format and to identify a core-meaning around which narratives can become meaningful.
- ▶ While supporting patients in making explicit their personal horizon of meaning (values and beliefs), the clinician promotes a reciprocal exchange of perspectives aiming at the co-construction of a new meaningful narrative which includes and, if possible, integrates contributions from both the original perspectives.

**Thursday, April 9**

- 10.00-10.30 **Introduction to the Course**  
*G. Stanghellini (Chieti, I)*
- 10.30-12.30 **The P.H.D. System: A Pradigm for Phenomenological Psychotherapy**  
*G. Stanghellini (Chieti, I)*
- 12.30-13.30 **Question time**
- 14.30-16.00 **Jaspers' concept of 'limit situations' and its importance in phenomenological psychotherapy**  
*T. Fuchs (Heidelberg,D)*
- 16.00-16.30 **Question time**
- 16.30-17.00 Break
- 17.00-18.30 **Psychotherapy of melancholic persons in the light of desynchronization**  
*T. Fuchs (Heidelberg, D)*
- 18.30-19.30 **Question time and general discussion**

**Friday, April 10**

- 09.30-09.45 **This is why we (still) have to study psychopathology**  
*A. Fiorillo (Napoli, I)*
- 09.45-11.30 **We are a dialogue. Philosophical Resources for Care**  
*G. Stanghellini (Chieti, I)*

- 11.30-12.00 **Question time and general discussion**
- 12.00-12.30 Break
- 12.30-13.30 **Presentation of a case study by one of participants**
- 14.30-16.00 **Discussion of the case study in the light of P.H.D. System**
- 16.00-16.30 Break
- 16.30-18.00 **Life-world oriented psychotherapy in real-world clinical settings**  
*A. Raballo (Reggio Emilia, I)*
- 18.00-19.00 **Question time and general discussion**

***Saturday, April 11***

- 9.00-10.30 **Phenomenological structures of schizophrenia spectrum vulnerability**  
*A. Raballo (Reggio Emilia, I)*
- 10.30-11.00 Break
- 11.00-12.30 **Phenomenological psychotherapy of schizophrenia. Practical perspectives**  
*B. Skodlar (Ljubljana, SLO)*
- 12.30-13.30 **General Discussion and Concluding remarks**

**Organizing Secretariat**

**MORE**<sup>++</sup>  
COMUNICAZIONE EVENTI & MORE

Via Cernaia, 35  
00185, Roma  
Tel. +39 06 87678154 Fax +39 06 94443440  
info@morecomunicazione.it  
morecomunicazione.it