



## Manchester Psychoanalytic Development Trust Conference 2024 Reveries: Dreaming Across the Life Cycle

### Abstracts

#### **Dreaming the World and Mind into Being – Dr Alexandra de Rementeria**

The author takes as her premise the idea that phantasy predates thinking and is necessary before any meaningful relationship to reality can develop (Bion, 1962). Also, then, that in the beginning, phantasy is not so much a distortion of reality as a bridge to apprehending reality. From hallucinatory wish-fulfilment (Freud, 1900), through symbolic equation (Segal, 1957) to the faltering ascendance of the reality principle (1911), the world and our minds emerge out of our love and hate and how both are met. In this way, much of infancy is a waking dream. Then, as self and other, reality and phantasy all begin to get distilled out, play emerges as the space for waking dreams. This becomes the arena where much of our internal conflict gets worked through.

The author explores this trajectory using material from infant observation and applied psychoanalytic observation, clinical work and child development research to highlight the importance of the capacity for reverie in carers to facilitate and nurture dreaming in the infant and child.

#### **'I am worried I am doomed'. On Dreams and the Fear of Death in Adolescence – Dr Catalina Bronstein**

Disturbed adolescents can concretely feel anxiety about fragmentation and annihilation through bodily symptoms and excessive fear of death. Pubertal changes can be experienced as bringing a metamorphosis that threatens any sense of continuity and also intensifies depressive anxieties connected with issues of separation, the loss of childhood, and an increased awareness of the passage of time, of loss and death, including parental deaths. With the help of a clinical example, this presentation will explore the place dreams occupy in therapy with disturbed adolescents, as, besides expressing unconscious wishes, dreams can play a crucial role in processing emotional experiences.

#### **Changing through Dreams: a Clinical Experience – Leon Kleimberg**

Our speaker reflects on how dreaming and dreams can initiate or be the arrival point for psychic change and psychological transformation. He will discuss two patients with their corresponding dreams where the process of dreaming and the dream in itself, allows the mind to develop further and at the same time can generate a structural internal change in patients by shifting the meaning of internal objects and creating new object representations. Two different patients and two dreams will be presented to explore this psychic transformative event.

#### **Dreaming the Social: Exploring the Unconscious Dynamics of the Collective – Ali Zarbafi**

Social Dreaming is a pioneering methodology, developed by Gordon Lawrence and his colleagues at the Tavistock Institute, London and elsewhere. This perspective regards dreams as more than the private possession of the dreamer and suggests that, by exploration in a social context through free association and amplification, the dream may help us edge our conscious, finite understanding further into the unconscious infinite and help us gain a greater awareness of the hidden, underlying dynamics of the setting within which it takes place. Long before Freud and Jung began to study them, dreams and dreaming had great significance to people such as the Australian Aboriginals, Native Americans, Africans etc. as they attempted to understand the meaning of life and the world in which they lived.

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Room 8, Norwood House, 53 Brighton Grove, Manchester, M14 5JT  
info@mpdtg.org.uk | mpdt.org.uk

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