

**American Group Psychotherapy Association
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**Wild Civility
Working with Erotic Feelings in Group Therapy and Supervision
Workshop 49**

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The erotics between the supervisor and the supervisee, the members of the supervision group, and supervisee and their therapy group will be explored. The tension wild-civility will be used to illustrate a valuable dialectic in managing erotic feelings for the benefit of all involved. The workshop will utilize didactic and sharing of work experience to demonstrate the wild-civility dialectic.

didactic-sharing of work experiences-experiential-demonstration

Course References:

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Evocations of Eros

Delight in Disorder

A sweet disorder in the dress
 Kindles in clothes a wantonness:
 A lawn about the shoulders thrown
 Into a fine distraction:
 An erring lace, which here and there
 Enthralls the crimson stomacher:
 A cuff neglectful, and thereby
 Ribbands to flow confusedly:
 A winning wave (deserving note)
 In the tempestuous petticoat:
 A careless shoe-string, in whose tie
 I see a **wild civility**:
 Do more bewitch me, than when art
 Is too precise in every part.

Robert Herrick (1591-1674)

First Elegy

Who, if I cried out, would hear me among the angels'
 hierarchies? and even if one of them pressed me
 suddenly against his heart: I would be consumed
 in that overwhelming existence. For beauty is nothing
 but the beginning of terror, which we still are just able to
 endure,
 and we are so awed because it serenely disdains
 to annihilate us. Every angel is terrifying.

Rainer Maria Rilke, (1875-1926) The First Elegy, *Duino Elegies*, Stephen Mitchell, Translator

“There is a fear, always latent in the countertransference, that reparation can turn to destruction, that love can injure as well as heal....In any event, the fear of destructiveness is surely central to all individual and cultural fears of sexuality, the fear that sexuality can be a traumatic force: greedy, selfish, oblivious, invading, shattering, exploiting....The psychoanalytic endeavor is intended to identify what can be healing as well as destructive in the erotic; and contribute to lifting the weight of the taboo that prevents our conscious participation in that endeavor. “ (Benjamin, 1994, 201)

Eros is a reaching out of the soul to a hoped-for good. The object is eternal beauty. In its crudest form, love for a beautiful person is really a passion to achieve immortality through offspring by that person. A more spiritual form is the aspiration to combine with a kindred soul to give birth to sound institutions and rules of life. Still more spiritual is the endeavor to enrich philosophy and science through noble dialogue.

(Encyclopedia Britannica, 15th Edition, Plato, Volume 14, p. 535. The article is attributed to the editors, but this quote reads as if it comes from Mortimer Adler who was editor-in-chief)