**Rethinking the Clinical Conference:**

**Psychoanalytic 'supervision' in mental health services**

This panel was proposed on behalf of the IPA Committee “Psychoanalysis and the Mental Health Field” (P&MHF) chaired by Claudio Eizirik. The panelists are distinguished IPA members working in Europe, North America and South America: Thais Blucher (Brazil), Bob Hinshelwood (United Kingdom), Florence Quartier (Switzerland) and Edward Shapiro (United States). The panel was chaired by Giovanni Foresti, co-chair for Europe of IPA Committee P&MHF.

**General purpose**

During the last 20 years the relationship between psychoanalysis and mental health services has radically changed. Institutional systems are now greatly differentiated in their structures (ranging from networks of outpatient departments to various types of residential institutions), heterogeneous in term of professional backgrounds of the workers involved (physicians, psychologists, nurses, social workers, sociologists, rehabilitators, educators) and increasingly influenced by the national/regional variants of ‘managed care’ that have been developed to assure administrative and financial oversight. Once central to clinical thinking, psychoanalytic concepts have become somewhat marginalized while the center has been taken by the pharmacological, cognitive and behavioral approaches.

Yet even within this very new and complex institutional field, clinical conferences and psychoanalytically oriented group discussions remain an indispensable organizational tool. In many settings, psychoanalysts are invited to chair, organize and coordinate these multi-disciplinary professional meetings and clinical conferences. Notwithstanding the present crisis, in fact, psychoanalysts still have the reputation of being able to manage some of the complexities (psychopathological, group and institutional) inherent to the mental health field.

The panel is grounded on the experience that psychoanalytic perspectives on clinical phenomena offer a unique opportunity to compare different viewpoints in order to integrate them into a comprehensive vision. With a shared and relatively integrated clinical perspective, more effective therapeutic decisions can be taken, implemented and assessed.

The panelists’ perspective can be summarized with few words. New institutional contexts have pushed many of us to go beyond the standard model of psychoanalytic ‘supervision’ in order to develop a new set of ideas, methodologies and techniques. The panel offers the opportunity to listen, to compare, and to exchange ideas with a prominent group experienced colleagues working in this arena.

**Items**

The following is a partial list of the items that will be addressed:

* function of the service’s established leadership (institutional responsibilities);
* relationship between consulting psychoanalyst and local leaders (system client);
* consultation/supervision as staff support system and upkeep of the organizational container;
* different levels of complexity in clinical conferences (rational discussions & unconscious agendas & group dynamics & transference phenomena & institutional constraints);
* consulting psychoanalyst’s method and its conceptual focuses (patient’s individual psychopathology + therapists’ relational dimensions + group phenomena + organizational functioning);
* patients’ and staff members’ reciprocal identifications: therapeutic resource *versus* narcissistic resistances;
* specific institutional traps (staff’s transference to consulting psychoanalyst in order to fight local leaders; group collusion in an anti-institutional stance etc.);
* specific psychoanalytic tools: the discontinuities of the single case (psychoanalytic clinical assessment) and the *continuum* of life processes (normal/pathological, past/present, manifest/latent, conscious/unconscious, repetitions/transformations, individual/familiar)

**Panelists’ contributions**

Dr. Thais Blucher is psychiatrist and psychoanalyst, member of the SBPSP and the IPA, and teaches Medical Psychology at the Santa Casa School of Medicine in São Paulo, Brazil. She will discuss her experiences in chairing clinical discussion groups: a method that she has devised and extensively used for training medical students. Its scope is to help physicians in integrating their technical knowledge with the emotional experience resulting from the actual taking care of patients.

Title of her contribution: **Psychoanalysis in Medical Education: A Possible Contribution.**

Dr. Florence Quartier is psychiatrist and psychoanalyst, member of the SSpsa and the IPA, she works and lives in Geneva. She is chair of a WPA Section (World Psychiatric Association, Section: “Psychoanalysis in Psychiatry”). Her experiences are based on the different roles she has had in her career: teacher and leader in the psychiatric services of the University of Geneva and consulting psychoanalyst in various cultural contexts and countries. She has just published *Psychiatrie: mode d’emploi* – a book written about this topics with an experienced French psychoanalyst (Paul Denis) and a young Colleague (Javier Bartolomei).

Title of her intervention: **Institutional Supervision: Building a Link between Psychiatry and Psychotherapy.**

Dr. Edward Shapiro is psychiatrist and psychoanalyst, member of the APsA and the IPA. He has directed for 20 years the Austen Riggs Centre and is the author (with Wesley Carr) of *Lost in Familiar Places: Creating new Connections between the Individual and Society* and theeditor of *The Inner world in the Outer World: Psychoanalytic Perspectives*. He will present clinical vignettes from a seminar he has been teaching in a public sector psychiatric service. He uses psychodynamic understanding to broaden the young clinicians’ perspectives beyond management interventions toward an understanding of transference, counter-transference and systems psychodynamics.

Title of his intervention: **Management versus Interpretation: Teaching Trainees to Listen**.