SEPI XXXVI ANNUAL MEETING
Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada
May 28-30, 2020

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

The Society for the Exploration of Psychotherapy Integration (SEPI) invites submissions for the 36th Annual Conference to be held in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, from Thursday, May 28, to Saturday, May 30, 2020. Pre-conference workshops will be held the morning of May 28th. The conference site will be the Marriott Vancouver Pinnacle Downtown.

SEPI is an international, interdisciplinary organization of practitioners and scholars exploring the benefits of integrating ideas from multiple perspectives and promoting alternative ways of meeting the needs of our clients. SEPI also advances the integration of practice and research.

Conference Theme: Suffering and Flourishing: Envisioning Positive Mental Health

Optimal human functioning is more than being free of depression, anxiety, and worries. In psychotherapy, reducing suffering alone does not necessarily ensure the enhancement of mental health. Happiness and wellbeing are complex and the dichotomy between positive and negative cannot capture the whole picture. Second wave positive psychology has recently emerged, which questions the simple dichotomy between positive and negative, challenges the very notion of “positive” and “negative,” and examines the complex relationship between so-called positive and negative psychological processes. Psychotherapy integration can also advance itself by exploring what positive mental health is and developing interventions that facilitate an optimal
functioning, not simply the reduction of symptoms and pathological processes. The theme for the SEPI 2020 conference, “Suffering and flourishing: Envisioning positive mental health,” seeks to explore optimal human functioning from integrative perspectives while recognizing the importance of addressing both aspects of psychological functioning in psychotherapy research and practice.

We seek to encourage submissions especially in the following areas:

- **Exploring optimal psychological health from an integrative perspective**: SEPI has encouraged the development of various models of psychotherapy that proposed innovative ways to help people, facilitate change, and improve psychological adjustment. There is much to be gained from clarifying and specifying the roles of suffering and optimal functioning in these models. We welcome submissions that explore the complex dialectical relationship between suffering and flourishing.

- **Beyond binarism**: Our world is filled with binary thinking such as good and bad, vulnerability and resilience, unification and diversity, suffering and flourishing, optimism and pessimism, etc. Envisioning optimal functioning seems to require going beyond this binary thinking. We welcome submissions that feature creative ways to go beyond binary thinking that can limit our conceptualizations.

- **Flourishing diversity**: In understanding what suffering and flourishing mean, the knowledge of diverse ways of addressing them in various cultures is invaluable. In order to be effective therapists and researchers and scholars of therapy, we must explore and affirm the cultural diversity of patients and practitioners. We welcome submissions that highlight cultural factors and feature presenters from different countries and/or cultural backgrounds.

- **Transforming suffering into flourishing**: Much of psychotherapists’ work is to help transform their clients’ suffering into flourishing. This is sometimes described as alchemy. We welcome submissions that highlight therapeutic methods that transform suffering into flourishing and also the research examining the mechanisms of such transformation.

- **Integrating positive psychology into psychotherapy**: Last but not least, we welcome submissions that focus on the integration of the concepts and practice of positive psychology into psychotherapy.

**PROGRAM FORMAT**

We encourage the participation of practitioners and scholars from all psychotherapy traditions and disciplines to attend our 2020 conference. The program will consist of pre-conference workshops, panels, structured discussions, mini-workshops, individual papers, and posters. There also will be plenary panels and the SEPI president’s address.

We wish to underscore that:

- SEPI is particularly devoted to facilitating dialogue among participants. As such, all presentations should allocate ample time for audience participation and discussion.

- We encourage the use of videotaped sessions, verbatim transcriptions, demonstrations, case presentations, or other methods that ground the dialogue, clarify practical considerations, and demonstrate clinical application. Please be sure to secure the client’s informed consent for the ethical use of session material.

**TYPES OF PRESENTATIONS**

**PANELS/SYMPHOSIA (75 minutes)**

A panel/symposium is a formal presentation that ideally includes 3 presenters and 1 discussant, leaving time for audience participation. Each panel must have a moderator who will introduce the presenters and topics, monitor time allotments, and guide audience participation.

**STRUCTURED DISCUSSIONS (75 minutes)**

Please note that the moderator of a discussion group is responsible for confirming at least two other individuals’ participation and for organizing all aspects of the presentation. Film, videotape, music, artwork, or other forms of media can also be used to stimulate discussion.
MINI-WORKSHOPS (75 minutes)

Mini-workshops are designed primarily for practitioner audiences and focus on skill development or experiential involvement. Preference will be given to workshops that include multiple presenters. A workshop “summary sheet” (overview of the topic) and handouts (if applicable) should be available to participants. A pointed focus is desirable due to the short nature of these workshops. Only a limited number of mini-workshops will be possible during the conference. Due to the fact that mini-workshops are the most competitive format, and the vast majority will not be accepted, we strongly encourage anyone submitting a mini-workshop to consider submitting other types of presentations as well.

INDIVIDUAL PAPERS (15 minutes)

This category includes research, theoretical, and clinical papers that are not part of a panel/symposium. The program committee will form accepted papers into panels. However, we strongly recommend that instead of submitting individual papers, you try to create a panel yourself by seeking out other people doing similar work and recruiting a discussant. The likelihood of acceptance is higher for panels than for individual papers. For this purpose, you are encouraged to use the SEPI listserv or Facebook.

POSTERS

Posters are graphic representations of the results of studies or tools to help in decision-making. Interested attendees have one-on-one discussions with the presenter whose work is displayed. Poster dimensions should approximate 91 x 122 cm (or 36 x 48 inches). Many attendees appreciate receiving a handout that summarizes a poster’s findings.

PRE-CONFERENCE WORKSHOPS (3 hours)

Pre-conference workshops are scheduled the morning of the first day of the conference to allow participants to learn about a particular approach in more depth. Preference will be given to pre-conference workshops that include multiple presenters. Only three pre-conference workshops will be accepted.

LIMITS ON FIRST AUTHORSHIPS

There is a limit of two first-author presentations at the conference. A total number of presentations including other forms of participation, such as discussant, moderator, or second authorship, should not exceed five. All presenters will be subject to the usual registration fee for the conference.

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS

The submission deadline is December 10, 2019. Submit online through the SEPI Conference submission portal at http://www.mymeetingsavvy.com/sepi. The program committee will send notices of acceptance by February 8, 2020.

Continuing education for psychologists will be offered through the Society for the Advancement of Psychotherapy (Division 29 of the American Psychological Association/APA). The Society for the Advancement of Psychotherapy is approved by the APA to offer continuing education for psychologists, but the Society maintains responsibility for the program. This year, continuing education credits will be offered only for major plenaries, keynotes, and preconference workshops as well as at least one session per time slot.

CONFERENCE LANGUAGE

Please note that presentations must be given in English. Please rest assured that perfect English is NOT a requirement; however, presentations must be understandable to English speakers.

REVIEW CRITERIA

All submissions are rated for rigor (scientific, clinical or theoretical), scope of coverage, relevance to psychotherapy integration, and consistency with the meeting theme. Mini-workshops and pre-conference
workshops are additionally rated for presenter qualifications and usefulness of the training objectives. Proposals must be sufficiently detailed to allow evaluation of these criteria.

**TRAVEL AWARDS**

**Student travel stipends**
Six student stipends not to exceed $500 each are available to defray costs for students who are presenting at the conference. To qualify for a stipend, students must be the first author and presenter of a paper or poster and must be SEPI members. The submission portal provides an opportunity for students to indicate that they are interested in being considered for a travel stipend.

**Paul L. Wachtel Travel Grants**
Up to two travel grants not to exceed $1000 each are available to support travel to the conference by SEPI members and SEPI fellows. Please note that SEPI student members are not eligible for these grants. To apply, please go to the awards section of the SEPI website: [https://www.sepiweb.org/page/wachtel_award](https://www.sepiweb.org/page/wachtel_award).

We hope to see you in Vancouver!

**PROGRAM COMMITTEE**
Shigeru Iwakabe, Chair and 2020 SEPI President
Catherine Eubanks, Alexandre Vaz, Beatriz Gomez,
Alberta Pos, Ueli Kramer, Tahir Ozakkas, Errki Heinonen, Rhonda Goldman

**LOCAL ORGANIZING COMMITTEE**
David Kealy, University of British Columbia

For conference specific questions/requests, please contact us at: sepichair2020@gmail.com.