

Syllabus

Understanding and Treating Disorganized Attachment and Dissociation: Exploring Dissociative Identity Disorder through the Lens of Interpersonal Neurobiology

Course Teacher: Daniel J. Siegel, M.D.

Overview

In this course, you will have the opportunity to become immersed in a one-of-a-kind interview with Dr. Dan Siegel's former client, who was diagnosed with DID and worked through the trauma and dissociative barriers to heal the condition through therapy. She has gone on to practice psychotherapy for the last 20 years. DID is a mental health condition in which an individual's experience of self becomes fragmented, and "self-states" become separated from one another, interrupting the continuity of consciousness. In this course, you will learn how to work with differentiated self-states by processing implicit traumatic memories, treating disorganized attachment patterns, and catalyzing relational trust and healing to create lasting change and the experience of an open, coherent autobiographical narrative, wider windows of tolerance, an access to the "open plane of possibility" with the Wheel of Awareness practice, and the deeply transformative experience of living with wholeness.

This course will enable you to learn the specific assessment and treatment strategies to effectively care for those with DID. Understanding DID also affords us the chance to gain insights into dissociation as a response to disorganized attachment relationships while also learning about the developmental and neurobiological nature of attachment, the clinical conceptualization of working with dissociation, and treatment approaches to healing the post-traumatic sequelae of developmental trauma.

IPNB is not a "form of therapy" but rather a deep understanding of the mind and mental health that informs all forms of therapy, and in this course we will focus on the integration of differentiated, fragmented self-states of DID. Through the relational connection established therapeutically with each of the self-states, the clinician is able to observe and understand the function of each individual part, find a bridge across states through open awareness cultivated in integrative practices in session and at home, and then process the psychological experiences and adaptive role that is protected within each segmented state. This relational connection also allows the client to integrate previously fragmented forms of memory and emotion, creating coherence across self-states, and dismantling the previously necessary dissociative barriers to liberate a new way of living with fluidity, integration, and wholeness.

Learning Objectives:

1. Describe how attachment impacts brain development.
2. Identify characteristics associated with specific attachment categories.
3. Explain how disorganized attachment impairs integration.
4. Identify the developmental basis of dissociation.
5. Explain the correlation between dissociation and disorganized attachment.
6. Conceptualize Dissociative Identity Disorder through the framework of interpersonal neurobiology.
7. Describe the role of self-states in Dissociative Identity Disorder.
8. Assess a client's impediments to integration to inform treatment planning.
9. Apply a clinical framework for building secure attachment.
10. List the five phases of treatment for Dissociative Identity Disorder.

Segment Overview:

Segments 1 - 3 – Introduction, Attachment and the Mind, The Categories of Attachment

Description:

These sections provide an overview of attachment and its significant clinical applications. It will explain how attachment patterns are shaped by early caregiver experiences and describe the impact it has on brain development. The distinct characteristics of each attachment pattern will be explored, as well as their implications for future relationships. Clinicians will learn about the relationship between disorganized attachment and dissociation.

Segments 4 - 7 – Disorganized Attachment: What It Is, and What It Isn't, Attachment, Disorganization and the Brain, Disorganization and Dissociation, Dissociative Identity from a Clinical Point of View

Description:

This section will highlight significant research findings about attachment patterns and the association between disorganized attachment and developmental trauma will be explored. Clinicians will learn about the regions of the brain that are affected by insecure attachment patterns. The fundamental issue of integration among these neural systems and the role it plays in regulation, identity and well-being will be discussed. This section will also focus on understanding the symptoms and treatment of Dissociative Identity Disorder(DID) from an attachment perspective.

Segments 8 - 10 – Client History, The Role of Implicit Memory, Dissociative

Identity Disorder

Description:

This section will follow the experience of Dr. Siegel's former client who had DID as she shares her journey with therapy. Significant topics related to DID such as the role of childhood trauma, implicit memory, disorganized attachment and dissociation will be contextualized. It will also explore the initial phases of assessment and treatment of DID.

Segments 11 - 13 – States of Mind and Dissociation, The Healing Process of Dissociative Identity Disorder Through Interpersonal Neurobiology, Widening the Window of Tolerance

Description:

This section will explain how DID is a survival strategy used to cope with traumatic experiences. It will describe the biological basis of the process of dissociating multiple self-states. Clinicians will learn how the window of tolerance can be used to help a client acknowledge their separate parts without becoming them.

Segments 14 - 17 – Reflections on the Healing Journey, Conceptualizing Dissociative Identity Disorder from the Wheel of Awareness and 3-P Diagram of the Mind, Transformation of the Self, and Looking at Dissociative Identity Disorder Symbolically as a Parallel to the Destruction of the Earth

Description:

This section will demonstrate how to apply the acronym PART (Presence, Attunement, Resonance and Trust) to the therapeutic process. Clinicians will learn about the clinical implications of how attachment impacts relational integration. These concepts will also be applied to broader contexts such as societal and environmental issues.

Segments 18 -19 – Treatment Planning and Treatment Implementation and Assessment

Description:

This section will focus on treatment planning from an Interpersonal Neurobiology framework. Clinicians will learn about important issues such as the different types of dissociation and techniques to work with unresolved traumatic memories. The PART framework will be introduced as a technique to move clients toward more secure attachment. In addition, this section will highlight the five phases of treatment for DID.

Segments 20 - 21 – Reorganization and Conclusion

Description:

This section focuses on assessment and interventions to guide clients with DID in a process of reorganization toward integration. Clinicians will gain a greater understanding of this process from the perspective of the client, including benefits and possible obstacles. It will also provide tools to assess a client's level of integration and a treatment framework for increasing their window of tolerance.